

**VANESSA AND RICARDO**  
A STREET THEATRE PERFORMANCE PIECE  
(Translated from Spanish)

(The scene begins with **Actor Three** singing a merengue while two teenagers, **Ricardo** and **Vanessa** dance. Ricardo whispers in Vanessa's ear and as he starts to move in close to her, she pulls away.)

RICARDO

What's going on? I thought you wanted to. Do you love me or not?

VANESSA

Of course I do.

RICARDO

So relax.

VANESSA

But, it doesn't feel right. What if something happens?

RICARDO

Like what?

VANESSA

I'm too young to be a mother. And Ricardo, you know there are diseases ...

RICARDO

Nothing is going to happen because I know what to do.

VANESSA

But, I want to wait. I'm not ready.

RICARDO

You act like a *viejita*. You're so old-fashioned. Everybody does it. That's the way they think *ayá*. But, now we're in this country. You have to try it or you'll be the last virgin on campus.

VANESSA

Shuttup.

RICARDO

You're sixteen and you're gonna end up without friends.

(**Actor Three**, playing multiple roles, shadows Vanessa and Ricardo during the scene as characters who reveal their thoughts. Vanessa and Ricardo remain frozen during these moments.)

VANESSA'S MOTHER

The best way to protect yourself is by not having sex, *cariño*.

VANESSA

My parents would get upset.

RICARDO

Your parents? *Que loca!*

VANESSA

Why are you in such a hurry?

RICARDO'S FATHER

No girlfriend, *hijo?* *Eres pato?* It's time. *Muevete!*

RICARDO

*Yo soy el macho.* That's how men are. We have needs.

VANESSA'S FRIEND

*Niña*, get over it . You have to live *la vida loca*. Wear short skirts. *Mira*, he's *chulito!*

VANESSA'S MOTHER

*M'ija*, I love you. Think clearly and protect yourself.

RICARDO'S FATHER

Look, *m'ijo*, don't dissappoint your mother. She wants a grandson, *hombre!*

VANESSA'S FRIEND

Forget about condoms. Those are for babies.

RICARDO'S FATHER

Be a man!

RICARDO

(Exploding out of a freeze.) I have needs. That's how men are.

VANESSA

Who are you, Mighty Macho?

RICARDO

What do you mean?

VANESSA

It sounds like a line from a movie.

RICARDO

Vanessa, don't you trust me? Don't you think I can make the right decision?

VANESSA

It's because I trust you that I'm talking about this. And that I want you to do the right thing. To take care of us.

RICARDO

Baby, what can I say? You know I love you.

VANESSA

I know, *miamor*.

RICARDO

Why do you have to get so complicated? We're supposed to enjoy life. We're young, we're healthy. Those are things *viejitos* worry about.

VANESSA

It's not me that's complicated, Ricardo. Life is complicated. With so many rumors, warnings, and threats, even without doing anything we're at risk. If we want to grow old, we have to learn to take care of ourselves. And you know I want you to take care of us.

RICARDO

( Puffing up) That's right. That's the way it should be.

VANESSA

Ricardo ...

RICARDO

I know. Mighty Macho. OK, I'll think about it.

VANESSA

Good. Thank you.

(She takes his hand as the merengue starts again. Ricardo and Vanessa dance offstage.)

THE END