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“Untitled Screenplay”

by

Mailyn Salazar Jiménez

An undergraduate honors thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

Bachelor of Science

in

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and

Film

Thesis Adviser

Dr. Jungmin Kwon

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Artist Statement

My creative work takes the form of a feature length screenplay. The screenplay follows a young woman named Lorena as she moves to Mexico in search of new beginnings. The work is firmly placed under the coming of age drama. Throughout the screenplay we see Lorena go through various changes and personal growth. Notwithstanding, the screenplay as a whole is heavily influenced by the slow cinema movement.

Also known as contemplative cinema, the movement places emphasis on the everyday lives of people. What can, at times, be considered mundane is given importance. Slow cinema can be characterized as “a resistance to action and the movement image and a preference for contemplation and the time-image...”¹ Here, the time-image refers to scenes typified by stillness and long temporal duration. Throughout the screenplay, I’ve included moments where the audience has the opportunity to sit with the characters and get into their headspace. Another important aspect of slow cinema is the location. Rather than merely being a place where something happens, the location itself becomes a character, with its own mood. The location the screenplay is set in is of particular importance to me as it is the real place where I spent part of my childhood: the Mexican state of Veracruz. Aside from imagery, in order to emphasize the location, I made sure to include descriptions of the natural soundscape. Often, in slow cinema “soundscapes composed of location recording, field recordings...foreground the material and sensory nature of matter on-screen...”²

As a whole, the screenplay seeks to explore the struggles of a young woman as she navigates her isolated and repetitive life.

¹ Lim, *Tsai Ming-liang*, 20.

² Lovatt, “Slow Sounds”, 192.

Bibliography

Lim, Song Hwee. *Tsai Ming-liang and a Cinema of Slowness*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014.

Lovatt, Philippa. "'Slow Sounds': Duration, Audition and Labour in Liu Jiayin's *Oxhide* and *Oxhide II*." In *Slow Cinema*, edited by Tiago de Luca and Nuno Barradas Jorge, 192–204. Edinburgh University Press, 2016.

"Untitled Screenplay"

EXT. FOREST - OREGON - EARLY MORNING

LORENA, 19, a Mexican American girl drives her white 1983 Volvo on winding forest roads. She has a far away look on her face. She drives until she finds a viewpoint. She parks the car, stays inside and grips the steering wheel. Lorena gets out of the car and takes in the view. She is wearing jeans, a plain sweatshirt and boots. Not following a path, she walks into the forest and finds a place to sit. She sits there with a contemplative look on her face.

CUT TO:

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - MORNING

Lorena sits behind the counter of a Mexican convenience store. She is slumped over the counter tracing figures on its surface. She is the only employee in the store. The convenience store is packed full of fresh produce. There are colorful piñatas hanging from the ceiling. There are many shelves stocked with various types of canned food and Mexican snacks. CUSTOMER 1 walks in, grabs some peanuts, and is attended by Lorena. He hands over the exact amount. Lorena prints the receipt.

LORENA

(half-heartedly)

Thanks for your patronage.

Customer 1 doesn't hear her and walks out of the store. Lorena waits for the customer to leave and takes out a price gun machine. She grabs an old creaky rolling step stool, sits down and begins labeling the new stock. She slowly grabs the new cans of green beans and labels them. As she labels them, she sometimes stops and stares at the can in her hand. After she is done labeling, she grabs a broom and sweeps non-existent dust. She spends the rest of the day at the counter, with only two other customers stopping by.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - EVENING

Lorena locks up the store and gets in her car. She stays in her car for a while before pulling away and driving home.

INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING

Lorena sits at the dinner table with her parents ELIAS, 44, and VALENTINA, 43. The dining table is small and wooden, only being able to seat four people at a time. The dining room is connected to the living room and the TV is visible, but nothing plays. In front of each member of the family there is a plate of green enchiladas. Nobody talks and only the sounds of eating can be heard. Lorena just pushes her food around.

VALENTINA
(monotonically)
Hija, please eat.

Lorena avoids looking at her mom, but she slowly begins to eat. The family finishes their meal in silence. The first to leave the dinner table is Valentina, followed by Elias, Lorena is last.

INT. LORENA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Lorena's room is small, and the walls are a light bluish color. There is a small wooden desk with papers and pens scattered all over it. The floor is covered with miscellaneous items like clothes, shoes and books, making it hard to walk around. Lorena is on the bed staring at the ceiling. She turns onto her side and falls asleep holding the antique silver pin her deceased friend NAME, 17, gifted her.

EXT. FOREST - EARLY MORNING

Lorena sits on a log in an opening in the forest. The early morning light flickers through the trees as a breeze sways the branches. Lorena shivers and walks to her car.

INT. VOLVO - MORNING

Lorena drives to her work. She drives with a glazed over look as the trees turn into a small town. She arrives at the convenience store and sees a light saddle metallic 1996 Ford Crown Victoria parked in front. She sighs, parks her car and heads inside.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - MORNING

Lorena sees her boss, ERASMO, 47, fixing the till. Erasmo sees Lorena, looks at his watch and looks up at Lorena disgusted.

ERASMO

(annoyed)

You're 4 minutes late. I gave you the keys for a reason. You needed to open the store. Don't just look at me!

Lorena stares at Erasmo and places the store keys on a hook underneath the counter. The keys are on a ring with a bright yellow railroad crossing keychain.

LORENA

(mumbling)

Sorry, it won't happen again.

ERASMO

(bitterly)

There's a lot of people out there looking for jobs right now. And I could probably pay them less than I pay you. So be grateful and get to it!

Erasmo looks at Lorena, aggressively taps on his watch and leaves the store. Lorena puts her elbows on the counter, puts her face in her hands and looks out the window, watching Erasmo drive away.

LORENA

(softly)

No one ever comes here anyways.

Lorena looks around the store and sighs. She leans back on the old metallic foldable chair she's sitting on. She takes out the pin her friend gaver her. She raises the pin toward the fluorescent light bulbs on the ceiling. She rolls the pin between her index finger and thumb. She puts the pin back in the front pocket of her jeans and gets up. She heads to the canned beans area of the store. She kneels down and checks the expiration date on the cans. She walks back to the counter, grabs the price gun and the stool. She walks back to canned beans and begins lowering the prices of the expired cans. When she's done she puts the price gun away and bends down underneath the counter to get a window cleaning solution and old newspaper. She heads over to the refrigerators and starts cleaning the doors. The refrigerators are filled with a wide array of colorful Mexican soft drinks and juices. As she's cleaning Lorena hears the door open.

CUSTOMER 2

(boldly)

Hey, do you guys sell motor oil?

LORENA

We only have the cheap kind.

CUSTOMER 2

Yeah, sure, whatever I just need it now.

Lorena walks to the back of the store where the miscellaneous items are stored. She gets to a white steel shelf where there is everything from motor oil to candles with images of saints plastered on. Lorena grabs a dusty container of motor oil and walks over to the counter where CUSTOMER 2 is waiting. CUSTOMER 2 has his left hand in his pocket and obsessively jangles his keys. Lorena attends CUSTOMER 2.

CUSTOMER 2

So are you like the only person working?

LORENA

(cautiously)

Yeah, why do you ask?

CUSTOMER 2

(defensively)

Damn, relax man. Just tryin' to make conversation.

LORENA

(hesitantly)

Oh, sorry... Will that be all for you today?

CUSTOMER 2

You should reeeally work on your service skills.

Lorena hands over the motor oil and receipt.

LORENA

Well thanks for shopping with us.

CUSTOMER 2

Suuuure man.

Customer 2 walks out in a hurry and peels out of the parking lot.

LORENA

(annoyed)

Dude was sketchy anyways.

Lorena sits down and places her head in her hands again. She looks at the clock on the wall to her left and sees that it is 5:30pm. She sighs as she watches Erasmo pull up to the store parking lot. Erasmo walks in full of energy.

ERASMO

(critically)

So? How was your day today? I expect you went above and beyond, right?

LORENA

I cleaned the refrigerators.

ERASMO

(saccharinely)

Well, hmmm, let me see, you're supposed to do that anyways! If anything you could've cleaned the outdoor windows.

Erasmus stomps over to the bean area.

ERASMO

And here we go again. Lorena how many times have I told you, you are to separate the beans! Black ones go here, pintos in the middle as always and the red beans on the left. And the cans on the top shelf. What did you even do?

LORENA

I changed the prices. I didn't mess with the order of the beans.

ERASMO

Lorena, that's exactly your problem. Don't you see, you have to be more proactive. How do you think I've been able to keep my store running for 30 years?

Lorena looks at Erasmo with a blank look on her face, almost looking bored.

ERASMO

(fed up)

Are you getting any of this?

Erasmus waves his hands in frustration.

ERASMO (CONT'D)

You better step it up if you wanna keep this job!

Erasmus walks away more disappointed than angry. Lorena watches Erasmus get in his car and shake his head before he drives away. Lorena sighs and begins organizing the beans. After she's done she turns the lights off, locks the store and heads out.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EARLY EVENING

Lorena sits on a well-worn dark green lawson style sofa. The living room looks like the inside of a cabin with textured wooden panels on the walls. Part of the dark wooden floors are covered with a red and cream patterned rug. There is a wooden coffee table in the center of the living room with various green plants. Lorena looks out the window from her vantage point on the couch. She stares at the swaying branches of the pine trees. Elias walks into the living room and sits next to Lorena. They sit in silence for a moment.

ELIAS
(cautiously)
Mi'ja, your boss called.

A pause.

ELIAS (CONT'D)
I want you to do your best considering the circumstances. Or did we teach you to things halfway?

LORENA
No.

ELIAS
Ok then, please work hard, I know you can.

Lorena continues looking out the window. Elias places his hand over hers.

ELIAS
You know, I'm here if you ever want to talk about anything.

LORENA
(tensely)
Thanks dad, I know.

ELIAS
I'm not messing around you know? I'm
here if you ever need me.

LORENA
(sighing)
Yeah, I know. What are we eating for
dinner today?

ELIAS
(grumbling)
Hmmm, well we can eat out today if you
want. What do you feel like eating?

LORENA
Anything I guess.

ELIAS
Let's just ask your mom, how 'bout that?

LORENA
Sounds good.

ELIAS
Well, okay then.

INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING

Lorena and her parents sit at the dinner table eating in
silence. The atmosphere is solemn. They eat soup, and only the
clanking of the spoons against the cream colored ceramic bowls.
Valentina looks at Elias then at Lorena.

VALENTINA
(dejected)
We can't keep going like this. Mi'ja
please talk to us.

ELIAS

Don't pressure her.

VALENTINA

What am I supposed to do? She won't talk at all! I can't tell what she's feeling!

LORENA

I'm sorry mom.

VALENTINA

Don't say sorry! It's not your fault. I just want you to communicate.

Valentina starts messing with the zipper on her jacket.

VALENTINA

It's just that you don't know how worried we are.

LORENA

(weepily)

I'm sorry, I don't mean to make all these troubles for you.

VALENTINA

Ay mi'ja.

Valentina gets up from her seat and hugs Lorena. Elias looks at them for a moment then gets up to hug them. Lorena begins to cry as they all embrace. She roughly wipes the tears from her eyes. Valentina stops her, and gently wipes her tears. Elias caresses Lorena's head.

INT. LORENA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Lorena lays in her bed on top of her blankets. She looks at the ceiling. She curls up in a ball and falls asleep.

EXT. FOREST - EARLY MORNING

Lorena slowly walks along a trail. Her hand grazes shrubbery as she walks along. She arrives at a wooden bench and sits down. After some time, she bends her legs and places them on the bench. She rests her head on her knees and hugs her legs. She sits there for a while looking at the dew drip from the trees as they move in the breeze. She shivers in the breeze, puts on the hood of her rain jacket, stands up and walks away.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Lorena sits on the floor of her living room. She fiddles with the keys of the store. She looks indecisive. She sighs and gets up. Just as she starts to walk away, the landline rings. She lets the phone ring two times before heading towards the small wooden table where the phone is located. She places the store keys on the table. Underneath the table there is a luscious green house plant. Lorena looks at the caller ID and realizes the call is from PABLO, 70, her grandfather living in Veracruz, Mexico. Lorena takes a few deep breaths while the phone continues ringing and forces a smile. She answers the phone.

All dialogue in Spanish.

LORENA

(strainingly positive)

Hi grandpa!

PABLO

Lore? Is that you?

LORENA

Yeah, it's me grandpa.

PABLO

(delighted)

Lore! How have you been?

LORENA

I've been good, I've been going to work. How about you?

PABLO

Oh, I've been fine, tending to the weeds and whatnot. Anyways, I was hoping You'd be the one to pick up the phone. Guess what Lore?

LORENA

Yes, grandpa?

PABLO

I have some exciting news!

LORENA

What is it?

PABLO

Come on Lore, try to sound a little more excited. Or do you get calls like this all the time?

LORENA

You know I don't grandpa. Please, tell me what it is. I'm curious.

PABLO

Okay, if you insist so much I guess I'll have to tell you. But first let me ask you a serious question. Do you like the job you have right now?

LORENA

Um, it's really easy. Not many people stop by.

PABLO

Come on Lore, I didn't ask you if it was hard. I asked you if you liked it.

Lorena plays with her hair.

LORENA

I can't say that I don't like it.

PABLO

So basically, what I'm hearing, is that you wouldn't mind leaving it or staying.

LORENA

That about sums it up, yeah.

PABLO

Okay, great! Guess what?

LORENA

What is it grandpa? You've been building it up so much.

PABLO

One of my old work buddies says that his son's company is looking for a translator. He reached out to me cause he remembered I had a bilingual granddaughter. So, what do you think?

LORENA

Uhm, what do you mean?

PABLO

What do you think about moving down here?

LORENA

Uhhh, well

There is a long pause.

PABLO

You know you don't have to give me an answer right now. And you don't need to answer yes. Just take your time, think about it, and call me with your answer.

LORENA

Um

Pablo cuts Lorena off.

PABLO

I've gotta go now mi'ja. Take care!
Bye!

Pablo hangs up and Lorena hears the tone on the phone.

LORENA

Alright, bye grandpa.

Lorena puts the phone on the receiver and stands there looking at it. She notices some leaked water near the house plant. She walks away and comes back with a small blue towel. She kneels down and dries the wet spot. She looks up and sees the store keys on the table, she looks at the clock on the wall, grabs the keys and leaves.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - LATE MORNING

Lorena walks along the shelves dusting them with a bright orange duster. She makes sure to get every space between the merchandise. As she is turning some cans to properly face forward, Erasmo walks into the store. He has a toothpick in his mouth. She briefly looks at him and continues dusting.

ERASMO

Good morning to you too.

LORENA

Good morning.

ERASMO

(exasperated)

Will there ever be a day when you don't
give me attitude?

LORENA

I don't mean...

Erasmus interrupts Lorena. He picks at his teeth with the
toothpick making intolerable noise.

ERASMO

Yeah yeah whatever, you don't mean to.
Hey! why's there a huge puddle of water
near the freezer?

LORENA

(mumbling)

'Cause you need to fix it.

ERASMO

(outraged)

What'd you say?

LORENA

I didn't see it.

ERASMO

You better go get a mop Lorena.

Erasmus snaps the toothpick in his mouth and leaves the store.
Lorena puts the duster away, grabs an old gray mop with a wooden
handle and a blue bucket. She takes the bucket outside and heads
to the outdoor faucet. She fills the bucket with water. She
walks back inside and pours some teal floor cleaning solution
into the bucket. She stares at the shape of the water on the
floor. After a beat, she quickly cleans the floor.

EXT. PUBLIC PARK - LATE AFTERNOON

Lorena sits at a bench. She eats a cold grilled cheese sandwich. She takes some sips from a cup of coffee that she places next to her. A woman in a tracksuit walks by with her small dog. Lorena finishes the sandwich and walks towards the parking lot. She gets into her car.

INT. VOLVO - NOON

Lorena digs around the backseat and finds a notepad. She opens the glovebox and takes out a pen. She leans the notepad on the steering wheel and begins writing. She writes her two week notice.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - EARLY EVENING

Lorena cleans the refrigerator handles and the ice cream freezer. Once she's finished she sits behind the counter. On the counter is her notepad with her note. She stares at it and tears out the page. She folds it in half and leaves the note on the counter. She grabs a red pen from a jar and addresses the note to Erasmo.

INT. LORENA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Lorena packs clothes into her carry-on suitcase. She packs in shorts, t-shirts, jeans and two formal outfits. She packs in a pair of tennis shoes and flats. She has a determined look on her face. She walks over to her desk, knocking over a stack of books on the floor. She opens the top drawer and takes out her pin. She puts it in her pocket, closes her suitcase, slings her backpack on and walks out.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Elias and Valentina stand next to each other. They look worried.

ELIAS

Are you sure about this mi'ja?
You know you don't have to, right?

VALENTINA

Elias, don't be like that.

ELIAS

(confused)

What do you mean? She doesn't have to go just cause she said she would.

VALENTINA

It'll be okay.

LORENA

Yeah dad, I'll be with grandpa.

ELIAS

I know that! I just don't want you to feel forced to.

LORENA

Don't worry dad. I'll make the most of it.

Elias sits on the couch. Valentina puts her hand on his shoulder and squeezes it.

VALENTINA

If anything happens, call us. If nothing happens, call us.

ELIAS

We're here for you mi'ja.

Lorena walks over to her parents. Sits next to her dad and hugs him. Valentina joins them, and all three embrace.

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT

Lorena is seated at a window seat. She looks tired and she slowly falls asleep.

INT. AIRPORT PASSENGER PICKUP - VERACRUZ - AFTERNOON

Lorena is sitting at an empty aluminum bench. She's looking at the people walking around her. She has her backpack on and is tense. She sees her UNCLE, 39, who's wearing a soccer jersey, jeans and tennis shoes, from afar and waves to let him know her location. Her Uncle sees her but doesn't seem to recognize her. Once he does, he smiles, jogs over and hugs her.

UNCLE

(Happily)

Lore! It's been so long! Last time I saw you you still had missing teeth! How was your flight?

Lorena, genuinely happy to see her Uncle, smiles.

LORENA

It was alright, I got to sleep the second half of it and no one was next to me.

UNCLE

Not bad at all then huh? Well, let's get your stuff and head to the truck, it's pretty late and I'm sure you wanna see your grandpa.

LORENA

Yes Uncle, all I have is this.

Lorena points to the carry-on next to her and moves her shoulders to emphasize the backpack.

UNCLE

That's my Lore, always practical! Alright then let's go.

Lorena and her uncle head to the exit that leads to the parking lot.

INT. GRANDFATHER'S HOUSE - EVENING

Lorena and her Uncle walk into the house through the front door. The house is made of cement and the roof is made of metal sheets. Walking in, there is the living room to the left with one long green couch covered with a bed sheet. To the right is the dining room attached to the kitchen with a glass dinner table covered with a plastic tablecloth. In the middle of the two spaces there is a hallway that leads to two rooms and a bathroom. Pablo is sitting on a Mexican style rocking chair next to the couch, he's eating and peeling peanuts.

UNCLE

Apa, look who I found!

LORENA

(enthusiastically)

Hello grandpa, I've missed you so much!

Pablo puts his peanuts down and heads to give Lorena a tight hug.

PABLO

Lore! Took you long enough! Have you eaten anything?

LORENA

Yeah, I ate a torta at the airport.

PABLO

Good, good, now I don't have to come up with something.

Lorena smiles.

UNCLE

Well pa, I'm headin' home now.

LORENA

Thanks for picking me up.

UNCLE

Lore, what's all this thanking about,
I'm your Uncle! Bye dad, goodnight
Lore.

Uncle leaves and Lorena and Pablo are left alone. Pablo grabs Lorena's carry-on and starts walking into the hallway.

PABLO

You tired?

Lorena takes off her backpack and nods.

PABLO

Thought so. Follow me young 'un.

LORENA

Sure grandpa.

Pablo leads Lorena to the guest room.

INT. GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

The guest room is small with one window and the only furniture is a bed and a bedside table. The bed has a mosquito net over it. On the table there is a picture frame with Lorena's deceased grandma. Pablo sets the carry-on near the foot of the bed. Lorena sits on the bed.

PABLO

Goodnight Lore, sleep well.

LORENA

Goodnight grandpa.

Pablo leaves the room and closes the door behind him. Lorena sits there for a beat then she grabs pajamas out of her suitcase. She looks at them and puts them back down, deciding not to put them on. She turns off the light and heads to bed.

LORENA
(whispering)
I can do this.

INT. GUEST ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Lorena wakes up, a ray of light hitting her face. She's groggy and local birds can be heard outside. She gets up and panics as she realizes she forgot to call her mom. She quickly gets dressed and heads to the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Lorena walks to the landline and calls her mom, but the call goes to voicemail.

LORENA
Sorry for not calling yesterday, but I
got here late last night and I was
tired, please don't worry. I really
wanna make the most of this. Love you.

Lorena puts down the receiver with a hopeful look on her face. She walks out of the room.

LORENA
Grandpa?

INT. DINING ROOM/KITCHEN - EARLY MORNING

Lorena walks over to the stove and turns off the gas to the pot boiling with water. She grabs a dark green ceramic mug from the messy grouping of dishes, she places it on a glass table. She walks over to the old wooden table. She looks around the food trying to find the sugar. She opens a small plastic container and finds cinnamon sticks. She shakes her head slightly and opens another container. She looks inside and finds the sugar. She takes the container back to the glass table. She heads to the shelves, squats down and reaches for a spoon. The cutlery is held in a plastic container. She heads to the glass table and prepares her tea. She hears a melody coming from outside. She

looks out the window which looks out to the back of the house. She sees Pablo clearing the land of weeds and grasses with a machete as he sings a song. She grabs her mug and sips on her tea as she watches Pablo work.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Lorena sits on the couch reading over a print-out detailing the job description for the position she is applying for. Pablo walks in. He is wearing dirty khaki pants and a loose long sleeve button up shirt. The sleeves are folded to the elbow. He's wearing big brown boots black with soot. The bottom of his pants are flesh with his boots and secured with twine. Lorena looks up from her reading.

PABLO

(jokingly)

Dang, I owe your uncle 20 pesos.

LORENA

Why?

PABLO

I thought for sure you'd still be asleep.

LORENA

Really?

PABLO

You know, you haven't been known to be an early riser.

LORENA

True, but how could I sleep in with a rooster screeching at the top of his lungs? By the way, I thought I heard the rooster at like 2 AM. Why was he singing at that hour?

PABLO

From what I know, that means that the weather is going to change.

LORENA

Ohhhh. I didn't know that.

PABLO

At least that's what we've always said around here, who knows.

Pablo looks at the papers in Lorena's hand.

PABLO

So you've been looking over the job description.

LORENA

Yeah. It seems pretty straightforward. I just have translate whatever they give me.

Pablo takes off his shoes at the entrance and puts on some sandals near the door. He sits next to Lorena.

PABLO

See, it's not gonna be bad.

LORENA

Yeah, hopefully I get the job.

PABLO

Come on Lore, if he called me, specifically because they remembered I had a bilingual daughter, then that means you've basically got the job. It's all about connections, you'll see.

LORENA

If you say so.

PABLO

If you stay negative then you won't get it. You have to be confident Lore.
Come on now.

Pablo stands up and pulls out a comb from his back pocket. He sauely brushes his silver hair. He leans back and strikes a pose. Lorena giggles.

LORENA

I wish I had at least one hair of the confidence you have.

PABLO

In all seriousness, you'll be fine. There's no use in worrying about something that hasn't even happened.

Lorena takes a deep breath.

LORENA

You're right grandpa

PABLO

That's what I want to hear! Now how about we go grocery shopping, I don't know if you noticed, but there's not a lot.

LORENA

Alright, sounds good to me. Let me just change.

PABLO

Of course! Sometimes I really do worry for you though. Did you really think I was going to the store dressed like this?

Pablo dramatically points to his clothes. Lorena smiles. They head to their respective rooms.

EXT. OUTDOOR MARKET - NOON

Lorena and Pablo sit on a gothic style bench at the city's center park. Next to them on the ground are two cardboard boxes filled with household goods. Next to Lorena is a Mexican style grocery bag filled with fresh vegetables. The bench where Lorena and Pablo are sitting is part of a group of benches surrounding a pavilion style two story structure. The pavilion has intricate railings similar to the benches, is painted a light blue and has an octagon shape. There are tall palm trees surrounding the area. There are planted areas behind the benches with bright green grass. In the planted areas there are a variety of trees and plants. The trees are trimmed to have a square shape and their trunks are painted white. Lorena and Pablo people watch.

PABLO

Are you hot?

LORENA

Kind of

PABLO

Come on, are you or aren't you?

LORENA

I am, but I like it

PABLO

Really?

LORENA

Yeah, I like the warmth

INT. DINING ROOM/KITCHEN - EVENING

Lorena and Pablo eat dinner together. They eat tacos.

PABLO

So what're you gonna do with so much money?

LORENA

Ummm, I haven't really thought about it,
but it's not about the money.

PABLO

You can always give it to me.

Lorena chuckles.

PABLO

Hey I'm serious, we could use it to
go to the dance.

LORENA

Grandpa, I don't even know how to dance.

PABLO

But I need someone who can dance with
me all night, the old ladies just don't
cut it.

LORENA

I'll try my best to keep up with you.

CUT TO:

INT. GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Lorena tosses and turns in bed. She covers and uncovers herself with a light blue bedding sheet. She finally ends up facing upwards toward the ceiling. She takes a deep breath and slightly smiles assuredly.

EXT. INTERVIEW BUILDING - AFTERNOON

Lorena stands on the sidewalk outside a medium-sized modern building. Lorena is wearing a black mermaid cut skirt with black tights and freshly polished black dress shoes. She's wearing a white button up dress shirt. Her hair is pulled back in a tight bun. She holds a small brown baguette-style purse. The building

is made up of a collage of geometric shapes. The walls are made of curved glass. The windows are varying shades of blue rectangles. The building stands out next to the traditional hacienda-style architecture of the buildings surrounding it. The building next to it has a long set of archways wrapping around it. Above the archways are sets of balconies with intricate railings that face toward the street. The building is colorful shades of yellow with orange and white accents, making the interview building stand out as imposing and almost sinister. Lorena takes a deep breath, tightly clutches her purse and walks into the building.

INT. DINING ROOM/KITCHEN - EVENING

Lorena and Pablo sit at the dinner table. They eat coffee and bread. Lorena, still wearing her interview outfit, looks unsure.

PABLO

Don't beat yourself up Lore.

LORENA

It's just that I did so bad. My hands were all sweaty when I shook their hands.

Lorena uses her right thumb to rub her left palm.

PABLO

Sweat is natural. You think they don't sweat?

LORENA

It wasn't just the sweat though.

PABLO

What's done is done Lore. You can't change what's already happened.

Pablo looks endearingly at Lorena.

PABLO

Look, we don't even know if you didn't get the job. You could've still gotten it.

LORENA

I just want it to be different this time around.

PABLO

We'll just have to see what comes of this. It's just one job Lore.

INT. GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Lorena, dressed in her pajamas, sits at the edge of her bed. She looks towards the window. Her eyes are not focused on anything in particular. She has a tired expression on her face.

INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Lorena nods as she holds the landline receiver to her ear. A strained smile appears on her face as she responds to the person on the other end of the line.

LORENA

Yes. No problem. Thank you so much for the opportunity.

Lorena nods some more and plays with the cord. Pablo walks into the room and looks at Lorena worriedly.

LORENA

Yes yes. Again, thank you so much.

Lorena hangs up and sighs.

PABLO

What reason did they give you?

LORENA

They said that I wasn't apt for the job.

PABLO

What's that even mean?

LORENA

They said that I needed to be super versatile since I'd be translating anything from machine part invoices to directions on how to put together ballet sets.

PABLO

Ok...

LORENA

I guess they didn't think I'd do a good job at handling orders from so many directions.

Lorena walks over to the couch and lays down.

PABLO

Come on Lore, it was just one job. There's so many out there.

LORENA

I know.

PABLO

Well then, don't mope around. Oh ok, you can mope a little, it always feels messed up when we don't get a job.

Lorena hugs her knees and closes her eyes.

PABLO

Tell you what. I'll give you ten minutes to reflect. But after that I'm gonna need you to get up ok?

Lorena stays in the same position but lifts her left hand and gives a thumbs up.

PABLO

Sounds like a plan then.

Lorena shifts on the couch and faces away from the living room. Pablo leaves and heads toward the kitchen. Lorena scrunches her nose and brows.

INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Pablo hands Lorena a glass and sits next to her. Lorena takes a sip. She widens her eyes in surprise and looks from the glass to Pablo.

LORENA

Woah, that is some orange juice.

PABLO

Never underestimate the power of a well prepared drink.

Lorena offers a genuine smile.

INT. GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Lorena, dressed in her pajamas, lays in bed looking at the ceiling. She rolls onto her side, faces the wall and hugs her pillow.

INT. GUEST ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Lorena lays awake in bed. The rooster sings loudly outside. She sits up and leans against the headboard. After a beat, she gets up and heads to the bathroom.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NOON

Lorena sits on the couch. She reads a book, the title is not seen. An empty cup of tea is on the floor next to her. The house is silent but bird songs can be heard from the outside. She hears the sounds of someone approaching the door. The door begins to open. CARMEN, 53, Lorena's aunt, walks in with a lot of energy. She has a lot of plastic bags filled with pastries, and she struggles to fully open the door.

CARMEN

Lore! How're you doin'?

Lorena quickly gets up to help. She takes half of the bags from Carmen.

LORENA

I've been good. How about you?

CARMEN

Great! I've been great! Busy but overall good.

LORENA

That's good to hear.

Lorena and Carmen walk to the kitchen. They place the bags on the wooden table. Lorena jogs back to close the door. Afterwards, she walks back to the kitchen where Carmen has found a chair to sit at.

INT. DINING ROOM/KITCHEN - NOON

CARMEN

I got all this extra bread from my buddy in the city. They made extra and gave it to me to sell but it didn't. So now, I'm just giving it out before it goes bad. Where's your grandpa?

LORENA
He's out weeding the property again.

CARMEN
Typical.

There's an awkward pause in the conversation.

CARMEN
So, guess what? I'm going on a trip
very soon

LORENA
Cool, where are you going?

CARMEN
I'm going to visit my husband's family
in Mexico City.

LORENA
That sounds awesome!

CARMEN
Yeah! We're staying there for a whole
month!

LORENA
Wow! Uh that's a long time.

CARMEN
I know, but it'll be amazing.

LORENA
What about your store?

CARMEN
Funny you should mention that.
I was actually going to ask if you
could look over it while I was gone.

LORENA
Uhhh, what?

CARMEN

Well, seeing as you didn't get the job. Not that that's a good thing, but, you do have experience with stores and whatnot. I thought you'd be perfect.

LORENA

Uhm, well.

CARMEN

Come on Lore, do your favorite aunt a favor. I've never been on vacation before. Plus, I'm only asking because the girl that usually works for me is on maternity leave.

Lorena looks at Carmen indecisively. Carmen stares back with hopeful eyes.

LORENA

(Hesitantly)

Of course I'll help you!

CARMEN

Really? Thank you! You were always my favorite niece!

LORENA

Yeah yeah, is that why you brought all this bread? To bribe me?

CARMEN

Maybe, or maybe not? Did it work?

LORENA

Umm, I can't say it did.

CARMEN

Oh well, I'm just happy you agreed. Gotta go now, I need to start packing.

Carmen rushes out of the kitchen. Lorena stays in the kitchen with a shocked expression on her face. A realization washes over her. She runs to the front door. Carmen is already well on her way to the street.

LORENA

(Loudly)

Wait! When do you leave?

Carmen stops walking and turns around.

CARMEN

Tomorrow!

LORENA

(Shocked)

What?

CARMEN

Yeah, so you start tomorrow at 7:00 AM

LORENA

How'd you know I'd say yes?

CARMEN

Cause you're Lore.

Lorena looks at Carmen in shock and awe.

CARMEN

Ok Lore, say hi to your grandpa for me. I'll bring you something from Mexico City. Oh and I'll leave some notes on how to deal with distributors ok? Bye!

Carmen rushes down the street. Lorena watches her leave from the door.

LORENA

(Quietly)

Have a fun trip

EXT. PORCH - NOON

Lorena walks onto the porch. The porch is made of bricks and cement. There is a fence enclosing the porch that is also made of cement and has pillars. There are two Mexican rocking chairs. The porch faces the dirt road. To the right of the porch there is a sprawling sugarcane field that sways gently with the wind. Across the street there are more sugarcane fields. There is one large mango tree in the front lawn. Lorena sits in one of the rocking chairs. She gently rocks herself. Pablo walks toward the porch from behind the house. He sits on the chair next to Lorena.

LORENA

I got a job.

PABLO

Yeah right.

LORENA

Really, I'm not kidding. I start tomorrow.

Pablo looks at Lorena.

LORENA

It's for aunt Carmen.

PABLO

Are you sure you want to do this?
I can talk to her. I know how she is.

LORENA

No it's fine, I want to do it.

PABLO

Really?

LORENA

Yeah, I need to do something

PABLO

Well if you say so. No one's forcing
you to though.

LORENA

I know.

INT. AUNT'S STORE - MORNING

The store is small but well stocked. There are wooden shelves mounted onto the wall that hold food items. The store mostly carries junk food of various types, as well as soft drinks and beer. There is a small cupboard that has items like powdered laundry detergent and individual rolls of toilet paper. It has a square-like shape. The only entrance comes from the back of the store where the storage is. There is a cement counter that runs along a large window-opening at the front of the store that faces the street. The counter is on both the inside and outside and is divided by metal bars. The customers ask for their goods at the barred window. There is a metal box cash box on a stool under the counter. There is a large yellow notepad where names of regular customers and their credit is written. Lorena sits on a tall wooden stool. She looks out the window. A small breeze moves through the store and moves the pages of the notepad. Nobody comes to the store.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lorena and Pablo sit on the couch.

PABLO

I'm guessing your first day wss
so exciting you don't even wanna
talk about it.

Lorena suppresses a smile.

LORENA

Um, I guess you could say that.

PABLO

Did you at least eat any snacks?

LORENA

I did drink some juice.

PABLO

You've never been a big snacker have you?

LORENA

Yes and no, I don't know. I guess I was just so bored I didn't know what to do.

PABLO

I still don't know why you agreed to it.

LORENA

Mmmm, well I guess I'd rather do nothing at the store than do nothing here, because at least I feel more useful over there

Pablo shakes his head. Lorena frowns confused and looks at him.

PABLO

Goonnight Lore, I'm heading to bed my bones need to rest for tomorrow's work.

LORENA

Why don't you stay home and rest?

Pablo offers a sneaky smile.

PABLO

'Cause I wouldn't feel useful otherwise.

Lorena smiles.

LORENA

Ohh okay then, goodnight grandpa.

INT. AUNT'S STORE - NOON

Lorena sits at the counter. She lays her head on the counter with a longing expression on her face. She sighs and reaches into her pocket. She takes out the pin. She rolls the pin around in her line of sight on the counter. She slightly digs the pin into her thumb.

LORENA

(whispering)

Why'd you have to ditch me like that?

She sits up and leans her head back. She slowly gets up and looks for a piece of cardboard. She can't find any cardboard lying around so she walks to the storage room and tears the flap off of a box holding cooking oil. She walks back to the front of the store and grabs a marker. On the piece of cardboard she writes: On Lunch Break - Back in 30 minutes. She leans the sign against the bars. She grabs her book from on top of the cash box.

EXT. RIVER - NOON

Lorena sits under a small tree. She attempts to read her book but is distracted by the river's sounds. The river's width is small. On the other side of the river there is a sugarcane field. Behind her is a dirt road with large holes and rocks. On the other side of the dirt road there is another large expanse of sugarcane fields. She sits on a flat rock. She puts her book down and brings her knees to her chest. She stares at the water with a heavy expression on her face. She grabs her book and walks away.

INT. AUNT'S STORE - EVENING

Lorena watches solemnly as heavy tropical rain falls on the street.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Lorena stands at the door holding on to the frame, takes off her muddy shoes and puts on sandals. She leaves the muddy shoes by the door. She walks to the couch and sits down. She sighs and leans her head against the wall. After sitting there for a beat she gets up and heads to the bathroom.

INT. AUNT'S STORE - EARLY MORNING

Lorena watches sun rays begin to illuminate through the trees. She runs her finger through the bars. She gets up and finds a rag and cleaning spray. She sprays the counter and cleans it. She gets lost in her thoughts and realizes she's wiping very roughly. She puts the cleaning supplies away and places her sign on the bars.

EXT. RIVER - MORNING

Lorena sits under the small tree. She watches the river with her knees pulled in. She frowns and squints her eyes. She grabs some rocks and throws them into the river. She hears some rustling in the sugarcane behind her.

CESAR

(loud whispering)

Hey!

Lorena looks around but doesn't see anyone.

CESAR

(loud whispering)

Hey you! Hide!

Lorena looks closer at the part of the sugarcane where the voice is coming from.

CESAR

Hurry up! Hide already, you don't want them to see you!

CESAR, a young man about Lorena's age, peeks his head out of the sugar cane and waves for Lorena to hide. Lorena looks up and down the road but sees no one. Cesar waves harder for her to hide. Lorena sees the urgency in Cesar's face and decides that she'll hide. She jogs across the road and hides in the sugarcane. They stay silent for a beat.

LORENA
Why'd you want...

CESAR
SHHH!

LORENA
I just want to know why...

CESAR
(pleading)
Shhh

LORENA
Uhh dude, no one is coming.

Cesar looks at his plastic watch.

CESAR
Well they're about to!

LORENA
(under her breath)
Why'd I even hide? This guy's probably a psycho.

Lorena is about to get out of the sugarcane when two men become visible around the bend of the road. Cesar quickly pulls Lorena back.

CESAR
What'd I tell ya.

Lorena stays still and holds her breath, a worried look takes over her face. The two men, CANDE and NAYO walk by nonchalantly,

laughter can be heard coming from them. Cande has a satchel and he pulls an empty water bottle from it. He hands the bottle to Nayo while he makes sure the stachel is secure. Nayo tosses the bottle around from hand to hand. He looks at Cande who nods and proceeds to chuck it into the river. Lorena looks at Cesar expectantly. Cesar keeps his eyes on the men who continue walking until they can longer be seen.

LORENA

That's it? You needed us to hide
for THAT?

CESAR

Come on, help me!

LORENA

What?

Cesar jumps out of the sugarcane and runs towards the river.

CESAR

Help me get the bottle!

Lorena gets out of the sugarcane and walks to the tree.

LORENA

Ummm, I think I'll just stay here..

CESAR

Suit yourself then.

Cesar dives into the river and retrieves the water bottle a little way down the river right before it disappears around the bend. Lorena watches incredulously. Cesar holds the bottle in the air triumphantly.

CESAR

Ha! Got it!

Cesar walks out of the river. His clothes are drenched. He plops down next to Lorena.

LORENA

So, you're an environmentalist?

CESAR

I mean I try, but look.

Cesar carefully slides the wrapper off of the bottle. On the inside of the wrapper there is something written. Lorena, surprised, leans in closer to examine the wrapper.

LORENA

But, it's nothing but gibberish.

CESAR

It's the place and location for their next meeting.

LORENA

What? Why'd they write it like this?
And how do you even know about this?

Cesar carefully places the wrapper back on the bottle and throws it back in the river. Lorena looks confused at Cesar.

CESAR

The bottle needs to get to its destination at a certain time or else they'd be suspicious.

LORENA

What are you talking about? Who are THEY and who are YOU for that matter?

CESAR

Oh yeah, I'm Cesar.

LORENA

Okay, more information would be useful.

CESAR

First you should tell me who YOU are.

LORENA

Wait, why?

CESAR

I can't just tell you everything
without knowing who you are!

LORENA

Well you should've thought of that
before you involved me in whatever
this is.

CESAR

Okay okay relax. Look, I've been
tracking those guy's messages.

LORENA

But why?

CESAR

First, at least tell me your name.

Lorena is hesitant.

LORENA

Lorena

CESAR

Thanks Lorena. Those men are trying to
kick my family off of our land.

Lorena looks confused. She opens her mouth to speak but nothing
comes out.

CESAR

It's just my mom and I. She's trying
to resist but we don't have that
many options. And it's not like
they're making it easy.

LORENA

I'm sorry. I...

CESAR

Don't be. It's not your fault.

They both stay silent for a while. They watch the current of the river.

CESAR

Hey. Can you come here tomorrow and see if they drop another one off? I've been missing some information and the only day I can't come at this hour is tomorrow.

Lorena looks suspiciously at Cesar.

CESAR

What? It's 'cause I work.

LORENA

Your story isn't made up?

CESAR

Promise it isn't.

Lorena keeps looking at Cesar.

LORENA

Fine, why not.

CESAR

Thanks! I owe you big time now.

Cesar runs off and pulls a bike from the sugarcane. Lorena incredulously watches him go. Lorena picks her book up and starts walking back to the store.

INT. GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Lorena sits on the edge of the bed, she looks out the window. After a beat, she gets up and grabs a juice box. She sits back down and finishes the drink. Afterwards, she blows into the box, expanding and contracting it.

LORENA

What did I just get myself into?

Lorena tosses the empty juice box towards a trash can but she misses. The juice box hits the can and lands on the floor. Lorena gets up, crouches down and puts it in the trash. She remains crouched down.

LORENA

(doubtful)

It might turn out that I'm the uninged one.

EXT. ROAD TO RIVER - MORNING

Lorena walks towards the tree with her book in hand. She carefully walks around large puddles in the road. As she nears the river she hesitates. She is unsure of whether to sit under the tree or hide in the sugarcane. She stands in the middle of the road looking at both places. She hears talking. She decides to jump into the sugarcane creating a lot of noise. Panic crosses her face. She remains still. A MAN, 43, walks in front of her while singing. He's wearing white overalls and a light blue shirt. He's carrying lunch. Lorena watches the Man closely, but the Man walks by indifferent to Lorena's presence. He disappears around the bend without throwing anything into the river. Disappointed, Lorena gets out of the sugarcane and walks over to the tree. She leans against it and looks at its leaves. After a beat she sighs and walks back towards the store.

INT. AUNT'S STORE - NOON

Lorena sits on the stool and unwraps a homemade sandwich. She grabs a juice from the fridge and eats her meal. She

periodically looks out the window. When she takes the last bite of her sandwich she sees a young woman approach the store. ITZEL, 20, walks up to the counter. Lorena quickly cleans up.

LORENA

Good afternoon, how can I help you?

ITZEL

(timidly)

Hi, can I uh get a, some popcorn?

LORENA

Sure, buttered or unbuttered?

ITZEL

Um, buttered. Please. Thank you.

LORENA

No problem.

Lorena turns back to get the bag of popcorn. Itzel picks at the ends of her hair while waiting. She watches Lorena with curiosity.

LORENA

Ok, that'll be 20 pesos.

Itzel hands over the coins.

LORENA

Thank you.

Itzel hesitates to respond. She looks Lorena in the eyes for the first time.

LORENA

Do you need anything else?

ITZEL

(quickly)

Oh no, I'm good thanks.

LORENA

Ok then, have a good rest of your day
and enjoy your popcorn.

ITZEL

Thanks.

Itzel stays at the counter for a beat. The atmosphere becomes awkward. When Lorena is about to speak again, Itzel quickly turns around and walks away at a normal pace. Lorena watches Itzel as she makes her way up the road. Itzel doesn't look back. Lorena wipes away some crumbs from the counter.

LORENA

I wonder who's stranger?

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lorena and Pablo sit on the couch. They watch a black and white movie. Pablo yawns, he stretches and gets up.

PABLO

Goodnight, Lore.

LORENA

Goodnight grandpa.

PABLO

Don't stay up too late.

Lorena nods and Pablo walks to his room.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - AFTERNOON

Lorena walks on a road nearing a baseball field. The air is sticky with humidity. She carries some limes in a nylon shopping bag. She periodically switches the bag from hand to hand. The cicadas' sound is strong and almost overwhelming. As she nears the baseball field she notices someone sitting in a white plastic chair in the middle of the field. She squints and realizes that it is Cesar. Cesar's back is to the road. Lorena

stops and looks at him. She starts walking again and decides at the last minute to approach Cesar. She stands next to him but says nothing. They both admire the mountains in the distance. Lorena places the bag on the ground.

LORENA

Have you ever been up there?

CESAR

When I was a kid.

A pause.

CESAR

I would walk with my mom to take lunch to my dad. Once, some snakes chased us out.

LORENA

How could a snake chase you?

CESAR

They're called the Masticophis flagellum. That day we must've gotten close to a nest.

LORENA

Wow. How old were you?

CESAR

I was about six.

LORENA

How'd you outrun it?

CESAR

Pure fear. So what's in the bag?

LORENA

Oh, they're some limes. I'm taking them to my aunt's house.

Lorena picks up the bag and shows the contents to Cesar.

LORENA

You're not gonna ask me what happened?
Or if I even went?

CESAR

No.

LORENA

Why?

CESAR

I assumed nothing happened since you
didn't say anything. Plus, you still
approached me.

LORENA

Have you always been observant?

CESAR

More or less. It's developed over
time.

LORENA

Well, I'll see you later. My aunt'll
worry if I don't get there soon.

CESAR

Alright, see ya.

Lorena walks off of the baseball field. She looks back at Cesar who remains sitting on the chair looking at the mountain. She walks after a beat.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - EVENING

Lorena walks by the baseball field heading home. She's holding a container filled with tamales. She stops and stares at the empty field for beat then continues walking.

INT. AUNT'S STORE - MORNING

Lorena sits on the stool looking out the window with a bored expression on her face. She turns around and looks for something to do in the store but finds nothing. She hears footsteps approaching. She turns back around and sees Pablo approaching.

PABLO

How's it going Lore?

LORENA

Not busy at all. I've had no customers all day.

PABLO

I take it you're bored then?

LORENA

Very.

PABLO

Well, not to rub it in, but I'm going to the city.

LORENA

Really? What for?

PABLO

I'm visiting an old friend. His foot got run over by a car and now he can't walk some odd weeks.

LORENA

Jeez, is he alright?

PABLO

Yeah he's fine, just bored.

LORENA

So when will you be back?

PABLO

It'll probably be nighttime by the time I come back. Will you be alright by yourself?

LORENA

Of course, I'm used to it.

PABLO

Yeah I know, just wanted to make sure. Hey, can you hand me a soda?

LORENA

Sure, that'll be 15 pesos.

PABLO

Just put it on my tab.

LORENA

Wow grandpa.

PABLO

What? I'll pay for it eventually.

LORENA

Sure sure, have a safe trip.

Lorena hands the soda over to Pablo and Pablo leaves. Pablo is still in Lorena's line of sight when Itzel shows up. She takes Lorena by surprise.

ITZEL

Hi, sorry about yesterday. It was a weird day for me.

LORENA

Uh what do you mean?

ITZEL

You mean it wasn't awkward for you?

LORENA

I mean...uh what, well what brings you here now?

ITZEL

I just wanted to introduce myself. I'm Itzel.

LORENA

Oh ok... Nice to meet you. I'm Lo...

Itzel cuts Lorena off.

ITZEL

Lorena right?

LORENA

Right, how'd you know?

ITZEL

It's a small town, everyone knows everyone and everyone knows each other's business.

LORENA

So did you already know who I was yesterday?

ITZEL

Yeah I actually did, but don't take in a weird way or anything.

LORENA

Ok. So do you want anything from the store or did you just want to introduce yourself?

ITZEL

I guess I just wanted to properly meet you.

LORENA

Well thanks, it's nice..

Itzel cuts Lorena off again.

ITZEL

I actually found it weird that you *didn't* introduce yourself yesterday. Everyone's so used to seeing your aunt and Bernarda that it's kinda a shock to see someone new.

LORENA

Oh well I uh guess it is right?

ITZEL

Definitely, anyways I gotta go now. I'm meeting up with my cousins. We're getting ice cream. Do you wanna come?

LORENA

Thanks for the invite. But I have to look over the store.

ITZEL

(playfully)

You're that dedicated huh?

LORENA

I don't know, I just don't feel up to it right now.

ITZEL

Well, how about we go to a soccer game or something?

LORENA

I mean...

ITZEL

Come on, don't be like that!

Lorena picks at her thumb.

LORENA

Fine... I mean if you really don't really mind me going.

ITZEL

Of course! I wouldn't invite you if I didn't actually want you to come.

LORENA

Yeah, yeah sorry, that makes sense.

ITZEL

Don't sweat it Lore. Can I call you that?

LORENA

Yeah it's fine.

ITZEL

Cool, so just head over to the field at around 1 PM tomorrow.

LORENA

(confused)

1 PM?

ITZEL

What?

LORENA

I feel like that's a strange time for a game

ITZEL

Really?

LORENA

Yeah, I'm kinda used to them being later.

ITZEL

I mean that's usually the time they're held here.

Lorena nods in understanding.

ITZEL

So anyways, I'll meet you there. Oh you don't need a ride do you?

LORENA

No, I'm good.

ITZEL

Ok, sounds like a plan then! See ya there!

Itzel walks off with an energetic commotion. Lorena takes a deep breath, holds it in for a while and slowly releases it.

LORENA

What was up with that girl?

CESAR

That's just how she's always been.

Lorena jumps, startled by Cesar's sudden appearance. Cesar is leaning against the store out of view from the window.

LORENA

Dude, not cool. How long have you been There?

CESAR

Not that long actually.

LORENA

Ok, but you could've approached the store normally or something.

CESAR

What? You wanted me to fully introduce myself?

LORENA

Don't be rude. She's just trying to be nice. I think.

CESAR

I suppose. Guess what?

LORENA

What is it this time?

CESAR

They took my mom's truck.

LORENA

(shocked)

What? Wait, what do you mean?

CESAR

They took my mom's truck, as simple as that.

LORENA

How? They stole it?

CESAR

Yes and no, they got it towed away since it had a flat tire and we didn't have the money to replace it.

LORENA

Wow. So I'm guessing if you didn't have the money for the tire, you don't have the money to get it out.

CESAR

Exactly.

LORENA

So now you wanna borrow money?

CESAR

Of course not! Do I really look like that type of person to you?

LORENA

You know, we don't really know each other right?

CESAR

Yeah, but that's beside the point.

LORENA

So what'd you want to ask?

CESAR

Do you really want to know?

LORENA

Yeah.

CESAR

Really? Cause you don't seem all that interested in it.

LORENA

No, I am, I guess I'm just cynical.

CESAR

And that's why I can trust you.

LORENA

Ok... So what is it?

CESAR

It looks like there's already people wanting to buy it. And I'm sure you can guess who.

LORENA

What are their names anyways?

CESAR

The two main guys are Cande and Nayo.

LORENA

So they want to buy your family's truck? Just to mess with you?

CESAR

Basically.

LORENA

And you want to do something about it?

CESAR

I just want to scope some things out.

LORENA

So we're going to spy again?

CESAR

Essentially.

Lorena looks around. She rubs her thumb nervously.

CESAR

It'd really help to have someone there for support.

Lorena looks at Cesar. He looks agitated.

LORENA

Yeah, alright I'll go with you. When and where?

CESAR

In like two days.

LORENA

Ok not bad. But what are we doing exactly?

CESAR

Just follow my lead and you'll be fine.

Lorena sighs and is about to say something but she decides to keep quiet. They both stay silent for a beat. All that can be heard are the birds and the cicadas. Eventually Lorena speaks up.

LORENA

Do you want a snack or something?

CESAR

On the house?

LORENA

Yeah I mean I need to get compensated somehow.

CESAR

I'll take a mango juice box then.

Lorena grabs a mango juice box and a grape juice box from the fridge. Instead of handing the drink over through the bars she puts up her sign and walks out front. She hands Cesar his drink. They both lean on the store drinking their juice without speaking. They stare at the empty road.

EXT. SOCCER FIELD - AFTERNOON

The soccer field has lush green grass. The boundaries are barely noticeable. There are different types of trees surrounding the field including palm trees. There are long logs in between trees. People are sitting on the logs or on plastic chairs. The players warm up. As Lorena reaches the field, she hesitates. She

watches the happy crowd for a beat. She locates Itzel, breathes deeply, shakes her head in disbelief and walks over.

LORENA

Hey.

ITZEL

Hey! I didn't think you'd show!

LORENA

Gee, thanks for having faith.

ITZEL

Come on, you know I wasn't far off.

LORENA

So, what team do you go for?

ITZEL

Oh my friend Tomas plays for the blue team so the blue team.

LORENA

Who's your friend?

Itzel points to TOMAS.

ITZEL

He's the one that's pulling his socks up.

LORENA

Oh I see him.

ITZEL

Yeah, he always pulls his socks all the way above the knee. It's supposed to be good luck or something.

Lorena nods as she listens.

SOCCKER GAME MONTAGE:

- - Player heading ball, sweat dripping from his hair
- - Player stopping ball with chest.
- - Player kicking ball.
- - Goalie clapping hands.
- - Referee blowing on whistle.

END MONTAGE.

Players come off the field and gather with friends and family.
Tomas heads towards Itzel and Lorena.

TOMAS

Sup Zelly. Hi Lorena?

Lorena looks over at Itzel, then back at Tomas.

LORENA

Hi, nice to meet you.

Itzel reaches into her backpack.

ITZEL

Here.

Itzel tosses a water bottle at Tomas.

TOMAS

Thanks.

Tomas sits on the grass in front of Lorena and Itzel and chugs the water bottle. He wipes his mouth with the back of his hand and leans back.

TOMAS

So you've been hanging out with Cesar?

LORENA

Yeah, how'd you know?

TOMAS

Everyone knows everyone's business
around here.

ITZEL

Told ya.

LORENA

Damn, I can see that now.

ITZEL

So why *have* you been hanging out?

LORENA

I don't know. I mean is that strange?
I'm hanging out with you right now.

ITZEL

Yeah, but this is different. Right?

Itzel points to Tomas with her chin. Tomas nods back.

LORENA

Why?

TOMAS

I don't wanna sound rude or anything.
But Cesar has no future.

Lorena looks confused.

LORENA

What do you mean?

ITZEL

Look, he's not going to school or
anything. For good reason though!

TOMAS

Yeah, a bunch of kids always used to gang up on him and make his life impossible.

ITZEL

Eventually he just stopped showing up.

LORENA

Wow, I did not know that.

ITZEL

Yeah, I guess it would be hard to talk about.

The trio stays silent for a beat.

LORENA

Ok, so he got beat up, why's it weird that we're hanging out?

TOMAS

For one, he never really hangs out with anyone our age.

ITZEL

Plus, it's just depressing to hang out with someone like that. He's just wandering through life.

TOMAS

Considering the way they treat his family in general, I wouldn't be surprised if he was hangin' on by a string.

Lorena starts picking at her thumb.

ITZEL

It's just sad to be around someone with no future.

Itzel fake shudders.

ITZEL

How 'bout we just go buy something cold? We're here to enjoy ourselves after all.

TOMAS

Yeah, I kinda want some shaved ice.

Itzel and Tomas get up, but Lorena remains seated. She looks at her hands with a faraway look.

ITZEL

Lore aren't you coming?

LORENA

Hmmm? Oh yeah!

Lorena quickly stands up. They walk away from the field together.

INT. GUEST ROOM - MORNING

Lorena lays awake in bed. She covers her face with the blanket even though she's sweating. Pablo knocks on the door. Lorena doesn't answer.

PABLO

Lore, you have a visitor.

Lorena frowns.

LORENA

(whispering)

Itzel?

PABLO

I'm letting them through.

Cesar opens the door and walks in. Lorena still has her face covered. Cesar leans against the wall.

CESAR

So what happened? You weren't at the store.

Lorena is surprised to hear Cesar's voice.

LORENA

I don't feel well.

Cesar looks suspiciously at Lorena.

CESAR

You don't sound sick.

LORENA

It's a headache.

Cesar sighs.

CESAR

Look don't be mad or anything, but Don Pablo said you just wouldn't come out of bed.

Lorena uncovers her face and sits up.

LORENA

Wow, really?

CESAR

He's just looking out for you.

Lorena closes her eyes.

LORENA

Look I'm sorry I didn't help you scope out today. I just don't feel well ok?

CESAR

It's fine.

LORENA

It isn't though.

CESAR

In what way?

LORENA

I mean I promised I'd go and now I'm flaking out on you.

They stay quiet for a beat.

CESAR

Look, how about we go out and do something not related to my family?

Lorena looks at Cesar. Cesar is looking out the window.

LORENA

Like what?

CESAR

You can help me with one of my jobs.

EXT. CITY PARK - EARLY EVENING

The park is filled with people. Locals and tourists alike. At the center of the park there is a large fountain. There are sellers of all kinds. They sell cotton candy, toys that light up, small robotic backflipping dogs, ice cream etc. There are kids riding around in small electric cars. Everyone is alive with energy. Lorena and Cesar stand in the periphery. Cesar has a stack of homemade books in his hand. He hands half the pile to Lorena.

CESAR

So we're gonna sell these to the tourists ok?

Lorena looks through one of the books. It is a book about the animals of the region. It's written by Cesar.

LORENA

Wait, you wrote these?

CESAR

Yeah, so look, you have to look for the right type of tourist. Usually the ones without kids are our best shot.

Lorena looks at Cesar in disbelief. Cesar shrugs and heads out into the crowd. He immediately starts talking to a young American-looking couple. Lorena looks at the books in her hand and looks around. She sits down near the fountain. She takes out the pin from her pocket and starts twirling it between her fingers.

EXT. CITY PARK - LATE EVENING

Lorena and Cesar sit on a bench looking at the fountain. Cesar has one book in his hand. Lorena still has most of her stack of books.

CESAR

Can I ask you something?

LORENA

Yeah.

CESAR

It's a serious question.

LORENA

Ok, go ahead.

Cesar and Lorena face each other.

CESAR

Did you come along today because you pity me?

LORENA

No. What made you think that?

CESAR

I don't know.

Cesar watches the street lights turn on. Lorena looks at Cesar and after a beat squeezes his arm.

LORENA

Look, it's not about pity. We're a team aren't we?

Cesar looks over at Lorena and nods.

EXT. PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE - NOON

Lorena and Cesar stand in the middle of a pedestrian bridge over a busy road. There is a thick expanse of trees to one side of the bridge and on the other, cramped houses and buildings. Cesar pulls out a small pair of binoculars from his pants pocket. He looks over to the buildings.

CESAR

They're looking at it right now.

LORENA

The truck? Let me see.

Cesar hands the binoculars over to Lorena. Lorena looks in the general direction that Cesar was looking. She sees some men talking near an old tan truck in a tow yard filled with all types of vehicles.

LORENA

So your truck is tan?

CESAR

Yeah that's the one.

LORENA

One guy is pulling out wads of cash. I think they're buying it right now.

CESAR

That's what I thought. Are they handing over any keys?

LORENA

Not yet, they're just talking. It looks like a casual conversation.

CESAR

Let me see.

Lorena hands the binoculars to Cesar. Cesar looks at the tow yard. Lorena leans against the rails and watches the cars go by under her. She can feel the heat radiating from them.

LORENA

How'd you know we'd have an exact view?

CESAR

I come here often to keep tabs on things.

LORENA

But won't people see you here? We're right out in the open.

CESAR

People are seriously oblivious. And even if they saw me I doubt they'd care.

LORENA

I guess. So now what?

CESAR

Now we wait.

LORENA

For what?

CESAR

To see where they go.

LORENA

Don't tell me you put some sort of tracking device on the truck.

CESAR

Of course not. I can barely afford a tire, where would I get that type of tech anyways?

LORENA

I don't know, it just seems like something you'd do.

CESAR

I mean I wouldn't be above that.

Cesar puts the binoculars back in his pocket. He sits down and dangles his legs off of the bridge. Lorena sits crossed legged next to him.

CESAR

We're in luck, he's coming this way.

Lorena and Cesar sit quietly waiting for the truck to pass under them. The sounds of cars whizzing by can be heard. In the distance the sound of music echoes. After a beat they see the truck drive under them and turn into town. Cesar quickly gets up and starts running to the stairs. Lorena follows closely behind. They run on the sidewalk and cut through a neighborhood until they get to a major intersection. There, Cesar walks up to an OLD LADY who is begging on the street.

CESAR

Where'd the truck go?

OLD LADY

First give the cut.

CESAR

Half first.

Cesar hands over a handful of coins to the Old Lady.

OLD LADY

It went east. Pretty sure they went into
the taco shack.

CESAR

Thanks.

Cesar hands over the rest of the coins. Lorena looks at Cesar in
wonder.

CESAR

You gotta have eyes everywhere.

Cesar and Lorena make their way through town. The town is
colorful and full of life. There are shops of every type, from
grocers and butcher shops to pirated dvd stands. As they close
to the taco shack, Lorena pulls Cesar into an ice cream shop.

LORENA

Do you really think it's smart to just
walk up?

CESAR

Well no.

LORENA

Look, I'm sure they know your face. But
they definitely don't know mine.

CESAR

So what's your point?

LORENA

I say, I play the dumb tourist.

CESAR

Makes sense, makes sense.

LORENA

Dude, did you even have a plan?

CESAR

I was gonna wing it, but your plan sounds good too.

Lorena walks over to the taco shack. Cesar hides around the corner of a building while keeping an eye on her with a small mirror. Lorena walks up to the shack and puts on her worst Spanish accent.

LORENA

Hi, can you tell me where I can find the bathroom?

The SHOP OWNER smirks and talks to the other customers, among them, Cande and Nayo.

SHOP OWNER

This pocha is lost.

A customer snickers. Cande and Nayo pay no attention.

LORENA

What is pocha? Is that where I can use the bathroom?

SHOP OWNER

No, but I can let you use the bathroom here if you buy something.

LORENA

Sorry, I'm allergic to corn.

SHOP OWNER

(irritated)

You're just wasting time gringa. You have
"the cactus on the forehead" and still
don't know Spanish? Get out of here!

Lorena acts oblivious and discreetly looks around. She looks at the Cande and Nayo and strains to hear their conversation but it is too low for her to hear. She smiles sweetly at the Shop Owner.

SHOP OWNER

(yelling)

Didn't I tell you to leave?

A LADY walks out of the shop. She looks at Lorena concerned.

SHOP OWNER

She won't leave! And she won't buy
anything!

LADY

What's wrong mi'ja?

LORENA

I really need to use the restroom.

The Lady turns to the man and lightly smacks his hand.

LADY

Why didn't you just tell her where
she could go?

SHOP OWNER

She's not my responsibility!

While the Lady and the Shop Owner argue. Lorena looks back and Cande and Nayo who are now asking for the check. Lorena notices Cande tapping his shirt pocket and then his pant pockets. He looks around with a confused look. Lorena widens her eyes and turns back to the Lady.

LORENA

Thanks for your help, I guess I'll
ask somewhere else.

LADY

There's a place downtown near the flower
shops, they charge like 7 pesos.

LORENA

Thank you so much!

Lorena walks away in a hurry pretending to need to pee. She quickly walks to the corner where the truck is parked. She hops in without thinking about it and looks for the keys. She finds the keys in the crack of the seat. With trembling hands she quickly turns the truck on and starts driving to Cesar. In shock, Cesar jumps onto the bed of the truck. He lays down so no one can see him. Lorena struggles driving the manual truck. As it turns off, she looks in the rearview mirror and sees Cande looking right at the truck with wild eyes. She quickly turns the truck back on and slowly makes her way into another street. Cande and Nayo start running after the truck. Cesar notices Lorena struggling, jumps off the bed of the truck and runs to the driver's side. Lorena quickly moves to the passenger side. Cesar shifts gears and peels out, leaving Cande and Nayo behind.

CESAR

What's wrong with you?

LORENA

What? Isn't this the purpose of the
mission?

CESAR

No! I just wanted to see where they'd
take the truck!

LORENA

Really? 'Cause I could tell your blood
Was boiling when you saw Cande driving
your truck.

CESAR

But that's to be expected, no?

LORENA

Yeah, but with all your snooping around shouldn't you already know their places?

CESAR

Now what are we gonna do with the truck? I can't just take it back to the house.

LORENA

Well, weren't you gonna wing it earlier? Just improvise right now.

Cesar continues driving at a fast erratic pace. Lorena looks at Cesar gripping the steering wheel.

LORENA

Dude, calm down. Drive at a normal speed.

Cesar looks over at Lorena. Lorena looks alarmed, she's holding onto the door handle. Cesar takes a deep breath.

CESAR

Ok, yeah, we don't want to get pulled over or anything.

LORENA

Right, so let's just think things out.

CESAR

I can't believe you did that!

LORENA

Ok, we're calming down, remember?

Lorena looks out the window and to the distance sees the mountains.

LORENA

How about we hide it in the trees?

CESAR

It'll get stuck. We won't be able to even get it in there.

Lorena starts breathing at a rapid uneven pace. She sticks her hand in her pocket and takes out the pin. She begins rolling it between her thumb and index finger. Cesar glances over and sees the pin but then looks back at the road.

LORENA

Do you know any abandoned places we can use?

CESAR

I do, but that's where they're gonna look first.

LORENA

Why not hide it in plain sight then?

CESAR

They're not *that* dumb.

CUT TO:

EXT. AUNT'S HOUSE - EVENING

Lorena and Cesar stand in front of the truck. The truck is covered with a tarp and branches. The truck is parked behind Carmen's house.

LORENA

I doubt they'd look here.

CESAR

Aren't you afraid of getting your family involved?

LORENA

I could just play dumb again.

Lorena presses the pin into her thumb and places it back into her pocket. Cesar looks at the pin then continues looking at the truck.

CESAR

Thanks.

Lorena nods and they walk away in silence.

INT. GUEST ROOM - EVENING

Lorena sits on the floor leaning against the bed and Cesar sits on Lorena's bed. There are two plates with empty banana leaves on the ground.

CESAR

Are you okay?

LORENA

Not really, are you?

CESAR

No.

LORENA

Why'd you confide in me?

CESAR

I'm not sure. I think because I recognized something in your eyes.

LORENA

What was it?

CESAR

A type of drowse.

Lorena leans back and rests her head on the bed. She closes her eyes. Cesar leans on the bed frame.

CESAR

What's the pin you always play with?

Lorena, with her eyes still closed, reaches into her pocket and hands the pin over to Cesar. Surprised, Cesar takes it and puts it in the palm of his hand. He inspects it and gives it back to Lorena.

LORENA

My friend gave me that pin back in primary school.

There's silence for a beat. Lorena gets back into a normal sitting position. Her back is still facing Cesar.

LORENA

She drowned three years ago.

CESAR

I'm so sorry.

LORENA

Don't be, it wasn't your fault.

Lorena hugs her knees. Cesar looks at Lorena but is hesitant to move or speak.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LAKE - EVENING

The lake is still. There are no people. The sky is purplish-pink. At the edge of the water there is NAME's body.

LORENA (V.O)

She was gone in an instant.

DISSOLVE IN:

Lorena remains silent. Cesar closes his eyes.

EXT. OUTDOOR MARKET - NOON

Cesar opens his eyes. He's crouching inside a vegetable store. The store is next to a butcher shop. The meat hangs from hooks, an ATTENDANT scares the flies away. The heat is unbearable. Street dogs lay on the ground panting. Cesar wipes away his sweat with the back of his hand. Cande walks up to the butcher without noticing Cesar. He has a black duffel bag in one hand and plastic shopping bags in the other. The duffel bag has soccer cleats in its outer pocket. Cande holds on to the bag as he asks the BUTCHER for his order.

BUTCHER

That'll be 250 pesos.

CANDE

(grumbling)

That's more than last time.

BUTCHER

Do you want your order or not?

CANDE

Yeah yeah, let me just...

Cande reaches into his front jean pocket but struggles as the duffel bag gets in his way. After struggling for a beat, he begins sweating. The Butcher gets irritated. Cesar is watching the whole exchange with the help of his small mirror. Cande then puts the duffel bag between his legs and reaches into his pocket for the money. As he pulls out the bills to pay, Cesar bolts from his spot and grabs the duffel bag. Taken by surprise, Cande tries to reach for Cesar and the bag but Cesar throws it up to the roof. Lorena is on the roof and catches the bag. She runs away with the bag. Cesar uses the opportunity to run away and disappear into the market.

CANDE
(bitterly amused)
You can try all you want!

EXT. TORTA STAND - NIGHT

Lorena and Cesar walk across the street from torta stand. There is a group of men eating, drinking beers and listening to loud music. One of the men, Man 2 looks up and sees Cesar. He starts yelling at him.

MAN 2
Just sell already!

Lorena and Cesar keep walking without looking over.

MAN 2
Hey! I'm talking to you! No one
wants you here.

Lorena looks over at Cesar. Cesar has a tense look on his face. Lorena places a hand on his shoulder.

MAN 2
What? You need a girl to comfort you?

Man 2 gets fed up with Cesar and Lorena ignoring him. He throws a bottle at the wall right above where Lorena and Cesar are walking. The bottle smashes into the building behind them. The shards go into Cesar's face and Lorena's arm. They start running. Two men confront MAN 2.

MAN 3
Hey, they're just kids.

MAN 4
Yeah, you've had too much man.

INT. PABLO'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Lorena removes shards of glass from Cesar's hair with tweezers. Cesar sits on the toilet with a defeated look in his eyes. He watches as Lorena carefully places a shard of glass on a paper plate. Lorena goes in for another shard but Cesar winces.

LORENA

Sorry.

She pulls out the shard. Cesar looks at Lorena's arm, with dried blood. Pablo knocks on the door and opens it. He hands over antibiotic ointment.

PABLO

I never thought it'd get this far.

INT. GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Lorena sits on her bed, her arm bandaged. Her hand with a large band aid. She leans her back against the headboard, her legs crossed in front of her. She falls asleep. Cesar is sitting cross legged on the ground. He has band aids on his face. He sighs.

CESAR

What am I doing?

EXT. STONE WALL - EVENING

Lorena, Itzel and GIRL 1 sit on a stone wall. There is lush greenery behind them. BOY 1 stands on the ground and leans against the wall. He talks to GIRL 2. BOY 2 is sitting on the stone wall with GIRL 3, he performs a magic trick. Lorena brings her knees to her chest and hugs them. Itzel and Girl 1 don't notice that Lorena is not participating in the conversation. Lorena smiles and nods along. Lorena looks around at the trees behind her. A small breeze makes her shiver. Silent tears start rolling down her cheeks. She roughly wipes them away and jumps off of the wall. Looking back quickly then facing forward again she calls out to Itzel.

LORENA

Thanks for inviting me! I've got to go now.

ITZEL

You don't want a ride or anything?

LORENA

No! No, I'll be fine. You have fun.

ITZEL

Oh ok, bye.

LORENA

(strained)

Bye!

EXT. ROAD - NOON

Pablo drives his truck down a long road surrounded by sugar cane fields. The mountains are near. There are no other cars on the road. In the passenger seat a WOMAN is sitting with her grocery bags. Lorena sits on the side of the bed of the truck. She looks forward as she tightly holds on. In the distance, she sees a figure walking on the side of the road. As they approach the figure, she realizes that it's Cesar. He has his pants rolled up and is covered with mud up to his knees. Without hesitation, Pablo pulls over to give Cesar a ride. Cesar nods in appreciation and hops on. Cesar sits on the bed of the truck near the back. They don't speak to each other for a beat. They watch the mountains roll by.

CESAR

(not looking at Lorena)

I'm sorry.

LORENA

For?

Cesar turns to face Lorena.

CESAR
Involving you in all this mess.

They stay silent.

LORENA
Don't worry about it.

CESAR
I just can't help but think that I've
overburdened you with my life.

LORENA
You shouldn't think that way.

CESAR
Why not? Look at the state we're in.

LORENA
It wouldn't have been any better if
you'd handled everything on your own.

CESAR
I suppose.

LORENA
I'm serious.

Lorena scoots over to Cesar and nudges his shoulder. They both smile. They continue to ride in silence.

INT. DINING ROOM/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lorena and Pablo sit in the kitchen. Pablo is sharpening his machete. Lorena sits across from him and watches.

LORENA
Grandpa?

PABLO
Yeah?

LORENA

Do you ever get tired of your routine?

PABLO

Not particularly. Why do you ask?

LORENA

It's just that up until recently, I felt like I would never escape the world I created for myself.

Lorena shifts in her seat.

LORENA

In Oregon every day was the same. Even here, I felt trapped by my own hand.

Pablo looks up and catches Lorena's eyes.

PABLO

The reality in our heads *does* have a funny way of getting out of hand.

LORENA

I think that I just felt really distanced from real life.

PABLO

You know what? It gives me peace of mind that you're telling me these things.

Pablo continues sharpening his machete.

PABLO

Everyone was worried about you Lore. We never knew how you were really doing.

LORENA

I know.

PABLO

You know something though, routines don't have to be negative, it's all about perspective and balance.

LORENA

(optimistically)

That's what I've been realizing.

EXT. YARD - MORNING

Lorena and Pablo are working on landscaping. Lorena is wearing an old backpack-sprayer yellowed with age. She sprays fertilizer on some of the plants. Pablo prunes the bugambilia tree. The sound of birds chirping can be heard. Cesar approaches from the back. He watches the flowers move in the gentle breeze.

CESAR

Good morning Don Pablo.

Pablo cuts a stem and looks back at Cesar.

PABLO

Good morning. Have you come to help out?

CESAR

I uh, was actually wondering if you'd let Lorena come on a walk with me.

PABLO

When you come back, will you help us with the yard?

CESAR

Of course.

PABLO

Ok, if she wants to, go right ahead.

Cesar looks over at Lorena. Lorena puts down her backpack, and walks over to Cesar.

LORENA

Where are we going?

CESAR

It's just a walk this time.

Lorena looks at Cesar suspiciously. They start walking down the road. The road is narrow and there are trees on either side.

LORENA

What's going on?

CESAR

I just needed a break I guess.

They walk in silence for a while.

LORENA

I can only imagine what you're going through right now.

CESAR

But that's just it, I'm tired of these issues defining who I am.

Lorena looks over at Cesar.

CESAR

I've been wanting to write and actually get something published.

LORENA

But you've been occupied by everything going on.

CESAR

Exactly! But at the same time, I feel guilty. I feel it's a responsibility I'm shrugging off for selfish reasons.

LORENA

But you also can't live your life for other people.

CESAR

I know, but come on, I obviously care about the wellbeing of my mom.

LORENA

Yeah, I suppose it *is* an impossible situation.

Lorena and Cesar walk by an abandoned wooden house. The house is overgrown with weeds and trees.

LORENA

You know what? I think it's admirable that you *do* have aspirations.

CESAR

What do you mean? Anyone can have ambitions.

LORENA

I mean, up until recently, I would wake up and just pass the time. Life meant very little to me because all the days were the same.

Lorena pauses.

LORENA

I was tired of it, but did nothing. It's like I was waiting for something to happen instead of doing something.

Lorena looks over at Cesar.

CESAR
(playfully)
So you were only helping me to pass the
time?

LORENA
No! I do genuinely care about you and
your family.

CESAR
Thanks, that means a lot to me.

They make it to a corner and turn.

CESAR
So, does that mean that you know what
you're gonna do?

LORENA
No, but at least now I look forward to
the future. And who knows maybe someday
I'll be picking up a book by written by
a certain Cesar.

They both smile lightheartedly.

EXT. PORCH - AFTERNOON

Lorena and Cesar sit on connecting ledges. Lorena leans against
a pillar.

LORENA
What's going on with your house?

Lorena looks at Cesar who is looking off into the distance.

LORENA
Is it that bad?

Cesar looks at Lorena.

CESAR

My mom signed the papers.

Lorena stops leaning on the pillar and widens her eyes.

CESAR

We move out tomorrow.

LORENA

So soon?

CESAR

We don't really have a choice.

LORENA

Do you already have a place?

CESAR

Yeah, we're moving in with my uncle.

Lorena gets up and sits next to Cesar.

CESAR

You know, it's not as bad as I
imagined.

LORENA

In what way?

CESAR

I can finally stop wasting my time
trying to delay the inevitable.

Cesar jumps off from the ledge. Lorena looks over to the other
side.

CESAR

Wanna help me pack?

Lorena nods and jumps off.

EXT. CESAR'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Cesar's house is moderately sized. It's white and has a small porch. There's a group of men led by Nayo, throwing things out and smashing them on the ground. Cesar's MOM is pleading with Nayo to let her in the house. Cesar runs up to Nayo.

CESAR

What do you think you're doing?

NAYO

Isn't it pretty obvious?

CESAR

(indignantly)

I thought we were moving out tomorrow!

NAYO

I got a sooner date approved.

CESAR

You can't do this!

NAYO

Yes. I can. Because this is my property now.

Cesar tries to get to the house but Nayo blocks him. Cesar tries to dodge him but fails. Nayo pushes Cesar to the ground.

MOM

Hey! Don't push my son like that!

NAYO

Stop making a scene and get out!

CESAR

Let us get our stuff then!

Cesar gets up and pushes Nayo. Nayo stumbles back and becomes angry. He tries to punch Cesar in the face but Cesar dodges the punch. Mom tries to run over to Cesar but is held back by Cande.

MOM

It's not worth it, mi'jo! These people
couldn't care less.

Cesar elbows Nayo in the face but does little damage. Nayo, even more angered, punches Cesar in the ribs. Cesar takes the hit. Nayo then punches Cesar in the stomach which makes him keel over. He then knees Cesar in the face. Cesar goes down and Nayo starts kicking him in the stomach. With a horrified look on her face, Lorena steps in and tries to pull Nayo away from Cesar. Nayo pushes Lorena away.

LORENA

Stop! Isn't that enough?

Nayo looks over at Lorena. As he's looking he sees Pablo walk toward them. Lorena doesn't notice her grandfather. Pablo is dressed in his gardening clothes. His machete in a sheath at his hip.

LORENA

(fearfully)

Can't you just give us at least 20
minutes?

Nayo composes himself. He has a pompous look on his face. He directs his words at Pablo.

NAYO

What, are you threatening me now?

Lorena looks back at her grandfather.

PABLO

Not at all, I was just walking by and
happened to see my granddaughter on the
ground.

Pablo helps Lorena up.

PABLO

So do I need to ask *why* she was on the ground?

Nayo looks around at his workers who look appalled. Mom breaks free from Cande. Cande doesn't put up a fight. Mom walks over to Cesar, tears streaming down her eyes. They stand side by side.

LORENA

Can't you at least give them 20 minutes?

NAYO

Yeah, whatever, but make it 15.

Lorena, Cesar and Mom quickly pack up bags. Pablo sits right outside the door on a plastic stool. Lorena throws random clothes into a backpack. She finds some family albums and shoves them into the bag. All three of them walk out the front door. The workers stare at Cesar's bloodied face. Lorena holds Mom's hand as she walks by Nayo. There are dried tears on Mom's cheeks. Pablo stands up and walks out to the road with them.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - AFTERNOON

Lorena hugs Mom and Cesar.

CESAR

I'm sure we'll see each other around.

LORENA

We better.

Cesar and Lorena smile. Cesar and his mom start walking to the bus stop.

PABLO

You guys aren't seriously taking the bus right?

MOM

We wouldn't want to impose.

CESAR

Come on Ma, let's accept his generosity.

Thank you Don Pablo.

Mom takes a deep breath and sighs. Pablo helps Mom and Cesar load their bags onto the back of the truck. Lorena reluctantly leaves them and heads down the road.

CUT TO:

Lorena is floating down the river. Her eyes are open, she has a relaxed look on her face. She's wearing the pin on her shirt.

END.