

ANA / PANCHACHA

ACT I

Real Women Have Curves

39

ESPERANZA (V.O.). How long has he been abusive?

CALLER (V.O.). Ah ... Well, he wasn't like this when we got married ... He was always sweet. So I don't know what has happened to him. He tells me if I did whatever he asked he wouldn't have to hit me. But I do what he says and it's still not good enough. Last time he hit me because ...

PANCHACHA (switches the dial on the radio). Isn't there anything else?

Reader CARMEN. Pobre mujer, I'm lucky mi viejo doesn't hit me.

Start ANA. Lucky? Why lucky? It should be expected that he doesn't. That woman should leave her husband. Women have the right to say "no."

PANCHACHA. You think it's that easy?

ANA. No, she's probably dependent on him financially, or the church tells her to endure, or she's doing it for the children.

PANCHACHA. You're so young. Did it ever occur to you that maybe she loves him?

ANA. I'm sure she does. But we can't allow ourselves to be abused anymore. We have to assert ourselves. We have to realize that we have rights! We have the right to control our bodies. The right to exercise our sexuality. And the right to take control of our destiny. But it all begins when we start saying ... (ANA quickly climbs on top of a sewing machine to continue preaching.) ... ¡Ya basta! No more! We should learn how to say no! Come on, *Amá*, say it! Say it!

CARMEN. What?

ANA. Say it! "No!"

CARMEN. OK, I won't.

ANA. *Amá*, say "No!"

CARMEN (as in she won't). No.

ANA. Good! Rosalí, say it.

ROSALI (*casually*). ¿Pues por que no? No.

ANA. Pancha, say it. No!

(*PANCHA stares at ANA, she won't say it.*)

~~ESTELA. Ya, ya, Norma Rae, get off and get back to work!~~

PANCHA. Why don't you run for office? Tan pequeña ^(so young) and she thinks and acts like she knows everything.

ANA. I don't know everything, but I know a lot. I read a lot. But it just amazes me to hear you talk the way you do. A women's liberation movement happened so long ago, and you act like it hasn't even happened.

PANCHA. Mira, all those gringas shouting about liberation hasn't done a thing for me ... And if you were married you would realize it. Bueno, and if you know so much how come you're not in college?

ANA. Because I don't have the money. I have to wait a year to be eligible for financial aid.

PANCHA. I always thought that if you were smart enough a college would give you a scholarship. Maybe you should read some more and get one so you don't have to be here making 267 dollars a week and hearing us talk the way we do. (*A car honking is heard outside.*)

CARMEN. Ya llegó mi viejo. Ana, get ready. ¡Vámonos!

ANA. No, Amá, you go. I'll take the bus ... I want to finish this last pile.

CARMEN. You do? Ah, I know why you want to stay, metiche. Bueno. Adiós.

WOMEN. Adiós.

(*CARMEN leaves. PANCHA collects her belongings. A car honking is heard outside.*)

END

ESTELA. We're going to have to. (*PANCHA grabs the skirt and begins to take them apart. ESTELA is looking at another lot and discovers the stained dresses that CARMEN hid.*) ¡Amá! What did I tell you about the mole?! (*ESTELA shoves a dress in CARMEN's face.*)

CARMEN. The stains are not so obvious. I was going to clean them, I swear. I didn't want you to see them and get worried.

ESTELA. It's going to be hell trying to take the stains out! (*ESTELA catches ANA accidentally burning the tulle.*) Not so close! You're burning the tulle! Pay close attention to your work or don't do it. Have you been burning it on the other dresses too?! (*ESTELA quickly looks at the dresses on the racks and those that ANA has finished ironing.*)

ANA. I thought if I did it this way it would be OK and save us time. I can't stand the heat and the steam.

Start: ESTELA. Can't any of you do anything right? Do I have to do everything myself so that these dresses get finished? (*PANCHA gets busy pulling on the two pieces of material on the skirt instead of cutting the sewn thread one stitch at a time.*) Pancha, don't pull on them or you'll tear them. I said I was going to help you do the repairs.

PANCHA. I want to get out of here and go home.

ESTELA. You have to finish this work.

PANCHA. Not in this heat! ↘

Pancha:
[REDACTED] Estela, please open the door!

ESTELA. For the last time, I won't!

PANCHA. Then I'll open it. (*PANCHA walks determinedly towards the door. ESTELA stands in her way.*) We're all burning in here. I'm getting dizzy.

ESTELA. I'm sorry it's so hot, but the van may be out there and I don't want them to see anything.

PANCHA. It's so selfish of you to keep the door closed when we are all burning!

ESTELA. I'm burning too!

PANCHA. But you're the one with the criminal record! It's not fair that we are all paying for your fault. We are all legal now!

ESTELA. Then go! Open the door, then leave.

PANCHA. All right! I'll leave, but with my work. *(PANCHA grabs the skirts, begins pulling on them, tearing the material.)* Let's see what else I've done.

(PANCHA continues tearing. ESTELA tries to stop her by holding PANCHA's hands. PANCHA and ESTELA begin to get physical, almost ready to strike each other. ROSALI quickly steps between them to prevent them from hitting each other.)

END
(option to stage exit or conflict w/o over doing the grabbing of other actors Be careful!)

CARMEN. Estela, ¡párale!

ROSALI. ¡Basta! ¡No se peleén!

(ROSALI faints and falls to the floor. ESTELA and PANCHA stop fighting.)

CARMEN. Rosalí!

ANA. Rosalí, are you all right?

CARMEN. What could be wrong with her?

PANCHA. It's this pinche heat! It's your fault, Estela. Here you have us all locked up! See what happened?!

ESTELA *(shakes ROSALI, who does not respond)*. Rosalí, please wake up!

PANCHA. Let's take her to the hospital!

CARMEN. ¡¿Pero que locura?! The hospital is three blocks away. We can't carry her, la migra is going to see us.