

Arroz Con Mango

For New Theatre's
Miami Stories 2006

A Comedy,
Honoring Lili Estefan

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We meet LILI, pacing back and forth, chatting on her cell phone.

LILI

(Into phone)

Hi, Alex? Alex! Hi! It's Lili. How are you? Great! Listen, remember my album? My wedding album? The wedding pictures you did for me? Of course I loved them - they were beautiful! Yeah, I know it's been a while, you did a wonderful job - it isn't that. No, you know how people can take, you know, forever to pick up their wedding pictures? You know, after the wedding, things get complicated - and you know me...things come up and you forget to pick up the pictures? *Tu me entiendes?* Well, *that's me!* I know. I know it's been a while. Ok, a long while. Ok, Alex, yes, it's been 13 years. But better late than never, right? You know me - my life's just crazy. I know this takes the cake, but - ha! The cake!

(seriously)

I know. Sorry.

Lili looks over the AUDIENCE and holds a finger out to indicate "just a moment."

LILI (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Listen, I'll pick them up this week - I promise! Gotta run. Ciao!

LILI (CONT'D)

(addressing the audience)

Don't laugh, but it's true. Yes, I'm finally picking up my wedding pictures after 13 years. Is that a record? But there's a good reason. There always is, right? *Ay, por favor*, most weddings are crazy anyway, but mine was a real *arroz con mango, tu me entiendes?* Not only did Don Francisco invite the **Sabado Gigante** audience to my wedding, he told everyone to bring their studio tickets for a hot dog and a Coke. Can you imagine?

(MORE)

LILI (CONT'D)

No, of course we weren't serving hot dogs and Coke! So people came with their tickets looking for their hot dogs and Cokes while Lorenzo and I tried to stay in character at the altar. And Lorenzo is very private - he hates this -

(Waves her hands in the air)

- showbiz thing. Don Francisco even tried to get him to propose to me on the show. Anyway, so you know how after the ceremony, everyone starts leaving to the reception and they start taking your pictures? *Tu me entiendes*, you know, when you go back after everyone's gone and do the wedding all over again? They start taking pictures of you with your whole family and then everyone starts disappearing so it's finally just you and your husband? Here...let me show you...

Lili WALKS TO CENTER STAGE and pretends to stand at an invisible altar, adjusting her invisible wedding dress, looking regal and divine.

LILI (CONT'D)

(to audience)

Ok - here I am. See my dress? Isn't it beautiful? I love it! You like it? It was made by - oh, sorry. Anyway, where's Lorenzo? Lorenzo, *donde estás*?

LORENZO walks up and takes his place by Lili.

LILI (CONT'D)

(to Lorenzo)

Well, you don't really look like Lorenzo, but I guess you'll do.

LORENZO

I can't believe all the people that came. Isn't that Omar?

LILI

Oh, yeah, that's Omar. He just came by to give his respects.

LORENZO

It's our wedding, not a funeral!
If he's here to talk business, we
have a problem.

LILI

He's here for the wedding, Lorenzo.

LORENZO

Look - the photographer's ready.
Big smile!

(Looks over at Lili, who's
now wearing a BIG SMILE)

Uh, not so big.

LILI

I can't believe you just said that.
You know how I feel about my smile.

LORENZO

Well, he just - he doesn't look
like he's using the wide angle
lens, ok?

LILI

Ten cuidado or we'll go from the
church to the courthouse right to
the divorce, *tu me entiendes?* And
you know what else is bothering me?
Why were there so many people in
jeans and T-shirts?

LORENZO

What do you mean?

LILI

Jeans and T-shirts. Didn't you see
all those people? They looked like
they just came from working in
their yard. What's wrong with
those people?

LORENZO

I don't know. They're your fans.

LILI

But at a wedding?! Don't they know
how to dress?

LORENZO

(Trying to distract her)

Don't worry about it.

(MORE)

LORENZO (CONT'D)

Look, Alex is waiting to take the picture. Give him half-a-smile.

She SLAPS Lorenzo playfully on the arm.

LORENZO (CONT'D)

Omar's coming over. I'm telling you, he better not -

OMAR walks up.

OMAR

(To Lorenzo)

I'm sorry Lorenzo, I'm sooo sorry, congratulations...

He gives Lorenzo a BUSINESS CARD as he turns to Lili.

OMAR (CONT'D)

Lili, remember when we came to you a year ago with that opportunity to do the morning show?

LILI

Omar, cut it out! What are you doing?

OMAR

The radio show, the morning show.

LILI

No, I'm not doing *La Piyama*. That guy you wanted me to work with, I went to the studio and he was wearing *piyamas*. It's a radio show and he's in *piyamas*! Who's gonna see him? That doesn't go with me.

OMAR

No, no, we tried that, but it didn't work. We want to do it your way. Your morning show the way you want to do it. We'll do whatever you want.

Lili is getting intrigued and sucked into the conversation.

LILI

Omar, the last time, I wasn't happy with the offer.

OMAR
We'll pay you whatever you want!

LILI
I need a great offer...

OMAR
Ok!

LILI
...and I want control of the
show...

Omar NODS throughout the rapid-fire exchange.

OMAR
Ok!

LILI
...and I want like a nice name, *tu*
me entiendes? No *piyamas*.

OMAR
No pajamas. And you can say yes,
and then we do the contract,
because we need to do the
promotional campaign now.

LILI
But you're going to do a
promotional campaign without a
contract?

OMAR
Yes!

LILI
Then the contract has gotta say
what I want!

OMAR
Yes!

LILI
And then you gotta pay me what I
want!

OMAR
Yes!

LILI
This is really weird!

LORENZO

You better believe it.

LILI

Omar, you guys are gonna do the promotional campaign, and then you're not gonna pay me what I want.

OMAR

Yes, yes! No, I mean, no! Of course we're going to pay you what you want.

LILI

This is too weird. You guys are crazy! I can't give you a picture and do a promotional campaign with my face without a contract! What if I don't sign the contract? What if we don't agree on a bunch of things?

LORENZO

Come on you guys - Lili, this is our wedding! Can we talk about this later? We'll talk about it when we get back.

OMAR

How long are you going on your honeymoon?

LILI AND LORENZO

(in unison)

What?!

LILI

Omar, whatever time we want! *Es mi luna de miel! Vamos a Atenas* - we're going to Athens and we'll be back in three weeks, ok? Do we have your permission?

OMAR

(clapping his hands with emphasis)

No, no, no. It's gotta be this week. I need to go by your house and get a picture off your wall.

LILI

Omar!

OMAR

I'm sorry, but we're starting the campaign! We need to do the poster!

LORENZO

I can't believe this! Are you serious?

OMAR

Yes I'm for serious, but we need to know by Thursday, or now -

(To Lorenzo)

I'm so sorry Lorenzo, I really, really apologize, I know this is a bad time, but -

LORENZO

You think?

OMAR

(To Lili, trying to sound logical)

- but if you say yes now, we don't need to talk Thursday. But I need to get the picture.

LILI

And it will be my own show?

LORENZO

Omar -

OMAR

Your own show. If you can do four hours on the radio, you can do anything, *flaca*!

LORENZO

Fine! Here, why don't you take a picture with us?

(Grabs Omar by the shoulders)

Now you're part of the family.

OMAR

(to Lili)

So, yes? Say yes!

LORENZO
 (resigned, unsmiling,
 looking straight ahead)
 Say cheese!

Lili smiles a BIG SMILE.

OMAR
 Now that's a smile, and a yes!
 (Breaks free of Lorenzo's
 grip)
 Ok, I'm going to your house now and
 get the picture. Congratulations!

Omar EXITS.

LILI
 (to Lorenzo)
 Ay, baby, don't you see? My own
 show! Radio is it!

Lili TURNS to the AUDIENCE.

LILI (CONT'D)
 (to audience)
 By doing the radio show, I could
 finally, finally let go of *el*
aceite Mazola! *Tu me entiendes?*
 Holding a bottle of cooking oil on
Sabado Gigante was not my idea of a
 career.

While Lily continues addressing the audience, THE HOUSE LIGHTS DIM and Lorenzo takes a SEAT by a NIGHT TABLE WITH A LAMP. He picks up the PHONE on the table and listens gravely to whomever is on the line. He nods occasionally and rubs his temple with his free hand at one point.

LILI (CONT'D)
 (pause, still addressing
 the audience)
 But...first things first. Our
 wedding night. We stayed at the
 Mayfair, and we thought, well,
 after the crazy wedding, now we can
 relax...a nice room, a jacuzzi,
beautiful. But how can I say
 this...you remember all those
 people that showed up to our
 wedding in shorts and T-shirts?
 Well, here we go. Before we could
 enjoy our wedding night -
 (MORE)

LILI (CONT'D)

(to Lorenzo)
Lorenzo, who are you talking to?

LORENZO
(looks up)
Mom.

LILI
Your mom? *Coño*, can they let us,
you know...

LORENZO
(motioning for Lili to be
quiet, speaking into the
phone)
Yeah. What? I can't believe this.
(concerned)
You're at the store? The people
are in lines? You have your gun?!
When is it coming? Today!? Why
didn't anyone tell us? Ok, ok. *No*
te preocupes. Don't worry. We -
yes, we're going to pack right now
and leave to the airport. Right
now, yes. We'll catch an early
flight.

Lorenzo HANGS UP and turns to Lily.

LORENZO (CONT'D)
(dumbfounded)
A hurricane! A hurricane is
coming! Today. I mean, tomorrow
morning, but we'll start getting it
tonight.

LILI
What do you mean a hurricane? It's
our honeymoon!

LORENZO
Everyone's evacuating. They're
calling it Andrew, Hurricane
Andrew. Lili, we had the wedding,
then we came here and we haven't
even turned on the TV. *Ya estan*
diciendo que we need to "hunker
down," it's coming.

LILI
But why didn't anybody tell us?

LORENZO

(shrugs)

We were busy with the wedding.
They didn't want to bother us.

LILI

That's why we saw people in shorts!

LORENZO

I've gotta start packing. I can't
believe this!

Lorenzo begins to WALK AWAY. Lili TURNS TO ADDRESS THE
AUDIENCE.

LILI

(to the Audience)

So we pack and run to the airport,
which is closing.

(to Lorenzo)

Wait. Lorenzo, come here, tell
them what happened next.

Lorenzo stops in his tracks and TURNS TO THE AUDIENCE.

LORENZO

(to audience, matter-of-
factly)

Yeah, they were only letting out
international flights. But of
course, since we're going Miami-New
York, New York-Athens, as far as
they were concerned, we were a
national flight out of Miami. We
couldn't get on a plane! So -

LILI

(to audience)

Can you believe it? So after going
through all that traffic to get to
the airport, we had to go back to
our new house - which of course we
had not prepared for the hurricane
we didn't know was coming - and we
say...

(to Lorenzo)

...what did we say?

LORENZO

(to audience)

"Let's do something fun -"

LILI

Ay, *si*, "let's do something fun and open all the presents! If they're gonna blow away, at least we'll know what they are!" *Tu me entiendes?*

(to Lorenzo)

Lorenzo, *por favor*, we need to get going!

Lorenzo HURRIES OFFSTAGE.

LILI (CONT'D)

(to audience)

So that's what we did the day of Hurricane Andrew - the day after our wedding, and the day after I got the job to do ***Alegre Despertar***. Can you believe it? It's true! But that's not all...since we couldn't stay at our house, the thing was to go to Abuela's house and stay with her. So I'm back in the same bedroom - the same bedroom - where I grew up, but with a husband! And I'm telling Lorenzo, "*Oye me, mire a mi esto*, can you believe this? Now that we signed the paper, you're allowed in this room that you couldn't be in for three years!" I'm not kidding, God forbid, if it was raining and midnight, "Granma, it's very late, can he stay here?" "*No-no-no, he goes home! We have no extra rooms, he has his own apartment, he's a grown-up man, he can handle it! Not until you're married!*"

(pause)

"Ok, Granma..." Well...I don't think that night was what she had in mind. But you know what? For the first time...for the first time...I looked at Granma and realized. Just where I got my smile...