

El Tigre/Juan Darien Excerpt

(A man sits with his back against an adobe wall with a sombrero tilted down over his eyes. Suddenly he appears to waken, agitated. He addresses the audience.)

STORYTELLER

Stop...Senor and listen, Por favor!
From dreams have I now found release, or
Am I caught in these illusions yet?
Permit me to recount what I have spied,
Then you the matter will decide.
I wandered through a jungle some.
And came upon a town beset
With melancholy groans from
Every house and church and public square,
For an appalling plague had struck them there,
And so affected, many villagers have died.

(MR. BONES appears and dances with the old man and woman, and each character mentioned.)

Death carred off the nodding pair,
The grandmother and grandfather,
Who moothed their grandchild's hair.
Yes, and it struck the milk maid too;
And taking from that death a cue,
It struck the cow and chicken too.
The maize no longer felt the hoe,
For even the farmer was laid low.
Nor did the herdsman, or the herd survive,
Nor was the priest left long alive.
The fortune of the bride and groom
Was but a short-lived honeymoon;
An uninvited specter at the feast
Left not until his palm was creased
With a grave, pestilential, triste.
Nor was the mewling infant spared,
Nor altar boy uniquely fared.
The nursing mother's milk went dry
No longer hearing the new baby's cry.
And when the bitter plague was done,
When all were dead, of fled, save one

STORYTELLER

Who still remained within her home;
The jungle, then, o'er grew the town.
But who was left alive of all
That once had lived there, great or small?
It was a woman, childless now,
Without a husband, horse or cow.
And every day she cut a flower.
Hoping to receive its power.
Though never did she bloom like it!
For after the plague's fury hit,
She could no longer that grief quit.
While all around the fecund jungle lay,
And in its fronds the beasts did play!

MR. JAGUAR

Come my pretty, come with me!

MS JAGUAR

Oh Sir, where are you *taking* me.

MR. JAGUAR

Far from the lonely sadness of the loon;
To the *intoxicating* gardens of the moon!

MS JAGUAR

For sure that is a spot that's rare!
We can enjoy our revels there!

MR. JAGUAR

I will give you sweet pleasure and a kit
And you shall evermore remember it!

(They go off)

STORYTELLER

And so a Jaguar cub was born,
Betimes, upon a winter's morn.
Into a world both lush and green,
Into a world that hummed unseen.
And pleased was he, this master, small,
With Mother there at every call!
But tto this rich and verdant spot
A hunter came with gun and shot,
Looking for an ornamental thing,
A bird, or snake, or jaguar skin.