

## CASTAWAYS

by Jorge Picó

Traducción Sabina Morello

### CHARACTERS

<b>Tourist</b>	his time is always flying
<b>Man and Woman</b>	married couple, minutes don't count, hours never pass
<b>Sailor</b>	a romance in every port
<b>Nineteen waves</b>	salty, deep blue

### WAVE ONE

*An island. A pot-bellied man in a Hawaiian shirt; he's holding a pineapple juice with a multicoloured straw. He takes a few breaths before speaking.*

**Tourist** Mmmmmm... the smell of guava in the summer, a half rotten, half superstitious perfume, the warm air wrapping you up like a second skin... perspire... inspire... live... *(To the audience)* Have you ever realized how vital breathing is? It's rather involuntary, isn't it? One of the few essential things in life that don't depend on our will... So if you want to stop breathing, however hard you try, you just can't. Now let me show you... *(He inhales and tries to hold his breath as long as possible, which is not much)* See? I told you... you just can't *(He slurps his juice noisily)* The Chinese, and I apologise for mentioning the Chinese just like that, without prior notice, the Chinese say that every man has a maximum number of breaths to be used in his lifetime and when he uses them all up he dies. This means that anyone can use the number of inhalations he's been allowed at his convenience or as he pleases. No need to worry about exhalations, they just happen. If you want to live fewer years and use up your breathing quota, and commit a sort of low-profile, respectable suicide, just inhale quickly, wasting air, like this, look... *(He inhales quickly, to demonstrate, he feels dizzy and drinks some juice*

*again to recover from the dizziness*) The Chinese... The Chinese are brilliant, they discovered pasta, vertical writing, silk, a whole heap of things... their culture is, how can I put it..., so ancient, that's it, it's an ancient culture. So you need to be quite wise to appreciate it. Well, let me tell you that I do and since I arrived here, I've been breathing very slowly and very deeply, and the perfume of guava, fresh, as if soaked in towels, drifts up into my nostrils, gently spreads round my pituitary and fills up my lungs with its scent (*He breathes slowly, with pleasure*) Ah, the pituitary! Pi-tui-ta-ry. It's the name of a vein but to me it sounds more like the name of a religious order: "The Sacred Order of the Pituitary" or "Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and of the Pituitary", "The Barefoot Pituitaries" (*He noisily drinks some more juice*) Of course, it also depends on where you are when you breathe, it's not the same to breathe the air in Madrid, say on the *Castellana Avenue*, or on the *Boulevard Magenta* in Paris, where the air is disgusting, as to breathe here, on this desert island... Did I say desert? (*He shouts*) Hello? Is there anybody there? (*He looks around, listening for an answer*) Is there anybody here? (*He waits again*) Nobody, we are alone. They assured me that the island was deserted, and for the price of the plane ticket that's the least you could expect. I made it very clear: "A plane ticket to a desert island, please". It's one of those sentences I had been waiting to say all my life. Because life is the distance between the sentences you pronounced and those you would have liked to pronounce... I still remember with great satisfaction that rainy spring day when I got into a taxi and at last I was able to say: "Follow that car". Not that I knew who was driving the car in front, nor where it was heading, nor anything else... what matters is that I finally got to say it, I pronounced one of those classic sentences you have to say once in your life: "Follow that car". Now, I imagined a cool blonde woman wearing sunglasses wrapped in a grey raincoat, taking out a red lipstick and painting her lips, while showing an endless leg in a black silk stocking. That's when I started breathing fast, I lowered the window to let in some fresh air from the rain, I thought about the Chinese and I realized that my imagination was killing me. I got out of the taxi. (*Pause*) The thing is that you need to get away from Europe for a change of air and be left alone, all to yourself. That's why I came here. There's no way they will find me on this island though I'm sure half of Spain is looking for me by now. I can imagine how freaked out they all are, investigating, searching, panting and going frantic, each of them using up their personal breathing allowance, so that they are all going to die a few years earlier than they should, if some of them are not dead already (*He sips his juice again*)... I wouldn't be surprised. In fact I've just robbed over twelve million Euros from the firm where I was working. (*He drinks*) To be honest, this bankruptcy protection lark is just the ticket, the work of a genius... You simply stop paying everybody and then take what you save to breathe elsewhere. This is an ancient culture too, but Spanish-style, another breathing

technique quite different from the Chinese, a millenary culture, a millionaire culture... I don't know whether the Chinese know about these things, one tends to think of meditation, Tao, spiritual life, whereas for Iberian culture one thinks of the picaresque, the pickpocketing in street markets. They may eat a lot of noodles and soup, I'll give you that, but when it comes to dodgy commission... *(Pause. He drinks. He touches his head, looks at the sky and smells his hand)* Bird shit. Sure, the island is deserted but there's flora and fauna, and the little bird is having a shit on my head. I'm not all that alone then. Now I made a specific request to the travel agency, I wanted a desert island, without anything, no plants, no people, no animals, absolutely nothing, just air to breathe, and they looked at me like I was out of my mind. But their look changed when I started pulling out 500-Euro notes, one after the other, spreading them on Ms Whatever's desk, after which I picked one up and used it to light a cigar with, and the poor young lady looked at me as if she wanted to say "take me with you", "take me away from here, I'm sick of saying 'Have a nice trip' to everyone when I can't move from this stupid chair". Though she probably knew that what I wanted was a desert island and she couldn't possibly come with me on this trip. I slipped twenty 500-Euro notes into her bag without being noticed. I felt like Robin Hood giving out money to the poor. I found comfort in the idea that she had been on the point of saying another compulsory classic sentence: "Take me with you" *(He drinks and looks inside the glass)* All gone. That was the last one. I'll have to check and see how much water I've got left, my mouth is drying up from talking too much, which makes me really thirsty. I brought no more clothes with me and in the rush I didn't have time to say goodbye to anyone, not even my kids or my wife, not to mention, obviously, my work mates at the office. I only brought a few litres of water, a portable cooker, and a good lot of packets of instant Chinese soup, the kind that just needs boiling water and is ready to eat in five minutes. I reckon I'll have to start hunting, if I want to survive... I might even stone that bird dead and eat it to teach the bastard a lesson for crapping on my head. You don't need much to live here, so I'll base my diet on the birds I can kill, some greens and berries, and my Chinese soup. I also brought a cushion to sit on *(He pulls it out from under his belly and his belly disappears)* The inside is stuffed with hundred-Euro notes...It's fluffier and softer, much better than feathers. I was thinking of a dollar lining, but I thought I would get tired of reading "In God we trust" on each note, and lose my concentration. Make yourself comfortable as there will be long hours of meditation before I can get back to Spain. *(He puts the cushion onto the ground and sits on it, in a Hindu meditation position)* I'll pick a stone just in case the bird with diarrhoea shows up so I can knock him down. Please, check out the sky for me and let me know if it turns up, I'm a very good shot. Mmmm... The smell of guava in the summer, hot and lazy. *(He starts meditating, with his right hand in a Zen position)*

*while his left hand is holding the stone. He chants ommmm and he cocks his right eye open now and then, watching out for the bird. Fading slowly to black-out, the sound is heard for a while, mingling with the sound of the waves and the occasional bird song)*

## WAVE TWO

*Woman* won't see forty again and *Man* is five or more years older. They are drenched, he's shirtless, her dress is all messed up and she is limping because she is wearing only one shoe. They are looking at the seashore.

**Woman** This is not Australia.

**Man** How do you know?

**Woman** Because it doesn't look like Australia at all.

**Man** Really? And what does Australia look like? Come on, you tell me.

**Woman** Australia is a continent and this is an island, and it looks deserted.

**Man** Well, it looked like Australia from the ship.

**Woman** And the worst thing is that I believed you and I plunged into the water after you.

**Man** Well, that's the least I could expect from you after a whole life spent together, that you would follow me. And this could be Australia, if we wanted, we could just say: "Ah, it's great, we are in Australia at last"... You knew what you were doing when you followed me.

**Woman** What was I supposed to do! Tell me, what did you want me to do? ... I'm not going to stand there alone and watch my husband plunge into the water towards the first shoreline he sees (*Pause. She is trying to wring out her wet clothes*) I only followed you because I really did think this was Australia, that was the only reason, but now I realize that you just wanted to show off in front of all those pensioners. You took off your shirt when everybody was looking and you shouted: "Land ahoy!". And then you pointed that way and shouted "Australia!, Australia"! And then you jumped into the water and fell with such a belly flop that you almost brought up all the food you had in your stomach including that white coffee and the croissant. After that you started swimming in such a showy fashion, making

up a new style halfway between the front-crawl and the “creepy-crawly”... only to impress that old bag with your naked chest, you know, the one who used to run that clothes shop.

**Man** (*Interrupting her*) That woman is so stupid... anyway she isn't that old...

**Woman** I don't care, but you haven't taken your eyes off her since we left. (*Pause*) Honestly! How could you jump off the ship at the sight of the very first palm tree! Just to prove that you are still young and ready for action. That's so ridiculous, at your age! And me, going after you like an idiot.

**Man** You had your own reasons, I suppose. I didn't ask you to follow me.

**Woman** Just before jumping, you glanced at me.

**Man** I didn't glance at you, I just said: “Get out of my way, I'm jumping”.

**Woman** You liar, what a liar you are, that's the thing you do best, lying, and Australia is your last big lie.

**Man** Or maybe the first time I've told you the truth...

**Woman** Look at me, I'm all soaking wet, I've got no other clothes, I've lost one of my shoes, the cruise ship must be miles away now and I don't think anybody will be bothered to come here and rescue us, two old gits like us.

**Man** So what? Even better, if that means they'll leave us alone. Australia is a wonderful island, full of promise and opportunities. I've heard they have some excellent wines.

**Woman** But do you really believe we are in Australia?

**Man** I've never been so sure about anything in my whole life. (*He explores the ground around him*) I bet a kangaroo or a koala will show up anytime and welcome us. I can't wait to feed the birds on the palm of my hand. (*Meanwhile her shoe and the shirt he took off before diving appear on the shore. He*

*picks them up*) Look, the gods are sending us a sign: a sign that everything is going to be all right. *(He heads towards her as if she was Cinderella and he tries to fit her shoe; he struggles, but it won't fit)*

**Woman** Don't bother, it's not mine. *(He stands there staring at the shoe wondering who it might belong to)* Some shipwreck, probably.

**Man** Stay right there where you are, I'll go and make sure we are really alone.

**Woman** And who else would want to come to this frigging island in the first place? You tell me.

**Man** How should I know! The owner of this shoe, for a start.

**Woman** Oh yes. And what are you going to do next? Will you try and fit the little shoe on all the native women you come across, as if they were Cinderellas?

**Man** This shoe can't belong to a native woman, look, it's a designer shoe, CD.

**Woman** Or they might be her initials, Cristina Dávila, for instance. You would fancy that, ending up on a desert island with two women.

**Man** Sweetheart, it's literally impossible to be on a desert island with two women.

**Woman** Well, that's true, you won't be so very lucky...

**Man** The trouble is that behind a shoe like this one there is always a man, and that would ruin my plans.

**Woman** Your plans? But you've never planned anything in your life, always taking each day as it comes, improvising, like our first encounter that was improvised, the fruit of an improvised kiss, followed by an improvised wedding and all the way since we've been improvising our days together... even the children we had were improvised, that's what happened to us...

**Man** What do you mean by “that’s what happened to us”! How many husbands pay for a cruise like this with their wives?

**Woman** This is the first time we’ve been abroad in twenty years, and it has to be on a shitty state-sponsored cruise full of pensioners, and, what’s even worse, you still have to pay off the rest of the balance.

**Man** Well, I never meant to pay it off, it was all part of my plan. I knew we’d end up in Australia and stay here forever... Loving each other, you and me, here, in peace and quiet, without being disturbed.

**Woman** You’re looking for trouble! Do you want me to hit you, eh? Is that what you want? Look, I’ve still got the other shoe and I could throw it right at your teeth.

**Man** But it’s true, I mean it, now that we’ve got this far we can really make it, we can be together, at last, alone, and now we can tell each other all the things we never have time to say, with no children coming in and out when they want to, no friends inviting me to play dominoes, away from your fashion magazines, no television... you and me, alone... *(He feels moved and takes her by the hand)*

**Woman** AND DID WE NEED TO COME TO A DESERT ISLAND FOR THAT! *(She starts crying)*  
My shoe, I want my shoe... no, no, I want to go home..., but why me, what have I done...

**Man** Don’t cry, dear, don’t cry, everything is going to be all right, you just sit here and I’ll go and check if we are alone. I’ll make sure it’s not dangerous to camp here tonight... you never know, I might even find your shoe... *(He covers her up with his wet shirt and sets out on an expedition)*

**Woman** *(She feels abandoned, and she cries. She touches her head, looks at her hand, then to the sky, and sniffs at her hand)* Shit. *(Blackout. The sound of a seagull, squawking)*

### WAVE THREE

*A Sailor dressed like a child in a sailor suit is scanning the horizon, with geometrical movements, drawing lines in space, taking notes, making calculations.*

**Sailor** Logbook: "I'm not afraid of shipwreck. Well, yes, I fear drifting forever. The time is now approaching the fifth sextant of the day of our Lord. The sea is becalmed, almost humid. We have left behind two thousand three hundred and eighty-nine lighthouses, fifteen of which were out of order. Mr Helmsman fell in love with Mr Purser and they have flown away together to exotic lands. The rats and the rest of the crew abandoned the ship at the first port we docked in and they all went off for a little bit of whoring on the shore, a little bit of shoring on the whores, a little bit of whoring on the rocks. But I know there are stowaways on board, there have been noises of pots and pans and rough linen since we left; I just hope they are good-looking at least. One of the countless material losses suffered during this trip is that of one of my favourite shoes, a black patent leather one, top designer quality. But the compass keeps playing jokes on me, one moment signalling North and the next East or South. I think I have been sailing round in circles for some weeks now, although I can't be sure, for I sail leaving no traces behind and there are no tracks that might guide me. I don't trust the stars, and if it weren't so trite I would cry for help. So now I will make a decision and stick to a fixed course and follow it up to its final consequences. The straight line will be my salvation. No matter what happens to me or where it leads me (*He traces out a line with his right arm pointing in one direction, slowly, and follows it until it takes him nowhere*) Four octants for two o'clock (*He calculates*)... perhaps I made a mistake in my calculations and the Earth is not round but a cube or even worse a dodecahedron and I am sailing along, here, lost on one of its sides. It is a shameful disgrace when a sailor is not notified of these things, what with the time I would have saved if I had known that in advance. (*He recites*) "With a hundred cannons on each side/With a following wind under full sail/A brigantine sailing ship /Doesn't cut through the sea but flies..." (*His gaze is fixed on his arm. He pulls it off*) Fourteenth sextant in the year of our Lord, the situation is becoming desperate. Having tried everything, I've felt compelled to pull my arm off and follow the direction it's signalling (*He does so*) But this may not be the right direction, we might not be far from the Australian coast, or from the Tropic, one doesn't know with all this going round and round, and anyway I think it's the only alternative, this arm of mine that never aches is the best guide, it looks quite confident and always signals a very clear direction (*He follows the direction of his arm again*) If my adventure should end tragically and this diary falls into somebody's hands, be it a man or

a woman, regardless of race, colour or nationality, I do ask him or her to bear with my desperate, almost unbearable, situation. Alfredo, I wish you were here with me now, so I could hug you close on this very sad occasion. You will never know how much I miss you, and how I miss my shoe. I'm sick and tired of the sight of salt at night. *(He disappears following his arm, drawing lines and scanning the horizon)*

## **WAVE FOUR**

*Man and Woman together. They lie sunbathing as there's nothing else to do. There is a long silence before they speak.*

**Man** They say sea water is supposed to heal wounds. *(Pause)*. Because of the salt. *(He licks his skin)*

**Woman** And time. *(Pause)*

**Man** Thyme? What – the herb?

**Woman** Time. Time is a great healer. *(Pause)*

**Man** Ah! *(Pause. A wave reaches his feet)* The water's lovely. Do you fancy a swim?

**Woman** No, I don't.

**Man** Well, neither do I, just thinking of something to do.

**Woman** Together.

**Man** Sorry?

**Woman** Together. Something to do, together.

**Man** Yes, sure... together. *(Pause)*

**Woman** Separately.

**Man** Sorry?

**Woman** Something to do separately.

**Man** No, no, I said together... together.

**Woman** You didn't say anything.

**Man** Yes, I did, I said together.

**Woman** I said together. You just repeated it.

**Man** Right, but it doesn't matter. I could have said it.

**Woman** What's yours is mine and what's mine is yours.

**Man** Well... more or less... *(Pause)*

**Woman** But separately, it's also yours.

**Man** *(Angry)* Yes, "separately", it's also mine. But words don't belong to anyone, they belong to whoever uses them and when they use them. *(Pause)*

**Woman** I feel like a word right now: "Plesiosaur". But don't worry, now that I've used it, you can borrow it. *(He stands there staring at her)*

**Man** "Plumbiferous". You can borrow that one too. *(Pause)*

**Woman** "Reef".

**Man** *(He looks at her again and thinks before telling her)* "Scariff".

**Woman** "Isobaric".

**Man** "Isotope".

**Woman** (*The pace gets faster*) “Corollaceous”.

**Man** “Cornucopia”.

**Woman** “Encephalogram”.

**Man** “Sabbatical”.

**Woman** “Sunday tripper”.

**Man** “Quadruped”.

**Woman** “Lobster”.

**Man** “Hirsute”.

**Woman** “Mammalian”.

**Man** “Ratchet”.

**Woman** “Quadrant. Quarters. Three-piece suite. Bedroom. Living room. Service staircase. Hoover. Dining room...”

**Man** ... And ready to move in... (*He laughs heartily at his joke*)

**Woman** “Wanker”. (*Dark*)

## **WAVE FIVE**

*Enter the Tourist. He still has the stone in his hand and the cushion under his arm. From his clothes and his face we can see that some time has passed: he is now sporting a beard. He addresses the audience.*

**Tourist** I saw it once on the telly, there's loads of things you learn from television... They were experimenting with kids, isolating them from society, bringing them up like savages, with no education, without language... It seems they all died... Am I turning into a savage too?... Or maybe into a child?... The truth is, now, I have plenty of time to think... about things I've found out, little discoveries, the treasures of my life as an islander. **FIRST:** *I only know I can't swim.* I only know that if I knew or had I known, I would know. And once I knew, if I knew, I would end up knowing what is known, which is the same as what was known, I would swim and I would know, knowing that knowing that I knew is the thing to know, I would know that knowing that you know is more than knowing, it is knowledge, it's more than knowledge... it's knowledge of swimming... so I could swim... and I would swim... and should swim until I swam a long way... I know I would. If only I knew. **SECOND:** *Half of the problems of mankind are caused by their inability to be on their own on a desert island.* When I say on their own, I mean alone, by oneself, against oneself, before oneself, cum oneself, down oneself, for oneself, in oneself, near oneself, out of oneself, past oneself, round oneself, to oneself, under oneself, with oneself... *(He recites by heart)* a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, l, m, n, o, p, q, r, s, t, u, v, w, x, y, z. *(He breathes nervously as he gets out of breath)* Bloody hell!... What the heck am I doing... I'm committing suicide right in front of your noses... I'm breathing fast again, I'm using up my allowance, loneliness is going to kill me... **THIRD:** *Next time I come to a desert island I'll bring a book on cooking in the wild with me.* After a year and a half of strenuous pursuit and countless near-misses, I have just killed the crapping bird and I'm not quite sure I know how to cook it. *(He shows it to the audience)* Is there a cook in the house, please? Now, it's nobody's fault but my own if I let my wife do the cooking all these years. As a matter of fact I can't cook at all, and I've already run out of Chinese soup. I would ask for help but it feels like a women's thing to do. The procedure, I reckon, is as follows: first you pluck the thing, then you clean it, bone it and after that you stick it in the oven. Wait for a while and it's ready to eat. *(He starts plucking feathers off it)* Alternatively, you might have to roast it with its feathers on, then grill it so it gets crispier and tastier. Don't forget to pluck before eating. Hold on, I've got it, it's wild meat, right? It's pure and rich with vitamins. So the best way to eat it is raw, now that it's still a bit warm... *(He tastes it)* It's disgusting... I think I'm turning into a savage, a cannibal, what's to become of me... **FOURTH:** *There is a slight chance, though remote and not very likely, but a chance nevertheless, that I am not alone.* This morning while I was chasing the bird I saw a black shoe, a patent leather one, as I was walking along the shore, it was a woman's shoe... Ever since I started considering the possibility I haven't been able to concentrate on my

meditations ...What fills me with a deep sense of uneasiness is the idea that there might be a woman wandering around this place, on her own as well, you know, a woman can turn a desert island into an island, a desert into an oasis and then into a garden if a man sees her walking along... I think I need to roast this bird, it will do me good... *(He disappears)*

## WAVE SIX

*We see that **Woman** is building a hut-door with canes and whatever else she has found lying around. **Man** appears on stage with a fish, still alive, spiked on a stick, and stands there watching.*

**Man** What are you doing?

**Woman** I'm building a home to live in.

**Man** And you start with the door?

**Woman** What's so funny?

**Man** Who, in their right mind, would start building a house from the door... Shouldn't you start by building the foundations and then working up from there to the roof... How can you start with the door if you don't even know how high the house is going to be...

**Woman** Because the door is most important... So if I want to leave the place I already know the way out. *(Pause. She keeps on with the building)* And if I start from the door I shall know right away whether I feel like carrying on with the rest of the house... I'll pitch it, I'll stand in front of it and I'll picture the rest... Doors are the most meaningful features of houses. When you think of a door you want to have whatever is behind that door, and you also want the person who happens to be there.

**Man** But we are alone, dear. And we don't need a door, or a house, or anything else. Here, we can sleep in the open, the weather is mild and I like falling asleep while watching the stars. Look, I found a fish we could eat...

**Woman** What I'd like is a house to live in until the next ship comes round and rescues us. *(Long pause)*

**Man** No ship will come round, we're too far from the regular routes.

**Woman** The only thing I can't make is the doorbell. I'm quite worried in case someone calls at the door and we can't hear them, or if you knock and I can't hear you, but that doesn't worry me as much. Listen, do you think we could tie a bird by the door, with a string or something so if somebody comes by they can just pull, and the bird will squawk and we'll hear it... In the meantime, until we catch it you might as well do the doorbell noise, yes, that's a good idea, you be the doorbell.

**Man** But I'm hungry, shall we eat the fish?

**Woman** Yes, you be the doorbell.

**Man** Look, never mind that, let's eat.

**Woman** (*Hiding behind the door*) Make a noise like a doorbell.

**Man** I won't.

**Woman** Do the bell.

**Man** I said I won't.

**Woman** Please, do the bell.

**Man** I won't be a bloody doorbell.

**Woman** Do the bell or else I won't open this door for you ever again in my life, do the bell or else tonight I'll strangle you while you're asleep, do the bell or else I'll swim back home tomorrow, do the bell or I'll scream so loud that I'll scare the birds and the fish away from this place and the leaves off the trees, do the bell because I followed you all the way here without a thought for myself, do the bell because I say so, DO THE BELL.

**Man** (*After giving it some thought and making sure nobody is watching him*) Rinnnng, rinnnng, rinnnng.

**Woman** Not like that, that sounds like a phone. I want it like the one at home.

**Man** But I can't remember what it sounds like.

**Woman** How can you not remember our doorbell? We've lived together in the same house for twenty years and you can't remember the sound of your own doorbell, what else can't you remember... Eh?... Do you remember what I was wearing the day we met? Do you remember where we made love for the first time? Do you remember my favourite colour in those days? Do you remember where you took me out to dinner the day you asked me to marry you? Do you remember when our first child was teething? And the last time you said I was beautiful? Do you remember?

**Man** I can't remember everything. Can you repeat the first question?

**Woman** Our doorbell sounds like this: ding-dong! ding-dong! *(Making the notes resound in the air)* You see? Ours is much more elegant, more distinguished, than the one you did, there is a pause after "ding" and before "dong" that allows a moment for the person who rings, a pause that makes you feel welcome.

We were a family with some standards before we turned into aborigines. We chose it together, remember... Do it. *(He does the bell)* That's perfect... Now, ring the bell. *(He rings the bell on the cane door. She takes her time before answering. He rings the bell again)* Who's that? *(She leans round one side and beckons him to answer her)*

**Man** It's me, open the door.

**Woman** You, and who are you?... show me your paw, please...

**Man** *(Making one last effort to follow the game)* It's me, your husband.

**Woman** *(Opening the door)* Oh my God, there is a man at the door with a raw fish in his hand claiming he's my husband! I shall have to call the police... I'm very sorry, but I don't know who you are.

**Man** I'm getting tired of your little jokes. *(He throws the fish down and goes off. The fish moves its tail a little before dying on the sand)*

**Woman** *(Alone again. She touches her head, looks at her hand, then to the sky, and sniffs at her hand)*  
**Water.** *(A light curtain of rain is falling over each character as the light fades to blackout)*

## WAVE SEVEN

*A violent storm is starting to break. Rain, thunder and lightning...*

**Tourist** Blow, winds, blow! Fly into a rage! Let the waters roll, may the spirits leave this island, I offer up my breast to the storm! Let the seas drown the earth! Let my body be filled with a thousand noises even if I go mad! I won't beg for pity even if I deserved it!

**Man** It's no use shouting in the middle of a storm: nobody can hear you!

**Woman** Say that again.

**Man** I said it's no use shouting in the middle of a storm: nobody can hear you!

**Woman** I can't hear you! It's no use shouting in the middle of a storm: nobody can hear you! You should know that.

**Tourist** I'm a free spirit! The child of the air! The grandson of the rain! The clouds are my sisters! Chaos! Destruction, your name is woman...

**Woman** What did you say about your sister?

**Man** That's impossible: you would hear my sister, she's got a voice like a foghorn!

**Woman** Look, if it's something to do with the family leave it till the storm calms down: I don't want to argue right now.

**Sailor** I didn't send my ships to fight against the elements: I couldn't harm a fly, as you well know, Alfredo. Alfredo! ...Alfredo!... My strength comes from you.

**Man** From me?

**Woman** I didn't say anything.

**Tourist** This might be the end: it doesn't really matter. We'll start again. A new world order. Let the waters wash the shit off the face of this world!

**Sailor** Strike the mizzen sail! Fix the sail to the mainmast! Tack, tack! Put about to the side!... What a glorious moment to come out with phrases straight from the training manual: Alfredo, help, the ship is sinking! *(He's engulfed by a wave)*

**Tourist** Nature in the best of its forms: I've never felt better. What doesn't kill me makes me stronger! *(He's carried away by the wind)*

**Man** Stronger? I can't make my voice any stronger, dear.

**Woman** Speak in my ear. Let's take shelter.

**Man** I love being out in the open.

**Woman** Who did you say you love?

**Sailor** *(From outside)* Alfredo! Alfredo!

**Woman** Who?

**Man** Do you realize we don't watch the rain through glass any longer?

**Woman** I'm not quite sure.

**Man** We are like rain.

**Woman** Look! The storm has hardened my nipples. It's the salt making them stiff. Isn't that funny?

**Man** It's not the best time to think of yourself, is it, dear?

**Woman** What do you mean, "dear"? Eh! This is my first storm on an island. I didn't know this was going to happen.

**Tourist** (*From outside*) The calm after the storm! (*The storm is dying down*)

**Woman** They are really hard. Look at these two little things! Aren't they cute!

**Man** Just like that time when... do you remember?

**Sailor** Alfredo, whatever happens don't ever forget me!

**Woman** No.

**Man** Of course you do, dear, it was when... and then you started to... like this... and I...

**Woman** If I scrub myself with sand I might remove all my skin impurities.

**Man** And we stayed like that until your mother rang.

**Woman** All of a sudden what is mine doesn't seem to be mine. Darker than usual. Look at them... hard as steel... and is this all mine?

**Man** Why don't we take shelter?

**Woman** The rain's almost stopped.

**Man** Just in case your mother rings again... I mean... just in case it starts raining again.

**Woman** Have you seen any fruit on this island?

**Man** Fruit? What kind of fruit? Do you fancy some fruit now? Shall I get you the menu?

**Woman** Any old fruit. It's... for dessert... something other than coconuts, if possible.

**Man** I think I've seen some kind of oval, crescent-shaped fruit somewhere. But I don't think they're edible. They might even be poisonous. If you want I'll try them first. You can't fool around with nature.

**Woman** No, please, let me try it. I won't fool around with nature... Oval, did you say?... Very big?... Crescent-shaped? First quarter or last quarter?

**Man** What?

**Woman** Crescent-shaped... how romantic... Just look at them... *(She heads towards the "fruit")*

**Man** Wait for me!

**Sailor** I'll swim till I reach solid ground. Love is all-powerful, Alfredo.

**WAVE EIGHT**

*The **Tourist** appears. He works out with a few exercises. He looks at the audience as if he were seeing them for the first time, then he remembers that they have been here as long as he has, which seems to reassure him. He can't remember why he got here.*

**Tourist** Up. *(He is thinking)* Up. *(He looks downwards. Thoughtfully he glances towards the sky. Realizing)* Up!... Down? *(He looks at the ground quickly)* Down. Up. *(He looks upwards, then downwards. He repeats the action while doing the opposite of what he's saying)* That's right, isn't it? *(To the audience)* Right, left, up, down, left, down, right, up, up, downleft, right, left, upright... *(He has been moving according to the directions, correctly in some cases but not in others)* Ouch! *(He searches through his beard, pulls out a flea and shows it to the audience)* A crab, this place is full of birds and crabs. *(He eats it)* It would be just perfect with fastslow!... coleslaw... slow... *(He starts talking more and more slowly)*... slow... slooow... my naaaame... is... sloow... Emilio... what is your name... ahhh!... That's very, very, nice... I like it... I... I?... walk backwards... like a crab... like this *(He walks backwards)*... claws were made for walking... *(He stops)*... And what if I don't walk?... *(Completely motionless. He speaks in a self-confident way)*... And by this show I show what is mine, yours, everybody's... movement is all we are... you can afford it but the country can't... for each walking person in the country, a hundred are stuck... They are sold by the hundred... a bird in the bush is worth two in the hand... on the other hand, better safe than lorry... I am sorry we are closed... only during office hours... we are at your service, we work for you and we will screw you over as much as we can... because it's better the devil you know than... talking against the wind, the rain, words don't come easy... easier said than done... done!... these feet were made for walking... this way *(He walks)*... And by this show I show what is ours... I will be back and I will be a dark swallow... or a crab... There will be hundreds of us... I will be back and my name will be legion... *(He exits walking backwards)*

## WAVE NINE

*Woman enters running away. Man is running after her. Woman stops, breathless.*

**Woman** Stop running after me.

**Man** I want you.

**Woman** You're running after your desire, like all men... Besides I've got a stitch.

**Man** Here, right now. Don't think twice. Let's do it.

**Woman** I want a drink of water first.

**Man** Drink from my mouth.

**Woman** Don't talk shite. And don't look at me like that. I don't like it.

**Man** My desire starts from my eyes.

**Woman** Rub them with sand then. You'll get over it.

**Man** Stop fighting me off. I'm getting tired too.

**Woman** Another storm is brewing. We'll get wet.

**Man** That's great.

**Woman** The wind will blow, the tide will rise, we'll be dragged off by the waves.

**Man** Just keep hold of me.

**Woman** Oh yes, and we'll drown together. How romantic.

**Man** I'm going to caress you.

**Woman** If you can.

**Man** I'll undress you.

**Woman** If you can. *(She's slowly moving away)*

**Man** I'll kiss you.

**Woman** If you can.

**Man** Every inch, in circles, in a straight line, from right to left, up and down... changing direction, I'll cover every inch of your body.

**Woman** I'm not a road, darling. You'll make me dizzy, with all that turning around.

**Man** Come here.

**Woman** Why don't you come here, where there's a will there's a way. *(He moves forward a little)* Not so fast, slow down, take it easy... Love needs some work... look, you've almost got me there, but you've not got me... *(She moves back a little)*... and now you can't have me but you could if you just knew how to get me... *(He starts moving forward slowly at first and then faster)*... Stop! Stop! Now, the important thing is not so much getting there, but... taking part. If you behave properly you might get... a medal or something... It's the space that lies ahead of you that matters... Measure the distance, enjoy yourself till you get here, you are a winner...

**Man** ... Don't be silly. I could pounce on you...

**Woman** Kangaroos can do that better. I might cop off with one.

**Man** Come over here.

**Woman** No!... you're an animal. You come and get me. *(She rushes off)*

**Man** I love it when you call me an animal. *(He follows her)*

## WAVE TEN

*The **Sailor** is on the shore looking at a small wooden ship that has run aground and broken its mast. He's wearing a woman's blond wig and is holding a dress in his hand; next to him is a black patent leather shoe.*

**Sailor** Logbook: "Tragedy. Thirtieth sextant of the day of the Lord. A storm of insolent airs seizes the ship and makes me founder against some invisible rocks. The mast broke with a shout, sick and tired of waiting for a harbour, and the splinters that came off are stuck in my back like darts, in the shape of a heart. I fainted from the pain and fetched up on this beach. I saw the stowaways jumping overboard, and a couple swimming away. I also saw my wardrobe drifting away. I've only managed to save one of my wigs, a shoe and the clothes I was wearing when I met you. I am probably in the tropics because the air is thick and rarefied, with the scent of exotic fruit... exactly the fragrance of the fruit that is about to fall... a solid fragrance... capable of hovering in the air... inviting you to stay... and let yourself go... giving shelter... But I can't dismiss the possibility of having run aground near the Australian coast. The last information I received from the compass was advice for life as a castaway, and the sentence clearly read: "Now, you'll get your arse wet, captain". I fear the worst and I'm ready for everything, but I wouldn't like to be cooked to death in a pan, surrounded by savages... That would be quite unglamorous. Alfredo, I know you are there, somewhere in the world. Come and save me, please, I beg you."

## **WAVE ELEVEN**

*The **Tourist** appears, walking backwards, as if he were walking all around the island in circles. He looks at his own footprints on the ground, but some are not his.*

**Tourist** *(To the audience)* I'm a sea crab... Well, actually, I'm not, I'm a seagull...

## WAVE TWELVE

*Sitting on the sand, with their back to the audience, **Man** and **Woman** are naked together, like cats staring at the moon from a roof. Beside her, one of the shoes.*

**Man** I was frightened I might lose you in the storm. You only really appreciate something when you lose it or you're about to lose it.

**Woman** Just because you made love to me you shouldn't feel you have to say nice things. I prefer a good silence. *(Pause)*

**Man** I love you.

**Woman** I love you too. You hadn't made love to me like that for years.

**Man** That's why I brought you to Australia, to love you secretly, and alone.

**Woman** If you make love to me like that, I'll begin to think we're in Australia, or in a continent, or on a desert island, or nowhere, all surrounded by water. I'll begin to believe whatever you say... *(Pause)* All this is so beautiful, the air is so pure, the forests, the birds, and the sand is so clean... The only thing I don't quite understand is why we are sitting with our back to the sea... I would have thought that looking at the sea is always more pleasant, isn't it?

**Man** So we can watch the sunset.

**Woman** I see! The sunset! You are making it all perfect.

**Man** IT IS PERFECT... Alone on a desert island, what more could you wish for?

**Woman** *(After a silence)* Sweetheart, I think there's something I have to tell you... The fact is... We are not alone.

**Man** What?

**Woman** I said we're not alone.

**Man** That can't be true, I've walked all around the island and I haven't seen anybody.

**Woman** There is somebody else.

**Man** How can you be so sure?

**Woman** Because I saw a man while we were making love. He was sitting on a cushion with his legs crossed... and he was watching us.

**Man** (*Turning*) What are you talking about? That can't be true, I've checked every inch of this part of the island, and I can swear there is no-one.

**Woman** Well, I've seen him... He was wearing a ripped Hawaiian T-shirt, he had a very long beard and looked absent-minded, as if he was distracted, or meditating. I'm not even sure that he saw us, he seemed to be looking without really seeing.

**Man** And why didn't you say something?... Was he masturbating?

**Woman** How would I know... He looked harmless, and besides, you were quite busy. I actually felt sorry for him. But don't worry, Australians are very nice people. Like the inhabitants of these desert islands.

**Man** But darling, that's awful, how can you make love to me just like that, with someone watching as if it were the most natural thing in the world.

**Woman** Well, what was I supposed to do? Stop and say: "Look, dear, but I think there's a man sitting on a cushion watching us?". Just when I was starting to enjoy myself on this disgusting island. (*Pause*)

**Man** Well, you should... It could have been someone dangerous, a nutter, who knows...

**Woman** ... or a castaway... like us...

**Man** We are not castaways, we came here of our own free will...

**Woman** ... invited by fate... a holiday we won in a TV competition... after all those months watching the same channel...

**WAVE THIRTEEN**

*The **Tourist** appears, his beard is so long that it almost reaches the ground, his trousers are ragged and worn out: he looks like a castaway. He addresses the audience.*

**Tourist** Indeed (*He thinks*), or is it in need? Well, as a matter of fact or as a fact of matter I'm not alone... I met a woman on the beach, which, I mean who wasn't scarred, I mean scared by my presence... On the contrary, she looked at me and she asked me to sit beside her, and said to me "Come here, my soul". And then I pictured a huge sole with fishy eyes, and... But she wasn't thinking of any shoal... She was thinking of me, the seagull, the crab, the cast-off, the savage, the child, the preposition, me, the pronoun I, now that I was your shoal, I mean, your soul... This wasn't my dessert island, I mean my desert island, I came here to be alone but sunnily, I mean funnily enough, I met someone. I don't think she knew who I was, nor about my scope, I mean my escape. Fair enough, I mean she was four-haired but then she took her wig off and she was no longer four but dark-haired, and she was no longer her but him, although I might be getting the terms mixed up, as I sold you, I mean I told you, I can't articulate lorries properly and I confuse them, but I think it was him because of his huge sax, and he called me Alfredo while I was curling it, I mean cuddling him... Perhaps he also gets mixed up with words since my name is not Alfredo, but Emilio, I think... He didn't say anything else, he just said Aaaaah!... at a gibbon, I mean given moment I thought he was going to say Ilford!... At a gibbon point... but no, he didn't say anything else and he just kept very calm while he spoke me, I mean stroked me... Then I asked him what year it was, then I had a workout, and I worked it out... I believe that more than seven years have pissed, I mean passed since I got to this island. She, actually, or rather, he, or maybe the two of them, tell me that they want to stay, spray and live with me on this island forever... But I used body language to tell him that I want to be alone, and meditate... And he laughed I mean he left and told me that I was a great pet, I mean a great poet, but I told him that I was no poet, that I came here flying, I mean fleeing from Spanish justice, and that I left my family, wife and cods, I mean kids back in Spain. He then called me a social climate and from that point on we got revolved, I mean involved in a row of misunderstandings until we decided we should vote for not trying to stand under each other but just to be left alone, I mean to be laughed at alone, and let ourselves go... Without a thought for anybody but ourselves, we'll have a good time for Eva until the next train comes... Well, until it comes to this island, so welcoming, well, come and see, if you are well. You're welcome. Thank you.



## WAVE FOURTEEN

*Man and Woman in the same position. Naked. Covered in sand.*

**Woman** The sun is not setting, you've lied to me again...

**Man** It will set, eventually, just be patient...

**Woman** Perhaps it went down behind us and we didn't see it... Is the sun in Australia the same sun we have back home?... The moon looks as if they have turned it over, the other way round from in Spain... *(Pause)*... Darling, I'm thinking about that man there... *(Pause)*... Why don't we go and ask him to have dinner with us or something... He seemed to be very lonely, poor thing, maybe he hasn't spoken to anyone for a long time... now, you have to be friendly, especially on a desert island.

**Man** Look, dear, please stop pretending this is a desert island, what with this bearded fellow spying on us somewhere... Sometimes I get the impression that there are loads of people watching us...

**Woman** Oh yes, now that you mention it... I get the same feeling... but only sometimes... *(Pause)*... Do you think it will be long before the sun goes down?... You know, I could do a few things while we are waiting...

**Man** Please don't move, it's quite important for me that we're together when the sun sets.

**Woman** If it's important for you, then it is for me, too. Or at least I hope so.

## WAVE FIFTEEN

*In the same position as **Man** and **Woman** are the **Sailor** and the **Tourist**, with a very long beard, almost unrecognizable; they also look like two cats staring at the moon.*

**Sailor** I've got to go.

**Tourist** Hello!

**Sailor** You mean goodbye.

**Tourist** Goodbye! And welcome!

**Sailor** My heart belongs to another man. I have to split, so that I can go and find him.

**Tourist** My man belongs to another heart. I must find me to split with him. Let's split the heart and we'll find the man. Let's split the man and we'll find nothing.

**Sailor** It's the first time I've been with someone and I don't need to understand anything to love him.

**Tourist** I understand you.

**Sailor** This was your first time, wasn't it?

**Tourist** Yes. *(Pause)*. Well, no. But this close, yes.

**Sailor** Don't worry, there is always a first time. I found out at school. I was always the only one in the yard watching the handball team training. I used to wait until the end of the training session and join them in the showers, even though I wasn't sweaty. By the end of the season I had made friends with the coach and instead of watching them training, I would wait, naked, in the changing room, and I would turn on the showers so that the water would be hot when they came in, then I got the towels ready and geed them up, especially the poor reserves, the ones who didn't play throughout the year. We played

great matches. Then I met Alfredo. At a butcher's shop called "The meat dream"... He was working behind the counter, wearing a blood-stained white apron, with no T-shirt underneath, because of the heat... That was in Cadiz, near the port... You could see his hairy naked chest when he bent down to serve, but to me he looked like a baby wearing his bib with food dribbled all over. We went to the back room and made love under a half-opened calf... I was freezing so I held him tight, then he suddenly said "Next, please" and he was off to serve more customers, cutting chicken thighs, plucking geese, chopping livers and sausages... Since I met him the smell of meat, tendon and entrails has been stuck in my body and I can't get rid of it... *(The **Tourist** has fallen asleep while listening to the **Sailor's** monologue. The latter combs the former's hair a little and tidies his beard before waking him up with a kiss)* You fell asleep, sweetheart.

**Tourist** You're off then. Or am I the one who's staying?

**Sailor** The best thing is not to say goodbye.

**Tourist** It's no good to know what's best. All the best. For your own good. Good for nothing. *(He starts reciting fast)* "Now you see it, now you don't... It was a brutish thing to do, but Brutus killed Caesar..." I'm tired of playing with words. One day I'll shave and I'll start a crusade against wit. I'll kill all punsters and those who make their living setting crosswords, I'll kill TV presenters, I'll kill travel agents, I'll kill my wife and my two kids, I'll kill Leonardo who's always saying "Have you heard this one?", I'll kill all of them with the same scissors I'll use to cut this beard and when I am finished I'll be your bloody butcher and I'll love you forever, far away from calves and handball players.

**Sailor** Who were you before you became the cast-off you are now?

**Tourist** A nobody from nine to five. A shadow by the time I got home. Always clean-shaven.

**Sailor** I always wanted to be a sailor.

**Tourist** Will you write to me?

**Sailor** Messages in a bottle? Would you be happy with a cliché?

**Tourist** Yes. I'll collect your letters, and I'll rip the bottle labels off, I'll cover my hut with them and I'll paper my heart with your letters. If they are returnable bottles I'll wait for civilization to come and then I'll take them back. With my savings I'll make a long journey to see you: to see you better, I mean. You leave me and leave a heart adrift.

**Sailor** A romance in every port... You'll forget me... I'm just the first one...

**Tourist** Never. Without you, I'm neither hole nor whole...

**Sailor** I want you to keep something of mine. *(He pulls his arm off and gives it to him)* It's wooden... Orthopaedic...

**Tourist** Is it Chinese?

**Sailor** Made in Taiwan. *(With the other arm he points in a specific direction and disappears into the water. Then we see the wooden ship sailing along the shore. And the tourist watching)*

**Tourist** A Chinese ship... a relation ship... a friend ship... ... (he goes on repeating slowly, as if trying to see the difference). None at all... a tall nun... *(He repeats very fast)* ass sign... ass sorted ... *(He realizes he's on to something but doesn't quite know what)* member ship *(He breathes deeply)*... hard ship *(He breathes deeply and he's slowly falling asleep again)* friendship... *(He looks at the arm)* Arm of mine, please don't harm me... *(The wooden arm hugs him while the **Tourist** finally falls asleep)*

## WAVE SIXTEEN

*Man and Woman covered in sand up to their waist.*

**Woman** I'm sure the sun has set several times already, with its days and nights. And here we are waiting... We should do something. Build a house. Have a family. Go out for a walk on Sundays, even if it's round the island, and say hello to the bearded man, play an active part in the neighbourhood, community life, my projects, my things, the odd weekend in the mountains... just for a change of air... write some letters, take some interest in the rest of the world, go out and vote, even... *(Pause)*... Where have I left the door? *(She searches for it)*... Look, over there, isn't that...? Yes, yes it is... It's a ship! We're saved!... Hey, we're here!... Here, on the desert island! No, no... In Australia!... No, no, no... Over here in the continent, in front of you!... I hope it's coming on account of my rhyming... Darling, what's the name of this place, I still haven't got it straight... And if I don't give them precise directions they could just go past and off the other way... Quick, we need a signal!... a flare, a message in a bottle, an SOS, a white cloth, a well-judged YOO-HOO!, nice and loud, something, dear, just something... it's going past... let's do something...

**Man** Don't move or you'll miss the sunset.

**WAVE SEVENTEEN***Sailor sailing.*

**Sailor** Log book: “I’m setting sail from the island where I met a wonderful man... discreet, sensitive, with a sense of humour, we understood each other without many explanations... someone who reminded me of you, Alfredo... yes, I know that comparisons are not fair... but what else can I do *(Pause)*... I’ve lost track of what day it is... this place is full of islands... I’m sailing among the waters of an archipelago, where I believe I’ve been going round and round for months without knowing how to get out, in the water floats the wreckage of ships, bobbing leisurely: combs, suitcases, toilet bags, shoes, wigs, clothes everywhere... each island must be full of castaways, stripped of their belongings... I feel like kissing them all... to cheer them up... this must be a huge archipelago... I fancy diving in to sleep on a coral... *(Pause)*... I have these funny ideas, well, I get sort of silly when I’m sailing... To be a mermaid... or a swordfish...or a seaweed if they let me... “Islands, islands, islands go by/Many more, ever more/The ship, the ship is sailing and sailing/Without a pause”<sup>i</sup>... it’s a really huge archipelago... I don’t know how long it will take me to get out from it... on my maps such a huge archipelago doesn’t exist... but sometimes maps are wrong... borders change... countries disappear...I think I have discovered a new archipelago today... full of castaways...”.

## WAVE EIGHTEEN

*Man and Woman, covered in sand up to their necks. They are two talking heads. He is still looking towards the background, she is now facing the audience.*

**Man** It's going to be the most wonderful sunset I've ever seen. It was worth it, coming here.

**Woman** If you say so... But maybe I shouldn't have moved... *(Pause)* My shoe, look, that's my shoe! Over there, floating!...

**Man** Don't get carried away, or you'll miss the sunset... *(Pause)*

**Woman** Darling, now that I think of it... when we left the house I don't know whether I locked the door properly... Somebody might get in...

**Man** I'm happy by your side.

**Woman** Oh yes, I think I... did lock it. I feel better now.

## WAVE NINETEEN

*We can see the beach with two sizeable mounds. The sound of waves. A shoe, different from the castaways', is floating along the shore. Sunset.*

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<sup>i</sup> Poem lines by Nicolás Guillén. *El son entero*, 1947.