

# UNIDOS

by

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FADE IN.

EXT. WICKER PARK - DUSK

Two Latino KIDS play an intense game of basketball as a light snow falls.

HENRIQUE's(13) long sleeves flap in the wind as he fancily dribbles around the court.

He playfully mocks his friend, DIEGO(13), who wears a headband over his winter cap.

Henrique leans in, steps back, and shoots -

SWISH

Diego undercuts him. Henrique crashes to the ground.

HENRIQUE

Quit foul'n'!

Henrique dusts himself off.

DIEGO

I don't hear no whistle!

HENRIQUE

You know what happens to cheaters...

Diego angrily picks up the ball.

DIEGO

Whatever. I'm not of no ghost.  
Cucays don't exist!

HENRIQUE

Game point! Side out!

Henrique backs down Diego, slowly pushing him off the block.

Henrique shakes his shoulders left and spins right, grinning.

He fades away. Wide open.

He watches the ball float towards the hoop.

SWISH

He raises his arms in celebration and dances.

HENRIQUE

I won! I'm the best! You got owned!

He hears nothing in response but the brisk wind.

He looks around confused. His eyes widen as he realizes why he was wide open.

HENRIQUE

You can't just up and quit! Come on! Best 2 outta 3!

Diego is gone.

The ball slowly bounces into the grass.

HENRIQUE

No good perro.

As Henrique walks over to the ball, he looks around for his friend.

As he rises up, ball in hand, he notices an OLD MAN(60s) strolling down the sidewalk.

HENRIQUE

Hey you!

The Old Man ignores him, whistling away.

Henrique turns back to the court.

His face contorts in FEAR.

He sees Diego's shoes hanging from the hoop, painted in blood.

He turns back to the Old Man, who smiles and winks at him.

HENRIQUE

Where's Diego?

The Old Man glances up behind him and chuckles.

Henrique, in a fluster, turns around and looks at the other basket.

HENRIQUE

What have you done?!

He sees Diego's mutilated body hanging.

The Old Man guffaws as he walks away.

Drip.

Drip.

Drip.

The blood slowly dribbles on the court.

Henrique lets out a high pitched SCREAM.

FADE TO:

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

The snow falls briskly.

STUDENTS, bundled up in heavy coats, make their way into the school.

SUPER: Pilsen, Chicago

The sign in front reads: José Fernández High School

Off the bus strolls LUCIA(18), who wears a BRIGHT RED JACKET and matching BOOTS into the school.

Her long brown hair spills out from her CHRISTMAS HAT. She wears a Pilsen Neighbors Community Council button. The ROSE logo of the Democratic Socialists of America garnishes her overflowing backpack. People say she is earnest if a bit pugnacious.

She walks into the --

INT. SCHOOL - LATER

A line of students slowly make their way through the metal detector. CABLE(40s), a security guard, eyes them suspiciously.

Lucia joins them.

She smiles at the Cable as she sets her CELL PHONE, a brand new iPhone 3G, into the bowl he is holding.

CABLE

Lucia! How are you saving the world today?

She walks through the detector. It makes a small BEEP. The Guard looks up at detector and waves her through.

LUCIA

Oh, you know, Cable, the usual.

She takes a CANDY CANE out of her bag and gives it to Cable.

LUCIA

Merry Christmas! Thanks for keeping us safe!

He smiles and hands her the bowl.

CABLE

Ain't no problem, ma'am.

She picks up her phone. A NOTIFICATION pops up. A weather alert. She glances at it and puts the phone into her pocket.

She make her way past the security checkpoint to the down the hallway through the school.

She stops and smiles as she watches the students going about their day. Christmas decorations adorn the walls.

LUCIA  
Merry Christmas everyone!

She runs up to a couple STUDENTS standing by their lockers and hands them two small GIFTS out of her backpack.

LUCIA  
Merry Christmas! I hope it's  
special for you two!

They look at her confused and tear open the gifts.

She hands a GIFT to a GIRL(16) walking past her.

LUCIA  
Merry Christmas! If you need help  
with your homework, call me!

The girl smiles and nods as she walks by.

She hands GIFTS to a group of GOTH KIDS(16).

LUCIA  
Don't think I forgot about you  
guys!

She beams at them.

LUCIA  
Oh my god! You guys are hella cute!  
Maybe for New Year's we can have a  
sleepover makeover?

They tear up the paper. The wintry packaging colors the tile flooring.

Lucia reaches into her backpack when MARIA(17) approaches. Despite the glasses, no one would mistake her for a nerd. An air of cynicism follows her. She wears her gang colors: a white dress shirt, khakis, and a black bandana with a gold crown logo.

Lucia's expression drops.

LUCIA  
Hi María.

MARÍA  
Hi Lucia. This. This is for you.

María hands her an elegantly wrapped PACKAGE and walks away.

Lucia glances at the attached NOTE. It reads: To Lucia, from Your Secret Santa.

Her expression brightens.

LUCIA

Hey, wait!

María turns around and shrugs and continues on her way.

Lucia tears it open, the wrapping paper falling by her feet.

The janitor, who we previously met as the OLD MAN, named PETE(60s), wearing a cardigan much like Mr. Rogers, glares at her.

He clears his throat.

Lucia glances up at him. His sagging skin hangs from his cheekbones. If he wasn't employed by the school, he could be mistaken for a vagrant.

LUCIA

um...Sorry!

With her free hand, she picks up the wrapping paper and drops into a garage can.

Pete smiles and winks at her.

Lucia looks at him. His aura is unsettling.

LUCIA

Okay...I'm going to go now...

HALLWAY

She approaches her locker.

She looks down at the box. The fancy gold lettering suggests the cost.

She opens the box to reveal -

A CROSS NECKLACE.

As she puts it around her neck, her thumb covers round ruby centerpiece.

She opens her locker and checks herself with the mirror inside.

She glances up and her face contorts in confusion.

She notices Pete staring at her amidst the crowd of students.

She turns around and opens her mouth to say something when -

JESÚS

What's crackin'?

Her brother, Jesús (14), jumps into view. Assured and amicable, he wears his baseball cap backwards. A JOINT

sticks out behind his pierced ear.

JESÚS

Didya hear what happened to that  
freshman?

LUCIA

No. What happened?

Lucia, broken from her trance, looks back where Pete stood.

He's gone.

JESÚS

Watcha! It's getting crazy out  
there. Some freshman killed this  
kid over some game! There was cops  
all over the park last night!

LUCIA

That's awful. Did you know the kid?

Lucia's phone BUZZES.

JESÚS

Not really. Yo? What's that?

She takes her iPhone out her pocket and fumbles around with  
it.

LUCIA

My new phone! Hey! I was saving up  
my entire life for this!

Impressed, Jesús moves in for a closer look.

JESÚS

Wow! That's fucking awesome! Give  
it to me!

Lucia pulls the phone away from him.

LUCIA

No! I honestly have no idea how  
this thing works.

Jesús snatches the phone from her and plays with it.

JESÚS

Yo, this is so cool! So it doesn't  
flip? That's crazy!

The phone's lights FLASH as the ALARMS continues to SIREN.

JESÚS

Why is it making so much noise?  
What's with all these alerts? You  
know, you could just use my pager--

LUCIA

Give that to me! I like it. It's cute.

Lucia snatches it back.

She pounds on it until it goes quiet. She puts the phone back in her pocket.

LUCIA

Anyways...

JESÚS

Where'd you get that?!

Jesús looks down and sees Lucia's necklace.

LUCIA

Secret Santa.

JESÚS

You still doing that, eh?

LUCIA

Yeah, I thought, it's last year of high school. Why the hell not?

JESÚS

Yo, I know why you really did it--

LUCIA

Shut up!

The bell RINGS.

LUCIA

Come on. We're gonna be late.

Lucia throws her jacket in her locker and packs books into her backpack.

JESÚS

I got a better idea. Join me for a smoke?

Lucia pauses and looks at him.

JESÚS

It's the last day before vacation!  
What's the worse that could happen?

BATHROOM

We see the sign by the bathroom door. It reads: Women.

Lucia waltzes in.

Jesús hesitates, and then follows her in.



Two GIRLS(16) talk by the sinks. They stop as Jesús enters, looking at him in disgust.

LUCIA

Ladies, please. We need the room.

The girls leave in annoyance.

Lucia sits on the sink and looks at her nails.

Jesús takes a long pull from the joint and grimaces.

Lucia watches him.

LUCIA

Something's wrong. Tell me what's wrong. It's okay, Jesús.

Jesús hands her a crumpled up paper.

She opens it up and reads it.

LUCIA

You failed another Spanish test?

JESÚS

You don't understand! It's that stupid gringo who doesn't understand Spanish! I knew I'd never be no Einstein but I'm trying my best!

Lucia takes the joint from him and takes a drag. She coughs on the exhale.

JESÚS

I don't know. I don't know. Eh, maybe, it's for the best. Who even speaks Spanish anymore?

She turns back to him.

LUCIA

Don't worry about it. You can stay with me next year.

JESÚS

Aren't you gonna be halfway across the state at that snooty school with all those white people?!

LUCIA

Well, yes. But we'll be together! It's a nice neighborhood and--

JESÚS

I got my life here! I can't just pack up and leave. You just don't get it.

The angry wind beats against the windows. The snow falls onto the tiled floor. The sky darkens.

JESÚS

Give me that.

He takes the joint and angrily pulls a drag.

JESÚS

You're book smart but not street smart. All these crusades are going to get you in trouble one day.

Lucia phone BUZZES.

She takes it out and fiddles with it.

LUCIA

Ugh, this stupid thing won't shut up! I gotta run. I know we aren't in the best situation right now, but we can talk later. It's going to be okay.

She picks up her backpack and runs towards the door.

A LOUD KNOCK AT THE DOOR stops Lucia in her tracks.

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS(50s) barges into the bathroom, the two girls trailing him.

The white of his hair matches his pressed dress shirt. He rules the school with ever-changing draconian rules. Though, in today's parlance, he would be the living embodiment of the "OK BOOMER" meme.

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

What are you two doing in here?

JESÚS

Shit.

Jesús stomps the joint out.

Principal Hastings sniffs the air.

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

Is that mary-jo-wana!?

He confronts Jesús and Lucia.

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

That's DETENTION for you!

The two girls make faces at Lucia and Jesús from behind Principal Hastings.

BACK ROOM

A CAFETERIA WORKER(late 30s) turns on the lights.

The room is a mess, with supplies and food everywhere.

She walks towards a table with stacks of papers.

She rushes towards the cabinet, forcefully opening the drawers and throwing out the contents.

CAFETERIA WORKER

Where is it?

BUMP

She looks up in panic.

CAFETERIA WORKER

Hello?

She moves towards the noise in a darkened corner of the room.

She glances around a bit, satisfied there is nothing there.

She goes back towards the cabinet and restarts her search

GRRROWL

The Cafeteria Worker throws down the items in their hands and exhales.

CAFETERIA WORKER

They don't pay me enough for this  
shit.

She grabs a bag of hamburger buns, giving one last look before turning out the lights and heading towards -

KITCHEN

The Cafeteria Worker shakes her head as she makes her way through the busy kitchen.

COOKS watch over the skilletts relentlessly. Sloppy Joes are cooked mass scale.

She slams the buns on a table.

CAFETERIA WORKER

If you send me back there again,  
I'm going to the union.

A few of the Cooks turn back at the Cafeteria Worker and laugh.

A lonely COOK(40s) slices a slab of ham on a MEAT SLICER at the end of the table.

The Cafeteria Worker picks up a slice and munches on it.

CAFETERIA WORKER

We don't need this today. It tastes good, though.

The Cook sighs and heads over to stoves.

A LUNCH LADY(60s) takes the bag of hamburger buns and lays them out in a plate. She takes the plate back towards -

CAFETERIA

The Lunch Lady empties the buns an empty tray.

LUNCH LADY

NEXT!

The line of agitated STUDENTS cheer.

The first student in line approaches her and points at the buns.

The Lunch Lady checks her gloves and takes a big scoop of the Sloppy Joe meat.

It makes a loud PLOP as it lands. The splatter hitting the food guard.

The student does not look impressed.

As the camera moves back from the lunch counter, we see Lucia get in the back of the line, fiddling with her phone.

Jesús trails close behind her, loudly greeting his friends along the way.

María leaves the lunch line. Alongside her is her best friend CARLOS(17) a manly man wearing a Varsity jacket over his gang colors: a white dress shirt and khaki pants.

CARLOS

Hey, let's sit over there.

He points to an open table.

María trails behind him looking at the bulletin board.

MARÍA

Save me a seat! I'll catch up!

CARLOS

Suit yourself!

Carlos continues towards the table.

She looks at a brightly colored FLYER and smiles.

She snatches it and crumples it in her pocket.

María jogs back towards Carlos.

Carlos takes a huge bite of the sloppy joe, getting the juicy bits all over his face.

MARÍA

Hey! Where you at-

He glances back at her.

MARÍA

Yo, watch out!

A CHOLO(16), otherwise known as a gangbanger, Latino with long hair and green eye contacts stares him down.

Carlos flinches out of the way.

The Cholo smirks and snaps his fingers

His 3 person CREW emerges from behind him and rams into Jesús causing the tray to CRASH on the ground.

The Cholo's crew dress just like him - green and white jumpsuits and flashy, but fake, jewelery.

The food goes FLYING all over Carlos and María.

The Cholo laughs.

Carlos, with napkin in hand, wipes his face and throws it on the ground.

He glares at the Cholo.

Carlos scoffs.

CARLOS

Look at this fuckin' cholo. What the fuck, man? You lost?

MARÍA

What the fuck, vato!

The Cholo glares at him. His pack circling the two, like predator and prey.

Carlos rolls up his sleeves.

María backs up into him, ready for war.

The Cholo reaches for his waistband.

Carlos' eyes go wide.

CARLOS

We honor the code around here.

The Cholo smirks and snaps his fingers and his crew stop. A couple students sitting at a table nearby glance up from their meals.

CHOLO

I hear you run the baddest gang in  
Pilsen. I'm about to make a name  
for myself on your grave!

Carlos and María look at each other in concern.

CARLOS

Excuse me?!

The Cholo smiles. He snaps his fingers again.

CHOLO

Yo, drop the beat!

One of the Cholo's crew beat boxes. The Cholo tries to catch the beat.

CHOLO

Yo, yo, yo name is Carlos but your  
false idol, I know what I'm doing,  
I'm taking your title!

Carlos looks at the Cholo confused. A few students leave the lunch line and gather around the scene.

CHOLO

I'm the king of beats, no one can  
stop me! Not even a wannabe  
football player who still cries for  
mommy!

Carlos shakes his head.

MARÍA

You gonna let him trash you like  
that?!

The Cholo moves in, sensing a kill shot.

CHOLO

Pick up yo pants, yo girl the man  
of the house. I ain't scared of  
your 3 blind mice! When you see me  
walking away with my arms raised,  
you'll think to yourself damn, how  
come I can't get laid?

The Cholo's crew hoots, hollers, and give each other high fives.

Carlos paces in anger.

He suddenly stops and glares at the Cholo.

CARLOS  
Hey yo, drop it, M.

María beat boxes in her hands, struggling at first.  
Carlos steadies himself as María finds a groove.

CARLOS  
Who are you? Trying to make a name  
off me? You see, that ain't easy.  
Get off my lawn, fucking sue you  
for libel. I'm about to drop bombs,  
this ain't American Idol.

A student in the crowd gasps.

Carlos simmers, gaining momentum.

The crowd swells as the rhymes grow in intensity.

CARLOS  
You're nothing but a supporting  
character in my lead story. Sorry,  
let me back up. You know what,  
that's too fast for you. Lemme slow  
down so you can understand. I'm the  
man. I'm the one. I'm the  
undeniable. I'm the frontrunner,  
you are unviable.

Lucia exits the lunch line, tray in hand. She spots the  
large gathering and heads over.

The Cholo stares at Carlos in shock. His crew in shambles.

CARLOS  
I look at you I see nothing. Hey,  
María grab my lunch, my stomach's  
grumbling! Mmmm, PBJ, that's what  
my mom makes. I took you down, it  
only took one take. Lights, camera,  
action, the director says. You  
don't stand for nothing, Simon  
Says. Fuck your principles, I'm the  
principal!

Lucia's eyes go wide as she takes in the scene.

She makes eye contact with Carlos, who winks at her.

She blushes and walks away.

JESÚS  
Hey, wait up, sis!

Jesús runs after her.

Carlos smiles then explodes back into his verse.

CARLOS  
 Fuck your principles, I'm the  
 principal!

MARÍA  
 Fuck your principles, WE'RE the  
 principals!

The students join with María and Carlos in unison

CARLOS  
 Fuck your principles, I'm the  
 principal!

The Cholo looks at him in anger and shame.

He opens in his mouth to respond but it just hangs.

The Cholo and his crew walk away, heads down.

Carlos smiles and high fives María.

He turns around to greet the cheering students when -

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS  
 That's DETENTION for you, Mister.

María laughs

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS  
 And you too!

CLASSROOM

SUPER - Later that day...

Principal Hastings sits at the desk with his feet up,  
 reading a newspaper

María and Carlos sit next to each other. They quietly  
 practice a rap.

María chuckles as Carlos messes up a verse.

The snow piles up by the window as the storm rages on  
 outside.

A light KNOCK at the door. It slowly opens -

Jesús barges in, a wide smile on his face. Lucia trudges in  
 behind him.

Lucia glances up and spots Carlos. Their eyes make contact.

She blushes.

Carlos nods in acknowledgement.



Jesús sits in a desk in the front row. He glances out the window as the last bus leaves.

Lucia sits near to Carlos.

The Principal Hastings looks up.

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS  
Nice of you two to finally join us.

He stands up and writes on the chalkboard:

DETENTION

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS  
The first thing you need to know  
is: Do your homework. I don't want  
to hear you or see you...

María raises her hand.

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS  
What?

MARÍA  
Can I call my mom? I need a ride  
and...

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS  
No! You have to wait until after  
detention.

María raises her hand.

MARÍA  
But I need to go and...

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS  
No! No! No! For the last time...

María raises her hand.

The Principal Hastings rolls his eyes.

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS  
Yes...?

María looks around, confused.

MARÍA  
I forgot.

The Principal Hastings grits his teeth.

Lucia raises her hand.

LUCIA

Really? We can't even talk to our parents? Is this some sort of prison?

The Principal Hastings sighs.

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

No! This is detention! Stop talking! That's not a question. That's an order.

After a beat, Lucia raises her hand.

The Principal Hastings glances over to her.

Lucia opens her mouth to say something when her phone BEEPS.

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

What is that?

Lucia fumbles in her pocket, mashing her phone.

The phone BEEPS get LOUDER.

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

That's it! Give me whatever is making that noise!

Lucia takes out her iPhone. The notifications fill her screen.

She looks down and taps the screen to read one:

WINTER WEATHER ADVISORY. EMERGENCY. SNOWFALL EXPECTED TO BREAK RECORDS. PLEASE REMAIN INDOORS.

The Principal Hastings snatches the phone from her.

LUCIA

Hey! That's expensive!

The Principal Hastings fiddles with the phone that continues to make NOISES.

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

Okay, everyone else, give me your phones, pagers, PDAs, gameboys, anything that can make noise.

After groans and shrugs, the students line up one by one at the front of the Principal Hastings's desk.

Carlos drops his flip phone.

Jesús drops his pager.

María glares at the Principal Hastings, and drops her Gameboy.

Back at the desk, Principal Hastings gathers the electronic devices and puts them in basket.

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

Now, I'm going to go put these away. Don't you dare make a sound when I am gone. I can see you. I can hear you. I will know.

And with that, the Principal Hastings stomps out of the room, basket in hand, with a flourish.

The students stare at each other for a beat.

JESÚS

I don't know about ya'll, but I'm bouncin'.

Jesús bounds towards the door, when Lucia grabs his arm.

LUCIA

What? Where are you going?

JESÚS

Fuck if I know! Anywhere but here.

LUCIA

But you can't just leave! You'll just get suspended. It's just a couple of hours.

Carlos raises his eyebrow.

MARÍA

You know this doesn't count for extra credit?

LUCIA

Thanks. I know. I'm just saying, it'll be better if we just behave, We'll be outta here in no time.

JESÚS

Since when did you care about being good?

MARÍA

She doesn't. She only likes to behave when it fits her agenda. She must get that from her parents.

Lucia looks like she's been punched in the stomach.

LUCIA

Don't you...Take that...

JESÚS

Lay off her.

Carlos wanders near the argument.

CARLOS

Wait...that's your brother?

Jesús and Lucia glare at him.

María strolls over to Jesús.

MARÍA

I tried to tell you! Little Miss Goodie Two Shoes is totally a virgin.

CARLOS

A virgin?

LUCIA

How...What? I'll have you know, I get around. I study AND party. So there.

CARLOS

Well, this weekend I'm throwing a huge blowout banger if you're interested....

LUCIA

Sure...Can I bring my brother?

CARLOS

Of course! Little dude is always welcome! Just not allowed to drink.

Jesús shrugs.

JESÚS

Well, whatever dude.

He sits back down at his desk and scribbles angrily in his notebook.

Lucia blushes and looks up at Carlos.

Carlos smiles and looks at the necklace.

Lucia self consciously touches it.

LUCIA

Yeah, I'll take care of him. I always do!

CARLOS

(giggling)

Ay, chica, all this time I thought you two were dating. I mean I see you two everywhere together. I was just telling Maria, like, when's the wedding?

LUCIA

We're just family! Very close. We had to be. We brought each other up by the bootstraps. We're practically soldiers out here.

JESÚS

True story. I love her but not like that. We only hang out so much because she helps me with stuff. Like, math and shit.

Carlos smiles.

CARLOS

Nice! I got my crew. They're good peeps. Right, Maria?

She rolls her eyes.

MARÍA

Sure. Whatever you say.

Lucia smiles and plays with her hair.

LUCIA

Anyways, you were really impressive at lunch...

CARLOS

Eh, it was nothing. Maybe I can show you how it's done sometime?

The Principal Hastings marches back into the classroom, chest puffed out.

Lucia and Carlos pretend to do their homework.

María chuckles.

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

In your seats! Now!

Lucia and Carlos run into their seats.

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

So, since you people seem unable to behave rationally, I'm going to have to set more rules for the rest of your time here.

Jesús, in his own world, continues to scribble on and crumple up paper.

MARÍA

That's not fair!

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

I don't care about fairness. This is about keeping order in this school.

Jesús tears a page from his notebook and folds it angrily. He holds up his creation - a PAPER AIRPLANE.

JESÚS

(mumbles under his breath)

Dumb gringos...don't know anything...

The Principal Hastings turns his back to the students, writing on the board:

THE RULES

MARÍA

Dude, it's not that serious.

Jesús aims it at the Principal Hastings and tosses it.

Lucia realizes whats going on and stands up -

LUCIA

Watch out!

The plane flies ever so slowly as Lucia reaches out to grab it.

She stretches out her arm - diving for it - Until...

CRASH

She faceplants HARD.

The plane softly taps the Principal Hastings's shoulder.

The Principal Hastings turns around and picks up the paper.

It reads - STUPID GRINGO!

He looks down at Lucia.

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

What the..? Are you responsible for this?!

JESÚS

Ay, boss, she didn't do anything.

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

Did I say you could speak?

Lucia sits up, her nose bleeding. She glances back at Jesús.

LUCIA

I...I...It was me. I apologize.  
Please don't put this on my  
permanent record!

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

Okay. I'll see you first thing  
tomorrow morning. I am very  
disappointed in this change of your  
behavior, ma'am. I hope you think  
long and hard about the path you  
are going down.

LUCIA

I'm sorry. I really am.

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

Now, go get yourself cleaned up.  
You've got 5 minutes.

Lucia stumbles out of the room, clutching her nose tightly.

MARÍA

(mocking)

Aw, she's so sawwy!

JESÚS

Shut up!

CARLOS

Chill out man!

Jesús stands up.

JESÚS

I did it.

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

That is inappropriate, Jesús! You  
can join your sister for tomorrow  
morning's detention.

HALLWAY

Lucia stumbles on the carpeted floor.

She raises her head up and squeezes her nose as she tries  
to stem the bleeding.

She looks around, her mind a rush.

A STUDENT walks by in a blur.

Lucia turns her head towards the window as she tries to hide  
her wounded nose.

The wind rattles the frame. The snow reaches the top of the  
sill.

She sniffs to stop blood.

She hears a soft JINGLE, much like one that comes with a reindeer leading a sleigh.

LUCIA  
Hello? Is anyone there?

The JINGLE continues further down the hall.

Lucia follows it.

As the JINGLE gets closer to her, she runs.

She pauses at a pillar and leans against to catch her breath.

She puts her hand on her head and takes a deep breath.

Lucia collapses to the floor, as we close up to Lucia's closed eyes.

MATCH CUT TO:

BATHROOM

We close up to Lucia's wide open eyes as she looks at herself in the dingy bathroom mirror.

She stuffs a tissue in her nostril.

There are ripped stickers on the mirror and cursive writing in marker.

The stalls empty, some without doors.

The floor, tiled and grungy.

She washes her face and looks at herself in the mirror.

She hears a low guttural GROWL.

LUCIA  
Um...Hello? Okay guys, I'm not  
falling for it anymore. Not funny.

She backs away from the mirror.

LUCIA  
I swear I'm gonna kill you, Jesús.

She heads towards a stall and slowly opens the door -

Nothing.

GROWL

She hesitates at the sound.



LUCIA

Jesús, I know it's you. You can  
come out now. I get it.

She grabs the handle of the stall.

And pulls it open and -

She sees 2 BRIGHT ORANGE EYES that glow in the dark stall.

IT GROWLS.

Lucia screams and runs out -

HALLWAY

Lucia stumbles into the hallway.

She heads back towards the classroom when she hears her name  
being called. His VOICE belies his age, sleek and leathery.

FIGURE

Lucia!

She peers into the down the hallway.

LUCIA

Who's there? Leave me alone!

She squints at the figures at the end of the hallway.

LUCIA

Hello? Who are you?

Her eyes go wide as the FIGURE comes into focus: A sickly  
Old Man holds a doglike CREATURE by a leash, which JINGLES.  
We've seen him before...

The Old Man STRAINS as the vile creature tries to escape his  
grasp.

The Old Man smiles, his teeth brown and rotting. The same  
nasty smile of the janitor...

PETE

Hello Lucia.

Lucia mouth drops agape.

LUCIA

You...You...Creep!

The doglike creature BARKS -

Lucia gasps.

THAT IS NO DOG.

Pete smiles and drops the leash.

PETE

Oops.

The creature barrels towards her, frothing at the mouth, barking each step of the way.

Lucia screams.

She turns and runs, never looking back.

CLASSROOM

The Principal Hastings tries to control the rowdy room.

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

Okay, ladies and gentlemen. New  
Rule: ENGLISH ONLY

The Principal Hastings writes the phrase on the board with exclamation points for emphasis.

MARÍA

Dafuq?!

JESÚS

I knew it! I knew it! The entire gabacha administration is out to get us! They are always watching us... Like that janitor.

CARLOS

That's one crazy conspiracy theory, man. I think that weed is going to your head. I don't even know any Spanish. What's the big deal?

MARÍA

(in Spanish: English  
subtitles)

Idiot! Trying to force your culture on me! I'm not having any of that. I exist!

JESÚS

I don't know what she said, but I agree! Carlos, don't you have any pride?

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

Excuse me, Jesús. I am only doing this for your own good. I care for you. I care about all of you, but we must find better ways to communicate.

MARÍA  
(in Spanish: English  
subtitles)

You don't care about us. Just say  
it!

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS  
Stop that gibberish at once!

CLASSROOM

Lucia runs in the classroom and slams the door.

Lucia looks out the classroom window for a beat.

LUCIA  
SOMEONE HELP! HELP ME!

Everyone in the classroom looks at her.

LUCIA  
Someone call 911! There's some  
creepy old guy and some crazy  
looking dog...

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS  
Have you been smoking again. I'm  
gonna have to susp--

LUCIA  
I'm being honest! I swear. It's the  
janitor! He was acting all weird  
this morning!

Jesús runs up to Lucia and comforts her.

JESÚS  
Are you okay?

Jesús leads Lucia to her seat.

MARÍA  
Lucia, if there is a creep out  
there, I'll fuck him up for you.

CARLOS  
Nah, I'll fuck that guy with one  
arm tied behind my back. Bring it  
on!

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS  
Okay folks, settle down. Do your  
homework while I handle this affair  
with Lucia. Please catch her up on  
the new rules while I am gone.

María groans.

MARÍA

Always gotta be the buzzkill.

The Principal Hastings leaves the classroom flustered.

LUCIA

What's with the new rules?

JESÚS

What happened out there?

LUCIA

I'm not sure what I saw was human.  
We have to leave as soon as  
possible.

CARLOS

You know, my ride definitely would  
have been able to conquer this  
weakass snow.

Carlos glances out the window, at the snow. His expression drops.

CARLOS

It's just...my mom is driving it  
today.

JESÚS

Never had you pegged as a momma's  
boy!

MARÍA

Guys! Can we focus on the emergency  
here!

CARLOS

Yeah, and my mom is amazing anyway.  
Ya'll don't know!

LUCIA

All I can tell you is it ain't  
right. What I saw was not right.

The Principal Hastings returns.

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

I can confidently report that there  
is no one out there. The last bus  
left a while ago. It's just me,  
you, and a few teachers finishing  
up their day.

LUCIA

I'm not lying. There is something  
there. Did you look for the  
janitor?

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

Lucia, you have done nothing but disrupt this learning environment. I'm gonna have to suspend you pending a parent-teacher conference.

The last phrase hits her hard.

LUCIA

That's not fair!

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

Ma'am, of course the janitor is here. I just saw him mopping the floor. Just settle down. I'll call your parents and discuss this later.

Lucia eyes go wide. Her voice gets caught in her throat.

LUCIA

Uh..I...please...

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

I know your situation. I'll spare you the embarrassment.

Lucia tears up, still stumbling on her sentences.

Jesús gets up and comforts Lucia.

CARLOS

Come on, give her a break, man.

JESÚS

Ay, dude, look at us, look at this place. We are giving this all we've got.

LUCIA

It's okay. I'm fine.

They return to their seats.

Principal Hastings glances out the window, shakes his head, allows himself a slight chortle.

The lights in the room cut out.

The students murmur in the darkness.

The Principal Hastings tries to put on a mean mug.

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

Which one of you did this? I want the lights on immediately!

CARLOS

No! It wasn't me.

LUCIA

Don't look at me.

MARÍA

Jesús, just stop it. No more pranks. It's just not funny anymore.

JESÚS

I'm not doing anything!

MARÍA

I'm not taking the fall for this. Not like the last time. Just stop it.

JESÚS

I swear I'm not doing anything!

The lights continue to flash on and off.

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

I'm not kidding. If one of you are doing this...I swear...

LUCIA

Maybe it's the snowstorm?

JESÚS

It's not me! Stop looking at me. I know you are. Just stop it!

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

Be quiet!

Just then --

The room falls into darkness.

JESÚS

Oh, fuck. We're boned.

CARLOS

What the hell is going on?

LUCIA

Uh...sir...maybe now would be a good time to--

MARÍA

Has anyone just tried flipping the switch?

María gets up and fiddles with the light switch.

Nothing.

LUCIA

What are we supposed to do now?

Just then - The lights flicker back on.

MARÍA

See? No reason to get all worked up. Not everything needs a revolution.

Lucia scoffs.

Maria returns to her seat with an air of self satisfaction.

Principal Hastings sighs.

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

Alright. Now sit down and do your homework.

Click. The lights cut out.

The room falls into darkness.

Lucia screams.

Principal Hastings goes to the door.

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

Damn it. I better not hear a peep out of you while I get to the bottom of this!

Principal Hastings slams the door and locks it as he leaves.

HALLWAY

The Principal Hastings grunts down the hallway

He looks out and sees the snow piling up.

He sighs and continues on his way.

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

(under his breath)

Damn kids. Every single time. Can't even behave during-

He sees another TEACHER(40s), and tries to grab their attention.

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

Hey!...oh hey, what are you up to? Did you notice the something strange happening in your classroom?

The Teacher shrugs

TEACHER

No, but I think I saw the janitor  
around the corner. Ask him.

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

We really don't have a maintenance  
guy? Whatever. Come with me. That  
guy gives me the creeps.

The Teacher shrugs.

TEACHER

Anything to get out grading papers.

They walk together, passing dark and empty classrooms.

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

Nothing like extra curricular  
activities to keep em honest.

TEACHER

Yeah, tell me about it. These kids  
don't know how great they have it.  
How many do you have today?

They approach the door of the JANITOR'S OFFICE.

They share an awkward glance.

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

Okay, I'll do it.

Principal Hastings knocks politely on the door.

No answer.

Principal Hastings pounds on the door.

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

Excuse me! We got a situation here.

No answer.

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

I thought you said he was...

BARK

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

What was that?

The BARK grows nearer.

TEACHER

Is that a....

ROWF ROWF ROWF

A grey FLASH speeds the corner.



The Principal Hastings and Teachers stare down the hall in horror.

The doglike creature comes tumbling towards them.

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

Is that a? A...CHUPACABRA!?

The doglike creature, the CHUPACABRA, charges into focus.

It's snout froths with spittle. It's grey fur gleams. It's big ears flap around it's long and narrow face.

Principal Hastings screams.

He runs.

The Teacher hesitates, frozen in fear.

The Chupacabra tackles him, its mouth open wide exposing the sharp canines.

The drool drops on the Teacher's face.

The Principal Hastings looks back in horror.

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

NO!

He hides behind a pillar, cowering in fright.

He watches the scene.

The Chupacabra takes a bite of the Teachers neck, blood leaking all over.

The Teacher gurgles.

It swallows and takes another bite.

The Teacher falls silent.

CLASSROOM

The emergency lights from the exit sign faintly brightens the darkened room.

The students sit in a huddle.

JESÚS

Yo, can we squash this beef?  
Something ain't right. We may need  
each other. It's better to stick  
together.

Jesús makes his way towards the door.

JESÚS

Can someone help me with this?

MARÍA

You seriously think you are going to be able to open that?

María takes a hair pin out gives it to him.

MARÍA

Try this.

She smiles at him.

MARÍA

I'm sorry, man. I was only teasing.

He blushes.

JESÚS

It's okay, chica. We cool.

Jesús fiddles with the lock.

JESÚS

You ever think of getting out of here?

MARÍA

Out of detention?

JESÚS

No, out of this life. I mean there is a big world out there. And I'm missing out on it in this stupid classroom. Like I should be out there shooting hoops with my friends but everything is always so serious. The school demands you do this. Parents demand you do that. But there is no one out there saying, "what if we stopped demanding and started living?" Like, just take a step back, bro.

MARÍA

(giggles)

When did you become so deep?

Jesús laughs

JESÚS

Since today. There has to be more out there than Pilsen.

The hairpin breaks.

JESÚS

Damn it. Got another pin?

Carlos makes his way towards the door.

CARLOS  
Hey, little bro, let me handle  
this.

JESÚS  
Suit yourself.

Carlos approaches the door and takes a few steps back.  
He gets down in a three point stance.

LUCIA  
Don't hurt yourself!

CARLOS  
You're dealing with a pro here.  
You've never seen me in the gym. I  
can deadlift 800 pounds no sweat.  
These pythons can handle a simple  
puny door.

Carlos hypes himself up. His face contorting in rage.

CARLOS  
AAAAHHHHH

BANG

Carlos rams himself into the door.

HALLWAY

Principal Hastings backs away from the scene, deliriously  
traversing down the hall.

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS  
Help! Someone! Help me!

He bangs on an empty classroom door.

He tries to turn the handle.

Locked.

He goes to another door.

Also locked.

He looks around panicked and pulls his phone out of his  
pocket.

He looks at his phone: low signal.

He dials 911.

The familiar chime.

OPERATOR

Your call can't be completed as dialed, please hang up and try again.

He hears a BARK in the distance.

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

Damn it. This can't be happening!

He sees the Chupacabra down the hallway.

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

Oh shit!

The Chupacabra slowly stalks the Principal Hastings, licking it's bloodstained lips.

The Principal Hastings turns and runs.

The Chupacabra strolls after him.

As he runs, Principal Hastings tries to call again.

The chime.

OPERATOR

Your call can't--

The Principal Hastings hangs up in anger.

CRASH

He trips over his own two feet.

Phone on the ground.

Glasses broken.

The Chupacabra advances, picking up speed.

The Principal Hastings flails around for his belongings.

He grabs his phone.

He reaches for his glasses - too far away.

He crawls towards them, each movement agonizing.

The Chupacabra inches ever closer -

He grabs his glasses and puts them on - the ear hanging off kilter.

He sits up and frantically dials his phone. The smell of the Chupacabra engulfing his nostrils.

The creature bares its blood soaked fangs.

He stands up and backs away from the creature.

OPERATOR

Hello, this is 911. What seems--

He hears a soft whistle. The Chupacabra GROWLS in understanding and sits.

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

Can you hear me now? Uh...

The Principal Hastings turns around.

His face fills with fear as he drops the phone.

Pete smiles back at him.

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

Peter? Pete? I thought we had a deal...I thought...

Pete giggles. His KNIFE drawn.

The Principal Hastings slowly backs up.

PRINCIPAL HASTINGS

What are you doing? We can talk about this! I'll have you know...

Pete stalks his prey, his gait cool with an air of femininity.

He pulls back the KNIFE and DRIVES it FORWARD.

CLASSROOM

Carlos RAMS himself into the door-

WE HEAR A LOUD CRASH FROM THE HALLWAY

Carlos falls to the ground.

The students look at each other in confusion.

LUCIA

You okay?

Lucia looks down at him and smiles.

LUCIA

Did you check how much the door lifts?

Carlos sits up and smiles back at her

CARLOS

You're so amazing.

Lucia helps him up.

The overhead lights turn back on.

Carlos points towards the open door.

CARLOS  
It actually worked?

MARÍA  
Good work, tough guy.

JESÚS  
Let's go! Come on! Move!

MARÍA  
Where?

JESÚS  
Anywhere. This place is lame.

LUCIA  
We need a plan. There is something out there...

She thinks.

LUCIA  
Let's find my phone. Get some help.

JESÚS  
Okay, whatever you say, Karen.

LUCIA  
What? Who is Karen?

MARÍA  
Girl, he is calling you an out of touch white girl.

LUCIA  
I'm very much in touch with today's culture. I take much pride in knowing the intersectionality of it all.

Jesús and Carlos laugh.

Lucia rolls her eyes.

LUCIA  
Whatever guys. Well, not much is gonna get accomplished standing around here.

She peeks out from behind the door frame towards the -

HALLWAY

Blood spatter decorates the lockers. A trail of blood flows from the giant blotch in the carpet.

Lucia recoils at the sight.

LUCIA

Uh, you guys gotta see this.

The rest of the group come out and cringe at the sight.

MARÍA

Holy shit! I...do you think?

María tears up.

LUCIA

I don't know. I literally just saw it.

Carlos kneels down and examines the blood. He slowly shakes his head.

CARLOS

Something ain't right here, man.

LUCIA

That's what I said! Now do you believe me!?

JESÚS

Let's go back to the room! I'm sure the Principal Hastings will be back soon! Right?

LUCIA

I'm not so sure about that...

CARLOS

Yeah, let's just go.

MARÍA

Yeah, I have to finish my Christmas shopping!

Lucia shrugs.

LUCIA

Alright. I know a guy who can help.

Jesús raises his eyebrow.

SECURITY CHECKPOINT

Cable packs up his work area. He glances up at the group and smiles.

CABLE

Hey! What's up? Isn't it a bit late to be hanging out here?

Lucia rushes up to him.

LUCIA  
We need help. We...I...

CABLE  
Now, slow down. Just tell me what  
is going on. I'm here. I can help.

JESÚS  
People are fucking dying!

CABLE  
What? Impossible! I've seen  
everyone who came through here. I  
can certify that there are no  
weapons in the building.

LUCIA  
We were in detention and then we  
heard a scream and then we saw all  
this blood...

CARLOS  
The blood, man! The blood!

MARÍA  
There was a lot of it.

Cable pulls out his gun from his holster.

CABLE  
Okay. Just direct me to wherever  
the problem is--

The lights cut out.

Darkness.

CABLE  
(to the group)  
Stay calm! Everyone! Stay where you  
are!

He pulls out his flashlight and holds it alongside his gun.

CABLE  
(into the darkness)  
Show yourself! Put your hands up!

Cable points his gun wildly about the air.

The lights turn back on.

The group slowly backs away from Cable.

Lucia, wide eyed, points.

LUCIA  
Um...Cable...TURN AROUND!



Pete stands between the doors and Cable.

A big sickly smile stretches across his face.

SLASH.

Pete hacks away at Cable. The blood spraying all over the floor.

JESÚS  
What the shit!

LUCIA  
We have to go...now!

Cable grapples Pete.

CABLE  
RUN!

The group sprints in the opposite direction. Cable's screams reverberate behind them.

HALLWAY

As they run, the group separates.

Jesús lags behind, coughing.

JESÚS  
Ya'll run on ahead. Let me catch my  
breath.

Lucia stops.

MARÍA  
You know, smoking will kill you.

LUCIA  
Come on! We aren't leaving without  
you. Carlos, give him a hand.  
Please!

CARLOS  
Okay. Come here buddy.

Carlos walks over to Jesús.

The lights flicker off.

JESÚS  
Not again.

LUCIA  
Let's stick together.

She reaches out in the black. She feels something soft.

Carlos smiles and holds her hand tightly.

CARLOS  
We're going to be okay.

María taps him on the shoulder.

MARÍA  
Yes, we are.

A beat.

LUCIA  
Where's Jesús?

Jesús SCREAMS echo in the darkness.

The lights turn on.

Pete has a knife to Jesús's neck.

Lucia takes a cautious step forward.

LUCIA  
No! Jesús! Let him go!

Pete hisses at her and pulls Jesús backwards.

Pete menaces the group with his knife.

PETE  
Get. Out! You leeches don't BELONG  
here!

The lights cut out.

The group murmurs in the darkness.

The lights turn back on.

Pete is gone.

Lucia breaks down and cries.

LUCIA  
NO! My brother! My life! My love!

Carlos attempts to comfort her. Maria tears up.

Lucia sniffles and stands up. She wipes the tears from her eyes. Her face fills with determination.

INT. HOUSE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

SUPER - Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas, Mexico -- 1996

The inside is ransacked.

A FATHER(late 40s) Mexican, sweaty but regal, tears through his drawers. He tosses clothes onto a nearby bed.

An open suitcase sits on the bed.

His DAUGHTER(6), stringy hair and rambunctious, stands alone in an adjacent room. She looks through the bullet holes that line the wall. She pokes her finger inside one, exploring.

The Father peers out the window and gasps.

He slams his suitcase shut.

FATHER  
(in Spanish: English  
subtitle)  
They are coming! We must go to the  
polleros!

The Father barges in and grabs her hand. He pulls her out of the room.

The Daughter tenses up and wails.

The Father lets go.

He looks down at his daughter with care in his eyes.

He kneels down.

FATHER  
(in Spanish: English  
subtitle)  
I will get you a better life, away  
from all of this. It's not safe  
here. You understand?

She nods.

FATHER  
(in Spanish: English  
subtitle)  
Your mother is waiting for us. She  
holds a special gift. The only way  
to protect it is to leave this  
place.

He stands up and holds out his hand.

FATHER  
(in Spanish: English  
subtitle)  
Come! We'll do this together!

She grabs his hand and they run.

EXT. DESERT - DAY (FLASHBACK)

A dozen Mexican vagabonds are gathered by an empty dirt road. Their tattered clothes tell the story of their journey.

They sweat in the overbearing sun. A few sheltered by the old caps atop their head.

The Father and Daughter run up to join them.

We hear tires grind in the distance.

One by one, the vagabonds look up.

In fear. In anger. In relief.

The Daughter runs up and hugs her MOTHER.

The MOTHER(late 40s), her brown hair as straight as she is persistent, holds a blanketed bulge close to her chest.

The Father gives his wife a tender kiss and caresses the bulge.

The Daughter looks on curiously.

DAUGHTER  
(in Spanish: English  
subtitle)  
Mommy, what's that?

She points at the bulge.

MOTHER  
(in Spanish: English  
subtitle)  
That, child, is our gift from god.

The Father looks over the crowd to see what is causing the disturbance.

He looks back at his family and motions to them to join him.

The Daughter hesitates and takes a deep breath.

END FLASHBACK

INT. CLASSROOM - LATER

In the faint light, Carlos paces back and forth. María stands by the chalkboard as she tries to calm him down.

Lucia sits at a desk, crying quietly.

CARLOS  
This is bonkers! We gotta go but  
did you see that thing?! I mean I'm  
not really scared. I'm not scared  
at all!

María gives him a look.

MARÍA

If that creep can get Carlos worried, we've got a problem.

Lucia looks up.

LUCIA

I'm not leaving until I find my brother.

CARLOS

No way. No way. That's insane! We don't have anything. My biceps are only equipped to protect me!

MARÍA

Stop freaking out. Unfortunately...She's right. We can't leave him behind. But we need more than just...us.

Lucia wipes away the tears from her eyes and stands up.

LUCIA

That creep can't hide for long. We know this place. I'm sure we can find something.

Carlos stops pacing and stares at her.

CARLOS

You can't be serious! You saw that guy! He murdered Cable! The guy who has protected us for years! The guy went through police training! I really don't like this.

MARÍA

What other choice do we have? I don't know about you, but I think she's got a point.

Lucia smiles at her.

LUCIA

Thanks. I got an idea. Follow me!

She runs out the door.

MARÍA

Wait. We should check out the office...

Maria leaves. .

CARLOS

You are really going back out there? You are going to get yourself killed!

The room is empty. The silence lingers.

Carlos looks around.

CARLOS

Fine.

He leaves the classroom.

CARLOS

(O.S.)

We better not split up. I saw Get  
Out. I ain't going to no SUNKEN  
PLACE, ese!

BACK ROOM

OVER BLACK.

We hear a tussle between Pete and Jesús.

A door opens.

We hear as Pete struggles with his free hand in the darkness  
to find the light switch.

Jesús's muffled cries fill the empty air.

FLICK

The lone LIGHT BULB glows and BRIGHTENS the room.

We see old stacks of expired lunch meat fill the room, but  
not as much as their smell.

A rusty desk sits on the left. A tattered calender with  
drawings and scribbles on it hangs above it.

Next to the desk, on the ground, a dirty bowl sits. It's  
labeled: CHARLIE

On the desk is a recipe book, it's glossy finish stands out  
in the small drab room.

With one big throw, Pete tosses Jesús into a SECURITY CAGE,  
something usually set aside for keeping expensive  
belongings. It now houses a mylar blanket, a roughed up  
teddy bear, fleas, ticks, and other critters.

Jesús stumbles on the unforgiving concrete floor, his hands  
breaking free from the rope.

He tears away the rag from his mouth, drooling, angry.

JESÚS

WHO ARE YOU!? GET ME THE FUCK OUTTA  
HERE!

Jesús pants in the heavy hot air.

Pete looks up at him.

PETE

I like you. You are my toy. BAIT. I need the taste. I miss the drops of virgin blood on my tongue. And you will bring it to me! Daddy said no dessert before dinner!

Pete gives him a wink and a smirk and turns off the light.

The light in the room slowly fades as Pete swings the door closed.

Jesús screams in the darkness.

HALLWAY

The snow batters against the windows.

Lucia, Carlos, and María walk down the dark hallway, bathed in the bright red of the emergency lighting.

Lucia stops.

LUCIA

WATCHA! Look!

She runs towards the dirty stained carpet.

She kneels down and runs her fingers on the dirty stained carpet.

CARLOS

Gross!

He catches himself.

CARLOS

It's not that I don't like blood.  
It's just doesn't match the carpet.  
It ruins the Feng Shui.

MARÍA

The what?

CARLOS

The Feng Shui.

MARÍA

You surprise me everyday.

She lifts her finger up. A beet red splotch darkens the tip of her finger.

She looks down the hallway and sees a faint trail leading around the corner.

LUCIA  
Well, if we just follow this. Maybe  
we can find my brother.

MARÍA  
Or maybe we'll get killed!-

CARLOS  
Don't worry about that. You gals  
got me to protect you.

Lucia and Maria look at Carlos.

He shrugs.

Lucia and her friends follow the trail down the hallway.

We hear the sound of a distant door cracking open.

María freezes.

MARÍA  
What's that?

Lucia slows down and looks back her.

LUCIA  
Huh?

Carlos stops and shrugs.

CARLOS  
What's going on?

They hear a NOISE, this time much closer than before.

They look around wildly, trying to find the source.

Another NOISE, the pitter patter of footsteps, seems to come  
from right behind them.

Carlos turns around, ready to fight.

Lucia jumps next to him and gets in a fighting stance.

María looks over Carlos' shoulder.

Carlos and Lucia take a step forward.

Carlos tenses as he looks down.

A chattering RAT bounds towards them.

Carlos lets out a heavy sigh of relief.

LUCIA  
Really? I mean...really?

The rat looks up at them as it munches on some debris.



María emerges from behind Carlos and takes a closer look at it.

She glances at Lucia and giggles.

MARÍA

It's pretty disgusting that we have rats walking around like they own the place.

CARLOS

They probably do. I mean, they get treated better than we do!

The rat runs off, still chirping away.

LUCIA

Let's go. The sooner we can find my brother, the sooner we can get out of here.

KITCHEN

Bright yellow steel cabinets line the wall.

The stone countertops pristine. Pots and pans neatly ordered by size. Cutlery organized by type. The sink empty and sparkling.

A 50s show tune plays on a nearby record player. Pete hums along.

He wears a bright pink apron, as he glides around on the black and white ceramic floor with a feminine finesse.

We hear soft muffled cries from behind the nearby door.

Pete opens the fridge and unfurls an gnarly piece of meat.

He plops it down on a cutting board.

He slices it down on the beat to the music with a huge shear.

He twirls around and gets a meat hammer and slams it down on the beat. We hear the bones cracking as after each bang of the hammer.

He dances toward the spices and picks a couple up. He holds both of them and sprinkles it all over the meat.

We hear the soft jingle of a dog collar.

Pete frowns and cuts a small piece of meat. He holds out the piece and waves it.

In comes a CHUPACABRA wearing a dog tag with CHARLIE on it. The animal's exposed small incisors twinkle in the light as it moves towards the meat. The green fish like scales ripple

as it runs.

Pete teases Charlie with the meat and it jumps up and down wildly in excitement. Pete dodges the small spikes on Charlie's back as it tries to snatch the meat from his hands.

Charlie barks and Pete drops the meat into it's mouth. He pets the creature, as it rubs against his hand in appreciation.

HALLWAY

Lucia, María, and Carlos continue down the hallway.

MARÍA

Where are we even going?

LUCIA

Calm down. I'm trying my best here. If we just follow this blood trail maybe we can find my brother or Principal Hastings or something.

MARÍA

Oh. My. God. This is your brilliant idea!? You never listen! Why is everything always about you?

Lucia stops, the question punching her in the gut.

LUCIA

Excuse me?

MARÍA

I mean, we were so close growing up and now you never acknowledge my existence. It's like I'm an alien.

LUCIA

Mar- We gotta...We don't have time-

María confronts her.

MARÍA

We never have time for anything! You constantly talk behind my back. You are up there in your little bubble and treat the rest of us like crap.

Carlos puts a hand on María's shoulder in an effort to calm her.

CARLOS

Ladies, come on...this isn't helping...

MARÍA

Can you just shut up for once!

María fiddles around in her pockets.

MARÍA

Damn it! This is so stupid! I'll never forgive you for what you did!

CARLOS

Maria. Please!

María slaps Carlos.

He looks at her in confusion.

María turns around and walks the other way.

LUCIA

...Wait!

Lucia sighs.

Carlos looks at her incredulously.

CARLOS

What the fuck was that?

Lucia shrugs.

LUCIA

I really have no idea...

Carlos runs down the hall after Lucia.

HALLWAY

María face scrunches up in tears as she leans against a pillar.

She looks back at Carlos and Lucia.

María shakes her head. She pulls her bandana over her face, attempting to hide her feelings.

MARÍA

(in Spanish: English subtitle)

I always knew I couldn't trust that bitch.

HALLWAY

Carlos runs towards the pillar.

CARLOS

María, come on. Can't you girls find another time to talk about your feelings?

María rolls her eyes.

MARÍA

You really do like her, don't you?

Carlos blushes.

CARLOS

I just don't want to see you get hurt.

MARÍA

Of course you do. So, don't give me any of this patronizing bullshit.

Carlos stops and catches himself. He looks into her eyes.

CARLOS

I'm sorry. So, what's really wrong?

María sighs and pulls down her bandana.

MARÍA

Look at us! We aren't even a real gang! Let's do something real for once! How about instead of trying to run the streets, when we get out of here, we go out and share our gifts with the world? There's a festival in Evanston...

She pulls a flyer out of her pocket and shows it to Carlos.

MARÍA

The world needs to hear us.

Carlos examines the flyer.

CARLOS

I feel you. That really isn't my style.

Carlos looks down at his clothing.

CARLOS

Eh, maybe we can do this.

María brightens up.

MARÍA

You really think so!? Thank you!

CARLOS

Sure. It's no big deal.

María playfully pushes him.

She grabs his hand and they walk back toward Lucia.

HALLWAY

Lucia stands by a door, tapping her foot impatiently.

LUCIA

Are you okay?

MARÍA

I'm sorry. I've been dealing with a lot and this day couldn't have gone worse. I'm good now.

LUCIA

Cool. I'm sorry if I did anything to hurt you. It wasn't intentional.

María rolls her eyes.

MARÍA

(under her breath)

Yeah, it wasn't like your stupid council shutting down the fiesta del sol...

CARLOS

Oh no.

LUCIA

What? We never did that. That's ridiculous!

MARÍA

Oh, come on. You and your preppy twits are always looking to put your nose in everybody's business.

LUCIA

We are looking out for the good of the community! We work with everyone.

Carlos steps in between them.

CARLOS

Girls...come on! We're all on the same side here!

LUCIA

(to Carlos)

I am not going to be accused of something I didn't do!

(to María)

Now, I'm sorry that happened to you. But the council had nothing to do with that. Maybe you need to think about what you are doing with your life.

MARÍA

And maybe you should think about  
why you don't have a family.

Lucia gasps. The words hit her like a gut punch.

LUCIA

Excuse me...well I...

María smirks

MARÍA

Stop overcompensating. It's okay.  
It's not your fault.

Lucia tears up.

LUCIA

Just...Shut up!

Lucia turns around, looking to escape the situation.

She spots the sign that reads STORAGE CLOSET.

LUCIA

If you aren't going to help...just  
go away!

She opens the door and SLAMS it shut.

MARÍA

Really? Really? Of course, just run  
away! Just like every other time  
you don't want to confront the real  
issue.

CARLOS

What the heck is going with you  
two? Can we just make it through  
one day without killing each  
other?!

MARÍA

I just can't deal with her shit  
anymore. She walks around like she  
is too good for us! Talking about  
socialism like it will save us!  
Talking about revolutions. Well,  
bitch, my family escaped the  
revolution and we don't need that  
shit here!

CARLOS

I...I...I don't know. We have to  
stick together. Please. I really  
don't want to see the sunken place!  
That's her brother out there!  
Just..just give me a second, wait  
here...let me talk to her.

Carlos gently opens the door and slips in.

María sighs as she slumps against the storage room door.

MARÍA  
(In Spanish: English  
subtitled)

Oh my god. It's always something.

María hears SCRATCHING in the distance.

She looks up and her eyes grow wide.

STORAGE CLOSET

Lucia cries in the cramped closet.

Carlos walks in and smiles weakly at her.

Carlos holds onto a broom handle as he looks around the shelves.

CARLOS

Hey.

Lucia sniffles.

LUCIA

Hi.

CARLOS

I'm here if you need me.

LUCIA

Thanks. It's just...I don't know. People always want me to think of everything. To take on everything. It's just a bit exhausting.

CARLOS

I understand. I think. Like being captain of the football team but for...life?

LUCIA

Yeah, pretty much. Like, I just want to give up. Too many people are counting on me.

CARLOS

You shouldn't! It may not look that way, but she really respects you, you know?

Lucia smiles weakly.

LUCIA

Well, that's interesting.

CARLOS

Yeah, she's got a tough exterior but is really a softie. You just have to give her some time. I know you two can work this out.

LUCIA

I'd be happy to give it a try!  
Thanks, I really needed this.

Lucia beams.

CARLOS

That's more like it!

He looks down.

CARLOS

Hey, look what I found!

Carlos grabs a flashlight from a shelf and shines it in her face.

LUCIA

Hey! Stop it!

Lucia laughs.

LUCIA

Hmmmm...maybe there is something  
in here we can use...

Lucia searches a nearby shelf. Carlos rummages a drawer next to her.

A beat.

CARLOS

Found it.

Lucia looks up.

LUCIA

What?

CARLOS

Where those rats are coming from.

Lucia raises her eyebrow.

Carlos steps back.

Lucia shines her flashlight past him to reveal a mousetrap with a dead rat on it.

Carlos points towards a hole in the wall nearby.

LUCIA

Gross!



She laughs. Lucia moves closer to him.

Carlos pops up from a shelf, beaming.

CARLOS  
I found something!

He holds out a pair of rusty scissors.

Lucia hops back.

LUCIA  
Oh! That'll do.

She smiles as she recovers her bearings.

An awkward beat.

LUCIA  
You know, if we don't make it out  
of this, I just want to say thanks.

CARLOS  
Oh, you know, no problem.

LUCIA  
It really means a lot to me...

Carlos smiles.

CARLOS  
Oh that? That was nothing! How'd  
you know it was me?

Lucia smirks.

LUCIA  
No, it really meant a lot to me.

She moves in close, slowly moving her finger down his chest.

LUCIA  
Now I have a gift...for you...

She unbuttons her shirt. Her NECKLACE exposed.

CARLOS  
Oh...

He chuckles nervously.

She kisses him deeply.

He kisses her back.

She grabs him tightly.

They make out like wild.

HALLWAY

María looks at the closed door in anger.

She rolls her eyes and walks down the hallway.

MARÍA  
(in Spanish: English  
subtitled)  
Idiots leaving me out here.

María sees a shadow scurrying in the darkness.

MARÍA  
Hello?

The SCRATCHES come closer and closer.

She tenses up as the shadows draws near.

A RAT scurries past her.

It stands up on it's hind legs, illuminated by the emergency light.

María sighs.

MARÍA  
(In Spanish: English  
subtitled)  
Whatever. Almost there.

She turns and looks out the window as the snow piles up.

MARÍA  
(in Spanish: English  
subtitled)  
Almost there.

She hears a BUMP.

She looks around, confused.

MARÍA  
Lucia? Carlos? Hello?

The BUMP gets LOUDER

And closer...

MARÍA  
Okay! Not funny guys!

BUMP.

BUMP.

BUMP.

María walks away from the noises.

She walks back towards to supply closet.

The wind from the snowstorm steadily BEATS against the windows.

She glances quickly at the window.

Frightened, María runs towards the supply closet door.

MARÍA

Someone help me please!

The BUMPS continue to follow her.

She tries the door handle. Locked.

MARÍA

Help! Something is coming!

She looks to her left and right.

Confused. Nervous. Scared.

Not knowing where to go, she faces down what's making the noise. Her face resolved, her mind not.

We pull up on Pete, with a large knife. He grins maniacally.

MARÍA

No!

STORAGE CLOSET

We hear a ear shattering SCREAM.

Lucia and Carlos freeze and look at each other wide eyed.

CARLOS

Oh shit!

They take their supplies and exit the closet to the -

HALLWAY

Carlos turns on the flashlight. He spots a pool of blood stained in the carpet.

Lucia, scissors in hand, readies for battle.

A SCREAM in the distance causes them to look up.

They make their way down the hall towards the noise.

Slowly. Carefully.

They hear a rhythmic muffled NOISE.

Lucia kneels down over a spot of blood, still wet.

She gasps.

She spots something on the ground.

LUCIA

Oh no!

CARLOS

No! No! No! No!

She holds the bandana up and shows it to Carlos.

LUCIA

I'm afraid she's gone.

CARLOS

No. She can't! No!

He sobs.

She stands back up, the guilt sticks on her expression like a bad facelift. Tears streaming from her eyes.

LUCIA

I'm sorry. This is all my fault. I just thought...I'm so sorry.

They embrace.

Lucia lets go of Carlos and stares down the hallway.

HALLWAY

Pete drags María by her foot.

She writhes in agony, blood spilling from under her shirt.

MARÍA

Stop it! Let me go! Please!

Pete looks back at her. He winks at her.

PETE

It'll be alright. Just be quiet. We're just taking a little trip to the market!

María screams, tears streaming down her face as he continues to drag her.

MARÍA

What are you talking about? Where are you taking me?

Pete giggles.

PETE

Where you should have gone a LONG  
time ago.

MARÍA

I have money. I'll give you  
anything! Please! Just let me go!

Pete guffaws.

PETE

Sorry pal! All I want is a clean  
comfortable space...

María looks at him in horror.

PETE

free from all the nasty rode...

She KICKS Pete.

He loses his balance.

She wriggles out of his grasp.

She rolls on the ground, trying to gain her bearings.

Pete looks at her, curiously, smiling.

She stands up and confronts him, her gaze unwavering.

MARÍA

The only mess around here is what  
is gonna be left of your face when  
I'm done with it!

She rears back and wallops him with a haymaker.

The blow does not shake him.

Her eyes go wide.

Pete looks at her and smiles, as he brandishes his blade.

He slowly advances forward.

María backs up.

She tries to punch him as he gets closer, but he grabs her  
by the arm.

He suplexes her to the ground.

He pins her down as he raises the knife.

It comes down with blinding speed.

She puts up her arms over her face.

The knife goes straight through, blood falling all over her face.

He pulls the knife out, annoyed.

PETE

Oh, now look at all this blood.  
It's going to take for-EVER to  
clean up. Can't I just have a day  
to myself?

She weakly tries to push him off with her bloody arm.

Pete savagely slashes it.

She screams as the blade of the knife cuts deeper.

He holds down her arm and begins sawing.

MARÍA

No no no no!

Her bones crack as the knife carves through.

She screams in agony.

PETE

It's okay. It'll just take a  
second!

With one final cleave, he separates her arm from her body.

Blood spews all around them.

PETE

Now look at this mess you've made.  
And it's gonna be little 'ole me to  
clean it up before you VERMIN come  
back bright and early tomorrow!

He pulls her by the leg down the hallway.

MARÍA

What?

PETE

Now people say don't use bleach to  
get the stains out! Use vinegar!  
SOAP! BAKING SODA! Don't ruin it!  
You'll turn those colors WHITE!  
Well sugar, nuh-uh.

He points to some of his previous handiwork.

PETE

I find joy in those little white  
specks. That pure white haven in a  
colored sea. Beautiful white. CLEAN  
white. Forever white.

He giggles.

PETE

Sugar, soon, this carpet you see  
here, will all be white. And it  
will all be thanks to you.

She hyperventilates from the pain.

MARÍA

How?...What?...I...

PETE

QUIET!

Pete knocks her out with a brutal BLOW from the knife  
handle.

KITCHEN

Pete heads to the stove.

Charlie looks at him, a chunk of drool drips from his mouth.

Pete exchanges a glance with Charlie.

Pete turns on the stove and fries the seasoned meat. It  
crackles as the oil gets hot.

We hear a SCREAM from the back room.

Charlie looks intensely at the door.

PETE

No, not yet.

Pete flips the meat and puts it on a dinner plate. The  
juices melt off, leaving it in a puddle.

The screams from the other room grow louder.

Charlie trots in a circle, annoyed.

Pete slices a piece of meat and takes a bite.

PETE

Mmmm...Perfect! This will be great  
for tonight.

Pete commands Charlie, not even looking up from his plate.

PETE

Dinner's ready!

Charlie breaks into a sprint, drool flying off it's snout.

He pushes though the door to -

BACK ROOM

A shackle locks María's one arm to a pole.

Her other arm in Charlie's bowl.

Her mouth taped shut.

Her eyes in fright as Charlie strolls in.

Charlie snarls and barks.

María tugs at the chain.

Charlie charges and snaps at her. Biting.

He chomps a chunk of her thigh off.

She screams muffled through the tape.

Tears roll down María's face. She weakly hits Charlie with her stump.

Charlie swallows the flesh and charges her again.

He bites her neck, blood flowing.

María whimpers.

Her eyes slowly roll to the back of her head.

She slumps over.

Charlie chows down on the rest of her carcass.

A gasp.

Charlie looks up. Confused.

Jesús, still locked in the cage, holds his mouth with both his hands, batting down a scream. Tears roll out of his eyes.

Charlie spots him. He snarls and advances slowly towards the cage.

Jesús backs up as far as he can go, pressed against the wall.

Charlie glares at him. Legs tensed. Muscles tight. Prepared to pounce.

When suddenly - Charlie twists his head towards the cafeteria, hearing a SOUND not meant for human ears.

Charlie slowly walks towards the cafeteria.

Jesus sighs.



Charlie looks back at Jesús and licks his lips.

He exits.

Jesús exhales, slowly slinking down the wall.

HALLWAY

Lucia and Carlos walk carefully down the hallway, following the blood trail, the flashlight leading the way.

CARLOS

Is it true what happened to your parents?

LUCIA

What do you mean?

CARLOS

I just heard stories. Jesús said you've been living with foster parents ever since he can remember.

LUCIA

I...I don't want to talk about it.

CARLOS

Sorry...it's just...where are you from? Like originally?

LUCIA

I'm American, like duh.

Carlos looks at her skeptically.

LUCIA

No, I really am. Born and bred.

Carlos looks at her, still unblinking.

LUCIA

What? I mean, we are all immigrants. The only real Americans are the Native Americans.

CARLOS

Sure, but it's just if the stories are true-

LUCIA

It isn't! What stories? I don't even know what you are talking about!

CARLOS

Okay, just know that I am here for you. You don't have to go through all this yourself.

Lucia blushes.

LUCIA

Thanks.

A beat.

She sighs.

LUCIA

I'm so stupid.

CARLOS

Why?

LUCIA

María. She didn't deserve that.

CARLOS

Ay, that's true.

LUCIA

That's my point. Life is so fleeting. Gone in a flash. Why does it matter where I came from? We are all human anyway. We all come from the same place.

CARLOS

Okay, I get it.

LUCIA

Like no one is asking where you are from?

CARLOS

The West Loop.

LUCIA

Well yeah, but no one from Pilsen is deporting you because you are from the Loop!

CARLOS

Don't worry, mi amor, we'll find your brother.

Lucia smiles and gives him a kiss.

EXT. DESERT - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The crowd gathers towards the road as two trucks park.

The Mother and Father push people out of the way as they make their way towards the front. The Daughter holds onto tightly to her mother.

Out of the trucks emerge the POLLEROS, the human traffickers. Armed with handguns and aviator sunglasses,

they could be mistaken for extras on Miami Vice.

The Mother holds her daughter close at the sight of them.

One Pollero in particular, the LEADER(late 30s), directs the others, who vanish amongst the crowd.

The Leader shouts instructions and the other soldiers push the group into a single file line.

He motions for the first person in line and motions to the right.

The person walks to the right, flanked and prodded by Polleros.

He motions to the next person and he motions to the left.

A woman tries to get the Leader's attention. A Pollero smacks her down to the ground.

She slowly hobbles off in tears.

The Daughter looks up at her father and tugs on his pants. The Father smiles and pats his Daughter on the head.

They arrive at the front of the line.

The Leader looks them up and down. He scrunches his face, thinking.

He points to the Daughter and points left.

Her face contorts in confusion.

The Leader points at the parents. And points right.

The Daughter's eyes go wide and she screams through tears.

The Father aggressively approaches the Leader.

FATHER

(in Spanish: English  
subtitles)

That is my family! I will not leave  
without them! We must remain  
united!

The Leader flicks his wrist and a Pollero WALLOPS the Father with the butt of his handgun.

The Mother cries and screams over the Father's lifeless body.

The Polleros drags the screaming Daughter away.

DAUGHTER  
(in Spanish: English  
subtitles)  
No! Daddy! Mommy!

She pushes, punches, and scratches at them.

The Polleros throw her into the back of a -

INT. TRUCK - LATER (FLASHBACK)

She looks around, frightened at the sight of the older, disheveled people.

They stare at her. No emotion on their faces.

The dwellers in the truck sway at the RUMBLE of the engine. The Truck drives off.

She looks out into the horizon. She sees Mother and Father pushed into another truck.

She screams wildly to get their attention.

END FLASHBACK

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

Lucia and Carlos continue to down the hallway.

The wind from the snowstorm violently bangs against the windows. The snow is as high as our heroes.

LUCIA  
Do you think María's okay?

CARLOS  
I think so. I hope so. She's a fighter. That's what I know.

LUCIA  
How did you meet? You guys are so close.

CARLOS  
It's a funny story. So I had just moved here from a different neighborhood. I didn't know anyone. And there were these kids bullying me...

Lucia smirks.

LUCIA  
You got bullied?

CARLOS

Don't laugh. I wasn't always the big man I am today. Back then I was short and skinny and didn't know nothing. Anyways, this girl goes right up to those kids and tells them to fuck off.

LUCIA

Whoa!

CARLOS

Yeah, she just tells 'em to fuck right off and they never bothered me again. So I asked her, what if we started this group, this club, so that other people around here wouldn't get hurt? She was like hell yeah! We have each other's backs. We stick up for the little guy. We don't run the streets but we make the streets safer.

A tear forms in his eye, cracking his tough exterior.

CARLOS

She's my best friend. I don't know what I'd do without her.

LUCIA

I'm so sorry.

They walk in silence for a beat.

LUCIA

You never told me what happened after the game between you and that coach?

CARLOS

It's no big deal.

LUCIA

Tell me!

CARLOS

Okay. Well, he told me that there were a couple of scouts at the game. They might be interested. He thinks I got a chance to go to a D1 school.

Lucia looks at him.

LUCIA

So what about me?

CARLOS  
I'll never leave you. We'll work  
something out.

Lucia smiles.

She hums a tune as they continue down the hall.

Her flashlight flickers.

CARLOS  
Batteries dying?

It cuts out leaving them in darkness.

LUCIA  
Dead.

Carlos drags his hand along the wall, trying to find his way  
around. Lucia holds his hand, tense.

The wind howls through the windows.

Quiet and alone, they trudge their way down the seemingly  
never ending hallway.

When Lucia perks up. She squints her eyes at a little sliver  
of light.

LUCIA  
Hey! I see something! Follow me!

She leads him towards the -

BATHROOM

Snow flurries drift through a broken glass window.

Rusty security bars line the window. It sits high above the  
tiled floor.

Lucia and Carlos stumble in, the cool air hitting them.

LUCIA  
Back to the scene of the crime.

CARLOS  
Huh?

Lucia smiles at him.

CARLOS  
I'm glad you haven't lost your  
sense of humor. We have to think of  
a way to get some help.

She takes a deep breath and looks at herself in the mirror.  
She fusses with her hair and washes her face.

LUCIA  
You're right. Got any ideas?

Carlos shrugs. He heads towards a sink and drinks water from the tap.

Lucia looks at herself in the mirror. The sun shines brightly in the reflection. It catches her eye. They dart up at the window.

She smiles and looks around the bathroom, in thought.

Carlos looks up at her, curiously.

CARLOS  
What's up?

Lucia pushes a trash can from the corner of the bathroom.

LUCIA  
Can you give me a hand?

CARLOS  
Sure, no problem!

Carlos helps Lucia drag the trash can under the window.

CARLOS  
You sure about this?

LUCIA  
No, but we need to try something.  
Hold it steady for me.

Carlos grabs on to edges of the can. Lucia hops on top of it.

LUCIA  
I can almost reach it.

The can shakes as she reaches towards the bars. She climbs up on the sill and grabs the bars.

She squeezes her arm through the bars.

LUCIA  
Ow!

CARLOS  
You okay?

Lucia puts her finger in her mouth, trying to stop the bleeding.

LUCIA  
Yes, it's just...

They hear a VIOLENT SCRATCH against the bathroom door.

They both look at the door in panic.

Charlie BUSTS through the door, Pete not far behind.

PETE

Hello, children. Leaving so soon?  
We haven't even gotten to the FUN  
part yet!

Lucia looks back at Carlos, scared.

CARLOS

What are you waiting for?! Go!

She stretches her arm out of the window, reaching into the cool air. The snow melts on her arm and falls off, like tear drops.

She pushes herself in the narrow crack between the bars.

LUCIA

AHHHH! I can't fit!

She screams in pain as the glass cuts her arm.

LUCIA

I can't do this! I can't leave  
without my brother and I can't  
leave you!

Her eyes meet Carlos'.

CARLOS

No! Don't!

Lucia jumps off the window. Carlos scrambles to try and catch her.

She SLAMS DOWN on the floor with a THUD.

Carlos comforts her.

CARLOS

Are you okay?

Lucia nods.

Charlie snarls and advances.

Carlos stands up in front of Lucia and brandishes the scissors.

Pete glances down at Charlie and nods.

Charlie CHARGES towards Carlos and KNOCKS him down.

Carlos stabs Charlie repeatedly with the scissors, blood spattering all over.



Charlie yelps in pain and jumps off him.

Lucia runs up and KICKS Charlie like football player kicking a field goal.

Charlie wilts back towards Pete.

LUCIA  
Where is my brother?!

Pete smirks at Lucia.

PETE  
He's in a wonderful place! Let me  
show you!

He hits Charlie with a solid right hand. Charlie growls then whimpers behind his leg.

LUCIA  
It's over. Your dumb dog can't stop  
us! Give it up, old man.

Pete belches a disgusting guttural scream.

PETE  
That's not a dog. That's my friend!

He barges into the bathroom, knives in both hands.

Wide eyed, Carlos freezes. His trembling hand drops the scissors.

LUCIA  
Carlos?

Pete winds up to slash his vulnerable throat.

LUCIA  
(in Spanish: English  
subtitle)  
Surprise, bitch!

Lucia SMASHES Pete over the head with the trash can. Pete slumps to the ground.

LUCIA  
I got him? I got him! Are you  
okay?!

Carlos smiles. He reaches out to embrace Lucia.

CARLOS  
I'm okay, I think. I...

Charlie JUMPS on Carlos.

He SCREAMS in pain as Charlie's sharp incisors open deep wounds on his shoulder.

Carlos and Charlie scuffle.

Pete stirs. Lucia looks at the scene in panic.

CARLOS  
RUN! GET OUT OF HERE!

Lucia's eyes well up in tears. She shakes her head.

LUCIA  
I..can't...I can't leave-

Pete gets up to one knee.

CARLOS  
GO! NOW! It'll be okay. Remember,  
I'll never leave you.

Tears streaming down, Lucia closes her eyes and takes a deep breath.

She opens her eyes and exhales.

She runs out into the hallway, Carlos' screams echoing behind her.

HALLWAY

Lucia runs. She runs as tears flow down her face. She doesn't look back.

BATHROOM

Charlie bites Carlos again, tearing away flesh.

PETE  
Dontcha want to play with Charlie?  
He's such a good boy?!

Carlos flails wildly at the creature, spraying blood in the general vicinity.

PETE  
Please watch where you are throwing  
your bodily fluids, sir! You may  
awaken deep CRAVINGS. URGES that  
cannot be ignored!

Carlos wrestles with the creature. They both crumple to the ground.

Carlos crawls on the ground towards the door.

CARLOS  
Dude, you are one sick fuck.

Pete casually strolls over and stabs Carlos in the back.

PETE

Now look at this MESS you've made!

Carlos' eyes go wide, as the blood from the gaping wound soaks his shirt.

PETE

Ah, this is bliss. ECSTASY. You see that light? That's one my daddy showed me. He said TURN IT OFF AND CLEAN YOURSELF UP.

Pete twists the knife and Carlos' body goes limp.

PETE

So I did! Isn't it pretty? I'm gonna be the most beautiful belle at the ball! Won't you join me?

He pulls the knife from Carlos' body. The blood drips. Carlos' body collapses to the floor.

Pete rubs his hands together.

PETE

Well, you can't go out looking like THIS! Why don't we clean you up! Make you all nice and PRETTY!

He hangs Carlos by his shirt with a hook on a bathroom stall door. He examines him closely like a scientist looking at an experiment.

PETE

We'll show daddy! I can be pretty too! You just have a little something there...Let me help you out...

He drives his knife with such force that the knife goes straight through the door.

PETE

There. Perfect. You are a work of art! No wonder that girl is CRAZY about you!

Unsatisfied, Pete guts Carlos, spilling the innards on the floor.

PETE

Good boy.

Charlie trots over.

PETE

Tell the nice man bye bye. Daddy's got a date.

Charlie muches down on the innards. Pete pets him.

LOCKER ROOM

Lucia stumbles around. Lost in the fog of war.

She tries to balance herself on a locker. Her face a contortion of emotions.

TRUCK (FLASHBACK)

The Daughter looks back out into the horizon. The realization her parents are gone washes over her face. Small tears run down her cheek.

She crawls back towards the group.

She sits down, as the intensity of the tears increase.

A MAN(late 30s) sitting across from her, looks at her, curious.

He digs into his dirty duffle bag and pulls out a scuffed up water bottle.

He leans over and offers it to her.

The Daughter looks at him.

She looks at the dirty water bottle.

And she WAILS like a banshee.

The Man flinches with the sudden outburst.

But she cries.

Screaming. Balling. Blubbering.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. LOCKER ROOM - LATER

Lucia on her knees ugly crying. She feels defeated.

Lucia slowly pulls herself together sits on a bench.

She touches her chest, almost by instinct. Feeling the NECKLACE dangling down.

She grabs it, holds it close. She closes her eyes.

LUCIA

(in Spanish: English  
subtitle)

If you can hear me: I remember.

She looks up, her demeanor hardens. A fire lit inside her.

Lucia throws open her locker. She bandages her wounds.

She looks in the mirror and applies eye black to her cheek.

She bends over grabbing one last thing: A METAL BASEBALL BAT.

Ready for battle, She smirks.

REFRIGERATED CLOSET

Pete enters, whistling. He puts on gloves. He wears an apron with a plastic covering it.

PETE

Daddy always said I was the bad  
guy...

Principal Hastings's naked lifeless body hangs from his wrists. The stump of the his leg slowly drops blood on the ground.

PETE

I don't know why. All I wanted was  
to make him happy! He'd always tell  
me to STOP SMILING!

Pete takes out an electric saw and DRIVES it into the Principal Hastings's other leg.

PETE

STOP SMILING! But I couldn't stop!

The blades spin through the flesh. The bone cracks as the blade travels through. The leg falls to the ground.

PETE

Then he'd make me visit his  
friends. I don't know why. I was  
just a kid!

Pete grabs a steak knife and leans in on the leg.

PETE

He said "Take care of them, Peter!  
Show them how much of a MAN you  
are!" I had no choice but to  
oblige.

He skins the leg, drawing out the skin and exposing the muscles. He tosses the skin aside and finely cuts the fat away from the muscles.

PETE

Why am I telling you this? You  
aren't my friend! But please! You  
must believe me! I was a kid!

With a boning knife, he cuts away the flesh from the bone. The muscles squish as the sharp blade slowly grinds back and forth.

PETE

I can't stop what comes next. But I won't stop you from smiling! Have a nice day, pal!

He gathers the slices and brings them to the -

CAFETERIA

Pete sets down the platter of raw meat.

He puts on the record player and hums along to a 50s show tune.

He hammers the meat to the slow beat of the tune.

Charlie hobbles in and BARKS at him.

Pete plops the meat on the sizzling frying pan. He dashes seasoning as he sautéés it.

Pete glances back at Charlie.

PETE

Go away, boy! Daddy's busy! We've got a FRIEND coming over.

Charlie walks off into the adjacent room.

He walks around a table all set up with table cloths, candles, napkins, and one spot set up like a fancy restaurant with all the fixings.

Pete places the sizzling meat on a plate and sets it down.

He sits down and smiles. Satisfied.

A meal fit for a king.

BACK ROOM

Jesús, sits in the corner of his cage, shaking and crying.

María's half eaten body lays nearby.

Jesús stands up and takes a deep breath. He looks around the his prison, thinking.

Newspaper clippings about MISSING PEOPLE line the desk. He notices a container of keys.

Jesús smirks.

He takes off his shirt and socks and jumbles it into a twisted rope.

He throws the line with all his might. It falls short.

JESÚS

Come on! Come on! What would Lucia do?

He closes his eyes and takes a deep breath. With one big throw he knocks over the container with his rope.

He breathes a sigh of relief.

He pulls the keys towards him. Bit by bit.

WOOF!

Charlie appears in the doorway. Charlie eyes him suspiciously.

Jesús freezes.

JESÚS

Good doggie. Good boy.

Charlie comes closer. Stalking his next prey.

Jesús looks back down at the keys.

JESÚS

Please! Be a good boy.

He grimaces as Charlie walks right up to him and looks at him in the eyes.

Charlie snarls and grunts.

JESÚS

Okay! Okay!

Jesús slowly backs way from the edge of the cage.

Charlie looks back down and sniffs the keys, pushing them forward.

Jesús looks at the keys and thinks.

JESÚS

You can do this.

He dives forward!

His lone pointer finger curls into the key loop. He grabs the rest of the keys and swipes them into the cage.

Charlie BARKS like mad. Gnashing and biting at the air.

Jesús huddles back towards the back of the cage, laughing and smiling in relief.

He holds the keys up in victory.

HALLWAY

Lucia opens her locker.

She takes out her jacket and puts it on.

It's dark green hews look like something from the military. The thick fabric is more polyester than cotton.

She looks at the picture of her and Jesús attached to the inside of her locker.

She takes it out and examines it closely.

INT. TRUCK - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The truck speeds down the dirt road.

The TRUCK DRIVER(early 30s) peers into the distance.

His eyes go wide as he sees a MILITARY CONVOY coming in the other direction.

The Truck swerves off the road. The Daughter screams as she holds onto the Man for support.

EXT. US/MEXICO BORDER - LATER (FLASHBACK)

The Truck Driver jumps out and pads himself off.

He unlocks the back of the truck and pulls down the ramp.

The Daughter bursts out, tears in her eyes. Truck Driver freezes in shock as the 3 foot ball of fire rages past him.

The men in the truck react to this determined young girl. One chuckles softly. A couple discuss what to do.

The Driver yells out to her. She turns around and glares at him.

She charges straight towards him and SCREAMS at the top of her lungs.

He pulls his pistol out and points it at her. She marches right up to the muzzle.

She glares at him, continuing to SCREAM vulgarities in Spanish.

A beat.

The Driver looks at the little girl and laughs. He puts his gun away and pats the Daughter on the shoulder.

She PUNCHES his leg with all her might. The Driver continues to laugh.



She feels a RUMBLING approaching. The Driver gives her a look and points towards the noise.

The Daughter's mouth opens agape.

In the distance, the other truck with Father and Mother heads towards them.

INT. BACK ROOM - LATER

Jesús puts the key into the lock.

He twists and turns it. The lock doesn't move.

He pulls out the key and examines it.

JESÚS

What the fuck? Why is this not working?

With force, he pushes the key back into the hole. He turns it again, his muscles straining.

It slowly begins turning. He smiles.

JESÚS

Finally.

CRACK. The key breaks in two. He looks at the half broken key in his hand.

JESÚS

No! No! No! This can't be happening! I can't be stuck here....forever?

He tosses the broken key like a Brett Favre Hail Mary. Jesús screams in frustration, tears bursting from his eyes.

CAFETERIA

Pete hums a 1950's show tune as he glides around the kitchen. Charlie hopping up and down next to him.

A booth is already dressed up: tablecloth, a lit candle, silverware and pots of rice and vegetables.

Pete takes the meat out of the oven. It sizzles in it's own juices. The red and pink syrup like gravy swim around the charred lean meat.

Pete dances with the meat as he makes his way to the booth.

Charlie yaps behind him, waiting for a piece to fall.

PETE

Down boy!

He finally sets down the meat.

PETE

Just one more thing...

Pete rolls out a REPLICIA MODEL SKELETON from the Back Room. He pushes it next to the booth.

He stands back and admires his handiwork.

He heads back and turns on a record player which plays AT LAST by ETTA JAMES, or some other classic melodramatic romantic song.

He exits to the Back Room.

Pete reemerges wearing a DRESS and WIG. He seductively saunters towards the booth.

Pete speaks, his voice soft and dainty.

PETE

Excuse me sir, Is this seat taken?

He looks at the skeleton, expectantly and slides down into the booth.

PETE

Oh, don't you mind little old me!  
You come here often? I swear, I  
would have remembered your pretty  
face.

Charlie jumps on the table and BARKS, snapping at the meat.

Pete glares at Charlie and SMACKS him in the head.

PETE

(breaking character)

YOU STUPID IDIOT! I MADE YOU AND I  
CAN DESTROY YOU! NOW GO!

Pete points out the door and Charlie slowly trudges his way out of the cafeteria.

PETE

(back in character)

Why, I am so sorry! Now where were  
we?

HALLWAY

Lucia opens her locker and takes out her book bag.

She looks up and down her locker, when an idea sparks.

She sets down her bag.

She picks up a textbook. It weighs heavily in her hands.

One by one she stacks them up in her backpack.

LUCIA

And they said that these won't come  
in handy later...that reminds me I  
still have to finish that paper!

She lifts the bag, her knees buckling against the weight.

She makes her way down the hallway.

Lucia looks out the window, the snow falling as hard as  
ever.

She frowns as the faint noise of the music tickles her ear.

LUCIA

Where is that coming from?

A disgusting guttural GROWL stops her in her tracks.

LUCIA

Oh no!...Charlie.

She slowly backs up.

Charlie charges her and pounces.

As he is airborne, Lucia takes off her backpack and swings  
it with all her might.

THWACK

Charlie CRASHES into a nearby locker with the force of the  
backpack.

The impact of the bag loosens the baseball bat, it rolls  
down the hallway.

Charlie hobbles in the wreckage. He slowly regains his  
footing.

Lucia approaches him, determined.

She swings the bag down.

Charlie rolls out of the way, hissing at her. He BITES her  
ankle.

Blood pours.

Lucia SCREAMS in pain.

She looks over at the bat, her salvation.

Charlie also glances over, seeing his end.

Lucia stands up and winces in pain.

She limps towards the bat.

Charlie hobbles behind her.

She grabs the handle of the bat.

Charlie grabs the other end with his mouth and pulls.

Lucia puts both hands on end of the bat and strains.

She hesitates for a moment - Then she TWISTS the bat and FLIPS Charlie over.

Charlie yelps in panic.

She gets on top of Charlie, bat in hand.

She swings down -

But Charlie BITES her forearm.

LUCIA

Ow!

She whimpers in pain, dropping the bat.

Charlie snarls, his sharp incisors drooling in her face.

She picks the bat back up with her good arm. She swings at him wildly.

Charlie gnashes at her from a distance.

LUCIA

Get away from me! Leave me alone!

Charlie CHARGES her -

She steadies herself and focuses on one deliberate swing and-

TWACK!

Charlie's face RECOILS from the blow. Some of Charlie's broken pearly white incisors go FLYING through the air.

Charlie welps and licks the bleeding wound on his face.

Charlie growls at her, but keeps his distance. For the first time, rattled.

Lucia slowly backs away, her eyes not leaving the threat.

LUCIA

As God as my witness, you will not  
stop me. Show me where my brother  
is!

Charlie whimpers and retreats.

Lucia stands in a daze. Frazzled.

A beat.

She turns around and runs. She runs as fast as she can.

Tears streaming down her face, blood oozing from her ankle, the hallway passes by in a blur.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. US/MEXICO BORDER - LATER (FLASHBACK)

Tears streaming down the Daughter's face, the Daughter runs towards the truck carrying her parents.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

She runs waywardly, her arms reaching out for safety.

She grabs door handles, finding them locked, before moving on.

Drained, she reaches the last door in the hallway, it opens up to-

INT. TEACHER'S LOUNGE - LATER

She slams the door shut and locks it.

EXT. US/MEXICO BORDER - LATER (FLASHBACK)

The Truck Driver holds the Daughter back as she tries to run towards the truck.

She reaches her arms, desperate for her parents.

The Daughter cries out.

Just then -

INT. TRUCK - LATER (FLASHBACK)

The Father looks out the back of the truck.

He hears the scratching of tires on the dirt road.

He holds his wife and huddles down.

The POLLERO(40s) driving the truck looks at the rearview mirror and gasps.

He exchanges a glance with his COLLEAGUE(40s) in the passenger seat.

EXT. US/MEXICO BORDER - LATER (FLASHBACK)

3 Black JEEPS follow the Truck closely.

An ARMED CARTEL MEMBER leans out of the window of the lead car and FIRES.

The bullets hit the truck. The sound reverberating within.

The truck swerves wildly, trying to avoid the gunfire.

The Pollero hits his colleague on the shoulder. His colleague sticks his gun out of the window and fires back imprecisely.

The Military Convoy barrels towards the scene.

The Pollero looks ahead in panic. He turns the wheel at an extreme angle.

The Truck spins out of control.

IT FLIPS OVER END OVER END.

The Military Convoy comes to a stop near the crashed vehicle.

The Jeeps surround the truck.

The Truck Driver lets the Daughter go. She looks on in fear. The Truck Driver huddles everyone behind his truck for cover.

A group of CARTEL MEMBERS(30s) leave their jeep and surround the truck, weapons ready.

The Daughter watches the scene: the Cartel Members gesture angrily at the Pollero who drove the truck.

The Pollero gets out of the truck, his arms raised.

The Cartel Members continue to yell at him.

They lead him away from the truck and handcuff him.

The ARMED SOLDIERS(30s) in the convoy get out of their vehicles. They look at the scene.

Some of Cartel Members put the Pollero on one of the Jeeps and drive away.

The CARTEL LEADER(late 40s) yells instructions to the Cartel Members in Spanish.

They advance on the truck.

The Armed Soldiers ready their weapons and advance on the Cartel Members.

The CLICKS of safeties coming off echo throughout the desert.

The Cartel Leader gives the signal and they OPEN FIRE. Bullets riddle the truck, tearing holes through the metal and canvas.

The Daughter winces, tears in her eyes.

The BLOOD CURDLING SCREAMS from the truck echo throughout the desert.

DAUGHTER  
(in Spanish: English  
subtitle)  
Mommy! Daddy! No!

She cautiously moves towards the truck. She seeks safety in a nearby bush.

The guns stop firing.

Silence overtakes the truck.

DAUGHTER  
No!

An Armed SOLDIER(30s) puts his hand to his ear and nods.

He aims his rifle at the head of a Cartel Member and fires.

POP

The Cartel Member's head explodes like a firework, blood rains down on the truck and nearby Members. The Soldier yells out -

SOLDIER  
Go! Go! Go!

The Armed Soldiers FIRE on the Cartel Members.

Bullets take down Soldiers and Cartel Members alike.

Bodies FLY around the Daughter as she RUSHES towards the truck.

She dives behind a rock and looks at the BLOODBATH.

The Soldier takes a GRENADE out of his belt and takes out the pin.

Other Soldiers reach out to try and take it away from him.

He winds up and throws it.

The Daughter watches it fly as if it's in slow motion.

The Cartel Members dive out of the way.

The grenade rolls near to the truck.

The Daughter's eyes goes wide

DAUGHTER  
No...

THE TRUCK EXPLODES

It sends fire into the sky like Hiroshima.

Debris falls around the girl as she watches the burning truck, crestfallen.

INT. CAFETERIA - LATER

Pete eyes the skeleton seductively.

The empty sockets of the skeleton stare straight ahead.

Pete gasps and uses his napkin to wipe a spot of dirt on the table.

PETE

If you'll excuse me...these VERMIN  
keep leaving TRASH for little 'ole  
me! Now don't let this ruin our  
good time...

Pete jumps up and grabs a mop and bucket and rolls it towards the table.

PETE

I swear, it seems like every single  
week these RODENTS find new and  
inventive ways to throw their DIRTY  
shit everywhere.

He mops the floor obsessively.

PETE

Now that won't be happening  
anymore. The INSECTS will FRY!

Charlie staggers into the room, blood drops trailing behind him.

Pete looks down.

PETE

Charlie?

He puts down the fork, meat still on it, and goes over to Charlie. He examines the bruises and wounds on Charlie.

PETE

Come here, boy. What happened?

He glances towards the door, shakes his head, and leads Charlie towards the -

BACK ROOM

Jesús notices the rustling of the door and scurries to back of the cage.



Pete carries Charlie towards his desk.

He looks around, confused.

PETE

I could have sworn it was right  
here...

Jesús puts his hand over his mouth, catching his gasp.

Pete grabs ointment and bandages from the desk.

PETE

This will help you feel better.  
Right, boy? How ya doing? Good boy!

Pete hums a soft comforting song as he applies the materials  
onto Charlie's wounds.

Charlie purrs along.

Jesús, wide eyed, takes in the entire scene.

Pete lays Charlie back on the floor.

Charlie wags his tail and hops and down.

Pete smiles.

PETE

Good as new! You see, father! I'm a  
good boy!

Charlie runs ahead and towards the Cafeteria.

Pete looks back at the desk, hesitating.

PETE

I'll clean that later. My hot date  
awaits!

He shrugs his shoulders and starts towards the door when -

He steps on the broken key.

He lifts up his foot and picks up the broken key.

Pete glares back at Jesús.

PETE

YOU! YOU! MADE THIS ATROCITY?! I'LL  
GUT YOU!

He wields a knife and approaches Jesús.

Jesús cowers as Pete's silhouette grows closer and closer.

We hear the sound of the cage door rustling.

JESÚS  
HELP ME! SOMEONE PLEASE! HELP!

TEACHER'S LOUNGE

Lucia looks around, her back affixed to the door.

A refrigerator softly hums in the corner. A whiteboard with a table hangs on the wall.

She marches into the room towards the drawers.

She slams them open and grunts. She throws out the pots and pans and garbage bags. She opens another and another.

She pulls the handle on one and it doesn't budge.

LUCIA  
HMMMMMMM

BANG. Lucia slams the bat against the locked drawer. The drawer bruises and dents, but does not break.

BANG. The drawer splinters but remains shut.

BANG. The front the the drawer falls to pieces. The phones all drop among the wood shavings. She spots her IPHONE.

As she bends over to pick it up, she hears a faint noise.

LUCIA  
Jesús!?

CAFETERIA

Pete drags a screaming Jesús into the messy cafeteria.

JESÚS  
Where are you taking me?! Let me go!

The record player CRASHES to the grounds as a virile Charlie knocks it over.

PETE  
Down boy! Calm down now! Ugh, my mommy gave me that and you broke it! It was the only thing I had left-

Pete sets Jesús on the ground, struggling to hold him.

JESÚS  
The only thing you are going to have left when I'm done with you is a broken face!

Pete takes out duct tape and wraps up Jesús's legs.

Jesús kicks him, trying to get free.

PETE

Now, now, play nice!

Pete flinches and grabs Jesús's leg.

JESÚS

Let go of me!

Pete takes a knife out of his pocket and STABS Jesús in the leg.

Jesús screams.

JESÚS

OW!

PETE

Now be a good boy. Before I show you how daddy takes care of BAD BOYS like you...

Pete holds Jesús's legs together.

Jesús sits up and punches Pete in the face

Pete grabs his cheek in pain.

PETE

You are pushing it, little boy. You don't want to get on my BAD SIDE.

Jesús wriggles out of Pete's grasp and dives towards the door.

Charlie, drooling, jumps in front of him.

Jesús backs up.

He backs right up into Pete's leg.

Pete's smiles.

PETE

Running off so soon? We were just having fun!

Jesús looks at him.

JESÚS

You are sick and sadistic. You are going to burn in hell!

Pete twitches.

PETE

Daddy was very religious! When I cried to Mommy and I tried to tell her what Daddy was doing. He SHUT ME UP. Like this!

Pete tapes Jesús's mouth shut.

PETE

See? Good as new! No more yelling. Use your inside voice.

Pete laughs and taps him on the nose. He drags Jesús back towards the kitchen.

PETE

Daddy would have these big barbeques. All this friends would come over.

Pete drags Jesús behind the counter.

PETE

They'd sing and dance and play! Then Daddy would go away and it's just me and his friends and THE FIRE.

Pete drops him. Jesús wriggles as Pete tapes his hands behind his back.

Pete heads towards the back of the cafeteria and turns on the ROTISSERIE. Big enough for multiple pigs or even a human, the cavernous pit flickers to life.

Jesús eyes the scene with panic.

PETE

I'm gonna show you a great American tradition!

Jesús mumbles through the tape.

PETE

No, silly, the all you can eat buffet!

Pete sets Jesús by the rotisserie.

Jesús sweats from the increasing heat.

Pete puts his hands on his knees and looks at him inquisitively.

PETE

You're so handsome. I can see why everyone loves you.

Pete caresses his cheek.

PETE

Daddy said I'd never be pretty.

Pete rips out one of his earrings.

Jesus screams in agony.

Pete examines the earring and sticks it through his ear. The hole bleeds. Pete smiles blissfully.

PETE

DO I LOOK PRETTY NOW?!

TEACHER'S LOUNGE

Lucia dials 911.

LUCIA

Hello! I need help! I'm at the school!

LUCIA

This is an emergency!

LUCIA

Hello? Hello?

She looks at the phone in panic.

LUCIA

What the heck?

INSERT - iPhone screen

it shows 0% battery. The screen fades to black as it shuts down.

Lucia sighs, her face filled with fear and anguish.

She looks up. A faint SCREAM emanates in the background.

HALLWAY

Lucia stalks the hallway, dragging the baseball bat behind her. Her stone faced expression belies her fear.

She slowly creeps towards the Cafeteria door.

LUCIA

Hello? Is anyone in there? Jesús?

She pushes the door ajar and peers in.

She gasps.

CAFETERIA

Charlie sniffs the air, his eyes darting wildly.

Pete cowers over Jesús.

Charlie BARKS.

Pete looks up.

PETE

Go check that out, boy.

He runs out.

HALLWAY

Charlie BURSTS THROUGH THE DOOR, tackling Lucia.

Lucia picks up her bat and stands up.

Charlie SNARLS at her.

Lucia GROWLS back.

They charge each other.

Lucia swings and -

TWACK! Charlie collapses to the ground.

She stands on top of the animal as it twitches from the injury.

LUCIA

I don't know what you are or where  
you came from, but this is last  
time you are come to my school!

She BASHES it's head over and over with the bat. Blood  
spatters on her face and clothes.

SQUISH. She bashes into the innards of Charlie's skull. She  
bashes until her arms get tired.

Applesauce like liquid pools around her feet.

Lucia wipes the blood from her cheek and moves on.

CAFETERIA

Lucia sneaks past the dressed up table. She curls her  
nostrils at the stench.

She makes her way past the kitchen area. She goes up to the  
back door and takes a deep breath.

With the bat in hand and she tests the handle. She takes  
another deep breath and She kicks the door to the -

BACK ROOM

Lucia gasps.

She sees the broken container on the ground.

She peers into the cage.

LUCIA  
Jesús? Hello? Hello?

She examines the desk, tossing aside the papers.

Lucia mouth drops wide open.

She sees one of Jesús's earrings and picks it up.

LUCIA  
Oh no! No! It can't be!

Tears well up in her eyes.

EXT. US/MEXICO BORDER - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The Daughter runs towards the burning truck.

DAUGHTER  
(in Spanish: English  
subtitle)  
Mommy! Daddy! I'm coming!

GUNFIRE surrounds her.

The Armed Soldiers advance.

The Cartel Members fall back.

SIRENS fill the air as emergency vehicles and the military police drive towards the scene.

The Armed Soldiers surround the burning truck. Their guns pointed.

The Daughter dives under the truck.

The Daughter gasps at what she sees: the charred remains of the occupants.

Her eyes well up but she blinks that away.

The Daughter takes a deep breath and digs into one nearby.

She picks up a handful of dust and watches it fall through her fingers.

DAUGHTER  
(in Spanish: English  
subtitle)  
Mommy? Daddy? Please! Where are  
you?

She crawls towards another set of remains.

WAH

The noise stops her in her tracks.

The Daughter looks around to see where the sound is coming from.

She gets out from under the truck and spots it: She sees two bodies holding each other in a nearby bush.

A colorful blanket wrapped over them appears to be move.

She hovers closer. Watching it curiously.

The Daughter coughs. The rising smoke fills her nostrils.

The Daughter picks up the blanket and wraps it around her face.

WAH

She looks down and gasps.

She finds a BABY(2).

DAUGHTER  
(in Spanish: English  
subtitle)  
Are you my b..b..brother?

The Daughter picks up the BABY and holds him close. She wraps him up in the blanket.

The Baby coos.

She emerges from the bushes and runs.

Her face a contortion of sadness and determination.

She runs past The Armed Soldiers searching the burned truck.

She runs past the bodies of the Cartel Members.

The Daughter runs towards the BORDER, the tail end of her scarf flapping.

DAUGHTER  
(to the Baby, in Spanish:  
English subtitle)  
You are the gift from God! You are  
my brother! From now on, I will  
keep us united. Together for life!

She runs towards the FENCE. She sees a hole and hops through it.

EXT. US/MEXICO BORDER - LAREDO, TEXAS - LATER

The Daughter stumbles through the brush.



She makes her way towards a dirt road.

She sees two UNITED STATES BORDER PATROL AGENTS(late 40s) talking as they walk towards her.

DAUGHTER  
(in Spanish: English  
subtitle)  
Help me! Help! Help me!

They stop. They look at her. Their expressions hidden behind Aviator sunglasses.

She looks up at him and and his partner.

She unfurls the blanket. The Baby smiles at the Agents.

DAUGHTER  
(in Spanish: English  
subtitle)  
Help! Help...us! Help us! Our  
parents!...Our life! It's gone! We  
need help! Please, my brother...

She breaks down in tears.

The Patrol Agents look down at the BABY. They exchange quizzical glances.

END FLASHBACK

INT. CAFETERIA - LATER

Pete tapes Jesús onto the rotisserie.

Jesús screams as the fire rises towards him. Tears well up in his eyes.

Lucia BURSTS through the door.

LUCIA  
Oh my god! Jesús! What the hell?  
You sick creep!

Pete looks up to her and smirks. He clicks his tongue.

Nothing happens. His brow furrows.

Lucia smirks.

LUCIA  
I killed your goddamn dog! Now get  
away from him before I kill you  
too!

The expression on his face drops. Tears well up in his eyes. He looks at her blinking.

As a single tears rolls down his cheek, he twitches a smirk.

PETE

You can't kill what's already dead!  
Right, daddy? RIGHT!?

He charges towards her, brandishing a knife.

Lucia gets in a batting stance and winds up.

She swings.

Pete catches the bat.

PETE

Daddy says that we have to play  
nice. No more toys!

She gasps.

He slashes her face, a thin wound opens on her cheek.

Lucia crumples to the ground.

LUCIA

Ow!

Jesús grunts and cries.

She touches her cheek and glances at the blood on her fingers.

She shakes her head and leans up. She fiddles with her necklace.

LUCIA

I've seen great evil in this world.  
I've crossed many dangerous paths.  
I am not afraid! There is nothing  
you can do to stop me from  
achieving my dreams.

Pete giggles. An brief air of lucidity washes over him.

PETE

I've got dreams too. You and I  
aren't so different, you see. You  
think I want to clean up after all  
you kids? My dream was to be a  
nurse. Kill them with kindness.

Pete snorts.

PETE

Get it?

Lucia scoffs.

LUCIA  
That's not funny.

Pete charges her, knife out.

She hops ups to her feet.

He swings.

She ducks and trips him.

He lands HARD on the ground.

PETE  
Nice one, little lady.

Jesús screams as he tries to get her attention.

LUCIA  
I'm coming! I'm coming!

Lucia runs to the rotisserie.

She grabs pole in which Jesús is attached and pushes it off the hot surface.

Faint sirens echo in the distance.

She rips the tape off Jesús's arms, legs, and mouth.

JESÚS  
Ow! Careful!

LUCIA  
I'm trying!

Jesús blubbers into her arms.

JESÚS  
Thank you! I love you!  
Thank...Watch out!

Jesús jumps out of the way.

Pete pushes Lucia to the ground.

PETE  
Don't worry pal, it'll all be over soon. Let's play a game! Which one of you will make daddy upset first?

Pete takes another knife out of his pocket and cowers over Lucia.

PETE  
Time's up!

Jesús charges him and they tussle.

With one quick strike, Pete STABS Jesús.

He pulls Jesús in close.

PETE

One last dance?

Lucia gets up and jumps on Pete's back.

She curls her arm around his neck.

Pete lets go of Jesús, who crumples to the ground.

Pete flails the knife around wildly.

Lucia puts Pete in a headlock and hiptosses him out of through the door.

CAFETERIA

Pete writhes on the ground.

PETE

Good one! Daddy is  
impressed...There is something  
different about you...

Lucia looks down at him and thinks.

She jogs over to the meat slicer and removes the protective covering and turns it on.

She looks back down at Pete and smiles.

LUCIA

You're right. There is something  
different about me. I have family.  
I have friends. I have people who  
love me. You are nothing but a  
creep. You are always snooping  
around in other people's lives  
because you've got nothing! Is that  
why do you hate us?!

Lucia picks up Pete and drags him towards the meat slicer.

The blades WHIRR by his ears.

Pete's eyes open.

He screams.

Lucia gasps.

He grabs her shoulder, bringing her closer to the him.

PETE

I...I don't hate you. I like you. I LOVE you! You are so pretty with your hair like that.

He gently caresses her hair.

PETE

I was pretty like you when I was young. But I wanted to be the prettiest So, I tried on some makeup but my DADDY would YELL at me to WASH IT OFF! "CLEAN THAT MESS OFF YOUR FACE!" He never appreciated how pretty I was. He never cared. It was a mess. Garbage! But I'll show him! And I'll show you!

His grip on her hair tightens and he pulls.

LUCIA

Get off of me!

She pushes his shoulder into the blade.

LUCIA

Shut up!

He screams.

Blood pops up like a fountain.

Into Lucia's face and clothes.

She continues to push him all the way through.

The bones CRACKING.

With one final push, she pushes his arm all the way through.

Pete screams as his stump pours with blood.

PETE

(feigning sincerity)

I'm sorry! I'm sorry! You didn't have to do that!

Lucia rolls her eyes.

LUCIA

Are you finished? I'm about ready to go now.

Lucia strolls up to him.

Pete's face contorts in worry.

PETE  
(still faking it)  
I really mean it. You win. You beat  
little 'ole me.

She approaches closer, when he smirks.

In one quick violent movement, he slashes forward.

Lucia takes an unsteady step back, in shock.

Blood pours from a wound, now opened up.

Pete laughs.

PETE  
Now where were we?

BAM

Pete knocks Lucia out with his knife handle.

He rubs his hand on Lucia's wound and wipes the blood on her face.

PETE  
I've always enjoyed this shade of  
red.

He looks at his reflection on his knife and makes a duck face.

Pete rubs his hand under his stump, takes a handful, and licks it.

PETE  
Hmmm...a bit tart, some wood  
undertones.

He smacks his lips.

PETE  
Oooh, a fruity aftertaste. I give  
you a 3 out of 5. Not bad.

Pete picks up Lucia and tosses her over his shoulder and carries her back to the rotisserie room.

CAFETERIA

He lays Lucia down next to the rotisserie.

He leans over and forcefully grabs the knife out of Jesús's chest.

Jesús chest compresses, his breath forced out.

Pete leans over Lucia's body, his mouth drooling.

He runs the tip of the knife down her body.

PETE

So pretty. So scrumptious.

She moans and twists at the touch.

Pete smiles and lifts the knife over his head when-

BANG

Jesús punches him.

Pete falls to his side.

Lucia blinks as she regains consciousness.

LUCIA

What? What's going on?

JESÚS

We gotta -

Pete rises up.

Jesús jumps on his back.

JESÚS

Get him Lucia!

Lucia looks around confused.

She glances at the rotisserie.

Pete twists wildly trying to get Jesús off his back.

She runs over and takes the rod above the pit.

She holds the rod out like a lance.

We hear the sound of STOMPING outside the room.

LUCIA

Let my brother go!

Lucia charges.

She hits Pete in the chest, penetrating him. Blood pools around the wound.

She runs with Pete at the end of the rod.

SLAM

They hit the wall.

Jesús falls off Pete. Pete hangs from the rod.

She backs away and looks at the scene.

After a beat, she runs to Jesús.

LUCIA  
Are you okay?

JESÚS  
Yeah...yeah..just a little -

PETE  
You've made a real mess, young  
lady.

JESÚS  
Goddamnit.

LUCIA  
Just die already!

Lucia grabs the end of the rod. She turns it around towards the rotisserie.

She glances at Jesús, who smiles. Jesús giggles and flips the switch.

The rotisserie makes a noise. A spark creates a orange flame. The flame encompasses the pit.

Pete looks back at the rotisserie. His eyes wide.

He looks back at Lucia.

PETE  
We can be friends! I swear! Just  
give me a chance!

She smiles.

LUCIA  
Not today, old man.

She SPRINTS towards the rotisserie.

PETE  
No! No! No!

She pushes the rod into the flames. Pete drowns in the flames.

The blaze lick up his clothes, quickly turning them to ash.

As the fire encroaches on his skin, he screams.

PETE  
I will haunt you. I will never die!  
I will turn your dreams into my  
nightmare!

Lucia and Jesús watch in interest and relief.



Tears well up in Jesús's eyes.

JESÚS

It's...over.

Pete's body goes silent as the inferno engulf him. His skin charred ash black.

LUCIA

Looks like the old man died after all.

We hear a KNOCK at the door.

Lucia and Jesús look at each other.

Lucia grabs the rod. Jesús picks up a knife.

LUCIA

You ready, bro?

JESÚS

Anytime, sis!

They hold position next to one another.

A POLICE OFFICER(40s) BUSTS through the door, gun drawn.

POLICE OFFICER

PUT YOUR HANDS UP!!

Lucia drops the rod and hugs Jesús.

Jesús hand shakes as he drops the knife.

LUCIA

It...It's just me and my brother...

The Police Officer lowers his weapon.

He looks over Lucia's shoulder at the scene.

His jaw drops.

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The flashing lights of the emergency vehicles brighten the air in red and blue.

Snow flurries fall like a snowglobe. The sound of snow removal trucks echo in the distance.

We zoom past an ambulance parked in front of the school.

Lucia sits nearby. An EMT next to her attends to her injuries.

The doors BURST open as a pair of EMTs roll up Jesús to the ambulance. They wrap him in a mylar blanket.

Lucia runs by his side. She hugs him tightly.

LUCIA  
 You're never leaving my sight.  
 Okay?

Jesús weakly gives her a thumbs up.

The EMTs place him in the ambulance.

Lucia hops inside.

She looks out the window, back at the school, as the ambulance speeds away.

FADE TO BLACK:

SUPER: 6 months later...

FADE IN:

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

A stage sits at the 50 yard line. Flags bearing the Fighting Knights of José Fernández High School hang on poles on both sides.

Students in graduation cap and gowns stand on the field and face the stage. Their parents and relatives sit in bleachers behind them.

Lucia walks towards the lectern and opens the notebook of her speech.

LUCIA  
 Students, faculty, friends, and family. I just have one word for today: Thanks. Thank you for being there when we were down. Thank you for helping us along this journey. Thank you for having our back.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

We are back at the rap battle.

Carlos smiles as he declared the winner. He gets mobbed by the adoring crowd.

END FLASHBACK

LUCIA  
 I am going to say something that I never told anyone: I am an immigrant. My brother and I came to United States from Mexico. But  
 (MORE)

LUCIA (cont'd)  
right here, this community embraced  
us with open arms. Our foster  
parents showed us that dreams  
belong to us too.

Her FOSTER PARENTS(40s) wave from the crowd.

LUCIA  
You allowed us to be ourselves.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

A teacher writes the lesson on the blackboard.

The class pays close attention.

We zoom in on María, in the back of the class, headphones  
on, rocking out to her music. She is scribbling a drawing of  
the teacher.

END FLASHBACK

LUCIA  
But today we are start anew. We are  
the future we've been waiting for!  
We are the change we seek! I call  
on my fellow students to lift up  
the torch with me and carry it into  
the future! We will...

She sees a figure in the distance. It moves behind the  
assembled students.

She squints, as she takes a closer look.

She knows that gait. It's Pete.

She gasps.

He smiles and waves at her.

She blinks rapidly as if taking a punch to the gut.

She looks up. She sees the sky darken. The clouds gather.

They THUNDER. LIGHTNING FLASHES.

Lucia loses control.

LUCIA  
(muttering to herself)  
Stay away from me!

She hyperventilates. Her clothes soak with sweat. She wipes  
her brow.

The students exchange confused glances.

She feels a cold touch on her shoulder.

She glances at the source and sees A TEACHER(50s). The teacher smiles, reassuringly.

LUCIA

I'm okay...I'm okay...

She takes a deep breath and looks back behind the assembled students.

Shes sees nothing but green grass and the hash marks of the field.

She continues her speech.

LUCIA

We will triumph!

INT. GYM - LATER

People of all ethnicities stand in rows, facing the American flag.

A TEACHER(40s) administers the Oath of Citizenship.

Jesús, up front, smiles as he raises his right arm.

JESÚS

I hereby declare an oath to protect  
and defend the Constitution of the  
United States of America against  
all enemies, foreign and domestic.  
So help me God.

Lucia runs into the gym. She spots Jesús.

Jesús goes to the front and shakes the Teacher's hand.

The Teacher hands Jesús his certificate and they pause for a photo.

Jesús glances off center and spots Lucia. They look at deeply into each others eyes.

JESÚS

...I got to go.

Jesús drops everything and runs up to her.

They hug. The embrace lasts a lifetime. Both facing an uncertain future but all the pain and suffering was over. For now...

Jesús opens his eyes and smiles.

JESÚS

Hey!

He escapes her embrace and jogs to the other side of the court.

He picks up a basketball and dribbles it awkwardly.

JESÚS

Up for a game?

Lucia laughs and rolls her eyes.

FADE OUT.