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Writing Sample

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"Everything would make sense if death did not exist"

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Mariano TENCONI BLANCO

EVERYTHING WOULD MAKE SENSE IF DEATH DID NOT EXIST

1. BREAKFAST

MARÍA: Now it is.

Now it's all set.

Guillermina, come on now, cold coffee is really awful. Guillermina. Come on, it's all set.

GUILLERMINA: There you go again, you see, you are shouting.

MARÍA: A rebel. It's the age.

GUILLERMINA: Don't talk as if I wasn't here, mom.

MARÍA: Are you drinking that coffee or not?

GUILLERMINA: Mommy please, don't talk to me too much, I'm still asleep.

I'm drinking.

Why do you look at me?

MARÍA: I didn't say a word. You asked me not to say a word. I didn't say a word.

GUILLERMINA: You bother me on purpose.

MARÍA: Yes. I always bother you. I'm sorry. I always tell myself don't be a pain, don't be a pain, but still.

GUILLERMINA: It's something moms do. Maybe.

It's really awesome.

MARÍA: What?

GUILLERMINA: Well, the coffee, mom.

MARÍA: I'm asleep too.

GUILLERMINA: Were you unable to sleep today too? It's not unable, double n. It's unable.

MARÍA: Very good.

GUILLERMINA: Were you unable to sleep again?

MARÍA: Can you believe my disgrace?

GUILLERMINA: Yes, it's really bad.

MARÍA: Can someone explain to me the purpose of sleeping, because I don't get it, you know.

GUILLERMINA: Don't worry, relax. You'll see that sleep will come.

And you will rest.

Just take it easy, ok?

MARÍA: Yes, sweetie.

Thank you.

Now eat or you will be late for school and they will give you a tardy, come on.

GUILLERMINA: Yes mom.

MARÍA: Is it good?

GUILLERMINA: Mom please, it's like every day.

MARÍA: Is it good or not? You are not telling me. What are you laughing at?

GUILLERMINA: At you mom, I laugh at you.

Yes, mom. It's very good.

MARÍA: I'm glad, sweetie. I'm glad.

MARÍA: Let me clear the table. You go get dressed so we can leave. Your aunt is coming now. Actually she should be here already. It's always been the same with your aunt, you tell her to be at a certain time and she'll show up ten minutes later.

GUILLERMINA: No, mom.

MARÍA: No, what?

GUILLERMINA: The girls are coming to pick me up.

MARÍA: Money? Have you got?

GUILLERMINA: Yes.

MARÍA: Take a few more australes¹, Guillermina, here.

GUILLERMINA: No, mom, I've got enough.

Thank you.

MARÍA: Door bell.

GUILLERMINA: Well, go get it.

MARÍA: Yes. It must be your aunt.

How about we all go together?

GUILLERMINA: No, mom.

MARÍA: You don't want to. Fine.

MARÍA: Late, Nora. Late.

NORA: What can I do María, these pills I'm taking make me sleep and I have a hard time trying to get up. But if I didn't take them I would kill myself every day, you know.

MARÍA: Come on drama queen, let's go, let's go now, it's really late.

NORA: Can I have something to eat?

MARÍA: No. It's late.

NORA: I haven't eaten since yesterday, don't be cruel.

MARÍA: You didn't have a bite all morning?

NORA: Well no.

MARÍA: Ok, take a few for the ride then.

NORA: Where's my girl?

¹ The Austral was the currency of Argentina between 1985 and 1991.

MARÍA: She's not coming with us, our girl. Apparently she's going with her friends. GUILLERMINA: Aunt.

NORA: Come here, give your aunt a kiss.

Show me some sweetness because your mom is mean to me in the mornings.

GUILLERMINA: Hi, Auntie.

NORA: You have no shame getting prettier every day.

And older.

MARÍA: And getting a shorter skirt too, lower it down a bit Guillermina.

GUILLERMINA: We saw each other yesterday, Auntie.

MARÍA: The skirt.

GUILLERMINA: Yes, mom. The skirt.

NORA: She's mocking you, look at her.

MARÍA: It's not because of you, sweetheart. It's because of the things people say in this lousy town.

GUILLERMINA: And why do you care?

NORA: She's right. Why do you care, María?

MARÍA: Ok, ok, don't start allying yourselves against me. Come on, we two should go or we are going to be late.

Bye, sweetheart.

NORA: Bye, gorgeous.

MARÍA: Don't speak with your mouth full, Nora, for God's sake.

GUILLERMINA: Bye bye.

MARÍA: Take the other one too Nora, come on, you are starving. You are also thinner every day.

NORA: Not really, I even put on some weight you know.

MARÍA: I can't tell where though.

GUILLERMINA: I'm coming. I'm coming.

2. BREAKFAST

NORA: I'm probably anemic.

MARÍA: You're bored. That's what you are.

NORA: You are anemic too. And you lost weight, look at you. You don't eat at all.

MARÍA: Stop Nora, that's why we are going to get all these tests done, so that you stop mortifying me by saying I have this I have that.

NORA: And look at you, you are literally boiling María. Literally boiling. Did you take your temperature?

MARÍA: No.

NORA: Well, let's see, where's the thermometer?

MARÍA: No, stop. And lower your voice or Guillermina will wake up. That girl is hell in the mornings. I don't know what I'm going to do with her, you know.

NORA: I'm sure you have a high fever.

MARÍA: You are not listening to me.

NORA: You better take your temperature.

MARÍA: But we are going to the doctor now. Aren't we going to the doctor?

NORA: Yes, but for a blood test, there's no reason why they would take your temperature.

MARÍA: Absolutely imprudent.

NORA: It's not funny, María. You are not well. We are not well. We are bad. We are very bad. Face it María. Face it and stop denying reality. You are not even listening to me now. Ok, never mind, go on. Go on preparing breakfast.

MARÍA: Sometimes you sound so much like mom, Nora.

NORA: Don't piss me off.

MARÍA: The old woman was an ice box. One day I came back from school, from work, I don't know why this is coming to my mind now, it had been a black day and I went to visit her and she hadn't had a bite all day, nothing, not a cup of soup, and I got furious, I don't know why, and I turned off her radio and told her, I don't know what happened to me, I had never reacted like that before but I never thought that being as harsh as she was, she would mind, I turned off her radio and told her not to behave like a little kid, that's what I told her, like scolding her, do not behave like a little kid, that's what I told her, do not behave like a little kid, and she looked at me and I saw how the look in her eyes softened and right after that the old woman started crying. I don't know why this came to my mind now.

NORA: God help us.

MARÍA: Commend yourself to God with all your heart; He often rains down His mercies when hope is at its driest, says the nobleman Don Quixote.

NORA: You are even trying to be funny.

MARÍA: It's meaningless, isn't it? Life. Everything.

NORA: What are you talking about?

MARÍA: If I had money I would have myself frozen like Walt Disney and be revived when they discovered the sense of life.

NORA: You are talking nonsense, María.

MARÍA: You are right, I think such things.

NORA: I don't know what for.

MARÍA: The mind is like hell, it doesn't stop. It doesn't. Like life. It just goes on, and on, and on. And one is just sitting there. Waiting. Like a cow.

NORA: You woke up unbearable.

MARÍA: Between you and my daughter I don't have a break, Nora.

NORA: I'm worried because my period is not coming. Could it be all the damn pills I take? Without them though, my life becomes impossible.

MARÍA: You are not doing very well either, Norita. You lost weight too, I'm sure you don't cook for yourself at home. You should be eating now instead of scolding me.

NORA: If I lost weight it's because of sadness, María.

MARÍA: Why? Is it because of the father you met in kindergarten?

NORA: Yes.

MARÍA: I warned you, you can't get involved with the students' fathers.

NORA: It's different I'm not a grade teacher.

MARÍA: If we are talking about hooking up with their fathers there's no difference, Nora.

NORA: Fine, you know-it-all, can I tell you the story or not?

MARÍA: Tell me, tell me. What happened?

NORA: Bring that over here. You make me talk and I get nervous. I never eat breakfast, you know.

Anyway. This daddy, he starts trying to be smart with me. First it was like, look I want to talk to you about Pablito, Pablito is the kid, his kid, Pablito this, Pablito that, you know, the guy is always there, and one day like I realize, you know, I think what does this guy want? Pablito this and Pablito that, when the only thing Pablito does is play with three stupid toys, you know, he talks to me as if Pablito was going to College, I don't know, and so one day, are you listening to me?

MARÍA: Yes, yes I'm listening.

NORA: So one day Raúl, that's his name, Raúl.

MARÍA: Raúl.

NORA: Wouldn't you know that Raúl comes to me and says listen Nora, how about we go for coffee?

MARÍA: Bold.

NORA: Bold? Why?

MARÍA: Well, I don't know; it just seemed to me.

NORA: No, well, I summed up a lot, you know, the chats, well they were conversations really, we knew each other, Raúl and I, we already knew each other, you know what I mean.

MARÍA: Yes.

NORA: How about we go for coffee? That's what he tells me. This guy. Raúl. And I.

MARÍA: What?

NORA: Right. What do I answer? No. What blah blah blah do I answer?

MARÍA: I don't know.

NORA: Well I say yes, you know. I say, yes Raúl. When? Such day. I'll make it short, the day comes, which in fact was the following day, that is Raúl said tomorrow and I said yes. Ok. Tomorrow arrived. That day. Which was yesterday.

MARÍA: You saw him yesterday? I don't get it.

NORA: Yesterday.

MARÍA: But yesterday you didn't say a word.

NORA: I didn't tell you, no.

MARÍA: You bitch.

NORA: Can I go on?

MARÍA: Yes.

NORA: Ok, so the day finally arrives. Yesterday. The day arrives and wouldn't you know that I get to the place before he does. Bad signal, I thought, because these things you know, if they start off on the wrong foot they start off on the wrong foot.

MARÍA: Yes, it's true.

NORA: He arrives. This guy. And wouldn't you know that when he sits down I say naïvely one coffee, and he says one liquor. Weird. I didn't like the fact that he was drinking.

MARÍA: But what time was it?

NORA: Seven PM.

MARÍA: Aren't you being old fashioned?

NORA: Oh, look at her, so modern.

MARÍA: Come on, keep going.

NORA: He had four liquors. Four. I only had my small coffee. We went to the coffee shop which is right next to Santa Inés, you know, not cheap at all. The bill came up to four hundred thousand australes. He paid, he said, it's on me, it's on me, and we left. He says do you want to come home for dinner Nora? With a chocolate liquor killer smell.

MARÍA: What does he do for a living Nora?

NORA: Why do you ask?

MARÍA: I don't know. I don't know why I'm asking. What's the problem?

NORA: Well, there must be a reason why you are asking. Or did the question just pop up, out of nowhere, what does he do, all of a sudden.

MARÍA: Jeez you are paranoid. I don't know, just to picture him better I thought I needed to know what the guy did. But fine, never mind, don't tell me.

NORA: I'll tell you, I'll tell you.

MARÍA: No, if it's a problem, don't tell me, never mind, forget it, forget I asked you.

NORA: OK, this guy, his name is Raúl, invites me over to his place, right?

MARÍA: So you won't tell me?

NORA: You see? You see?

MARÍA: If I see what? Come on, don't shout. Tell me what this guy Raúl does and go on with the story.

NORA: He is a Police officer.

MARÍA: A Policeman?

NORA: Yes. He is a Police officer. He is young. Athletic. He also told me he plays the guitar.

MARÍA: Ok. I only meant what he did for a living.

NORA: He is a police officer, yes.

MARÍA: You are weird, Nora, did you know that?

NORA: What's wrong?

MARÍA: Nothing's wrong. Really.

NORA: Ok, so then I tell him, to your place for what? And he, ok come on María now you are laughing. I knew this would make you laugh.

MARÍA: I'm surprised. That's all.

NORA: Are you tempted?

MARÍA: Does he look like Poncharello?

NORA: Come on, you are not funny, María.

MARÍA: Hey, ok I'm sorry. Go on, go on.

NORA: Ok, but please don't laugh, I want to tell you.

MARÍA: Ok, ok. No more laughing.

NORA: I went to his place. I accepted. Dinner. Do you follow me?

MARÍA: Yes.

NORA: They guy takes off his shirt, he's standing there with his undershirt, let's say, so as to cook, as if he was going to get hands on and for that reason he had to take his shirt off, he had a good body, all worked out, and he was being nice, I don't know I thought it was going to be great, you

know? That's what I thought. The guy took a pack of spaghetti, opened a can of tuna, cut some tomatoes, I'm no chef but I can manage well teacher, you'll see, he said. He called me teacher. Anyway. He opened a bottle of red wine. I had one glass because I didn't want to reject him I guess, but I felt a bit forced.

MARÍA: You didn't have to drink if you didn't want to.

NORA: Yes, but you know how I sometimes feel forced to do what I think others want me to do, I don't know.

MARÍA: But Nora no, it shouldn't be that way.

NORA: I know, I know.

MARÍA: When Guillermina goes to parties I always tell her make sure your soft drink is opened right in front of you, you don't want anyone putting any drugs in it. That's what I tell her.

NORA: Ok. So we eat. Well? It was great, wasn't it? He said. Yes, yes, I said. I lied. He had made an effort you know. It was not great, but the spaghetti were good. Simple but good. I hadn't finished my last bite when I see him coming on top of me to kiss me. I didn't know what to do, I kind of like opened my mouth I would say, because it wasn't kissing. It even tasted like food. This guy kisses me, a long kiss, and starts touching my tits out of nothing, you know what I mean?

MARÍA: Yes.

NORA: I was bit shocked, like dumb, I didn't know what to do.

MARÍA: But did you want to be with the guy?

NORA: Honestly I don't know. You'll think I'm stupid but I don't know. Not because I didn't like him but because I mean it was sort of out of the blue. He takes me to bed, undresses me, all in a hurry you know as if we were teenagers, I don't know, and I was there as if following the game without much energy, I didn't really get it, he pulls my panties and sticks it in me, it kind of hurt, I was uncomfortable and as he was going in and out he says tell me that it hurts you, tell me that it hurts you, he says, and he pulls my hair, and he bites me, and he says, tell me that it hurts you and honestly the pulling of the hair and the bites did hurt so I turned my face to a side and started crying. He went on riding, saying dirty things, say it's huge, say it bitch, say the cop's got a huge dick, he bit me and now I have these bruises, how awful. How awful.

MARÍA: Easy, easy.

NORA: He came all inside of me. He didn't care.

He came all inside of me.

MARÍA: That's enough. Don't tell me more.

It's enough.

Are you on the pill?

NORA: Yes. Yes. Considering the date, nothing can happen. I was having problems with my period already and now this, I guess I'll have to see a doctor, you know, just in case. Now you scared me, what if this guy got me pregnant?

MARÍA: No, nothing happened. Don't cry, come on. Forget you've been through all this. It's over.

We are so long-suffering, Norita, what the fuck.

Here, have a glass of water.

NORA: Thank you. I shouldn't have told you what happened to me so early in the morning. What matters now are the tests you have to get done.

MARÍA: Are you kidding? You had to get it off your chest. You did the right thing.

NORA: It's time to go now.

MARÍA: Yes, let's go. Could you get those movies please? I have to return them.

NORA: Yes.

MARÍA: There's a pencil somewhere there, use it to rewind them or the fat lady from the video store will yell at me, you know how she is.

NORA: That woman is so strange.

MARÍA: Yes, very. She must be mean.

NORA: Karate Kid.

What are you doing?

MARÍA: Leaving a note for Guillermina.

Did you see Gilda?

NORA: No.

MARÍA: It's beautiful. You've never seen it? It's a classic. With Rita Hayworth. You should see it. It takes place in Buenos Aires, supposedly. They play "Febo asoma,"² the song they play in schools. In school ceremonies. There's a scene where she sings and Glenn Ford ends up slapping her face, he's so jealous he's sick with jealousy. Yes. You should see it. I must have seen it I don't know how many times now.

NORA: And the one about karate?

MARÍA: I rented it for Guillermina but she wasn't interested so I ended up watching it.

NORA: And did you like it?

MARÍA: Yes. I liked it too. The kid wants to learn how to fight and the teacher makes him clean his house. I liked it, yes. I like them all.

Are you done?

NORA: Yes. I think you have a very high fever, María.

MARÍA: I wish I had a fever so high I could fly away like a bird. I wish I could you know.

Ok, once and for all, let's go now.

² "Febo asoma" is the first line of the Argentine military march of San Lorenzo.

3. DINNER

MARÍA: Go change your clothes Guillermina, if you don't want them all wrinkled tomorrow.

GUILLERMINA: What are we having for dinner?

MARÍA: Guillermina.

GUILLERMINA: I'm going mom, I'm going.

MARÍA: You were very late today.

We are going to have spaghetti.

GUILLERMINA: Can I make myself something different?

MARÍA: Something different like what, Guillermina? What do you mean something different?

Oh I'm...

GUILLERMINA: What's wrong mom?

MARÍA: I don't know, I feel dizzy.

GUILLERMINA: Are you okay?

MARÍA: Yes, don't panic it's nothing.

It's probably because I had blood drawn today.

GUILLERMINA: Why? What's wrong?

MARÍA: Nothing, just a routine check-up. Your aunt is so insisting. Her life is all about going to the doctor so she wants everybody else to do the same.

GUILLERMINA: Better now?

MARÍA: Yes, it was nothing.

GUILLERMINA: I think you look thinner, mom.

MARÍA: Do you? Well, maybe it's because I'm running around all day.

GUILLERMINA: You are not getting thinner because there's some guy, are you?

MARÍA: Please Guillermina, what are you saying?

You still haven't changed your clothes.

GUILLERMINA: The girls and I were talking today, isn't there any teacher you like from high school?

MARÍA: Hmm. Not really.

GUILLERMINA: Not one?

MARÍA: Hmm, why do you ask?

GUILLERMINA: I don't know. The Physical Education teacher?

MARÍA: Oh, please.

GUILLERMINA: The math teacher?

MARÍA: The math teacher is an old man, sweetheart.

GUILLERMINA: Ok, so you don't like any of them.

Do you want to watch a movie later?

MARÍA: Yes.

GUILLERMINA: What did you rent today?

MARÍA: How do you know I rented movies?

GUILLERMINA: You always do. What did you get?

MARÍA: Wait.

There's stuff that's mine inside that bag.

GUILLERMINA: How about the Literature teacher?

MARÍA: Do you want to watch the movies or not?

GUILLERMINA: Answer me. The Literature teacher.

MARÍA: Whom?

GUILLERMINA: Oh, come one.

MARÍA: What?

GUILLERMINA: You know who I'm talking about.

MARÍA: No. I don't know.

I don't know.

The blondie one?

GUILLERMINA: Yes. Indiana Jones.

MARÍA: He doesn't look like Indiana Jones.

GUILLERMINA: Yes he does, mom.

MARÍA: No.

GUILLERMINA: Yes. Anyway, do you like him or not?

MARÍA: I don't like anybody.

GUILLERMINA: Nobody?

MARÍA: I don't like anyone from school.

GUILLERMINA: Nobody in the world?

MARÍA: A mom's got to take care of her daughter.

GUILLERMINA: I'm sixteen mom.

MARÍA: So what?

GUILLERMINA: Answer my question. Don't you like anyone?

MARÍA: Evidently I don't like anyone.

GUILLERMINA: But you never like anyone.

MARÍA: I don't know what you are asking me, I don't know.

GUILLERMINA: Yes, you do, mom.

I have grown. You can talk to me.

MARÍA: I know you have grown.

GUILLERMINA: Well then?

MARÍA: I have dated men.

GUILLERMINA: I know you sometimes date men but you don't like any of them, none of them come home, you never have, I don't know, like a boyfriend.

MARÍA: A boyfriend? At my age? I'm not like your friends Guillermina, who hang around with boyfriends.

GUILLERMINA: What's wrong with that? You could have a boyfriend.

MARÍA: Where do you get those ideas from?

GUILLERMINA: Talk with me instead of scolding me mom.

MARÍA: Yes. It's important to talk to someone, right?

I don't know. The truth is that when I date men I end up feeling sad.

GUILLERMINA: Sad?

MARÍA: Yes.

GUILLERMINA: In bed you mean?

MARÍA: Guillermina.

GUILLERMINA: Mom.

MARÍA: Not only in bed.

In bed too. But that was even before.

GUILLERMINA: But aren't you interested in men? Don't you find them attractive?

MARÍA: It's not even that. It's just that I can't seem to feel any affection for them. That's what it is. I think.

And what about you?

GUILLERMINA: What about me?

MARÍA: Don't be silly, you know what I mean.

GUILLERMINA: You ask and I answer.

MARÍA: Do you like anyone?

GUILLERMINA: Yes. There is someone I like. A little.

MARÍA: It's a boy, right?

GUILLERMINA: Well, yes, mom. Well, not a boy, he's a young man.

MARÍA: How old is he?

GUILLERMINA: Twenty five maybe?

MARÍA: No, that's way too old. No.

GUILLERMINA: Bullshit.

MARÍA: No, it's not bullshit. He's too old. He's nine years older than you.

GUILLERMINA: I can't talk to you.

MARÍA: No, come on, don't do that to me. Tell me. What does he do?

GUILLERMINA: That's so typical of a mother to ask, what does he do?

MARÍA: Well, it's useful to know what he does.

GUILLERMINA: Why? Does knowing you are a teacher say something about you?

MARÍA: Probably it does.

GUILLERMINA: How?

MARÍA: I don't know but it sure means something. Something like well educated, for example, a teacher is well educated, tidy, I don't know, there must be certain attributes I suppose that are typical of a teacher different to those of a woman who does something else.

GUILLERMINA: Raúl is a policeman.

Mother. Are you okay?

Mom.

Mom.

MARÍA: It's just nausea. I'm fine now.

GUILLERMINA: I will call Auntie.

MARÍA: No, leave your aunt alone, please.

GUILLERMINA: But I'd rather she was here.

MARÍA: Did you sleep with the policeman?

GUILLERMINA: Are you serious, mom?

MARÍA: Answer me.

GUILLERMINA: I never even spoke with the guy.

MARÍA: Answer me.

GUILLERMINA: Me? I'm a virgin mom.

MARÍA: Please don't call your aunt. I'm ok. I'm fine already.

GUILLERMINA: I'm sorry but I'll call her. I'm worried.

MARÍA: No.

I'm fine already.

GUILLERMINA: I don't care.

4. NIGHT

GUILLERMINA: Dinner was very good Auntie.

MARÍA: Well, everything was almost ready before I started making all the fuss.

NORA: Thank you, darling. Your mom wants to steal my merit.

GUILLERMINA: I'm going to sleep.

MARÍA: Why don't we watch a movie? The three of us.

GUILLERMINA: No. I'm worn out.

MARÍA: Ok. Come give your mom a kiss.

Sleep tight.

NORA: Sleep tight.

She's such a good girl.

MARÍA: She is.

NORA: María, help me here, I brought a pregnancy test, I want to do it here, I wasn't brave enough to do it alone. What if...

MARÍA: Go, go now.

NORA: I'm so scared, God. Have you ever done one?

MARÍA: A urine test. Yes. When I was pregnant with Guillermina.

NORA: And?

MARÍA: And what do you think? You make such questions.

NORA: No, I mean how did you do it?

MARÍA: You pee. Haven't you ever done one?

NORA: Yes, yes, I have, yes.

MARÍA: Well, then? Come on! Go!

NORA: I'm going. I'm going.

MARÍA: So?

Nora?

NORA: Negative.

MARÍA: What a relief. Thank God.

NORA: Anyway I will do another one tomorrow, just in case, you know.

MARÍA: Good idea, yes. Just to be sure.

NORA: Yes.

MARÍA: Nora, you know it's been a long time since I don't date anyone.

NORA: Why do you want to talk about that now? Is it because of this policeman, the test, and all that?

MARÍA: Oh no, not at all. It's because of a conversation I had with Guillermina.

I don't know what got into her head but the thing is she started asking me why I didn't date men. Not true. She was asking me why I didn't have a boyfriend. That's what it was. Why I didn't have a boyfriend. I don't know where she gets those ideas from.

NORA: And what did you tell her?

MARÍA: That I didn't enjoy it.

NORA: In what sense?

MARÍA: In all senses.

NORA: Sexually speaking too?

MARÍA: Yes.

NORA: You talk about sex with the girl?

MARÍA: Yes. A little.

NORA: Oh! Tell me all about it.

MARÍA: Actually she was the one who started talking about sex with me.

NORA: And has she?

MARÍA: Has she what?

NORA: You know. Has she already...

MARÍA: I didn't ask her, what do you think I am, some kind of gossip?

NORA: You didn't ask her?

MARÍA: No, I didn't.

NORA: I don't believe you.

MARÍA: Don't believe me.

Stop looking at me like that.

No, she hasn't yet. Our girl. She hasn't yet. Ok?

NORA: Yes.

MARÍA: Finished then.

NORA: Fine, then tell me what you talked about.

MARÍA: Well we talked about me, about the fact that I didn't have a boyfriend, what I was telling you before.

NORA: And why don't you have a boyfriend?

MARÍA: You are not sixteen Nora, please.

NORA: When was the last time you dated someone?

MARÍA: A long time ago.

NORA: How long?

MARÍA: Long, Nora. Long.

NORA: Months?

MARÍA: Stop it.

NORA: Years?

MARÍA: Stop it.

NORA: Years.

MARÍA: It's because I feel bad.

NORA: Bad, how?

MARÍA: Bad. My body feels bad.

NORA: You can't reach orgasm?

MARÍA: No.

NORA: When?

MARÍA: What do you mean when?

NORA: I mean, when can't you reach orgasm? How frequently can't you reach orgasm? Almost never? Never if it's the first time you are with a guy? I don't know.

MARÍA: Never ever.

NORA: I don't get it.

MARÍA: I think I've never ever reached an orgasm in my life.

Having sex.

Never.

NORA: Okay.

MARÍA: Don't you just stay there speechless.

NORA: No, no.

No.

With Guillermina's father?

MARÍA: With Guillermina's father the least, Nora, what are you saying?

NORA: I'm sorry.

MARÍA: The woman from the video store offered me a pornographic movie.

NORA: What?

MARÍA: I'm serious. What's so funny?

NORA: Well, it's a bit funny. She must like you.

MARÍA: What are you talking about?

NORA: To me she's a heck of a lesbian.

MARÍA: Give me a break, only because she's a little fat? What, you think she can't be with men?

NORA: Oh look at you, defending her.

MARÍA: She probably did it because it's written all over my face.

NORA: And what did she offer you?

MARÍA: I don't know I didn't show any interest.

NORA: Oh, I see, I thought that maybe.

MARÍA: No, no.

Why... would you be interested?

NORA: No, you have to be kidding, María.

MARÍA: Well maybe.

NORA: No way.

MARÍA: If you want to watch a movie, go ahead.

NORA: *Short Circuit*.

Karate Kid II

MARÍA: Well yes, I got hooked up with it.

NORA: *Police Academy*. Enough of cops.

MARÍA: Yes, please. I brought all sort of dumb movies today, I'm too tired to think much. Why don't we watch *Short Circuit*? It's about some robot.

NORA: No, I better go home and rest because it's already very late.

MARÍA: Are you sure?

NORA: Positive.

You should get some rest too, and take good care of yourself instead of watching all these movies.

MARÍA: Yes, don't worry.

Translated from the Spanish by Laura Guidi