For the Love of Lina

A Ten-Minute Play

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For the Love of Lina, Copyright 2012.

Playwright notes: While the names of the characters are real, the events in this play, to the best of my knowledge, are purely fictional.

CHARACTERS

Lina Lovaton Pittaluga – 19-year-old. Upper-class debutante. Future mistress of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo. Elegant, young, lithe, tall, regal, and beautiful. She is the only daughter of a very powerful attorney in the capital and a member of the old aristocracy of Santo Domingo. With the assistance of Trujillo’s influence as ruler, she was (“the elegant female mascot”) named the reigning Queen of the 1937 Carnival in Dominican Republic.

Rafael Leonidas Trujillo – 48 years old. Former Commander of the National Army, he is in the seventh year of his rule over the Dominican Republic. He is of humble origins. Trujillo joined the military when he was 18 and spent his entire adult life forming an alliance to service his professional and personal goals.

He is currently married to his third wife, Marie Martinez de Trujillo. Trujillo has been waging a long campaign to win over Lina’s affections.

INT. SITTING ROOM - DOMINICAN REPUBLIC - OCTOBER 3, 1937

Lina Lovaton Pittaluga, 19-year-old, paces back and forth wringing her hands.

She is a beautiful, fair-skinned Dominican woman, wearing a long white tulle gown, and her hair is pinned up in a stylish chignon.

There is a knock at her door.
Lina sits down slowly and arranges her gown around her ankles with great care.

There is another knock at the door.

She slowly looks up. Her face is a fixed in an expression that is absolutely cold and disdainful.

LINA
Enter.

Enter: Rafael Leonidas Trujillo, 48-years-old, male, medium height. He has grey hair at his temples, and a stature formed by years of military service. He has thick dark eyebrows and a moustache slightly reminiscent of Hitler’s.

Rafael slowly closes the door behind him and stands at the door, staring at Lina.

Lina’s chin comes up a notch as she stares him down.

RAFAEL
Mi amor.

LINA
(quietly)
Where are they?

RAFAEL
Lina, my queen, this is how you greet me?

Lina silently watches as Rafael approaches her.

RAFAEL (CONT’D)
You don’t apologize for upsetting me?

LINA
Hah! Everything upsets you. Like I care.

RAFAEL
You should not talk to me like that, mi amor.

LINA
I will talk to you anyway I choose. Where is my doorman? My cook? My maids? Where is my dresser? Do you have any idea how difficult it is to dress oneself or style one’s own hair?
RAFAEL
This difficulty will pass my love.

LINA
Rafael Leonidas Trujillo! Where are they?!

RAFAEL
Lina . . .

LINA
First you sent Esteban to Haiti and you get him killed.

RAFAEL
Yes, your little “Haitian-African-want-to-be Dominicano” suitor got caught spying in his parents’ motherland. Is it my fault he could not do his job well?

LINA
You are such an egomaniacal animal.

RAFAEL
I like the animal part, mi amor, but the ego . . . What is that?

LINA
You want to stake your claim to everything. Our capital, Santo Domingo - is now Ciudad Trujillo. The highest peak in our country, Pico Duarte, you renamed Pico Trujillo. Your birthplace, San Cristobal - changed to Trujillo. Now me - you want me to be known as “La Puta de Trujillo.”

RAFAEL
I would kill anyone who called you puta.

LINA
Kill. Kill. Kill. Is that all you know how to do? You wish to kill my birthday party too?

RAFAEL
Well, not exactly —

LINA
Your wife, Maria Martinez de Trujillo, tells everyone that I am your new puta. You know I am still a virgin.
RAFAEL
She is just a little emotional right now.

LINA
Quiet! I have been planning this masquerade ball for two months and now - no cook, no doorman . . . no servants at all?! Has your wife stolen them all? Did you take them all away because I didn't invite you and your ugly wife to my party? Everybody knows she hates me because you are madly in love with me - something you haven't allowed to be a secret since Carnival this year.

Silence.

LINA (CONT’D)
Speak!

RAFAEL
But dear one, you told me to be quiet.

Beat.

LINA
You take everything literally.
Why is that?
(Beat) Where are my servants, Rafael Leonidas Trujillo?

RAFAEL
I got rid of them.

LINA
You had no right to. This is my house, not yours. I want them back.

RAFAEL
You told me to get rid of them

LINA
I did no such thing.

RAFAEL
Yes, you did.

LINA
No, I didn't.
RAFAEL
   Yes, you did.

LINA
   Stop that! You

RAFAEL
   —did.

Beat.

LINA
   (quietly)
   How could I do something that stupid?
   When did I say that?

RAFAEL
   Yesterday, you told me that you love beautiful young Haitian brown-skinned men
   and that you would never have anything to do with me as long as there was a
   single Haitian man, woman or child in our country.

Beat.

LINA
   Ah! Those were just words. You didn't take them seriously.

RAFAEL
   Maybe. Maybe not.

LINA
   Yesterday, at the dance held in honor of you . . . your speech . . . You said 3000
   Haitianos were dead in Banica . . .

Silence.

RAFAEL
   And that more will follow.

LINA
   Thousands of Haitians who've lived here for years and worked for our families all
   their lives . . . dead?

Trujillo shrugs and nods.
LINA (CONT'D)
You did this all because of me?

Trujillo smiles and shrugs. Silence.

Lina is torn between being frightened and aroused by this information.

LINA (CONT'D)
Mi amor. That is so . . . romantic.

Rafael rushes to her side and falls to his knees.

RAFAEL
I would do anything to win your love, mi amor.

LINA
Anything but divorce Maria.

RAFAEL
That is complicated, but yes . . . anything but that.

She kisses him.

LINA
Mi amor, you are such a . . .

Rafael smiles.

RAFAEL
What?

Lina struggles to contain her desire to laugh and/or cry.

LINA
So . . . my household staff . . . Dead?!

Rafael nods.

LINA (CONT'D)
All the men, women, and children!??

RAFAEL
As many smelly, immigrant, dirty brown Haitian people as my men could find.
LINA
Your mama is a brown-skinned Dominicana. You are killing brown-skinned Dominicans as well?

RAFAEL
No sweetling. Just the Haitians.

LINA
How can you tell the difference?

RAFAEL
The Haitians can’t pass the perejil test.

LINA
The perejil test?
What? Do they hate parsley?

RAFAEL
They can’t trill the “r,” mi amor. Stop worrying. You just reschedule your party for next week. I will make sure you have a new staff by then.

Rafael starts to lift the hem of Lina’s dress.

Lina stops him.

RAFAEL (CONT’D)
You told me you would be mine if —

LINA
No. I will not reschedule. Get me new cooks today.

They stare each other down.

Rafael concedes.

RAFAEL
Very well, mi amor. I will send word for my troops to stop the purge. I am sure a few cooks and maids are still alive.

Rafael tries to lift her skirt again. Lina stands.

LINA
I need an experienced doorman, dresser, hairstylist, and a butler.
RAFAEL
    I will do my best.

Rafael takes her hand, but she pulls her hand from his grasp, and walks away from Rafael.

LINA
    If you get me what I need for my party tonight, I will allow you to be my first and only lover. *Por todo tu vida.*

Rafael jumps to his feet and rushes over to Lina. He falls to his knees at her feet and kisses her hands.

RAFAEL
    Mi amor. Amor de mi vida. I will not fail you.

Lina pats him on his head.

LINA
    My beast—my birthday party is scheduled to start in exactly nine hours. Not a second later. The clock is ticking.

Rafael roars like a tiger and licks her palm, and quickly stands and runs out.

As Lina considers what she has learned.

    LIGHT FADES TO BLACK

    END OF PLAY