

## THE FORGOTTEN

**...she came often and poured olive oil on the headstone to clean it, light a candle, and place a rock by her beloved...**

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Bracha Schefres

*After a 20-year absence from formal education, Bracha Schefres returned to college. She plans to transfer to a Cal State to pursue a degree in Liberal Arts and earn a teacher's credential. She has been an educator teaching Hebrew language and Jewish Studies in the elementary grades for more than 20 years. At her workplace, Bracha was recently moved to the position of School Librarian, requiring her to earn a secular teaching degree. Bracha is married with three children: Sarah, who recently graduated from UC Davis with a B.A. in Sociology and African Studies; Rivkah, who completed her first year at UC Berkeley in the school of Environmental Science and is pursuing a degree in Architecture; and Yaakov, who will be returning to Hamilton High School Humanities Magnet as a junior. She makes her home in West Los Angeles.*

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*A man wearing a dark blue shirt and jeans appears with a walking stick in his hand. He is a caretaker of a cemetery. He begins speaking to the audience as if they walked up to a gravesite.*

Caretaker:

Oh! Sorry I didn't see you there. I don't get many visitors nowadays. No one seems to care. Everyone busy with their own lives - days seem to merge together. Now and again especially on holidays, Mother's Day, Memorial Day...well, I get the occasional stranger putting flowers on a gravestone. There was this one lady – she doesn't visit anymore, she's here- I mean buried here. Well, when she was alive she came often and poured olive oil on the headstone to clean it, light a candle and place a rock by her beloved. Now, no one comes, no one remembers her story – but I know her story, I know all their stories, their hardships and happiness. Here, let me show you around.

*Moves across stage as if to show something. Points.*

This is Enriquez Saltillo and lying next to him is his wife, Urania. Beautiful story – the two of them.

*To himself.*

I don't even think it was permitted for a white woman to marry a Mexican – no he was Spanish or Castilian I think.

*To audience.*

That was a very important distinction in those days. He was a charmer and their love was so great for each other that they ran away together.

*Continues down row.*

And this is Arnold and Frances – also married –but just barely. You see Arnold was supposed to marry a girl from back East and live out here and Miss Frances - she wanted to return to the East. But, that didn't happen and I guess in their loneliness they found each other. That's how mining camps used to be. Dreadful places, so isolated. But the most tragic of couples lie here, Felipe and Buelna.

*Looks up at audience.*

Do you believe in curses and superstition? Well, I didn't until I learned of Buelna. They were betrothed to each other – you know promised. And Felipe was unfaithful. His lover, Rubia, cast a curse on the woman who would kiss Felipe next. Well, Felipe thought that the curse was over because it turned out that Rubia kissed him. Felipe rode all night to prevent Buelna from taking her vows to become a nun. The next day they were married and Buelna was buried here only two days later. Rumor has it that Felipe went mad and took his life right here where I'm standing. There's a lot more to the story if you believe in that sort of thing. It seems that Buelna was light-skinned and Catholic. And there was a different treatment to the dark-skinned Rubia and those to who held onto their old beliefs – frankly that sort of stuff still goes on today. Some things never change. I said this was a tragic story – but not because of Buelna or Felipe, but because of Rubia. She was scorned by her lover and the town. They didn't understand the ancient ways and only saw beauty in the European features. There is

no grave for Rubia. Like her people, nothing left. There are more memories here, but I see you've come for a reason.

*Pauses to listen.*

You are here to see California. Yes, I know where she is. I see you brought her poppies – her favorite. I'm sorry, but she doesn't take many visitors these days. But maybe I can get you in. I think they are trying to protect her. But they don't understand that it's you who make her strong and beautiful. Follow me, perhaps you may find her still alive...