

EL SALON SERIES - TANGO LOCO
Original screenplay Written by Debbie Croysdale

A tourist hiker finds a dying man who hands her a pendant with a dark puzzle to solve whilst a local heiress battles to save her captive lover from death and both women join forces.

INT- DAY 1990 STUDY Baronial Hall, portraits, marble floor.

DON GARCIA 63 Statuesque, formal wear, stares up from desk.
ALEHANDRA 19 Slim, hair waist length, maxi dress, refined.

DON GARCIA

Respect your legacy for I did not rear you in my House of Garcia Sanchez to hand you to peasants.

ALEHANDRA

Legacy? A word that means pride and joy but to you is humiliation. How can you justify forcing me?

DON GARCIA

For greater good two families unite, finally we influence the Maldonado's and Miguel's a man no force can move yet you hold a key.

ALEHANDRA

Promises or pacts do not happen today. This is what I feel for him.
(spits while speaks)
You raised me only to debase me.

DON GARCIA

Viper in my nest, you bite the hand that feeds? Beware or I'll show you real disdain. Don't dare walk away.

ALEHANDRA

So shoot me in the back Father.

EXT - DAY RURAL White washed guest house El Salon stands alone in copse of olive trees in foothill below the mountain.

MAUDE 25 Short, curves, blonde. Sits on bench with her Motorola cell phone talking, looking down at her suitcases.

MAUDE

No vacancies in town, yes I'll lock my door, Jesus Mum it's the safest place this land has a soul nothing like the package deals Dad took us.
(MORE)

MAUDE (CONT'D)

Sorry I bolted but Alan cheated on me and my world's blown apart back home. But this place has found me. It's breathtaking. *The real Spain.*

INT - EV STONE CELLAR WINDOWLESS Candlelit, bench with straps, water bucket, scoop. Man sits in corner aimlessly rocking, yards away Don Garcia sits in a high back chair.

MONK 50 Emaciated, filthy, long beard and hair, loin cloth.

MONK

The real Spain? It's backbone still is and will always be the church so confess Don Garcia and clear your conscience for hell surely awaits.

DON GARCIA

You mock? Through portals of time a thorn to whose heirlooms you seized and still lie hidden from glory.

MONK

Repent. I'm capable of forgiveness.

DON GARCIA

Pious hypocrite you preach greed a deadly sin yet value worldly goods more than your own rotting flesh. What good my inheritance you now?

MONK

Church needed insurance, a bastion as governments robbed it's funds but never a conspiracy to hide any map where your treasure lies and especially now after centuries.

DON GARCIA

Coals will burn off your flesh as ours did, I know of the Maravillas Brotherhood how through generations they've handed down the last known drawings of Persecutor Albertos.

MONK

The Grand Inquisitor burned your ancestors heretics Don Garcia and heretics you still are and worse.

DON GARCIA

Freemasons were, are good men but seen as witches.

(MORE)

DON GARCIA (CONT'D)

Philosopher, politician, scientist,
forced into secret covens but I am
feared here now not any Holy Army.

MONK

I face death but can you face
damnation? I think not. Too used to
your cellar of ancient fine wines
and all of life's wretched excess?

DON GARCIA

But I broke free of bigotry, do as
I do without hiding behind any God.

MONK

(sniggering)

Your grudge will destroy you.

DON GARCIA

No because we rose again to a new
political world seduced by the very
powers you crushed. Churchill,
Roosevelt onto Hollywood Wayne

MONK

Men and their ideologies die, only
God controls our final destiny.

DON GARCIA

But does he control mankind? New
breeds of hatred came, our own
General Franco and Hitler's Nazi's.
Come dawn I'll ask you last time.

MONK

In God's hand's I commend myself.
Mi Culpa. Mi Culpa. Mi Culpa.

Monk makes sign of cross, puts hands to heart and bows.

EXT - DAY Landscaped garden, Alehandra sits, woman sunbathes.

DONA ISABELLA 50 Tan, buxom, hair bun, swimsuit, jewels.

ALEHANDRA

I can't lose Antonio. I won't live.

ISABELLA

Alehandra happiness can't buy this.

ALEHANDRA

You're a woman too so how can you
possibly condone it?

(MORE)

ALEHANDRA (CONT'D)

Born to this wretched family but I still want the same as other girls.

ISABELLA

Take lovers, oh such an appetite I had and some I even remember now.

ALEHANDRA

A revelation Mother and I always thought you a saint like the little clay figurines on your dresser.

ISABELLA

But we're not in heaven yet.

ALEHANDRA

And I thought you would protect me from being forced to become you.

ISABELLA

Insubordination! And how could you survive? Busk your violin or sew cloth for food? So show respect.

Isabella slaps her hard across the face then jumps into pool.

EXT - DAY MOUNTAIN Snake like path winds up between rocks. Maud ambles through prickly junipers, earphones in. Man suddenly darts in front, battered, foaming mouth, naked.

MAUDE

Arrrrgh!

MONK

Senorita? Por favor?

She runs, he follows and loses balance tumbling into her knocking her over. She gingerly levers herself up, he lies still, panting as fresh blood from wounds trickles into sand. She runs to strewn rucksack to grab water flask and phone.

MAUDE

I don't speak Spanish but know some emergency phrases to bring help.

MONK

Please Senorita! No police.

MAUDE

We're desperate, you've been mugged out here, they took your clothes.

MONK

You cannot be witness to this or
your life will be truly over.

She kneels by him, retching at his foul odor.

MAUDE

Drink it come on. Please, or you'll
surely die in this agonizing heat.

He purses lips refusing and rips a clay pendant off his neck.

MONK

I beg you take this and leave.
I felt their hand in my bowels I'm
beyond help and dead already.

MAUDE

Who on earth did this?

MONK

Hurry, they will follow. Surprise
fear and deadly intolerance they're
of a kind that is yet alien to you.

He drops pendent and turns into embryo position to reveal a
deep slice to his back and then clasps both hands to pray.

MONK (CONT'D)

Forgive me God.

A tortuous growl, he falls limp. Suddenly a dust cloud higher
up moves down the mountain, she grabs pendant and runs away.

EXT - DAY FOOTHILL A truck speeds downhill but just manages
to halt. A couple alight, he lights cigarette as she scowls.

RODRIGUEZ 35 Tall, dark, athletic, clean shaven, suit.

MERNA 30 Dainty, sequin dress, heels, black bob, machine gun
slung on shoulder, sunglasses. She takes off her shoes to pin
ankle straps around butt of gun so they hang on loose on end.

MERNA

Asshole why not change to low gear?

RODRIGUEZ

I shoot people and have a fucking
chauffeur in my pedestrian life.

She winces, hot sand on soles of her feet, she tip toes to
the Monk to check for life. Angrily she spits on his face.

MERNA
Porco Misero!

RODRIGUEZ
Why spit on him?

MERNA
My feet nearly burned for nothing.

He walks away. She hurls a shoe hitting his back.

MERNA
I gave no permission to leave, help
me turn him to search his orifices.
Suddenly she runs to disturbed soil, face almost on ground.

RODRIGUEZ
What are you doing?

MERNA
Someone got here first who would be
waiting? Nobody knows he escaped.

RODRIGUEZ
You knew though.

MERNA
I paid well. Miguel's a stubborn
mule yet couldn't resist spilling
his secret in throws of passion.

RODRIGUEZ
And him, more beast than man, why
so special you drag me to this
wilderness and why has our employer
caused him such bitter demise?

MERNA
Poetic words since Boss gutted him
as a fish, you're back up in case
followed but seems all are out
hunting Alehandra, she escaped in
the night for her secret lover.

RODRIGUEZ
Who'd have guessed? His little
princes always so virginal.

MERNA
All their bridges and boarders
burned may they return in a coffin,
ungrateful brat some of us work.

RODRIGUEZ
(laughs as speaks)
Work? Lying on your back is work?

MERNA
We find the owner of these feet.

RODRIGUEZ
I'll get the spade to bury him, he
can't be left as a dead dog for
vultures to pick out his eyes.

MERNA
Then dig two graves, one for you, I
want no evidence left, mercenaries
cannot be sacrosanct. Shove him by
those bushes and we'll burn him.

RODRIGUEZ
But the smoke? An Apache trail to
bring the Don here. See our tracks?

MERNA
We make fresh air tunnel, trust me.

RODRIGUEZ
Sooner trust the devil and you run
a brothel so how do you know this?

MERNA
Fostered as a daughter age ten but
taught to be a wife so I waited and
found a way. A Dakota pit. His wine
drugged, I dug the earth till my
hands bled, staring up into my eyes
he could not move in his silent
plea as I watched him burn alive.
Flesh for flesh, pain for pain.
Town saw no smoke or heard his
cries nor ever did find his bones.

RODRIGUEZ
Always thought you a machine not a
hurt child, maybe you've an excuse?

MERNA
A mistake to pity me. That there
certainly gave his dying confession
before he met his maker. We find
his confidant, cut off their ears.

RODRIGUEZ

Think I fathom you but you always
evolve a worse monster than skin
last shed, Merna, a reincarnation
of snake the Goddess perhaps?

MERNA

Cut the chat. We bring the dogs,
find who dare cheat me of my prize.

He gathers twigs, she spits on a finger holding it up in air.

MERNA

Winds blows east. Idiot, twigs are
full of sap, fetch that dry Lynx
shit and go look for more. Go on?

EV - INT ATTIC EL SALON Rustic, Bed, chair, tiny en suite.
Maud scrubs her whole body fervently in shower again and
again then collapses on bed falling into an exhausted sleep.

DREAM FLASHBACK Thousands of chirping crickets echo loudly,
heavy heat mist hangs in air, a tortured body at her feet,
beady black eyes stare into hers. "Of a kind alien to you."

INT - EV CAVE Room carved into rock, oil lamp, basic
furniture, cooking pot over fire, Antonio sits by father.

ANTONIO 21 Medium build, muscular, ponytail, denim, earring.

SENOR ALBAS 50 Vinegar lined skin, workman's hands, bald.

SENOR ALBAS

Fool to believe her and death wish
you tried to surpass the powers
that be. And now a bounty, such
price on your head no one could
refuse turn Judas. Escape now while
there's time into secret tunnel dug
these very hills by our tribe past.

ANTONIO

No force is stronger than love. I
won't hide but find her and fight.

SENOR ALBAS

Fight what with? A cave community
against castles and tanks? Better
to live as a rat under ground than
face what is in store, I heard he
crucified a man once and more.

EXT - EV OLIVE GROVE Maud and Rodriguez hold back two hunting dogs by the collar to stop them racing up towards El Salon.

RODRIGUEZ

Stop, I go case them for weapons.

MERNA

No I pretend to be lost out here.

She walks to entrance, it's locked, she rings doorbell.

MAN 20 Bare chest, underpants, bearded hippy, opens door.

MERNA

I'm out of petrol and lost in the dark and please I need a telephone?

MAN

You're the cream, come, but keep quiet or we'll wake the dormitory.

They enter empty reception with side room off, two bunk beds. She pulls a pistol pointing the end under the man's chin.

MERNA

(screaming outside)

Rodriguez come and tie the dogs.

(soft, sarcastic)

Wake them and one by one I get the truth, you first maybe?

INT- EV ATTIC Maud wakes to loud screams and gun fire, sits bolt upright and runs to lay her ears on the ground. Her boots shine through gap under door, she holds door handle but releases her grasp in case opening it makes a noise. Quickly pulling on jeans she grabs handbag and stares up at skylight.

EXT - EV ROOF Maud clings barefoot to chimney stack, two dogs tied to a tree below, she moves away to the rear of building, takes a deep breath and jumps into a bed of wild poppies.

INT - EV PUBLIC TOILETS Alehandra wears men's clothes and cap staring in mirror then cuts off all her hair, an elfin boyish figure stares back. She bins hair, enters a cubicle, flushes down a pawn ticket and sits on closed lid counting cash. Two enter and stand side by side front of urinal, she sees both their feet from the gap under her door.

EZRA 50 Stout, bulldog face, pitted skin, wild shirt.

JORDI 35 Burly, tall, suit, deep facial scar, crop hair.

EZRA

Dragged from shit hole to shit hole
let's stay find a bar the Don's in
foul mood I don't fancy returning,
gardener was left to guard the monk
but turned traitor. Got a light?

Jordi shakes his head no as Ezra pulls out a cigar.

JORDI

Little cunt's under her peasant boy
now and I want a piece of her. Our
Guardia Civil friends increased
their search, it won't be long now.

EZRA

Hey you in there got a match for my
Cuban best? You dead or something?

Her door wobbles as he bangs. Alehandra opens, smiles and
holds up the card of a caricature holding their ears and
mouth with slogan "deaf and dumb" and calmly walks past them.

EZRA

Fucking mute, come we'll go drink.

EX - FIELD BY WOOD Six horses roam, one begins to naye loudly
and jump in air, a man jumps over wood fence to go see why.

JOQUAIN 32 Long hair, soulful face, rubber apron, hat.

JOQUAIN

What's wrong my beauty, do I not
spoil you? Here, be calm.

Joquain follows horses gaze, Maud emerges from behind tree.

JOQUAIN (CONT'D)

Chestnut senses your fear. Come,
come so we can see you properly.
(Raises voice to shout)
No senora, don't run away, these
woods are a maze, you can die here.

He makes chase, she stumbles and falls but she trembles so
violently he steps back, holding both hands up in the air.

I mean you no harm but you need
help. My stray, I am Joquain horse
whisperer. Welcome to my kingdom!