WHO'S AFRAID OF THE RAIN?

A One-Act Play

by Ramón Esquivel

Written in collaboration with:
Yulitssa Meza Duarte
Lus Gallardo
Arely Sanchez Medina
Mylaa Moreno

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Who's Afraid of the Rain?
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Cast
The play is designed for three performers with doubling.

Perform 1

    CHIQUIS, a Lechuza

Perform 2

    REBECCA, a Sasquatch
    SQUIGGLES, a Ferret

Perform 3
A puppeteer would be ideal.

    DRAKE, a Dragon
    CARÍN, a Shrimp

Settings

    The Great Gate, a portal between Our World and the Other World
    A Public Library
    — The Children's Area within the Library
    — Before a large window looking outside
    Outside the Library, where it is perpetually raining
PROLOGUE

DRAKE, a Dragon, guards the Great Gate.

DRAKE
Once upon a yesterday, this Great Gate was open. It was a portal between two worlds: Our World, and the Other World. When it was open, it was a time of peace and harmony.

But then, the water of Our World. Might fires swept through and burned our trees. I crossed this portal to ask for help from the Other World. What I saw there astonished me. The Other World had so much water that its land could not hold it all. They stored the extra water in the sky. I saw this with my own three eyes!

I knew what had happened: the Other World had stolen our water! I shared my suspicion with Our World, and everyone believed me. We closed the Great Gate. It has been closed so long, creatures of the Other World exist only in our books and imaginations.

SCENE I

REBECCA, a Sasquatch, and CHIQUIS, a Lechuza, have been listening to Drake’s tale.

REBECCA
Every time we come here, this cranky old Dragon tells us the saaaame story.

CHIQUIS
Rebecca, do you really want to upset a Dragon?

REBECCA
I’m a Sasquatch. We’re not afraid of anything, especially Dragons.

DRAKE
Hmm!

REBECCA
I’m not even afraid of my friend Chiquis here ...

—Hi, I’m Chiquis.

CHIQUIS

REBECCA
And she’s a Lechuza! Lechuzas like her are scary. They fly around and swoop down and grab creatures and eat them. Do you do that, Chiquis?
CHIQUIS
Only sometimes.

DRAKE
Why do a Sasquatch and a Lechuza want to visit the Other World?

CHIQUIS
I’ve read books about magical creatures of the Other World. I want to see them. I want to see cats, shrimps, pigs, ferrets, capybaras, dogs...

REBECCA
—I really want to see a dog. That is, if the Other World is even real.

DRAKE
Ohh, it is real. I saw it with my own three eyes!

CHIQUIS
Let us see the Other World, with our own eyes. Let us see all those fantastical creatures. Let us bring back stories to share with everyone in Our World. Including you.

DRAKE
If you enter the Other World, beware of the creatures you meet there. They will trick you.

I won’t trust anyone but us.

REBECCA

DRAKE
Most of all, beware of the water that they stole from Our World. They have so much water that it falls from the sky. I hear that the water in the sky... is POISON.

REBECCA
Poison water from the sky? Why would they do that?

DRAKE
They are not to be trusted.

CHIQUIS
We understand. We will remember your warning.

DRAKE
You may pass.

Drake opens the Great Gate. Chiquis and Rebecca walk through the portal.
SCENE 2

A Library in the Other World. CHIQUIS and REBECCA enter.

CHIQUIS
So this is the Other World? Walls and walls of books?

REBECCA
I don’t read much. I get my news from friends and family. This all seems wasteful.

CHIQUIS
I want to read their books, but it’s so dark in here. Do you see that light over there? It seems to be coming from behind a door.

REBECCA
Let’s investigate. But try to stay quiet.

Chiquis kicks over a garbage can.

—Ow! My talon!

CHIQUIS
So much for quiet.

REBECCA
An angry cry from behind the door.

CHIQUIS
That sound! A creature from the Other World? Let’s hide.

REBECCA
Hide? I’m not afraid of anything.

CARÍN, a Shrimp, enters with a light.

CARÍN
Hah! Who goes there?

REBECCA
Run!

CHIQUIS
Hide!
CARÍN
Who dares disturb my evening reading?

REBECCA
Such a little thing. I’m not afraid of that. You stay here, Chiquis.

CARÍN
I said, who goes there?! It’s too dark to see.

Rebecca emerges.

REBECCA
I go there. Or ... here. And who are you?

CARÍN
This is a library. I’m a librarian. I work here. But I’m not working at this moment. Know why? Because we’re closed! It’s the middle of the night, so get out of here!

Chiquis emerges.

CHIQUIS
You’re really loud. What is your name?

CARÍN
My name is Carín.

CHIQUIS
Nice to meet you, Carín. My name is Chiquis. This is Rebecca. This is our first time in ... what you call a library. We came through the Great Gate there.

CARÍN
Great Gate? You mean that door that is always locked? I thought it was an emergency exit. You say you’re from another world?

REBECCA
You are from the Other World. We are from Our World.

CARÍN
I want to get a good look at you. Let me turn on the lights.

Carín turns on lights and sees Chiquis and Rebecca in their full glory.
REBECCA

Hi!

CHIQUIS

Hello.

CARÍN

Wow! Oh wow! You’re a ... you’re a Sasquatch!

REBECCA

Sure am.

CARÍN

And you must be ... with an owl’s body and woman’s face? You’re a Lechuza!

CHIQUIS

That’s right!

CARÍN

Lechuzas fly through the air, and swoop down and kidnap creatures, and eat them.

CHIQUIS

Only sometimes. How do you know about us?

CARÍN

From books, of course. But Sasquatches and Lechuzas are only legends. You’re not real.

REBECCA

Of course we’re real! We’re as real as you are.

CARÍN

I’m a Shrimp. Shrimps are real.

CHIQUIS

You’re a Shrimp! A real, live Shrimp.

CARÍN

If you’re from another world, how do you know about Shrimps?

CHIQUIS

From books.

REBECCA

Even I’ve heard of Shrimps.
CHIQUIS

The Little Shrimp is one of my favorite stories. The Little Shrimp falls in love with handsome werewolf on land, so the Little Shrimp gives up her voice to meet him.

CARÍN

Wrong. You’re thinking of The Little Mermaid.

CHIQUIS

No, you’re wrong. It’s The Little Shrimp. Mermaids tell that story in school.

REBECCA

We’re right. You’re wrong. That’s how it is.

CARÍN

Well ... we will agree to disagree.

CHIQUIS

But why? Isn’t that what conversation is all about? Talking and discussing so that disagreements can become agreements?

CARÍN

These days, it seems that conversations and agreements only exist in fantasy stories. Stories like The Little Mermaid.

REBECCA

The Little Shrimp.

CARÍN

Why don’t you return in the morning? When the library is open. I will be happy to give you books that will correct your way of thinking. But we’re closed! Please go outside.

CHIQUIS

Outside? Where the water in the sky is?

CARÍN

You mean rain? Yes, it is raining. It’s been raining for a long time.

REBECCA

You’re trying to trick us into going into the POISON rain!

CARÍN

No-no, rain is not poison. Rain is just annoying. I never leave the library when the rain is falling. I have not left the library in a very long time.
CHIQUIS
Because you are afraid of water?

REBECCA
Water that was stolen from Our World!

CARÍN
Stolen ... ?

CHIQUIS
We have a right to be in this ... this strange fortress of books.

CARÍN
This is the [Insert Name of the Local] Library.

REBECCA
We’re not going anywhere. Right, Chiquis?

CHIQUIS
Right.

Rebecca and Chiquis sit down.

CARÍN
Oh dear. A sit-in protest. Reminds me of my sit-in protests in college. Quite different being on the other side of one. I’ll call Squiggles. He’ll know what to do.

SCENE 3

A little while later. Carín and SQUIGGLES, a Ferret, observe (offstage) Rebecca and Chiquis.

SQUIGGLES
You said her name is Rebecca? Funny name for a Sasquatch.

CARÍN
Some might say Squiggles is a funny name for a Ferret.

SQUIGGLES
“Squiggles” fits me, don’t it? How many times have I squiggled into this library’s pipes to fix the plumbing? What’s the owl-lady’s name?

CARÍN
Chiquis is not an “owl-lady.” She’s a Lechuza, part human and part owl.
SQUIGGLES

So ... an “owl-lady.”

CARÍN

Are you going to help me? I have to open soon, and I don’t want a Sasquatch and Lechuza sitting in the middle of the children’s book section. I do not need a bunch of screaming puppies, kittens, ponies, and kids running around the library. Too loud.

SQUIGGLES

Their world believes that this world stole their world’s water? Maybe there’s truth to that. After all, we steal water from each other in this world. Maybe we did steal their water.

CARÍN

Sad but true.

SQUIGGLES

But believing our rain is poison? That makes no sense. Everyone would be dead.

CARÍN

They don’t even believe creatures like you and me are real, so using logic is tricky.

SQUIGGLES

We don’t believe creatures like them are real either, and yet, there they are. Ask Chiquis, the Lechuza, if she’ll come speak with me.

CARÍN

I hope they will listen to you. They stopped listening to me.

Carin exits.

SQUIGGLES

Hmm. How can I prove that the rain is not poison? Maybe the solution is something else?

CHIQUIS enters.

CHIQUIS

Awesome! I can’t believe I’m looking at a real, live ferret.

SQUIGGLES

Here I am. Handsome yeah?

CHIQUIS

Adorable.

SQUIGGLES

CHIQUIS
I’m Chiquis. You wanted to speak to me?

SQUIGGLES
Yes. First of all, thank you for talking to me. I understand you and your friend there are doing a sit-in protest here in the library?

CHIQUIS
Rebecca and I just wanted to visit the Other World and see some of the magical creatures.

SQUIGGLES
Magical creatures? Like Ferrets?

CHIQUIS
Exactly. But the Shrimp, Carin, tried to trick us into going outside, in the poison rain!

SQUIGGLES
The rain isn’t poison.

CHIQUIS
Are you trying to trick us too?!

SQUIGGLES
It has been raining for a long, long, long time. People don’t want to get wet in the rain. Even Carin doesn’t like getting wet. Can you believe a Shrimp that doesn’t like water?

CHIQUIS
Carin must know that the rain is poison!

SQUIGGLES
Ferrets like me don’t like the rain much either. It’s wet and cold and, and if we get too wet and cold then sometimes we get sick. But I’m a plumber by trade, which means people call me all the time to fix their leaky pipes. My job means I have to go out in the rain all the time. But I have something that will protect me.

CHIQUIS
What’s that?

Squiggles shares his umbrella.

SQUIGGLES
An umbrella!
CHIQUIS
An umbrella! I’ve read about them in books. Great warriors carry them, right?

SQUIGGLES
We sure do. This umbrella here keeps me dry mostly. When it rains really hard, I wear extra armor: rain jacket, rain pants, and rain boots. But an umbrella is the best.

CHIQUIS
The rain could never hurt you with this umbrella to protect you.

SQUIGGLES
A little rain water may seep in, but not enough to make me feel yucky. An umbrella is perfectly safe. Here, I brought extra umbrellas, for you and your friend. Want to go outside and try it?

Squiggles offers Chiquis the umbrellas.

CHIQUIS
I want to believe you, Squiggles. But I only just met you. Rebecca and the Dragon say that the rain is poison.

SQUIGGLES
The rain is not poison. Come outside and give / it a try.

—You’re trying to trick me!

SQUIGGLES
I hear you. You really believe the rain is poison. I will go outside and show you how the umbrella protects me. Keep looking out the window.

Squiggles exits with his umbrella.

SCENE 4

Carín enters. She joins Chiquis at the window.

CARÍN
Where did Squiggles go?

CHIQUIS
Outside. He said his umbrella protects him from the poison rain. Do you have one?
CARÍN
Yes, I have an umbrella. I don’t like getting wet, and it has been raining for such a very long time. I want the rain to stop, but it is still raining. When I absolutely must go outside in the rain, I bring my umbrella. Like Squiggles said, it protects me from getting wet.

CHIQUIS
Look! There he is! There’s Squiggles.

CARÍN
What foolishness is he doing?

CHIQUIS
Squiggles is ... dancing? Other creatures are gathering to watch! They have umbrellas too.

CARÍN
Their umbrellas keep them dry.

CHIQUIS
What are those creatures?

CARÍN
Oh, well ... let’s see. That creature there is a monkey.

CHIQUIS
A real monkey!

CARÍN
There is an ostrich. See that little guy on the ground there? That is a banana slug.

CHIQUIS
It’s like my books are coming to life right in front of me. It looks so fun. Any dogs?

CARÍN
That furry creature there ... that is a dog.

CHIQUIS
A real dog. Wow.

CARÍN
They’re all dancing now! Hmm. It does look fun. Maybe it’s fun to dance in the rain?

CHIQUIS
You have an umbrella, don’t you? Why don’t you go outside and join them?
CARÍN
Would you like to join me? Meet that dog? Squiggles brought extra umbrellas. Maybe Rebecca can join us outside too?

CHIQUIS
Rebecca! She’s going to be angry that I’m even thinking about it. You’re tricking me.

CARÍN
Take the umbrella, don’t take the umbrella — the choice is yours. But do remember that: the choice is yours. Rebecca’s choice is hers. I’m not trying to trick you.

CHIQUIS
I’m not sure I believe you.

CARÍN
Why did our two worlds stop trusting each other? I wish I knew. But I think it would be fun to dance in the rain with a Lechuza, and a Sasquatch. It would make a good story.

CHIQUIS
I would like that story. But I can’t leave my friend. She will be angry if I accept the umbrella. And if I go outside without her, it will hurt her feelings. She’s big and she’s tough, but she’s really got a gentle heart.

CARÍN
The umbrellas are there if you change your mind. Talk to Rebecca. I hope both of you will join us outside. If not, you are welcome to stay in the library for as long as you wish.

SCENE 5

SQUIGGLES dances in the rain. CARÍN joins in. Their umbrellas keep them safe.

SCENE 6

CHIQUIS is speaking to REBECCA, still protesting. Chiquis has two umbrellas.

REBECCA
What did the Dragon warn us about? Beware of Other Worlders telling you lies.

CHIQUIS
How do you know the Ferret was lying? You haven’t even met Squiggles.
REBECCA
I know because I know. That’s all I need to know.

Chiquis twirls an umbrella, fiddles with it, etc.

CHIQUIS
This umbrella is actually really cool.

REBECCA
Whatever an umbrella is, it’s stupid. Get rid of it. It could be poisoned, like the rain.

CHIQUIS
Squiggles and Carín say that it’s specially designed to protect us from the rain.

REBECCA
They admitted it! The rain is poisoned.

CHIQUIS
Maybe it is, maybe it isn’t ...

REBECCA
—It is. It definitely is.

CHIQUIS
Either way, though, poison or not poison, these umbrellas will protect us.

REBECCA
Lies. All lies.

CHIQUIS
Right now, Squiggles and Carín are outside, in the rain, dancing and laughing and having a good time with a monkey, an ostrich, a banana slug ... and a dog. Just like in the books.

REBECCA
Did you say ... a dog? I’ve always wanted to see a dog.

CHIQUIS
Look out that window. See Carín dancing there? The fella dancing next to her? That’s Squiggles the Ferret. And that creature clowning next to them? That is a dog.

REBECCA
But the rain ... ? It should be hurting them.

CHIQUIS
The umbrellas are keeping them safe from the rain.
REBECCA
We’re going home. I think about these things more than you do, and I know better.

CHIQUIS
You only think you know better.

REBECCA
This place is changing you. I don’t like it.

CHIQUIS
You’re my best friend, and adventures aren’t any fun unless you’re having them with me. I would like to go outside and play in the rain with those other creatures. I believe this umbrella will protect me from the rain.

REBECCA
Fine! Then go!

CHIQUIS
But your friendship is more important. If you don’t want to go, I won’t leave you alone.

REBECCA
Your friendship is important to me too. You can outside, with the umbrella. It is your choice. But I’m staying here.

CHIQUIS
Are you angry with me?

REBECCA
Yes. But I’ll get over it. I always do.

CHIQUIS
Thank you, Rebecca. Now I just need to figure out how to open this.

Chiquis opens the umbrella. When she tries to hold it, it sways her this way and that.

REBECCA
What’s wrong? Is it enchanted? Why are you moving like that?

CHIQUIS
It’s hard to hold. I don’t think umbrellas are designed for creatures with wings.

REBECCA
They probably designed it that way on purpose so creatures from Our World will get poisoned by the rain.
CHIQUIS
Or ... maybe they just haven’t met creatures from Our World before? Creatures like you and me? We can help them understand us. They can help us understand them.

REBECCA
Give me the umbrellas. I will hold them for both of us.

CHIQUIS
You’re not afraid of it being poisoned?

REBECCA
I’m not afraid of anything. I’m not afraid of the rain! But I’ll use this umbrella anyway.

CHIQUIS
Thank you. What changed your mind?

REBECCA
You changed my mind, my friend. I am doing this for you.

SCENE 7

CHIQUIS and REBECCA outside in the rain. Rebecca holds both umbrellas, while Chiquis dances beneath. The umbrellas protect them.

EPILOGUE

The Great Gate is open. DRAKE the Dragon returns. She holds an umbrella.

DRAKE
Once upon a yesterday, this Great Gate was closed. Now it is open, a portal between two worlds. All are welcome. Soon, it will once again be a time of peace and harmony. Can you see it? I can see it, with my own three eyes.

End of play.