

# 1492 THE PLAY: THE CONQUEST THROUGH NATIVE EYES

ACT I - Columbus is Discovered

Scene I - The Court of Ferdinand and Isabella in Spain.

AT STAGE LEFT, FOUR RAPPERS STAND IN A LINE. THE SPOTLIGHT HITS THEM AT THE SAME TIME THAT A RAP BEAT BEGINS. THESE RAPPERS, ALONG WITH THE 'CHORUS' AT STAGE RIGHT, PROVIDE THE NARRATION THAT WILL TIE THE SCENES TOGETHER AND FILL IN THE HISTORY.

Rappers:                In nineteen hundred ninety two  
                              folks everywhere were fixing to  
                              celebrate the tale of discovery,  
                              how Columbus sailed the unknown sea.  
                              You read about it in your history book,  
                              and now we're going to take a closer look.

SPOTLIGHT SHIFTS TO STAGE RIGHT WHERE THE CHORUS, ALSO FOUR, SING IN MOURNFUL TONES TO THE TUNE OF "HEIGH, HO, NOBODY HOME".

Chorus:                Fourteen hundred ninety-two,  
                              a grievous year to be a Jew.  
                              Isabel and Ferdinand  
                              have forced them out of Spain's fair land.

A LIGHT APPEARS AT THE REAR OF THE STAGE, CENTER, WHICH SILHOUETTES THE OUTLINES OF THE KING AND QUEEN ON THEIR THRONES. WE CANNOT SEE THEIR FACES. THEY SIT IMMOBILE. SPOTLIGHT UPON A LONE JEW WHO STRUGGLES ACROSS THE STAGE, A LARGE PACK ON HIS BACK, STOOPED. HE SPEAKS TO THE AUDIENCE.

Jew:                    Oi vey! ¡Qué pena! What did I do?

THE VOICES OF THE MONARCHS ECHO FROM THE THRONES, BUT WE STILL DO NOT SEE THEIR FACES.

King and Queen:    You are a Jew!

Jew: STILL SPEAKS TO THE AUDIENCE, AS IF THE VOICE CAME FROM THEM

A member of a brilliant race!  
To have a brain is no disgrace.

King and Queen: (VOICES STILL ECHO, NO FACES YET)

Only Christians live here now.  
All before the cross shall bow!

SPOTLIGHT ON THE CHORUS, STAGE RIGHT.

Chorus: Muslims, Moors, and now the Jews  
are leaving Spain, but who shall lose?  
Queen Isabel? King Ferdinand?  
Or those who toil on Spain's rich land?

LIGHTS GO UP ON THE MONARCHS, STAGE CENTER, AND A SLOW RAP BEAT BEGINS. THEY RISE FROM THEIR THRONES AND COME SLOWLY TO STAGE CENTER. UPON ISABEL'S THRONE IS 'CASTILLA', AND UPON FERDINAND'S THRONE IS 'ARAGON'.

Isabel: My Lord, 'tis a brilliant thing we've done:  
Your kingdom and mine have joined as one!

Ferdinand: How strong and brave our armies fight!  
We put the Moors and Jews to flight.  
(PUFFS OUT HIS CHEST WITH PRIDE)  
Our cannons are a wondrous sight!

Isabel: They prove our military might.  
And our Spanish navy, mi amor!

Ferdinand: Technologically superior!

THEY DO A SHORT CONGRATULATORY DANCE TO THE RAP BEAT. PERHAPS SLAPPING EACH OTHER FIVE. THEY ARE DELIGHTED WITH THEMSELVES. ENTER A COURTIER TO THE SOUND OF TRUMPETS. THE MONARCHS RESUME THEIR REGAL AIRS AND RETURN TO THEIR THRONES.

Courtier: If it please your Royal Highnesses, one Christopher Columbus wishes to see you.

Ferdinand: Show him in, my good man!

COLUMBUS ENTERS WITH TWO SAILORS, HIS COMIC SIDEKICKS WHO ALWAYS REMAIN BEHIND OR TO THE SIDE OF COLUMBUS. ALL THREE BOW LOW BEFORE THE MONARCHS.

Columbus: My name is Cristobal Colón.  
I'm a captain and trader of some renown,  
with a skill at sailing the ocean seas.  
I can reckon my course from the northerly breeze

Sailors I & II: He can steer a ship's course with marvelous ease!

Isabel: (WHISPERS TO FERDINAND AND THEN TURNS TO COLUMBUS)

But tell us, señor, where do you call home?  
Do you sail for Spain?

Ferdinand: (WORRIED, STRAINS FORWARD)  
Or for an enemy throne?

Columbus: I'm glad you asked. Take a look at me.  
Would you say I'm Portuguese? Or from Italy?  
Well both are true! I'll serve the monarch who  
has the money to pay my voyage to

Sailors I & II: China! India! The mysterious East!  
Land of the Great Khan (now deceased).

ALL THREE LOWER THEIR HEADS AND PLACE THEIR HATS ACROSS THEIR CHESTS IN REVERENCE. THE MONARCHS EXCHANGE QUIZZICAL LOOKS. FERDINAND PICKS UP ON THE IDEA, HOWEVER.

Ferdinand:           The land of precious gold and spices?

COLUMBUS IMMEDIATELY SEES HIS OPPORTUNITY AND RUSHES UP TO THE THRONE.

Columbus:           Yes! A way to forestall your financial crisis!  
Your cannons surely cost a lot,  
Armies, Navies, and what-not,  
Ministers of foreign affairs,  
Nobles with their fancy airs...

Sailors I & II: Cristobal Colón in ninety-two!  
The sailor with chutzpah and derring-do!

MORE PRIVATE LOOKS BETWEEN THE MONARCHS, AND ISABEL RISES FROM HER THRONE AND APPROACHES COLUMBUS. SHE SPEAKS CONDESCENDINGLY.

Isabel:              By the way you speak, one would think you'd seen  
a land to the west. But I, your Queen,  
have it on high authority:  
there's nothing to the west but endless sea.

THE MONARCHS AGAIN CONGRATULATE EACH OTHER WITH GESTURES ON 'ONE-UPPING' COLUMBUS.

Columbus:           Most sovereign Lords, come look with me,  
at Marco Polo's diary.  
Right here it says, on page fifty-three:  
"The wealth of the Orient waits for thee!"

MONARCHS SHOW INTEREST, STRAIN FORWARD TO SEE THE DIARY.  
COLUMBUS AGAIN SEES HIS OPPORTUNITY.

Columbus:           And furthermore, wouldn't it be grand  
to Christianize the Great Khan's land?

SAILORS I & II PRODUCE A LARGE CROSS WHICH THEY GIVE TO COLUMBUS. HE HOLDS IT FORTH AND DROPS TO ONE KNEE.

Columbus:            In the name of the powers invested in me  
                              by your Holy Catholic Majesties,  
                              I'll bring to China the faith of the Cross!  
                              Millions of heathen souls now lost  
                              will fall to their knees...

Sailors I & II: And the Portuguese...

Columbus:            Will get there first if we don't act fast!

COLUMBUS AND THE TWO SAILORS LISTEN ANXIOUSLY FOR THE MONARCHS' REPLY, BUT ISABEL AND FERDINAND IGNORE THEM, STEP DOWN FROM THEIR THRONES AND APPROACH STAGE CENTER FOR A 'POWWOW'.

Ferdinand:    This sailor fellow Colón is mad!  
                              His map of the ocean is worse than bad.  
                              Whoever heard of reaching the East  
                              by sailing West? His mind's diseased!

Isabel:                Oh bother me not with mundane things.  
                              But think! What if the Portuguese kings...

Ferdinand:        Steal the gold and glory from Spain?

Isabel:                Yes! Nothing ventured, and there's nothing to gain.

ISABEL SINGS A SOLO TO THE TUNE OF 'AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL',  
JOINED BY FERDINAND ON THE CHORUS.

Isabel:                Oh beautiful and bounteous land  
                              across the western sea.  
                              Oh how I long to sing a song  
                              of your discovery!

Ferdinand and Isabel:    A mariner! A mariner  
  will conquer all for Spain.

Our nation's might, will make it right.  
Long may our glory reign!

Ferdinand:            Summon the royal money man!

MINISTER OF FINANCE APPEARS BALANCING A LARGE SACK OF COINS ON HIS HEAD. ON TOP OF THE SACK HE WEARS A CROWN MADE OF DOLLAR BILLS. WHEN HE BOWS BEFORE THE KING, THE SACK FALLS, KING CATCHES IT AND PASSES IT TO COLUMBUS, WHO PASSES IT TO SAILORS I & II.

Columbus:            Your Graces won't regret this day.  
I promise I'll return and pay  
my debt to you a thousandfold.  
Onward for Spain!

Isabel:                For Christ!

Whole cast: And for gold!

LIGHTS OUT. SPOTLIGHT ON RAPPERS AT STAGE LEFT.

Scene II - Guanahani --- The Island of Hispaniola

Rappers:             Now, Chris was one ambitious man.  
He was no fool, he had a plan  
To make himself rich for eternity  
as Admiral of the Ocean Sea.  
But far away, in Guanahani,  
living very peacefully,  
the native people are holding a dance.  
Let's listen to the sacred chants.

SPOTLIGHT ON THE TAINO VILLAGE OF GUANAHANI. THE TAINOS ARE HAVING AN AREITO (PERFORMING A CELEBRATORY DANCE), DANCING IN A CIRCLE TO SEVERAL DRUMS AND RAT-TLES. THE MOOD IS JOYOUS.

Taino maidens:      Caracaracolesin Taino,

Giver of life from whom we flow!  
Gifts of praise we gladly raise;  
to Yucahu all things we owe.

(SONG) Give thanks for the corn and yucca,  
give thanks for the wind and rain!  
Give thanks for the ocean creatures,  
give thanks for the crop of grain!  
Give thanks! Give thanks!  
for beast and bird and plants.  
Give thanks! Give thanks!  
for Yacahu we dance.

TAINOS CONTINUE CHANTING 'CARACARACOLE SIN TAINO', WHILE A YOUNG TAINO GIRL COMES RUNNING BREATHLESSLY INTO THE MIDST OF THE CELEBRATION. GUACANAGARI THE TAINO CACIQUE (CHIEF), RAISES HIS HAND TO SIGNAL THE DANCERS TO STOP. THE GIRL DROPS TO HER KNEES BEFORE HIM.

**Guacanagari:** What prompts you to interrupt our dance?

**Marien:** Great Chief! Have you seen them yet, by chance?  
The pale-skinned men with hairy faces,  
come over the sea from far-off places?

**Guacanagari:** What sort of creature is this you've seen?

**Marien:** And the dogs they have look terribly mean!  
They ride on deer as tall as a house,  
and cover their bodies in pants and a blouse!

THE TAINOS LAUGH AND GIGGLE AT THE THOUGHT OF CLOTHED BODIES.

**Guacanagari:** What? They cover themselves? In 90 degrees?

**Marien:** You've never seen such men as these!  
Their canoes resemble a floating city!

Guacanagari:                We must send a welcoming committee.  
I bless you, my daughter, for bringing this news.  
Now let each of you go home and choose  
A spool of cotton, a loaf of bread,  
we want our guests to be well-fed,  
And other things that you treasure and love.  
We will fly to the shore as a peaceful dove!

Guacanagari: (SONG TO THE TUNE OF 'AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL')  
Oh, beautiful and placid sea,  
what have you brought to me?  
These men so odd may just be gods,  
we'll treat them royally!

Tainos & Cacique:        Oh, Marien, our Marien  
will lead us to the shore.  
And Yucahu will guide us, too.  
On wings of love we'll soar!

SPOTLIGHT SHIFTS TO THE RAPPERS.

Rappers:                    Well, the gentle folk went down to meet  
Cristobal and the Spanish fleet.  
Cris gave them beads and worthless things,  
and asked them how they got the rings  
of gold they wore in the nose and ear.  
He told his men, "It would appear  
the gold mine lies not far away.  
We'll find that gold, somehow, someday!"

SPOTLIGHT ON THE CHORUS AT STAGE RIGHT.

Chorus:                    (TO THE TUNE OF 'ONWARD, CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS')  
  
Onward, Spanish sailors, lost in the Carib sea,  
thinking you're in India, most erroneously!  
You plant the royal flag of Spain



on San Salvador,  
a name Cris chose, although he knows  
Tainos came before!

LIGHTS OUT ON THE CHORUS AND UP ON THE CONQUISTADORS, NEWLY ARRIVED ON THE SHORE WITH THE SPANISH FLAG IN HAND. SAILORS I & II HOLD THE CROSS, AND A PADRE (PRIEST) HAS A TABLET AND PEN FOR RECORDING THE MOMENTOUS OCCASION. A GROUP OF TAINOS WATCHES THE PROCEEDING CURIOUSLY. THE SPANIARDS SING A ROUSING CONCLUDING CHORUS TO THE TUNE OF 'ONWARD, CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS.'

Spaniards:           Onward, brave conquistadores,  
                          praise be to the names  
                          of Isabel and Ferdinand,  
                          and Holy Catholic Spain!

TAINOS AND SPANIARDS GREET EACH OTHER.

Columbus:           They come bearing gifts, get something to give.

Guacanagari:       Please accept these gifts from the land where we live.

Columbus:           What's this?

Guacanagari:       Avocado, you'll find it makes a nice spread.

Columbus:           A spread for my bread?

Guacanagari:       Yes, or crackers instead.

Columbus:           Mmm, this is good. Do you use it to bake?

Guacanagari:       Of course, it is chocolate, for goodness sake.

Columbus:           We'll give it to the German's, they'll make a great cake.

Guacanagari:       Cashews and cotton, grits and gum...

Columbus: Well ok, yes, I'll have some...but here, have some glass beads and a hat.

Guacanagari: Thanks a heap for that!  
Tomatoes for paste...

Columbus: See how the Italians can make that taste.

Guacanagari: And popcorn, a most delightful snack. Ideal for the theater.

Columbus: Yes, pass it back.

Guacanagari: Potatoes and pumpkins, peanuts and pears,  
pineapple, yams, and cayenne peppers.

Columbus: Is there anything else? This is quite a haul.

Guacanagari: Just zero I guess, but that's nothing at all.

Columbus: Then enough! On your knees, marineros, and you  
Indians, too. A Mass for the subjects of Spanish rule!  
Padre, you'll record it officially  
that I'm Viceroy of all the lands I see.

Sailors I & II: And Admiral of the Ocean Sea!

Columbus: 'Though you Indians call it Guanahani,  
"San Salvador" sounds better to me.  
(TO THE TAINOS)  
Now back to the subject of which I'm most fond:  
Gold! Where's the court of the Emperor Khan?

Taino: There's a place to the west, Cubanakan...

Columbus:       Which leads to the fabulous city, Ceylon?  
                    Oh, I can just smell the spices and tea!  
                    Make way for Progress! (TURNS TO PADRE)  
  That’s a capital “P”.  
                    But wait! Suppose our ships get lost,

Sailor I:            By lightning struck,

Sailor II:           By hurricane tossed!

Columbus:        We’d better bring some Indian guides.  
                    Quick, grab them before their chief decides  
                    to put a stop to my enterprise.  
                    Come along, Padre, and you’ll baptize  
                    these naked, heathen souls, unshod...  
                    Onward for Spain!

Spaniards:        For gold, and for God!

Scene III. Hispaniola, or present day Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

Rappers:           Well, everywhere Columbus sailed  
                    a welcome warm and kind prevailed.  
                    “I never saw such folk,” said he,  
                    “for selfless generosity!”  
                    Now the Admiral had a banker’s eye  
                    as he looked around, and he had to lie:  
                    the amount of gold was not that great.  
                    He settled for slaves, and real estate.

LIGHTS UP ON COLUMBUS AT A DESK IN HIS SHIP’S CABIN, DICTATING A LETTER TO THE PADRE.

Columbus:        Dear Highnesses, who rule in Spain:

I'm on an isle near the Chinese main.  
The wonderful things mine eyes have seen!  
The loving people and their land so green!  
I call them "Indians." Shall we subjugate  
these simple souls, devoid of hate?  
It wouldn't take but fifty men!  
Signed: Your faithful servant.

Padre:                   Amen.

LIGHTS OUT. COLUMBUS REMAINS BUT THE SCENE CHANGES TO THE SHORE OF HISPAANIOLA. A SEMI-CIRCLE OF TAINOS WITH GUACANAGARI IN THE CENTER FILES AROUND COLUMBUS, WHO SITS WITH HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS. HIS SHIP, THE SANTA MARIA, HAS JUST RUN AGROUND. GUACANAGAI COMFORTS HIM, WEEPING.

Guacanagari:       Great Lord, descended from up above,  
                          what can I offer but brotherly love?  
                          Your ship went down; I mourn it's fate.  
                          'Though we saved your cargo, your loss is great.

HE BOWS HIS HEAD AND WEEPS. COLUMBUS STARES AT THIS DISPLAY OF EMOTION. THE CHORUS AND TAINOS AND GUACANAGARI SING A LAMENT TO THE TUNE OF 'AVE MARIA'.

Tainos and Chorus:    Santa Maria, aground on a shoal of Taina.  
                          The mighty ship lies on her side,  
                          Oh, what a blow to Spanish pride!  
                          Santa Maria, aground on a shoal of Taina.

GUACANAGARI TAKES THE CROWN OFF HIS HEAD AND PLACES IT UPON COLUMBUS. COLUMBUS PUTS A NECKLACE ON GUACANAGARI, AND A SCARLET CLOAK. TAINOS HUM 'SANTA MARIA' SOFTLY.

Columbus:            I'll be going now, back to my country, Spain.  
                          But I'm leaving some men, since you maintain  
                          the gold in Cibao is very near.  
                          Lord willing, you'll see me within the year.

Sailor I & II: And now for a message of Christmas cheer.

Columbus: We've built a fort near your property.  
We call it "Navidad" for Nativity,  
'cause our ship ran aground at Christmas season.

Sailors I & II: Hispaniola has gold. That's the reason!

COLUMBUS STEPS FORWARD MENACINGLY AND DIRECTS HIS WORDS TOWARD THE AUDIENCE, ALTHOUGH THEY'RE INTENDED FOR THE TAINOS, WHO COWER WHEN THEY HEAR THEM.

Columbus: To mess with our fort is an act of treason!

A CANNON IS FIRED TO PUNCTUATE THIS LAST SENTENCE. THE TAINOS DROP TO THE GROUND IN FEAR, AND THE LIGHTS GO OUT.

Rappers: In fourteen hundred and ninety three,  
Columbus went back across the sea.  
He was a hero in every village and town  
'cause he'd found a "new" world for the Spanish crown.  
But those men he'd left to their own devices  
at Fort Navidad gave in to vices,  
much to the horror of the Indian nation.  
It was the start of their devastation.

ENTER ABOUT SIX SPANISH SAILOR, IN RAGS AND TATTERS. THEY BEHAVE AS THOUGH DRUNK, ARMS LINKED, SWAYING TO AND FRO AS THEY SING. A ROUGH ENCLOSURE REPRESENTING FORT NAVIDAD IS THE BACKDROP.

Sailors: Onward, brave conquistadors, alone on the Indian shore  
Forsaken by Columbus, we've waged a constant war  
against the lowly Indians, their wives and daughters, too.  
We passed the time in horrid crime,  
we plundered, raped and slew!

THEY FALL TO THE GROUND, MUMBLING AND SINGING TO THEMSELVES, GROANING AND WRITHING. A LOUD BANGING IS HEARD. THE IMPRISONED WOMEN ARE DEMANDING TO BE RELEASED.

Taino women: Let us out! You pigs! We're starving!

IN RESPONSE, A SPANIARD, HALF CRAZED, DEMANDS:

Spaniard: Bring us something to eat!

IT IS THE ELEVENTH HOUR FOR THE MEN AT FORT NAVIDAD. THEY FINALLY FALL ASLEEP ON ONE ANOTHER AND SNORE LOUDLY. TAINOS CREEP STEALTHILY UP, SPEARS IN HAND.

Caonabo (a Cacique): The last of the swine awaits our spears!  
Be brave, Tainos, forget your fears.  
Remember when life was noble and free.  
An now, an end to our misery!

ALL THRUST THEIR SPEARS DOWNWARD AT ONCE ON THE SNORING SPANIARDS AND THE LIGHTS GO OUT.

Rappers: When Columbus returned, he sadly learned  
Fort Navidad had all been burned,  
and there was not one ounce of gold.  
This is what the natives told.

COLUMBUS, THE PADRE, SAILORS I & II, AND THE TAINOS ARE TRYING TO UNDERSTAND ONE ANOTHER WITH PANTOMIME AND GESTURES. GUACANAGARI STANDS LOOKING ON, HEAVILY BANDAGED. A TAINO PARTIALLY DRESSED IN SPANISH CLOTHES STEPS FORWARD AND ADDRESSES THE AUDIENCE.

Diego Colón: I'm Taino with a Spanish name.  
I was captured, and much to my shame  
they paraded me through the streets of Spain,  
and taught me Spanish, so I could explain  
the facts and be an interpreter.

Now they want to know what did occur  
at Fort Navidad where the men were killed,  
and why their Spanish blood was spilled!

Columbus: Diego Colón! Come, do your job!  
Who killed these men? Was it a mob?

Sailors I & II: Or the work of an angry Indian chief?

Diego Colón: The cacique expresses his sincere grief.  
He says he was wounded defending your men,  
'though the stories he heard time and again  
told of how badly your sailors behaved.  
Their lust for our women was truly depraved!

Columbus: Guacanagari is a loyal friend.  
Beg pardon if the ways of my sailors offend.  
Padre! A mass for the martyred dead.  
Marineros! The gold lies up ahead!  
To the Rio del Oro, the river of gold!  
We'll march in formation, to show how we're bold.  
Sound trumpets! Show banners! Fire guns in the air!  
Let any Tainos who oppose us, beware!

ANOTHER CANNON IS FIRED AND THE TAINOS COVER THEIR HEADS AND FALL TO THE  
GROUND. SAILORS I & II UNFURL A BANNER WITH THE SPANISH CROSS ON IT. A TRUMPET  
SOUNDS AND LIGHTS GO OUT.

Scene IV - The Vicinity of the Gold Mines on Hispaniola.

A PROCESSION OF GOLD DIGGERS FILES ONSTAGE. THEY ARE EN ROUTE TO THE NEWLY-DIS-  
COVERED GOLD MINES IN CIBAO, AND ARE LOADED WITH PICKS, POTS, PANS AND PACKS.  
THEY SING.

Gold diggers: Mine eyes have seen the glitter of the wondrous

mines of gold,  
they have lured me to the New World from the poverty  
of the Old.  
I'll soon be rich and powerful, and Someone to behold!  
For gold we're marching on!

ENTER A GENTLEMANLY GOLD DIGGER, A CABALLERO, WHO IS TRAVELING IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION FROM THE GOLD DIGGERS.

Gold digger I: : Buenos dias, Señor!

Caballero: Good day to you, Sire!

Gold digger I: You're going the wrong way. Why? May I enquire?

Caballero: My food supply's gone, and my strength just gave out.  
It's damned hard digging gold! If it's there, which I doubt..

THE CABALLERO EXITS IN A DISGUSTED MANNER.

Gold digger II: Good riddance to the faint-hearted fellow.

Gold digger III: He must be blind to the lustre, to the yellow.

TWO MORE GOLD DIGGERS COME ONSTAGE FROM THE WRONG DIRECTION. THEY CARRY A BODY COVERED WITH A BLANKET ON A LITTER. THE BODY GROANS A FEW TIMES AND THEN IS SILENT.

Gold digger IV: Señor, por favor, I don't wish to be rude,  
but who's that pobrecito, a Spanish dude?

GOLD DIGGER V SUDDENLY NOTICES THE BODY IS SILENT AND BENDS OVER TO GRASP AN ARM AND FEEL FOR A PULSE.

Gold digger V: By the hair on my chin, I believe he is dead!  
Praise be! That's one less mouth to be fed!



GOLD DIGGERS V & VI VERY UNCEREMONIOUSLY TIP THE LITTER AND THE BODY ROLLS TO THE GROUND, DEAD. THE SPANIARDS DON'T SEEM IN THE LEAST SHOCKED BY THIS, BUT CONTINUE ON THEIR WAY, KICKING THE BODY OUT OF THE WAY.

Golddigger VI:       By the way, how much further 'til we get to the mine?  
                          Will there be any marker? A road, or a sign?

Golddigger VII:     Just keep going south, to the most torrid zones.  
                          The path will be marked with the Indians' bones!

UPON PRONOUNCING THE WORD 'BONES', LOUD WICKED LAUGHTER ECHOES AND THE WORD 'BONES' ECHOES WITH IT, INTERSPERSED WITH THE WORD 'INDIAN', PROVIDING A MACABRE MARCHING BEAT FOR THE GOLD DIGGERS AS THEY TRUDGE ON. WHEN THE COAST IS CLEAR, A VULTURE PEERS CAUTIOUSLY AROUND AND THEN HOVERS OVER THE BODY LEFT IN THE PATH.

Vulture:             Upon my bloodthirsty soul, what is this?  
                          Another meal, thanks to the Admiral Chris?  
                          These corpses the Spaniards throw off their ships  
                          have caused me to put on a little weight in the hips.  
                          The Indians' bodies are everywhere strewn  
                          on the paths to the mines. It looks like quite soon  
                          we vultures will be much too fat to fly.

SHE TURNS TO THE AUDIENCE AND ADDRESSES HER LAST LINE TO THEM.

Vulture:             By the hundreds and thousands these Indians die!

SHE POUNCES ON THE BODY AND THE LIGHTS GO OUT.

Rappers:            Every Spaniard who ever went  
                          to the Indies had the same intent:  
                          to pick up gold on the tropical shore,  
                          and force the Indians to bring much more.  
                          By sword and horses, dogs and gun,  
                          the natives perished one by one.  
                          Many died in the mines, for gold;  
                          others were branded as slaves and sold.

## ACT II - The Destruction

### Scene I - A Dominican Monastery in New Spain.

A PROCESSION OF CLERICS WITH LIGHTED CANDLES ENTERS, HUMMING 'AVE MARIA'. SOME CLERICS CARRY CROSSES, AND BOW THEIR HEADS AS THEY SET THEIR CROSSES OVER IMAGINARY GRAVES. THEY ARE CLEARLY IN MOURNING. AS THE LIGHT FADES FROM THEM, IT FOCUSES ON FREY BARTOLOME DE LAS CASAS AT STAGE RIGHT, SEATED AT A WRITING DESK.

Las Casas:            Dear Sovereign Lord and Noble King,  
I fear you'll deplore the news I bring.  
Three million souls have now been slain  
in the Indies by our men from Spain.  
Three million, Sire! Or many more,  
through cruelty, torture, blood and gore.  
Such wickedness! It knows no bounds.  
And the natives never gave them grounds!  
If you could see the gallows with you own eyes,  
or hear the Viceroy's cunning lies...  
Who in future times will believe my tale?  
The telling of it makes one pale.

LAS CASA PUTS HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS AND SLUMPS OVER THE DESK, ASLEEP. TWO MEXICAN INDIAN WOMEN COME SOFTLY IN, AND SEEING HIM SLEEPING, CAREFULLY BLOW OUT HIS LAMP. ONE OF THEM TAKES HIS UNFINISHED LETTER AND EAGERLY STARTS TO READ IT. THE OTHER LOOKS OVER HER SHOULDER.

Maria:                It's a letter to the Chief, across the sea.  
Shall I read it? The monks instructed me

in Spanish. Oh, look! It contains a plea:  
“Your Highness must set the Indians free!”

Elena: Frey Bartolomé fights a losing battle.  
My father and brother were branded like cattle  
and worked to death on a sugar plantation.

Maria: But, Elena, who cares for our salvation  
except this man? And he’s so alone!  
I pray he’ll convince the Spanish throne.

SHE RETURNS THE LETTER TO THE DESK AND BOTH WOMEN TIPTOE AWAY.  
LAS CASAS SLUMBERS ON.

Chorus: (TO THE TUNE OF ‘GO DOWN, MOSES’)  
  
Go, Frey Bartolomé, ‘way back, across the sea.  
Tell of their misery. Set the Indians free!

Rappers: Las Casas, you weren’t always blessed  
with compassion. You, like all the rest,  
followed the trail of Conquistadors  
into Cuba and the bloody wars  
against the natives. They were made your slaves!  
How many did you send to early graves?

LAS CASAS WAKES UP AS THOUGH FROM A DREAM, LOOKS AROUND, AGITATED, AND ANSWERS HIS INVISIBLE INTERROGATOR DEFENSIVELY.

Las Casas: I was young! I was dazzled by Spanish might!  
Yes, I was wrong, but I did see the light.  
That sermon I wrote turned me ‘round in my tracks,  
and ever since then I’ve collected the facts  
about the atrocities Spaniards have done.  
I gave up my slaves, to the very last one!

LAS CASAS AGAIN SLUMPS IN HIS CHAIR AND FALLS ASLEEP, SNORING, HIS CHIN ON HIS CHEST. AN APPARITION IN WHITE ROBES APPEARS. IT IS THE GHOST OF MONTESINOS, THE DOMINICAN PRIEST WHO FIRST BEGAN THE STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE IN SPANISH AMERICA, FROM A LITTLE STRAW-THATCHED CHURCH IN HISPANIOLA, 1511.

Montesinos: Las Casas! My spirit lives on in your own!

The seeds of resistance, courageously sown  
by my sermon, through you will bear heavenly fruit.  
They forbid me to preach, but you are not mute!  
The natives have suffered incredible pain.  
Plead their case to the King and the Council in Spain.

THE GHOST DISAPPEARS. LAS CASAS STIRS AND RUBS HIS EYES AND MOPS HIS BROW.

Las Casas: My dreams are so vivid, it seems like bright day.  
Was that Frey Montesinos? Did I hear him pray?

HE FINGERS HIS ROSARY AND MUMBLES A FEW DEVOTIONS BEFORE FALLING BACK TO SLEEP. ENTER A SPANIARD DRESSED LIKE A TAINO, WHO STANDS BEHIND LAS CASAS AND BESEECHES HIM.

Cristobal Rodriguez:

Frey Bartolomé, listen, before it's too late!  
I'm Cristobal Rodriguez, and it was my fate  
to live a few years with an Arawak clan.  
My respect for their culture was much greater than  
that which I hold for my own native one.  
The Tainos treated me just like a son!

AT THESE WORDS, LAS CASAS AWAKES AND STARES AT THE APPARITION. HE RUBS HIS FOREHEAD, REMEMBERING.

Las Casas: Were you called by the nickname "La Lengua," The Tongue?

Cristobal Rodriguez:

I was! Even Spaniards my praises have sung.  
Yet Ovando, the tyrant and gobernador  
expelled me! From that moment on, I foreswore

I'd go to the court of King Ferdinand  
in defense of the Arawak nations and land.  
Will you follow my steps, and take up their cause?  
Condemn the Conquista and Spanish outlaws!

DURING HIS SPEECH LAS CASAS HAS BEEN WIDE-EYED. NOW HE RUBS HIS EYES AGAIN AND WHEN HE LOOKS, THE 'APPARITION' IS GONE. HE RISES AND COMES FORWARD TO ADDRESS THE AUDIENCE.

Las Casas: In a dream my mission appeared so clear:  
to rescue the native from torture and fear!  
Once, in Cuba, I stopped a tyrant's hand.  
Narvaez betrayed his promise and planned  
to kill those who'd had my solemn word  
they'd be spared the sword. Is justice absurd?  
And what of human laws? What of divine?  
Lord, send me to Spain! My will is thine!

HE CLASPS HIS HANDS IN PRAYER AND BOWS HIS HEAD. LIGHTS GO OUT ON LAS CASAS AND UP ON THE CHORUS.

Scene II - A silver mine in Mexico.

Chorus: (THE TUNE IS 'GO DOWN, MOSES')

When Spaniards conquered Mexico, Let my people go!  
Oh, how the native blood did flow, all through Mexico.  
Go, Frey Bartolomé, back across the Ocean Sea.  
Plead for their liberty. Set the Indians free!

A GROUP OF INDIAN SLAVES CHAINED TO ONE ANOTHER COMES ONSTAGE, SLOWLY AND LABORIOUSLY, SINGLE FILE, PICKS IN HAND. THEY HAVE SUFFERED A GRUELING DAY UNDER THE HOT SUN IN THE SILVER MINE. TWO SPANISH OVERSEERS, WHIPS IN HAND, ARE IN CHARGE OF THE SORRY GROUP. THEIR JOB IS TO HARRAS THE INDIANS AND DRIVE THEM TO WORK HARDER.

Overseer I: (PUSHES THE INDIAN NEAREST HIM)

You Indian dog! You scum of the earth!  
I swear that you aren't even worth  
the peso or two I paid for you!

Overseer II: (DRAWS HIS SWORD, READY TO RUSH ON THE INDIAN)  
I'll test my blade. May I run him though?

Overseer I: That can wait 'til tomorrow. Hear the dinner bell?  
By God, I've a hunger! What is that smell?

Overseer II: It could be the chief of that tribe we subdued.

Overseer I: Ah yes! Our dogs will have plenty of food.  
I recall that Cortes had him roasted alive,  
along with some nobles who somehow survived.

THEY EXIT IN THE DIRECTION OF THE DINNER BELL. THE INDIANS SLUMP TO THE GROUND  
AND FOR A LONG PAUSE NO ONE SPEAKS. THEN SLOWLY THE INDIAN WHO WAS SINGLED  
OUT SPEAKS.

Juanito: Compañeros, it's over for me. Tell my wife  
that I prefer death. It's less painful than life.

Luís: I've no heart to stop you.

Pedro: Nor I. Let us chew  
the poison cassava together and die.

José: Goodbye, Oh, my sons and my daughters!

All: Goodbye!

JUST AS THE INDIANS ARE ABOUT TO CHEW THE CASSAVA POISON, THE CACIQUE ENRIQUILLO  
RUSHES IN.

Enriquillo: Stop, my brothers! I come with good news!  
Where's your guard? Is he gone? Then there's no

time to lose!  
Quickly! To the rebellion that I have begun!  
Our tribe has fought Valenzuela and won!  
He stole my mare. He raped my wife  
and he surely intended to end my life.  
But I fled to the hills and gathered some men.  
When the Spaniards pursued us, we beat them again.  
Now softly! And swiftly as chains will permit.  
To resistance! Rebellion! Let no Indian quit  
'til we've won back our freedom! Shhh, carefully now,  
while they're gorging themselves, through the jungle  
we'll plow!

Rappers: Did you think that the Spaniards were always ahead  
in the struggle to conquer? Well, you were misled.  
Enriquillo was raised by the monks and could read.  
He pleaded his case in the courts and this deed  
caused his master, Valenzuela, to cry  
"That brash, upstart cacique by my hand shall die!  
I won't rest 'til he hangs from a gallows or tree.  
By God, it does irk me that he should roam free!"

Scene III - The Audiencia (High Court) of Mexico.

FOUR SOLEMN, DIGNIFIED JUDGES SIT ON EITHER SIDE OF THE VICEROY OF NEW SPAIN. NO ONE SPEAKS EXCEPT THE PRESIDING JUDGE, ALONSO DE ZORITA, WHOSE DUTY IT IS TO ISSUE DECREES AND METE OUT 'JUSTICE'. THE VOICE OF THE KING ECHOES THROUGH THE COURTROOM, LIKE THE VOICE OF THE SPANISH CONSCIENCE. WE DO NOT SEE HIM.

King Philip: I order you to do justice and in all things be fair!  
Abuse not the natives God gave to your care!

Viceroy: I, Luís de Velasco, Viceroy of New Spain  
by decree of King Philip (Long may he reign!)  
do open this court. The presiding judge,

Alonso de Zorita, will hear the first grudge.

Zorita: I call Pedrarias Dávila, governor of Panama!

THE CONQUISTADOR PEDRARIAS DAVILA SWAGGERS TO STAGE CENTER, ACCOMPANIED BY AN INDIAN SLAVE WHO BRUSHES OFF HIS CLOTHES AND FANS HIM WHILE HE SPEAKS.

Pedrarias: Your Honor, most worthy judges, and court,  
as the heat is oppressive, I'll try and be short.  
I'm charged with the deaths of hundreds of slaves.  
On my honor, the reason they went to their graves  
is the pox, the disease that disfigures and kills.  
How can I be blamed for the Indians' ills?

Zorita: The fame of your tyranny precedes you here.  
Your very name evokes trembling and fear!  
For barbarousness, Sir, you have no rival  
in Panama, where even survival  
is forbidden fruit for the Indian tribes.  
You made a fortune through wars, and bribes!

Viceroy: Objection! Dávila has served well the Crown.  
This smallpox has hit every Indian town.  
(TO PEDRARIAS)  
Return to your encomienda and fire  
the man who accused you.

Pedrarias: Thank you, Sire!

PEDRARIAS PUFFS OUT HIS CHEST AND STRUTS AWAY, THE SERVANT STILL FANNING HIM.  
ZORITA MOPS HIS BROW.

Zorita: I call the encomendero, Valenzuela!

VALENZUELA STRIDES QUICKLY UP TO THE JUDGES. HE IS YOUNG AND HOT-TEMPERED AND SPITS OUT HIS WORDS.



Valenzuela: Learned judges! I beg you, hear my plea!  
An affront to Spanish authority  
is this rebel dog, Enriquillo by name.  
He must be stopped! Therefore I came  
to ask for soldiers to hunt down my slave  
in his jungle hideout. Kill the knave!

HE GETS CARRIED AWAY AT THESE LAST WORDS AND DRAWS HIS SWORD, STABBING HIS IMAGINARY ADVERSARY.

Zorita: Enriquillo has cause to resist your command!  
He received only injury by your hand.  
Did you not desecrate his marriage, too,  
by raping Doña Lucía, who  
is an Indian lady of noble birth?

Valenzuela: By God, I did, and for what it's worth  
I'd do it again! I've a perfect right  
to do as I please on my own plantation.

Viceroy: The court understands your indignation,  
and awards you soldiers to wage your war,  
which appears quite just. One hundred? Or more?

Valenzuela: One hundred men? Can you make it two?  
This rascal is crafty, through and through!

Viceroy: Two hundred men. Next plaintiff, please.

ZORITA, VISIBLY AGITATED BY A SECOND DECISION THAT OVERRIDES HIS OWN, AGAIN MOPS HIS BROW, CONSULTS A PAPER. THE VICEROY AND THE OTHER THREE JUDGES WHISPER TOGETHER.

Zorita: The Vicar of Popayán!

THE VICAR OF POPAYAN IS CARRIED IN ON A LITTER HELD BY TWO INDIANS. WHEN THE LITTER IS SET DOWN BEFORE THE JUDGES, THE VICAR HOLDS UP BOTH ARMS AND THE INDIANS PULL HIM UP, WITH DIFFICULTY. HE IS VERY FAT.

Vicar:           The charges against me are fantasy!  
                    As a man of God, I've been pleased to see  
                    the conversion of oh, so many souls  
                    to our Catholic faith. And it consoles  
                    the Pope to know of our diligent preaching...

Zorita:           Sir, you have not spent your time in teaching!  
                    Your piety has been tepid, at best.  
                    With strong, fleshly appetites you've been blessed.  
                    While other clergy bury the dead,  
                    You dig them up! And it is said  
                    You rob the ancient Indian graves  
                    (the digging done, of course, by your slaves)  
                    for ornaments made of silver and gold.

Vicar:           Lies! All lies! (HE SNEERS) What else were you told?

Zorita:           Your sinful pleasures know no bounds.  
                    You are charged with training your own hounds  
                    in the barbarous sport of giving chase  
                    to helpless Indians. You disgrace  
                    the Church and Crown. You make me ill!  
                    How many natives did your dogs kill?

Vicar:           I object to this unjust accusation.

Viceroy:          Objection sustained. The court knows your vocation  
                    is a difficult one in these times of strife.

Vicar:           A man can't be blamed for improving his life!

Viceroy:          Return to the province of Popayán.

THE VICAR TURNS TO THE AUDIENCE AND GLOATS:

Vicar:           The Spanish Court is so easy to con!  
                  (TO THE COURT, UNCTUOUSLY)  
                  Blessings upon you, gentlemen!  
                  The Saints preserve you 'til we meet again!

THE VICAR SITS DOWN HEAVILY ON THE LITTER, WHICH THE INDIAN SLAVES LIFT WITH GROANS AND SIGHS. THE VICAR IS HEARD TO CHUCKLE AS THE INDIANS BEAR HIM AWAY. LIGHTS OUT ON THE VICEROY AND JUDGES. ZORITA STEPS FORWARD AND ADDRESSES THE AUDIENCE.

Zorita:           Now that you've seen Spanish justice at work,  
                  and that barbarous Vicar with his loathsome smirk,  
                  would you say that an honest judge has a chance?  
                  This is justice by fire, by gallows, and lance!  
                  Alas, truth has no place in this land of New Spain.  
                  Those who defend the slaves, do so in vain!

ZORITA EXITS. LIGHTS UP ON THE CHORUS, WHO SING TO THE TUNE OF 'GO DOWN, MOSES.'

Chorus:           When justice was a foreign word, all through Mexico,  
                  in ashes lay the Quetzal bird,  
                  the sacred temples glowed.  
                  Burning! Burning! The holy Mayan books are burning!  
                  Gone for eternity, the wisdom of their learning.

Rappers:         Alonso de Zorita tried very hard  
                  but as a judge he was always barred  
                  from doing justice for the native folk.  
                  The High Court treated them like a joke.

LIGHTS UP ON THE VICEROY AND JUDGES. ZORITA IS ABSENT. A MAYAN INDIAN COMES CAUTIOUSLY AND FEARFULLY INTO THE COURTROOM. THE VICEROY CLEARS HIS THROAT (AHEM!) AND THE STARTLED INDIAN JUMPS.

Mayan:           Honored judges! You see before you a man

who has mined for gold and tilled the land  
and endured my wretched servitude...

Viceroy: Get to the point!

Mayan: Without being rude,  
I must protest the tribute I pay!  
My land is being taken away  
and the maize I grow has come to harm  
by the cattle on the encomendero's farm!  
This man is rich. You see I'm not,  
yet he takes the little that I've got.  
He steals the water from my stream...

Viceroy: Is this some sort of lazy scheme  
to shirk your duty to his Majesty?  
Be gone! I doubt your honesty!  
Be sure to pay before you go.  
I've doubled the tribute that you owe!

THE MAYAN SINKS TO HIS KNEES, THUNDERSTRUCK, THEN PAUSES A MOMENT BEFORE FALLING TO THE FLOOR IN A FAINT. TWO OF THE JUDGES CARRY HIM OFF. IMMEDIATELY A SPANIARD DRESSED IN SHORTS AND A VEST AND BOOTS RUSHES UP TO THE JUDGES.

Señor Encomendero:

Estimados Oidores, estimado Virrey,  
I need more slaves! Hear what I say:  
Let me go and get some on the African coast.  
Black people work harder, and they're taller  
than most  
of these Indians, who are about all gone.  
Well, what do you say? It's a deal? Are we on?

Viceroy: Señor Encomendero, you are a bit crass,  
but rather typical of your class.

THE VICEROY PAUSES A MOMENT, AND HIS TONE CHANGES ABRUPTLY.

Viceroy: This deal you mention, where do I figure in?

Señor Encomendero:

Twenty free slaves, and as many again  
if you'll put up the money for two ships or three.  
Slaves are what make a man richer, you see!

Judge I: We do see, of course! You're a genius, Señor!

Judge II: I'm good for one ship. Is that ten slaves? Or more?

Judges I & III: To Africa! That's where our fortunes all lie!

Viceroy: I expect as Viceroy I'll be able to buy  
the pick of the lot for my sugar plantation.

Sr. Encomendero:

We'll be the envy of all the colonial nation!  
Richer than Lords! As rich as the King!  
Oh, think of the money the slave trade will bring!

THE FOUR MEN DANCE IN A CIRCLE, ARMS LINKED, CARRIED AWAY BY VISIONS OF LIMITLESS WEALTH, SLAPPING EACH OTHER FIVE, ETC. LIGHTS OUT

Scene IV - A Mountain Peak in Hispañola.

ENRIQUILLO AND HIS BAND OF ESCAPED SLAVES, BOTH AFRICAN AND ARAWAK, HAVE COME FACE TO FACE WITH CAPTAIN HERNANDO DE SAN MIGUEL, WHO HAS BEEN PURSUING THEM FOR A LONG TIME. BUT EACH IS ON A SIERRA PEAK SEPARATED BY A DEEP CHASM, AND THUS CANNOT HARM ONE ANOTHER.

Enriquillo: Saludos, Capitán! We meet at long last!  
The distance between us is small, and yet vast!

San Miguel: Give in, Enriquillo!

Enriquillo: And suffer more harms?  
Why do you think we first took up arms?  
You taught us to steal, to kill and to lie,  
And if we obey you, we still have to die!

San Miguel: This land belongs to the King of Spain!  
You're all his vassals!

Enriquillo: You're all insane!  
I may be the only Indian chief  
who dares to avenge his countrymen's grief.  
My people and yours are light years apart.  
We live on the earth with a loving heart,  
and we do not believe that land can be sold.  
Your obsession and greed for silver and gold  
Have made you into ravening beasts,  
and all of you, from captains to priests,  
have a single thought: to enslave my nation!  
You brought us starvation, and degradation!

San Miguel: The High Court sends me to negotiate  
a truce. We just wish to communicate  
the terms of a peace accord. Will you agree?

Enriquillo: Perhaps. But have I a guarantee  
that this isn't more Spanish treachery?  
You see that my men are both brown and black.  
Neither Indian nor African will ever go back  
to being your slaves. We will die in the fight!  
We, the oppressed, are entitled to right  
our own wrongs, where Justice is lacking.  
You have my word that we won't be attacking  
your men. We'll only provide our defense.

San Miguel: I hold the provision that represents  
the King's authority, through the High Court.  
Ten terrible years you've gathered support  
from every runaway vassal and slave.  
As a chief, you're exceptionally clever and brave.  
Can we now, in accord, lay our weapons down?  
I pledge my respect, on behalf of the Crown.

ENRIQUILLO TURNS TO HIS MEN A MOMENT AND SPEAKS TO THEM IN THEIR NATIVE LANGUAGE. THEY RAISE THEIR SPEARS AND SHOUT IN UNISON. HE TURNS AGAIN TO SAN MIGUEL.

Enriquillo: I pledge, for my part, to suspend all strife.

Both sides: We will respect each other's way of life!

CHEERS FROM BOTH SIDES, AND CURTAIN CLOSES ON ACT II.

### ACT III - La Conquista del Punto de Vista Feminista (The Conquest From a Feminine Point of View)

Scene I - Tenochtitlán, Mexico, after the Conquest.

Rappers: Enriquillo led his men to victory,  
but the Spanish never ceased their trickery  
and deceit. They went forth in the land  
turning tribe against tribe and man against man.  
The mighty Aztec nation fell that way.  
This is what the historians say:

CHORUS: Hernán Cortés, the conquistador  
entered Mexico with a corps  
of men and horses, six hundred strong.  
It didn't take them very long  
to kill the natives and burn the city,  
Tenochtitlán. Great was the pity  
that all of the beauty went up in smoke,  
with the wisdom of the Aztec folk!

LIGHTS UP ON CORTES, MALINCHE, AND AN AZTEC WOMAN WHO IS COOKING. CORTES  
COMES FORWARD TO ADDRESS THE AUDIENCE.

Cortés: A job well done, now wouldn't you say?  
When conquering it will always pay  
to bring an interpreter. I was smart!  
Mine was captured right at the start  
of my great campaign in Mexico.  
It was true, a little blood had to flow...

MALINCHE STEPS FORWARD TO CORRECT CORTES.

Malinche: A little blood? He understates the case!  
He nearly wiped out the Aztec race!  
(TO CORTES) And let's give credit where credit is due:  
Moctezuma would never have listened to you,  
but I persuaded him, oh so sweetly,  
to come to your quarters, and then discreetly  
advised he submit to your commands.  
You had some rather outrageous demands!

THE AZTEC WOMAN STEPS FORWARD.

Aztec Woman:  
I survived the holocaust and, terrified,  
I ran everywhere for a place to hide.  
But the soldiers captured me with a chain  
and marched me back through all the slain



to this place where I've been ordered to cook.  
But I ask you, where should I go look  
for food? Our crops have all been hit.  
And the Spaniard's stomach is a bottomless pit.  
What we eat in a week, they eat in a day!  
You can't fill them up, not even half-way!

CORTES, MALINCHE, AND THE AZTEC WOMAN SING A SONG OF  
CONQUEST, THE TONE VARYING FROM TRIUMPHAL (CORTES) TO BLUES (THE AZTEC WOMAN).

Cortes: Conquest does wonders for manly pride!

Malinche: Conquest is rough on the Indian guide.

Aztec Woman:  
Conquest means too many people have died!

Cortes: Life has meaning if one has some gold.

Malinche: Life had dignity in days of old.

Aztec Woman:  
I am a slave, and a slave can be sold.

Cortes: Will history treat me kindly, I hope?  
Will I be as famous and rich as the Pope?  
Who else had the nerve to sink his ships  
so none could set sail or attempt any trips  
back to Spain? It was brilliant! We marched on,  
full force,  
and conquered each town as a matter of course.

Malinche: You'd have been nothing without your translator,  
diplomat, theoretician and fellow crusader!  
It's I who'll go down in the history books  
as the one with the brains, and of course with the looks.

Aztec Woman:

And what of me and my powerful nation?  
Are we doomed to oblivion, as well as damnation?  
Oh, the glorious temples we built with our hands!  
The sumptuous palaces, the fertile lands!  
Wiped out in a flash of a horse and a lance  
and weapons of iron. We stood no chance  
against the dread white man's disease,  
the smallpox you brought us from overseas.  
Oh, I too am stricken! Look! On my face!  
Come, death! You'll be my saving grace!

THE AZTEC WOMAN FALLS OVER, CLUTCHING THE SIDES OF HER HEAD. MALINCHE CATCHES HER AND BENDS OVER HER. CORTES IGNORES THE DRAMA ENTIRELY.

Cortés: I must get word to the Sovereign King  
that we beat Moctezuma, and everything  
he had that was silver or gold or a treasure  
will be shipped to Spain for His Majesty's pleasure.  
As for my reward, he can honor me  
with land and slaves, and the title "Marquis."  
On with the conquest! I've barely begun!  
Let's go tear down some idols! Where's the Temple  
of the Sun?

CORTES DRAWS HIS SWORD AND STRIDES OFFSTAGE, LEAVING THE WOMEN WEEPING.  
LIGHTS OUT.

Scene II - Tahuantinsuyu (the old name of the Inca Empire) after  
the conquest of Cuzco.

Rappers: "Perhaps with words you will be pierced, broken to  
understand."  
Thus spoke an Aztec poet after the conquest of his land.  
The sweeping plague of Spanish lust continued, unabated.  
In Jamaica, Cuba and the continent the colonists were hated.

Yet more and more explorers came, they never paused for breath.  
And everywhere the Spaniards went, the Indians met their death.

Chorus: Tumbala, my Lord, Tumbala.  
Life was peaceful, in Tumbala.  
Pizarro invaded Tumbala. Oh, woe, Tumbala!  
Tumbala and now Cuzco, too.  
Life was ancient here in Peru.  
None could save us from Pizarro!  
Oh, Inca! Oh, woe!

QHORA CHINPU, AN INCA PRINCESS, SITS AT HER LOOM, WEAVING. HER DAUGHTERS WATCH AND LISTEN.

Qhora Chinpu:  
We Inca Princesses saw it all:  
civil war, small pox, and the fall  
of our once grand and glorious empire.  
Cuzco burns! And in the bonfire  
all the magnificence of our past,  
the sacred Quechua lore is cast.  
Children of the Sun, lament!

Inca Princesses:  
Children of the Sun, lament!

Qhora Chinpu:  
With these threads I weave the story  
of Inca harmony and glory.  
I weave the symbols of our Universe,  
our ancient Cosmos, and the curse  
that fell upon this native land.  
I weave the Inca nobles and  
old Manco Capac, King of Kings!

Inca Princesses: We weave the hope each new day brings.

Qhora Chinpu: Children of the Sun, be strong!

Inca Princesses: Weave our story, sing our song!

ENTER PIZARRO, THE CONQUEROR OF PERU, WITH SEVERAL FOLLOWERS. HE APPEARS NOT TO NOTICE THE WOMEN WEAVING. WITH GRAND GESTURES HE PLANS THE REBUILDING OF CUZCO, THE IMPERIAL INCA CAPITAL.

Pizarro: When the last idolatrous temple is down,  
we'll build a road right through the town.  
I want a home that's twice as grand  
as Atahuallpa's palace, planned  
to hold a hundred slaves, at least!  
Oh, I'm so pleased to have increased  
the Spanish empire, one more time!

Conquerors (in unison): Three cheers for Conquest!

Inca Princesses (in unison): We call it crime!

AS THE STARTLED CONQUERORS NOTICE THE WOMEN FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE LIGHTS GO OUT.

Scene III - The Conquistadors' Hall of Fame, Mexico City.

Rappers: Lest you think the Spaniards never fought against each other,  
I tell you they would poison and denounce their only  
brother!  
With intrigues and executions, even regular crusades,  
no one or thing was sacred to them, least of all their maids.  
And apropos of women, where have all the women been?  
Was conquest just a male affair, no females entered in?

Chorus: The stakes were high, a whole continent  
was up for grabs, and for this event

Spain sent her worst and her very best.  
Let's see if the women are impressed.

LIGHTS UP ON THE COURTROOM, AS IN ACT II, SCENE III, BUT THIS TIME THE WOMEN SIT IN JUDGMENT: MALINCHE, CORTES' AZTEC INTERPRETER; ANACAONA, THE TAINO QUEEN WHOM THE SPANIARDS PUT TO DEATH; QHORA CHINPU, THE INCA PRINCESS; IXCHEL, THE MAYAN GODDESS OF WEAVING; LATIFA, AN AFRICAN QUEEN WHO WAS CAPTURED IN HER NATIVE LAND AND ENSLAVED IN NEW SPAIN; BEATRIZ, A JEWISH WOMAN FROM SPAIN WHO WAS EXPELLED IN 1492; AND CATALINA, A CASTILLIAN WOMAN WHOSE HUSBAND AND SONS SET SAIL ON NARVAEZ' ILL-FATED VOYAGE TO FLORIDA.

Queen Latifa:

Welcome to the Conquistadors' Hall of Fame!  
Who is worthy to present a claim?  
Let each come forward and say his name,  
and how he played the Conquest Game!

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS ENTERS BRISKLY WITH HIS BROTHERS, DON DIEGO AND DON BARTOLOME COLON, AT HIS SIDE. THEY BEHAVE AS DID SAILORS I & II, DANCING WHILE COLUMBUS RAPS.

Columbus: Cristobal Colón! (HE BOWS TO ALL.)  
I really deserve the number one spot  
in the Hall of Fame. It was my lot  
to discover the Indies and explore them, too.  
All that followed was clearly due  
to the bravery of my bro's and I.

Diego & Bartolomé: He found a new world! What a talented guy!

ALL THREE TAKE A BOW AND DANCE OFF TOGETHER TO THE SIDELINES.  
THE LADIES NOD AND SOME MAKE NOTES, UNMOVED. BALBOA ENTERS, BOWING AND SMILING.

Balboa: Vasco Nuñez de Balboa!  
Ladies, I found the Pacific Ocean,

and if I speak with some emotion,  
it's because I went on foot overland.  
My eyes were the first that ever scanned  
that vast expanse of heavenly blue!

The Colón brothers:      How daring! How bold! Three cheers for you!

BALBOA BOWS TO THE LADIES AND TO THE COLUMBUS BROTHERS AND JOINS THEM ON THE SIDELINES. JUAN PONCE DE LEON ENTERS.

Ponce de León:

Buenos días, señoras! How lovely you look!  
(HE PAUSES TO FLIRT WITH CATALINA)  
Juan Ponce de León is my name, and I took  
a trip from San Juan (Puerto Rico these days).  
Sailing north through the tropical haze  
I discovered Florida, pure and pristine!

Conquistadors:      Explorers like you are few and far between!

PONCE DE LEON BOWS AND JOINS THE OTHER MEN. HERNAN CORTES SWAGGERS FORWARD.

Cortés:                  Hernán Cortés.  
I'm the richest man in all Mexico.  
If you find one richer, I'd like to know.  
King Charles was the man who made me that way.  
I conquered Mexico, and for my pay  
he made me Marquis. So I built a few castles,  
with help from my 23,000 vassals!

Queen Latifa:      (SITS IMMOBILE, HEAD HIGH, UNIMPRESSED)  
Your claim has been heard and recorded, señor.  
May we please have the next conquistador?

CORTES DOES NOT CONCEAL HIS DISAPPOINTMENT THAT THE LADIES HAVE NOT REACTED TO HIS SPEECH; BUT THE MEN RECEIVE HIM INTO THEIR GROUP, PATTING HIM ON THE BACK,

SLAPPING HIM FIVE, ETC. NEXT, PEDRO DE ALVARADO STRIDES ONSTAGE, BRANDISHING HIS SWORD. HE REMOVES HIS HAT AND MAKES A SWEEPING BOW.

Alvarado:           Can you guess my name? It rhymes with “bravado.”  
                          I’m Capitán Pedro de Alvarado.  
                          I’ve been everywhere in this land of New Spain.  
I fought hard for my place in the Hall of Fame:  
                          Mexico! Guatemala! Peru! And more.  
I’m Spain’s most reckless conquistador!

Conquistadors:    He’s not afraid of danger, blood or gore!

THE CONQUISTADORS ALL APPLAUD ALVARADO, WHO DANCES OFF TO JOIN THEM WITH A WAVE OF THE HAND TO THE WOMEN. PANFILO DE NARVAEZ STEPS BRISKLY ONSTAGE.

Narvaez:           Well, ladies, you’ve heard a lot of claims;  
                          but of all these worthy, illustrious names,  
                          remember Panfilo de Narvaez, my dears!  
I chased Cortéz, to allay the fears  
                          of the Viceroy: his power was out of hand.  
I led an expedition to that unknown land  
                          called Florida. We sailed up the coast...

Conquistadors:    He was the first, he’s got the right to boast!

NARVAEZ WAITS FOR THE WOMEN TO REACT, AND WHEN THEY DO NOT, HE TURNS TO THE CONQUISTADORS, WHO APPLAUD HIM.

Queen Latifa:     Will the final conquistador step to the fore,  
                          and tell us the deed you are famous for?

FRANCISCO PIZARRO COMES FORWARD, BOWING TO THE WOMEN.

Pizarro:           Francisco Pizarro! I’m of humble birth,  
                          but for that very reason my claim is worth  
                          twice as much. You see, I neither write nor read,  
                          yet the conquest of Peru was a splendid deed!

Through the dense, steaming jungles we trudged,  
without eating,  
and never turned back, 'though my men were entreating  
me every step of the way. It was great!

Conquistadors: The Inca conquest is our greatest to date!

QUEEN LATIFA NODS, THE WOMEN MAKE NOTES, AND PIZARRO JOINS THE CONQUISTADORS  
ON THE SIDELINES. QUEEN LATIFA RISES.

Queen Latifa: Gentlemen, you've all had your say,  
and it's clear there's been a price to pay.  
Your successes came at quite a cost:  
all of you were at some point lost  
as you wandered through unknown territory.  
But one more man would tell his story.  
Come forward, Alvar Nuñez, please!

ALVAR NUNEZ CABEZA DE VACA ENTERS. HE WAS ONE OF FOUR SPANIARDS WHO SURVIVED  
THE NARVAEZ EXPEDITION TO FLORIDA, 1528, AND ONE OF THE FIRST WHITE MEN TO MEET  
THE NATIVE NORTH AMERICAN TRIBES FROM FLORIDA THROUGH MEXICO.

Cabeza de Vaca:

Ladies, I am on my knees  
with gratitude for your invitation.  
It was a blessing for our nation  
that I and three men survived a trip  
to Florida in Narvaez's ship.  
When the sea had swallowed our finest and best.  
the inland journey devoured the rest.  
Eight years we wandered, the sole white men  
in North America. Finally when  
we found our way to Mexico,  
the Spaniards dealt us the cruelest blow:  
our Indian guides were put in chains!  
The very tribes who crossed the plains  
and saved our lives, and loved us so!



I now call -- Estevanico!

ESTEVANICO STRIDES ONSTAGE. HE IS A TALL, WELL-BUILT AFRICAN FROM SPAIN (A MOOR, SAY THE HISTORIANS), DRESSED IN FEATHERS AND NATIVE FINERY. HE ACCOMPANIED CABEZA DE VACA AFTER THEIR SHIPWRECK AND, ALTHOUGH A FORMER SLAVE IN SPAIN, TOOK THE LEAD IN ESTABLISHING FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH THE INDIANS.

Estevanico:           You conquistadors think that you're so fine  
                          'cause you kept the native peoples in line  
                          with your guns and your swords. But I tell you now  
                          that Cabeza de Vaca and I knew how  
                          to pacify tribes by talking and trading  
                          and healing the sick, and gently persuading  
                          the Indian people to guide us along  
                          on our journey westward. By God, it was wrong  
                          to enslave the natives and betray their trust!

ESTEVANICO'S VOICE HAS RISEN IN INDIGNATION AT THESE LAST WORDS, AND CABEZA DE VACA NODS AGREEMENT. QUEEN LATIFA RISES.

Queen Latifa:        Señor, your conduct appears to be just.

THE CONQUISTADORS BOO AND HISS, BUT THE WOMEN APPLAUD.

Queen Latifa:        Ladies, the decision lies in your hands:  
                          Who are the true heroes?

QUEEN ANACAONA RISES TO RESPOND TO COLUMBUS.

Anacaona:           It seems clear to me that the women's voices  
                          are long overdue. And, sir, but for you  
                          I'd have lived a long life as an Arawak Queen.  
                          You, in the Hall of Fame? That is obscene!

WHILE THE CONQUISTADORS GASP IN ASTONISHMENT, ANACAONA'S VOICE RISES.

Anacaona:           Great and warm was my hospitality!

In thanks, you ordered me hanged from a tree!

ANACAONA SITS DOWN AND BEATRIZ RISES.

Beatriz:           Almirante Colón, I charge that you  
                      made your trips with money ill-gotten through  
                      confiscating the wealth of Jews!

COLUMBUS STICKS HIS TONGUE OUT AT BEATRIZ, WHO DOES NOT LOSE HER COMPOSURE  
BUT SITS DOWN WITH DIGNITY.

Queen Latifa:     Next on our list: does anyone choose  
                      Vasco Nuñez de Balboa?

CATALINA, THE CASTILLIAN LADY, RISES.

Catalina:           Certainly not!  
                      My husband and sons left home, and a lot  
                      of misery came upon Spanish homes  
                      when our men were gone. What woman roams  
                      on foot through unknown land? And then...  
                      (SHE PAUSES, TEARFULLY)  
                      I never saw my sons again!

CATALINA BREAKS DOWN AND IS COMFORTED BY THE OTHER WOMEN. MALINCHE RISES AND  
SINGLES OUT CORTES, WHO COMES FORWARD EAGERLY, CONFIDENT OF PRAISE.

Malinche:          Hernán Cortés!  
                      The “Marquis of Oaxaca” sounds terribly grand.  
                      You made me rich and gave me land.  
                      But do riches make immortality?  
                      Would you buy what others are given, free?  
                      No! You cannot enter the Hall of Fame  
                      with a sword or a bribe or a selfish aim.

CORTES STAGGERS BACKWARD, THUNDERSTRUCK. THEN HE QUICKLY RECOVERS AND CHARGES MALINCHE, BUT IS RESTRAINED BY THE OTHER CONQUISTADORS. IXCHEL, THE MAYAN GODDESS, RISES AND SINGLES OUT PEDRO DE ALVARADO.

Ixchel:                    Capitán Alvarado! You would enter this Hall?  
(ALVARADO ADVANCES, EXPECTANTLY)  
I charge you with unsurpassed cruelty in all  
the native lands you invaded. Your men  
killed Indian people for sport! And then,  
it was you who slew Chief Tecum Uman,  
Guatamala's great hero. In Tenochtitlán  
the Aztec dancers were killed in cold blood,  
which action of yours unleashed a flood  
of violence, continuing unto this day.  
You would enter the Hall of Fame, Señor? No way!

ALVARADO STARTS TO ADVANCE ON IXCHEL, HIS SWORD DRAWN, BUT THE WOMEN RISE UP AND THE MEN RESTRAIN HIM. ALVARADO THROWS HIS SWORD DOWN IN DISGUST AND STORMS OFF TO THE SIDELINE. QHORA CHINPU RISES AND CALLS ON PIZARRO.

Qhora Chinpu:        Francisco Pizarro, come forward, please!  
We Incas remember you very well. These  
are the gifts you bestowed on our ancient empire:  
smallpox, beheadings, and death by fire!  
Sure, we had riches of silver and gold,  
but the wealth we prized were traditions of old.  
You stripped us of both! And for this you'd be  
praised?  
Why, if you're called a hero, I'll be quite amazed!

PIZARRO CUSSES UNDER HIS BREATH AND RETURNS TO THE OTHER MEN WITH CLENCHED TEETH. QUEEN LATIFA RISES.

Queen Latifa:        You remaining two can expect the worst:  
Ponce de León, you claim to be first  
to reach Florida. Then Narvaez explored  
that "virgin" land. And you both ignored

the fact that the folks with the prior claim  
were the hunting and gathering tribes. It's a shame  
that you never tried cooperation.  
You might have learned much from their civilization.

ALL SEVEN WOMEN COME FORWARD IN A LINE AND ADDRESS THE AUDIENCE. THE RAPPERS  
AND THE CHORUS JOIN THEM ON EITHER SIDE.

Rappers:           Fourteen hundred and ninety two,  
the year it all began, and who  
deserves to be elected to  
the Conquistadors' Hall of Fame?

THE CONQUISTADORS FAN OUT THE LENGTH OF THE LINE AND PEER ANXIOUSLY OVER THE  
WOMEN'S SHOULDERS. THERE IS A DRUM ROLL AND QUEEN LATIFA STEPS FORWARD.

Queen Latifa:     We African peoples are proud that our race  
was represented. And in the first place,  
the explorer and guide, the star of our show,  
the former slave from Spain, Estevanico!

ESTEVANICO DANCES JOYFULLY FORWARD, BELLS JINGLING, FEATHERS BOBBING, AND BOWS  
TO THE LADIES AND THE AUDIENCE. ALL APPLAUD. BEATRIZ AND CATALINA STEP FORWARD.

Beatriz:           In spot number two, a man of our race  
who easily could have become a disgrace  
like the villains and tyrants he followed from Spain.

Catalina:          But through shipwreck, misfortune, hunger and pain,  
this man learned to live as the native tribes do.  
Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca, thank you!

CABEZA DE VACA COMES FORWARD AND BOWS TO ALL, THEN JOINS ESTEVANICO AND THE  
OTHERS IN THE LINE. THE CONQUISTADORS ATTEMPT TO BREAK THROUGH THE LINE, POKING  
THEIR HEADS THROUGH AT ABOUT WAIST HEIGHT OF THE LINE, PERHAPS WEARING MASKS  
OF FROWNING FACES, MAKING THEIR DISPLEASURE FELT. IXCHEL AND ANACAONA COME  
FORWARD.

Anacaona: Now there's one more voice that should be heard.

Ixchel: Frey Bartolomé has the final word.

LAS CASAS COMES IN FRONT OF THE LINE AND RAPS TO THE AUDIENCE. TURNING OCCASIONALLY TO THE LADIES.

Las Casas: I cannot be called a conquistador,  
for the battle I fought was to deplore  
all that the Spaniards did in the name  
of our holy Lord and the Kings of Spain.  
You won't find me in a history book,  
but I tell you, ladies, it certainly took  
a tremendous courage to launch an attack  
against the Conquest. And as I look back,  
God gave me long life and the strength for the fight:  
Resistance to tyranny! Might does not make right!

CHEERS AND APPLAUSE FROM THE LINE, WITH THE CONQUISTADORS' FACES AGAIN MAKING A BRIEF AND STORMY APPEARANCE BEFORE THEY ARE REPULSED. LAS CASAS JOINS THE OTHERS IN THE LINE, AND ALL STEP FORWARD FOR THE FINALE.

Rappers: La Conquista was a bloody game;  
No one it touched was ever the same.  
We celebrate in story and song  
those who learned to get along.  
We've elected them to our Hall of Fame.  
'though your history book doesn't mention their name.

Las Casas: History is written by the victors, you see.  
But it's only half the Reality!

CAST SINGS: The victors write the history, but it's only half the reality.

Rappers: Las Casas tried to stop them then

but the killing went on, again and again.  
Whole civilizations disappeared,  
conquistadors were loathed and feared.  
Though some books praise their bravery  
it's only half the reality.

CAST SINGS:: Victors write the history but it's only half the reality.

Rappers: 500 years was long ago  
but that's not the end of the story you know.  
Indigenous people everywhere today  
are still being pushed and shoved out of the way.  
They say it was Columbus' discovery  
but that's only half the reality.

CAST SINGS: Victors write the history but it's only half the reality.

FIN