
FLOORSHOW: DOÑA
SOL AND HER
TRAINED DOG

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

FLOORSHOW: DOÑA SOL AND HER TRAINED DOG was first produced by Brooklyn Playworks on 22 October 1987. The cast and creative contributors were:

SOL	Katherine Marie Loague
SON	Michael Caron
WOMAN	Stacie Linardos
GIRL	Daphne Rubin-Vega
BOY	Carlos Linares
CUSTOMER	Wellington Santos
CUSTOMER/NURSE	Christine Vanacore
<i>Director</i>	Phylis Ward Fox
<i>Choreography</i>	Michael Caron
<i>Sets and costumes</i>	Neil Jacob
<i>Lights</i>	Chris Kondek
<i>Sound</i>	David Ravel
<i>Stage manager</i>	Rona Bern

FLOORSHOW: DOÑA SOL AND HER TRAINED DOG was subsequently produced by Latino Chicago. The cast and creative contributors were:

SOL	Laura Ceron
SON	Edward Torres
WOMAN	Michelle Banks
BOY	Daniel Sanchez
GIRL	Justina Machado
NUN	Laurie Martinez
<i>Various players</i>	Gregorio Gomez
	Frank Rosario
<i>Director</i>	Juan Ramirez
<i>Costume design</i>	Michelle Banks
<i>Light design</i>	Juan Ramirez/Frankie Davila
<i>Sound design</i>	Juan Ramirez/Edward Torres
<i>Assistant director</i>	Michael Torres

CHARACTERS

SOL

SON

WOMAN

GIRL, WOMAN *as a child*

BOY, SON *as a child*

Five people to play all other roles

(Lights rise. Low, sensual music is heard. The SON's chant begins in the background, rising and falling as in a wave.)

SON: I didn't kill her, I didn't kill her, I didn't kill her, I didn't kill her,
I didn't kill her, I didn't kill her, I didn't kill her, I didn't kill her, I didn't
kill her, I didn't kill her.

WOMAN: Oh, yes you did.

SON: I didn't kill her.

WOMAN: If you didn't, who did?

SON: I didn't kill her.

WOMAN: But you had to.

SON: I didn't kill her.

WOMAN: We all saw it.

SON: I didn't kill her.

WOMAN: Prove it.

SON: I didn't kill her, I didn't kill her, I didn't kill her, I didn't kill her,
I didn't kill her, I didn't kill her.

(Lights up slowly on a small, cheaply furnished room. There is a bed, a table with a loaf of bread and a knife, and off to the side a closet. Opposite the closet there is a vanity table with a mirror and a bench. Seated at the vanity is SOL, a young woman who is busy making herself beautiful.)

(Her two children are helping her get ready. The BOY (11) is very protective of his little sister (GIRL, age 9), who is deaf, dumb, and blind. He puts the brush in her hand and guides it through their mother's hair.)

BOY: See how soft?

(A knock is heard. SOL leads the BOY, who leads the GIRL, into the closet. SOL gives the BOY a loaf of bread and puts her children into the closet. The lights dim. In the silhouette we see SOL take off her robe and a MAN enter. He begins to kiss her. The lights fade on them and come up on the closet door. The BOY is shaking the closet door, begging to be let out.)

BOY: Sol! Sol!

(The closet moves forward. The door bursts open and now the BOY is a MAN in a straight jacket. He is alone. His sister is gone. Lights dim on him and come up on another part of the stage. SOL is crouched behind a door. Her hands are covered in

blood. *The lifeless body of her daughter lies next to her. An angry mob approaches her home.*)

#1: Murderer!

#2: Whore! Come out and pay for your sins.

(SOL cowers behind the door.)

#3: Only by purging her sin can we hope to cleanse this town.

#4: She has shamed us.

(The mob's fury is uncontainable.)

#1: Come out you whore! It doesn't matter where you hide. We will find you.

(SOL looks at her daughter's inert body. She slowly stands and faces the door. Before she exits she absentmindedly wipes her daughter's blood off her hands and onto her chest. She opens the door. The crowd becomes silent and faces her.)

SOL: Here I am. Well? You've been calling loud enough for me.

(#2 breaks from the crowd and slaps SOL. Immediately, he drops to his knees.)

#2: *(Screaming)* I can't see! I can't see! She's blinded me.

#1: She's a witch.

#3: Look at her. She's covered in blood.

#4: Her daughter's blood.

#2: Someone please help me. Please.

(SOL approaches #2. The crowd fearfully backs away. She touches his eyes.)

SOL: You can see.

(SOL faints. #2 opens his eyes.)

#2: I can see! I can see!

#1: She's a saint.

#5: She's cured him.

(The crowd gathers around SOL's prone body.)

#4: Did you see how the blood on her chest glowed when she performed her miracle?

#3: She is one of God's chosen.

#1: Look at her. So beautiful.

#5: A goddess.

(#2 picks up SOL.)

#2: An altar. We must build an altar for our Doña Sol. Where she may preach to us and show us the way.

(The others begin building an altar for SOL.)

#5: She can perform miracles. She will set us free.

(The crowd begins to pray. We hear an occasional "Doña Sol" now and then. The GIRL gets up; the dry blood is still on her chest. She looks out of SOL's door and sees the crowd. She approaches them and points to her blood, but no one pays any attention. When the altar is finished, #2 places SOL on top of it. SOL regains consciousness and the crowd drops to its knees in prayer for her. SOL is like a cat, ready to flee, until she realizes the prayers are for her. She smiles and sits regally on her throne. The GIRL comes and lays at her feet. Lights out. Lights rise on SON, who is sitting on a bare floor in a straightjacket.)

SON: Hypocrites.

(WOMAN appears.)

WOMAN: She really thought she killed me.

SON: I did, too.

WOMAN: And from my death a saint was born.

SON: Those people were so stupid. Willing to believe anything as long as it was impossible.

WOMAN: Why did she kill me?

SON: She could barely take care of herself, let alone two children.

WOMAN: But you took care of me.

SON: For always.

WOMAN: And you let her kill me.

SON: She looked me up; like now. Got me out of her way.

WOMAN: Why didn't she put us away together? Like she always did.

SON: Because you were broken. You were her broken doll. You couldn't see or hear or speak. You were so pretty, but you couldn't do anything. And I was born with a hole in my heart. A tiny little hole that prevented me from doing anything. So out of two broken children she made a whole one. She gave me your heart. My little sister's heart.

WOMAN: I'll always be better than you.

SON: I don't care.

WOMAN: Yes, you do. Even without a heart, without my sight... *(She covers his eyes.)* ...my voice... *(She covers his mouth.)* ...or my hearing... *(She covers his ears.)* ...I will always be better than you.

SON: I want to be good. Please help me. Don't make me jealous of you.

(The WOMAN disappears as #1 enters as a NUN.)

NUN: Your mother is here to see you. *(No response)* I said your mother is here to see you. You should be very proud. She's taken time out from her busy schedule to see you. You should be very proud. Anyone would want to trade places with you right now.

(The NUN exits. SOL enters. She is wearing a house dress. Her hair is pulled back and she wears no make-up. She is smoking a cigar.)

SOL: They tell me you're not eating. Hey this place is expensive, you might as well eat the food they give you. It's all paid for, Baby. You look better, you know. Soon you can come home. I'm dying to have you back with me, Baby. I miss you so much. The way only a mother can miss her son. Her only child.

(The SON shifts away from SOL.)

SOL: Everything's going so good for us. Why did you have to crack up like that, Baby? I love you, Baby. You're my best friend. You're the only man in my life, you know that, right? I want you to come home. And I want you to get well. *(She gently caresses his head.)* Will you do that for Mami? I'm such a big baby! I've had to sleep with the lights on since you've been gone.

SON: La bendición.

SOL: May God bless you and protect you.

(SOL leaves. The lights follow her as she goes to her consultation area, which consists of a table and two chairs. Seated by the table with her back to the audience is the first in a series of customers. SOL sits facing the audience. She begins shuffling a deck of cards.)

CUSTOMER: Oh please, Doña Sol, I need your help.

SOL: Everyone needs Doña Sol's help. Cut.

(CUSTOMER cuts the deck.)

CUSTOMER: It's my husband

SOL: I know what's wrong. Your husband has lost interest in you. A woman has come between you.

CUSTOMER: Yes.

SOL: A beautiful woman. *(She puts the deck on the table.)* Cut into three piles.

(CUSTOMER does. SOL takes the pile on the right and pushes the other two aside. She places the cards, face up, one by one in a circle formation.)

SOL: He's seen other women before.

CUSTOMER: Yes.

SOL: But this one's different. She's carrying his child.

CUSTOMER: Please, no.

SOL: He wants to marry her. Has he asked you for a divorce?

CUSTOMER: No. I'm not even supposed to know about the other woman.

SOL: As if kissed lips could hold a secret. This woman called you.

CUSTOMER: Yes. She said she was going to take him away from me.

SOL: No great loss.

CUSTOMER: I have children, Doña Sol.

SOL: Ah yes, children. It's too late to correct that mistake. We'll have to take care of this woman, won't we? Her name is Leyda.

(CUSTOMER nervously nods her head.)

SOL: Write her name in your blood. Prick your finger and write her name on a piece of paper. Then put it in a glass full of water, make sure the glass is made of plastic, and put it in your freezer. Never take it out. Next, take a lock—

CUSTOMER: A lock?

SOL: Like any lock. Tie something of your husband's around it and throw it into the sea. Make sure you keep the key. He'll stay put with you where he belongs.

CUSTOMER: Oh, thank you. You don't know the relief I feel. How much do I owe you?

SOL: Whatever you feel is fair.

(CUSTOMER pays SOL and kisses her hand.)

SOL: Send the next one in.

(CUSTOMER exits. Another enters and sits. SOL is already shuffling her cards.)

SOL: Sit. You're having trouble...you're having trouble with your son. I may not be the best person to help you. My son is also very ill. We share that you and I. But yours, yours will recuperate. Mine. My baby. He lies. He's crazy. I think someone who was jealous of me put a curse on him. He makes up these incredible lies, and he knows they're lies. He knows they hurt me. Why does he want to hurt me? I love him. *(She begins to weep.)* Go home. Tell them all to go home.

(CUSTOMER exits as SOL weeps. SON is about to caress SOL's head when she abruptly leaves. Enter NUN, who is busy studying SON's chart. Off to the side,

in a lower light, is a long narrow platform that is slightly higher than waist level. It is a diner.)

NUN: You're cured now. *(She smiles and offers her hand. The SON clumsily takes her hand.)* You're a good boy.

(The NUN exits. Lights dim on SON and rise on diner. SON enters, repeating softly to himself:)

SON: I'm a good boy. I'm a good boy.

(SON stands by someone and continues his soft chant. He/she gives him a dirty look and moves away. Someone else takes the place. Building his courage:)

SON: I'm a good boy. I'm a good boy. I'm good.... It's a beautiful day today, isn't it. Not for everybody, of course, but me, I like a little rain. It looks like it's going to rain again, huh? Yeah. Do you want me to leave you alone? Can I buy you a cup of coffee? One coffee, please. If everyone would just discuss their differences over coffee there would be no more problems. It's the sensible thing to do. The adult thing.

(No one hears anything the SON is saying. #2 turns his back on SON, who then goes to #3.)

SON: I'm a good boy. One coffee for my friend, please. I'm not a boy. I'm a man; but if you asked me to prove it I couldn't. A nice boy. Never in the way. When Sol introduces me that way I feel I have to break something, throw a fit. Break the tension of being good. Everybody expects me to be good, but what if I'm not good enough?

(#4 enters. SON runs to him/her.)

SON: You think I'm a good boy, don't you? Coffee please. You've never seen me before, but I'm a good boy; wouldn't you say? Please, wouldn't you say? Have another cup, on me. I'm a good boy. Right? Who else buys you this much coffee? Tell me, who?! *(SON runs angrily to #1.)* It's Doña Sol, isn't it? So perfect. So beautiful. Cures your ills. Make you forget about me and all my coffee. All my sins. I love her, but she can't love a sinner. Say you forgive me. Sure, you drink my coffee but you won't absolve my sins. Say I'm a good boy, say I'm a good boy and I'll never love Doña Sol again.

(#5 enters.)

SON: Can I buy you some coffee, a sandwich, ice cream? What do you want? Just tell me what you want and I'll do it.

(Lights out. Lights up on DOÑA SOL's present-day bedroom. There must be a clear distinction between the bedroom of her past and of her present. SOL is dressed as before—simple housecoat, no make-up, and the ever-present cigar. The diner counter has become her bed and her vanity is off to the side. SOL runs up to SON and embraces him. For his part, he's not all too sure how he got there.)

SOL: Oh, Baby, I've missed you so much. Give Sol a kiss.

SON: Uh, sure, Mami.

SOL: Ugh. Don't call me Mami. I'm young enough to be your sister.

SON: You look like shit, Sol.

SOL: It's too bad they didn't put a straightjacket on your mouth.

SON: It's true. You don't take care of yourself anymore.

SOL: Who have I got to look good for?

SON: Me.

SOL: *(Not hearing him)* When you're in my line of work you dress down.

(She begins to turn down the bed.)

SON: If you dress at all.

SOL: I was born into this, you know? Like you. What's the matter, too good to perform miracles?

SON: Not good enough.

SOL: Don't be silly, Baby.

(After SOL is done with the bed, she places a sheet and pillow on the floor at the foot of the bed for the SON.)

SON: I can't fake it like you can.

SOL: I don't fake shit.

SON: I can't be honest like you can.

SOL: You're okay.

SON: I'm ugly.

SOL: Of course you're ugly. You're my son.

SON: You're beautiful. The most beautiful woman in the world.

SOL: You're sweet, Baby. A fine son. You don't smoke or drink.

SON: I have a weak stomach. They make me nauseous.

SOL: You go to church every Sunday.

SON: I made a promise to go.

(SOL sits at her vanity and begins to put on cold cream and get ready for bed. WOMAN is on the other side of the vanity as SOL's mirror image, only she is doing the exact opposite of SOL—WOMAN is applying make-up and fixing her hair. SOL and SON don't hear each other.)

SOL: Everyone would always brag to me about how they'd see you going off to church on Sunday. How you always went to the very first Mass at six a.m. And it wouldn't matter how late we'd been up the night before. I would hear you as you practically crawled out with the sun. Just so you could be the first one in church to greet God. That got me a lot of customers, Baby.

SON: I'd wake up at five-fifteen a.m. and go to the first Mass on Sunday. The first Mass was the shortest one. I could be in and out in half an hour. On my way to church once, a couple stopped me. I thought they needed directions so I stopped to help. The man grabbed my penis and laughed, "It's so small," and his woman laughed and called me ugly. I could never understand how God could let that happen to someone going to church. After that I always wore the tightest pants I had to church.

SOL: The priest would tease me and tell me he should give you your own set of keys to the church. He was crazy about me, Baby.

SON: I had to go to church because I had promised God that if the kids at school would stop making fun of me I would go to church.

SOL: Well, let's go to sleep, Baby. Tomorrow is a big day. Got to show you off to everyone. Let them see how I cured my baby. My ugly little baby.

(SOL and the WOMAN stand. SOL gets into bed and makes herself comfortable.)

SOL: I want to get an early start tomorrow. None of your dawdling in front of the bathroom mirror. Anyone would think you were a girl, staring at yourself in the bathroom mirror. You're not a girl, are you, Baby?

SON: *(Mesmerized by the WOMAN)* No, Sol.

SOL: Come give Sol a kiss.

(SON does not move.)

SOL: Baby.

SON: When the lights are out.

SOL: I don't look that bad, Baby.

(SOL lays back. WOMAN approaches SON. She lays on the bed with her feet by SOL's head and her own head inches from SON. She begins to fondle him. He loses himself in her. They kiss. Lights fade.)

SOL: *(Voice only)* How about my kiss, Baby?

(From the darkness SON comes to the edge of the stage.)

SON: She never asked me why I stare into the bathroom mirror. I knew she wouldn't. Some answers don't interest her. I don't see anything in the mirror. Not my reflection or my half-awake eyes that beg me to have mercy on them. I just don't see anything. But I'm not looking for anything either.

I only know that when the water hits me I'll be officially awake; and I don't want to be. When my eyes are open everything gets taken away from me. You know, there's a moment when you're between being awake and being asleep, and your mind sort of freaks out because you can't move. Can't even open your eyes; like a coma. I always think I'm going to die if I don't wake up. I struggle so hard to move. And then I become exhausted and give up. That moment when I give up, when I recognize that the struggle is over and I've lost; that moment is delicious.

(Lights up on stage. On one side of the stage are SOL and her worshippers. They are kneeling before her. She is shuffling cards and smoking a cigar. The worshippers are chanting her name and throwing out questions to her. Next to DOÑA SOL is the closet with its side facing the audience. The SON is inside, holding a box which he proceeds to open. The chant of "Doña Sol" is constant throughout this scene.)

#1: I have lost my wife.

SOL: I will make her return to you.

(The SON takes out an inflatable doll from the box. He begins to inflate it.)

#2: I have lost my house.

SOL: I will get it back for you.

(The SON is anxious about being caught. He blows up the doll hysterically.)

#3: What will the number be tomorrow, Doña Sol?

SOL: Hey, show a little more respect.

#4: Don't ever leave us, Doña Sol.

SOL: Where would I go?

#5: I'm dying, Doña Sol.

SOL: You won't die.

#1: I can't breathe.

SOL: You can breathe.

#2: I can't cry.

SOL: And you can cry.

(The chanting builds in volume. The SON is about finished inflating his doll. It now becomes clear that it is a female sex doll. The SON joins in the "Doña Sol" chant. SOL silences her worshippers.)

SOL: My children, that's enough. Listen to me. I have a special surprise for you.

(The SON's chant continues nonstop, his volume rising as he caresses the doll.)

SOL: You can hear him. Yes, my son has come home. I have cured him. He is here to take his rightful place next to me. Listen to him. There is true passion! There is true belief! Join him all of you.

(Her worshippers join in SON's feverish chant.)

SOL: We must make him feel welcome. He has been away too long. My son. My son. My son.

(Lights on SOL fade as the "Doña Sol" chant builds. As the SON reaches his climax he screams out his mother's name.)

SON: Sol!

(The chant fades. Blackout. Lights up on closet. SOL is inside holding a mostly deflated male doll.)

SOL: There is nothing new under the sun, Baby. We've all seen it. Only I pretend to look the other way as I let my only child O D on desire. Let him feel guilty for what he feels. When he feels guilty he's indebted to me. Guilt is nine-tenths of the law. Nice boy. His father would say that he would beat manhood into him so my boy naturally assumes that being a man is painful. Then the man up and leaves without telling the little shit how to be a man. My son didn't know. He still doesn't know. Look at him. *(She holds up the doll.)* Is he half-empty or half-full? For an only child both of my children have given me nothing but heartache. And don't think I don't tell him, Baby.

(Under the last two lines the GIRL appears on the other side of the closet. She repeats softly under SOL's lines and twice on her own.)

GIRL: If you believe I exist, I existed.

(Lights fade over closet and rise on SOL's consultation area. SON is sitting shuffling cards, smoking a cigar. A CUSTOMER sits, back to the audience, facing SON.)

SON: Cut the cards into three equal piles starting from the left.

CUSTOMER: I want to find out who's put the evil eye on me.

(The SON takes the pile on the left and pushes the other two aside.)

SON: Did you bring a handkerchief?

CUSTOMER: Yes.

SON: It must be a silk handkerchief.

CUSTOMER: It is.

(The CUSTOMER takes it out of his pocket.)

SON: Tie it around your eyes.

(The CUSTOMER does.)

SON: Now I can see.

(SOL enters.)

SOL: You're padding your part, Baby.

SON: I was keeping your cards warm.

SOL: So now you're a card-warmer?

(SON gets up. SOL sits with SON standing behind her. SOL notices a CUSTOMER.)

SOL: What's this?

CUSTOMER: Someone has put the evil eye on me.

SOL: (*Sarcastic*) And you'd rather not see them.

CUSTOMER: Your son, Doña Sol—

SOL: Take it off.

SON: He'll see us.

SOL: That's silk, isn't it?

CUSTOMER: Yes, Doña Sol.

SOL: I love silk. May I?

(SOL takes it from CUSTOMER and wraps it around her neck. SON will take an end in each hand and will begin to very slowly pull at them.)

SOL: I see a lot of jealousy in your path. You're the kind of person who inspires jealousy.

CUSTOMER: That's true.

SOL: You're a hard worker. You mind your own business. Yet this person is jealous of you. Do you know where jealousy comes from?

SON: Fear.

SOL: This person is afraid of you. There's a part of you that reminds them too much of themselves. You frighten them.

CUSTOMER: I haven't done anything to anyone.

SOL: Sometimes that's enough reason. (SOL looks up at SON.) Tighter, Baby. I can still breathe.

(The SON drops his hands to his sides.)

CUSTOMER: What can I do?

SON: Move away.

SOL: And let the enemy win?

CUSTOMER: I will do whatever you say, Doña Sol.

SON: Put the evil eye right back on them.

SOL: Overzealous amateur.

SON: Then?

SOL: Isn't your father calling you?

SON: Or maybe it's my sister.

SOL: It can't be your sister. You killed her long ago.

CUSTOMER: I will do whatever you say, Doña Sol.

SOL: Whatever I say.

SON: He doesn't know any better.

SOL: But you do.

CUSTOMER: I will do whatever you say, Doña Sol.

SOL: Exactly as I say.

CUSTOMER: Whatever you say, Doña Sol.

SOL: (*Referring to CUSTOMER.*) He's a good son.

SON: (*Defensively*) Me, too. I am, too.

SOL: Did you finish your breakfast?

SON: Yes, Mom, and I walked the dog.

SOL: Good boy.

SON: I have to go to school now.

SOL: Did you wash behind your ears?

SON: Yes, Mommy.

SOL: You come straight home from school. You know how your father and I worry. There are a lot of crazies out there.

SON: I love you, Mommy.

SOL: I love you too, Beaver.

CUSTOMER: Doña Sol?

SOL: I know who is responsible for your evil eye. Go home, I'll take care of it.

CUSTOMER: Bless you, Doña Sol, and your fine son.

SOL: Don't encourage him.

CUSTOMER: How much do I owe you?

SOL & SON: Whatever you feel is right.

(*The CUSTOMER pays and exits.*)