

BROWN vs The Board of Education

Written by

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Setting:

A low-income public school classroom with a handful of rectangular tables. Chairs are left surrounding them haphazardly.

Stage Right, there is a classroom door.

Stage Left, there is a small window letting in sun from outside.

The front left of the space has a teacher's desk with various stacks of papers and a closed laptop.

CAST OF CHARACTERS:

Ángel.....teenager, Chicano

Ms. Acuña.....millennial teacher, Afro-Latinx woman

Lalo.....Ángel's cousin, veterano of the system, teenager, but older, Chicano

Rudy.....teenager, Ángel's best friend, Chicano

Chango.....teenager, Ángel's other best friend, Chicano

Tia Hilda.....Ángel's great aunt, Chicana

SCENE THREE

MS. ACUÑA

You were there? At the riots?

TIA HILDA

(offended)

Riots?! They were protests. Peaceful. The cops were the riots. We marched.

MS. ACUÑA

You know. You've been there before. Against impossible odds. Demanding your voices be heard by a deaf government.

ÁNGEL

Tia, how did y'all start?

TIA HILDA

Ay, this ain't a story time. I'm gonna be late.

ÁNGEL

HOW, tia??

Tia Hilda, annoyed, turns from the door and plants herself firmly.

ÁNGEL

How long do you think we got a choice for, tia? How long before they start beatin' us for speakin' Spanish again, huh?

CHANGO

Yo, they did that shit? Man, they try to hit me, I'm all like *makes Kung Fu noises.

TIA HILDA

We did what we had to do. And YOU have to leave now so I can get to work on time so YOU don't end up selling chiclets at the stop light.

RUDY

(sheepishly)

Did it change?

TIA HILDA

Did it change? Yeah, sure, it changed. They told us that if we didn't back down, they said, 'You won't graduate with your class. Your scholarships will be withdrawn.'

LALO

Yo, they straight up threatened y'all?

CHANGO

Fuuuuuuck.

TIA HILDA

The walkouts did make people notice. They noticed they were scared of us. So they threaten us.

CHANGO

Shit's as bad as ever was...damn, son.

TIA HILDA

We gain an inch, they say we're trying to replace them. Deportation. Build a wall. Cages at the border.

LALO

In lockup, you know, we ain't allowed to learn about none of this stuff neither.

CHANGO

Yo! You see? The pen's the same as the schools, man. Ain't no way for a brown kid to get out, man.

TIA HILDA

Ok. I'm done talking about this. Let's go.

ÁNGEL

Then, Ms. Acuña's gotta be right. They made this world like this to keep us all down. But we can be the ones to say that this can't be like this no more.

CHANGO

Yeah, this shit's fucked up, son.

LALO

Word.

ÁNGEL

Miss, this is bigger than just your job even. I mean, like, everything's gotta change, right?

MS. ACUÑA

Ángel, I wasn't saying that/

TIA HILDA

You weren't saying? You've been telling these kids everything you'd been telling them, then you expected them to what? Sit back and say 'thank you for these table scraps'?

MS. ACUÑA

The world needs revolutionary thinkers/

TIA HILDA

And what about when they get arrested and thrown into jail? Or worse. What about when their 'revolutionary thinking' looks like resisting arrest and they get shot and killed? Will you be there? No. The world hasn't changed. It just stopped hiding.

ÁNGEL

Tia...

TIA HILDA

What, mijo?!

ÁNGEL

It ain't like that, tia. It can't be.

LALO

Hey yo, they threw me in when I ain't done nothin' wrong. Shit, I'd fuck some shit up if it'd fuck *THEIR* shit up.

TIA HILDA

Ay, cabron! You just got back to the outside and you're trying to beg them to take you back in? What, you miss the bars?!

LALO

For all my primos, tia. For la Raza. For Ángel, tia.

RUDY

You marched. You said you made a difference.

CHANGO

Why you lost that fight in you, tia? Like you ain't even alive no more.

TIA HILDA

I will *not* lose Ángelito like I lost my brother!

(beat)

He fought for la Raza and *died* for la Causa and what happened?! The world forgot him. He's not in any books. He's not on any statue.

CHANGO

Yo...He died?

TIA HILDA

He died so *nothing* would change.

ÁNGEL

Tia, I didn't know that/

MS. ACUÑA

Oh my god. I am so, terribly sorry, Mrs. Valdez.

TIA HILDA

Tell me it's changed. Tell me it's better.

MS. ACUÑA

I can't, but/

TIA HILDA

All the protests...Women's rights. Gay rights. Black Lives.

RUDY

Trans Rights.

The group looks at him surprised.

RUDY

What? That shit matters. We all free or we ain't free. Can't let the fascists win, fool.

TIA HILDA

All of this. And what has happened? How can all this be happening? Pero, the protests? The petitions? The viral videos? The/

ÁNGEL

Tia! We can't just give up. If we stop pushing back, we're givin' them permission to keep us down. I ain't gonna be here, some pocho with the most table scraps.

CHANGO

Yeah, we ain't tryin' to get inside their Whole Foods or nothin'.

MS. ACUÑA

Mrs. Valdez, neither of us are going to be able to tell these young men what to do. We can only hope that they take the knowledge of the past and commit to their futures. That they can look back for guidance and learn from the lessons - like your brother/

CHANGO

Or Kaepernick. On a knee and shit. Man, fuck the NFL!

RUDY

This ain't got nothin' to do with Kaepernick, stupid!

CHANGO

Nah, they blacklisted his ass and everything. He got canceled by the establishment, guey!

RUDY

But he didn't die, fool!

CHANGO

Yo, it don't matter. He had a cause and they kept him down.

(beat)

Shiiit, I see what's up. You trying to tell me I can't know something cause I'm brown, fool!

LALO

We're all brown, pendejo!

TIA HILDA

I'm gonna be late for my shift. So y'all gonna walk or y'all are leaving. Tell your teacher goodbye. Ángel! Vamos!

ÁNGEL

I ain't leavin', tia.

TIA HILDA

Ok. Get home however you want.

Tia Hilda turns to leave and this time does not stop. She exits.

CHANGO

Hey yo, can we hit up that drive thru? My brown ass wasn't supposed to be here this long. Gotta get me a whatameal or somethin'.

LALO

Fool, I know your ass is broke.

RUDY

Ángel, we still gonna play Xbox later?

LALO

Man, childish ass.

The group exits the room.