

PEPITA

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EXT. L.A. / CITY CENTER CONSTRUCTION SITE / BIRD'S EYE - DAY

A 10-story high crane lifts a load of I-beams above a brand new, partially built, ultra-modern apartment complex.

Beefy CONSTRUCTION WORKERS in hard hats, jeans, steel boots, bandanas covering their faces, toil away, move about the structure like kids on a massive jungle gym.

The CLAMOR of jackhammers, saws, concrete mixers, fill the late morning.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE / GROUND LEVEL - CONTINUOUS

A squat, lunch truck, with shiny quilted metal panels, parks next to a stack of lumber. The driver, **TONY** (58), suntanned face hidden beneath a full beard, straw cowboy hat, climbs out, lifts the sides, props them up with aluminum bars.

He circles to the driver's window, reaches inside, sounds the LUNCH HORN - *La Cucaracha* echoes through the site.

Almost immediately, all work on the site stops. Machinery grinds to a halt. Silence. It's almost peaceful, save for the CITY SOUNDS.

The construction workers emerge from the guts of the metal behemoth, bandanas come off, they wipe their grimy faces.

The men, in sweat-soaked shirts, make their way to the lunch truck, encircle the vehicle.

Tony, overwhelmed, watches the men grab plastic wrapped sandwiches, burritos, chips, sodas, bottled water.

He can barely keep up with them while they empty the shelves of his goods, fork over their cash.

EXT. BUSY L.A. INTERSECTION - SAME TIME

A ramshackle food truck, dirty, rust exposed behind peeling paint, the faded words "*Pepita's Tacos*", barely legible, idles at a stop light.

Thick, choking exhaust billows from the tailpipe.

There's a brief break in the cross traffic. The truck guns its motor, runs the light, barely makes it across.

HORNS HONK.

EXT. CITY CENTER CONSTRUCTION SITE - MINUTES LATER

The ramshackle food truck, rattles up next to Tony's gleaming vehicle. Slows. SQUEAKY BRAKES announce its arrival.

A few men watch **LILA** (37), prematurely graying, faded natural beauty, not a trace of make-up, in a sun-bleached "Guns 'N Roses" t-shirt, slide open the side panel.

She emerges into the bright daylight, waves at the men.

LILA

Hey, fellas. Be with you in a sec.

A couple men WHISTLE, ogle her; the rest turn away.

Lila rushes to the rear of the truck, pulls out a generator, fires it up, dashes around the side, cranks open the awning, climbs back in the truck, appears in the window, sounds her LUNCH HORN. She's on a mission.

A couple of the workers SCOFF.

CONSTRUCTION WORKER #1

Don't bother.

CONSTRUCTION WORKER #2

Yeah. Your food's crap.

INT. PEPITA'S TACO TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER

Lila, leans out of the window, watches men wander off with Tony's food, calls after them.

LILA

Guys. I'll be here. Come back if you need anything else.

Tony serves the few remaining workers, looks over, gives her a smug thumbs up.

LILA

(mumbles low)

Fucker.

MARISA

(from behind Lila)

You're late, again.

Lila jumps, turns to find **MARISA** (36), Lila's former sister-in-law, in a form-fitting tee, too much make-up, hair piled high, oodles of chunky bracelets, in the doorway.

LILA
God, Marisa, do you always have to
sneak up on me?

MARISA
Didn't you see me back at the
corner? You drove right past me.

LILA
My mind was somewhere else.

MARISA
I bet. Where did Rosa put your keys
this time?

LILA
In the dishwasher.

MARISA
Sounds like she's getting worse.

A construction worker's head appears just inside the window.

WADE
Hey, Lila.

Lila turns back to the window. **WADE** (28), handsome, short,
his forehead beaded with sweat, gives her a dazzling smile.

LILA
Hi, Wade. What can I get you?

WADE
Didn't think you were coming.
Already got something from Tony.

LILA
You know he doesn't even make his
own food. He buys it prepackaged
and marks up the prices. You guys
are getting ripped off.

MARISA
Prepackaged is still better than
yours.

LILA
Thanks, Marisa. Would you please
keep quiet and grab Wade a soda?

MARISA
Just sayin'.

Marisa goes to the fridge. Pulls out a cola.

MARISA
They're warm.

LILA
Then get a cup of ice.

MARISA
Nope. It's melted.

WADE
Gotta get back to work.

LILA
Okay. Sorry.

WADE
Will you be here tomorrow?

LILA
I'll be here. On time.

MARISA
(under her breath)
Yeah, right.

Wade leaves.

MARISA
He's kinda young, don't ya think?

LILA
He's just being friendly.

MARISA
He wants more than a side of guac.

Lila watches Wade and his cute butt walk away.

LILA
No... Do you think so?

MARISA
He's looking for someplace to dip
his chip... How long's it been
anyway? My dead beat brother left
six years ago.

Lila opens the ice bin. Peers inside.

She kicks the ice machine, hurts her foot.

LILA
Dammit. I just fixed this.

A KNOCK on the side of the truck.

Tony leans against the rear doorway.

TONY
Hello, ladies.

MARISA
Hey, Tony. How's it going?

Marisa tugs down on her v-neck, exposes ample cleavage.

TONY
Doin' much better now.

LILA
What do you want? You've already
stolen half my customers.

TONY
Half? Looks like it was all of 'em.

LILA
They'll come back. Wait and see.

TONY
I'm looking to expand my fleet, if
you ever decide to chuck it in,
come work for me.

LILA
No, thank you. I've got principles.

MARISA
Would you make it worth our while?

Lila shoots her a STFU look. Marisa shrinks back.

He hands Lila a flyer.

INSERT FLYER - *"TAKING IT TO THE STREET TACO CONTEST - First
prize \$10,000."*

TONY
In case you feel like coming and
watching me take it all. Or you
could enter, increase my odds.

He LAUGHS, walks off.

Lila stuffs the flyer in a drawer.

LILA
Grab the generator. We're leaving.

INT. MARISA'S RENT-CONTROLLED APARTMENT - AN HOUR LATER

A shabby, one bedroom, minimum furnishings. A few small family photos on the wall. Plants, in dire need of watering, succumb on the window ledge. Altogether, a depressing place.

DEZ (19), a trans-masculine goth, slicked-back purple hair, pierced nose, raccoon eyes, sits at the kitchen table. They slouch, text on their phone, GIGGLE.

Lila and Marisa enter. Lila drops her keys and purse on the coffee table.

Dez doesn't acknowledge their arrival.

LILA

Why aren't you making dinner?

Dez continues to text, doesn't look up.

DEZ

Because there isn't anything to cook. You were supposed to leave money for groceries. Remember?

LILA

Shit, Dez. I forgot.

DEZ

Whatever. I'll eat at Georgie's. Their parents have paying jobs.

Marisa, uncomfortable, starts for the bedroom.

MARISA

Um. I'll go check my messages.

She disappears into the other room.

Dez gets up, stomps across the room, drops onto the sofa.

LILA

Abuelita had another episode. I ran out the door. Why didn't you call?

DEZ

Uh, I did. But you left your phone at Abuelita's. Somehow she figured out how to answer it. She had no idea who she was talking to.

LILA

Did you use your birth name?

DEZ
I'm not that person anymore. So,
why would I do that?

LILA
Because she doesn't understand. She
knows you as Desiree.

DEZ
So uncool, mom. I asked you not to
call me that.

LILA
I didn't. I only meant--

DEZ
- Dead naming is total bullshit.

Dez storms out, lets the DOOR SLAM.

Marisa pops her head in the room.

MARISA
Dez go off in a huff?

Lila heaves a heavy SIGH.

MARISA
Feel like pizza?

LILA
You're buying.

EXT./INT. CITY CONSTRUCTION SITE - NEXT MORNING

Lila and Dez lean out the truck window, watch Tony's truck.

Once again, he is mobbed.

A SOLITARY CONSTRUCTION WORKER wanders over, views Lila's
menu board. Shrugs. Walks away.

Wade bounds up.

WADE
Save me anything?

She shoots him a "not funny" look.

WADE
Did I say something wrong?

LILA
Look at that.

Wade turns, watches the activity at Tony's truck.

LILA
What's he selling?

DEZ
Meth probably.

Wade turns back.

WADE
Give me a Supremo and a Coke.

He waits for his food. Nods at Dez. Dez snubs him.

Lila sets the food on the ledge, slips him her number.

Wade pulls out cash.

LILA
It's on the house.

Wade pockets her number, grins.

WADE
Thanks. Ladies.

Dez GROANS.

LILA
Tell your buddies.

He walks away.

DEZ
Tell them what? That they'll get
your number with every order?

Lila sits on a stool, slumps, fans herself.

DEZ
This is stupid. Why don't we just
go somewhere else?

LILA
Because this is the only site that
allows me to sell without a permit.

DEZ
Right. That. So? How long do we
hang? I'm bored.

LILA
As long as it takes.

Lila pulls out a deck of cards.

LILA
War?

Dez sits. Lila shuffles the deck.

EXT./INT. L.A. FREEWAY / PEPITA'S TACO TRUCK - LATER

Traffic is bumper to bumper.

Lila drives, her door closed.

Dez, in the passenger seat, their door slid open, dabs a wet bandana on their forehead.

DEZ
Told you to take the last exit.

LILA
I wish you'd close your door. I don't like you riding like that. It doesn't feel safe.

DEZ
If we had air conditioning...

Dez messes with the radio, finds a station.

DEZ
The radio is the only thing that actually works. You need to dump this pile of junk, get a new--

LILA
- This pile of junk keeps food on the table.

DEZ
Yeah? How much did we make today? Nothing. 'Cuz you give shit away.

Lila ignores them

DEZ
You can't keep this up. Every dollar goes to gas and repairs.

The radio loses its signal, CRACKLES.

Dez messes with the dial.

LILA

Things are going to turn around.
You'll see.

DEZ

I can't keep missing school to help
out whenever Marisa flakes. She was
faking it. No way was she sick.
(turns off the radio)
Get a clue. You need better help.

Lila nods.

LILA

I am working on a new menu.

DEZ

You said that last month. And the
month before. And--

LILA

- I heard you. Okay? I don't need
you reminding me I'm a failure
every goddam day.

DEZ

That's not what I said.

LILA

That's what I heard.

Lila sees an opening in traffic, pulls the truck off the
freeway.

INT. MARISA'S APARTMENT - 30 MINUTES LATER

Dez and Lila enter.

Marisa, sprawled on the couch, watches "*Jerry Springer*."

LILA

Feeling better?

MARISA

A bit.

Marisa sits up, clicks off the TV.

MARISA

Dez, give me and your mom a minute.

DEZ

Sure.

Dez goes outside, paces in front of the picture window, texts on their phone.

MARISA

I've got some news.

LILA

You're not pregnant again, are you?

MARISA

God, no. I hope not.

LILA

If it's about your check, I'll make up for it, really. I can give you a small raise. Not much, but--

MARISA

- Funny thing is I did get a raise.

LILA

What?

MARISA

I got another job.

LILA

You did? When did that happen?

MARISA

Today.

LILA

So Dez was right, you weren't sick.

Marisa looks guilty.

LILA

Spill. What aren't you telling me?

MARISA

I'm going to work... for Tony.

LILA

I've seen you coming on to him.

MARISA

Yeah, so, I know he's a jerk, but at least he's a sexy jerk.

Lila fumes, glares at her.

LILA

You're family and you're going to work for the asshole that's destroying my business?

MARISA

You're the one who's late every day and when did you last care about your food?

Lila bangs on the picture windows, gets Dez's attention, waves them inside.

Dez comes in.

LILA

Pack your things. We're going.

MARISA

Nobody said you had to leave.

DEZ

What? Where?

LILA

Abuelita's.

DEZ

Hell, no.

LILA

We don't have a choice.

(to Marisa)

Do we?

Lila glares at Marisa.

LILA

You're just like your asshole brother. Stab me in the back. Should have known.

MARISA

Think what you want. Isn't my fault Mario liked boys more than you.

LILA

You would bring that up. At least he wasn't a liar.

DEZ

What happened?

LILA MARISA
 Your tia would rather get It's not my job to feed your
 laid than support her family. kid. You're a shitty mother.

They pause, look at one another.

LILA MARISA
 Puta! Perra!

DEZ
 Stop! Both of you!

MARISA
 When I get back, I want you gone.
 Not you, Dez. You can stay.

Marisa slips out.

LILA
 I'm your mom. You come with me.

INT. ROSA'S HOUSE / PARLOR - A COUPLE HOURS LATER

A dimly lit room, lined with religious paintings - Jesus, heart aflame, the Virgin of Guadalupe, heart aflame,...

Shelves of devotional candles, depicting saints, glow.

In the center, a table draped with a fringe-lined tablecloth.

At the table, **ROSA (ABUELITA)** (63), head wrapped in a red turban, embroidered shawl over her shoulders, rings on every finger, slowly waves her hands around a crystal ball.

CYNDI (27), glitter tank top, nails, spray tan, leans in close, chomps gum.

ROSA
 Your gum chewing. It's distracting.

CYNDI
 My bad.

She discretely removes the pink wad with two fingers. Holds it up. There is nowhere to put her gum.

Rosa grabs a glass candy dish from a side table. Holds it out to her.

Cyndi plops in her gum.

Rosa returns the dish to its spot.

ROSA
Now, what was I was saying?

CYNDI
Meeting a famous actor...

ROSA
Oh. That's right... He's looking
for a change, someone new. He's had
enough of the drama queens, the
botoxed faces, the puffy fish lips.

Cyndi feels her naturally voluptuous lips.

CYNDI
Yeah? What else?

ROSA
He wants a simple life. A sweet
girl. A loving girl.
(points a finger at Cyndi)
Is that you?

Cyndi shrugs.

CYNDI
You tell me.

ROSA
The Gwyneths. The Jennifers. The
Angelinas. He's finished with them.

CYNDI
Really? Are you shitting me?

ROSA
Rosa does not shit anyone.

EXT. ROSA'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Lila's truck pulls up to a rundown inner-city bungalow.

The lawn is dry, the plants overgrown. A collection of
overflowing trash bins lined up along the side of the house.

The truck pulls into the gravel driveway, feral cats scatter.

In the window, a neon sign blinks, "*Rosa's Psychic Readings.*"

Lila clambers out of the truck, opens the back, loads her
arms with a pile of clothes still on hangars.

She comes around the side.

Dez sits, defiant, arms crossed.

Lila stops, nods towards the house.

LILA
Coming?

DEZ
Do I have to?

LILA
Nobody's forcing you.

Lila walks on. She nears the front door.

DEZ
(calls out)
This is your fault, you know.

LILA
Isn't everything?

Lila rings the door bell. Waits.

The door pops open. Cyndi, giddy, comes out.

She and Lila eye one another.

Cyndi drifts down the sidewalk, as if on a cloud.

INT. ROSA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Lila enters the front door. A cat scampers away.

LILA
Hey, mom. Last client?

ROSA
That Cyndi. She's dumb as a brick.

Lila sets down her armload of clothing.

ROSA
I'm not doing your laundry again.

LILA
Dez and I need to stay here awhile.

Rosa turns off the neon sign.

ROSA
For how long? I have my sessions.

LILA
A couple months, maybe longer.

ROSA
Is Desiree still mad at me?

LILA
Mom, please don't start. I've told
you about calling them that.

ROSA
She can have the back bedroom.

LILA
That room's full of dad's stuff.

ROSA
Take it off the bed. There's plenty
of space. Just step around the
litter boxes. The cats won't mind.

Dez walks in, with a child's suitcase on rollers.

DEZ
Hey, Abuelita. Sup?

Rosa gives her the up and down. Frowns.

ROSA
Still wearing boys' clothes?

DEZ
I knew it.

Dez does an about face, leaves. SLAMS the door.

LILA
Mom, really? Can you just let it
go? Things are shitty enough.

Lila goes after Dez.

EXT. ROSA'S HOUSE / FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

Dez sits on the truck bumper, texts. Lila walks up.

LILA
Honey, we have to make this work.
Just ignore her.

Dez, teary, lowers their phone.

DEZ

Why can't she just love me? That's what Grandmas are supposed to do.

LILA

I don't know... I've spent my entire life trying to figure her out... Hey, think positive, we'll be out of here in a few weeks--

DEZ

- And end up where?

LILA

I have no idea. But I'll come up with something.

Lila takes Dez's chin, turns their head to her.

LILA

Listen, I don't want to be here either... You take my old room. I'll take Tata's. Okay?

Lila moves toward the rear of the truck.

LILA

Help me unload?

Dez begrudgingly joins her.

LILA

Maybe Abuelita's cats will eat her in her sleep.

DEZ

I wish. She gets one more chance.

INT. ROSA'S HOUSE / KITCHEN - LATER

The threesome sit around a junk-heaped table.

Silent.

The kitchen counters are crowded with multiple canister sets, empty cereal boxes and tin cans, three electric can openers, four toasters, numerous inspirational coffee mugs.

Lila holds up a chipped coffee mug. The quintessential cat hanging for dear life from a tree branch stares back. "*Hang In There, Baby!*"

Rosa serves bowls of watery soup.

Dez lifts a spoonful, lets it splash back into their bowl.

Lila nudges Dez's foot under the table, shakes her head.

Dez sips, spits it out.

DEZ

What kind of soup is this?

ROSA

Beef. You're favorite.

DEZ

Not anymore, it's not. I'm vegan.

ROSA

I can't keep up with your--

DEZ

- Forget it. I'll make a sandwich.

Dez goes to the fridge. Rosa, feathers ruffled, gets up.

ROSA

Sit. You don't know my kitchen.

Dez steps aside. Rosa brushes by them.

ROSA

(to Lila)

If she ever bothered to visit me,
she'd know her way around my house.

LILA

Mom. Pronouns.

ROSA

What does that mean? Pronouns.

DEZ

It means I'm me and not defined by
societies prescribed ideas of
gender and who and what I'm
expected to act and look like.

ROSA

Can I make you a sandwich? Or do I
have to listen to your speeches?

DEZ

Don't bother. I'm going out.

LILA

You need to eat something.

DEZ
Abuelita, I need your car.

ROSA
Are you going to be nice to me?

DEZ
Only if you're nice to me.

ROSA
Good luck finding the keys. They're
somewhere around here.

Dez leaves.

LILA
Can you at least try with Dez? It
would mean so much to them.

ROSA
Them who?

LILA
Do you enjoy being that way?

ROSA
Like what?

LILA
Insensitive.

ROSA
You sound just like your father.

LILA
He was right.

ROSA
I'm going to bed. Turn off the
lights. Electricity's expensive.

Rosa stomps out.

LILA
Fuck.

EXT./INT. ROSA'S FILTHY, JUNK-PACKED CAR - AN HOUR LATER

Dez speeds down Melrose, just making each light.

The back seat is a heap of boxes, dingy stuffed animals and
thrift store curios. A cluster of air fresheners dangle from
the rear view mirror.

They pull up to a group of gender non-specific **PUNKS** under a street light.

DEZ
Hey, queers!

PUNK KIDS
Dez! Long time. New car?

DEZ
It's my crazy grandma's... Have you guys seen Georgie? We were supposed to meet at Melrose and Western.

PUNK KIDS
Nope. Sorry. Haven't seen them. Why don't you hang with us?

DEZ
I'll be back, if I can't find them.

Dez zooms off.

INT. ROSA'S HOUSE / DAD'S OLD BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Lila shoves aside a row of hangars with mens' clothes, makes room for her belongings.

She spots a cowboy hat, the brim bent, on the upper shelf.

She takes it, plops it on her head, steps back, eyes herself in a cloudy mirror.

Taped to the mirror are news clippings and old photos.

HEADLINES - *"Local Man Wins Top Food Award" "Tacos Straight From Heaven" "Pepita's Is Pure Perfection"*

She plucks an old polaroid off the edge. Views it.

INSERT - Faded polaroid - The food truck, fresh paint, the words *"Pepita's Tacos"* gleam. A slight man (30s), in white, same cowboy hat, proudly smiles, one boot rests on the shiny chrome bumper, his thumbs firmly planted in his pockets.

Lila replaces the photo, straightens the hat brim.

EXT. MELROSE SIDEWALK - LATER

Dez and their goth/punk friends, **GEORGIE** (20), **SLIM** (23), **HECK** (22), **FIERCE** (22) and **KARMA** (18) loiter in front of a sketchy convenience store.

They pass around a bottle in a paper bag.

GEORGIE

You're not gonna stay there, are you? Your grandma has no respect.

DEZ

Fuck, no.

SLIM

We'd let you crash at ours, but the landlord would freak.

HECK

Slim caught him digging through our trash. Total creep. I swear he jerks off to our used tampons.

FIERCE

Ewww. That's fucked up.

DEZ

Figure I can sleep in my grandma's car a couple nights. Have to get rid of the stench though.

FIERCE

Got something against cat piss?

DEZ

It's not cat pee. I swear something died in there. And air fresheners don't help.

GEORGIE

Just keep the windows cracked.

DEZ

A lot of good that'll do.

SLIM

Bitches, are we gonna do anything fun or are we just gonna stand around and talk about old lady car odors all night? It's boring.

HECK

Don't hear you offering anything.

SLIM

Fuck off, Heck. Follow me.

They all WHOOP and HOLLER, make a commotion as they walk off into the night, arms around each other's shoulders.

INT. DOWNTOWN SEX SHOP - LATER

Dez and gang wander the brightly lit aisles stocked with sex toys, kinky lingerie and marital aids.

A few SLEAZY TYPES peer at them over the racks.

Fierce, camps it up, waves at a MAN IN SUIT AND TIE. He lowers his head, skulks off.

SLIM

I'll go up front. Fierce come with me. Karma, keep a lookout.

Slim and Fierce head towards the front.

Dez, Georgie and Heck continue to the back. Karma picks up a box labeled, "*The French Tickler*", reads the fine print.

They arrive in front of a dildo display. Phalluses of every imaginable size, shape and color glisten inside their cellophane wrappers.

GEORGIE

Pick a color.

DEZ

That purple one's kinda cool.

HECK

Um, it doesn't have any balls.

DEZ

You're right. I need balls.

GEORGIE

Hurry up and just pick one.

DEZ

Don't rush me, Georgie. It's my dick.

Dez grabs a huge package, called "*The American Whopper*."

HECK

That's way too big. It'll never look realistic.

There's a commotion at the front of the store. A HUGE CRASH, LOUD VOICES.

GEORGIE

Now.

Dez rips the wrapping off, shoves the dildo in their front pocket. The head peeks out.

GEORGIE

Not like that. Down your pants.

Dez quickly changes its location, pulls their hoodie over the ridiculously large bulge.

DEZ

What if it's got a sensor?

HECK

Then just run faster.

They rush to the front of the store.

Dez pauses at the door, covers their crotch, approaches cautiously, knock-kneed.

Fierce and Slim pull Dez out the door with them.

INT. ROSA'S HOUSE / BATHROOM - SAME TIME

Rosa, in her nightgown, opens the medicine cabinet.

She takes a pill bottle, struggles to remove the cap.

Once it's open, she shakes a small red pill into her palm, eyes it, contemplates, then drops the pill into the toilet.

INT. ROSA'S HOUSE / DAD'S OLD BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Lila, on the lopsided mattress, tries to get comfortable.

She gets a sour look on her face, looks under the bed.

A cat HISSES, pops out from under the bed, makes for the closed door.

LILA

Shit.

She hops out of bed, opens the door, pushes the cat out, shoves a litter box out after it, SLAMS the door.

EXT. ROSA'S FILTHY CAR / WALMART PARKING LOT - LATER

Rosa's car, parked alone under a dim streetlamp.

Dez leans back against the hood, removes the dildo from their pants, goes to the trunk, pops it open.

They immediately reel back, cover their mouth.

INSERT - There in the trunk is a spilled sack of rotting groceries - black, moldy vegetables, a bluish-gray package of raw meat, green block of cheese and a bloated carton of milk.

A cop car cruises by in the distance.

Dez CLOSES the trunk, quickly hops in the car, ducks.

INT. ROSA'S HOUSE / DAD'S OLD BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Lila's phone lights up in the dark room.

She flicks on the lamp, grabs her phone.

INSERT TEXT - *"Staying at Georgie's"*

Lila texts back. Hits send.

She waits for a response. Nothing.

She gets out of bed, leaves the room.

INT. ROSA'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Rosa, in a flannel nightgown, reads an *"Us Weekly"* in bed. A George Clooney paparazzi shot graces the cover.

Numerous framed Catholic saints, hang on the wall above the bed, peer down, while she flips the magazine pages.

She softly CHUCKLES.

There's a KNOCK on the door.

Rosa quickly stuffs the magazine under the blanket, picks up a rosary, acts like she's praying.

ROSA

Yes.

The door opens. Lila's head appears inside the doorframe.

LILA

I'm packing up dad's things. Where should I put--?

ROSA

- Don't move anything. I like the room just how he left it.

LILA

Fine. I won't. But the cats have to go. It's disgusting.

Rosa smirks.

LILA

Dez is staying at a friend's. Do you need your car tomorrow?

ROSA

No... Should I add you both to my prayers?

LILA

Couldn't hurt. I'll let you get back to your "research".

She closes the door.

Rosa retrieves the magazine, resumes reading.

EXT./INT. ROSA'S FILTHY CAR / DARK ALLEY - TWO HOURS LATER

Dez settles into the driver's seat, tears down a bundle of air fresheners, finds a chain and locket tangled in the mix.

INSERT - A tarnished locket, inside a photo of 8-year old Dez in a frilly, homemade dress on Rosa's front porch.

Dez looks at it, hangs it around their neck, tucks it inside their t-shirt.

They slump down in the seat.

RAPPING on the driver's window.

A **POLICE OFFICER** presses his badge to the window.

POLICE OFFICER

Lower your window, please.

Dez complies; their guilty face stares back.

The officer shines a flashlight in their eyes.

POLICE OFFICER

Got an ID?

INT. MARISA'S APARTMENT - AN HOUR LATER

Marisa stumbles in the dark, flicks on a table lamp.

She opens the apartment door.

There stands Dez, accompanied by the Police Officer.

POLICE OFFICER
Is this your niece?

MARISA
Dez, is everything all right?

DEZ
Yeah. I wasn't breaking the law.

POLICE OFFICER
I found her sleeping in her car.

MARISA
Their car.

POLICE OFFICER
I don't care whose car it is.

MARISA
Never mind.

Marisa pulls Dez inside, urges them to step back.

MARISA
Is there anything else?

POLICE OFFICER
It's not safe for a young lady to--

MARISA
- Thanks, officer. I'll take things
from here... G'night.

She closes the door.

MARISA
What the fuck, Dez? Why are you
sleeping on the streets?

DEZ
I wasn't on the street. I was in
Abuelita's car.

MARISA
That sounds dangerous... What did
your mom do now?

DEZ
It's Abuelita.

MARISA
I knew going to Rosa's was stupid.

Dez starts to cry.

DEZ
Abuelita fucking hates me.

MARISA
No, she doesn't. She's just old-fashioned. She doesn't get you.

Marisa hugs them.

MARISA
Go clean up. I'll make you soup.

DEZ
Why does everybody keep forcing soup on me? Soup sucks.

Dez stomps off to the bathroom.

INT. ROSA'S HOUSE / KITCHEN - NEXT MORNING

Lila, at the sink, fills a large water jug. Foil-covered trays are stacked on the kitchen table.

Rosa rushes in.

ROSA
My car was stolen.

LILA
No, mom. Dez borrowed it.

ROSA
Oh,... did she?

LILA
Are you okay?

ROSA
Of course I am.

Lila caps the water jug, sets it on the floor.

ROSA
Why are you doing that here? Why can't you use Marisa's water?

LILA

Marisa kicked us out. We're living here now... Remember?

ROSA

I have a lot on my mind with all that's going on. It's disrupting.

LILA

Did you stop taking your pills?

ROSA

No... But they make me feel jumpy.

LILA

That's a whole lot better than being cloudy and forgetful? Right?

ROSA

Is this how's it going to be? You watching my every move.

LILA

Take your pills like your supposed to and it won't have to be.

Lila grabs the water jug, leaves.

INT. MARISA'S APARTMENT / LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Marisa sits on the couch, drinks coffee.

Dez enters from the bedroom.

DEZ

Is somebody here?

MARISA

It was a friend. He left.
(looks at her phone)
Shouldn't you be getting going?

DEZ

In a minute.

The bathroom door opens. Tony, in black bikini briefs, strolls in, a towel over his shoulders. He dries his hair.

TONY

Oh, shit... Hey, kid.

Dez glares at him a second, turns, glares at Marisa.

MARISA
It's not what you think.

DEZ
Does sleazy, fuck face know that?

Dez grabs their backpack.

DEZ
I'm going back to Abuelita's. You
are a total asshole traitor.

Dez leaves.

MARISA
God, Tony. You couldn't have waited
ten minutes like I asked? Dammit.

She stands, grabs her coffee cup, heads for the kitchen.

TONY
How was I supposed to know she--?

MARISA
- They. Dez is a they.

Tony, perplexed, no idea how to respond, stands there.

MARISA
Put on some pants.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE / PEPITA'S TACO TRUCK - LATER

Lila struggles to start the generator. After three attempts,
she sits on the truck's step, wipes her brow with a rag.

The shadow of an IMPOSING MAN blocks the sun.

LILA
I'll be open in a minute.

IMPOSING MAN
Are you Lila Montoya?

She looks up.

LILA
Uh-huh.

IMPOSING MAN
You're a tough person to find.

He hands her an envelope, walks away.

LILA
What's this?

Lila tears open the envelope.

INSERT - *"60 Day Vehicle Repossession Notice"*

Lila jumps up, chases him to his car.

LILA
Hey, asshole! Do you have kids?
'Cuz I do. And losing my truck
means they go hungry.

He waves her off, climbs in his car, drives off, leaves her alone in the dust and blazing sun.

Lila stomps back to her truck, stops.

Teary, she watches Marisa serve the workers at Tony's truck.

Marisa appears ecstatic, surrounded by sweaty, burly men.

Fed up, Lila starts to pack up, lower the awning.

Wade approaches.

WADE
Hey! You're not leaving, are you?

Lila discretely wipes the tears from her eyes, tries to put on a smile.

Wade walks up, rests his arms on the counter.

She grabs the repossession letter, shows it to him.

LILA
The bank is threatening to take my
truck. That jerk won.

Wade scans the letter.

WADE
You have sixty days. There's time--

LILA
- To do what? Reinvent the taco?

WADE
Sure! Why not?

LILA
How am I supposed to do that?

WADE

Take it apart, bit by bit, you know. Figure out what can be improved. Turn it on its head.

LILA

My father was the culinary genius, not me, and it killed him.

WADE

You'll figure something out.

LILA

I've been out of ideas for years. I just don't have it in me.

WADE

Let me help. What do you say we brainstorm over dinner?

LILA

Sure. That'd be nice. But I have a lot on my plate. No promises.

WADE

Gotcha... So, what are you going to wow me with today?

LILA

How about the daily special?

She climbs in, prepares his food, gently slides a bowl of Pozole to him.

He sips the broth, makes a sour face.

LILA

See! Everything I make is awful.

WADE

Tastes just like my mom's. She tends to over salt too.

Lila cracks a smile.

WADE

There. That's more like it.

LILA

Stop being so nice to me.

WADE

Why would I wanna do that?

LILA
Because I'm a lost cause.

WADE
That's not what I see.

LILA
Come back in sixty days.

WADE
I don't scare away that easily.

Their eyes meet. Wade lifts an eyebrow. Lila blushes.

INT. ROSA'S HOUSE / PARLOR - SAME TIME

Rosa, with a new client, spreads a Tarot deck in front of her, carefully selects a card, flips it over. "*The Lovers*" card lays face up.

VALERIE (early 40s), imagine a bookish, high school biology teacher, slips her glasses on, peers down.

VALERIE
It's dark. Can we turn on a light?

Rosa shakes her head.

ROSA
It will frighten the spirits.

VALERIE
We certainly don't want to do that.

Rosa CLICKS her tongue, let's out a DEEP SIGH.

VALERIE
Tell me what you see. Is it good?

ROSA
Very good. Most promising.

Rosa beckons Valerie to draw in closer. She does.

The front door bursts open.

Both Rosa and Valerie, startled, SCREAM.

Dez walks in.

DEZ
It's only me. Jeezus.

Rosa scoops up the cards.

ROSA
We need to begin again. The spirits
have flown.

DEZ
What are the spirits saying today?
Ryan Gosling? Hugh Jackman?

Dez eyes Valerie.

DEZ
For you? I bet I know who it is.

Rosa rushes over to Dez, takes them by the arm.

ROSA
You're not to disturb me when I'm
with a spiritual seeker.

DEZ
It's gotta be Clooney. Right?

ROSA
Hush!

She pushes Dez out of the room.

INT. PEPITA'S TACO TRUCK - SAME TIME

The packed-up truck idles.

Lila, chin in her hands, sits at the wheel.

LILA'S POV - She observes Marisa flirt with Tony. He grabs Marisa's butt. She playfully swats at him. He turns, taunts Lila with a fist pump.

Lila shakes her head in disgust.

She SLAMS her door shut, REVS the engine.

She floors it. The truck's engine ROARS.

Wheels try to gain momentum, spin in the dirt.

The tires take hold of the ground. The truck lurches forward.

Lila guns it, drives right for Tony and Marisa.

TONY'S TRUCK

Tony opens the door for Marisa, catches motion out of the corner of his eye. He turns his head.

TONY'S POV - Lila's truck comes barreling straight at them.

TONY
Holy Fuck!

PEPITA'S TACO TRUCK

LILA'S POV - Tony grabs hold of Marisa's arm, pulls her to safety.

They dive, hit the ground.

Lila turns in time to miss Tony's truck.

TONY'S TRUCK

Lila, demonic look on her face, zips by Tony and Marisa, flips them off.

Marisa and Tony COUGH in a cloud of dust.

Gravel spits at them, as Lila speeds away.

INT. ROSA'S HOUSE / DEZ'S BEDROOM - LATER

Dez unpacks the dildo from their backpack, searches for a hiding place, tries a few unsatisfactory spots.

KNOCK on the door.

DEZ
Wait. Don't come in.

They quickly shove the dildo under the mattress, flop on the bed, get out their phone, text.

DEZ
Okay. You may enter.

Lila comes in.

LILA
I have a date. So, you need to stay with abuelita. I think she's off her meds again. And don't let her burn down the house.
(MORE)

LILA (CONT'D)

You know how she is with those
saint devotionals.

Dez's face sinks.

LILA

May as well unpack your stuff.
We're going to be here awhile.

Dez GROANS.

LILA

It could be a lot worse. At least
you have your own room. I have to
share with feral cats.

Lila closes the door.

Dez buries their face in a pillow. SCREAMS.

EXT. ROSA'S FRONT PORCH - LATER

Lila, dressed plainly for her date, waits on the front steps.

Wade pulls up in a vintage Mustang.

She walks briskly to the car.

He hops out, starts to come around the passenger side.

LILA

I'm good. I've got it.

Lila pulls open her door, slides in.

Wade climbs back in.

They speed off.

INT. WADE'S MUSTANG

Lila, a shawl over her shoulders, stares straight ahead.

Wade lowers the MUSIC, glances at her.

WADE

You look great.

Lila has made little effort, her hair pulled back, her face
free of make-up. She fidgets.

LILA
It's been a long time since I've
done this.

WADE
Ridden in a muscle car?

LILA
Been on a date... Oh, you're being
funny.

WADE
Trying. Unsuccessfully.

Silence.

LILA
Where are you taking me?

WADE
My favorite Thai place... Is that
okay? Do you like Thai food?

LILA
Yes. Anything but tacos.

WADE
I thought you'd enjoy something
different.

LILA
It's perfect.

Lila loosens her wrap, rolls down the window, let's the wind
blow through her hair.

INT. DEZ'S BEDROOM - LATER ON

Dez and Georgie blast MUSIC, dance.

Dez, in the center of the room, their back to the door, wears
a strap-on. The dildo bobs up and down with every move.

Georgie, on the bed, uses a dildo as a mic. Mimes along.

Rosa walks in.

Georgie stops, lowers their dildo, gestures to Rosa.

Dez, pivots toward the door, freezes.

Their dildo swings toward Rosa, points right at her.

Rosa and Dez's eyes lock onto one another.

Rosa takes one look at Dez's crotch, about faces, leaves.

Dez rushes to the door, slams it shut.

Georgie, falls to the bed, bursts out in LAUGHTER.

DEZ

Dude! It's not funny... Fuck!

EXT. DOWNTOWN LA - THAI RESTAURANT - SAME TIME

Lila and Wade, finish dinner, a WAITER clears their plates.

WADE

I've got something for you.

Wade produces an index card from inside his jacket.

WADE

This is a cherished family
heirloom.

Lila looks interested, scoots her chair closer.

WADE

My grandma would hang me if she
knew I was giving you this.

He holds out the card. Lila reaches for it. He pulls it back.

WADE

Promise me that you'll use it in
good faith and that nobody else
will ever see this recipe.

LILA

I swear on my mother's life.

Wade places the card in her hand. She reads it.

INSERT - "1996 California State Fair - First Place Guacamole"

WADE

I figured this could be the first
step towards creating Pepita's New
Tacos.

LILA

I can't accept this.

Lila tries to hand it back. Wade raises his hands.

WADE

Nope. Take it. Not doing any good
stashed away in a kitchen drawer.

Lila looks him in the eye, considers his offer.

LILA

Are you sure?

WADE

Positive.

LILA

What do you want in return?

Wade extends a hand to her.

WADE

A second date.

Lila takes his hand, grins.

LILA

I can do that.

INT. ROSA'S HOUSE / BATHROOM DOORWAY - LATER

Rosa comes out of the bathroom, sees Dez waiting there. She averts her gaze, starts to walk by.

DEZ

Abuelita?

Rosa stops.

DEZ

Are we cool? About before? Are you
gonna tell mom what you saw?

ROSA

I didn't see anything.

Rosa walks off.

INT. ROSA'S HOUSE / KITCHEN - NEXT DAY

Lila, heaps of avocados, tomatoes, jalapeños, onions, limes, cilantro and spices on the table before her, slices an avocado, removes the pit, scoops the green pulp into a huge metal mixing bowl, runs a knife through the ingredients.

Dez, Georgie and Fierce walk in.

LILA
I'm so glad you're here. I want you
to taste something.

Dez peers in the bowl.

DEZ
I've had your guac before.

LILA
You haven't had this.

Lila gives them each a spoon.

They dish up a spoonful, put it in their mouths.

Eyes widen, eyebrows raise, they look at one another.

Lila waits in anticipation.

They refill their spoons, like kids cleaning a bowl of cake
batter.

LILA
Well, what do you think?

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| FIERCE | GEORGIE |
| It's fucking awesome. | Best guac I've ever had. |

DEZ
Damn, mom. This kicks ass.

Dez high-fives her.

Lila beams, fills her own spoon, devours it.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

Pepita's taco truck is surrounded by a group of construction
workers.

Lila, in a blue dress, her hair curled, serves them samples
of guac as fast as she can.

Marisa wanders over from Tony's truck, hangs back some.

Wade walks up beside her.

MARISA
What's all the commotion?

WADE
Lila's taking back her business.

Marisa scoffs, walks off.

INT. PEPITA'S TACO TRUCK - 30 MINUTES LATER

Lila sits on a stack of produce boxes, glows with excitement.

Wade peeks in from the door.

WADE
How did it go?

LILA
I sold out. Thanks to you. Have any
more secret family recipes?

WADE
That was it.

She goes over, gives him a prolonged kiss.

LILA
I need to get to the market. Man
can't survive on guac alone.

Lila pulls away. Wade draws her back.

WADE
Not so fast.

They kiss again.

INT. ROSA'S HOUSE / KITCHEN - LATER

Lila rolls out tortillas. Rosa and Dez watch.

LILA
You should have seen it. I could
barely keep up with the orders.

She holds up a gummy blob, the dough stuck to her fingers.

DEZ
Have you made tortillas before?

ROSA
What does it look like?

Lila flings the dough from her hands onto the table.

DEZ
Just make what you always make.

LILA
But, nobody orders that.

ROSA
You're crazy like Tata. As soon as
he had one success, he panicked.

LILA
One taste of my old food, they'll
be back at Tony's truck in no time.

She attempts one more tortilla; the dough sticks to the
roller.

LILA
Shit.

Dez comes up to her, wraps their arms around Lila.

DEZ
Relax, Mom. It'll be okay.

Lila looks at Dez, needs reassurance.

DEZ
I've got this.

EXT. MELROSE SIDEWALK - THAT NIGHT

Dez and their gang congregate on a street corner.

Karma, distracted, counts wads of gum stuck to a lamppost.

DEZ
That's why I have to find a way to
help her... Any ideas?

The group ponder a moment.

SLIM
My dad's a food safety inspector.
Maybe I can ask him.

DEZ
Unless he has access to top secret
recipes, how will we--?

FIERCE
- Just waltz in and steal Wonka's
chocolate formula?

SLIM
That's perfect.

EXT. TORTILLA FACTORY / PARKING LOT - DAY

Slim and Heck slip on yellow jumpsuits and hard hats.

Karma simply stretches a hairnet over their head, let's it snap, primps.

Dez, Georgie and Fierce, in Rosa's car, LAUGH at them.

DEZ

You look like trans fire hydrants.

SLIM

Yeah, guess who'll be laughing when we deliver the goods?... Us!

DEZ

We'll see. Back in two hours.

Dez drives off.

INT. MAMA CONSUELA'S TORTILLA FACTORY - MOMENTS LATER

Slim and Heck, now wearing goggles, walk down a long white corridor, clipboards in hand.

They pass a door marked "*Emergency Exit Only*".

Slim nods for Heck to go ahead.

Heck walks to a large doorway, glances around the corner, gives Slim a thumbs up.

Slim pops the door, the ALARM CHIMES.

Karma slides inside, creeps along the wall like a spy.

They run, disappear around the corner.

INT. POSH NATURAL FOODS MARKET - SAME TIME

Dez, Georgie and Fierce wander the aisles of the produce section. They poke and prod the organic vegetables.

INT. MAMA CONSUELA'S TORTILLA FACTORY / ASSEMBLY ROOM

The trio enter a massive room lined with huge vats, automated dispensing machines and tortilla presses.

Balls of dough drop onto a conveyer belt, while FACTORY WORKERS quickly position the balls in neatly spaced rows.

They saunter past the assembly line, stop near a door marked "Authorized Personnel Only".

SLIM

Karma, wait here. If anyone approaches, whistle.

Slim and Heck go inside.

Karma hangs back, gets engrossed in the OSHA safety poster.

INT. POSH NATURAL FOODS MARKET - SAME TIME

Dez holds up a perfect red onion. Georgie, across the bin, nods. Dez discretely slips the vegetable inside their hoodie.

Georgie circles around, their pants bulge with produce.

DEZ

Where did Fierce go?

GEORGIE

To the car. Couldn't handle the pressure.

DEZ

This is going to take forever.

GEORGIE

I'll be right back. Pretty sure I squished a tomato.

Georgie waddles off.

INT. MAMA CONSUELA'S TORTILLA FACTORY / CONTROL ROOM - LATER

Slim and Heck approach a GEEKY FACTORY FOREMAN.

SLIM

Are you the man in charge?

He looks up.

GEEKY FACTORY FOREMAN

Today. The boss is out sick.

Heck nudges Slim, grins.

SLIM

Sorry to hear that. Um, we're here for a surprise safety inspection.

GEEKY FACTORY FOREMAN
I should call my boss. He told me
to phone if anything--

SLIM
- No need for that. We just want to
see your ingredients list.

GEEKY FACTORY FOREMAN
Can't you just read the packaging?

HECK
We need the exact quantities. The
CDC has issued warnings about toxic
levels of--

Slim nudges Georgie.

SLIM
- You mean the FDA. He means the--

HECK
- The FDA says tortillas can have
fatal amounts of strychnine.

GEEKY FACTORY FOREMAN
That's impossible. Mama Consuela's
are the top-rated tortillas in LA.
Plus, they're totally organic.

HECK
That's even worse. Pesticides are
necessary to eradicate toxins.
Organic food is highly susceptible
to fatal levels of poisonous
chemicals, especially when used in
the wrong combination.

SLIM
Yeah. Like he said. So, if you'll
kindly hand over your corn tortilla
recipe, we'll be on our way.

GEEKY FACTORY FOREMAN
I don't know. I really think I
should call my boss.

He picks up a phone.

SLIM
Do you want us to close down this
factory? Because we have the
authority. And we'll do it.

HECK

How would you feel if all these people lost their jobs because you refused to cooperate with the CDC?

SLIM

The FDA.

HECK

Fuck! I mean the FDA.

SLIM

It's his first day with us. He used to work for the CDC.

HECK

Health and safety is kinda my thing.

SLIM

All it takes is one call and...

Slim makes a cutting gesture across his throat.

SLIM

... you're glazing donuts down at the Krispy Kreme.

The Geeky Factory Foreman lowers the phone, goes to a filing cabinet, takes a key, opens a locked drawer, removes two sealed envelopes.

GEEKY FACTORY FOREMAN

Do you want the flour too?

SLIM

Duh. Public safety first.

He comes back to Slim and Heck, hands over the envelopes.

HECK

(salutes him)

You've been a huge service to your country.

The Geeky Factory Foreman awkwardly salutes back.

EXT. POSH NATURAL FOODS MARKET / PARKING LOT - SAME TIME

Dez hands a load of vegetables to Fierce in the back seat.

Georgie comes up, unpacks their pants, a huge wet spot in front.

GEORGIE

We better hit another store. A
stock boy was giving me the eye.

INT. MAMA CONSUELA'S TORTILLA FACTORY / ASSEMBLY ROOM - LATER

Slim and Heck find Karma has joined the assembly line and expertly plops raw tortilla dough on the conveyer belt.

Slim taps Karma on the shoulder.

Karma turns to them, their mouth jammed with raw dough. They smile, cheeks full like a greedy chipmunk.

HECK

Come on. We've gotta go.

INT. PEPITA'S TACO TRUCK - SAME TIME

Lila, chin in her hands, her eyelids slowly close.

A HORN HONKS. Her eyes pop open.

LILA'S POV - Tony, on the hood of his truck, waves, points to the line of men buying food at his truck. LAUGHS.

She flips him off, mock laughs back.

INT. ROSA'S KITCHEN - LATER

Dez, Slim, Heck and Karma, covered in flour, make tortillas.

Dez holds up a lumpy, oblong blob of dough.

DEZ

Are you sure the measurements are
right?

SLIM

I don't know. I've never converted
such huge quantities before.

HECK

Isn't it just flour and water?

SLIM

No. Do you want to do it?

HECK

I suck at math.

SLIM

Okay, then. Shut up and knead.

Karma, in the corner, rolls out a portion of dough into a perfect circle, holds it up to the light.

Slim and Heck stare in amazement.

DEZ

Damn, Karma. How did you do that?

HECK

You sly Bitch!

Lila walks in. They conceal their failed tortillas behind their backs, except Karma, who twirls theirs in the air.

LILA

What are you four up to?

DEZ

Experimenting.

Lila eyes Karma's stack of perfect, golden tortillas.

LILA

Mind if I try one? I need to bring something new tomorrow. My guac has run its course.

Karma hands her a tortilla. She takes a bite, eyebrows raise.

LILA

Give me six dozen.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - NEXT DAY

Lila, in a sea of construction workers, hands out fresh tortillas samples.

LILA

There's enough for everybody.

Wade watches, smiles proudly.

INT. ROSA'S HOUSE / PSYCHIC PARLOR - LATER

Dez and their gang gather around Rosa's crystal ball.

DEZ

Next up. The meat.

HECK

Don't look at me. I'm vegetarian.

FIERCE

Me too. But just on Fridays.

DEZ

Karma! Any opinion on meat?

Everyone looks at Karma, who inspects Rosa's psychic paraphernalia, drifts from saint candle to saint candle, examines them closely, ignores them.

SLIM

Goat's pretty cheap on the black market. And you can charge way more than for beef.

GEORGIE

How do you know that?

SLIM

Street talk.

DEZ

Okay, then. Goat it is... Who's going to find it?

Everyone looks at Fierce.

FIERCE

Slags! That's not fair.

GEORGIE

You were zero help on the last job and your brother has a van.

FIERCE

Fine, but someone needs to ride along. I'm crap at directions.

They all look at Karma, shake their heads.

EXT. ROSA'S FRONT PORCH - A COUPLE DAYS LATER

Dez sits on the front porch, texts.

A tricked-out 70's van, glitter airbrush paint job, chrome hub caps, splashed with band name, "*Side Boob*", pulls up.

Fierce hops out. Dez approaches the van.

DEZ

About time. We need to get the meat
in the freezer ASAP.

FIERCE

We have a small problem.

Dez looks at Fierce with a puzzled look.

FIERCE

My source, who asked to remain
anonymous or their mom will flip
out, would only give them to me if
I took them as is.

Fierce slides open the panel door.

Six fluffy, white and gray pygmy goats gather in a terrified
huddle around Karma. They all quiver, stare back at Dez.

DEZ

Oh, my God. They're babies.

FIERCE

Actually, they're fully grown.

DEZ

You were supposed to get raw meat,
not bring back My Little Pony.

FIERCE

You said get goats and my cousin,
oh shit, I divulged my source,
anyway, my cousin told me about a
petting zoo going out of business.

DEZ

You bought them from a petting zoo?

FIERCE

Noooo. They were free.

Dez slides the van door closed.

DEZ

Take 'em back.

FIERCE

I can't. My brother needs his van.
He's got a gig in Long Beach.

EXT. ROSA'S HOUSE / BACK YARD - LATER

The goats, happy as can be, climb on the lawn furniture, devour Rosa's garden, chase Karma around in circles. BLEAT.

Lila shakes her head at the chaos, glares at Dez.

Dez cowers.

INT. ROSA'S KITCHEN - LATER

Lila, arms folded, sits at the kitchen table surrounded by fresh veggies and stacks of tortillas.

Dez bottle feeds a goat.

LILA

Explain how stealing goats is supposed to help me.

DEZ

Help us.

The goat BLEATS.

LILA

(to the goat)

Keep quiet you. I already have enough mouths to feed.

(to Dez)

Do I even want to know what else you're planning?

DEZ

We're still figuring out the meat. But I was thinking, why not veggie tacos? Save some money. And who doesn't like refried beans?

LILA

I like that. But I think I should be involved from now on.

Rosa wanders in. She's deathly pale.

ROSA

(stammers)

Why are you?... You...need... to call first. I have... a session.

DEZ

Abuelita, we've been living here for two--

Lila nudges Dez to shush.

LILA
Mom, what's the matter?

ROSA
One minute, I... was watching... my
head,... then I... have to lay...

Rosa's head rolls to the side, she drops to the floor. THUMP.

LILA
Mom!

Lila rushes to her, cradles Rosa's head.

LILA
Call an ambulance.

Dez, look of horror, teary eyed, freezes.

LILA
Dez! Get out your phone! Call 911!

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - LATER

Rosa, on an examination table, oxygen mask strapped to her face, lays inert, stares at the ceiling.

Lila holds her hand.

DOCTOR GRANT (30s), opposite Lila, hangs up a clipboard.

DOCTOR GRANT
She's exhibiting signs of a mild
stroke. I suggest we keep her here
awhile, just for observation.

LILA
We can't afford that. Can I just
take her home?

DOCTOR GRANT
I don't advise it. Not right now.
She requires constant care. If you
walk out, insurance won't cover any
further expenses.

ROSA
Nan... Nan... Nan...

Lila looks down at Rosa.

LILA
She keeps saying that over and
over. What does it mean?

DOCTOR GRANT
If you'd like to admit her, we can
run a few tests.

ROSA
Wine... Wine...

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - LATER

Lila, on her phone, leans against the wall.

LILA
Call Marisa... Because, Dez, we
can't keep this from her... Thanks.

The frenetic energy of the hospital whirls around her.

Lila texts.

EXT. HOSPITAL ENTRANCE - LATER

Lila paces on the curb.

Wade's Mustang pulls up.

She waits for him to open the door.

Wade, hurries out, comes around her side, opens the door.

She climbs in.

INT. WADE'S MUSTANG / FREEWAY

WADE
How's your mom?

LILA
Not good.

He takes hold of her hand.

Lila turns away, hides her tears.

INT. ROSA'S BEDROOM - LATER

Lila and Wade clear the clutter.

LILA

The bed has to be moved. It'll be hard getting her in and out.

They start to push the bed and...

Lila stumbles on a dust-covered shoebox.

She stoops, picks it up, sits on the edge of the mattress.

INSERT - Lila opens the box. Inside are clippings about *Pepita's Taco Truck*, only now they paint a different picture -

"Taco King Loses Crown" "Top Tacos Ends In Scandal" "Feted Local Business Owner Dead" "Award Winner Takes Own Life"

Eyes wide, she shuffles through the stack.

WADE

What did you find?

LILA

It's nothing.

Lila hurriedly stuffs the clippings back in the box, replaces the lid, sets the box on the bedside table.

LILA

(mumbles to herself)

I need to put a stop to this.

WADE

What are you talking about?

LILA

Dez thought they could help by stealing Mama Consuela's tortilla recipe and shoplifting organic produce. They even took baby goats--

WADE

- Hold on. You knew Dez was committing crimes?

LILA

They already had the tortilla recipe and the produce, I just didn't tell them to stop.

Wade moves out from behind the bed.

WADE

That's pretty lame. I handed over my family's hard won guacamole recipe because you needed help. I had no idea this is who you are.

LILA

When you put it like that, you make me sound like I'm--

WADE

- Complicit? Because you are. I went to juvenile hall for stealing.

LILA

I didn't know that.

She reaches for him.

He backs off.

LILA

I'm sorry. But what was I supposed to do? Let my family starve?

WADE

No. Of course not, but being dishonest isn't the way to--

LILA

- When you have a kid to raise and a sick mother to care for, you can talk to me about being honest.

WADE

Yeah? But what kind of example are you setting for--?

LILA

- My dad killed himself and for what? Because he didn't play the game? He worked his whole life and left us with nothing. I'm not doing that to Dez.

WADE

Hey, you're having a tough go, I get that, but--

LILA

- No. This isn't a "tough go". This is rock bottom... And to think I was considering sleeping with you. Glad I didn't let that happen.

WADE

That sounds kind of final. Are you dumping me?

LILA

It's all too much. I don't need this right now.

He shakes his head in disbelief, leaves. SLAMS the door.

Lila throws the shoebox across the room. The clippings scatter everywhere.

INT. ROSA'S LIVING ROOM - NEXT MORNING

A dingy, dark room, heavy curtains.

Dark thick wooden furniture, embroidered pillows, a *Dios de la Muertos* altar, dead flowers, gathers dust in the corner.

Lila brings Rosa into the room, slowly guides her to a recliner.

She helps lower Rosa into the chair, raises her legs.

Rosa grips Lila's hand tight, pulls her close.

Rosa moves her lips, no sound emerges.

Lila brings her face close to Rosa's.

ROSA

Nan... Wine...

LILA

I'll get you a drink, but I don't think we should be giving you wine.

Rosa shakes her head ever so slightly.

ROSA

Nan... Wine...

Lila gives her a small kiss on the cheek.

LILA

You rest. I'll be right here.

Rosa sinks back, closes her eyes.

Lila pours herself a shot of whiskey, throws it back.

She sits across from Rosa, the world on her shoulders.

She drinks another shot, lays down, falls asleep.

INT. ROSA'S HOUSE /HALLWAY - NIGHT

Dez, their crotch visibly stuffed, walks awkwardly down the hall with their legs wide apart, stops, squats, stands, rearranges their bulge, walks back in the other direction, squats, stands, turns, nods their head, walks into the...

LIVING ROOM

Lila asleep on the sofa, Rosa in the recliner, both SNORE.

Dez stands over Lila.

DEZ

Uh-umm.

Lila, a little worse for wear, rouses, rubs her eyes.

LILA

Hey... What time is it?

DEZ

Eight. You've been asleep all day.

Dez holds up the empty whiskey bottle.

LILA

Guess I overdid it.

DEZ

Boy trouble?

LILA

Not any more.

Dez shifts their weight, tugs down on their pants.

LILA

What's going on down there? Are you packing?

DEZ

Giving it a try. Thinking about going public.

LILA

That's a big step. You go.

Lila gives Dez a pathetic, hungover, high five.

LILA
Walk around. Let me see.

Dez strolls to the mantel, pauses, comes back walking like John Wayne.

Lila CHUCKLES.

LILA
Maybe a little less I've been riding a horse all day.

Dez crosses the room. Comes back.

DEZ
How was that?

LILA
Better. But lead with your hips, not your chest. Think testosterone.

Dez gives it a go, exaggerates their walk.

A soft GIGGLE comes from Rosa's recliner.

Lila and Dez turn to Rosa, who has a small grin on her face.

ROSA
My... family.

Dez goes over to Rosa, gives her a hug.

LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

The lights are dim. Rosa SNORES in the recliner.

Lila, on the made up sofa, texts.

INSERT TEXT - *"Hey... I'm sorry... I screwed things up."*

Send.

Lila waits for a response.

Moments later...

INSERT TEXT - *"Need any help?... Tony dumped me btw."*

INSERT LILA'S TEXT - *"I can pay you in tacos"*

INSERT MARISA'S TEXT - *"Not if they're the old ones."*

INSERT LILA'S TEXT - *"(Shit emoji)!"*

EXT. ROSA'S HOUSE / DRIVEWAY - DAYS LATER

BANGING and LAUGHTER come from inside the taco truck.

DEZ (O.S.)

We all need to practice our knife skills.

GEORGIE (O.S.)

I don't need knife skills. I eat ramen.

DEZ (O.S.)

Would you please just watch Karma? It's not that hard.

INT. PEPITA'S TACO TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Dez and the gang observe Karma expertly dice a tomato.

Karma finishes, twirls the knife like a Benihana chef.

EVERYONE

Whoa!!!

They APPLAUD.

Lila appears in the doorway.

LILA

What's all the noise?

DEZ

We're honing our sous chef skills.

LILA

What for?

DEZ

Somebody has to operate the truck. Why not us?

LILA

That's great. Have at it. But the food costs come out of your pocket. And no more committing crimes. All decisions go through me.

She leaves.

They all CHEER, rock the truck from side to side, chant.

EXT. ROSA'S HOUSE / DRIVEWAY

The truck sways.

EVERYONE (O.S.)
Pepita's! Pepita's! Pepita's!

MONTAGE

1) The gang roll out perfect tortillas, except for Heck who holds up a saggy mess with holes. Dez marks their progress on a clipboard.

2) Dez and gang hold an avocado pitting contest. As each one finishes, they raise their arms. Georgie times them with a stop watch.

3) Slim stirs a huge pot of beans. Karma tastes them, gives a thumbs down, adds more salt.

4) The gang, spread out in Rosa's living room, watch *"Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives"* with laser focus.

5) Fierce at a sewing machine, manipulates a huge sheet of silver lamé. In the background, Dez forms a huge chicken wire cage around Karma, whose head sticks out the top.

6) Georgie, in the truck window, takes an order from Slim, races around inside the truck, prepares the food at lightning speed, delivers the food to Slim. Heck times them.

END MONTAGE**INT. HECK'S UNCLE'S CHOP SHOP - NIGHT**

Pepita's Taco Truck rolls into a shady looking garage. All windows are blacked out. A few classic cars, recognizable under their nylon car covers, sit under dim overhead lights.

Heck, like an aircraft marshal, directs the truck into a bay, signals for the truck to stop.

Dez leans out the window.

DEZ
How's that?

HECK
Great. My Uncle can start work tomorrow.

DEZ

Make sure he knows we want it to
look street.

HECK

Chill already. I told him.

DEZ

We need to be seen blocks away. Big
letters. I mean big! Honkin' BIG!

HECK

I get it. Big letters. Jeez.

DEZ

And all he wants is tacos for life,
right?

HECK

For him and my entire family.

Dez thinks a second.

DEZ

It's a deal.

Dez tosses the keys to Heck, gathers their things, opens the
glove box, finds...

INSERT - Flyer for "*Taking It To The Street Taco Contest*"

Dez pockets the flyer.

INT. ROSA'S KITCHEN - NEXT DAY

Lila and Marisa chop vegetables.

MARISA

How're you holding up?

LILA

Mom's steady. Her speech is--

MARISA

- Lila, I know about Rosa. I was
asking about you.

LILA

It's been so long since anyone's
asked me that, I don't know how to
respond.

MARISA

Try.

LILA

Well, I guess I could use a day to myself... Just go to the park,... actually sit in a coffee shop, and I mean just sit and take up space,.. Get my hair dyed, hell, get a manicure.

MARISA

And a pedi. Now we're talking.

LILA

I've missed you.

MARISA

You better have.

They grab onto one another. Hold on for a moment.

LILA

Enough mush. Dez will be furious if we don't get this pico made.

Marisa goes to the fridge. She sees the flyer posted on the door, pulls it down, takes it to Lila.

MARISA

Are you entering? Tony thinks he's already got it in the bag.

LILA

Dez wants to. Says we could use the prize money to start a real taco stand,... if we win.

MARISA

That kid is one smart cookie. Just like their mom.

LILA

Back to work. The boss will be back soon.

EXT. HECK'S UNCLE'S CHOP SHOP / ALLEY - THREE DAYS LATER

The gang and Lila stand in a city alley, amidst overflowing dumpsters, vulgar graffiti, discarded car bumpers, doors, tires and shopping carts.

They face a huge corrugated steel garage door.

All eyes fixed, as the door creaks open, the gap growing wider and wider.

Slowly, like a whale giving birth, the gleaming new truck emerges from the garage into the bright daylight.

They raise their hands to shield their eyes from the glare.

Shocking pinks, greens, blues and violets swirl over the vehicle. A massive, exploding taco graces the rear door.

The words "*Pepita's*" in "Street Script" splash over the truck's sides.

It's truly magnificent.

They stare in amazement, jaws dropped.

From inside the vehicle, someone sounds the LUNCH HORN. But instead of the traditional "*La Cucaracha*", we hear a silky, baritone voice under a remixed hip-hop version.

BARITONE VOICE

*"Pepita's Tacos. Pepita's Tacos.
Come on and give us a try."*

They're speechless, dumbstruck. Then...

THE GANG

Yeah! Damn, that's sweet! Awesome!
That's freakin cool! Play it again!

Everyone APPLAUDS.

The lunch horn sounds again.

THE GANG

*"Pepita's Tacos. Pepita's Tacos.
Come on and give us a try."*

Lila starts to cry.

LILA

Tata would be so proud.

The gang surrounds Lila, try to hoist her onto their shoulders. She fights them off.

LILA

We can celebrate when we win the
contest.

EXT. ROSA'S HOUSE / DRIVEWAY - LATER - NIGHT

The truck sits quiet. A dim light glows inside.

Dez and Lila sit on the rear bumper.

LILA

I'm so proud of you kid.

DEZ

Thanks, mom.

LILA

That's an amazing group of friends you have. I hope you tell them how much they mean to you.

DEZ

I do.

LILA

It's important they know. Don't let a day go by without expressing your gratitude.

DEZ

I won't.

LILA

Your Tata, he was a good man, but saying what was in his heart was difficult... I wish you could have met him. He would have gotten you. You're just like him. Brave. Strong. Brooding.

Lila looks up, glances at the brightly colored doorway that surrounds them.

LILA

He used to call me Pepita when I was small. His little pumpkin seed. He told me something so small can grow into something big and beautiful. He wanted that for me... His dreams were practical, about survival, but he wanted more for me, he wanted me to be somebody.

DEZ

You are somebody.

LILA
Me? Don't be silly. I'm a single
mom with a taco truck.

DEZ
Don't give up. We'll make something
of this yet.

LILA
Who's giving up? I'm just being
realistic.

Lila puts her arm around Dez, pulls them close.

DEZ
We should get some sleep.
Tomorrow's the big launch.

LILA
Can I have just a little longer
holding you? I don't get to do this
much anymore.

DEZ
Okay.

Dez hugs Lila back.

INT. ROSA'S BEDROOM - LATER

Lila creeps into the room, finds Rosa asleep.

She sits on the edge of the bed, strokes Rosa's head.

On the nightstand sits a framed photo of Rosa and Lila's dad.

Lila picks it up.

INSERT FRAMED PHOTO - Rosa, in a white dress, holds a bunch
of flowers at her side. Tata, in a clean white shirt and
bowtie, grins. They clutch one another's hands.

LILA
I wish you could tell me why he did
it... but I guess I'll never know.

Lila touches the photo, returns it to the nightstand, turns
off the light.

EXT. ROSA'S DRIVEWAY - EARLY, THE NEXT MORNING

The truck, decorated for Pride, sparkles. Rainbow flags and bunting drape the bumpers.

On the lawn, a giant avocado half (Slim), a giant taco (Georgie) and a giant foil-wrapped burrito (Karma) gather for a selfie.

SLIM

Dez! Get out here.

Dez emerges from the truck, dressed in white like Tata, in his cowboy boots and cowboy hat.

GEORGIE

Dude, look at you! Muy guapo!

SLIM

Where's Heck? It's selfie time.

DEZ

They hate their costume.

Fierce, in Frida Kahlo drag, bounds out of the house.

FIERCE

No photo without me.

Fierce joins their friends, poses in front of the others.

DEZ

Heck, you can't hide in there forever.

Heck gradually creeps out of the truck, dressed in a huge, olive green, lumpy papier-mâché form.

SLIM

What are you supposed to be?

HECK

I'm a pumpkin seed, but I look like a massive green turd.

Slim and Georgie LAUGH.

Lila and Rosa appear on the porch, both done up in glitter make-up, rainbow feather boas and loaded with beads.

LILA

Wait for us.

Lila leads Rosa onto the lawn.

She places Rosa and herself in the center of the group.

Marisa runs out of the house, looking like a drag queen, in a revealing bustier, hot pants and towering platform shoes. Her hair teased a mile high.

LILA
Marisa, would you mind?

MARISA
Girl, I've got this.
(takes Lila's phone)
Everybody! Squeeze together.

They do.

MARISA
Now say, "Queso."

EVERYONE
Queso!

SNAP!

INT. PEPITA'S TACO TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER

Everyone piles into the truck.

Rosa rides shotgun.

Lila takes the wheel.

LILA
Seat belts, Bitches!

DEZ
We would if we had seats.

LILA
Sit on the floor and hold on.

The floor of the truck is a heap of Dez's costumed gang, Marisa happily squished in the middle.

Lila guns the motor.

LILA
Pride, here we come.

The truck lurches forward.

They all CHEER.

EXT. WEST HOLLYWOOD / MELROSE / PRIDE DAY

Crowded city street with colorfully clad people, with ornate vintage cars, queer marching bands, leather contingents on flatbed trucks and drag queens on stilts gliding by.

Pepita's Taco Truck rolls by.

Dez and their costumed friends pass out mini taco bites.

The crowd goes wild.

EXT. LA PARK / PRIDE FESTIVAL / FOOD TRUCK PARKING - LATER

Lila and Rosa sit on lawn chairs, watch the festivities.

A petite woman, **NANCY WEINBERG** (40s), cropped hair, polo and Bermuda shorts, walks up.

NANCY WEINBERG

Hey, folks. Sorry to bother you.
You ran out of samples before and I
was wondering--

ROSA

Nan... Wine...

NANCY WEINBERG

What did she say?

LILA

My mom's recovering from a stroke,
and for some reason she keeps--

ROSA

(excited)

Nan... Wine.

NANCY WEINBERG

That's weird. That's my name.

ROSA

Nan... Wine...

NANCY WEINBERG

Well, it's Nancy Weinberg.

LILA

It is?

She hands Lila her business card.

INSERT CARD - "Nancy Weinberg, *LA Times Food Critic*"

LILA

Holy shit, mom, you did it. You actually made a correct prediction.

Rosa smiles, from ear to ear.

Nancy is completely confused, not sure what to say.

LILA

I believe I know why you were drawn here... Follow me.

Lila dashes into the truck, appears in the window.

Nancy watches Lila whip up a plate of tacos. She works at lightning speed, finishes with a sprinkle of cilantro.

Lila emerges from the truck.

NANCY WEINBERG

You are amazing.

Lila hands over a small plate with two taco bites.

LILA

I think these were meant for you.

Nancy gladly accepts them. Takes a bite.

NANCY WEINBERG

They look incredible. Hope they live up to the hype.

Silence.

Lila and Rosa watch in anticipation.

Nancy finishes the first bite.

NANCY WEINBERG

I've had plenty of tacos in my day. But these... are... simply divine.

She devours the second bite.

NANCY WEINBERG

(mouth full)

I could die, seriously. Right now... Oh, my god.

ROSA

(proudly)

Nan... Wine...

EXT. PRIDE FESTIVAL - SAME TIME

Dez and Georgie wander the aisles of booths and food vendors.

A woman dressed in a "*Xena, Warrior Princess*" costume, pierced nose, lip and eyebrows walks by, smiles at Dez.

Dez turns, watches "Xena" disappear into the crowd.

GEORGIE
See something you like?

Dez, mesmerized, stays silent.

GEORGIE
Earth to Dez.

Dez snaps out of it.

DEZ
What?

GEORGIE
That girl, in the Game of Thrones outfit...

DEZ
Xena, you mean.

GEORGIE
What 'evs. She was kinda hot.

DEZ
Uh-huh.

GEORGIE
Go talk to her.

DEZ
But we're hanging.

GEORGIE
It's really okay. I can go find Slim and Heck.

DEZ
Meet you back at the truck?

GEORGIE
Sure.

Dez slips off, in pursuit.

EXT. PRIDE STAGE - LATER

JAZZ (25), Xena, nods her head to the techno band onstage.

Dez wanders up next to her, gets bumped by a towering leather man, knocks into Jazz.

Jazz glances at Dez, smiles

DEZ

Sorry.

Jazz nods, goes back to enjoying the music.

DEZ

I noticed you before.

Jazz doesn't look at Dez.

JAZZ

I noticed you too. Where's your boyfriend?

DEZ

They're not my boyfriend.

Jazz turns toward Dez.

JAZZ

I'm Jazz.

DEZ

Dez.

They shake hands.

JAZZ

Wanna go somewhere?... To talk?

DEZ

Sure. I'd love to.

Jazz takes Dez's hand, leads them away.

EXT. PRIDE FESTIVAL / FOOD TRUCK PARKING - LATER

The event has wound down. Very few trucks remain. The sun sets.

Rosa, asleep, sits in the passenger seat.

The gang, sans Dez, loiter around the vehicle, exhausted.

Lila paces, texts on her phone.

LILA
When did you see them last?

GEORGIE
They went after an Amazon woman.

LILA
What do you mean?

GEORGIE
There was this girl dressed like--

Dez appears around the corner of the truck.

LILA
There you are. We've all been waiting. You had me worried.

Dez has a prominent hickey on their neck.

FIERCE
Where did you get that?

GEORGIE
From Xena, I bet.

DEZ
Their name is Jazz.

GEORGIE
Oooh. And?

DEZ
We have a date for tomorrow night.

Dez's gang CHEER.

DEZ
It's not that big a deal.

FIERCE
It is, if it's bigger than that hickey.

DEZ
Shut up. You're embarrassing me.

LILA
We need to get Abuelita home. Time to go.

The group clambers back into the truck.

They drive away.

INT. ROSA'S KITCHEN - A FEW DAYS LATER

Lila paces, talks on her phone. Marisa shucks corn.

LILA

Three hours... And how many people
will we be serving?... Uh-huh...
And it's a flat fee?... Great. I
have you on my calendar.

Lila gets off the call, sets down her phone.

MARISA

That sounded promising.

LILA

A charity needs three trucks to
serve food during their silent
auction.

MARISA

Ooooh. Sounds fancy.

LILA

Next month is getting full. I don't
think we need to go the site
anymore.

MARISA

Isn't that a good place to try out
new recipes? Plus, you need to
stick it to Tony. Keep him nervous
about the contest.

LILA

Somebody has to stay with mom.

MARISA

I can do that. In the meantime, you
need to walk me through the street
corn recipe.

LILA

It's so easy... Here. First grill
the corn with mayo.

Lila takes an ear of corn, rubs mayonnaise over the kernels.

LILA

After it's charred, we roll it in a combination of Cotija, parmesan and Tajin. Finish with lime juice.

Dex wanders in, texts on their phone, takes a peak at Lila's preparations.

LILA

Any feedback, boss?

DEZ

No... Looks like you've got it.

Dez's PHONE RINGS, they dash out.

MARISA

How long have they been like that?

LILA

Ever since Pride.

MARISA

Any idea who this person is?

LILA

Dez is completely tight-lipped. They don't want to jinx it.

MARISA

Young love.

LILA

Don't remind me.

MARISA

That was a little different. As I recall, you ended up pregnant.

Dez wanders back in, head in the clouds.

Lila and Marisa watch them.

Dez ends the call, realizes they're being watched.

DEZ

What?

LILA

You tell us.

DEZ

You'll be pleased to know, Jazz is going to come over and hang.

(MORE)

DEZ (CONT'D)

So that means you can go out if you want. We can watch Abuelita.

LILA

Where would we go exactly?

MARISA

Let me worry about the details. Just make sure you pull yourself together. None of this last minute I don't have anything to wear B.S..

Lila appears a little trapped.

MARISA

Go. I can finish up here.

Lila leaves.

MARISA

So, do I get to meet this Jazz?

DEZ

You do.

MARISA

And are they a him? Her? Or them?

DEZ

They're a she.

Dez inspects what Marisa and Lila have completed.

DEZ

Don't skimp on the Cotija. People need to taste the cheese.

MARISA

Yes, boss.

INT. ROSA'S HOUSE / BATHROOM - LATER

Lila, in front of the mirror, in a spaghetti-strap tee, her hair down, puts on bright red lipstick.

She steps back, views herself, frowns.

Immediately she takes a tissue, wipes off the lipstick, nods.

Pleased with the results, she pinches her cheeks, raises a blush.

KNOCK.

Lila opens the door. Dez stands outside in the hall.

DEZ
Abuelita won't eat her dinner.

LILA
Just put it in the fridge. Maybe
she'll want it later.

DEZ
You look nice.

LILA
Do you think so? I wasn't sure if I
needed lipstick.

DEZ
None is better.

LILA
You'll be okay tonight? Right?
You're sure you can handle
Abuelita? I really don't have--

DEZ
- I'll text, if I need you.

Lila places her hands on Dez's face, lightly pats their
cheeks.

LILA
Thanks. I really need this.

DEZ
Marisa's waiting.

Lila dashes out of the room. Dez follows.

LIVING ROOM

Marisa, transformed, in a tight tee and short skirt, slouches
on the couch.

Rosa, in her recliner, watches TV.

Lila and Dez enter.

MARISA
Good God, woman. About time. It's a
school night. I have to be home and
in bed by twelve.

LILA
You'll be lucky if I make it past
ten.

Lila goes over to Rosa.

LILA
Dez is going to be here with you.

Rosa continues to watch the TV.

LILA
I'll see you in the morning. Eat
your dinner.

She gives Rosa a kiss on the forehead.

LILA
Where's Jazz? I wanted to meet her.

DEZ
Running late.

MARISA
Lila, we need to go.

DEZ
Mom, go have fun. Everything's
going to be fine.

Marisa tugs on Lila.

LILA
Goodnight.

She kisses Dez.

They leave.

INT. ROSA'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

Dez and Jazz, spread out on the sofa, watch *RuPaul's Drag Race* on a square, boxy 90's TV.

The picture is distorted, wavy.

Rosa sits close to Dez, who feeds her bits of cracker.

ROSA
Boyfriend... hungry?

Jazz SNICKERS, slides an arm around Dez's shoulders, pulls them close.

JAZZ
 (deepens her voice)
 Thanks, Rosa. But, I'm fine.

Rosa takes in *RuPaul's Drag Race*.

INSERT - RUPAUL'S DRAG RACE CLIP

A drag queen in a shimmering spandex jumpsuit, chest heaving, clasps her hands in anticipation.

RUPAUL and her **CELEBRITY JUDGES** shake their heads. **CLUCK.**

RUPAUL
 Y'all need to step your pussy up.

Dez and Jazz **SNICKER.**

ROSA
 Miss... America?

DEZ
 No, Abuelita, it's RuPaul.

ROSA
 Pretty girl... too much... make-up.

DEZ
 Ru's not a woman. She's a drag queen. It's a reality show.

Rosa nods, **GRUNTS.**

ROSA
 Thirsty.

Dez picks up a glass of water, inserts a straw in Rosa's mouth. Rosa sips.

Rosa raises an unsteady hand, takes ahold of her old locket around Dez's neck, gazes at the photo.

She lets the locket slip from her fingers, touches Dez's face.

ROSA
 Dez... Handsome.

INT. L.A. NIGHTCLUB - LATER

Lila and Marisa pushed up against a bar, order drinks.

They get jostled by the much younger crowd.

Lila looks miserable. Marisa looks like she enjoys the close contact.

Marisa makes eye contact with a SLEAZY TRENDROID next to her. He turns away, towards a much younger woman on his opposite side.

MARISA

This place sure isn't what it used to be.

LILA

I was thinking it's exactly like it used to be. We're what's changed.

MARISA

S'pose you're right.

Marisa motions to the bartender.

MARISA

One more?

LILA

I just want water.

MARISA

You're no fun.

LILA

You don't know when to stop.

Lila quickly ducks behind Marisa.

LILA

Oh, shit.

MARISA

What?

LILA

Wade's over there.

Marisa turns, looks.

LILA

Don't! He'll see you.

MARISA

Too late.

LILA

Fuck.

Wade comes over.

Lila keeps her back to him.

WADE
Hey, ladies.

MARISA
Wade.

Lila turns around.

WADE
Lila.

LILA
Hi... How are you?

WADE
Good... Working at a new site.

LILA
That's nice.

Marisa motions she's going to go mingle, walks off.

WADE
How's your mom?

LILA
Better... The same, really.

WADE
Oh, sorry to hear that... How's
business? Heard you're not at the
construction site anymore.

LILA
I'm not. I'm booking real gigs.

WADE
Oh. Great... Hey, Lila, I'm--

LILA
Wade, please, you don't have to say
any--

WADE
I was just going to say, I'm with
friends, so I should,... you know.

LILA
Oh, right, sorry.

WADE
Good seeing you.

LILA
Yeah, it was nice seeing you.

He gingerly kisses her cheek, disappears into the crowd.
Lila is left alone.

EXT. ROSA'S HOUSE / DRIVEWAY

Pepita's taco truck glistens in the moonlight.
Marisa pulls up in her Ford Echo, Lila hops out.

MARISA
Good night, girl.

LILA
Night. See you at 6:30.

MARISA
Are we still doing that? Can't we
just skip a day?

LILA
No. And don't be late.

Lila CLOSES the DOOR.

Marisa drives off.

Lila slowly strolls up the driveway, past the truck.

She turns back, goes up to the truck, gives it a pat on the hood.

A cat wanders up, rubs against her leg.

Lila bends down, picks up the animal.

LILA
You're new. What's you're name?

The cat PURRS.

She takes the cat, goes inside the house.

INT. ROSA'S HOUSE / LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Deez sleeps on the couch, Rosa in her recliner.

Lila enters.

She sets down the cat.

The TV plays a trashy horror movie.

Lila grabs the remote, shuts off the TV.

Lila rouses Dez.

LILA
Hey, why isn't Abuelita in bed?

Dez sits up.

DEZ
She was so peaceful. I didn't want
to wake her.

LILA
Come on. Help me move her.

Lila goes to Rosa, gently nudges her.

LILA
Mom? We need to get you... Mom?

Dez comes over.

LILA
(keeping her cool)
Abuelita's cold... When was the
last time you spoke to her?

DEZ
A couple hours ago. She actually
called me Dez.

Lila, puts a hand to Rosa's throat, feels for a pulse.

LILA
Do you have your phone?

DEZ
It's in my room.

LILA
Hurry. Go call an ambulance.

DEZ
What's wrong?

LILA
Abuelita's not breathing.

Dez backs off, runs out of the room.

Lila grabs Rosa tight. Hugs her.

LILA
Mama. No... No.

The cat rubs against Lila's leg.

INT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY

Small room, smaller crowd, with Rosa on display up front.

FUNERAL MUSIC plays a depressing, dirge version of *La Bamba*.

Dez's gang, all in black, congregate in the front pew.

Lila comes up to them, urges them to move back a row or two.

They abide, except Jazz, who remains.

Karma, by the open casket, observes Rosa's corpse. Bends down for a closer look.

Lila comes up, nudges Karma away.

Karma quickly hugs Lila. Lila unsure how to react, lightly hugs Karma in return.

Karma hugs her harder, then scurries off to their friends.

A **PASTOR** approaches Lila, leads her to the front pew.

Dez slides in after her.

Jazz slides close to them.

The Pastor returns to the front of the room.

PASTOR
The deceased was very explicit in their final wishes and asked that no formal service be conducted. Instead she requested her beloved say a few words.

The pastor gives a "cut the music signal" to the organist.

The ORGAN MUSIC STOPS.

The pastor steps aside, sits.

Lila, hesitant, arises, walks to the front.

Karma APPLAUDS.

Fierce grabs Karma's hands, restrains them.

LILA

Thank you for the encouragement,
Karma.

Lila positions a tissue box close at hand, pulls a couple.

LILA

I'm Lila... Rosa is... was my mom.
Um... wow, um, I really wasn't
expecting to give a speech. But
that's my mom for you, always
putting you on the spot... Good
one, mom. You got me. Again... But
this time I get the last word. So,
there's that.

Lila looks at the few rows of faces.

They stare back, eager for something.

LILA

My mom was difficult, even up to
the end. She lived life her way, no
excuses, no apologies... I guess
that's what we can all take away.
Be independent, be your own person.
Even though she didn't always
extend that to others, especially
when it came to my... or Dez's
choices. So, having said that, I
guess we all face challenges when
it comes to accepting others. I
suppose she did her best...

Lila dabs her eyes.

LILA

I never thought this would happen.
That I'd be here, with her laying
there... My whole life it's been
her calling the shots, running her
business, making crazy predictions,
ninety nine percent of which were
untrue, but that was just her. She
had a lot of people walking around
Hollywood with the insane idea,
which she planted, that one day
they'd be swept off their feet by
People Magazine's sexiest man of
the year?...

(MORE)

LILA (CONT'D)

In my teens, I was certain Tom Cruise would be calling any day to invite me to my high school prom. Of course, it never happened, but she had me believing it was possible, that, in life, anything was possible. That dreaming is okay. And that achieving something was only worth it if you did it on your own. I never truly realized that until now. And over the last few weeks, I've been trying to make things right, follow her example, even though life was looking pretty shitty... Sorry, pastor.

He gives her the okay sign.

LILA

So, mom, thanks for that. I'll never stop dreaming.

She approaches the casket, kisses her index finger, touches Rosa's lips.

Lila returns to her pew, nods to Dez.

Dez receives a pat on the back from Georgie.

Jazz nudges Dez to go.

They slowly rise, go to the casket, peer down at Rosa.

Dez takes a moment, then turns to everyone.

They go to speak, but catch themselves. They look to the ceiling, tears well in their eyes.

The pastor comes forward with the tissues.

Dez refuses the box.

DEZ'S GANG

You've got this. Come on, Dez. We love you. Dude, you're strong. From the heart.

Dez takes a deep breath.

DEZ

Abuelita, my abuelita, was my friend. But she was also my foe. She loved me, I know that, but she didn't accept me.

(MORE)

DEZ (CONT'D)

And that hurt, a lot. Sometimes I forgot who she was and where she came from. Her world was so different from mine, coming from a small village, where everything you did was scrutinized and judged. Being different wasn't something she experienced growing up. Family and tradition meant everything. You sacrificed, towed the line and that's how you got by... Ruffling feathers or going against the grain was frowned upon... When I came out as trans, she didn't talk to me for months. She thought I was rejecting her values, her beliefs. But ever since her stroke, I saw someone who was vulnerable, a person that really needed others, that saw me and loved me for who I really was.

Dez removes the locket from around their neck.

DEZ

Abuelita gave me this when I was little. She told me it came from her Abuela and that she had got it from her Abuela. So this locket meant a lot to her; it meant longevity, the future. The day she gave me this, we had a huge fight. She had made my first communion dress and I hated it. I refused to put it on, even though she spent weeks saving up for the material and then even longer making sure it was just right, that every button, every pleat and every bow were perfection... Inside is a picture of me in the dress, the one and only time. I don't remember how she bribed me to put it on, but I remember running off and hiding in Tata's taco truck, where the dress got torn and ended up with a huge grease stain down the front. When I finally emerged from my hiding place, Abuela was furious. She told me, I was wearing my dress with the tear and the stain, that if I wanted to be a boy, I could be filthy just like a boy. And she took back the locket.

(MORE)

DEZ (CONT'D)

It's funny, she was the one that put the idea in my head that I could be a boy. I had no idea that was even possible. I know it wasn't what she meant, but the world opened up for me that day. I saw a future, a way forward where I could be happy, be myself.

Dez turns to the casket, slips the locket in beside Rosa.

DEZ

The day she died, she took my face in her hands, looked into my eyes and called me, Dez. She never called me that before. It was the first time I knew that she loved and accepted me, just like I was.

Dez's gang start a LOW CHANT, gradually increase in volume.

DEZ'S GANG

Rosa, rosa, rosa, DEZ, DEZ, DEZ.

Dez bursts into tears, rushes to the pew.

Lila embraces them.

EXT. FUNERAL HOME - LATER

Dez and Jazz, hug the gang, watch as they wander off.

Lila emerges from the funeral home.

LILA

Are you coming home now?

DEZ

We thought we'd go to the beach. Watch the sunset.

LILA

That sounds nice.

JAZZ

You can come along, if you want.

LILA

No, you two deserve a little time alone together after all the craziness.

DEZ
 You sure, mom? You're okay being
 alone?

LILA
 Yeah. I should probably start
 getting used to it.

Dez hugs Lila.

DEZ
 We'll be back later.

They walk off.

Lila goes to the truck, climbs in.

PEPITA'S TACO TRUCK

Lila, at the wheel, slips on her seat belt, CLICK.

LILA
 Looks like it's just you and me,
 old girl.

She starts the truck, sounds the LUNCH HORN.

Drives off.

EXT. ROSA'S HOUSE / DRIVEWAY - LATER

Lila pulls up to the house.

"Rosa's Psychic Readings" neon glows in the evening light.

She goes into the house, appears in the picture window.

Lila tugs on a ball chain, the neon goes dark.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - NEXT DAY

Lila, her hair pulled back, in a floral blouse, sips a latte.

The shop activity, abuzz, circles around her.

A **WOMAN WITH A STROLLER** and TWO BABIES walks up to her table.

Lila looks at her; the woman smirks.

WOMAN WITH A STROLLER
 Do you really need both chairs?

LILA
No, you can take one.

Lila removes her purse from the extra chair.
The woman drags the chair to another table.
A BUSINESS MAN walks by, bumps Lila.
She spills her drink.

LILA
Hey! Excuse me. Am I in your way?

He looks back, dismisses her, leaves.
Lila scoots her chair in further, mops up the spill.
This is not the "sit and take up space day" she envisioned.
She takes out her phone, texts.

INSERT TEXT - *"Are you coming? Here a little longer."*

She waits for a response.

INSERT TEXT - *"Reconsidered. Not gonna make it."*

LILA'S POV - She opens her contacts, scrolls to Wade's name, deletes the contact.

She stands, leaves her coffee, exits.

INT. ROSA'S HOUSE / DEZ'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Dez and Jazz, on the bed, limbs wrapped around one another kiss.

Dez stops.

JAZZ
You okay?

DEZ
Yeah, I just don't think I'm ready to try yet.

JAZZ
It's fine. Don't sweat it. I want you to feel comfortable.

DEZ
I've just never topped before.

JAZZ

It's okay.

Jazz caresses Dez's face, embraces them.

Outside, BEEP of a truck backing up.

Then a GRINDING NOISE.

JAZZ

What is that?

Dez peeks out the window.

DEZ

Shit! Oh, shit.

Dez quickly fastens their pants, runs out of the room.

EXT. ROSA'S DRIVEWAY

A tow truck is backed up to the taco truck.

A **TOW TRUCK DRIVER** attaches a chain to the bumper.

The taco truck, partially lifted onto the flatbed, gets pulled forward.

Dez rushes out of the house, up to the driver.

Jazz quickly follows.

DEZ

What are you doing?

The driver hands Dez a piece of paper.

Dez worked up, paces, reads the paper.

DEZ

You've got to give me fifteen minutes.

TOW TRUCK DRIVER

No can do. I've got to get to the yard before it closes.

DEZ

Fuck.

Dez lays down in the street, in front of the tow truck.

DEZ

Jazz, call everyone. Tell them to get over here right away!

TOW TRUCK DRIVER

What the hell, dude?

DEZ

I'm not moving. You're going to have to drive over me.

TOW TRUCK DRIVER

Okay.

JAZZ

Dez! Be careful.

Jazz, phone in hand, punches in a number, waits.

JAZZ

(on the phone)

Get everybody here now. Pepita's in trouble.

Jazz joins Dez on the sidewalk, lays down.

They join hands.

DEZ

Now it'll be double vehicular homicide.

TOW TRUCK DRIVER

Goddammit.

30 MINUTES LATER

Dez's entire gang form a protest "die-in" in front of the tow truck. They lay on their backs, in a circle, hands joined.

NEIGHBORS stand, stare.

Children ride their bikes around the "die-in".

It has become a carnival atmosphere.

The tow truck driver, in his cab, LAYS on the HORN.

DEZ'S GANG

Fuck no, we won't go! Fuck no, we won't go, etc.!

Karma, stands in the center of the circle, conducts them like an orchestra.

The Neighbors join in, CHEER.

Lila, in Rosa's car, slowly makes her way through the chaos, parks, bounds out of the car, rushes over.

Dez, jumps up, runs to Lila.

DEZ

We can't hold him back much longer.
The cops are on their way.

LILA

You called the police?

DEZ

Yeah.

LILA

Dez, you need to get your friends
to end this. The police will arrest
them, not the driver. He's only
doing his job.

DEZ

You're just gonna give up?

LILA

We don't have a choice. He has
every right to take the truck.

A POLICE SIREN approaches. Flashing lights.

The neighbors back off, as the police car pulls up.

Lila runs over to the protest circle.

THE GANG

Fuck no, we won't go. Fuck no, we
won't go....

LILA

Kids, you need to stop. I don't
want you putting yourself at risk
for nothing.

She climbs into the middle.

LILA

Stop this!!

Dez watches in disbelief.

Lila tries to break up the protest, pushes Karma out.

LILA

Kids, please, you've got to stop!

THE GANG

Fuck no, we won't go. Fuck no,...

Their chant fades.

A POLICE OFFICER walks up.

POLICE OFFICER

You people need to clear the street. Right now.

Karma climbs onto the tow truck, clings to the grill.

Everyone stops, looks at Karma.

The police officer looks at Karma, LAUGHS.

Lila coaxes Karma down.

LILA

It's really okay, sweetie. We lost.

POLICE OFFICER

Come on. Move it.

She puts an arm around Karma, leads them to the sidewalk.

The protest circle breaks up. The neighbors disperse.

The truck driver pulls away.

Pepita's Taco Truck disappears down the street.

FLASHBACK

INT./EXT. PEPITA'S TACO TRUCK / CARWASH - 30 YEARS EARLIER

TATA (37), dressed just like the photograph, in his boots, white shirt and cowboy hat, commands the wheel.

He glances over at Lila (now 7).

She sits, wide-eyed, in awe of...

The foam and suds that cascade down the windshield.

Jets and spinning brushes batter the windows.

Lila CLAPS.

Tata removes his hat, slips it on Lila's head.

She gives him a huge smile.

TATA

Promise me you'll take care of her
when I'm gone. Don't let anything
happen to her.

Lila nods.

TATA

That's my Pepita.

END FLASHBACK

INT. ROSA'S HOUSE / TATA'S OLD BEDROOM - DAY

The curtains are closed.

Just a sliver of light hits Lila, who lays on the bed.

Dez opens the door, peers in through the crack.

DEZ

Mom, are you coming with us?

LILA

What's the point? Pepita's gone.

DEZ

You don't need to have a truck.
They have tables set-up and you can
cook from--

LILA

- Dez, you can go if you want, but
I'm through. I can't take anymore.

DEZ

Okay, but you're going to regret--

LILA

- No. You go. I'm fine right here.

Dez, shakes their head, closes the door.

Lila sits up, rubs here eyes, stares at herself in the cloudy
mirror.

The photo of Tata and the truck, hit by the sliver of light, hangs there next to her reflection.

The door pops open, in storms Marisa.

MARISA

This feeling sorry for yourself act ends right now. Get out of bed.

Lila flops back onto the mattress.

LILA

Why can't everybody just leave me alone?

MARISA

Because, shit happens. And then you move on. Plus you have a kid that hangs on your every word. Doesn't that mean anything to you?

LILA

I need some time.

MARISA

There isn't time. The contest is today. And you're coming with us.

Marisa grabs Lila's arm, tugs her.

LILA

Stop! I don't need you bruising me.

Marisa releases her.

MARISA

There's a group of kids out there, waiting for you. Are you prepared to disappoint all of them?

LILA

Alright, I'm coming.

INT. ROSA'S HOUSE / KITCHEN

Lila enters to find everyone assembled.

The kitchen table is piled with food containers full of ingredients.

Georgie comes up to her.

GEORGIE

We can't win without you.

Lila puts an arm around Georgie's shoulders, pulls them close.

LILA

I'm in.

DEZ

Let's do this. For Abuelita.

They all CHEER.

EXT. DOWNTOWN L.A. / PARK - LATER

A huge crowd has gathered around five stations stocked with grills, prep areas, chafing dishes and stacks of plates

Lila and Dez, in chef's coats, stand behind their station, ready, their produce beautifully displayed.

Tony, a couple tables over, scrambles to complete his set-up.

A TV CREW wander over to Lila and Dez.

A **REPORTER** positions themself in front of the camera.

REPORTER

Here we are at the *Sixth Annual Taking It To The Street Taco Contest*. Behind me is this year's dark horse, Pepita's Tacos, who just a few days ago had their truck repossessed. Will they be able to overcome their bad luck and walk away with the grand prize of ten thousand dollars? Who knows... Hey Pepita's! Show a little love to our home audience.

Lila and Dez awkwardly wave.

REPORTER

Word on the street is they're here to stick it to Tony, last year's winner, who only last week was cited for food safety violations. Ouch! That's bad timing. I can only say, I'm glad I'm not a judge. They might be needing of a dose of Pepto before the day's over.

The crew are now in front of Tony's station.

REPORTER

Hey, Tony. Do you have anything to say to our viewers?

Tony flips them off.

REPORTER

Whoa there! This is a family show.

A BELL CHIMES.

REPORTER

That's the starting bell. Who's it gonna be? Pepita's? Tony? Or this year's favorite, Jorge's Jalapeño Hotness? We'll be right back after this commercial break.

EXT. DOWNTOWN L.A. / PARK - ONE HOUR LATER

A mariachi band have the crowd whipped up.

The food stations are a blur of activity.

A huge digital clock, mounted over a stage counts down.

CROWD

Ten, Nine, Eight, Seven,...

Lila and Dez add the final touches to their tacos.

Tony, dripping with sweat, stumbles, spills a bowl of guac.

CROWD

Six, Five, Four, Three, Two, One.

BUZZER.

EMCEE (O.S.)

Put down that salsa. Hands up.

Lila and Dez raise their arms.

The crowd APPLAUDS.

An **EMCEE**, in a powder blue tuxedo, takes the stage.

EMCEE

And now, join me in welcoming to the stage, our judges - LA's most discerning food critic, Nancy Weinberg.

Nancy walks out on stage. Scattered APPLAUSE.

EMCEE

From the Food Network, celebrity chef and bad boy, Marcus Waverley.

MARCUS (a dead-ringer for Gordon Ramsey) comes out on stage, waves. He's met with BOOS.

EMCEE

And finally, our mystery judge, social media's, The Phantom Foodie... Who is behind that mask?

A MAN IN A COLONEL SANDERS mask and clown suit, comes on stage, waves.

No reaction from the crowd.

EMCEE

If our judges will take a seat.

The judges sit at a long table.

EMCEE

Bring on the tacos!!

WOMEN IN SKIMPY COSTUMES set plates of tacos before them.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

- 1.) The judges take bites from the assorted tacos.
- 2.) Lila, Dez and gang, watch, nervously hold one another.
- 3.) Tony flirts with the women in skimpy costumes.
- 4.) Wade, in the back, tries to get a better look.
- 5.) The emcee checks his watch.
- 6.) The judges, heads together, discuss.
- 7.) Karma wanders onto the stage, gets escorted off.

The emcee signals the TV crew.

REPORTER

It looks like the results are in.

One of the women in a skimpy costume approaches the emcee, whispers in his ear.

EMCEE

Hold on, everybody.

The woman nods toward Lila and Dez, then Tony.

The emcee glances their way, walks over to the judges table, talks to the them.

The judges confer.

The emcee returns to the mic.

EMCEE

Ladies and gentlemen, we have a change in the results. It's been brought to our attention that there's been some cheating.

The crowd BOOS.

EMCEE

Our winning contestant has been disqualified.

The audience GRUMBLES.

EMCEE

That means... this year's winner is... Jorge's Jalapeño Hotness.

The audience APPLAUDS, CHEERS.

EMCEE

Jorge! Come and get your prize.

The Mariachi band kicks in.

Jorge leaps onto the stage, seizes the giant check.

Dez and the gang, defeated, gather around Lila, hug her.

MARISA

I knew I saw that bastard lurking around. I'm going to find him and kick him in the balls.

FIERCE

We're coming for you, asshole!

LILA

Leave him be. I knew it was a long shot. We did our best.

Wade walks up.

MARISA

You've got a nerve showing up here, you short mother--

LILA

- I can't believe you did do that--

WADE

- It's not what you think. I can explain.

DEZ

Explain what? That you ruined our chances of winning?

WADE

That's not it, at all. I found out Tony was using restaurant bought tacos and I informed the judges.

Nancy Weinberg joins them.

NANCY WEINBERG

He's right. I should have known when Tony's tacos came out tasting like El Coyote's. I'd know those tacos anywhere.

LILA

You mean, we weren't first?

NANCY WEINBERG

Your tacos are great, but the other judges thought Jorge's were just a little better. You came in third.

LILA

Oh! Thank God. That's a relief.

DEZ

Mom, we lost.

LILA

I don't care. I'm okay with that. We won third fair and square.

NANCY WEINBERG

Personally, I think you should have taken first.

LILA

Thanks, Nancy.

NANCY WEINBERG

Which brings me to this, I have something important I want to discuss.

LILA

Yeah?

NANCY WEINBERG

I know a backer in search of female entrepreneurs and I think you're exactly what they're looking for.

MARISA

Is there much money?

NANCY WEINBERG

She wants to help struggling women-owned businesses get off the ground. You would be perfect... Should I make the connection?

DEZ

Hell, yes.

The gang burst into the "Pepita's Taco" song.

GANG

"Pepita's tacos, Pepita's tacos, come on and give us a try."

They hoist Lila onto their shoulders, parade around.

GANG

"Pepita's tacos, Pepita's tacos, come on and give us a try."

INT. LA'S MERCADO LA PALOMA - DAY

Busy food hall, crammed with stalls selling every type of Latin food.

Off to the side, the cast of characters clusters in front of a brightly-painted, clapboard stall. Giant roses, neon tacos and psychedelic, Aztec sun stones decorate the walls.

A banner stating, "Opening Soon" covers the back wall.

Amongst the crowd are Dez's gang in their Pride costumes - the life-sized avocado, taco and burrito.

Lila, in a chef's coat, steps up on a ladder, takes hold of a cord attached to the banner.

LILA

This has been a long time coming,
but I wouldn't have gotten here
without the tireless assistance and
endless encouragement of every one
of you.

The group WHOOPS and HOLLERS.

LILA

There is one person, though, who I
really owe it all to. Well, two.
Thank you Nancy for bringing me to
the attention of the LA Women's New
Business Group, and who believed in
me long before I knew I had it in
me to start something of my own.

Polite APPLAUSE.

LILA

So, the one person I truly owe it
all to is my flesh and blood, my
son, Dez, who has been a constant
source of inspiration and drive.
And a daily reminder of why I'm
here. This is for you!

Dez's gang CHEERS LOUDLY.

LILA

I love you!!!... Dez come up here.

Dez sheepishly comes forward.

LILA

I think you should have the honor.

Lila hands over the cord, climbs down from the ladder.

LILA

Is everybody ready?

EVERYONE

Yes!

LILA
What?

EVERYONE
Yes!!

LILA
I know you've got more in you than
that!

EVERYONE
YES!!!

LILA
Dez, let her rip!

Dez yanks the cord.

The banner drops to the floor, reveals, on the wall, in
glorious violets, pinks, greens, yellows and blues...

"ROSA'S RIGHTEOUS TACOS"

INT. LA'S MERCADO LA PALOMA - A MONTH LATER

A line snakes from the market entrance all the way to Rosa's.

We draw close.

Behind the counter, a team made up of Lila, Dez and the gang
hurriedly prepare food.

Lila, huge smile on her face, approaches the counter, hands a
customer a plentiful plate of tacos, chips and guac.

The customer steps aside, to reveal...

There, manning the register, in a red striped uniform, is
Karma, hair neatly tucked under a hair net. They smile.

KARMA
Welcome to Rosa's. What can I get
you?

THE END