



DEALING WITH HURT, PAIN, SUFFERING?

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- ✓ **POST-VIEWING LESSON/ACTIVITY**
- ✓ **TYPE:** POINTS TO PONDER, DISCUSS OR WRITE ABOUT
- ✓ **SUITABILITY:** GRADE 8-12

THE FANTASTICKS – SCRIPT SEGMENT – Act 2 (pp. 56 - 61)

Luisa: It's really like that? The world is like you say?

El Gallo: Of course.

(Suddenly we see Matt coming back down the aisle where Henry and Mortimer had carried him off. He is in shadow, and neither Luisa nor El Gallo take any notice of him as he sings.)

El Gallo: Beyond that road lies a shining world.

Matt: Beyond that road lies despair.

El Gallo: Beyond that road lies a world that's gleaming.

Matt: People who are scheming.

El Gallo: Beauty!

Matt: Hunger!

El Gallo: Glory!

Matt: Sorrow!

El Gallo: Never a pain or care.

Matt: She's liable to find a couple of surprises there.

Luisa: I'm ready. I won't be long. *(Once more, she turns back.)* You will be here?

El Gallo: Right here. I promise.

(When Luisa has gone, El Gallo turns to walk away. He is interrupted by Matt, who limps forward to stop him.)

Matt: Wait.

El Gallo: Well. The Prodigal Son comes home.

Matt: Don't leave her like that. It isn't fair.

El Gallo: It's her misfortune. What do you care?

Matt: She's too young. I said, don't leave her!

(Matt tries to stop him. El Gallo raises his hand sharply and, as if struck, the boy falls back against the Stage Left pole, and then slowly sinks into a sitting position on the platform, his head bowed. Then El Gallo moves on off into the shadows, out of sight.)

(Luisa returns. She calls out for El Gallo, but he isn't there. Suddenly, as if by some quick instinct, she realizes she has been left. Slowly, sadly, she sits on the Stage Right side of the platform and bows her head.)

(El Gallo returns and moves to Stage Center of the platform to address the audience.)

El Gallo:

There is a curious paradox
That no one can explain.
Who understands the secret
Of the reaping of the grain

Who understands why Spring is born
Out of Winter's labouring pain?
Or why we all must die a bit
Before we grow again.

I do not know the answer.
I merely know it's true.
I hurt them for a reason
And myself a little bit too.
(He steps back into the shadows.)
(Matt looks over at Luisa.)

Matt: It isn't worth tears, believe me. Luisa, please – don't cry.

Luisa: You look awful.

Matt: I know.

Luisa: What's that swelling?

Matt: That's my eye.

Luisa: And those scratches. What in the world happened to you?

Matt: The world happened to me.

Luisa: Did you drink and gamble?

Matt: The first day, yes. But the drink was drugged, and the wheel kept hitting sixes. Until I played a six.

Luisa: Did you serenade senoras?

Matt: I did for a little while. Until I got hit.

Luisa: Hit?

Matt: With a slop pot.

Luisa: What?

Matt: A Spanish slop pot. Believe me, it defies description.

(She cannot help but smile at this.)

Luisa: I'm sorry, Matt.

Matt: No. It's all right. I deserve it. *(Music begins "under.")* I've been foolish.

Luisa: I have too. Believe me. More than you.

POINTS TO PONDER

In the play, El Gallo is narrator, actor, a choral conductor, a director or final arbiter regarding the behaviour of all the players. He describes the characters and intervenes whenever necessary to control their actions. He is the one who *"snaps his fingers and everyone moves quickly into position"* (Act 1, p. 8). In the first part of the play he is *"seated at the shadows at the side"* (Act 1, p. 28) but later puts on his *"bandit hat"* and acts as an abductor. At the first sight of

him, a startled Huck exclaims, *“What the devil?”* His devilish image is symbolized by *“flicking [the] tail of the red scarf from inside his shirt collar”* (Act 1, p. 29). He casts a spell over Luisa and masks the cruel side of life. After he brings her out of her trance, Luisa decides to strike out on her own to see more of the world. At El Gallo’s request, she gives him as a promise of her return a necklace which she inherited from her mother. The returning Luisa never gets it back. A duplicitous El Gallo reassures the adventuring Luisa by singing the “scenic” song, which in part says, *“Never a pain or a care.”* As he sings, Matt, who is in shadow and unnoticed by El Gallo and Luisa, sings the “cynic” response, *“She’s liable to find a couple of surprises there.”* Matt, aware of his own painful experiences in the world, tries to forcefully stop El Gallo from abandoning her. But, as one who commands the fortunes or misfortunes of others, El Gallo merely has to raise *“his hand sharply”* and a defeated Matt sinks to the floor. Then, using the natural changing of seasons, he explains to the audience why he hurt them and insists that it hurt him *“a little bit too.”* Finally, Matt, the Prodigal (Christian parable) as El Gallo calls him, appears to endorse El Gallo’s punishing purpose saying, *“I deserve it.”* El Gallo then seals the deal at the end of the play, singing, *“Deep in December, it’s nice to remember: Without a hurt the heart is hollow.”* Since hurt is a factor in our life, what are the positive and negative outcomes of experiencing pain and suffering? How do you deal with hurt?”

Please note:

Part 1: Story, Background, Creators, Characters and Glossary is available for downloading at
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