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*Dramatic Publishing*

# **ALICIA IN WONDER TIERRA**

**(or I Can't Eat Goat Head)**

**A Play in Two Acts**

**by**

**SILVIA GONZALEZ S.**

**Loosely based on Lewis Carroll's  
"Alice in Wonderland"  
(with a touch of "The Wizard of Oz")**



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(ALICIA IN WONDER TIERRA  
[or I Can't Eat Goat Head])

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## SYNOPSIS

*Alicia enters a Mexican curio shop with her mother. Fascinated by the Latin American imports, Alicia reaches for a Mexican doll on display, but trips over Mexican pottery. The doll, Rosa, spins out of her hand and becomes a full size woman. She then disappears under a Mexican blanket. Alicia follows her and meets a variety of characters: A Day of the Dead sugar skull, an armadillo, and gang-bangers with faces painted to resemble Elvira wielding chicken claws. If touched by their chicken claw, the soul gets trapped in Mexican pottery. With the aid of a puppet, El Musico Tocando la Trumpeta (Ramon), Alicia heads to the Aztec Temple to find the Pottery Maker, and the truth about the trapped souls. During the journey, Alicia enlarges or shrinks by blowing into a trumpet, or breaking a piñata and meets a goat head steaming in an oven, a sad horny toad that is so ugly bricks keep falling on him, and the Tree of Heads. The tree holds the head of Pancho Villa, Charo, a mambo king, a pachuco, and a Hispanic Yuppie. Alicia also enters the Distorted Memory Forest, the Village of Laughter, and a maze of black velvet paintings. When she reaches the temple, she has menudo with the Aztec priest and his unique guests. Finally, Alicia finds the Pottery Maker and he tells her the truth about Mexican pottery. Rosa has been captured by the Elvira gang and it is up to Alicia to rescue her. Grateful to be saved, Rosa helps Alicia to go home. Alicia puts the Mexican blanket over her and finds herself back at the curio shop. Apparently, when she tripped over the pottery, she hit her head and knocked herself out. Before leaving the Mexican curio shop, Alicia's mother tells her that they must hurry home to help cook goat head for el compadre's dinner.*

# ACT ONE

## SCENE ONE

AT RISE: ALICIA, whining like a teenage "Valley girl," follows her mother into a store full of Mexican curios.

ALICIA. You said shopping.

MOM. This is shopping, *mija*.

ALICIA. The mall, Mom.

MOM (*picks up a decorative sugar skull*). *¿A cuanto me lo dejas?*

STOREKEEPER. *Cuarenta.*

MOM. Very expensive.

STOREKEEPER. It should be. Someone made it with their bare hands.

ALICIA. Let's go.

STOREKEEPER. Look around, young lady. Your mother has a lot of money, and I want her to leave it here.

MOM. I don't have a lot of money.

STOREKEEPER. *No togues.*

MOM. Don't touch, *mija*.

ALICIA. He told me to look around.

STOREKEEPER. Look with your eyes, not with your fingerprints.

ALICIA (*looking at a price tag*). Ki-hoo-a-hoo-a.

MOM. What are you reading?

ALICIA. It says, Ki-hoo-a-hoo-a on this tag.

MOM. That's *Chihuahua*.

STOREKEEPER. No touching! You can touch in the back room, but only this once. Stay there long enough so your mother will buy something.

MOM. *Voy a comprar algo.*

STOREKEEPER. The last time you didn't buy one thing.

MOM. I miss these things.

STOREKEEPER. Then buy them and take them home. I need to pay my bills.

ALICIA. Mom. When we're done, can we go to the mall?

MOM. What a shame.

STOREKEEPER (*overlap on "shame"*). *Que lastima.*

MOM. Blame it on me. She wants clothes.

STOREKEEPER. I have beautiful clothes in the back. Go there and see if you like anything. *Andale.*

ALICIA. What else is back there?

STOREKEEPER. *Magia...* (*She doesn't understand.*) Magic.

MOM. She won't learn Spanish either.

STOREKEEPER. *Aye, caramba.* (*ALICIA wanders into another room—a world of more colorful items. She gazes at everything. She picks up a beautifully carved wooden horny toad. She touches the items even though the Spanish/English sign reads: MIRAME Y NO TOQUES/LOOK BUT DON'T TOUCH. ALICIA goes towards a display shelf with a variety of dolls.*)

ALICIA. Aztec instruments. A few flamenco combs. Here are Mexican dolls. It looks like a village on this counter. Useless stuff. What's this? (*She stares at one particular Mexican doll and takes it. It has long braids and large eyelashes. The lips are ruby red. The dress is filled with sequins.*) She's so pretty and it says "Rosa" under her shoe. Your name must be Rosa, then. You're pretty, but I don't want you.

MOM (*off*). Are you causing trouble back there?

*(ALICIA steps back and accidentally trips over pottery. She falls behind the counter as the Mexican doll, Rosa, spins out of her hand. There's a BLACKOUT during the crash. When the lights return, ROSA is now a full size woman.)*

ROSA. In the far reaches of the mind, I see you. I see myself. I see the whole world, and I wonder about so many things as I look out in a glaze. *(ROSA walks around and returns to the same spot.)* There is a hand that reaches to me. It wants me to take it. When I do, I see myself. *(ROSA walks around the room looking at the piñatas.)* I see your world, and I see my own. In both places I find isolation. I find loneliness. I find a person that I am and am not. I find a world made of animals in human clothing and humans in animal drapes. It hangs on a thread. *(ROSA runs to the stack of Mexican blankets, then throws a blanket over herself and disappears.)*

ALICIA *(coming out from behind the counter)*. Wait!

*(ALICIA runs to the blankets. A SUGAR SKULL floats up from the table and scares her. ALICIA throws the Mexican blanket over herself and disappears, too. Lights shift. A new place. Fog enters. ALICIA rises from it.)*

ALICIA. Where am I?

*(In the distance she sees ROSA running away. She tries to go after her, but the fog is overwhelming. Suddenly the SUGAR SKULL appears before her. It is floating and large, but friendly.)*

SUGAR SKULL. ¿A donde vas? Don't be afraid.

ALICIA. You are a skull.

SUGAR SKULL. Made of sugar. I'm not real. I represent the Day of the Dead. I could be a gift to someone. How much money do you have?

ALICIA. I have none.

SUGAR SKULL. NONE? Then I am wasting my time.

ALICIA. You are made of sugar?

SUGAR SKULL. Very sweet sugar.

ALICIA. Sugar is sweet.

SUGAR SKULL. Some sugar can be stale. Haven't you ever received a sugar skull from anyone?

ALICIA. No. Never.

SUGAR SKULL (*exaggerated inhale*). That's shocking.

ALICIA. I think my parents may have gotten one when they were young, but I never have.

SUGAR SKULL (*exaggerated inhale*). Never?

ALICIA. Never.

SUGAR SKULL. Never? Such things! This is a tradition here in Mexico.

ALICIA. We're not in Mexico. We're in a bazaar. There's a street out there in the middle of a city. This place is made up to look like "Little Mexico." Outside is a city.

SUGAR SKULL. NO!

ALICIA. Yes. I came in with my mom to buy a gift. I saw all these things that looked strange even though they looked familiar.

SUGAR SKULL. We are in Fresnillo, Zacatecas! I'm on a shelf in Carrillo's store waiting for the Day of the Dead.

ALICIA. Not. You are in a curio store in the United States. You will be bought as a curiosity and passed around as a very strange, yet folk-tale-like, object.

SUGAR SKULL (*exaggerated inhale*). I'm not an object! I have a function! A very important function. It is a tradi-



tion. Bah. I'm so sorry you ever came into the store.  
(*Darkness. The SKULL disappears.*)

ALICIA. Wait! Come back! The room is dark! I can't find the light switch.

(*The fog starts to enter again. ALICIA runs to the wall and finds a switch, and turns it on. ROSA is standing in the distance looking at herself in the hand mirror. ALICIA sees her and ROSA runs again and disappears. Then ROSA reappears in another spot and disappears again. An ARMADILLO is sitting on a stool. A bright light shines on the ARMADILLO's face.*)

ARMADILLA (*Texas accent*). The sun dances on my face. I know if I gaze at the faraway ball-of-fire it'll burn my eyes. But I can't help it. I like it. I like it a lot. It feels so good on me. I love the mystery of—

VOICE (*off, Spanish accent*). Don't sit in the sun! It'll wrinkle your face.

ARMADILLA (*continuing Texas accent throughout*). I don't care.

VOICE (*off*). Don't look at the sun! You'll go blind!

ARMADILLA. I don't care if I go blind.

VOICE (*off*). Don't smile!

ARMADILLA. Why not?

VOICE (*off*). A young lady doesn't smile too wide. They'll think she's asking for it.

ARMADILLA. I am asking for it. (*A slap is heard, ARMADILLA reacts. She then goes back to facing the sun. She opens her eyes, and rubs them for a few moments. She looks at the sun again, and then looks away. Purple, green, pink dots of light start to float around her. The colorful lights swing to the direction she faces.*) Floating amoebas,

within the spots of refracted corneal light images. My delightful friends. There you are. You always come when I need you. (*The lights dance before her. Some go on her.*)

VOICE (*off*). Don't look at the sun!

ARMADILLA. But I love the colorful spots.

VOICE (*off*). You'll put a hole in your eyes.

ARMADILLA. So...A bright blue light, now green. Now bright pink. Any color I want. I just think of it. And the demon amoebas appear in a hazy splotch. See their brown arms extend outward? Spots, amoebas, then more spots. The amoebas look like...amoebas! The kind you see on a slide with a microscope. Well, just a bit different. How else can you describe what very few people see?

ALICIA. They say it's from the amniotic fluid that got in the fetus' eyes when they opened in the womb. (*She can't believe she said that.*)

ARMADILLA. Really? That was interesting...Ah, you dance before my eyes when I'm in rage. You descend to my nose, and then lift again as I blink my eyes. You, the lights, that dance before my eyes when I need you. (*To ALICIA.*) Who are you?

ALICIA. Alicia. Who are you?

ARMADILLA. Did the spots go?

ALICIA. I think they did.

ARMADILLA. So you saw them, too. I thought I was the only one who saw them. People who are very depressed see those spots.

ALICIA. I'm not depressed.

ARMADILLA. People who are confused, see those spots.

ALICIA. I'm not confused.

ARMADILLA. Yes, you are. (*A light shines on ARMADILLA's face. She closes her eyes and faces it.*)

VOICE (*off*). You'll burn your face!

ARMADILLA. I don't care. You smell something?

ALICIA. No.

ARMADILLA. I do.

ALICIA. What is it?

ARMADILLA. The faint odor of mascara. It's the Elvira gang. Go home!

*(Suddenly, a gang of ELVIRAS surround ARMADILLA. [Their faces are painted like Elvira, the Empress of the Night on TV, and their bodies are of gang-bangers.] They surround ALICIA.)*

ELVIRA #1. Hey, check out the coconut!

ELVIRA #2. She's a wetback!

ELVIRA #3. She's a *gringa!*

ELVIRA #4. She's a Mexican-American!

ELVIRA #2. No. We say *Latina!*

ELVIRA #3. She's a Chicana!!

ELVIRA #4. She's a *pocha*.\*

ELVIRA #1. She's a *pocha*.

ALL ELVIRAS. She's a *pocha*. She's a *pocha*. She's a *pocha*.

ALICIA. What do you want from me?

ELVIRA #1. Are you going around calling yourself a Hispanic?

ELVIRA #2. We don't like that word.

ELVIRA #3. We don't like *Chicana* either.

ELVIRA #4. That term is over.

ALICIA. I don't say anything.

ELVIRA #1. She doesn't say anything. Hear that? Nothing.

ELVIRA #4. Then what are you doing in our part of town?

ALICIA. I'm looking for someone.

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\* *po-sha*=neither Mexican nor American

ELVIRA #2. Are you looking for me?

ELVIRA #3. Are you looking for me?

ELVIRA #1. No. She's looking for me. Am I right? Am I RIGHT? (*ELVIRA #1 takes a chicken claw out of her pocket. The rest follow suit. They surround ALICIA.*)

ELVIRA #2. Elvee one.

ELVIRA #1. What?

ELVIRA #2. You're stepping on my foot

ELVIRA #1. That's Elvira three.

ELVIRA #3. My feet are over here.

ELVIRA #4. Wait a minute. I thought I was Elvira three.

ELVIRA #1. No, you're Elvira four.

ELVIRA #2. Who cares which number you are. We're a gang and that's all that matters.

ELVIRA #1. Hey, it matters to me. I'm in charge.

ELVIRA #2. Oh, yeah?

ELVIRA #1. Yeah.

ELVIRA #2. Oh, yeah?

ELVIRA #1. Yeah.

*(During the argument ROSA has placed four marionette puppets nearby: A ballerina, a borracho (drunk), a novia (bride) and a musico tocando la trumpeta (trumpet player). ALICIA manages to get away from the ELVIRA gang and sees the puppets on the floor. She grabs one of them by the strings and spins it above her head causing a strange musical sound.)*

ELVIRA #2. That sound is making my mascara run!

ELVIRA #3. Mine, too! (*ALICIA finishes one more swing of the puppet over her head and throws it at the ELVIRAS. They exit screaming, leaving a trail of mascara.*)