

# IN SOMEONE ELSE'S SHOES

**By: José Cruz González**

A short play for young audiences and families  
commissioned by La Jolla Playhouse

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**Cast:**

*Carmen*, a ten-year old girl.

*Mario*, an eight-year old boy.

*Old Sneakers*, a girl's voice.

*Leather Shoes*, a teenage boy's voice.

*Stage Directions* may be read by any age or gender.

*Soccer Cleats*, a young woman's voice.

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*Carmen* (age 10) and her brother *Mario* (age 8) stand looking at a midsize cardboard box that is folded shut, each of them eats slice cucumbers with lemon and salt in sandwich baggies.

CARMEN

What do you think is in it?

MARIO

I don't know.

CARMEN

Guess?

MARIO

Toys?

CARMEN slightly kicks the box.

CARMEN

No.

MARIO

Games?

CARMEN kicks the box again.

CARMEN

Too light.

MARIO

Baby clothes!

CARMEN

Ma gave them to Aunt Josie for her new baby.

MARIO

Let's open it!

CARMEN

Yeah!

CARMEN and MARIO open the box illuminating their faces.

MARIO

Wow...

CARMEN

Wow...

They reach into the box removing shoes of various sizes, styles, and eras. They place them neatly in a line.

MARIO

Who's are they?

CARMEN

Don't know. Want to find out?

MARIO

Okay!

CARMEN steps into a pair of old sneakers.

OLD SNEAKERS

(a child's voice)

"Let's go!"

CARMEN jumps out of the sneakers.

Holy cow!

MARIO

Oh, my gosh!

CARMEN

Let's put them back!

MARIO

No. Aren't you curious?

CARMEN

Huh?

MARIO

Don't you want to know more?

CARMEN

What if they bite you or eat your toes?

MARIO

I don't think they will.

CARMEN

CARMEN steps back into the old sneakers.

OLD SNEAKERS

(a girl's voice)

“‘*Apá* says the boss won't pay us until the whole strawberry field is picked today. Let's go!”

CARMEN steps out of the old sneakers.

What is it?

MARIO

These must be *Nana Tuti's* sneakers. She only liked to wear nice shoes, remember?

CARMEN

Yeah, I remember.

MARIO

CARMEN

Ma asked her about it once and she said, “When I was a girl I wore one pair of shoes that were for school and work. All the kids made fun of me because they were worn down and soiled. I promised when I grew up I would never wear another pair of sneakers.”

MARIO

*Nana Tuti* never did.

CARMEN

Oh, I loved how she made fresh *tortillas* by hand!

MARIO

Yeah, they were hot with butter and she’d roll them up for us to eat. Yum!

CARMEN

Yum!  
(a little pause)  
I miss her.

MARIO

Me, too.

CARMEN

It’s your turn.

MARIO

Okay.

Eeny, meeny, miny, moe,—

CARMEN

Catch a tiger by the toe.

CARMEN & MARIO

If he hollers, let him go,  
Eeny, meeny, miny, moe!

MARIO jumps into a man’s pair of leather shoes.

LEATHER SHOES

(a teenage boy's voice)  
"I hope I look okay."

MARIO steps out of the leather shoes.

MARIO

Do you know who that is?

CARMEN

No.

MARIO

It's Papa!

MARIO steps back into the shoes.

LEATHER SHOES

(a teenage boy's voice)  
"Mr. Evans, thank you for seeing me. I want to go to college, sir. What do I have to do to prepare myself?"

MARIO steps out of the shoes.

MARIO

Papa once told me a story 'cause I wasn't doing so good in math about a time when he was in high school and that he was so nervous that he got dressed up to see his high school counselor.

CARMEN

What's a counselor?

MARIO

He said someone who helps you think about your future before you leave high school.

CARMEN

Oh.

MARIO

He said that Mr. Evans told him it wasn't going to be easy with his grades and that he would have to take much harder classes which he did. Math was one of them.

CARMEN

I guess he did okay 'cause Papa's got his college degree on the wall in his office.

MARIO

I like math now.

CARMEN steps into a pair of soccer cleats that are covered in colorful paint splatter.

SOCCER CLEATS

(a young woman's voice)

"I'm going to be a professional soccer player one day. No time to lose! Practice, practice, practice!"

CARMEN steps out of the SOCCER CLEATS.

CARMEN

Bet you can't guess who that is?

MARIO

GINA!

CARMEN

BIG SIS!

MARIO

My turn.

MARIO steps into the SOCCER CLEATS.

SOCCER CLEATS

(a young woman's voice)

"I dreamed I would become a soccer player, but I found my real gift instead."

MARIO steps out of the soccer cleats.

CARMEN

I like when she paints her art.

MARIO

I love when she lets us paint together.

CARMEN

We've got lots more shoes.

MARIO

We got a big family.

CARMEN

You think one day our shoes will be in this box?

MARIO

I think that would be nice.

CARMEN

I got two more slices of cucumber. Want one?

MARIO

Okay.

CARMEN hands MARIO a slice of cucumber. They eat. All the shoes begin to speak.

*What story will your shoes tell about you?*

End of play.

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