

SAUCY MAMASITA

By Jerry Rabushka

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ISBN 1-932404-30-9

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CAST: Maria, a Hispanic domestic violence victim in Los Angeles, who left her husband and overcame her past, is now “strong and in your face.” This should be delivered in the style of standup comedy, with a powerful message.

Hey, how many battered wives does it take to change a light bulb?

None! Let her sit in the dark!

What do you do when your dishwasher breaks?
Throw the old broad out!

What do you say to a woman with two black eyes?
Nothin' - you already told her twice.

Funny, isn't it? Well, yeah, I was that woman. The one who sat in the dark. The one who didn't listen. The one who broke. You think I deserved it? I thought I deserved it. I thought I did it all wrong. No, really. I wanted to take the kids to a shelter, but I didn't wanna miss Judge Judy. Well, you know, that old broad, she knew how to put a man in his place. **(as Judge Judy)** “Did I say you could talk?” Yeah, my man, he picked up on it. He used it on me. Well, there was always tomorrow. I had a place to live, a bag of chips, and *Telemundo*.

Oh, and really, I had no way to get out. No, really. Ok, I was too lazy to check it out. Remember? I can't even change my own light bulb! **(addressing her husband)** “Hey honey, on your way to the bar, can you take me to the battered woman's shelter? Yeah, there's one on Sepulveda. It's a secret; drop me off a few blocks down. No, you keep Susana. I'll take the other kids with me.”

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See, the girls in the *barrio* - the ones just up from "Hispano-America" to seek a better life - they're not gonna just run to a shelter. First of all, your husband's put the fear of God in you about leaving him. He'll take the kids, he'll take your sister, he'll – kill your sorry butt. And if it's not fear of God--it's the immigration! "*La migrá!*" She turns him in, he rats her out, and she gets a free ride south of the border.

You forget that, with all that happens here, this is still the U. S. of A. You fight over Proposition 65. You fight over whether or not to label something certified organic or if you should call 2% milk low fat. Where we come from, we fight civil war. We have drug lords who control half the country. We have people disappear for their politics. We have no work, and we live in a shanty with no water and no electricity. Getting beaten twice a week might seem a low price to pay for living in America and certainly not worth going back home.

But oh, she's not in the county legally so she deserves to get the crap beat out of her! What if she *is* legal? And she doesn't know it's a crime? She doesn't know how to find help. Oh, you think it's so easy. *Llame a la policia!* Who you kidding? This is the LAPD! The ones she saw bust her brother in the mouth because he was Hispanic and they were bored. Because he was DWM – Driving While Mexican.

Well, girlfriend, my abused sisters - and brothers! Stop acting like you just fell off the tortilla cart. If your husband beats you, you gotta call! You gotta prosecute! You gotta open those *Paginas Amarillas* and find someone who will make the difference!

See, a lot of us Latinas – we love our men. We depend on them. They're passionate! They're macho. They're *un caballo*, no? I say no. **(changes attitude)** They're prissy. He beats you because a towel isn't folded? Because the toast is cold? Does a *macho caballo* care about a bath towel? Passionate! That's *passionate*?

But his father did it to his mother. His grandfather didn't come home and kick the dog – they couldn't afford a dog – so he kicked his grandmother. And what they do about it? *Nada!* She just put more

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frijoles on his plate and pretended her kids still respected her. And the poor husband, he doesn't know it's wrong. Kids take after their parents, you know. And as long as you sit there and take it – he doesn't have to stop. After all – he's passionate!

I know it's hard. You have a home. If you leave, you have enough money to last you 3 days. Your mother tells you he's just being himself. She says "Fold the towels! Heat the toast! *¿Que es su problema, chica?*" Some days, I'd fold the towels ten times to get it right. Toast was tough. You only get one crack at it. I was scared of him. I thought I was the one who had to change. Every day he wants the toast a different temperature. That's passion!

See, I wasn't always the saucy *mamasita* you see here now. But one day, one day instead of slapping me, he slapped the kids. They looked at me for help, and I sat there and did nothing. Not a darned thing! Now that – how can I let that happen? Do I let him hit my kids and just spend the day in front of Judge Judy? Now you can say what you want about her, but I say Her Honor's got it goin' on. I could just hear her telling me now: "Maria - if you stand by and let those kids get whacked, then you're the criminal. *He* doesn't know any better. *You* know better."

And I'd say "Your honor-"

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