

- 1) Love Spell**
- 2) The Work**
- 3) The Challenge**
- 4) Inconsolable**
- 5) Santa Rosa**
- 6) Gambling Debts**
- 7) Debts of Honor**
- 8) Farewell**
- 9) Candlewick**
- 10) Residents**

1) Love Spell

Pedro sings a serenade to his girlfriend Consuelo, who is listening to him from the balcony.

Pedro

I see you have your light on,
come and look out from the balcony.
If you hear me from your bedroom,
I've come to make you an ugly confession.

I have lied to you, my darling, forgive me.
I haven't been sincere.
I have deceived you, my love, forgive me.
I don't want to hide the truth anymore.

I'm the prince of the fable,
turned into a chubby toad,
who, for all his roguish trickery,
has been mercilessly cursed.

Please free me already from this tragic fate,
and banish this horrible spell.
I beg you for the magic antidote,
come and give me a kiss of true love.

Consuelo comes down from the balcony looking for Pedro to kiss him. Jorge and Dolores discover the couple and confront them.

Jorge:

(to Pedro)

For how long have you been
wooing my daughter?

(to Consuelo)

You know well that you need
our permission.

We must approve of
whomever you choose.

Dolores:

It isn't wise to court a woman
without an agreement.

Pedro:

I apologize and ask for your
blessing.

I will seek a bracero contract
right away,

and hoping to be a worthy
son-in-law, I'll come back
once I've saved enough
money.

Jorge:

If you plan to participate in
that program, well, you better
forget Consuelo!

Consuelo:

Why do you say that, if you
were a young bracero too?

Jorge:

Precisely for that reason, it's
not an easy life!

Dolores:

There's no reason for anger,
nor for scolding; I trust he's a
fine gentleman.

Why don't you tell us your
experiences, from the time
when you worked as a
bracero?

2) The Task

Jorge

El Trocadero, in Chihuahua,
was the processing center
where people got hired
into the bracero program.

Mexican officials
reviewed documents,
tightened regulations,
robbing their countrymen.

If a paper was missing,
one could offer, discretely,
a bill to the manager
in charge of the file.

On the train 'cross the border,
they unloaded the coal,
they threw us onto wagons,
and we arrived smoked and sooty.

A humiliating welcome:
they dragged us like beasts,
naked, and sprayed us
with powdered pesticide.

X-rays, two shots,
they drew so much blood
that eventually those
who were fasting fainted!

Jorge

On the farm in Pecos, Texas:
muggy barracks,
sparse food,
and they ignored our complaints.

Dolores

But the workers
received from their employers
an insurance that covered
major medical expenses.

Jorge with Mariachi

They paid us two-fifty
per hundred pounds of cotton,
but only the real champions
exceeded five hundred.

Jorge

When picking at dawn,
the cotton was covered in dew,
so, the sacks of crops
were heavier.

Dolores

That, and other tricks,
Jorge frequently used
to win the competitions
between nearby farms.

Jorge with Mariachi

I played cards and earned a lot,
and using some tricks
—with much discretion—
the cents piled up.

Dolores with Mariachi

Until the day he got caught
and was accused of cheating.
He started a fight,
and for his con, he got deported.

3) The Challenge

Pedro: I'll go and work for the program anyway.

Dolores: Don't forget that it is also my future.

Jorge: If you're hired, say goodbye to this lady.

Consuelo: It's our life and we'll decide what to do!

Pedro: So, Jorge is unbeatable in farm work?

Consuelo: Picking cotton is his talent.

Pedro: And he's also a hopeless gambler?

Consuelo: Obsessive betting is his weakness.

Pedro: Five hundred pounds of picked cotton?

Jorge: What you see is what you get!

Pedro: I can go above and beyond it!

Jorge: You won't manage a fraction of what I could do!

Pedro: I have more notches on my belt!

Jorge: That's easier said than done!

Pedro: Let's see what you're made of!

Jorge: Proud fools die by their words!

Jorge: Starting?

Pedro: At dawn.

Jorge: Ending?

Pedro: At sunset.

Jorge: And if you beat me?

Pedro: I'll be your son-in-law.

Jorge: And if I beat you?

Pedro: I'll never return.

Jorge: Don't tempt me!

Pedro: Do we have a deal?

Jorge: We have a deal!

Consuelo: I can't believe the deal you two have made!

(To Pedro) To bet on our wedding is to challenge our love!

(To Jorge) And gambling debts are debts of honor!

Pedro says goodbye to leave as a bracero, but Consuelo angrily rejects him.

4) Inconsolable

Consuelo

Twilight paints the clouds
with flashes of red and violet,
and the moonlight shines,
with shades of pearl and silver.

A void is growing in my chest,
dry wasteland, a vacant lot.
Nothing soothes my sorrows,
not sunsets, nor full moons.

A shadow arises in my bed,
Is it a specter? It's your ghost!
Nothing warms my bones,
like your verses, like your kisses.

*Dolores enters the stage and hears Consuelo longing for Pedro.
She has a letter in her hand."*

Dolores

This pain you're feeling,
it's not permanent, it will soon fade away.
Sooner or later it will lessen.
What does not kill you makes you stronger.

This letter arrived just now.
It comes from the north, without a return address.
No one has signed their name,
but we do know, the man who wrote it.

*Dolores hands the letter to Consuelo, who reads it
while Pedro sings its contents (Santa Rosa).*

5) Santa Rosa

Pedro with Mariachi

I am now in Santa Rosa.
There are apple trees, orange trees,
lemon trees and pear trees.
California is so beautiful!

From the plow to the watering,
from the fallow to the weighing,
from the harvest to the winnowing,
from the sowing to the racking.

The boss sizes us up
by changing us from job to job,
so that only the very best,
will eventually gain his trust.
I discovered that some oranges
disappeared from their boxes,
and, after marking the boxes with a knife,
I proved that someone stole them.

The orange crates
were never emptied again,
and the thief was
dismissed from the farm.

The employer, out of gratitude,
signed the application
to start the procedure
to gain my permanent residency.

Pedro

Some say it was the pressure
that social leaders
and regional laborers
imposed on employers.

Mariachi

Some say the new machinery
for field labors
was the main cause
that broke the agrarian alliance.

Pedro with Mariachi

The treaty got canceled.
No more farming contracts.
The braceros are finished.
Now here come the wetbacks.

I'll go back to my homeland
to marry my beloved.
The bet has been cast
and like men we must honor it!

6) Gambling Debt

Dolores

At the break of dawn,
as the dew thickens,
the time has come
for the crucial challenge.

Consuelo

To choose a winner,
the main condition
will be the weight of the sack,
when full of cotton.

Dolores

With his great experience,
Jorge soon leads.
Neither overwhelmed nor relaxed,
he harvests efficiently.

Consuelo

At the thought of failing,
Pedro feels the pressure,
his heart pounds,
driving him to win.

Dolores with Mariachi

For Jorge, it's a matter of pride and power.
If he doesn't win, the anger could kill him.
For Pedro, his beloved is at stake.
He could never forgive himself if he loses her

Consuelo, Dolores and Mariachi

Hurry up, Pedro, you can't lose,
as betting on your bride endangers your love.
If you beat Jorge, he will have to give in,
as gambling debts are debts of honor.

Dolores with Mariachi

But Jorge, he's doing it for pride and power.
If he doesn't win, the anger could kill him.
But Pedro's competing for the woman he
loves.
He could never forgive himself if he loses her

Dolores

The field is darkened at dusk,
the work of the rivals comes to a halt.
The winner of the challenge is decided
after weighing the cotton in their sacks.

Consuelo

Pedro's reaches almost five hundred,
and his package seems bulkier.
But the scale reveals a strange account:
Jorge is the champion by seventeen!

Consuelo, Dolores and Mariachi

For the father-in-law, it is already over,
but the son-in-law doesn't give in.
Sensing that he may have been deceived,
he makes an accusation.

Pedro

I find this weight suspicious;
my sack seems fuller.
This smells like a cheater's trick.
There must be a cat in the bag.

Jorge

Don't offend me with shameless lies.
This is typical of bad losers.
Once defeated in the game,
they turn out to be all talk.

Consuelo

Let us avoid shouting bravado.
There's no need to behave like children.

Dolores

We will weigh, for all eyes to see,
the actual contents of the sacks.

Consuelo, Dolores and Mariachi

Indeed, they found the rock,
that had changed the reading on the scale.
Out of shame, Jorge had to keep his mouth
shut, admit defeat, as well as the cheat.

7) Debts of Honor

Jorge: How do you plan to support her when you marry?
Pedro: Like I said, I'll work across the border.
Dolores: But how? The treaty has been canceled!
Consuelo: What's the difference? We'll cross the border illegally anyway.

Jorge: Don't even think of it - that wasn't our deal!
Consuelo: Again, with this? What a pain in the neck!
Dolores: Being a bracero isn't the same as being a wetback!
Pedro: My boss can help us with the papers.

Jorge: When you have the papers then.
Pedro: Don't even go there!
Jorge: We can cancel if you prefer.
Pedro: Don't be a wise guy!

Pedro: Then we'll marry without your blessing!
Jorge: Don't even think about it or I'll kill you!
Pedro: I'll take her away if I have to!
Jorge: I should kill you right now, then!

Pedro: Let's go!
Jorge: Get on your guard!
Pedro: Bring it on!
Jorge: You first!

Pedro: Draw your gun!
Jorge: Don't tempt me!
Pedro: Don't be a coward!
Jorge: Don't dare me!
Pedro: Aim for the chest!
Jorge: Get off my back!
Pedro: Don't chicken out!

Dolores: *(To Pedro and Jorge)* Enough with these threats!
(To Pedro) Challenging your father in law is a huge mistake!
(To Jorge) To break your word is to lose your honor!

8) Farewell

*Pedro and Consuelo run away to go as
undocumented immigrants*

Dolores

The chrysalis breaks through the cocoon,
raising its head to the sky.
Transformed, flutters proudly,
overcoming its fear during the flight.

(To Consuelo)

After discovering your departure,
Jorge fades away, losing his life.
The doctor says that his ailments
are incurable, they're terminal.

From his deathbed,
he calls your name, begs to see you.
He urges you to come and see him
to say goodbye, to forgive him.

*Consuelo hurries back, and Jorge sings to
her from his deathbed.*

9) The Candlewick

Jorge

When migrating, the flock of birds
flies north looking for a cornfield.
By the river, on the branch of the poplar tree,
a nuptial nest is blessed.

You eloped one wild night.
Madly, you bet on love and luck.
You turned around and dried your tears,
and swore never to come back.

The candlewick has burned down,
the gloom surrounds the home.
At the end, dying and frail,
my mistakes haunt me.

I am a fool, my child, forgive me.
Due to my pride, I refused to give in.
I am an ogre, princess, forgive me,
but I love you with all that I am.

Consuelo and Jorge embrace

10) Residents

Jorge and Consuelo

Almost all braceros
returned to their homes,
and only a few applied
for permanent residency.

Pedro and Dolores

Others became citizens;
they own farms or ranches,
they have plenty of
Mexican-American heirs.

Jorge, Consuelo and Mariachi

By cooperating as
partners and neighbors,
countries strengthen their destinies
and entwine their roots.

Tutti

In times to come
we will remember this story,
saluting the memory
of the program, and the braceros.