

WE AREN'T ALIENS

A short drama by
Rex McGregor

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

TERESA, lively girl.

MIGUEL, cheerful boy.

SOFÍA, sensitive younger girl.

RAÚL, angry boy.

ROSA, confident older girl.

CARLOS, sedated boy.

All characters are Latinx and may be played as any gender.
Names and pronouns may be changed accordingly.

SETTING

The present. A shelter for unaccompanied alien children, Texas.

(TERESA and MIGUEL are drawing pictures on a wall with white chalk. Teresa is drawing a huge spewing monster. Miguel is drawing a shark with vicious teeth. SOFÍA is sitting on the floor with her head down. RAÚL is pacing and sulking.)

TERESA: My monster will swallow your shark in one gulp.

MIGUEL: My shark will attack from inside. And bite its way out.

(ROSA enters, carrying a box of colored chalk.)

ROSA: Different colors!

TERESA: Whoa!

MIGUEL: How did you swing that?

ROSA: I asked politely.

TERESA: I'll take red, orange, yellow, green and blue.

MIGUEL: So your monster's skin will look like a rainbow?

TERESA: No. So its vomit will look real.

ROSA: And for you, Miguel?

MIGUEL: Red and green.

ROSA: Here you go.

MIGUEL: Now I can put stripes on my shark.

TERESA: Sharks don't have stripes.

MIGUEL: This is a tiger shark.

TERESA: Tiger sharks don't have red and green stripes.

MIGUEL: Mine does.

ROSA: Sofía. Look at all the pretty colors.

SOFÍA: Quiero ir a casa. (KYEE-ro eer a KAsa.) (I want to go home.)

ROSA: No, you don't.

TERESA: Do they let you draw on the walls at home?

ROSA: Or feed you three full meals a day?

MIGUEL: Plus snacks.

SOFÍA: Mamá y papá están en casa. (Ma-MA ee pa-PA ess-TAN en KAsa.) (Mom and Dad are at home.)

ROSA: Your parents want a better life for you. Here.

SOFÍA: ¿Estamos in Texas? (Ess-TA-mos en TEH-has?) (Are we in Texas?)

ROSA: Yes. We're in America now. So stop speaking Spanish.

MIGUEL: Tía Elena lives in Los Angeles. She always speaks Spanish.

ROSA: And you can too. Once you get there.

RAÚL: If you ever do.

TERESA: We're not really in America yet.

MIGUEL: We crossed the border.

TERESA: But they aren't letting us go any farther, are they?

ROSA: They will. If we behave ourselves.

RAÚL: Ha!

ROSA: What's so funny?

RAÚL: You, Rosa.

ROSA: I got the chalk. By being nice.

RAÚL: Try sweet-talking the guards to let us out.

ROSA: They aren't guards. They're like guardians. Here to look after us.

MIGUEL: And keep us safe.

RAÚL: In our cage.

ROSA: Raúl! Don't say that word. You know it hurts their feelings.

RAÚL: They call us "aliens."

ROSA: Not to our faces.

RAÚL: They wouldn't dare.

SOFÍA: I'm not an alien.

(Sofía starts to sniffle. Teresa puts her arm around her.)

TERESA: Hey, don't cry.

ROSA: Teresa! You know the rules. No hugging.

TERESA: I'm her cousin.

ROSA: Doesn't matter. We're not allowed to touch each other.

MIGUEL: For our own protection.

TERESA: This is crazy!

ROSA: Do you want to leave this place or not?

TERESA: Course I do.

ROSA: Then obey the rules.

TERESA: Sorry, Sofía.

(Teresa gently stops Sofía from clinging to her and moves away.)

MIGUEL: When I get to L.A., I bet Tía Elena smothers me with kisses.

TERESA: Does she wear lipstick?

MIGUEL: Only on special occasions.

ROSA: Like your arrival.

TERESA: You'll spend all your time wiping your face.

(CARLOS enters, carrying a suitcase. He is under the influence of calming medication.)

CARLOS: Hey, guys.

ROSA: Carlos!

RAÚL: Yo, dude.

MIGUEL: We were starting to think we'd never see you again.

CARLOS: You probably won't. I've just popped in to say goodbye.

RAÚL: Are they letting you out?

CARLOS: I'm being transferred. To a facility in Arizona. Where I can receive individual care.

TERESA: You sound weird.

RAÚL: What have they done to you?

CARLOS: I was traumatized.

RAÚL: Those bastards!

CARLOS: No, no. They helped me. Put me on meds. I'm way calmer now.

RAÚL: Man!

CARLOS: Stay back! Physical contact. I better go now.

ROSA: Take care.

CARLOS: Thanks, Rosa. You guys watch yourselves. Or they'll pick you off one by one.

TERESA: What?

CARLOS: That camera. They're observing you all the time. That's how they got me.

RAÚL: I'll smash that thing!

ROSA: Don't be stupid, Raúl!

CARLOS: Do you want to end up like this?

(Pause.)

MIGUEL: Arizona might be nice.

(Offstage, a car horn blares out.)

CARLOS: I have to go. I need special treatment.

(Carlos exits quickly.)

TERESA: Poor guy.

RAÚL: They drugged him out of his mind!

ROSA: He had enough sense to warn us.

TERESA: To be careful.

ROSA: They're on the lookout for signs. Of any of us being – like – disturbed.

RAÚL: Let's block the camera.

TERESA: With what?

MIGUEL: Chalk!

ROSA: Use your heads! If we ruin the surveillance, they'll think we're desperate.

MIGUEL: Drat.

ROSA: Stop staring at it! You look suspicious.

RAÚL: Might not even be safe to talk.

ROSA: CCTV doesn't have sound.

TERESA: Yeah, Raúl. Didn't they teach you anything in Guatemala?

RAÚL: We learned everything in México is el cheapo.

TERESA: Hey!

RAÚL: This is the U.S. government. They can afford sound.

MIGUEL: There's no microphone.

RAÚL: You looked up again, Miguel.

MIGUEL: No, I didn't. I was just rolling my eyes.

RAÚL: Sure, sure.

TERESA: Raúl. You should have stayed south of *our* border.

RAÚL: Teresa. I passed through your country as fast as I could. Holding my breath the whole way.

MIGUEL: Our football team beats yours.

ROSA: Stop arguing! We're all Latinos.

SOFÍA: We're all Americans now.

ROSA: That's right, Sofía. You've stopped sniveling. Good girl.

SOFÍA: They put Carlos on drugs. I'm not allowed to do drugs.

MIGUEL: Me neither.

SOFÍA: Mamá said, "Watch out for two bad things: drugs – and traffic."

MIGUEL: There's lots of cars in L.A.

ROSA: I think her mother meant "traffickers."

SOFÍA: What are they?

ROSA: Bad people. Who hurt children.

RAÚL: Did you see on the news? Those kids getting dragged and pushed?

TERESA: That wasn't traffickers. That was staff. In a "facility."

ROSA: In a totally different state.

RAÚL: Arizona. Arizona!

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