

Songs of El Santo
a play in one act

Passing Songs of Legend Character List

OCASO: Chicano, 42 year old vaquero. Superstitious.

CHARCO: Chicano, 40 year old vaquero. Not-very-stitious.

SANTO: A figure, often seen with a horse, whose features are hidden by a large hat and poncho.

Synopsis

A fictional small walnut orchard in an agriculture based region. The farm workers suffer from an unknown pollutant in the air. Two men who work in the orchards encounter a local legend thought to have disappeared long ago.

SCENE 1

(**OCASO** and **CHARCO** in a walnut orchard surrounded by dense poisonous smog. **OCASO** carries a crate of walnuts while **CHARCO** is in a truck bed. **OCASO** has fallen extremely ill from breathing in too much smog.)

CHARCO

Hey, watch it!

(**OCASO** tosses a crate of walnuts into the truck bed **CHARCO** is in.)

OCASO

I need to catch my breath.

(**OCASO** falters and leans on the truck for support.)

CHARCO

Ocaso, what is it?

OCASO

Hell, I don't think I can keep working.

CHARCO

But, I thought you were getting better?

(**CHARCO** helps **OCASO** back onto his feet.
OCASO catches his breath.)

OCASO

I am fine, Charco. Just take the keys.

(**SANTO** enters the scene on a horse.)

CHARCO

Great, just what we need. Hey! Go around!

(**SANTO** does not move. Only the horse is heard.)

OCASO

It can't be.

CHARCO

You! Did you not hear me?

OCASO

(Hushed.)

Charco, you know what this is don't you?

CHARCO

Yeah, competition. We need to be ready in case he tries something.

OCASO

No, not that. This is a Santo.

CHARCO

A Santo? No way. This is no Santo. He gives me a bad feeling.

OCASO

A bad feeling?

CHARCO

We are not going to tell you again! Go around and leave us alone.

(**CHARCO** takes out and points his gun at **SANTO**.)

OCASO

What the hell do you think you are doing?

(**OCASO** puts **CHARCO'S** gun down.)

CHARCO

What? If this guy is a Santo, a bullet won't bother him.

OCASO

Put that away. Santo, he's bluffing, he won't shoot.

CHARCO

Don't tell him that.

(**CHARCO** puts away his gun.)

OCASO

Santo, why have you come here?

CHARCO

What do you want?

SANTO

Gather. We share your pain. Hear our story.

(**SANTO** speaks in a clear, strong voice.)

SANTO

Hear our story of an older man, who knew that it was nearly time for him to pass on. Every morning he would go on a walk. And it was on these walks where he began to feel different. Outside, he began to feel the earth welcome his footsteps. He began to feel the wind hold his spirit. He knew it was his time. But he felt no fear, because this was not his end. He had more to give. So in his final weeks, he gave. He began speaking to the universe around him. The man would fascinate the trees with stories and captivate the clouds with song. Even the sky would wait by his window day after day to see him. Eventually, the man did pass, but he was not gone. The universe carried his soothing voice in the wind, reflected his kind face in the ocean waves, and made the stars shine brighter long after he passed.

SANTO

This is our story, it will be yours. You must remember this.

(**SANTO** invites **OCASO** onto the horse.)

CHARCO

That's creepy as all hell. Ocaso, let's get out of here.

OCASO

Santo, I understand.

CHARCO

(Hushed.)

What are you doing?

OCASO

If a Santo is here there must be a reason.

CHARCO

I can't believe you are falling for those stories. You don't know what it wants.

OCASO

They want to help us, we just need to listen.

CHARCO

Please, you can't trust Santos. They make people go missing.

OCASO

So now you believe they are a Santo.

CHARCO

That doesn't matter. You can't just get on some horse, and go off to who knows where.

OCASO

Santo, where will you take me?

SANTO

To the truth...

(**SANTO** points into the orchard.)

CHARCO

No, no. I've put up with enough. We are leaving right now.

(**OCASO** is silent.)

CHARCO

Santo, leave us alone! We do not want anything to do with you.

(**SANTO** is silent.)

CHARCO

Ocaso, give me the keys.

OCASO

I need to see what they have to show me.

CHARCO

You're crazy. No. Hand me the keys.

(**OCASO** takes the keys to the truck from his pocket.)

OCASO

Charco, I am sorry.

(**OCASO** throws the keys.)

CHARCO

What the hell!

(**OCASO** tries to make it to **SANTO**, but is stopped by **CHARCO**. The commotion causes **SANTO'S** horse to buck up, knocking **CHARCO** on his back. **SANTO** reaches down and helps **OCASO** onto the horse.)

OCASO

I'll be back, Charco. You don't have to worry.

(**OCASO** and **SANTO** ride off.)

CHARCO

Ocaso? Santo, bring me him back! Santo! Shit!

(**CHARCO** runs after them until he loses them in the smog.)

END SCENE

SCENE 2

(An unknown amount of time has passed. **SANTO** and **OCASO** are on the horse, walking through the orchard and smog. **OCASO'S** condition is worse. They come to a stop.)

OCASO

Santo, why have we stopped? Did we make it?

(**SANTO** points to a worker's corpse.)

OCASO

How did she get all the way out here?

(**SANTO** weeps. Getting off the horse, kneeling over the body.)

OCASO

Santo, the orchard claims many worker's lives. It's just the way things are.

(**SANTO** continues to weep over the body.)

OCASO

(Restless.)

Santo, take me where we need to go already.

SANTO

Gather. We share your pain. Hear our story.

SANTO

Hear our story of an eldest daughter, who when asked about herself, would share she has a sister. The eldest held her sister close, having raised her on her own. For as long as she could remember, she had always cared for her when their parents were away. Her favorite moments were during dinner. Waiting at the kitchen table for her sister to join her. Listening to the warmth she shared. Enjoying each other's softness and laughter. The eldest loved her sister. A love that the other could not comprehend, but understood. There came a time when the eldest was left to sit at the kitchen table alone. And it was those

times where the eldest could only hope that for her sister, death was peaceful. Peaceful like when she would brush her hair, or carry her to bed. The eldest could only hope that her sister was surrounded by kindness when she wasn't there to give it.

(**SANTO** looks directly at **OCASO**.)

SANTO

This is our story, they will be yours. You must remember this.

OCASO

Yes. I understand Santo.

(**OCASO** gets off the horse, he is moved and joins **SANTO**, kneeling.)

END SCENE

SCENE 3

(An unknown amount of time has passed. **SANTO** and **OCASO** continue on horseback, but they stop abruptly. **OCASO'S** condition is worse, near death. **OCASO** wakes from the halt. He watches as a machine sprays pesticides onto the orchard.)

OCASO

What is this? Is this what causes the smog?

(**OCASO** stumbles off of the horse.)

OCASO

This thing poisons our land? Makes our lives a living hell?

OCASO

We die gathering walnuts, and this is how it's given back to us?
Spit back into our faces.

(**OCASO** coughs.)

OCASO

This isn't right. Santo, can't you help us?

(**OCASO** falls over on his side reaching to **SANTO**.)

OCASO

I have more to give.

(**OCASO** dies.)

SANTO

We share your pain. This will be a part of our story.

(**SANTO** gets off the horse and picks up **OCASO** by his hand. **OCASO** stands. **SANTO** dresses him with their own poncho and hat. **OCASO** becomes **SANTO** and gets on the horse.)

END SCENE

SCENE 4

(SANTO rides back to the workers and OCASO. There is a wrapped body of the woman on the back of the horse. CHARCO has been waiting for OCASO and SANTO for a few hours.)

CHARCO

Santo, where is he?! Where is Ocaso?
(SANTO is silent.)

CHARCO

Why couldn't you just leave us alone?
(CHARCO points his gun at SANTO.)

CHARCO

Don't think I won't put a bullet through your skull. Answer me!

SANTO

Gather-
(SANTO moves to the other workers.)

CHARCO

No, I don't want to hear about that! Tell me where he is.

SANTO

Gather-
(SANTO is rounding the workers up.)

CHARCO

Please Santo, just tell me where he is. Bring Ocaso back. I only ask this of you.

SANTO

Gather.
(SANTO continues to address the other workers, not looking at CHARCO.)

CHARCO

Bastard thing!

(**CHARCO** shoots **SANTO** with his gun. He pulls **SANTO** off of his horse, knocking his hat off. **CHARCO** sees that **SANTO** is **OCASO**.)

CHARCO

(Quiet.)

Ocaso?

(**SANTO** rises back onto his feet. They put back on their hat covering their face.)

CHARCO

It can't be.

(**SANTO** gets back onto his horse.)

CHARCO

You're a Santo? A real Santo!

SANTO

Gather. We share your pain. Hear our story.

(**SANTO** speaks to the workers who have gathered in to listen, crowding past **CHARCO**.)

CURTAIN