

BLUE NOTE RUN  
A full-length play  
by  
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CAST

AURELIO ROXAS, Male, 21

CASSANDRA PRICE, Female, 21

RED POMEROY, JR., Male, 23

PERFECCION ROXAS, Male, 23

SETTING

1930s. A small farming town in Northern California.

Note: Ideally Aurelio and Perfeccion are played by Filipino-American actors, but can be played by any ethnic actors.

**ACT I****SCENE ONE**

(AURELIO, wearing a damaged brown suit, holds his blackened eye in pain inside a bunkhouse. He removes his tie.)

PERFECCION

Your eye. What happened?

(PERFECCION tries to touch his eye, but Aurelio stops his hand.)

AURELIO

California is different from our home.

PERFECCION

I told you the suit is only to be worn for church.

(Perfeccion lays the coat gently on his cot.)

AURELIO

It is too hot to wear for church.

PERFECCION

But it is not too hot to wear...where did you go last night?

(pause.)

PERFECCION

Did you go to--?

AURELIO

Yes.

PERFECCION

I warned you, never to go there. You agreed you would not. After we bought our suit.

AURELIO

But I was trying to find enjoyment here. In America.

PERFECCION

Now look at your eye. Who did this to you? Was it one of the Pinoys?

AURELIO

Maybe.

PERFECCION

How do you not know? Were you drunk?

AURELIO

No.

PERFECCION

Then?

AURELIO

I was removed from the hall before I could see--

PERFECCION

Removed?

AURELIO

I did not know the etiquette of the dance hall--

PERFECCION

You have committed sin, then?

(Perfeccion shakes his head.)

PERFECCION

You have only lived here two months and already a criminal.

AURELIO

I have broken no laws--

PERFECCION

I will write to our mother.

AURELIO

I have already written her.

PERFECCION

What?

AURELIO

I believe I have made a mistake. Coming to America.

PERFECCION

But you were overjoyed when you arrived and now--

AURELIO

My body aches for our country. I yearn to see the bend of neighboring coconut trees from my window. And the sweetness of our mangoes. Addicting. Like the scent of garlic and rice on the pan before supper.

PERFECCION

I can fry garlic for you here.

(Aurelio sits on his bed and picks up one of the pillows.)

AURELIO

I miss the presence of our Filipina women. The way the sun has embraced their skin. With an elegant glow of life. Strength and passion painted onto every curve.

(Aurelio rolls over and holds the pillow above his face.)

AURELIO

And the wondrous sway of a Filipina's hair. Like a wonderful horse's hair.

PERFECCION

You can brush the hair of the horses here.

(Aurelio touches the pillow.)

AURELIO

The almond that shapes each eye. Like an artist's stroke.

(Perfeccion removes the pillow from Aurelio's hands.)

PERFECCION

There are many Filipina women here on the farm. I will introduce you.

AURELIO

I have not seen any available.

PERFECCION

There is Carlita.

AURELIO

She has twelve children and a husband in Cebu.

PERFECCION

Oh. I did not know. How about Lupe?

AURELIO

She is already matched with a young Visayan whose face is spotted like the owls perched in the trees.

PERFECCION

Helen is not married.

AURELIO

Yes. But I have heard she is drawn to older Tagalog men who know how to whisper to roosters and goats.

PERFECCION

There must be another.

(Aurelio stands.)

AURELIO

Here. There are only endless asparagus fields, and hundreds of Pinoys.

PERFECCION

Come then, we will pray God will send you an ocean of Filipinas to quench American soil with their first steps. Then you will find your new love.

AURELIO

That would be a dream.

PERFECCION

And the proper way to court a woman. Unlike last night.

AURELIO

With the American women here. Their faces.

(Aurelio takes Perfeccion's face.)

AURELIO

They are so pale. Like soap.

PERFECCION

American women?

(Aurelio brushes his hand on Perfeccion's cheek.)

AURELIO

Longer chins. Rounder cheeks.

PERFECCION

Did you touch an American woman inside the dance hall?

AURELIO

Curls in their hair hanging by their ears. Sometimes red. Have you ever seen red hair before?

(Perfeccion removes Aurelio's hand from his face.)

PERFECCION

Not yet. How many did you--?

AURELIO

And many are too tall. I must walk with buckets attached to each foot. Maybe then I may see the genuine color of their eyes. Tinted in different shades than I am used to.

PERFECCION

You must be careful about whose eyes you look into and whose bodies you touch--

AURELIO

And they are so vulgar with their words.

PERFECCION

No!

AURELIO

Yes! Words new to my ears. Spoken faster than I can digest.  
I lose the poetry of their English.

PERFECCION

You expected to find a poetess in the dance hall?

AURELIO

I believe I am growing sick. Inside.

PERFECCION

You are not sick.

(Perfeccion points at Aurelio.)

PERFECCION

Trust my words. Turn away from the dance hall and your  
health will return. God can protect those in his sight.

AURELIO

But the music. It is--

PERFECCION

Satan's melody.

AURELIO

I felt alive again. The hairs on my arms. Dancing. To the  
rhythm. In our suit. I am young. Handsome.

PERFECCION

Ungodly. Lustful.

AURELIO

No. Only dancing.

PERFECCION

Immoral. Intimacy is reserved for--

AURELIO

American Jazz.

PERFECCION

Hanky panky.

AURELIO

I will show you.

PERFECCION

What?

AURELIO

You will see it is different than what you believe.

**SCENE TWO**

(RED waits by the back door of the dance hall.)

(CASSANDRA enters onstage.)

(Red holds out a cigarette for her.)

CASSANDRA

Red. I don't have time.

RED

I know. But. I haven't seen you. Feels like you've been hiding from me.

(pause.)

RED

I miss. Hearing you laugh.

CASSANDRA

You haven't missed much then. Doesn't happen too often.

RED

You still smell like lilacs.

CASSANDRA

You still smell like...cows.

(Red offers her the cigarette again.)

(Cassandra takes it and puts it in her purse.)

CASSANDRA

Keep it for later.

RED

Always thinking ahead.

CASSANDRA

Yeah. And if I'm not inside--

RED

Hold on.

What?  
CASSANDRA

I've been practicing. RED  
The dancing you showed me awhile back.

I can't. CASSANDRA

(She sees dirt on his face. She wipes it off.)

But I'm glad you've been practicing. CASSANDRA

(She fixes his hair.)

Will you ever get yourself decent? CASSANDRA

I'm sorry. About what I did. Before. RED

I know. CASSANDRA

I didn't mean to. It's... RED

All past now. CASSANDRA

Is it? We both are still here and-- RED

No...Red. I'm sorry. CASSANDRA

You ever gonna tell me you were working at the dance hall? RED

Haven't been here long enough to talk-- CASSANDRA

Really? Hear it's been three months since-- RED

Your friends following me now? CASSANDRA

Nobody's following you. You chose to leave. RED

CASSANDRA  
To make a better life for myself.

RED  
You call this better? Why do you work here?

CASSANDRA  
Have to eat. Pay my rent.

RED  
You don't know what these Pinoys might do with you.

CASSANDRA  
I can take care of myself. They're all perfect gentleman and fine dancers.

RED  
Stop lying. I'm trying to help you. You need more money, you can work for me again. I will pay you more than fair.

CASSANDRA  
You think I want to go back?

RED  
I'm protecting you.

CASSANDRA  
There's nothing harmful inside this building.

RED  
Surrounded. Every night. Them touching you. Holding your body. Close.

CASSANDRA  
Dancing requires a little hand holding. Nothing else.

RED  
I don't believe you.

CASSANDRA  
You don't have to. Because we aren't anything anymore.

(Red tries to slap her but she stops him.)

CASSANDRA  
Still trying to protect my body?

RED  
You think your ma would like you dancing here?

CASSANDRA  
You think I still mind what she thinks?

RED  
You can't run away from what happened with us. You're.  
My wife.

CASSANDRA  
Not anymore.

RED  
I took care of you.

CASSANDRA  
No. I wasn't ready then.

RED  
And now?

CASSANDRA  
I'm not. Running.

RED  
But you still love me.

CASSANDRA  
I got to get to work.

RED  
Don't you?

CASSANDRA  
They don't like me being late.

RED  
Go on then. Earn your living.

CASSANDRA  
Good night, Red.

RED  
Selling your body.

(Red exits.)

### SCENE THREE

(Spot on Cassandra who enters and stands onstage as if she is standing in the midst of other taxi-dancers in a straight line.)

CASSANDRA  
Dime a dance, fellas.

(Jazz music like Duke Ellington's "Jack The Bear" plays.)

(Aurelio enters wearing the torn suit.)

(He walks up and down looking at the other invisible taxi-dancers one by one.)

(Aurelio examines each taxi-dancer's face and is unsatisfied.)

(Aurelio is indecisive of who to choose.)

CASSANDRA

Isn't very difficult is it? You pick the gal you wanna dance with and stop wasting the music!

(Aurelio sees Cassandra.)

(He is frozen.)

CASSANDRA

New suit?

(He looks closely at her eyes and her skin.)

CASSANDRA

Taken quite a beating.

(He examines her hair and then the rest of her body.)

AURELIO

Hah?

CASSANDRA

Your suit.

AURELIO

I did not see you here last night. Are you new to the dance hall?

CASSANDRA

Can't say I've been in this lovely establishment too long. But, you're the one who looks fresh. Except for that eye of yours. What happened?

(Aurelio backs away and covers his black eye with his hand.)

(She pulls his hand down.)

CASSANDRA

No. I can hardly tell.

(Aurelio turns his head away, keeping his black eye away from her view.)

CASSANDRA

I didn't mean to offend you. I get uneasy. Every time they line us up like cows waiting to be milked.

AURELIO

But it is only dancing.

CASSANDRA

Really? What if you were standing in a line of men, and I was looking at every part of you, you didn't like? Not exactly just dancing going on is it?

AURELIO

But your body is--

CASSANDRA

Careful.

AURELIO

Magical.

CASSANDRA

The whorehouse is next door if you want.

AURELIO

I apologize. I did not--

CASSANDRA

This is your first time, isn't it?

AURELIO

First time?

CASSANDRA

Here. Dancing.

AURELIO

Oh, no. It is my number two. Time. Number two time.

CASSANDRA

Number two? Practically a pro aren't ya?

AURELIO

No. Still learning your style of dance. American Jazz.

CASSANDRA

I can teach you a little...how much money you got?

(Aurelio shows her his dimes.)

CASSANDRA

That will get you the right amount of steps under your toes.  
Get your feet familiar. You up to it?

(Cassandra opens her coin purse. He  
drops a dime in her purse.)

CASSANDRA

Thank you, sir. I didn't catch your name.

AURELIO

Aurelio Roxas.

CASSANDRA

Oral what?

AURELIO

Aurelio.

CASSANDRA

Ohher...?

AURELIO

Aur--

CASSANDRA

I'll call you Leo for short.

AURELIO

Roxas.

CASSANDRA

Roses.

AURELIO

Rox--

CASSANDRA

Leo Roses. I got it.

(She extends her hand.)

CASSANDRA

A pleasure. I'm Cassandra.

AURELIO

Cassava?

CASSANDRA

Dra.

Cassandra. AURELIO

Price. CASSANDRA

(He bows.)

(She curtsies.)

(She holds out her hand.)

(He takes it.)

(A song like Duke Ellington's "Cotton Tail" plays.)

Where you from Leo? CASSANDRA

(They walk onto the dance floor.)

Laguna, Philippines. And you are from? AURELIO

New York City. United States. CASSANDRA

Ah. The Statue of Liberty. AURELIO

Yeah. Not much liberty. CASSANDRA

What? AURELIO

Nothing for you to worry about. Now. Leo. CASSANDRA

(She takes his arms into a dancing position.)

Dancing has a natural-- CASSANDRA

(They dance.)

(He steps on her foot.)

Ow. CASSANDRA

AURELIO

I am sorry, Miss Cassava, Cassandra.

CASSANDRA

No. It's alright. Let's try again.

(They dance.)

CASSANDRA

Yes. Listen to the rhythm. It's simple. You just--

(He steps on her toe.)

CASSANDRA

Oh!

AURELIO

I apologize.

CASSANDRA

No. Don't apologize.

AURELIO

I...love your music.

CASSANDRA

Yeah?

AURELIO

It invades my shoes. Into my feet.

CASSANDRA

I can see that.

AURELIO

What?

CASSANDRA

I love the music too. It's why I love working here.

AURELIO

If the music played until morning, I would dance the entire night.

(A slow jazz song like Duke Ellington's  
"Concerto for Cootie" plays.)

CASSANDRA

Show me.

(She extends her palm out.)

CASSANDRA

It's a slow one. Easier on my feet. Our feet.

(He places a dime inside.)

(She drops it in her purse.)

(She takes his hand and they dance closer.)

CASSANDRA

What's it like in your country?

AURELIO

It is wonderful. You wake to the footsteps of the fisherman beating along the path to the bay. The still water broken by the bottoms of their boats. Pushing waves across the rest of the shore. And the simmer of their catch on the pan calls, telling you they have returned. Suddenly your nose is filled by the scent of Milkfish and Tilapia. A new day. The vendors cooking. Selling. Shouting out. Earning their life.

CASSANDRA

Sounds delicious.

AURELIO

And you can drift under the warm ocean in the evening. So warm. You can remove your clothes.

CASSANDRA

Really?

AURELIO

But. I never remove my clothes.

CASSANDRA

Oh.

AURELIO

And you can float back and forth, along the edge where the ocean meets the beach. Then rest on each pebble of sand to dry every droplet from your skin.

(pause.)

AURELIO

What is it like working here?

CASSANDRA

For the most part the guys are gentleman. Their tempers get the best of them only when they've had too much to drink.

AURELIO

(whispering)

Alcohol?

CASSANDRA

Yeah. They don't serve warm milk here. You want a drink?

AURELIO

Oh...I cannot.

CASSANDRA

Why? Celebrate your first time in the hall?

AURELIO

It is my second.

CASSANDRA

Oh, right. But it's your first time with me.

**END OF SELECTION**