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Galerna

de
Tamara Gutiérrez

traducción de
Kymm Coveney

(fragmento en inglés)

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Tomás

Tomás' mother

Tomás' father

Tomás' sister

Social worker

or

TOMÁS' FAMILY and the ESKIMO BOY

SETTING

The performance space should be one set. The family's living-dining room must be able to change into all the other settings in which the action takes place. The table at which meals are shared is where families confess secrets, witness betrayals, bestow trust, speculate, accuse, love, confide, make declarations, hold trials, etc.

NOTES

The use of italics when Tomás speaks indicates an aside. This is also true for Tomás' mother's final speech.

Scene 7 includes lines quoted directly from J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*, while the scene called The Goodbye Dream adapts one of the passages in the book.

Lines preceded by the names of two characters are to be spoken simultaneously by them both.

0. House Lights

Clear skies before the galerna; the storm front has yet to arrive. The play begins with the happy family welcoming the audience to TOMÁS' birthday party. Each member of the audience should feel part of the celebration, like they've been invited. The scene is set for a party, with all kinds of cookies and candy on the table. Once the audience is seated, TOMÁS' MOTHER will turn off the light, making everything go dark. TOMÁS' FATHER will come on stage carrying a birthday cake with candles. They sing Happy Birthday.

EVERYONE

Happy birthday to you.

Happy birthday to you.

Happy birthday, dear Tomás.

Happy birthday to you.

TOMÁS is about to blow out the candles.

SISTER

Wait. You have to make a wish.

TOMÁS thinks for a moment. He closes his eyes and blows the candles out. Time freezes, along with the scene, as if everything had been blown out.

TOMÁS

You never think about the future when you make a wish. So many birthdays. So many shooting stars and lost eyelashes.

You could ask to save your wish. Keep a wish like a piece of candy for later. But there's a catch: you make a wish in the dark, with the first stupid thought that comes into your head:

In-line skates instead of my parents loving each other.

Winning the basketball championship instead of my parents loving me.

A ton of video games to play instead of them playing with me.

A trip to Disneyland instead of not having nightmares.

Going skydiving instead of taking a trip together.

The power to teleport myself instead of wanting to go back home.

Learning to fly instead of not arguing anymore.

Restoring trust.

EVERYONE

YAY!!!

SISTER

Okay, now open your presents.

TOMÁS

But the real present...

SISTER

Here.

TOMÁS

...is from the wish.

SISTER

Okay, maybe not. This one last.

TOMÁS

...before you blow out the candles.

SISTER

Save the best for last.

TOMÁS

Like a piece of candy you keep...

FATHER

Open mine, then. (Tomás opens the package)

TOMÁS

...for later.

FATHER

It might look like just a camera, but it isn't. It's the secret of time, being able to capture it.

MOTHER

A Polaroid? What a relic. There are digital cameras now that do the same thing.

FATHER

It's completely different. Not the same thing at all.

MOTHER

Nostalgia.

Pause.

MOTHER

Here.

Silence.

MOTHER

For you to write things down.

TOMÁS sits looking for a moment at the first blank page of the notebook.

TOMÁS

Now I know I'd started writing it a long time ago.

SISTER

Mine next. (*TOMÁS' SISTER gives him her present.*)

TOMÁS

The Catcher in the Rye.

Silence.

SISTER

You're him. (*Pause.*) Holden Caulfield. The catcher in the rye.

Silence.

FATHER

Try it.

TOMÁS

Now?

FATHER

Yes, now.

MOTHER

Just don't take any of me.

TOMÁS

Why not?

MOTHER

I don't like being photographed.

FATHER

Why not?

MOTHER

I just don't. I'll take one of you all.

TOMÁS

But I want you to be in it.

FATHER

I'd better take it. Then you can see how it's done.

TOMÁS

Let me try. It can't be that hard.

FATHER

But you're the one having a birthday.

TOMÁS

That's why. It'll be something for me to remember, and I want to have all of you in it. (Pause.)
Stand over there.

MOTHER

No, not me.

TOMÁS

C'mon, please?

MOTHER

You can be such a pain in the neck.

FATHER

You've got to look right into the viewfinder. When you can clearly see the moment you want to capture, go ahead and shoot.

They all pose and TOMÁS takes their picture.

TOMÁS

It's black.

MOTHER

They're always black at first. Shake it. Wave it like this.

FATHER

That doesn't do anything.

MOTHER

Well, that's the way we've always done it. Everyone does it that way.

FATHER

The image is revealed as the photo develops. Whether you shake it or not.

TOMÁS

Nothing's coming out.

FATHER

Don't be so impatient.

MOTHER

Go ahead and wave it around. You'll see.

TOMÁS does what she says.

TOMÁS

Nope.

FATHER

What did I tell you? (*Silence.*) Take another one. Maybe this wasn't the memory you were supposed to capture.

MOTHER

One more?

They all pose again. TOMÁS takes another photo.

FATHER

Wait. Wait a few seconds. Let it work its magic.

Silence.

FATHER

What about now?

TOMÁS

Nope.

Pause.

TOMÁS

I did just what you told me to do.

MOTHER

What now?

FATHER

I don't know. There might be something wrong with the chemicals, or maybe it's expired.

MOTHER

I told you so. It's so outdated. Give them to me. I'll throw them away.

TOMÁS

No.

MOTHER

What do you want them for?

TOMÁS

A keepsake.

MOTHER

But you can't see anything.

TOMÁS

They came out that way. That's the way they'll stay. Memories aren't always what you want them to be.

MOTHER

Sometimes you say the strangest things. Why would you want a black photograph?

FATHER

Alright, leave him alone. Let him do what he wants.

MOTHER

What do you mean, leave him alone?

TOMÁS

Maybe it'll come out by itself one day when we're not looking.

FATHER

That's impossible.

TOMÁS

I'm going to hold on to it anyhow, just in case. The image is there; you just can't see it yet.

At this point, Tomás' family should disappear as if they were being devoured by the fade to black. I trust the magic of the theater to make this possible, to have this blackout reveal the perfect antonym for 'rendering visible.'

TOMÁS

Once upon a time. That's how I'd like to begin this story. Tell the story of my life as if it were a fairytale. A tale full of all the world's horror.

You always tell the story you need to hear. This one's mine. We all tell ourselves stories to solve the puzzles of us, using pieces from the past, pieces from the present and missing pieces from the future. My parents never told me stories. Maybe they didn't need to hear them. Or maybe they did. So this is a story for parents. It's also a story for us kids who were never told any fairytales.