

ESTROVERI POINT

by Ana Rosales

CAST

KAY	university student about to graduate, limited Spanish ability
CELIA	skipped college, been touring the states, comfortably bi(lingual)
EL DEEJAY	the voice of the radio
JULIO	a teenage gas station attendant

Notes:

- All characters are Mexican-American.
 - ◆ Cast (particularly CELIA and JULIO) should be fluent in Spanish.
- In the premier reading, EL DEEJAY read most of the stage directions.
 - ◆ [Stage directions written like this should be EMBODIED, not read aloud.]

Bonus note:

PEDRO's full name is PEDRO INFANTE, after the Mexican singer/movie star.

SCENE 1 - "YOU WERE SERIOUS"

The middle of the night. Mid-May in 1996. El Paso, Texas.

In their dark bedroom, KAY sleeps.

Suddenly a FIGURE appears holding two duffel bags. This is CELIA. She drops one of them by the door and moves in close to stand over Kay. It's kind of creepy. Celia slowly reaches out...

CELIA

Kay... Quique...

She taps Kay, gently, but nothing happens.

They really need to get going, so Celia opts for a new approach. She grabs Kay by the shoulders and gives 'em a good shake!!

CELIA

KAY!!

[Kay wakes up, gasping.]

KAY

NO PLEASE DON'T KILL ME, I HAVE A GOLDFISH!!

That'll do it.

[Celia laughs. Kay catches their breath.]

KAY

Oh, god, it's you.

CELIA

(this is the funniest thing ever:)

Ohhh man, I'm sorry!!, I didn't mean—ohh that's so good!

KAY

You scared the shit out of me. I thought I was getting murdered.

CELIA

And your first thought was, *(really just go for it:)* "Ahh!! My fish!! My fishhhh!"

Celia places one of the duffel bags on Kay's bed. It's packed.

KAY

Pedro is like a son to me!

Or, you know, a daughter. Whatever.

[Celia settles down a bit.]

Celia moves towards Pedro's fish tank in one corner of the room and studies him.

Then she *really* studies him... Huh.

CELIA

Well, I'm glad you haven't eaten him.

KAY

I've kept him alive this long.

CELIA

(little off:)

Mm.

Celia moves back to the bedroom door and grabs her own duffel bag, slinging it over her shoulder. [She grins.]

CELIA

Well. Hope you didn't shit your pants too bad.

Let's go!

KAY

Go?

[Beat. Kay remembers.]

KAY

Oh.

Oh, you were, serious.

SCENE 2 - "THAT'D BE FUNNY"

[A shift.]

It's earlier now. One day ago, just after morning, at Kay's front door. Celia stands on the porch with a travel backpack on. She looks nervous.

Kay opens the door, and immediately they seem to melt—so, so happy.

KAY

Celia!

CELIA

¿Quiubo, Quique?

They hug. Kay holds on tight. It's been a while.

CELIA

I missed you, dude.

Kay missed her, too.

KAY

Yeah.

They separate, and Celia steps inside like it's home. Kay follows her in.

KAY

How was New York?

CELIA

New York?

KAY

Yeah! Your-!

Kay searches for... something. Then they find it: a postcard.

KAY

You sent me this one a bit ago. It said "Big Apple."

CELIA

Ah.

Celia takes the card and points on it.

CELIA

Big Apple *Georgia*, see?

It's this sculpture thing. A big, red apple, like *this* size—so fuckin' cool.

Kay is actually fascinated.

KAY

Yeah, wow. Wish I could have seen it.

CELIA

...Really?

Celia considers the postcard, then hands it back to Kay.

CELIA

So you *were* getting these.

KAY

Yeah. I keep them all. I think it's cool you're doing this stuff.

CELIA

You never sent any back.

KAY

I didn't think you'd want, an El Paso card.

Why does it feel like they just admitted something?

[Beat.]

CELIA

I heard you're graduating soon.

KAY

Yeah! Yeah. I've been-
It's been a lot.

CELIA

Mm.

You walking? "Capingon" y todo?

KAY

(not all there:)

Yeah.

It's weird.

CELIA

Nah, that's cool, man. Super cool. Congratulations.

The vibe is off...

KAY

Paulina's here. With- you know, with my Tia Mari and stuff.

My mom says they're here to "celebrate me." They're coming to the ceremony, but-

CELIA

That is such bullshit.

Are you, okay?

KAY

Yeah, no, it's not that big of a deal.

I mean, you know her. Paulina's just kind of...

CELIA

She's a bitch.

[Kay laughs.] That's exactly it.

CELIA

I wish you wouldn't let her get to you.

Es niña fresa, she's a snob.

KAY

Fresa! That's the word- that's it!!

I was trying to think of it earlier, when she-

When Paulina was-

but I couldn't.

I couldn't remember.

(trying to make it stick:)

Fresa. Fresa, fresa, fresa. Yeah.

CELIA

At your service with Mexican slang!

Metiche, naco, a huevo... Fresa.

KAY

Did you see any of those? Like the apple. Big strawberries?

[Celia laughs.]

CELIA

No. That's funny.

Guess the biggest one's right here in town, huh!

[Kay laughs, too.]

KAY

We could find the second biggest!

CELIA

What?

KAY

No, I was just—I'm kidding, I don't know.

I thought about, driving out to one of those sculptures. Like your Big Apple.

CELIA

There's a thought. That'd be funny.

That'd be fun.

KAY

Super funny.

SCENE 3 - "IT'S IN IOWA"

Another shift. We're back to the present: the crack of dawn in Kay's bedroom.

KAY

It was a *joke!*

CELIA

Yeah. Let's go!, as a joke.

Kay gets out of bed and looks back and forth between Celia and the duffel bags.
They realize, for the first time, that the sun is not out. They walk to their bedroom window.

KAY

What time is it?

CELIA

Four.

I wanted us to get there soon as possible.

KAY

Celia. We can't drive 12 hours to see a sculpture.

CELIA

It's 19. Actually probably closer to 20 hours. Here to there.

KAY

That's- that's worse. You see how that's worse, right?

CELIA

I'll drive! You can go right back to sleep soon as we're in the car.

KAY

What? No, dude, no.

CELIA

Or, you know, you can drive. No big deal.

KAY

Celia, no, no. I'm *graduating* in two days! I don't have time!

[Beat.] Ooh...

CELIA

Right.

No, you're right.

[Beat.]

CELIA

Your mom, um-

She called me on Wednesday. To invite me. But I just- You know, I hadn't really heard from you.

And I wanted to. About your ceremony. But you never said anything.

I thought if I came down, maybe you'd—I don't know.

But you didn't.

[It's quiet.] Kay doesn't really know what to say.

Celia grabs her duffel and starts to leave, but—

KAY

(this is ridiculous:)

Where is it?

It doesn't matter. They're going.

CELIA

Iowa.

It's in Iowa.

SCENE 4 - "S MART"

A few hours later, at a gas station corner store.

A bored teenager, JULIO, works the cash register. He fiddles with the dial on a portable radio.

[JULIO:]But there's nothing good on. So EL DEEJAY, voice of the radio, zooms through the stations.

EL DEEJAY

(sweet, crooning:)

♪ Quién será la que me quiera a mi ♪—

JULIO

No.

[Julio switches the station.]

EL DEEJAY

(journalistic:)

—and national statistics indicated that one in every five first-generation—

JULIO

No.

[Switch.]

EL DEEJAY

(bright!:)

El jugo de naranja Jumex lo mueve, lo refresca! Con su auténtico sabor a—

JULIO

Requete-no.

[Switch.]

EL DEEJAY

—a look at traffic here. We're at 16 past the hour on this Thursday morning, May 16—

[Kay and Celia enter.]

KAY

You drive like a maniac.

CELIA

May I remind you that we are on a tight schedule.

KAY

I know! I know. Just-
I'm driving next.

CELIA

Daring!

KAY

Just! Go fill up the tank!

CELIA

You gonna empty yours?

KAY

GO!

Kay exits toward the bathroom. Celia approaches the counter. As she does...

EL DEEJAY

—and a big happy birthday goes out to Tom McGinn, who's turning 53 years old! Fun fact here, Tom is the founder of PistachioLand, Alamogordo's own—

CELIA

(about the broadcast:)

Orale...

(then:)

Lemme get 20 on pump 2.

She hands him cash. Julio nods, does his thing.

JULIO

¿A dónde van?

Ah. He speaks Spanish. [Celia smiles.]

CELIA

Iowa.

JULIO

Ah chingado. ¿Y por qué tan lejos? ¿Qué hay en Iowa?

CELIA

Deja nomas te cuento! Es que a mi amige Quique se le ocurrió la gran idea de ir a buscar la fresa más grande del mundo. Bueno. Pues, la segunda, no?

JULIO

¿La... segunda?

CELIA

Fíjate nomás que la verdadera “frezota” va siendo su prima.

JULIO

(*bruhh:*)

No manches.

CELIA

A sí que vamos como de chiste, no.

“As a joke.”

JULIO

¿Tantas horas en la carretera por un chiste?

Celia is bashful about that.

CELIA

Si, a- algo así. Bueno. Más bien, creo que-

Kay returns from the bathroom. They spot Celia talking to Julio, but freeze when they register the Spanish.

They stand by, unnoticed. (Except, y’know, by me. I see *everything*.)

CELIA

Pues, que se trata de pasar el tiempo juntos, no.

Having an adventure together.

JULIO

“Adventure...”

Julio considers this. Kay considers this.

CELIA

De eso se trata con la familia. Así digo yo. Y elle... bueno.

Me gusta que podamos pasar el tiempo así.

They're like family.

Oh wow...

EL DEEJAY

—anyway, here's “Wonderwall,” by Oasis. ♪ Today is gonna be the day that they're ♪—

[Kay approaches.]

KAY

Hey. You ready?

CELIA

Shit, yeah! Hang on.

Celia rushes out to pump the gas. Kay grabs a water bottle and places it on the counter.

Then they stop, and look out at Celia.

They grab a second water bottle—and a pack of sour gummy worms.

Julio rings them up.

JULIO

¿A si que van a la fresa más grande del mundo?

KAY

Huh?

Oh. Oh yeah, yes. We are.

JULIO

¿Esto lo hacen seguido?

KAY

Um. No, not really, we don't-
I don't- do this often.

Sorry, we're... I'm kind of in a hurry.

[Julio squints.] English. Why?

JULIO

Claro. Disculpa.

Kay takes their items.

KAY

Okay. Um. Thank you.

Bye.

—and exits.

JULIO

Bye...

Julio watches as they go... then takes off his name tag.

EL DEEJAY

♪ I SAID MAAAAYBEEEE ♪ —

SCENE 5 - "BRUCE DELAWARE"

In Celia's car, on a highway somewhere on the US-54 in Oklahoma.

Kay is driving, laser-focused, while Celia plays along with a trivia game on the car radio.

EL DEEJAY

—and finally! Which young actress holds the current record for youngest person to ever host Saturday Night Live?

[Celia smacks Kay in her excitement.]

CELIA

OH!! I know this one! Kay, I know this one!

KAY

Ow! Oh my *god*, okay!

CELIA

I know the answer!!

EL DEEJAY

She also happens to be allergic to coffee! Wuh-oh! That can't make Mondays any easier!

CELIA

I'm telling youuu! It's that girl!! She's in that movie!

KAY

Celia, there are lots of girls in lots of movies.

CELIA

The girl!! Oh god, what is it...

[Celia thinks reallyyyy hard. Then:]

CELIA

Bruce Delaware!

KAY

What?

CELIA

Her name!! Bruce Delaware! Not Bruce but *like* Bruce!

KAY

What the hell are you saying!

CELIA

The *girl*, Quique, the *girl*!! She's in that movie, with the little brown guy!!

E.T.!! She was in E.T.!

EL DEEJAY

DING DING DING!! Time is UP, my friends! If you guessed "Drew Barrymore," you would be exactly correct! Congratulations!!

[Pause. Kay and Celia sit with this.]

KAY

Bruce Delaware?

[Then they burst out laughing.]

EL DEEJAY

Next up here we've got The Cure, a little "Friday I'm In Love" for you all. Not Friday just yet, but we can dream! Bit of wishful thinking for your Thursday afternoon.

["Friday I'm In Love" plays.]

CELIA

Oh, this song! Man!

We were so annoying senior year.

KAY

You think so?

CELIA

For. Suuure.

Like, you remember when Ari brought his boombox to school—

KAY

Yes! Oh my god, and you took it!!

CELIA

And *you* brought your CD to play this on repeat.
Andabas obsesionade!

KAY

So were you!

[Celia laughs. Kay looks at her.]

They make eye contact for a second.
Oh.

[Kay refocuses on the road.]

CELIA

You still know it, yeah?

EL DEEJAY

♪ Monday you can fall apart, ♪

CELIA (with EL DEEJAY)

♪ Tuesday, Wednesday, break my heart
Oh, Thursday doesn't even start ♪

KAY (with CELIA and EL DEEJAY)

(*giving in:*)

♪ It's Friday, I'm in love ♪

They quickly dissolve into a full-on karaoke dance party—as much as one can dance with their seatbelts securely fastened.

As they reach the peak of another verse, Julio suddenly pops up from the backseat, frantic and pointing at something on the street.

JULIO

¡Aguas, aguas, aguas!

[Kay freaks out! So does Celia!]

The car swerves—
Why is there a kid in the backseat?? What's going on!!
[General chaos, maybe EL DEEJAY makes some airthorn sounds.]

[The car ba-bumps, then brakes.]
Oh no.

KAY
Oh god.
No, no no...

Celia turns and finally gets a good look at Julio. She's confused, and pissed.

CELIA
A qué horas—cómo te—?
Que fregados—!

JULIO
Un coyote.
Lo vi que iba cruzando, pero no pensé que...

KAY
No. No no no no no.
This isn't happening.

Celia gets out of the car to assess the situation on the road.
Yeah, that coyote is super dead.

Julio joins her.

JULIO
Oof. 'Ta rete-muerto el pobre!

KAY
Nooo!

JULIO
Muertisimo!

[Celia snaps.]

CELIA

Yo que tu, me preocuparia de ti mismo, eh!
Cuando chingados te subiste a mi carro?

JULIO

Ey ey ey!

Kay gets out of the car.

KAY

Celia, what's—

Julio approaches them with a big ol' smile on his face.

JULIO

Oye, no te preocupes por lo del coyote, eh. ¡Así pasan las cosas!
Me llamo Julio- nos conocimos en el S Mart.
Tu eres le de la prima fresa, ¿no?

KAY

This. Isn't happening.

This is an omen. It's a bad omen!

No!, I'm still asleep, huh. I'm asleep and there is no strawberry, there is no coyote.
Oh god.

CELIA

Hey! Hey hey hey, Quique.

Look, don't beat yourself up about the coyote. It was an accident.

KAY

No, you don't get it.

I killed it!

CELIA

You didn't mean to.

Meanwhile, Julio pokes at the dead coyote.

KAY

I've never killed anything before.
Oh god...

CELIA

Well that's not true.

[Beat.]

KAY

What?

The coyote stirs. [Julio panics.] Wait, *what?*

JULIO

Ay, hijo de su—! Sigue vivo!! ¡Sigue vivo el guey!

Kay and Celia either don't notice or don't care.

CELIA

I just mean. Pedro.

KAY

What about him?

Julio's cat-and-mouse with the coyote escalates.

JULIO

¡Oigan! Mejor vámonos saliendo, no!

CELIA

You know, you—
He died, didn't he?

KAY

I didn't kill him.

CELIA

I didn't say you killed him.

KAY

I didn't kill him! I take care of things!
I can take care of a stupid goldfish. I didn't kill him!!

Suddenly, Celia's car pulls up next to them—Julio behind the wheel.

JULIO

¡Súbanse!

Kay and Celia finally notice the very angry, very *alive* coyote.

CELIA

It's *alive*?

[Ahh!] Celia grabs Kay and they rush into the car.
Then she realizes Julio is driving her car.

CELIA

¡Quien carajos te crees!

JULIO

Tranquila. ¡Ando manejando desde los catorce!

KAY

Cator... *Fourteen*?
I thought he was like 12!

CELIA

How old are you?

JULIO

Fifteen!

[He cackles!] Julio steps on the gas. They're off.

SCENE 6 - "WHAT NOW?"

Later. Another gas station somewhere in Kansas. [EL DEEJAY by the counter.]

EL DEEJAY

Th-th-this!! Is Harper's number ONE hit music station!! 93.3!!

[Kay, Celia, and Julio enter.]

JULIO

¡Ay, por fin! ¡Ya me estaba meando!

He rushes toward the bathroom.

CELIA

Okay. So. We'll find a bus route or something,
make sure the kid gets back to New Mexico—though,
Christ, it would'a been *so much easier* if we'd let the coyote—

JULIO

Ey!

I speak English.

CELIA

Right. I'm sorry!

JULIO

(pointed:)

And I'm pollito!

[He leaves. As soon as he's gone:]

CELIA

'che pendejo estorboso...

[She laughs, expecting Kay to follow suit. They don't.]

CELIA

Hey, um.

Look, I'm sorry about earlier-

KAY

I thought you were going to the bathroom.

EL DEEJAY

♪ IT'S THE FINAL COUNTDOOOOWN! ♪

This June!! Don't miss it, the match for ULTIMATE GLORY!! Chavez versus The Golden Boy!

CELIA

Yeah. Yeah, okay.

We can. We'll talk- after.

[Celia exits.]

EL DEEJAY

Whenever there's school, there will always be homework!

Whenever there's a beat, there's always a drum!

And whenever there's fun there's always COCA-COLA!

Coca-Cola's new—

[El DeeJay shuts off. Kay exits, and we follow.]

SCENE 7 - "PHONE HOME/LA GASOLINERA"

Outside the same Kansas gas station. There's a public phone, and Kay is counting quarters from their pocket.

As soon as Julio approaches, Kay holds out the phone for him.

KAY

Call home, work, wherever. I don't care.

Just let them know where you are.

I'm not trying to become a kidnapper before I can graduate.

Julio takes the phone. [He looks at Kay.]

JULIO

Felicidades.

KAY

None of that.

Call.

JULIO

Y si no?

[Kay stops for a second.] The *audacity* of this kid.

KAY

Look, I really don't wanna have to call the cops, but if you—

JULIO

No, no no. Please.

I just kidding.

(Whoa.)

KAY

Okay.

[Julio clutches the receiver. It's like Kay fades into the background, and then we see PAPÁ (played by EL DEEJAY).]

PAPÁ
Bueno?

JULIO
Soy yo, Papi.

PAPÁ
Hijo? Carajo, ¿de donde marcas?

JULIO
Uhhh... la gasolinera. Bueno- *una* gasolinera.
En Kansas.

[Beat. Then:]

Papi. Te extraño mucho. Un chingo.
La verdad es que ya me canse de tanto Inglés.
Y me hablan bien feo en el trabajo. Hay días peores que otros, pero pos... ya pasó mucho tiempo,
no?
¿Pa' que cuesta tanto la vida? La *escuela*? La pinche escuela...
Sabes- pude haber hecho la prepa desde allá. Haberme quedado con ustedes.
Pero el dinero—siempre con el pinche dinero—ya me di cuenta que nos *pudre* la vida.

Pero a veces así pasan las cosas, verdad? Mandas a un hijo a estudiar, a trabajar— y resulta son las
babas del diablo. Los gringos le dicen “pendejo” y los paisas, “puto.”

En fin. Ya voy de regreso. Nos vemos pronto Papi.

[Julio lowers the phone, looks at Kay.]

JULIO
Thanks for that.

He lets the phone hang and starts to walk away.
A dial tone. Was there even another voice?

KAY
Julio-

JULIO

None of that.

Ya vámonos.

[Julio exits. Celia returns.]

CELIA

Did you, figure out what we're gonna do about the kid?

SCENE 8 - "PEDRO II"

Back in the car. Somewhere in Missouri. Celia is driving, Kay sits up front, and Julio seems to have fallen asleep in the back.

No DEEJAY. It's quiet.

CELIA

I'm sorry. About Pedro.

[Kay breathes deeply.]

KAY

No.

No, *I'm* sorry.

I overreacted, it's just. I was-

I was so embarrassed.

[Celia doesn't say anything.]

KAY

He was yours, and I was supposed to take care of him.

You know, you left, and it was me and him, and I-

I messed up. And it was *fucking* killing me.

I wasn't trying to replace him or anything. I told my mom, and I- I guess she told Tia Mari, 'cause at my next birthday Paulina comes in with a fuckin' goldfish, and what am I gonna say? No?

[Celia laughs. Kay stops. They were being vulnerable!]

KAY

What?

CELIA

(fresa:)

"Osea, aquí tienes tu pescadito, amigui!"

[That makes them both laugh.]

CELIA

Well. I forgive you.

And Pedro the Second.

KAY

Ha, ha.

CELIA

Pedro the Sequel?

Pedro Part Two?

[They can actually laugh about that.]

They smile at each other, and—it's nice.

Really nice.

SCENE 9 - "STRAWBERRY POINT"

Early Friday morning, who knows where. The car is parked, and Julio, Celia, and Kay are all asleep.

[EL DEEJAY is there.
Celia rises.]

CELIA

I met Quique freshman year of high school, in U.S. History class. AP. But actually I wasn't even supposed to be in there, you know, 'cause I got the rooms mixed up. First day stuff. I had to ask for a pencil, and I remember they just got this look on their face, like, "Youuu fuckin' idiot."

And now I'm waking up in my shitty car, with a stowaway in the backseat.

[She looks at Julio. She looks at Kay.]

CELIA

I said yes because they asked.
Yes, yes yes, all the time. Anything. Everywhere.
Please.

I think... when their mom called, I got scared.
Like they were graduating from—
...stuff like this.

I would do anything for Quique, I think.

[Celia turns on the radio.]

EL DEEJAY

—beautiful Friday morning here in Strawberry Point, we've got a slight breeze in from the—

CELIA

Kay. Quique.

[Kay wakes up.]

KAY

Are we there yet?

CELIA

Yeah. We made it.

Oh. There it is again—a moment of Gay Eye Contant.

[Julio wakes up now, too. He yawns, and then he sees it!]

JULIO

No mameeeees!

Julio scurries out the car. There it is!

JULIO

La fresa más grande del mundoooo!!

[Kay laughs.]

KAY

After Paulina.

JULIO

Después de Paulinaaaa!!

Kay and Celia step out of the car now to get a real good look at it.

Huh. Wow.

Kay takes Celia's hand.

KAY

Gracias. Por todo.

CELIA

It was your idea.

[Kay laughs.]

They kiss.

SCENE 10 - "Y DE REGRESO"

Twenty four hours later. El Paso again.

Saturday, May 18, 1996. Celia stands in semi-formal wear. She's looking for...

[She approaches EL DEEJAY, who isn't actually a DJ right now—just some guy.]

CELIA

Disculpe, ¿sabe si ha llegado Julio?

[EL DEEJAY is confused.]

EL DEEJAY

Ah. No. Según yo, seguimos en Mayo...

[He walks off.]

CELIA

So much for that.

She's about to give up when Julio enters, also semi-formal.

He finds Celia and the two of them hug.

[Then EL DEEJAY begins leading the procession.]

EL DEEJAY

Samantha Alcroft...

Justin Bauer...

Kay enters in their cap and gown.

EL DEEJAY

"Quique" Albores...

[Celia and Julio cheer, *loud* and over the top.]

EL DEEJAY

As a reminder, if we could please hold our applause until all graduates have crossed the stage...

Kay takes their diploma and crosses to Julio and Celia.

EL DEEJAY

Ramon Nuñez...

Celeste Magallanez...

Anthony McElroy...

Celia spins Kay around in a big hug.

They hold each other, and when they part, they're still holding hands.

They celebrate together for a while. They hug, they laugh, they reminisce.

And they go home.

[Beat shift:]

Now Kay and Celia sit in the car, and the radio finishes a song.

EL DEEJAY

Next up we have a dedication here for Quique Albores, who graduated today!!

Big congratulations to Quique!!

This message is from Celia. She writes,

"Eres lo máximo.

Mi mejor amigo, mi media naranja...

CELIA

"—mi media naranja...

CELIA (cont.)

Te mereces todo lo bueno de este mundo, y me siento cada día tan suertuda por haberte conocido."

I love you. From here to the giant strawberry and back.

De aquí a la fresa y—

KAY

—y de regreso.

They kiss.

EL DEEJAY

Aww! How very sweet! Quique and Celia, this next song is for you.

The music starts. It doesn't really matter what song it is; it's not what you're listening to, it's who you're listening with.

Y colorín colorado, este cuento se ha acabado.

[End of play.]