



# **SLOWGIRL**

**BY GREG PIERCE**



**DRAMATISTS  
PLAY SERVICE  
INC.**



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Produced by Lincoln Center Theater,  
New York City, 2012

SLOWGIRL was produced by LCT3/Lincoln Center Theater at the Claire Tow Theater, New York City, 2012. It was directed by Anne Kauffman; the set design was by Rachel Hauck; the costume design was by Emily Rebholz; the lighting was by Japhy Weideman; the sound design was by Leah Gelpie; the stage manager was Charles M. Turner III; the managing director was Adam Siegel; and the production manager was Jeff Hamlin. The cast was as follows:

STERLING ..... Željko Ivanek  
BECKY ..... Sarah Steele

## **CHARACTERS**

BECKY — 17, niece

STERLING — 49, uncle

## **PLACE**

Sterling's house outside the tiny town  
of Los Angeles, Costa Rica.

## **TIME**

A week in late April.

## **SCENE BREAKDOWN**

Scene 1: Monday afternoon, Sterling's house.

Scene 2: Tuesday afternoon, the walking labyrinth up the hill.

Scene 3: Thursday, the middle of the night, Sterling's house.

Scene 4: Saturday night, Sterling's house.

## NOTES

There is no intermission.

Sonia is pronounced SOH-nya.

... means the line trails off.

— means an interruption.

// means the point at which the following line begins.

[ ] means unspoken dialogue.

Sterling's house: He did the best he could with a big slab of concrete, some boards, and a tin roof. There are some New England touches to remind him of home. There's a hammock on the front porch, then a couple steps down to the driveway. The house is always wide open. Inside, we can see a tidy kitchen/living room area and doors to the bedroom and bathroom in back. The bedroom wall goes up about six feet, then stops. Anyone can hear anything in here. It was obviously designed for only one person.

# SLOWGIRL

## Scene 1

*Monday afternoon. Sterling's house.*

*Sterling is asleep in the hammock on his porch, a Latin American story collection in Spanish spread across his chest. Becky stands there watching him. She's out of her element. Her backpack is so stuffed it looks like it's about to burst. She's not sure whether she should wake him. She goes over to the hammock, hesitates, and then swings it, barely, from the strings just above his head.*

BECKY. *(Quietly.)* Uncle Sterling? *(Nothing. She sits down on the steps, takes off her backpack, looks around. It's surreal, being here all of the sudden. Quietly.)* Uncle Sterling? *(Nothing. She hears an unfamiliar bird off in the distance. A little louder.)* Uncle Sterling? *(Sterling wakes up suddenly, stabilizes himself.)*

STERLING. Whoa, hey. You're here.

BECKY. Yeah. Hi.

STERLING. Hey. *(Beat.)* You made good time.

BECKY. Really? I left like nine hours ago.

STERLING. Oh! Right on schedule then. *(Beat. He looks her over.)* So ... Hector picked you up and everything, no problem?

BECKY. Yeah. He's really nice. We didn't have much of a conversation 'cause my Spanish sucks ass.

STERLING. *(Surprised by that.)* Oh ... he knows more English than he lets on. *(Pause. They don't know what to say.)* Well. Welcome. *(He stands up and gives Becky a somewhat mechanical hug.)*

BECKY. Thanks. So this is your place?

STERLING. Yes.

BECKY. Wow. And ... you own all this? (*Re: land.*)

STERLING. Pretty much. I don't own across the road — that's Hector's — from the balsa trees up to the uh ... ridge. (*Is that the right word?*)

BECKY. Whoa. This is so crazy. I'm sorry, it just hit me. I'm in the *jungle*. You live in the *jungle*.

STERLING. Yes, it's weird, isn't it? So ... that folds out. That's where you'll be sleeping but you can always use the bedroom for changing or ... if you need privacy.

BECKY. 'Kay. (*She tosses down her backpack. He gives her the quick tour.*)

STERLING. Bathroom, fresh water — you should brush your teeth with that — flashlights, first aid kit.

BECKY. Where are your doors?

STERLING. They're in the shed. I keep them off in the dry season.

BECKY. So there's no doors at night?

STERLING. No.

BECKY. So stuff can just come in?

STERLING. What do you mean by "stuff"?

BECKY. Like ... animals?

STERLING. They could, I suppose. They don't seem very interested —

BECKY. — So a jaguar could just like, run in here in the middle of the night?

STERLING. I've never seen a jaguar. I've seen a panther.

BECKY. In here??

STERLING. No, no. Way up in the hills — I can put the doors on at night if it'd make you more comfortable ...

BECKY. Whatever, it's fine. (*Looking around.*) Whoa. You live in the *jungle*. (*Sterling smiles. Pause. Nervously.*) Oh my God, that plane from San Jose's so crazy — there were only like eight of us and one lady was like super-sized — I swear to God I've never been so claustrophobic in my life, I just, like, plastered my face against the window and did this (*Her hands become horse blinders.*) so I couldn't see the edges of the window so I could just pretend there was no plane and I was just floating in the clouds — isn't that weird, how you can do that? I don't know if you're claustrophobic, but I am, really bad, and I figured out that if you can just, like, mindfuck yourself, you can totally survive anything — but it didn't really work this time 'cause there was this skeezy guy who was like, pretending he was so

into the scenery he needed to like, lean over me to get a better look. I was like “How’s that scenery, sketchball?” (*Beat.*) It was nasty.

STERLING. Sorry, that sounds unpleasant.

BECKY. Whatever, I’m here. (*Beat.*) Oh, but then we landed and there was like, one dude sitting on his Jeep with a gigantic machete and a pole, and I was like, “That is *not* my ride to Uncle Sterling’s ... ”

STERLING. Oh. (*Amused.*) Hector loves his sugar cane.

BECKY. It’s so gross! He just cuts it off and eats it?

STERLING. Everybody does. Sorry I didn’t pick you up ... he’s better on those roads.

BECKY. How come his teeth aren’t, like, black?

STERLING. I don’t know. Did he push any on you?

BECKY. He kept handing me these little chunks but I was like, “No thanks, I had some nuts on the plane.” I don’t think he understood me. (*Beat.*) Do you remember the last time we saw each other?

STERLING. Um ... I guess it was probably when Karen and I were about to go over to England, right? We came and stayed with you guys for a couple nights? Or was there another ...

BECKY. Nope, that was it. I was eight.

STERLING. Oof ... that’s embarrassing.

BECKY. Why?

STERLING. Oh no — I just ... probably should’ve visited a little more in the last ... nine years.

BECKY. Don’t worry ’bout it. ’Member what my mom made us? (*He doesn’t.*) Fondue.

STERLING. Oh ... (*Trying to remember.*)

BECKY. Eckh, she was going through her whole fondue thing. Eckh! It makes me wanna puke just thinking about it — fondue’s like the nastiest, fattiest, eckh ... and she didn’t, like, stir the cheese enough or something so you’d dip your bread cube in and you’d get, like, a big old salty old chunk. Eckh, I can’t even talk about this anymore. (*Beat.*) Karen was wearing a jean jacket, right? It had like, whatdoyoucallit, embroidery on the shoulder? ... almost, like, country western-style or something?

STERLING. Wow. You have a good memory.

BECKY. I always remember what people are eating and wearing. I forget names and faces like that (*Snaps.*) but food and clothes ... I guess that means I’m shallow, right?



STERLING. No ... I tend to ... well, I forget most things. *(Beat.)* I have a fruit smoothie in the afternoon. Do you want a fruit smoothie?

BECKY. Sure.

STERLING. Great. *(He gets to work.)* The fruit's from right here on the property. Hector picks it and his wife Sonia cuts it up and puts it in these handy little freezer baggies so I can just ... There's mango, banana, papaya ... Sonia's a fantastic cook too — you'll see. She makes tortillas and guacamole and mashed plantain chips. Have you ever had a mashed —

BECKY. — So what, you pay them like ten cents a day and they do all your work for you?

STERLING. *(Taken aback.)* No. I pay them very fairly. And they only work ...

BECKY. Just kidding, God.

STERLING. Well, I'm very lucky to have them. *(He dumps the frozen fruit into the blender.)* And flowers — Sonia cooks with flowers sometimes.

BECKY. Whoa, weird. *(He takes out a syrup container and starts adding its contents.)* What's that? — It looks like cum.

STERLING. *(Taken aback, again.)* It's a ... sweet, coconut syrup-type-thing. It's very tasty.

BECKY. Gross. Can you just put that in yours?

STERLING. Alright. *(He does. As he blends the smoothie, Becky walks around, checking the place out as though she were window shopping. She stops at his bookshelf.)*

BECKY. You can read Spanish?

STERLING. *(Can't hear over the blender.)* Sorry?

BECKY. You can read Spanish?

STERLING. Yes.

BECKY. Are you like ... fluent?

STERLING. Yes.

BECKY. That was a dumb question — you live here. How long did it take you to get fluent?

STERLING. Two years, maybe?

BECKY. OK, so how do you say, "It took me two years to get fluent in Spanish"?

STERLING. *Esto me tomó dos años para ser fluido en español.*

BECKY. Whoa, cool. Do you speak other languages?

STERLING. German and French. Not fluently though. *(He hands her a smoothie. They sit on the steps.) Salud.*

# SLOWGIRL

by Greg Pierce

1M, 1W

SLOWGIRL is the story of a teenager who flees to her reclusive uncle's retreat in the Costa Rican jungle to escape the aftermath of a horrific accident. The week they spend together forces them both to confront who they are as well as what it is they are running from.

*"[A] sensitively drawn two-hander about the emotional common ground established between Becky and her Uncle Sterling during her visit to his remote home in the countryside."*

—**The New York Times**

*"Captivating ... Pierce shows great instincts. He's a fine storyteller and has an ear for the halting rhythms of how uncle and niece would speak to each other after nine years. He touches on the issue of bullying but avoids making this a simple hot-topic play. He's chasing broader issues about the murky boundary between guilt and innocence."*

—**New York Daily News**

*"[A] haunting two-hander ... a genuine thrill ... It's incredibly heartening that Lincoln Center chose to open its new theater with such a subtle play."*

—**Variety**

*"Engrossing ... Pierce gradually and fascinatingly reveals the details behind Becky's trip to Central America — as well as for Sterling's self-imposed exile from the U.S. and his career as an attorney — as the two wounded and lost souls come to know and trust one another over the course of Becky's nearly week-long visit."*

—**TheaterMania.com**

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