

# Ana: the dream of coming back

This Zine was created by Michael Guetio Cobo and includes a reflection written by Peter Wade

## 1. Zine Transcript

### COVER

Ana: the dream of coming back. A work of fiction based on all the stories of indigenous peasant women who go to the city to earn money

by Michael Guetio Cobo

### PAGE BREAK

#### Vignette 1

A house with cracked doors, windows and wooden roof. In the distance some children play football

#### **Narrator**

The story begins in the indigenous territory of Cerro Tijeras. Ana lives with her father and two brothers.

#### Vignette 2

In the kitchen, two big pots are on the stove

#### **Ana's father**

Ana must go to the city to work so that she can help us. Children, the farm is no longer giving us enough for food.

#### Vignette 3

#### **Narrator**

The next day Ana must leave for the city.

#### **Ans's brothers**

We will miss you sister!

Everyone embraces

#### Vignette 4

Chao, hope everything goes well!

### PAGE BREAK

#### Vignette 1

Image of a bus arriving at the city. The mountains and the church in the city stand out.

**Narrator**

After many hours of travel, Ana arrives in the city.

Vignette 2 and 3

Ana walks through the city

**Ana**

How different this place is. I will be looking for employment in a house as a service employee.

Vignette 4

Ana on the street

**Narrator**

After searching all day, Ana can't get a job.

**Ana**

Ugh! I've walked all day and nothing. I will search in the market square.

Vignette 5

A woman in the market speaks to Ana

**boss**

You are very young and the only thing I can offer you is somewhere to sleep and a little money.

**Ana**

Yes, I accept.

Vignette 6

Ana loading boxes in the market

**Ana**

How hard the work is, but it's all for my family.

Vignette 7

Ana carrying a box with food

Vignette 8

**Narrator**

Their payment is very little.

Vignette 9

Ana walks down the street

Vignette 10, 11, 12

Because she is from the countryside, her boss does not allow her to sleep in the bed because she might dirty it.

While they eat, she must eat outside the house.

**Ana**

Come on doggy, let's eat

Vignette 13

Ana carrying a box

**Narrator**

Her life goes on, between hard work and missing her land.

**Ana**

How tired I am.

PAGE BREAK

Vignette 1

A hand touches Ana's legs

**Son of the boss**

Mmm... nice legs...

Vignette 2

Ana cries on the bed while a silhouette stands in the door frame

**Narrator**

At night, the son of the owner of the house abuses her.

**Ana**

I don't like it when he touches me. But he's my boss's son.

Vignette 2,3,4

**Narrator**

In her free time, she plays with the youngest son of her boss.

**Young boy**

After falling

jouch! Mamáaaaaa!

**Ana**

It was unintentional

Vignette 5

The boss scolds Ana

**boss**

Brute of an Indian!

Vignette 6

Ana sits on the stairs outside the house while her boss lectures her and the younger child repeats racist slurs

**boss**

You are very ungrateful; we have given you everything.

Vignette 6

Ana scrubs the floor

**Ana**

I'm bored, I want to know what's happening with my family.

Vignette 7

Ana in front of a door. In the distance you can see the sunset

**Narrator**

In the afternoon after work...

Vignette 8,9

**Before**

What a joy to see you, Anita!

**Ana**

I'm happy to see you too cousin !

The two cousins hug

Vignette 10

Walking around the city

**Ana**

Everything here is very hard; they treat me very badly and I have to do things that I don't like. I want to leave.

**Before**

I know how it is here, we'd better spend holidays in our lands.

### Vignette 11

Before saying goodbye

See you tomorrow, early to leave.

**Ana**

Yes, see you tomorrow.

### Vignette 12

The boss talking to Ana with a face of satisfaction and evil

**Narrator**

To prevent them from leaving, bosses make up debts.

**boss**

You owe me money – until you pay me, you can't leave.

### Vignette 13

Ana lying looking at the window. It is a starry night, and you can see the mountains

**Narrator**

That night Ana thinks a lot.

### Vignette 13

**Narrator**

She decides to escape and jumps out of the window

PAGE BREAK

The two cousins walking

### Vignette 1

They decide to return to the territory to spend a few days. Next year they will return to the city to the same reality.

**Narrator**

When man's laws go against nature, there's no need to obey them.

Manuel Quintín Lame.

**END**

## 2. Reflection written by Peter Wade

In this comic, the Nasa artist Michael Guetio depicts in a raw and moving way the reality faced by millions of young women from humble origins throughout Latin America, for whom very often the only option to try to help their families and, with luck, open up opportunities to get ahead in life is to work in domestic service in a family home. In Latin American countries, although low-income women of all ethnic origins go to work as domestic servants, the evidence shows that Black and Indigenous women tend to be disproportionately represented.

Domestic service is a type of work shaped by the interaction of classism, sexism, ageism and racism:

- **Classism:** domestic workers come from the lowest socioeconomic strata of society, because domestic service is hard and low-paid work. In many cases, these workers migrate from rural areas due to poverty and forced displacement. For them, this work is their first experience in an unfamiliar urban environment, where, like Ana, they may be alone, without family or friends to support them. This makes the women very exploitable and more vulnerable to violence of various kinds.
- **Sexism:** the vast majority of domestic workers are women, because, in a sexist society, this type of care and service work in private homes or companies is considered appropriate for women. Sexism also fuels the sexual harassment, or the threat of sexual advances from men, that many domestic workers experience, as Ana does.
- **Ageism:** many domestic workers are young women, sometimes girls, like Ana, because it is considered that this type of work, bad as it is, is a starting point for women of humble origins, especially those who migrate from rural to urban areas. However, the many women who, due to lack of other employment and educational opportunities, are forced to continue in this line of work as they get older, continue to be considered minors in the house, even when they themselves have adult children.
- **Racism:** many domestic workers identify as Black or Indigenous, or are identified as such by their middle- and upper-class employers. Many more are mestizo women with dark hair and brown skin whose appearance shows the Indigenous and Afro origins that characterize the lower strata of Latin American societies. In some cases, employers may have the same physical appearance as their maids, but very often there is a visible difference because people from the middle and upper classes tend to have lighter skin and hair, as well as bodies that have benefited from expensive forms of care (beauty salons, gyms, etc.). In the comic, Guetio shows us that Ana's "Indian" status in the eyes of her employers means that it is acceptable for her to be subjected to humiliating conditions, such as being made to sleep on the floor and eat outdoors with the family pet. Later, when something goes wrong, Ana is blamed and insulted as a "stupid Indian" and seen as ungrateful.

Only in highly unequal and racially stratified societies can domestic service flourish in these forms marked by classism, sexism, ageism and racism. Michael Guetio's comic condenses these multiple elements into a short and simple story. Towards the end, we learn how Ana's family provides an escape route for her to go back to her home territory for the Christmas holidays. But this is only a

temporary release. The following year she will have to “return to the city to the same reality”. The underlying realities of poverty, sexism and racism remain.

Peter Wade