

Jitters in San Diego

A One-Act Play
By Richard Medugno

Setting

A San Diego restaurant's deserted dining room.

Characters

Marisa, 20s-30s, a bride-to-be

Michele, 20's, her younger sister, maid-of-honor-to-be

Carlos, 20s-30s, a restaurant employee

(The scene opens at around 8am on a Saturday. It's quiet for a moment, then Marisa and Michele burst into the room. Marisa is in pain, holding the middle finger on her left hand, while Michele is trying to guide her into the room.)

MARISA

Ow, ow, ow... Oh, it hurts so bad!

MICHELE

Hello! Hello, anyone here?

MARISA

I can't believe I did that...Dang! It hurts so bad.

MICHELE

Hello! Anybody! We have an emergency here! We need some ice. How can no one be here?

MARISA

(Weeping.)

It's going to swell...

MICHELE

Don't worry, we'll get some ice...Here, sit here while I go get somebody.

MARISA

Ah, I can't believe it...

(Sitting down.)

MICHELE

I'll be right back.

MARISA

Where are you going?!

MICHELE

To find someone. Can't believe they left the place open and there's nobody here...

MARISA

What should I do?

MICHELE

Stick your arm up. And keep it up.

MARISA

What good will that do?

MICHELE

Keep your finger from swelling.

MARISA

It's throbbing.

MICHELE

(Starting off.)

Hello?! Anybody here?!

(Turns back before she leaves.)

Raise your hand!

MARISA

(She does so gingerly.)

I feel like an idiot.

MICHELE

Would you rather feel like an idiot or have a fat finger on your wedding day?

(MICHELE exits through a doorway.)

MARISA

Ah, I can't believe I did this...Today of all days...

(Entering from a different doorway, CARLOS carries a box of place settings.)

CARLOS

Hello?!

(Embarrassed, Marisa pulls her hand down.)

MARISA

Hi.

CARLOS

Are you all right?

MARISA
I hurt myself.

CARLOS
What happened?

MARISA
I closed the car door on my finger.

CARLOS
Ouch! How bad is it?

MARISA
Pretty bad. It's throbbing.

CARLOS
(Putting the box down.)
I'll get you some ice.

MARISA
(As he exits the way he came.)
Thank you! *(To herself.)* God! I'm such a klutz...

MICHELE
(Rushing back in.)
This whole place is empty!

MARISA
No, there's a guy. He went to get ice.

MICHELE
Oh. Good.

MARISA
Ah, look at my finger. I just paid sixty bucks for a
manicure.

MICHELE
(Looking at it and cringing.)
Oooohew!

MARISA
(Starts to cry again.)
It looks horrible, doesn't it?

MICHELE

Well, the nail looks fine...Don't worry, nobody's going to be looking at your knuckle.

MARISA

They will if it looks like a grapefruit.

MICHELE

It's not going to look like a grapefruit...a plum maybe.

(They both laugh.)

MARISA

Stop it, Michele, this isn't funny.

MICHELE

Right now it isn't...But when you tell your kids about it...

MARISA

Dave might change his mind when he sees this finger.

MICHELE

Knock it off. He's not marrying you for your finger.
(Pause.) Face, boobs, butt, and legs. That's all guys are interested in. Not fingers. Never heard of a finger guy.

MARISA

(Laughing.)

Stop it...

MICHELE

So where's the ice guy?

MARISA

I don't know. I wish he'd...It's throbbing again.

MICHELE

I'll go see if I can find him. Marisa! Hand up!

(MICHELE exits the doorway CARLOS exited.)

MARISA

(Resting her hand on her head.)

Ugh...Why do these things always happen to me?

(CARLOS re-enters from a different entrance.)

CARLOS

Hey, there, I'm sorry it looks like our ice machine is broken. I just checked our bar and there's none in there either. I have to call a repairman. Good thing you...well, it's not a good thing for you, but...Okay, I'm going to run across the street and get you some ice from the 7/11. By the way, who are you?

MARISA

Marisa Schwan. I'm getting married today. We're having our reception here.

CARLOS

Oh, you're kidding?! Oh, right, Schwan and Gordon reception for 150. That's what I'm setting up for...Why are you here? Aren't you supposed getting all dolled up?

MARISA

We came to set up the centerpieces and the seating cards.

CARLOS

Oh. Who's we?

MARISA

My sister. She's somewhere looking for you.

CARLOS

Looking for me?!

MARISA

Anyone with ice.

CARLOS

Hey, you know, I could get you a frozen steak from our freezer. We got frozen chicken or frozen salmon, too, if you like. You're not a vegetarian, are you? I think we have some frozen vegetables.

MARISA

Anything icy cold will be fine.

CARLOS

Okay, I'll check. I'll be right back.

(CARLOS *exits the doorway he came in.*)

MARISA

Okay, thank you.

(Michele *re-enters from a different doorway*)

MICHELE

I can't find anyone anywhere. Come on, let's go home.

MARISA

No. It's okay. The guy was just here.

MICHELE

Oh, hey, you're not delirious from the pain and just imagining a guy, are you?

MARISA

No! He's real and he just told me the ice machine is broken. So he's going to get some frozen food or something icy...

MICHELE

All right, as long as it's not imaginary. You need something real and cold. Hand up!

MARISA

Ha! Remember when you had an imaginary friend. Kelly. Remember her?

MICHELE

Oh, Kelly! Yeah...I was like four.

MARISA

Yeah. Whatever happened to her?

MICHELE

She moved away. Or maybe I unimagined her. She became kind of a bitch. She knows what she did.

MARISA

(*Laughing.*)

You didn't need a fake bitch, when you had me. A real one, right?

MICHELE

That's exactly what Kelly said!

MARISA

Stop making me laugh. It hurts more...

MICHELE

Sorry. Well, where's your invisible ice guy? What's his name?

MARISA

His name tag says "Carlos."

MICHELE

What's he look like? Dark, handsome, and mysterious?

MARISA

Yeah, he's kind of cute. Hey, didn't your Kelly have red hair?

MICHELE

Why do you remember more about my imaginary friend than I do? Maybe she was really your friend?

MARISA

Ah, no. I was capable of making real friends.

MICHELE

Ah, the bitch is back. Okay, I need to do something. Should I go look for "Carlos"?

MARISA

No. Stay here. He'll be back...Do you think I should go to hospital?

MICHELE

(Looking at her finger.)

I don't know, Maris. It looks pretty bad, but if it's broken, they'll just put a splint on it.

MARISA

Yeah...And I don't have time to sit in Emergency...Should I call Dave?

MICHELE

No, it's bad luck for the bride to talk to the groom on their wedding day.

MARISA

Really? I thought it was just to not see each other before the ceremony.

MICHELE

Whatever. There should be no contact.

MARISA

Who says?

MICHELE

Ah...Kelly. It was the last thing she told me before she disappeared.

MARISA

(Laughing.)

Shut up!....Haha-oooh, it's hurts.

(Enters CARLOS with an industrial-size bag of frozen peas.)

CARLOS

Okay, Marisa, I got something. Sorry it took so long. Here ya go.

MICHELE

Wow, he is cute and he knows your name? *(To CARLOS.)* Hi.

CARLOS

Hi. It's frozen peas.

MARISA

Thanks. *(Putting the bag of peas on her hand.)* Ahhhh...
(MICHELE is giggling.) What's so funny?

MICHELE

At first, I thought he said frozen pee.

MARISA

(Laughing.)

Ew! *(To CARLOS)* This is my sister Michele. She's a little silly today.

CARLOS

Sure, it's not every day your sister gets married.

MICHELE

And closes her finger in a car door.

MARISA

Ah, it's starting to feel better now. Thank you. I really appreciate it, Carlos

CARLOS

No problem...

MICHELE

Okay, so I'm gonna get the centerpieces from the car.
(Exiting) Be right back.

MARISA

Okay. Don't forget the seating cards.

CARLOS

Anything else I can get you?

MARISA

No, thank you. I'm just going to sit here for a few minutes. I'm a little nauseous.

CARLOS

Maybe I should get a bucket.

MARISA

No. I'll be all right in a minute.

CARLOS

Okay. I'll finish setting up your room.

(Begins unpacking the place settings)

So today's the big day, huh?

MARISA

Yeah.

CARLOS

Your fiancée is a very lucky man.

MARISA

Thanks.

CARLOS
What's his name?

MARISA
David.

CARLOS
Where'd you guys meet?

MARISA
College.

CARLOS
Nice...I wish I was marrying you.

MARISA
Me? We just meet!

CARLOS
I know, but you're very beautiful. And I wish I was
marrying you.

*(MARISA is a bit taken aback as MICHELE re-
enters a box of centerpieces.)*

MARISA
Are you teasing me?

MICHELE
You're not going to believe this...

MARISA
What?

MICHELE
The guest seating cards are blowing all over the parking
lot.

MARISA
Oh, no, I was holding them in my other hand. I must have
let go of them when I closed the door on my finger. Dang!

MICHELE
What should we do? Go home and print them up again?

MARISA

Unless you think we can pick them all up?

MICHELE

No way. Some have already blown into Mission Bay. Right now I think there's a pelican with Grandma Schwan's card in its beak.

MARISA

In it's bill. Not a beak. It's a bill.

MICHELE

Can you tell she's a pre-school teacher? Whatever! Who cares?! I'm going home. (*Exiting.*) I'll be back as soon as I can.

MARISA

(*Yelling after her.*)

Okay. But calm down...Or you'll end up like me.

CARLOS

She's cute.

MARISA

Yes, she is...

CARLOS

And really attractive, like you.

MARISA

You're just saying that because it's my wedding day.

CARLOS

I know. I think you're probably beautiful everyday.

MARISA

Are you seriously hitting on me?

CARLOS

(*Distributing silverware.*)

No. Just stating the obvious.

MARISA

You're very sweet, Carlos. And calm. You have a very calming effect. Do you know that?

CARLOS

Yeah, people tell me I'm pretty laid back.

MARISA

Can you help me with the centerpieces?

CARLOS

Sure. Don't get up. Tell me what to do and I'll do it. Just keep your finger wrapped up.

MARISA

Okay. Thanks. *(Pause.)* So can I ask you a question?

CARLOS

Sure.

MARISA

Do you think I'm too young to be getting married?

CARLOS

Not if you're marrying the right guy. Are you marrying the right guy? Is Dave the right guy?

MARISA

I think so.

CARLOS

Then I guess you're not too young.

MARISA

I do feel nervous, though.

CARLOS

Cold feet?

MARISA

No, just cold fingers. *(They laugh. Pause.)* It's a big step.

CARLOS

It is. Jitters. That's all. That's normal.

MARISA

Yeah.

CARLOS

Okay, tell me what to do.

MARISA

You mean, how to meet someone you want to marry?

CARLOS

(Laughing.)

No. What should I do to set up these centerpieces?

MARISA

Oh. Okay. Duh. You just need to put the candles inside the glass-thingies and then stick in the flowers.

CARLOS

Okay, I can handle that. Okay, now, tell me how I can meet someone as lovely as you.

MARISA

You know, you're really making me blush. Are you like this with all the women who come in here?

CARLOS

Nope. Just the brides. *(Finishes a center piece.)* How's this?

MARISA

Good. Good job. *(Giggling.)* Now, you just need to do 14 more.

CARLOS

No problem. How's your finger now?

(She peeks under the bag o' peas.)

MARISA

Not so red anymore. Maybe it's not swelling.

CARLOS

Good. So tell me how you met David and how you knew he was the one.

MARISA

Well, we meet about three years ago at San Diego State. He was nice and friendly and tall. We kept running into each other. It was weird.

CARLOS

Maybe he was stalking you?

MARISA

No! (*Laughing.*) It was just happenstance.

CARLOS

That's what you think. But guys are sneaky.

MARISA

Well, if it was planned, Dave was good at making it seem like an accident.

CARLOS

Dave was good. How many times did this happen before he finally asked you out?

MARISA

I don't know, six or seven.

CARLOS

Seven?! Dave's good and slow.

MARISA

He's not slow. He was just a little shy.

CARLOS

Where was your first date?

MARISA

Church.

CARLOS

Church?!

MARISA

(*Laughing.*)

No! Wait it wasn't church, it was after a bible study class.

CARLOS

Oh. So where did he take you?

MARISA

We just went to a Denny's.

CARLOS

Denny's?! Oh, my God, I used to work at Denny's.

MARISA

Which one?

CARLOS

The one in Kearney Mesa.

MARISA

Yeah, that was the one.

CARLOS

Really? Weird.

MARISA

Yeah. We sat and talked for hours.

CARLOS

I think I waited on you guys. You sat for hours in a booth and then he left a lousy tip.

MARISA

(Laughing.)

No!

CARLOS

Is Dave a lousy tipper? C'mon, be honest.

MARISA

Yeah, kinda...

CARLOS

Yep! I waited on you guys.

MARISA

No, you didn't.

CARLOS

How do you know?

MARISA

Because I would've remembered you.

CARLOS

Nah, you only had eyes for Dave, the love of your life...But you're probably right. I would've remembered you...Someone as stunning as you...

MARISA

You're doing it again.

CARLOS

I know.

MARISA

Why?! How can you hit on me when you know I'm going to be married in a few hours?

CARLOS

I don't know. Maybe I'm just having fun. Maybe I'm practicing. Or maybe Dave asked me to test you. Ha! (Pause.) Are you sure you don't want to get to know me better and marry me? Maybe we could run away together. Wouldn't that be cool if I came to your wedding and I started banging on the church doors and yelling "Marisa! Marisa! Marisa, say I don't! Say I don't!"

MARISA

I think I saw that movie.

CARLOS

And then everyone in the church is looking at me like I'm loco and then you pick up your dress and you start running down the aisle and Dave's eyes are popping out of his head and he starts running after you. And then you run into my arms and I pick you up and start haulin' butt up the street with you, carrying you, and everybody is chasing after us in slow motion, you know, and then we jump on a city bus and I yell at the driver to "Step on it!" And then we run to the back of the bus and we start kissing passionately in the backseat as the bus drives away. And I open one eye while we're kissing and I see Dave out the back window and he's shaking his fist at me as he grows smaller and smaller in the distance. He's giving me the finger. Actually both fingers. And I think about giving him the finger back, but then I think he's got a right to be angry because he just lost the greatest girl in the world. And I feel some compassion for the dude and I flash him the peace sign. And then the next thing we know, we're in Santa Barbara making love on the beach and we spend the rest of our lives deeply

in love, happy and thankful that you smashed your finger in your car door so that we would have this special time to spend together and you could avoid making the biggest mistake of your life.

(He falls to his knees in front of her, tenderly takes her cold hand and gently kisses the damaged finger.)

So what do you think?

MARISA

Wow.

CARLOS

Want to run away with me?

MARISA

Ah, no. Sorry. But it would be romantic, and if I weren't really, really sure...I'd...

CARLOS

You'd go out with me then, if you weren't...?

MARISA

Oh, yes. But I'm really, really sure I want to marry Dave.

CARLOS

Good. I'm glad.

MARISA

You are?

CARLOS

Yeah. I'm happy for you. I just wanted to test you, you know, because lots of people tie the knot when they shouldn't.

MARISA

What are you? Some kind of pre-marriage counselor or something?

CARLOS

No, just a guy who works in a restaurant who likes talking to beautiful women. Like I said, I was just testing you.

MARISA

But why?

CARLOS

The finger. There's no accidents. Everything happens for a reason.

MARISA

What are you saying? Do you think I did this on purpose?

CARLOS

I don't know. Why do you think you closed your door on your finger?

MARISA

Because I was just too excited because it's my wedding day and because I was careless!

CARLOS

All sounds reasonable. (*Pause.*) So you really want to get married today?

MARISA

(*After a long moment.*)

I do.

CARLOS

Good for you. So in twenty years when you come back here to celebrate your anniversary and I own this place and your hubby is fat and gray, I want you to remember this conversation and how much you loved him today. Okay?

MARISA

Okay.

CARLOS

Now, what about me?

MARISA

What about you?

CARLOS

Where can I meet someone like you?

(*Enters MICHELE in a rush.*)

MICHELE

(Rubbing her forehead.)

Oh, my God! You're going to kill me. I just rammed your car into a light post in the parking lot.

MARISA

You've met my sister, right? *(She starts laughing.)*

MICHELE

What?! What's so freakin' funny? I bumped my head.

CARLOS

Ah, come here, sit down. *(He guides her.)* I'll get another bag of frozen peas.

(He dashes off.)

MICHELE

He's really sweet.

MARISA

Yes, he is. Do you like him?

MICHELE

I do.

Lights out.

CURTAIN.