

Korina
an original screenplay by
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1 FADE IN

2 INT. EMPTY ROOM - NIGHT

Two girls are sitting cross legged in front of each other and holding hands. A black, red, and white candle burns between them, casting the only light in the room. They are swaying, chanting.

Their hair lifts slightly off of their shoulders. The flames flicker.

Unintelligible whispers become audible, increasing in volume.

The flames extinguish, casting the girls in a cold blue light. The chanting stops. The whispers grow into a loud cacophony.

The shadow of a man emerges. It moves like a human, but it is an evil, cavernous black; utterly devoid of light.

It stretches across the room, impossibly tall.

The girls are panting in fear. The bigger one, BLANCA, tells her companion to pray.

Blanca is fighting to utter her words as though she were being restrained.

BLANCA
(through clenched
teeth)
I...re...BUKE...you

The companion whimpers and stumbles through the Lord's Prayer as the shadow man advances towards them.

BLANCA (CONT'D)
(with more force)
I...REBUKE...YOU!

The figure becomes the room, eating all of the light.

BLANCA (CONT'D)
(screams)
I REBUKE YOU!

3 BLANCA'S POV

She sees the face of a man sitting in front of her instead of her companion. His hair is a colorless blonde and a tribal tattoo encircles his neck.

He is expressionless and his eyes are the same shade of black as the shadow man.

CUT TO:

4 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Blanca gasps as she wakes up. She's breathing heavily, and her breath becomes more shallow as she realizes she is staring at her sleeping self. She's vibrating.

The low hum of bees buzzing fills the room.

Blanca looks at her left foot, willing it to move and get her out this state.

The toe twitches.

BLANCA

(whispers)

Wake up. Wake up, wake up.

Her foot shoots up.

5 BLANCA'S POV

Back in her body, awake, Blanca stares at her ceiling fan. The blades are motionless, then start to slowly spin and then stop again.

DISSOLVE TO:

6 EXT. MIDDLE CLASS NEIGHBORHOOD, - DAY

It's a Texas summer in 1999. From the POV of a pre-pubescent girl. Her footsteps are lilting, buoyant. Britney Spears blares through her Walkman. She makes her way through a nice neighborhood.

Her gaze lingers on a mother pushing her child on a swing. She watches for a long time as the child squeals and laughs, causing the mother to laugh along. Britney continues in her nasal sexy-baby voice.

7 INT. HOUSE - DAY

KORINA GALLEGOS, 15, almost cherub-like but dressed all in black, lets herself in and practically skips to Blanca's room.

BLANCA FUENTES, also 15, looks more grown-up. She is sitting cross-legged in her bedroom, studying a box of hair dye.

BLANCA

(looks up)

You're sure one box is enough for
both of us?

Korina flops onto Blanca's bed and slaps the 'stop' button on her Walkman before Blanca can recognize the song coming from the headphones around her neck.

KORINA

Totally. My mom never uses a whole
bottle.

BLANCA

Well come over here and do mine first.

Korina pulls a chair from the vanity over and sits above Blanca. They sit in front of a mirror that's covered in lipsticked words, punctuated by a pentacle in the bottom center.

KORINA

(brushing out Blanca's
hair)

So, spill it. What did you guys do?

BLANCA

(smirks into the mirror
at their reflections)

Nothing.

KORINA

Bullshit. You didn't call me to
confess what a slut you are, so it
must be really bad.

BLANCA

(laughs)

We went to The House. It was so hot
in there. John said it was creepy
but that didn't stop him from-

KORINA

(leans forward toward
mirror)

From what?!

BLANCA

(covers her face with
her hands in
embarrassment)

I'm pretty sure I gave him the worst
blow job ever.

KORINA

Trust me, no guy is going to complain.

Korina nods knowingly with false bravado and squirts a blob of red hair dye into her gloved palm.

KORINA (CONT'D)

You'll get better with practice.

Korina smears the bright red dye in to Blanca's scalp

BLANCA

It's so big, and I know he's probably had a million bj's. But it's a fucking athletic event! I don't have the breath control.

(laughs at herself)

KORINA

(a beat)

So is it weird blowing an old guy?

Korina finishes smearing the red dye on to the top half of Blanca's head.

BLANCA

(startled by the catty tone)

What? No-he's not old! He's barely in his twenties...guys our age are infants.

KORINA

I mean, it is pretty cool that he can buy beer, but he basically followed you home...it's kind of...I don't know...

(shrugs)

BLANCA

(looks at Korina's reflection and raises her eyebrows with a Cheshire cat smile)

He said Gary was asking about you.

KORINA

Barf. The ALBINO?! He's a fucking mute. He never talks!

Korina takes off the red-smearred latex gloves and tosses them on top of an overflowing trash can, then plops back down on to the bed.

BLANCA
 He's kind of cute! Besides-he can
 buy beer too.

KORINA
 (reconsidering)
 He does have pretty eyes...

Korina reaches in her pocket and pulls out a vibrating clear
 plastic pager.

KORINA (CONT'D)
 Shit. It's my mom. 911.
 (rolls her eyes)

She jumps up off of the bed and heads toward the door.

KORINA (CONT'D)
 I'll come over tomorrow? I wanna
 try some spells, yeah? I'm really
 good at praying, imagine what we can
 do with instructions!

Her hand is on the knob, barely waiting for Blanca's response.

BLANCA
 Wait! What the fuck do I do with
 this shit on my head?! We're supposed
 to match!

Korina slips her headphones back on and punches "play"

KORINA
 Rinse it out in 30 minutes, and don't
 let it sit in the tub or it'll stain.

Korina tilts her head as she considers Blanca's bright red
 scalp.

KORINA (CONT'D)
 You're a sexy bitch in red. Thanks
 for always going first.

BLANCA
 (rolls eyes)
 Bye, asshole!

8 INT. KORINA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Blanca enters the apartment sheepishly and addresses her
 mother who is on the couch with her feet up.

KORINA
 Hi momma.

DEBBIE GALLEGOS looks up warily at her daughter. Mid-thirties. Orange colored, lank hair is piled half-heartedly on her head. She looks like a mother worn thin.

DEBBIE

(sighs)

Korina, I know that it gets boring here, but you can't just take off without calling me.

Korina is ready for a fight.

KORINA

I told Alex!

(motions to the boy
at the kitchen table)

ALEX GALLEGOS, Korina's older brother is eating a bowl of cereal, trying to stay out of the line of fire.

ALEX

Korina, you know you didn't.

Korina glares at him, betrayed.

KORINA

Sorry if he didn't hear me! Momma, it's so boring here all day! You know I can't just sit here wasting my summer vacation!

Debbie massages her temples then reaches for her cigarettes and lights one.

DEBBIE

Korina, I can't deal with this stress on top of all the extra hours at work. San Antonio may feel like a small town, but it's not.

Debbie puts her cigarettes down and reaches over for her wine.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

There are a lot of bad people out there. Do your part in this family and let us know where you are! OR I'll start bringing you back to your grandmother's.

KORINA

Well if you weren't always gone you'd know about my life!

DEBBIE

(quietly)

You know I'm working for all of us.

KORINA

Why can't we be like a normal family?
With dinners and vacations? And A
DAD?

DEBBIE

I know it can be hard if you compare
us to tv families, but we have love.
And hey- I'm on vacation next week
and I promise we will do all kinds
of fun family stuff.

(smiles encouragingly)

Fiesta Texas?

KORINA

(bitterly)

I bet they make you work anyway.

Debbie's face darkens at her daughter's insolence.

DEBBIE

(spits her words out,
almost yelling)

You ungrateful shit. I barely ask
anything of you! I work my ass off
for this family and you just make my
life more difficult while your brother
has no problem with helping! Tomorrow
you go NOWHERE. You're grounded.

KORINA

(livid)

This is complete bullshit!

Korina storms off down a small hallway.

9 INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Korina bursts into the bathroom and slams the door. She's
crying silent, angry tears. She turns on the shower and
grabs a pair of cuticle scissors out of the medicine cabinet.

She lets herself slide down the wall until she is sitting on
the floor with her legs out in front of her.

She drags the cuticle scissors down one thigh, drawing blood.
She breathes a sigh of relief at the sight of it and drags
the point across her other thigh, again raising blood.

She drops the scissors and lets her head fall back against
the wall, relieved.

Her hand, still holding on to the scissors, has a cross-shaped scar on it.

As the endorphins flood through her she begins to pray. Her words are whispered, inaudible.

Her head is tilted back, resting on the wall as she enters a meditative state.

KORINA
(whispering,
unintelligible)

...Make me free...

The light in the bathroom dims as if something is draining the energy out of it.

Her whispered, mostly unintelligible prayer becomes louder and louder, filling the room.

A shadow passes across the mirror.

BANGING on the bathroom door rips Korina out of her trance.

10 INT. HALLWAY, OTHER SIDE OF THE BATHROOM DOOR

Alex pounds on the door, dancing from side to side.

ALEX
Quit hogging the bathroom, Kor! I
need to use it!!

KORINA
Hold on Alex! Fuck!

Korina turns off the shower, wipes her face, wets a wad of toilet paper under the tap and cleans the blood off of her legs.

CUT TO:

11 INT. KITCHEN, BLANCA'S HOUSE - MORNING

HELEN FUENTES, an attractive, well dressed woman in her mid-thirties flits around the kitchen making a full breakfast for her family.

She sets plates of scrambled eggs, sausage and toast down on the table where her half-asleep teenage daughters sit.

TOM FUENTES, an equally attractive and well dressed man in his late thirties drinks coffee at the bar while he reads the paper.

BLANCA

Mom, why do you make us wake up for this? It's summer! We are supposed to sleep late.

JENNIFER FUENTES, Blanca's older sister, looks up at her mother from a mess of long, sleep-mussed hair to nod in agreement.

JENNIFER

Seriously, mom. You know we go right back to bed after you guys go to work.

TOM

Girls, your mother takes our family time seriously. Show some respect.

Everyone falls silent except for the scraping of silverware on plates.

HELEN

Jennifer, I want you to keep an eye on your sister. Make sure she keeps up with her summer reading list and doesn't watch MTV all day. You know how important high school is and Blanca needs to get her head in the game.

BLANCA

Uh, I'm sitting right here. I'm 15! I know what I'm doing. I don't need a babysitter.

JENNIFER

I can't make Blanca care about stuff that matters, anyway. This is *my* summer break too.

BLANCA

Nobody reads during the summer, or thinks about anything school-related. You guys are so out of touch.

Tom loudly slaps his newspaper down and addresses the girls sternly.

TOM

If you girls want to succeed in life, the work begins now.

(MORE)

TOM (CONT'D)

I represent clients all the time who divorce wives with zero education, zero work experience, who end up taking shit jobs and never being home to see the kids they are breaking their backs to support. That won't be my daughters. You two will depend on no one. Understood?

Chastised, the girls mumble yes sirs through mouthfuls of toast and egg.

HELEN

Your father is right. It takes hard work and planning to succeed and it's our job to make sure you do it.

Helen, who has only eaten toast between tending to her family picks up the dishes and starts cleaning them in the sink. She addresses Blanca with her back turned.

HELEN (CONT'D)

And I don't want you at Korina's house when we are at work. She's welcome over when we're home, but that's it.

BLANCA

Yes ma'am.

Blanca grabs her empty juice glass and brings it over to the sink. She hugs her mom from the side.

BLANCA (CONT'D)

I love you mom. Thanks for breakfast.

Tom smiles approvingly and Helen is touched by the gesture.

HELEN

I love you too sweetie. Call me at the office and let me know what to pick up for dinner.

Blanca pads back to her bedroom. While Jennifer glares after her.

JENNIFER

(mutters under her
breath)
Fucking kiss ass.

12 INT. BLANCA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Blanca is rifling through a beat-up old book and watching MTV when she is interrupted by tapping on her window.

She rolls off her bed and opens her blinds to Korina's eager face.

KORINA
Wakey, wakey, puta. Let me in. The
front door's locked.

13 INT. KITCHEN

KORINA
So your parents are locking you guys
in like prisoners now?

BLANCA
They were being so lame this morning.
They want me to spend my summer
thinking about
(sarcastic, elaborate
air quotes)
"My Future".

Korina grabs a box of cereal from the pantry and starts shoveling it into her mouth.

KORINA
Ugh, that is lame.
(shrugs)
But at least they give a shit about
your future.

BLANCA
I guess..

KORINA
(Chewing)
Poor Alex practically begs my mom
for attention. He makes perfect
grades but she barely notices.

Blanca laughs.

BLANCA
What else would Alex be doing?
Playing *Magic*? Organizing his *Pokemon*
cards?

KORINA
(halfheartedly laughing
along)
Leave Alex's nerdy ass alone.

BLANCA

You're right, he's sweet. Unlike my
stuck up bitch of a sister.

Korina looks down the hall towards Jennifer's door. After
verifying it's closed.

KORINA

(emphatically)

Word.

Korina puts the cereal box down and moves over to the living
area where she plops down in Tom's easy chair and begins
channel surfing.

Blanca takes the couch.

BLANCA

What are we doing today? I'm so
sick of watching TV.

KORINA

Have you been messing with the book?

BLANCA

I flipped through it, but you need
candles and stuff to do anything.

Korina pops up like a chihuahua.

KORINA

Field trip! Lets get the stuff!
The House is full of it.

BLANCA

But it's so hot in there...let's get
dressed up and take the VIA bus to
the mall.

KORINA

C'mon! Guys can look at your butt
when we take the VIA to The House!

BLANCA

Yeah, homeless guys.

KORINA

Just your type. Cmon...Let's go!
How cool would it be to make something
happen?!

Blanca averts her eyes and tries to hide her hesitation.

BLANCA

Jennifer saw the book in my room and said not to fuck with stuff we don't understand.

Blanca notices a condescending vibe start to come off of Korina.

BLANCA (CONT'D)

And she's the most boring human on the planet. Let's go. Mall tomorrow?

Korina sits perched on the edge of the recliner like an eager puppy.

KORINA

(nods)

Deal!

BLANCA

Just give me five minutes to change.

Satisfied, Korina has already zoned out of the conversation and is captivated by a music video of Backstreet Boys dancing in unison.

KORINA

(doesn't look up)

Cool

14 INT. BLANCA'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Blanca scans her bedroom floor looking for an outfit to wear. She scoops up a spaghetti strap tank top, revealing the cordless phone underneath.

She slips the tank over her head while she dials.

FADE OUT:

15 INT. THE HOUSE -- DAY

The girls burst into a quiet, nondescript house. Dusty, with an air of abandonment. Completely furnished as though the people that lived there left for vacation and never returned.

Sunlight pours through the parted drapes.

KORINA

(Looking around)

Man, where the fuck did these people go?

BLANCA
 Maybe they couldn't afford it anymore.
 You can tell it used to be nice.

Blanca goes and sits at the dining table.

BLANCA (CONT'D)
 Wife! Bring me my dinner and martini!

Korina imitates the posture of a 50's housewife and curtsseys towards Blanca.

KORINA
 Yes, your highness!
 (sets down imaginary
 dinner before Blanca)
 And while you watch the news, one of
 my famous shitty BJ's for dessert!

BLANCA
 Hey! They're not that shitty!

The girls burst into laughter.

A dull thud from a back bedroom silences them. They stare at each other for a few seconds as the shock of the unexpected sound wears off.

KORINA
 It was probably just a squirrel.
 I'm sure all kinds of things live in
 here.

BLANCA
 (shudders)
 I fucking hope not. They carry the
 plague.

The thud again. Like something heavy landing on carpet.

The girls lock eyes.

KORINA
 Well now I have to go catch this fat
 ass rodent!

She runs toward the back bedroom to investigate while Blanca hangs back.

KORINA (CONT'D)
 What the FUCK?!

BLANCA
 (scared)
 What?!

Korina doesn't answer but instead walks out of the bedroom holding two candles, one red, one white.

KORINA

Dude. These were on the floor by the dresser.

BLANCA

I didn't notice those the last time we were here.

A wave of uneasiness washes over Blanca. The abandoned state of the house instantly shifts from exciting to menacing.

BLANCA (CONT'D)

Kor, I don't like this. We found the book on that dresser. We would have noticed those.

Korina is looking at the candles with hopeful wonder, like a puppy eager to play with a colorful, poisonous snake.

KORINA

We just didn't notice em.
(beat)
This is exactly what we need. It's a gift!

Three loud knocks pound the front door so loud both girls jump.

Then JOHN MCADAMS and GARY CHILDS storm into the house.

John is 22, big and handsome. His pockmarked skin and posture suggested he was a kid who wasn't always treated that way.

JOHN

Freeze!
(miming police officer holding gun)

GARY CHILDS accompanies John. 19, pale and lanky. Stringy beige wisps of a mustache shadow his upper lip. Cold grey-blue eyes stand out on his plain face.

GARY

You girls playing house?

Korina looks at Blanca pointedly.

KORINA

What a coincidence you guys showed up.

Blanca avoids eye contact with Korina. She tries and fails to hide how happy she is to see John.

John smiles and wraps an arm around Blanca's waist while pulling a joint from his front pocket with the other.

JOHN
(feigned innocence)
Me and Gary just wanted to smoke in
a quiet place.

Appeased by the peace offering, Korina slips the candles into her bag and pulls out a lighter.

CUT TO:

16 INT-THE HOUSE-KITCHEN

The group sits around the kitchen table passing the joint. Smoke swirls around in the late afternoon sun.

John and Blanca do most of the talking. Korina happily gets high while trying to muster interest in Gary. But something about him seems off.

Stoned, she stares at the sloppy tattoo on his neck.

FADE OUT:

17 INT. BLANCA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Blanca sits cross-legged on her bedroom floor with a deck of Tarot Cards she swiped from The House spread out before her.

BLANCA
(shuffling the cards)
Who is John to me? Are we meant to
be?

She holds the shuffled deck close to her chest with her eyes closed for a moment, trying to summon a favorable report.

She spreads out three cards: The Tower, The Fool upside down, and Eight of Cups. She reviews a yellowed scrap of paper to make interpretations.

CUT TO:

18 P.O.V. BLANCA - CONTINUOUS

Blanca scans the paper for The Tower. It reads: Disaster, Upheaval, Chaos, Awakening.

BLANCA
 (shrugs)
 Awakening can be good.

She finds The Fool Reversed: Recklessness, Taken advantage of, duped.

BLANCA (CONT'D)
 (sighs heavily)
 Eight of Cups, help me out.

Eight of Cups: Disillusionment, To leave behind, Walk away.

BLANCA (CONT'D)
 Awesome.

She throws the paper to the side in disgust and picks up the phone to call John.

She holds the phone to her ear hopefully as the shrill rings click by.

CUT TO:

19 INT. JOHN'S GARAGE APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

John's apartment sits above his parent's garage. It's messy, littered with empty beer cans, ashtrays, and discarded clothing.

The phone rings near a mess of video game cords. The lit screen reads: Fuentes, Tom.

The bedroom door is closed. Light seeps from the crack under the door.

The phone continues to ring.

20 INT. BLANCA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Blanca mashes the off button on the phone and throws it towards a pile of clothes in frustration. She picks up the spell-book and flops dramatically onto her bed, thumbing through the pages until she lands on a love spell.

She looks up when she realizes where to find exactly what she needs to procure.

She rips the page out of the book and hangs it on her mirror with her gum. She retrieves the phone from the laundry pile and dials a memorized number.

BLANCA

Hey it's me. Can I spend the night
at your house tomorrow?

FADE OUT:

21 INT KORINA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Korina lets Blanca in to her apartment, obviously a little uncomfortable to have her friend see how small and cramped it is.

KORINA

I'm sorry this place is such a
shithole.

Blanca is oblivious and focused on getting to Blanca's bedroom to discuss the spell.

BLANCA

Whatever! You have a pool.

KORINA

Community pool. With 10,000 little
Mexican kids and their cousins peeing
in it everyday.

Blanca looks over at Alex who is creeping out of his room and attempting to slink undetected to the bathroom.

BLANCA

Hey Alex! That pool is bad ass,
right?

Korina shoots a look at Blanca. Alex is pale and thin. It's obvious he rarely leaves the apartment.

Blanca smirks at him in a half-flirt, half-bully way.

BLANCA (CONT'D)

Maybe you can come down there with
us? I need to work on my tan.

Alex wordlessly goes into the bathroom.

KORINA

Why do you fuck with him like that?

BLANCA

What?! He loves it. I think he's
cute in like, an Edward Scissorhands
kind of way.

KORINA

Dude, whatever. Show me what you're so excited about.

CUT TO:

22 INT. KORINA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

The girls sit on Korina's tiny day bed, the only furniture in the room except for a small floral dresser made out of cardboard.

Blanca pulls the page out of her bag.

BLANCA

Let's do this one.

Korina raises an eyebrow as she looks over the page.

KORINA

You shouldn't have ripped this out.
(reads over the spell)
A love spell?

BLANCA

Why not?

KORINA

You haven't wanted to try any of them...and John already likes you.

BLANCA

I thought we could both do it. You pray, and I'll just do it for the practice. You took the candles from the house, right?

Korina narrows her eyes at Blanca but smiles.

KORINA

You're so full of shit. I'm just glad you've stopped being such a pussy about it. People have been doing this for thousands of years. It's all the same as praying, really.

BLANCA

I guess we'll find out.

The girls arrange the candles, some paper, some honey, and a lighter between them. They follow the instructions of the spell.

While Blanca repeated the incantations, Korina sat with her eyes closed, whispering her own prayers.

The flames of both candles wavered. Neither girl noticed.

It was quickly over, and the anticlimactic ending caused them both to giggle.

KORINA

What now?

BLANCA

Pool?

KORINA

It is early. I bet no one's peed in it yet.

BLANCA

You can be the first one.

KORINA

Gross! Maybe that's how you roll.
Grab some towels.
(beat)
Cochina.

Korina grabs a bathing suit from one of the cardboard drawers while Blanca hunts for clean-enough towels.

FADE OUT:

23 EXT. SWIMMING POOL - DAY

The pool area is a sad landscape of concrete and a few white chairs. But the pool glistens like a blue jewel. Blanca is reclining with her straps down and a towel on her face.

We focus on the shimmering surface of the water, seductive in the San Antonio heat. Korina dives in and swims under the water like a porpoise. Completely in the moment, she drinks in the experience.

Korina spins, kicks like a mermaid, and finishes with a flip before popping her head up out of the water.

KORINA

Cmon Blanca! It feels amazing!

Blanca just waves her hand dismissively.

KORINA (CONT'D)

This was your idea! Let's race!

Blanca flips over in response, clearly more interested in getting an even tan.

Korina dips back under the water and swims like the child she is.

24 INT. KORINA'S BEDROOM - EVENING

The girls are on the floor painting their nails. Their t-shirts are wet around the shoulders. Blanca's is tinged with red. A boxy CD/Cassette stereo sits on the floor playing the hits from the summer of 1999.

Korina's curtains are drawn shut and the lightbulbs in her ceiling fan have burned out. Two shade-less lamps in opposite corners of the room provide light.

KORINA

So you think John is obsessing about you right now?

BLANCA

That's not even why I wanted to do that spell.

KORINA

Sure.

BLANCA

What's that bullshit you were whispering over there? Praying for Gary? Or Justin Timberlake?

KORINA

(turns red at Justin's name)

Gary is a freak. And No.

KORINA (CONT'D)

(a beat)

You do know that John is fucking girls his own age, right?

She looks at Blanca who is suddenly hyper-focused on her cuticles.

BLANCA

(doesn't look up)

It's not even like that. We're just messing around.

Marilyn Manson's *Sweet Dreams* starts playing on the radio.

Blanca gets up and begins to sway with the moody intro.

BLANCA (CONT'D)

I haven't heard this song in forever.
He's so fucking hot. And so fucking
weird.

Korina watches Blanca, amused. Unable to resist, she cranks up the stereo and joins her.

They lip sync the verses together and dance with the abandon only teenage girls at a slumber party know.

The song nears it's peak, and they begin to flail around the room. As Marilyn Manson screams "some of them want to be abused" the girls swing their hair, head-banging, completely lost in the song.

The lightbulbs in each corner of the room explode in their sockets.

The stereo continues to blast the song.

Korina screams.

BLANCA (CONT'D)

WHAT THE FUCK?! Korina, open the
door!

Both girls rush over to the door. Korina fumbles with it but it's locked and it won't open.

KORINA

Just hold on!

The song continues to play in the darkness. The air is heavy with fear and a low hum of whispers are starting to become audible behind the song. Blanca begins to cry.

BLANCA

It's happening. It's happening.

Korina says nothing, she just focuses on getting the door open. She twists the lock open and it still doesn't budge. Fighting to stay calm, she tries again and again. Finally it flies open.

25 INT. THE GALLEGO'S LIVING ROOM-NIGHT

Debbie Gallegos sits up on the couch as the girls come stumbling towards her.

DEBBIE

What the heck is going on in there?

Blanca tries to wipe the tears off of her face, embarrassed in the ordinary vibe of the living room.

KORINA

Mom, the lightbulbs in my room just exploded.

DEBBIE

I told that lazy ass maintenance man this place is falling apart.

KORINA

But the stereo stayed on the whole time.

Groaning, Debbie gets up to investigate.

DEBBIE

It's always gotta be something.

The girls stay on the couch, neither willing to go back in the room so soon.

BLANCA

(in a low voice)

I knew we shouldn't be messing with that stuff.

Korina just looks toward the bedroom, listening for her mother.

26 EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD, SAN ANTONIO - DAY

A week later.

Blanca and Korina emerge from a city bus and make the short walk to The House. It's an older, well-kept neighborhood and the shade of the trees makes for a welcome break from the heat.

KORINA

So has anymore weird shit happened?

BLANCA

No. Has anything happened to you?

KORINA

(shakes her head)

Nope. I bet it was just the maintenance man's shitty work.

BLANCA

And the radio?

(beat)

And the door?

KORINA
 (looking up at the
 leaves of the trees)
 And that sound...

The come up to The House. We see it from the outside for the first time. The grass would be overgrown if a drought hadn't killed it. The straw lawn blends into the tan brick. It is a house devoid of color and life.

27 INT. THE HOUSE (KITCHEN) - DAY

Gary and John are already at the kitchen table. Two six packs of Zima sit in their plastic bags. Smoke hangs in the air.

Blanca and Korina let themselves in.

GARY
 Hey kids. Party's in here.

Korina and Blanca sit down and both reach for a drink. Blanca pulls jolly ranchers out of her pocket and pops one in her bottle. She tosses one at Korina.

BLANCA
 Jennifer showed me.

KORINA
 Cool. I gotta drink these fast anyway. I'm getting a haircut later.

JOHN
 You're not in any hurry, are you Blanca?
 (winks)

BLANCA
 I mean, I should go back with Kor...

KORINA
 (interrupts)
 I can handle a bus ride. It's whatever. Let's smoke already.

The two pairs smoke and drink. It doesn't take long before the girls are feeling a healthy buzz.

BLANCA
 (tipsy and boldly)
 Let's play truth or dare!

KORINA
 Yesss!
 (MORE)

KORINA (CONT'D)

(clapping)

Blanca! Truth or Dare?

BLANCA

(without hesitation)

Dare.

KORINA

(a mean gleam in her
eye)

Go sit in the back bedroom alone for
five minutes.

BLANCA

For real? That's no fun.

JOHN

I'll come with you.

BLANCA

(a half smile playing
on her lips)

I don't know...It's pretty scary in
there.

JOHN

I'm a big boy.

He grabs her hand and leads her to the back room.

Alone and bored, Korina turns her attention to Gary.

KORINA

Truth or Dare?

GARY

Truth.

KORINA

How many girlfriends have you had?

GARY

(shrugs, avoids eye
contact)

I dunno, few I guess.

Korina leans back and throws her legs across his lap.

KORINA

My turn. Truth.

GARY
 (takes a long pull
 from his Zima)
 How many guys you been with.

Korina throws her head back and laughs.

KORINA
 So, so many dudes.

Her sarcasm is lost on him.

KORINA (CONT'D)
 Why, you want on my list?

Not bothering to wait for a response she scoots further over until she's in his lap and kisses him.

They make out briefly but when Korina tries to come up for air he stays glued to her. His hands wander hungrily up and down her body and she tries to playfully squirm away.

KORINA (CONT'D)
 (gently)
 Hey, hey slow down.

He ignores her and continues to aggressively kiss and grope her like he's having a completely separate experience than she is.

Korina finds herself pinned underneath him as she tries more forcefully to extract herself from his embrace.

GARY
 You're so pretty.
 (covers her neck and
 face in sloppy kisses,
 hands everywhere)

KORINA
 (scared)
 Gary. Stop. Get the fuck OFF OF
 ME!

CUT TO:

28 INT. THE HOUSE-BACK BEDROOM

BANG BANG BANG on the door. Korina's voice comes through from the other side.

KORINA
 Blanca! I need to go. Are you
 staying or what?

Blanca and John scramble into their clothes.

BLANCA
 (pulls on her jeans)
 I'm coming with you, hang on.

Blanca opens the door and is startled to see Korina's eyes and nose are red.

She looks accusingly at Gary.

He is sitting on the couch smoking a joint. His neck hangs forward and his shoulders are rounded. His cold eyes are impossible to read.

She takes Korina's hand and looks back at John.

He tries to smile, but it feels about as reassuring as Gary looks.

BLANCA (CONT'D)
 Later.

They leave the men in the house, letting the screen door slam behind them.

CUT TO:

29 INT. THE FUENTES LIVING ROOM - EVENING

The family is sitting around watching a re-run of Saturday Night Live. It is the wholesome antithesis to Blanca's summer adventures.

Sarah Michelle Gellar announces the Backstreet Boys during the opening monologue.

BLANCA
 Omigod I bet Kor is watching and recording this. She'll never admit it, but she loves bubblegum pop.

TOM
 We haven't seen much of her lately.

BLANCA
 Her mom is making her help her grandma out a lot.
 (stuffs popcorn in her mouth)
 She's getting senile.

HELEN
 That's sweet of her.

JENNIFER

I'm just glad you and your little
freaky friend aren't hanging around
the house all day anymore.

(sneering at Blanca)

She eats my cereal and she smells
like cigarettes.

BLANCA

She can't help it if her mom smokes.

HELEN

(ready to change the
subject)

Blanca, Cindy at work told me about
a creative writing camp at UTSA next
week. There's still time to get you
in. Interested?

Blanca's reflex is to protest, but she reconsiders.

BLANCA

Actually, yeah. That'd be cool.
It's too hot outside to do anything
anyway.

Tom looks over at Helen, pleased. Blanca burrows into the
couch, content to embrace the mundane.

CUT TO:

30 INT.DEBBIE GALLEGOS' BEDROOM - EVENING

Korina and Debbie sit on Debbie's bed folding laundry and
watching SNL.

DEBBIE

(smiling as she watches
Korina drool over
the Backstreet Boys)
Which one's your favorite?

KORINA

I don't like any of them.

DEBBIE

Korina, I'm your mom. Not one of
your little punk friends. I don't
judge.

KORINA

Justin. He's too good for Britney.

Debbie chuckles and shakes her head.

DEBBIE

I used to think that about Sonny and Cher. But Sonny wasn't nearly as cute as Dustin.

KORINA

Justin.

DEBBIE

Same difference.

(she puts a folded
shirt down)

So!

(takes the laundry
out of Korina's hands
and holds them)

I'm off for nine whole days! What do you want to do tomorrow?

Korina sits, enjoying her mother's attention and the warmth of Debbie's hands around her own.

KORINA

Ummm...

DEBBIE

Whatever you want! Alex picks the next day. Tomorrow's all you.

KORINA

(ticks list off on
her fingers)

Let's go shopping, eat at Olive Garden and then go see a movie at the Quarry.

DEBBIE

Throw in Amy's Ice Cream and I think we have our first day planned.

Debbie looks at her daughter, absorbing what she's been missing while she fights to keep her family afloat.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

You're a good girl, Korina.

(strokes her hair)

I'm proud of you.

(a beat)

I hate that I'm not around enough, and you're dad's not here at all.

KORINA

It's ok, ma. Cmon.

(waves her hand away)

Don't get all weird.

DEBBIE

All mom's are weird to their teenage daughters. I love you, Kor. You're a joyful, special girl.

KORINA

All moms say that to their teenage daughters.

(lays her head on
Debbie)

I love you too, ma.

CUT TO:

31 INT. KORINA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Soft morning light falls on Korina's empty bed.

DEBBIE

Kor? What do you want for breakfast?

She pokes her head in the bedroom.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

French toast?

She looks around the empty room. Korina's shoes are by the bed. Her purse hangs on the doorknob.

Debbie goes to the bathroom.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Korina???

Panic begins to prickle at the back of her neck.

She swings the door open into Alex's room.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Alex! Where's your sister.

ALEX

(picks his head up)

What? Check her room.

Debbie starts to FLY through the apartment. She dials Korina's pager number. It vibrates in Korina's purse.

DESPERATE, she opens the apartment door and RUNS down the empty breezeway.

DEBBIE

KORINA!!

CUT TO:

32 INT BLANCA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Morning light falls on the back of Blanca's sleeping head. A stuffed animal at the foot of her bed rocks back and forth as she sleeps.

The door bell rings followed by insistent knocking. Muffled voices. Alarm.

Blanca sits up in bed, listening to the unusual morning sounds.

The door opens and Helen's face appears.

HELEN

Blanca, get up baby. Korina's mom is here.

BLANCA

Ms. Gallegos is here? Why? Where's Kor?

HELEN

(looking deeply
uncomfortable)

Just hurry and get dressed.

CUT TO:

33 INT. KITCHEN TABLE. - MOMENTS LATER

Debbie, pale, scared, is sitting at the kitchen table flanked by two cops.

Tom is making coffee, his expression grim.

BLANCA

What's going on?

The young FEMALE OFFICER takes charge and addresses Blanca first.

FEMALE OFFICER

Korina is missing. She left sometime last night and no one has heard anything from her. All of her belongings were left in her room. Do you know anything about where she might have gone, who she might have been meeting?

Reeling from the news and the questions, Blanca gapes at the adults.

The MALE OFFICER, less patient, intervenes.

MALE OFFICER

The first 48 hours are critical. We need every bit of information we can get to find your friend.

BLANCA

I...I don't know. She didn't say anything about leaving or meeting anyone.

Debbie reaches across the table and takes Blanca's hands in her own. In this moment, all of her hope rests in the lap of the girl sitting in front of her.

34 BLANCA'S P.O.V.

DEBBIE

Mija. You're not in any trouble. Anything you say is to help Kor, and won't be held against you.

(Her eyes plead with Blanca's)

I'm begging you. Just tell us.

CUT TO:

35 FLASHBACK - BLANCA'S POV

Hands moving over bare skin glistening with sweat.

Korina laughing and smoking in The House.

Korina swimming in the pool with childlike abandon.

Gary, hunched over and silent.

CUT TO:

36 INT. KITCHEN TABLE

Debbie's tired face falls.

BLANCA

I'm sorry, Ms. Gallegos, I really don't know.

(long pause)

I know she'll be back soon. She's probably just scared she's in trouble.

DEBBIE

(voice thick with bitter disappointment)

Ok then.

(MORE)

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
 (releases her hands)
 I hope you're right Blanca.

The officers push their chairs back and stand up to leave.

HELEN
 We'll keep you all in our prayers.

Frustration and fear bubble over.

DEBBIE
 (between her teeth)
 FUCK your prayers.

She SLAMS her fists down on the table, INCREDULOUS;helpless.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
 (looking up at all
 the people who aren't
 doing enough)
 WHERE'S MY GIRL??!!

DISSOLVE TO:

37 INT. BLANCA'S BEDROOM - LATER

Blanca is sitting on her bed, absently turning a teddy bear over and over in her hands.

JENNIFER
 (hovering in doorway)
 What the fuck was that? Do you know
 where she went?

BLANCA
 We haven't talked much since...

38 FLASHBACK BLANCA'S POV

Korina's face, eyes and nose red. Hair disheveled.

Gary hunched over and smoking.

BLANCA
 (she hesitates,
 catching herself)
 Her grandmother got sick.

JENNIFER
 But you two are joined at the hip.
 She didn't say anything?

BLANCA

I mean...she was messing with some spells. She was going to try a new one...

Jennifer's face darkens.

JENNIFER

(shakes her head)

Blanca you can't mess with that shit. I warned you. You guys don't know what you're doing. Fuck.

Jennifer sits back on the bed.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Poor Kid.

Considering the magnitude, she looks over at her sister. She inches closer but stops short of making physical contact.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

You ok? This must be super weird for you. I can't believe she didn't say anything to you...

BLANCA

(still clutching the teddy bear)

Whatever

(an attempt sounding flippant)

She wasn't really talking to me much anyway. I'm sure she'll show up. She's probably just scared her mom will kill her for ruining their vacation.

JENNIFER

Well it's definitely time for you to make some new friends. This whole sullen girl

(mimes air quotes)

Goth shit is starting to get really old.

Jennifer gets up and pats her sister on the head.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

(lingers in the doorway looking Blanca up and down)

I'm taking you school clothes shopping this year. We're gonna get some color on you.

Blanca doesn't look up.

CUT TO:

39 INT. EMPTY ROOM - NIGHT

Blanca and Korina are sitting in the empty room again, illuminated by candle light. The mood is still, HUSHED.

KORINA

I want to do a spell of protection.

BLANCA

Aren't you ready to stop this? I'm pretty sure you're in deep shit.

KORINA

And you're not?

The light flickers. The room darkens, barely perceptible.

BLANCA

Kor, I'm sorry. I should've called you that day...I was so scared when your mom came over.

A beat.

BLANCA (CONT'D)

Where did you go?

Korina begins to WEEP silent tears.

BLANCA (CONT'D)

I'm not mad, I just wish you'dve told me...I'm so glad you're back.

Korina CRIES harder.

BLANCA (CONT'D)

Kor, what's wrong?

Korina starts to pull at her hair. Her eyes are wide and locked on Blanca's in an attempt to communicate, but all she can do is PULL at her hair, her clothes, her neck.

The sobbing has turned into a GUTTURAL MOAN. She doesn't pause to breathe. It is just a long, unending note. UNNATURAL and TERRIFYING.

BLANCA (CONT'D)

(crying, scared)

Stop it! Kor!! STOP IT!! PLEASE!!

She scuttles backwards away from Korina who is locked into her SCREAM.

CUT TO:

40 INT. BEDROOM CONTINUOUS - NIGHT-BLANCA'S POV

Blanca is staring at her bedroom ceiling relieved that what she just experienced was a nightmare.

She quickly realizes that she can't move. She can't speak. She's completely conscious and TRAPPED in her body.

A black shadow begins to spread across the ceiling like water seeping across paper.

She tries to scream.

BLANCA
(barely a whisper)
Ughhhh...hhhhhhhhh

Next to her in bed, TRENT PRAEGER-mid thirties, blond, handsome, wakes up and notices her struggling. He tries to shake her awake.

We realize this is a grown Blanca. It is present day.

TRENT
Babe. Wake up.
(shakes her harder)
BLANCA.

Blanca takes a huge gulp of air and looks over at Trent breathing heavily.

BLANCA
Thank you.
(gasping)
Holy shit.
(a beat while she
remembers her dream)
That hasn't happened to me in years.

TRENT
This has happened before? That was insane. You sounded like you were choking.

BLANCA
When I was younger I used to have these crazy, out of body sleep paralysis type dreams. They're terrifying but totally normal. I thought I outgrew it.

TRENT

(sits up to look more
carefully at her)
Do I need to be concerned? Is this
like a sleepwalking situation?

BLANCA

No, no. I'm sure it's just work
stress. You can back to sleep. I'm
sorry I woke you up.

He KISSES her, plops back down and ROLLS over, almost
immediately back to sleep.

Blanca stares at the spot where the shadow was growing on
the ceiling.

41 INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

A beautiful, modern kitchen. Granite gleams in soft morning
light. A bulletin board with neat writing plots the family
schedule. The timer on the Keurig goes off, and dutifully
makes the days coffee.

Blanca enters and begins buzzing around the kitchen. Trent
emerges not far behind.

BLANCA

Eggs?

TRENT

I can do cereal.
(A beat while he
watches her crack
eggs.)
Aren't you tired? You had a rough
night.

BLANCA

A little. But Bella's got a big
day..
(stops whisking the
eggs and turns to
Trent)
Thanks for talking me through that
last night by the way.

TRENT

(eating and scrolling
through his phone)
No problem babe.

Blanca stares at him in a silent scoff long enough for him
to look up.

TRENT (CONT'D)

What? I asked if you were ok.

BLANCA

And immediately rolled over and passed out. Which I am used to. But this was different.

Trent laughs and gets up and wraps his arms around Blanca apologetically.

TRENT

Aw I'm just not used to my tough wifey having nightmares.

Blanca leans into him and relaxes.

BLANCA

This wasn't just a nightmare. I haven't had sleep paralysis in years.
(long pause)
And I dreamt of Korina too.

TRENT

Who?

BLANCA

Korina. Remember that crazy story I told you? She disappeared when we were kids.

Trent releases her and returns to his cereal.

TRENT

It rings a bell. You didn't act like it was a big deal.

BLANCA

I mean, I guess it wasn't then. But shit...god we must have been around the same age as Bella.
(remembering)
She was my best friend that summer.

TRENT

Damn. That's crazy.
(puts down phone)
Hey, you've had a rough week at work. We haven't had time to ourselves in forever. Lets go out tonight.

BLANCA

That...sounds perfect-

BELLA PRAEGER, long-limbed, brunette and around 15 strolls in.

BELLA
 What sounds perfect?
 (plops down with her
 phone, texting)
 Don't burn the eggs, mom. I want
 coffee too.

BLANCA
 Dad and I are going out tonight.
 (sets her plate in
 front of her)

BELLA
 (sarcasm)
 Oh no. Please. Don't leave me.

Bella scoops up the family cat, Ginger and snuggles her. The bell on her collar chimes merrily.

TRENT
 We will have the cameras on. And we
 track you. And we will call you
 every half hour.

BELLA
 Party in the backyard.

Blanca sits down with her own eggs and avocado toast. She puts a glass of

BLANCA
 Bella, I know you like to joke around,
 but you know how important trust is
 with us-right? And wash your hands.

Bella rolls her eyes but doesn't look up from her phone.

BELLA
 Mom. I'm a good kid. I want to get
 into Wellesley.
 (finally looks up at
 her mother)
 I'm fine.

BLANCA
 I know you're a good girl. It's
 just-life is so much faster for you
 guys than when I was a kid.

Bella scoffs through her eggs.

BELLA

Yeah. Aunt Jenny told me about when you were a kid. Goth phase much?

Trent raises an eyebrow but says nothing.

BLANCA

You know Aunt Jenny is crazy.

FADE OUT:

42 INT. BLANCA'S CAR - LATER THAT MORNING

Dressed in tailored suit and made up for work, Blanca guides her BMW through the upscale neighborhood. She listens to NPR, then surfs through the stations looking for more upbeat commute music. She lands on the intro to Violet by Hole.

Her hand stops, drops back onto the steering wheel. We watch her profile as she listens, remembering.

CUT TO:

43 INT. KORINA'S BEDROOM-FLASHBACK

Violet plays on Korina's stereo. Blanca is putting on makeup while Korina attempts to make her hair into faux dreadlocks. Korina's pager goes off. They both look at it.

BLANCA

Who is it?

Korina looks at the number. Waits a second too long to respond.

KORINA

Ha. It's John. He's probably with Gary.

BLANCA

(trying to act normal)

I didn't know he had your number.

KORINA

Relax...they just want to hang out here because there's a pool.

CUT TO:

44 INT. BLANCA'S CAR-CONTINUOUS

BELLA

(from the backseat)

MOM! What the hell. GO!

The light Blanca was sitting at had run through green and was yellow when she finally hit the gas and snapped out of her memory.

Bella returns to her earbuds and rests her head against the window.

Blanca takes a long look at her daughter in the rearview mirror.

CUT TO:

45 INT. BLANCA'S OFFICE - DAY

Blanca's office is a modern; expensively furnished. An appropriate balance of unfinished wood, hanging plants and white surfaces.

Blanca is at her desk facing her large iMac monitor. It is black. All we see is her reflection. She seems to be thinking.

ABBY CHASE, pretty, professional, and Blanca's best work friend stops in the doorway.

ABBY
Meditating?

BLANCA
(startled)
Ugh. I don't know why I'm so jumpy.

ABBY
It's a big pitch. This airline could make our entire year. You ready?
Of course you are. Boss Bitch Blanca.
I'll see in there in
(checks watch)
Shit thirty minutes!

Abby's quick, high-heeled strides CLACK down the hall.

Blanca puts on her glasses and types KORINA GALLEGOS 1999 into the search engine.

She INHALES sharply as photos of Korina punctuate the information on the screen. We focus on Blancas eyes. Her pupils expand. We watch her scroll through the information through the reflection of her glasses. We hear the clicking of the cursor.

DISSOLVE TO:

WHAT WE SEE NARROWS INTO ONLY THE SCREEN. THE WORDS AND IMAGES FADE INTO STATIC. THE STATIC SOUNDS LIKE WHISPERS. ABRUPTLY THE SCREEN CHANGES TO A LOCAL NEWS BROADCAST.

46 INT. BAR - THAT NIGHT

A bartender puts down the remote after changing the channel.

We see that we are in a trendy bar. Warm light, edison lightbulbs, exposed pipes. Trent and Blanca sit at a table, a candle between them.

TRENT

Why do you look bummed? We're celebrating.

BLANCA

Abby did most of the talking.

(gulps the last of
her whiskey)

I just wish I wasn't so off today.

I didn't like how it felt to not
take the lead.

Blanca looks at her husband's kind, open face. Her shoulders relax slightly.

BLANCA (CONT'D)

How was practice? Are the Mustangs
going to win district again this
year?

Trent's face lights up. A star player in high school, his role as coach is a source of joy in his life. He passionately launches into a one-sided discussion of the nuances of the team's dynamics.

Blanca stares into the candle while he talks. It flickers. Wavers. She looks at Trent to see if he notices. He doesn't.

The volume of the news broadcast overpowers Trent and yanks Blanca's head toward the screen.

CUT TO:

47 P.O.V. BLANCA - CONTINUOUS

The tv is displaying a photo of Korina, slowly cycling through others from the summer she disappeared.

Voiceover of news anchor: Today is National Missing Children's day and we are dedicating this segment to some of the city's oldest unsolved child disappearance cases.

Almost 20 years ago, Korina Gallegos vanished from her home without a trace. Investigators ask for anyone with information surrounding her disappearance call 1-800-843-5678.

Korina's mom Debbie fills the screen. The past twenty years have taken its toll. She is weathered by grief, held together with the bitter pride Blanca remembers her always having.

DEBBIE

You try to keep on living.
To find joy again in your life. But
it's like that feeling that you forgot
to do something important. Only
that feeling suffocates you. It
covers everything. Not knowing is
so much harder than...

(a beat)

(debbie looks into
the camera)

I've been living with the feeling of
that day for twenty years.

Gagging, Blanca gets up, knocking her chair over. She staggers towards the ladies room.

CUT TO:

48 INT. BAR BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Blanca stumbles into the bathroom. She dry heaves a couple of times before falling into a stall. She sits next to the toilet, panting, trying to get her bearings.

The sound of the faucet in one of the sinks turning on snaps her back to reality. She straightens herself and peers under the door. The bathroom is empty.

She is still scanning the room when the next faucet turns on, running FULL BLAST. One after another, each faucet turns on, filling the room with the loud echo of running water. Blanca whimpers, and stands up.

Summoning her courage, she stares at the back of her stall door. She decides to be angry at whoever is trying to scare her.

BLANCA

(yanks stall door
open)

What the FUCK?!

As if on cue, the lights go off in the bathroom. In the darkness, the sound of the RUSHING water takes on an undertone of whispering.

Blanca turns around in the stall, disoriented. The door SLAMS in her face. Every other stall door follows suit, VIOLENTLY shaking the frame that connects them all.

She squats down and covers her head, counting out loud.

BLANCA (CONT'D)

One, two, three, four, five, six,
seven, eight, nine, ten, one, two,
three

Trent's voice from outside the restroom interrupts.

TRENT

Blanca? Is there anyone in there?
I'm coming in.

Blanca looks up and the lights are on.

BLANCA

Trent! I'm in here. I'm ok.

Trent walks in and starts turning off the faucets.

TRENT

What the hell is going on?
(takes in Blanca's
ashen face)
Are you ok? Is it the bug bella
had?

Blanca buries herself in her husband's chest.

TRENT (CONT'D)

Babe, you're shaking.

BLANCA

Just get me the fuck out of here.

CUT TO:

49 INT. CAR - MOMENTS LATER

They drive in silence. Trent sneaks glances towards his wife, but she is staring out of her window.

TRENT

I think you need to take some time
off of work. Your health is what's
most important.

BLANCA

I wish it was that easy.

She looks over at Trent.

BLANCA (CONT'D)

Trent, those faucets turned on by themselves. The light TURNED OFF BY ITSELF. The fucking stall door slammed in my face?! How does that happen?

A beat.

TRENT

Babe, the lights were on when I came in.

BLANCA

I don't know what happened when I covered my head. You turned off the faucets yourself!

TRENT

(slowly)

Yes...and you were upset when you went in...it's possible you didn't realize you accidentally used them before you went in the stall.

Blanca returns to staring out of her window.

BLANCA

Right. I suddenly developed the bathroom habits of a toddler.

(A beat)

Do you even know why I was upset?

Trent sighs, knowing any answer will be incorrect.

TRENT

Babe, the pitch went well! You guys got the account. Give yourself some credit.

BLANCA

Korina.

TRENT

What??

(a beat while he puts
the events together)

Your nightmare?

BLANCA

No-I mean-yeah-but her story WAS ON THE NEWS. Tonight. The day after my nightmare.

(sighs)

It's been 20 years.

TRENT
Shit. That is heavy.

BLANCA
Yeah.

TRENT
Well, obviously your subconscious
knew this was coming up. You're
just processing it. It's normal.

BLANCA
Yes. Maybe...but the bathroom...

TRENT
Is just a normal, disgusting, bar
bathroom. Those sinks were probably
just trying to clean themselves.
(shudders)
Y'all nasty. I thought the guys
restroom was gross.

Blanca cracks a smile.

BLANCA
We have a lot more to deal with than
you guys.

They pull in to their driveway. As the garage door opens to
accept the car, Trent covers Blanca's hand with his.

TRENT
Maybe lets keep this Korina talk
away from Bella? You know she tends
to worry.

BLANCA
Fucking obviously, Trent. But you
should know, she is far less concerned
with the plight of you and I than
you would like to believe.

TRENT
(smug, teasing)
Maybe your plight.

The garage door closes.

FADE OUT:

50 INT. BLANCA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Blanca is in yoga pants and a t-shirt, her hair piled into a
topknot. She sips coffee in bed while reading articles on
her laptop.

She has old articles about Korina's disappearance pulled up.

Blanca begins to notice that her cat Ginger's bell is chiming downstairs.

 BLANCA
 Gingie? Kitty kitty.
 (she makes kissy sounds
 and pats the bed)

The chiming gets louder, insistent.

 BLANCA (CONT'D)
 Here kitty kitty!
 (mutters under breath)
 Fine. Dinner time again.

Blanca peels herself out of her cocoon and prepares to head downstairs. She FREEZES when her line of vision opens and reveals Ginger looking sleepily up at her from a pile of laundry in a basket.

The chiming downstairs has stopped. We see the flesh on Blanca's arm raise and prickle.

Blanca pounds down the stairs, determined not to freak herself out. The living room looks normal, nothing is out of place.

She looks over towards the kitchen and SUCKS in a lungful of air as her startle response KICKS in and SETTLES in the same moment.

Kitchen chairs circle the table, their backs on the floor, legs pointing towards the center. Every cupboard door and drawer is open.

Breathing quickly but deeply, trying to stay in control, Blanca quickly tries to restore normalcy in the room before Bella and Trent return home from the store. SCARED, then ANGRY, she SLAMS the doors shut.

 BLANCA (CONT'D)
 The fuck does this even MEAN?!

Self conscious about yelling at the kitchen, Blanca runs her hands through her hair repeatedly. She takes a drink of water when the bell chimes, causing her to drop and SHATTER the glass. Cursing, near tears, she cleans the new mess.

She lights a candle and a stick of incense in the kitchen, grabs the entire bottle of chardonnay from the fridge, and retreats upstairs.

CUT TO:

CUT TO:

51 INT. BLANCA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Blanca rolls off of Trent, panting. She throws one arm across her eyes and laughs.

TRENT

I need to do the grocery shopping more often..

(gestures toward the empty bottle)

And you need to keep day drinking in bed.

BLANCA

it just felt so good to do *nothing*...and the wine made it feel...better...

(rubs his chest)

... you were juuuust the right amount of exercise to keep me from feeling guilty about it.

Blanca stretches out on the bed like a cat, content and in the moment for the first time in days.

BLANCA (CONT'D)

I wish we had some weed...

TRENT

Me too...but we're parents so...booze it is.

BLANCA

Boo!...you think Bella has any?

TRENT

Hell no. Why, do you?!

BLANCA

I'm kidding! Calm down
(laughing at him)

I almost wish she did. She's the most serious kid I know. She's so *determined* to have the future she picked out for herself.

TRENT

Babe. That's a good thing.

BLANCA

I know

(MORE)

BLANCA (CONT'D)

(exhales)

I really do-I just don't want her to miss out on being a teenager.

TRENT

She's not. She's just doing her own version of it. Like she always has.

(a beat)

Be grateful we have a driven kid. Some of the shit I see go down at school with those other girls would make your skin crawl.

BLANCA

Yeah. I bet.

(her mood shifts,
darkens, heavy again)

She rolls over and tries to fall asleep. She stares at the shadows until they start to move. She closes her eyes.

CUT TO:

52 INT. THE HOUSE-BACK BEDROOM - NIGHT- DREAM SEQUENCE

It's dark, Blanca and John are in purple and blue shadows. She's looking around, confused. Her head HITS the headboard rhythmically as John carries on on top of her, oblivious to her lack of participation.

She's lucid, aware that she's dreaming but trapped in the loop of the experience. The sound of her head SMACKING the headboard continues, his movements show no deviation. She is stuck in a horrible, sickening moment.

Her mouth is open, trying to scream. Nothing.

Korina is knocking on the door. Her voice is muffled.

CUT TO:

53 EXT. OUTSIDE-NIGHT-CONTINUOUS

Blanca is standing over Korina. She is sleeping, curled into the fetal position. Tiny flames encircle her, licking at her body. Blanca watches in horror as they grow larger, eventually covering her sleeping body like a blanket of orange and blue and POURING out of her mouth like VOMIT.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

CUT TO:

54 INT. BLANCA'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Blanca opens her eyes. She stares at the clock as she processes the dream. 4:27 stares back at her. Trembling, she wraps herself around her sleeping husband's body and tries to fall back asleep.

CUT TO:

55 INT. BLANCA'S OFFICE - MORNING

A stack of leather portfolios SLAM onto a table in the conference room next to Blanca. She emerges from the deep zone out and sees her boss, MICHAEL, tall, late forties, is the one who slammed them.

MICHAEL
 (stares down at her
 for a beat)
 Pass these out for me, will you?

Blanca recognizes the look. She is not used to being on the receiving end and she jumps into action, passing out the portfolios with exaggerated energy and good will.

As the meeting proceeds, she zones back out of the conversation as soon as she determines it's safe to.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
 Blanca, how is the research going?

Blanca looks up slowly, reacting a beat too late.

BLANCA
 Excellent. I'm still in the preliminary stages, but I know enough from preparing for the pitch to start fleshing out a campaign.

His eyebrow twitches, preparing to furrow.

MICHAEL
 Right, but this isn't a pitch anymore.

He switches topic to another account before she can respond.

Blanca taps her pen against her portfolio.

CUT TO:

56 INT. THE HOUSE - FLASHBACK-BLANCA'S DREAM

The sound of the headboard HITTING against the wall matches the beat of Blanca's pen. Blanca is in the back bedroom with John again. He is breathing in her face this time.

She can't get enough air.

CUT TO:

57 INT. BLANCA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

In the boardroom, Blanca's breathing is shallow. She realizes she's starting to feel very hot and nauseous. Black spots begin to creep into her vision.

She gets up, nearly knocking her chair over and leaves the meeting.

The sound of her RETCHING in the restroom next door fills the board room.

CUT TO:

58 INT. BLANCA'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Blanca wipes her nose and reaches for her phone. She dials Abby.

BLANCA

(speaking through
Bluetooth)

Abby. I have to work from home today.
I think I caught Bellas bug.

ABBY V.O

Ok B. But please come back soon.
Michael's asking around about you.

BLANCA

(scowling)

Asking what?

ABBY V.O

I don't know, just like is everything
ok with you and stuff. He's such an
asshole. I don't know why he thinks
we need a babysitter for this project.

BLANCA

(incredulous)

I take my first sick day in YEARS
and I'm negligent-meanwhile Michael
takes off anytime he wants and
literally never works a full Friday.
Ok.

ABBY V.O

Don't get mad at me. I'm with you.
He's a selfish prick.

ABBY V.O (CONT'D)
 (awkward beat)
 Just get better and come back so we
 can kill this thing.

BLANCA
 I will. Thanks Abbs. I'm sorry I
 yelled.

ABBY V.O
 (laughs)
 I'd be seriously concerned if you
 didn't.

CUT TO:

59 INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Blanca stands in the kitchen, looking over the mail when she
 hears the front door open.

Bella enters. She dumps her jacket and backpack in the foyer
 and takes off her boots.

BELLA
 Mom. What are you doing home?

BLANCA
 What are you doing home?

BELLA
 Study period? Dual credit?

BLANCA
 Oh yeah. Good.
 (softens)
 Hey come here.

Bella begrudgingly walks over and allows her mother to hug
 her.

BLANCA (CONT'D)
 You know I love ya more than anything?

BELLA
 (muffled)
 Mom. Please.. I'm uncomfortable.

BLANCA
 Yeah, yeah. Well I do. I think
 you're the shit.

BELLA
 Oh my god mom! Who talks like that?!

Bella peels herself out of her mother's arms and walks toward the sink. She screams out in pain and grabs her foot.

BELLA (CONT'D)

Mother F ER!

BLANCA

Bella!

(sees the blood
starting to spread
through her white
sock)

Shit! Sit down! Lemme see!

Bella is whimpering and as Blanca takes a closer look she realizes there is glass wedged through her sock into her foot. She quickly pulls it out before Bella can figure out what she's doing.

BLANCA (CONT'D)

Cmon, let me clean this up for you.
All the first aid stuff is in the
bathroom.

BELLA

Mom, I'm fine. I can put my own
bandaid on.

Blanca spins around on her heel, incensed.

BLANCA

I've told you a thousand times to
wear your house shoes in the house!
Come let me clean that wound so you
don't get an infection. You don't
take open wounds like that seriously-
you could end up with staph!

BELLA

(in a low, even tone)
You are freaking out over nothing.

BLANCA

A GASH in your FOOT is a big deal
Bella. You wanna act like an adult
all the time but you are a CHILD.

BELLA

I don't know what's going on with
you, but this is seriously psychotic.

Blanca is becoming more unhinged the longer she talks.

BLANCA
 You do not talk to me like that,
 little girl.

BELLA
 I'm not participating in this.

Bella heads to the bathroom, limping slightly.

BLANCA
 (screams up toward
 the upstairs bathroom)
 YOU BETTER PUT SOME FUCKING NEOSPORIN
 ON THAT FOOT!!

Blanca spins around and starts aggressively sweeping the kitchen floor, paying special attention to the area where she broke her water glass.

CUT TO:

60 INT. KITCHEN TABLE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Blanca has made her way through most of a bottle of wine. She sits at the kitchen table with her laptop, half-heartedly working on the airline campaign.

She switches over to Facebook, drinking and scrolling, when she stops.

We see the screen. Debbie's tired face. The news station is sharing Korina's anniversary segment on Facebook.

BLANCA
 Damn Debbie. I'm so sorry.

After staring at the screen in contemplation for some time, she clicks on the search bar. She types the name JOHN MCADAMS and hits enter. The John at the top of the list shared one mutual friend.

She clicks on the profile. The page is full of photos from Disney, dead animals from hunts, and selfies with his wife at the Riverwalk. He was heavy, bearded, but it was him.

She sent a friend request.

She scrolls through his friends list, looking for Gary. She finds him quickly. The cursor rests on his face for a long while. She pours the last of her wine into her glass, downs it, and clicks.

His page is an echo chamber of his own stilted, non sensical thoughts. His photos are of his bed, his own face, of meals no one would ever want to remember.

He has many friends on his list, but most of his posts do not have any "likes".

He looks pretty much the same, though age had filled him out. His eyes were still as dead as cement. Tasting bile, Blanca hit "add friend".

Preparing to log out, a message comes in.

The IM reads:

John McAdams: Holy shit. Long time huh. How are u? Looks like life is treating u well. You still look amazing.

With trembling hands, Blanca inhales, cracks her knuckles and writes back:

Blanca Fuentes: I'm good. Thanks for accepting my fr. You look like you're doing well too. I actually looked you up because I'm doing some research on Korina. Did you see her story on KSANTO?

The text box sat empty for an eternity. Blanca had her hands on the top of her laptop, ready to close it for the night when a message came in.

John McAdams: Funny u ask. I did. Poor kid, I haven't thought of that in years. Those were some wild times.

Without letting herself think, she typed the next sentence out.

Blanca Fuentes: I know this is weird, but would you be willing to meet with me? I need to talk to someone who knew her for my research.

(Several beats)

John McAdams: LOL that is kinda weird. But you can come by my office at lunchtime if you need to. McAdams Construction Company. I'd love to catch up ;)

Blanca Fuentes: Thanks, I'll do that.

She watched his online icon turn off. She licks her dry lips and takes a pull of her empty wine glass.

A notification materializes. Gary had accepted her request.

CUT TO:

61 EXT. PARKING LOT, MCADAMS CONSTRUCTION - DAY

Blanca sits in her car, staring at the building. She is running her hands through her hair repeatedly again.

She grabs her notebook, clutches it tightly.

BLANCA
 (to herself)
 This is fucking crazy.
 (inhales deeply)

We watch Blanca get out of the car, slam the door and stomp towards the building. The St. Christopher medallion hanging from her rearview mirror continues to swing like a pendulum long after she has disappeared inside.

CUT TO:

62 INT. JOHN MCADAM'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

We see a framed photograph of a family of five dressed in matching denim and arranged around a pumpkin patch. John, his wife, a teenage son and two young girls gaze happily at the camera.

Blanca looks up as John enters the room.

JOHN
 Good afternoon, Mrs. Fuentes.
 (extends his hand)

BLANCA
 (takes his hand, shakes
 it firmly)
 John. Thank you so much for taking
 the time to meet with me.

JOHN
 (waves his hand
 dismissively)
 Anything for an old friend.

They both sit down. The awkward silence quickly fills the room.

JOHN (CONT'D)
 So you're in PR now

BLANCA
 (simultaneously)
 Your family is beautiful.

They both laugh nervously.

BLANCA (CONT'D)
 Go ahead.

JOHN

Ah, I was just saying, it looks like you're in PR. We might be able to use your firm when we expand to Austin.

BLANCA

Absolutely. We'd love to be of service. My sister lives in Austin. She knows the market well.

JOHN

Please give your card to my secretary on your way out- not that I'm rushing you out!

(laughs)

Boy-seeing you again is making me more nervous than I thought.

Blanca's posture relaxes ever so slightly with this admission.

BLANCA

Look, John. I know this is awkward as hell. I'm just going to be frank.

Trembling, she opens her notebook to go over her prepared bullet points.

BLANCA (CONT'D)

Since I saw that news report on Korina, I have been having nightmares. I'm also having memories, connections come up that I never considered when we were-

(looks up guiltily)

When I was a kid.

JOHN

(puts a hand up)

Let me stop you right there.

(wipes his mouth)

Look, Blanca. I have two daughters now. One is almost a teenager. What seemed normal at the time with you I can see now was me taking advantage of ...the situation. I just want to take this opportunity right now to say, I'm sorry. I had no business hanging out with you girls, or bringing Gary around.

Shocked, Blanca is momentarily speechless. Tears well up in her eyes. Embarrassed, she blinks them away.

BLANCA

Uh. Well yeah. Thank you. I mean...we knew what we were doing. We were experimenting.

(looks down)

But I know what you mean. I have a teenage daughter. She's incredible. But when I think about her possibly out doing the things Korina and I did....

(looks him in the eye)

It's unbearable.

John leans forward on his desk, nodding empathetically.

JOHN

I know.

BLANCA

(wipes her nose)

Anyway, that's not why I'm here. I keep thinking about Gary. I know he liked her...and I'm pretty sure something went on between the two of them. Do you guys still keep in touch? Did he ever say anything to you about her when she disappeared?

John sits back in his chair.

JOHN

I mean, this was eons years ago. I really don't remember if he said anything. He did like her...

BLANCA

Do you still talk to each other?

JOHN

We partied occasionally, but he was always a strange guy-and he got more anti-social as time went on. He asked me for a job about...god ten years ago maybe...but he couldn't hack it. He came in late, sometimes not at all.

BLANCA

What is he doing now?

JOHN

(frowns)

You aren't thinking he could have something to do with it?

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

He's odd, but he ain't capable of that. I mean, the guy still lives with his mama. I don't even think he has a driver's license.

BLANCA

I just wanted to fill in some gaps. I mean, I never told the police about him back then. He might have known something. I was so scared, I just tried to run away from the whole thing.

(looks pleadingly at
John)

What if I missed my opportunity to help her?

The word "POLICE" hung heavy in the air.

JOHN

Blanca, you did not do anything wrong. I promise you he didn't know shit. He really never talked about it after she left. We were all young, and that girl just got into a situation she couldn't get out of. Maybe she's still out there. Maybe she started over.

BLANCA

I really fucking hope so.

JOHN

We're parents now, and when this shit comes full circle at us, it's bound to throw you for a loop. Focus on your family. Don't let ancient history start fuckin with your head. It's been twenty some-odd years, torturing yourself now won't make any difference.

BLANCA

You're right. This is probably some mid-life crisis in disguise shit. I have been neglecting my family while I obsess over this.

(looks at him directly)

Thank you for talking to me. I feel so much better just being able to discuss this with someone who was there.

John stands up, extending his hand again.

JOHN
 (shakes her hand and
 covers it with his
 other one)
 Glad I could help. It looks like
 you have a beautiful life, Blanca.
 Go on now. Live it n enjoy it.

BLANCA
 You too, John.

As the door closes behind her, John picks up his phone,
 scrolls through his contacts and presses one.

JOHN
 (in a thicker, good
 ole boy accent)
 Hey man! It's John. Look, I could
 use a few extra hands for a project
 I got coming up. Mind if I swing by
 tomorrow and tell you about it?

CUT TO:

63 EXT. BLANCA'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Blanca sits back in the silence of her car, breathing deeply
 and trying to recover from the meeting. She glances in the
 cupholder and grabs the hand sanitizer. She vigorously wipes
 her hands, as if to wipe the encounter off of her as well.

She squeezes a second blob into her hands and rubs sanitizer
 up to her elbows this time.

Her phone rings and interrupts her decontamination efforts.

64 P.O.V. BLANCA

A photo of Blanca and Trent laughing together lights up her
 iphone. "Babe" with heart emojis is displayed at the top.

Blanca silences her phone.

CUT TO:

65 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Bella and Trent are preparing dinner in the kitchen. The
 atmosphere is light. They obviously have an easy relationship
 and are enjoying each other's company.

BELLA

There's something so soothing about making a really yummy meal.

She drops chopped shallot and garlic into a pan of butter and wafts the scent up towards her face.

TRENT

You've always loved to cook. Ever since you were a baby.

BELLA

Really? How would you know?

TRENT

You used to stand under your mom in the kitchen and raise your hands up and ask "pleathe" over and over until she let you 'help'.

Bella stirs in silence.

BELLA

Where is mom anyway?

TRENT

I'm sure she's working late on her new account.

BELLA

So you don't even know?

TRENT

Whatever she's doing-it's important.

He puts down the scallops he was preparing to sear to look at her.

TRENT (CONT'D)

I know you think she's too critical-but she's just trying to keep you on track.

BELLA

Dad, I don't even think she's too critical. I think she's misguided. I think *she's* the one who needs direction.

TRENT

Bella! That's really judgmental. And not your place.

Continues to sear scallops.

TRENT (CONT'D)

She worries about you because she loves you. She wants to protect you from the

(mimes air quotes)

big, crazy world. And she's...mom. So it comes out in her own special way.

Bella makes a face and begins to plate the meal.

BELLA

She's projecting her own shiz on me.

(a beat)

But I get you, dad. I know you guys are just humans trying to act like you know what you're doing.

Trent tries to act like he's not unnerved by Bella's insight.

TRENT

We know exactly what we're doing.

(smiles)

Just like I know that this meal is going to make mom so happy that she cleans the kitchen for us afterwards and won't mention the giant mess we made.

Bella looks around.

BELLA

Yeah. Right. I hope it's soon- the scallops are only good when they're still hot.

CUT TO:

66 INT. BLANCA'S BEDROOM - LATER

Blanca goes about her nighttime routine while Trent silently scrolls through his phone, already in bed.

She notices his silence.

BLANCA

(nodding at his phone)

What are you looking at?

TRENT

(without looking up)

The schedule for the team this week.

Blanca gets in bed and starts scrolling herself.

TRENT (CONT'D)
(after several beats
of silence)
We made that dinner for you.

TRENT (CONT'D)
We thought you could use a pick me
up.

Blanca froze. She didn't even notice the dinner in the fridge set aside for her. She hadn't thought about eating all day.

BLANCA
Really? Oh shit. I'm sorry. I ate
at the office.

TRENT
If you let me know, we'dve just
ordered in.

BLANCA
(rubs his shoulder)
I seriously was so busy it didn't
even cross my mind.

Trent puts his phone on the nightstand and turns his lamp off. Before he lays down he looks accusingly towards her.

TRENT
I can deal with your stress from
work. But Bella needs to at least
see you during the day. Don't be so
self absorbed you miss your daughter
while she's still here.

Blanca stares at her husband as rage bubbles up.

BLANCA
(hisses the words)
What did you fucking call me.

Trent has now turned his back on her.

TRENT
I'm not trying to fight.

BLANCA
You think I don't know my CHILD is
on the verge of leaving? You think
I don't know the shit she's about to
face out there?!

TRENT

She's smarter than we give her credit for. She's not going to put herself in situations like that.

BLANCA

Well if she does, that'll be my fault too. Fuck you, Trent. You have no idea what I'm dealing with. You NEVER ask.

She sits up, preparing to leave.

BLANCA (CONT'D)

You just want to pretend everything is basketball and dinner parties.

TRENT

I know you're going through something. And I think you should back to Dr. Shermann.

A long silence.

BLANCA

That was a *miscarriage*.

(a beat)

A hormonal trigger. That was dealt with. This is not the same thing. Korina-

Tom interrupts her, raising his voice for the first time.

TOM

ENOUGH!

(exhales deliberately)

About Korina. Whatever it is-work stress,dreams,obsession-WHATEVER. It's not normal. And it's taking a toll.

Blanca makes a big show of ripping the comforter and her pillows off the bed as she leaves for the couch.

BLANCA

Dr. Shermann was about *you* not being able to deal with anything deeper than losing a game. And here we are again. We face something you can't just deny away-and you outsource it. That's not how fucking life works.

TRENT

Blanca-

She slams the door behind her. A full seven seconds later a framed wedding photo tumbles off the dresser and lands with a THUD on the carpet, leaving Trent blinking in surprise.

CUT TO:

67 LIVING ROOM- NIGHT-LATER-ASTRAL BLANCA POV

Blanca's sleeping face is lit by the blue tinged light of somewhere around 3 a.m. The muscles in her jaw tighten and flex. Pan around to reveal the profile of the couch she is sleeping on.

We now see Blanca sleeping, a conscious version of her hovering above, hands out to the side, bracing against nothingness, hair hanging over her face.

Instead of panicking, she glides down. We see her bare feet land softly on the wood floor. Her teeth are chattering inside her closed mouth. She walks away from her sleeping self, out of the living room, and opens a door.

CUT TO:

68 INT. DEBBIE GALLEGOS KITCHEN - ASTRAL DREAM SEQUENCE

Debbie sits in a smoky, dingy kitchen. Papers cover the surface of a rickety table. She is poring over them. At the opposite end of the table sits Alex. Silent. Head down.

Debbie sniffs, pulls on a cigarette, and stops when she picks up a "have you seen me" flyer with Korina's picture.

DEBBIE

Where are you, baby girl?

She stares at the photo, tears welling up, spilling over. Her hands clutch the edges of the paper.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Where is my BABY?

The paper, pulled taught, starts to tear. Debbie THROWS it. She FLINGS the rest of the papers off of the table.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

MY BABY!
(sobs)

CUT TO:

69 FULL SHOT DEBBIE GALLEGOS KITCHEN

Debbie stands at the head of the table, fists clenched at her sides and screams toward the still silent Alex

DEBBIE
WHERE IS MY BABY GIRL?!

Blanca jumps when a hand closes around her own. She looks over into the face of Korina. Saying nothing, she guides Blanca out of the room. Debbie's wails fade.

70 EXT BREEZEWAY - CONTINUOUS

They emerge in the breezeway outside of Korina's apartment. Young Blanca and Korina are sitting on the stairs. Alex walks through them on his way to the apartment.

ALEX
(nods at Blanca)
Sup.

Young Blanca looks at Korina, mouth open as Alex continues on without waiting for a response.

YOUNG BLANCA
What the fuck was that?! He NEVER
talks to me.

KORINA
(rolls eyes)
Ugh. He's been trying to be cool
with all my friends lately. I made
the mistake of letting him get high
with me and Gary the other day.

Young Blanca looks unsettled but says nothing.

KORINA (CONT'D)
So I guess now he thinks he's cool
too. Do NOT be nice to him anymore.

Blanca looks over inquiringly towards Korina. But nothing is there. She is suspended in black, infinite emptiness. She is buzzing, vibrating.

CUT TO:

71 EXT. GARY'S BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

The black is gradually broken up by the light of a flame. The flame RUSHES towards the foreground and we are now looking at a full scene.

Gary and John stand next to a large bonfire burning in a field next to Gary's house. They gaze into the flames, silent.

Korina is standing next to Blanca again. She opens her mouth to speak for the first time. It peels back, far too wide. THICK, BLACK SMOKE pours out of it.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

CUT TO:

72 INT BLANCA'S LIVING ROOM - MORNING

From Blanca's POV we see Bella's face looking worried and scared hovering over Blanca.

Bella is shaking her mother.

BELLA
MOM!

Blanca blinks stupidly.

BELLA (CONT'D)
Jesus mom! Are you good? I was
about to get dad.

Blanca sits up. We see she is on the living room couch, waking up. Bella is still standing over her, worried. She tastes the dryness of her mouth.

She moves like she is hungover, THICK and HEAVY.

BLANCA
Are you ok? What's wrong?!

Bella looks disturbed.

BELLA
You were banging your head against
the pillow. It sounded like you
were choking.
(looks down at her
hands, childlike)
I was really worried.

Blanca is finally recovering, getting her bearings in the waking world.

BLANCA
Thanks for waking me up sweetie.
I'm fine. I was just having a
nightmare.
(MORE)

BLANCA (CONT'D)
 (stretches her back)
 I slept like shit on this couch.

Unconvinced, Bella doesn't leave her side.

BELLA
 What if that was like- a seizure or something...

BLANCA
 (looks at her daughter
 with love)
 Sweet girl.
 (feigned lightness in
 her voice)
 I promise-it's happened before- it's
 no big deal. It's just sleep
 paralysis and it only acts up when
 I'm stressed. Cmon. I'll make us
 some breakfast.

Bella finally steps away from her mother and heads for the kitchen. Blanca follows, walking UNSTEADILY.

CUT TO:

73 INT. DR. SHERMANN'S OFFICE - DAY

Blanca's POV. Close up on multicolored prism dancing on a white wall. The source is a sun catcher crystal with seven stones for each chakra dangling in a window. Blanca looks from the rainbow of light to the sun outside.

Her gaze lingers on the sun, made tolerable by a film of clouds. She hears RUSHING blood . It becomes the sound of a ROARING blaze.

A KNOCK at the door interrupts her trance.

DR. GLORIA SHERMANN, mid-fifties, attractive, walks in and smiles warmly at Blanca. She sits down in a rich leather chair next to the matching couch Blanca is already settled into.

Dr. Sherman is dressed in a floor-length gauzy purple skirt and a top that doesn't match but is also purple. Her eyes wrinkle at the corners in a way that conveys kindness.

BLANCA
 Hello again Dr. Sherman.

DR. SHERMANN

(smiles)

Blanca. It's so good to see you again. You are looking well.

Blanca smiles back, put at ease in spite of herself.

BLANCA

Thank you. I'm much better than I was last time.

(a beat)

But I'm here so I guess I'm not that much better.

DR. SHERMANN

Life isn't a linear path to health and happiness, Blanca. There's lessons in all the struggles, all the little deviations. And seeking out a little reinforcement when your navigation skills need sharpening is a wonderful gift to give yourself.

BLANCA

(crosses arms across her chest)

Well, it wasn't my idea.

DR. SHERMANN

(raises eyebrows for emphasis)

And yet, you are the one who showed up today.

BLANCA

(drops her hands into her lap)

I really don't think you can help me with this one, Dr. Shermann.

DR. SHERMANN

Maybe not, but I can try to make you feel better about it. Have you been staying on top of the CBT work we did last time?

BLANCA

(looks down, playing with her wedding band)

I worked on re-framing my thoughts of self-blame a lot after losing Shelby. But I don't go to meditation class anymore. I've stopped going to yoga.

(MORE)

BLANCA (CONT'D)
 (sighs, throws her
 head back on the
 chair)
 All I do is work and stress out about
 Bella.

DR. SHERMANN
 It's been five years since you've
 seen me. It's perfectly normal to
 fall out of practice.
 (a beat while she
 pulls out her notes)
 Tell me about the stress with Bella.

CUT TO:

74 EXT. GARY CHILD'S HOUSE- SAN ANTONIO TEXAS-CONTINUOUS

John's meaty hand KNOCKS on a run down front door. The peeling paint VIBRATES. The house is in a poor rural neighborhood in the south side of town.

The door opens to reveal Gary Childs. He's older, features sagging, but he's still lean and awkward. The dingy wife-beater he's wearing exposes the tribal tattoo encircling his neck, faded green and hazy with time.

GARY
 John.

JOHN
 Hey there bud.

GARY
 (begins to step outside)
 Wan beer?

Gary GESTURES to the folding chairs on the porch and the grimy styrofoam ice chest sitting between them.

JOHN
 Why not.

Gary's mom calls from inside the house.

GARY'S MOM
 GARY?! Who's there?

GARY
 It's just John, ma!

GARY'S MOM
 Oh Johnny!

Gary SLAMS the door before the exchange can go any further.

The men SIT on the porch for a bit in silence, pulling on their Natural Lites.

JOHN

You and your mama still getting the checks I send?

GARY

(looking straight ahead)

Yup.

JOHN

Good.

(nods and shifts uncomfortably)

Good.

GARY

What's this new job?

John ADJUSTS and RE-ADJUSTS his hat.

JOHN

Well, Gary. It's not exactly like the last one. This one's more of a... assignment.

Now Gary shows movement. He squints over at John, not comprehending.

GARY

Ok. What is it.

JOHN

(adjusts his hat once more)

It's about shit from back in the day.

(a beat)

Remember that ol girl we..uh.. Got tangled up with... Well her friend is all grown up now. Got a bee in her bonnet about it. Mother guilt'n all that type a shit.

(a beat)

Well she's been asking around about it.

Gary is motionless again.

JOHN (CONT'D)

SO your new job is to just lay low..
Don't talk to her if she comes around.
Don't say nothin to nobody.

(takes long pull and
finishes the beer)

At least until she stops sniffing
around.

GARY

I forgot all about that.

JOHN

(POINTS at Gary in
agreement)

Exactly! Keep it that way. Aint
nothing to remember.

(REACHES in ice chest
for another beer)

I'll send you and your mama a lil
extra each month for this new job.
Just make sure you do it better than
the last one I gave you.

They drink again in silence for a long beat. A rooster CROWS
somewhere in the hood.

GARY

(shoulders rounded
forward)

I didnt mean to hurt her.

JOHN

(CRUSHES the second
beer in his hand)

I know bud.

(THROWS the can into
the dusty, unkempt
yard)

And there aint no sense ruining two
more lives over it.

CUT TO:

75 INT. DR. SHERMANN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

DR. SHERMANN

Blanca, what you experienced as a
child-losing your best friend- is a
trauma. If you don't deal with
traumas they can cause maladaptive
behaviors to turn into persistent
issues later in life. It's a very
human and normal response.

BLANCA

(wipes silent tears
off of her face)

Thank you for listening to all of
that Dr. Shermann. I tried to talk
to Trent about it when the nightmares
started back, but he just puts up
this WALL.

DR. SHERMANN

(looks like she wants
to say something but
isn't)

Blanca, these dreams where you leave
your body. How long has that been
going on?

BLANCA

The sleep paralysis? Man
(looks up, thinking)
Well it used to happen all the time
when I was a kid. I always figured I
just kind of outgrew it. Then they
started again out of nowhere.

DR. SHERMANN

And the dreams about Korina are always
sleep paralysis dreams?

BLANCA

(nods)

Yeah.

Dr. Shermann SCRIBBLES in her notes.

DR. SHERMANN

You mentioned a handful of strange
things happening. Are your family
members experiencing this too?
(a beat)

Blanca NARROWS her eyes.

BLANCA

I'm NOT HALLUCINATING.

Dr. Shermann puts her notepad and pen down on the coffee
table.

DR. SHERMANN

(reclines in her seat
and clears her throat)

Can I talk to you off the record?

BLANCA
 (uncomfortably)
 Ok...

DR. SHERMANN
 So, my doctorate is in clinical
 psychology, but I am also a licensed
 energy healer and Reiki master.
 (puts her hands up)
 I know that sounds like quite the
 oppositional dichotomy, but the two
 fields are as interconnected as our
 cardiovascular and endocrine systems.
 (a beat while she and
 Blanca hold eye
 contact)
 I study human wellness--and the
 energetic level of existence
 (demonstrates with
 one hand)
 is just as real and influential as
 the physical one
 (intertwines her hand
 to make a whole)
 I'm telling you this for a reason.
 Psychological issues can manifest in
 many ways. This is especially so in
 people with certain inherited...
 (speaking gently)
 Abilities.

Blanca is staring at Dr. Shermann with her eyebrows raised.

BLANCA
 Abilities?
 (scoffs)
 Like PSYCHIC abilities? Dr. Shermann-

DR. SHERMANN
 (interrupts)
 When these strange things happen-are
 you in a state of distress?

BLANCA
 (reflecting)
 Yeah, I guess I am.

DR. SHERMANN
 Sleep paralysis is a very real and
 not uncommon phenomenon. OUT OF
 BODY experiences are much less common.
 Some people work very hard to achieve
 this. You do it involuntarily. But
 you can easily learn to control it.

BLANCA
Like lucid dreaming.

DR. SHERMANN
Very much. Your homework for our next session is to consider what these events all have in common. If you- or even your friend who passed- were trying to tell you something, what might that be?

CUT TO:

76 THE HOUSE -FLASHBACK

The brown, splintered wood of the headboard hits the old plaster wall with an UNSETTLING, rhythmic WHACK. Dust motes FLY off with each contact.

CUT TO:

77 INT. DR. SHERMANN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

BLANCA
(stands up quickly)
Well you've given me a lot to think about.
(laughs uncomfortably)

DR. SHERMANN
(hands her a sleek white business card with a cloud of purple in the middle)
If you want to schedule an energy healing, give me a call. Spiritual clarity has a lot of value too.

Blanca takes the card and stuffs it in her purse without looking at it.

BLANCA
(smiles out of respect, but it's weak)
Yeah. Thank you. I'll see you next week.

CUT TO:

78 INT. BLANCA'S FOYER - EVENING

Blanca shrugs her coat off and as she's hanging it on the hook by the front door she stops when she sees Trent HUNCHED over her laptop at the kitchen table out of the corner of her eye.

She casually strolls toward him.

 BLANCA
What's up? How was your day?

 TRENT
 (without looking up)
Where have you been.

She slumps into the chair next to him.

 BLANCA
I'm exhausted.
 (a beat)
I actually went to see Dr. Shermann.
It did make me feel better. But it
was also kind of weird.

 TRENT
 (his tone is ice cold)
You're a fucking liar, Blanca.

Startled by the venom in his voice, Blanca sits up.

 BLANCA
Seriously? Check the credit card
statement. Going there was YOUR
idea!

Trent swings the laptop around to show Blanca what he has been poring over. The entire message thread between her and John lights up her face.

 TRENT
Tell me you didn't go to see this
fucker.

Blanca's face registers shock, shame, and anger in the space of two seconds before settling on a guilty laugh.

 BLANCA
You can't be serious.

 TRENT
Who THE FUCK is John?

The smile is long gone. It's replaced by an expression that belies nervousness and could be misinterpreted as guilt.

 BLANCA
Remember? I know I mentioned him to
you. He used to hang out with me
and Korina. Him and Gary.

Disgusted Trent gets up from the table, **SHOVING** his chair out of the way.

TRENT

You must think I'm really fucking stupid to believe that-

BLANCA

Read the message! That's literally what I said to him! I just wanted to ask him if he remembered anything.

TRENT

It all makes sense. You're fucking psycho behavior. This creep obviously likes you-he's sending you winky faces and commenting on how good you look and you go to fucking SEE him?! How would you feel if I was chatting up exes from my past and arranging dates with them?

BLANCA

Trent! You really think it's like THAT? What does that say about what you think of me??

TRENT

Fuck you. It's always about YOU. This is so disrespectful.

(slams laptop shut,
Blanca stares,
speechless)

Oh and PS- your office called. When's the last time you checked in? They didn't seem to know what the fuck is going on. Looks like you're not cut out for the demands of juggling a boyfriend and a family.

Trent grabs his coat and leaves the house, **SLAMMING** the door behind him.

BLANCA

(remains at the table
with her forehead
propped up by her
hand)

FUCK!!!

She grabs the cordless phone off of the table.

CUT TO:

79 EXT. BLANCA'S HOUSE-BACKYARD - MOMENTS LATER

Blanca paces back and forth on her patio with her phone to her ear.

BLANCA

Abs! Hey-Trent said the office called? What's up?

CUT TO:

80 INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Abby is sitting in Blanca's office, working on the computer at her desk, navigating the cursor with one hand while holding the phone to her ear with the other.

ABBY

Hey Bossy. Yeah, Michael is pissed.
(awkward silence, she looks like she's in pain)

Blanca. I don't even know how to say this so I'm just going to lay it out there: he took you off the project.

(she's grimacing and now pushing her hair back and up off of her forehead nervously)
(silence)

Blanca?

CUT TO:

81 EXT. BLANCA'S HOUSE-BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Blanca stands on the patio, silently shaking her head in resignation.

BLANCA

Yeah I'm here.

(a beat)

Thank you for being straight up Abby.
(sighs)

My life is a giant cluster fuck right now. Ugh!! He's such a fucking prick.
(she shrugs)

But he's not wrong. I deserve it.
(weakly)

I fucked up.

CUT TO:

82 INT. BLANCA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

ABBY

There's just not a lot of room for
our personal lives in this business.

(shakes her head in
disgust)

I think that's why I'm still single.

(looks guiltily at
the framed family
photo on Blanca's
desk)

You're the best-performing, most
senior person here. You can come
back from anything. Just don't take
too long.

(silence)

What do you want me to say to Michael?

CUT TO:

83 EXT. BLANCA'S HOUSE-BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Blanca watches Bella come in from school through the sliding
glass doors.

BLANCA

(with urgency, wanting
to get off phone)

Just tell him I'm still not 100%.

Let him figure out what that means.

I'll get in touch with him and grovel
as much as necessary. Just please
keep him off my back in the meantime.

(her expression is
pleading)

Ok, Abs?

ABBY V.O

Sure Blanca. I gotchu. Get better
ok? I love you boss.

BLANCA

Love you

(quickly hangs up as
Bella starts to open
glass door)

Bella steps out of the house onto the patio to join Blanca.

BELLA

What are you doing out here, weirdo?
You HATE San Antonio heat.

BLANCA
 Just getting some vitamin D
 (fake lightness in
 her voice)

BELLA
 (wrinkles her nose)
 EW mom! Please never say that in my
 presence again.
 (quickly retreats
 back in house)
 I'm starving! What's for dinner?

BLANCA
 (barely registering
 the question or her
 answer, her voice
 almost monotone while
 she follows Bella
 back into the house)
 Spaghetti.

CUT TO:

84 INT. BLANCA'S HOUSE-KITCHEN TABLE - EVENING

Blanca and Bella are sitting at the kitchen table eating dinner. The clinking of fork against plate fills the room. Bella watches carefully as Blanca takes long drinks from her generously poured glass of red wine.

BELLA
 (cautiously)
 Where's dad?

Blanca grabs her wine glass and takes a long drink.

BLANCA
 Um, your dad and I had a fight.
 He's probably sulking at the school.

BELLA
 (quietly)
 He's probably pissed that you've
 gone AWOL on us.

Blanca looks squarely at her daughter, her jaw set.

BLANCA
 (sighs)
 I'm not going to fight with you,
 too. I'm here, we have this nice
 dinner. Let's talk. Tell me about
 school.

Bella hesitates, but launches into a long run-down of all her school activities and dramas, happy to have an audience. Blanca nods to indicate she's listening but Bella's voice begins to lose its form and fade out.

CUT TO:

85 P.O.V. BLANCA'S HOUSE-KITCHEN TABLE - CONTINUOUS

Eyes sleepy with wine, Blanca's vision begins to focus on the flame dancing in the large candle set in the middle of the table. We see the rest of the room, hear Bella's voice begin to recede into the shadows. All that is left is an extreme close up of the fire that used to be the flame.

DISSOLVE TO:

86 EXT. FEILD - ASTRAL DREAM

Blanca is now in a field lit by the dim orange of a large bonfire. Confused but moving slowly, as though her movements are cutting through an atmosphere of molasses, she looks around.

Suddenly she is PINNED to the ground by an unseen force. She FIGHTS back, flailing. Hot breath is in her ear. Hands are RIPPING at her shirt, her pants.

She is flipped over on the ground, her face BURIED in the dirt. She tries to use her hands to lift her face off of the ground long enough to get some air, but it was as though someone was sitting on her back, his hand pressing on the back of her head.

Muffled screams escaped her. She THRASHES in a pure panic, on the verge of losing consciousness.

CUT TO:

87 EXT. BLANCA'S HOUSE-KITCHEN TABLE - CONTINUOUS

Bella's school anecdotes are cut off by Blanca's face SLAMMING into her plate.

Stunned, she stares speechless before screaming at her mother.

BELLA
MOM! What the FUCK?!

Blanca's hands brace the table on both sides the of her plate with such force that the cutlery bounces on the table. She writhes and struggles against an unseen force.

Her face has been smothered into her plate for a disturbingly long amount of time.

BELLA (CONT'D)
This isn't funny!

Blanca continues to buck against whatever force is holding her down.

BELLA (CONT'D)
(on the verge of tears)
MOM!!!

Bella jumps up from her seat to pull her mother's face up so the woman can breathe.

She grabs a fistful of hair from the back of her head and pulls it off of the plate.

Blanca gasps the air gratefully like someone who had been saved from drowning. She greedily gulps lungfuls and wheezes while she recovers. She stares up at her daughter, dumbfounded- bits of food and sauce clinging to her face and hair.

BELLA (CONT'D)
(crying)
What's WRONG WITH YOU?!

BLANCA
What happened? What?! Whaaaa?
(pulls strands of
pasta from her face
while she struggles
to speak)
Why am I covered in food?!

BELLA
You slammed your face into the plate!
You couldn't breathe!

Blanca gets up and wipes her face with a napkin while she walks toward her daughter and takes her in her arms.

BLANCA
(smoothes her
daughter's hair with
trembling hands)
I'm so sorry I scared you. Shhh.
I'm going to figure this out.

BELLA
(still crying)
That was really scary.

BLANCA

I know baby.

Blanca still has a distant look in her eyes.

BLANCA (CONT'D)

You did the right thing.

FADE OUT:

88 INT. DR. SHERMANN'S ENERGY HEALING ROOM - DAY

Blanca is laying on a massage table, looking up at a poster of a chakra chart. The sound of bubbling water comes from a small fountain in the corner of the room. An essential oil diffuser emits a steady stream of lavender scented vapor.

Crystals are everywhere in the room and soft, classical music plays in the background. Dr. Shermann is standing over Blanca.

DR. SHERMANN

I'm glad you took me up on this.
Now, this works much like a regular
massage, except I will just be placing
my hands on you. Let your mind relax,
and enjoy the experience. Sometimes
I will talk, if I feel there is
something you need to know, but a
lot of this process is done with
energy.

Blanca nods in agreement and burrows into the table/bed, trying to relax and hide her skepticism.

Dr. Shermann places her hands on her legs and inhales deeply.

Blanca closes her eyes.

DISSOLVE TO:

89 INT. POV- BLANCA -

We see purples and blues swirling against a black background. The purple blobs of color swell and dance, ebbing and flowing into beautifully like stirred paint. We watch the colors breathe and evolve into greens, yellows, and finally orange.

The orange FILLS the frame, roaring.

CUT TO:

90 INT POV -BLANCA-ASTRAL DREAM

From an aerial view, we see Debbie Gallegos. She is sitting on a couch, in a ratty but clean apartment, watching tv. It is apparent she lives there alone and has for some time.

Korina stands in the hallway, silently staring at her mother.

CUT TO:

91 INT. POV-DEBBIE - CONTINUOUS

Debbie looks up, sensing something. She looks down at her right arm. The hairs lift as goosebumps erupt.

CUT TO:

92 INT. POV-BLANCA-ASTRAL DREAM

Now from a traditional vantage point, Blanca watches Korina. She is looking at her mother with love and pity. A tear slips down her cheek.

Debbie's head snaps toward where Korina is standing. Her eyes focus. She sees her daughter.

DEBBIE

(whispers)

Korina...?

Korina smiles sadly and turns to walk down the hall toward the solitary bedroom.

Orange creeps back into Blanca's vision and fills the frame like flames consuming a photograph.

DISSOLVE TO:

93 INT DEBBIE GALLEGOS' HOME - CONTINUOUS

Debbie gets up and follows Korina.

DEBBIE

(stifling a sob)

Kor?

Debbie stops for a moment when she reaches the bedroom. There is an unmarked cardboard box open on her bed. She opens the well-worn cardboard flaps and rifles through her collection of momentos from Korina's life.

She pics up a school photograph and smiles at the innocent, gap-toothed grin of her once happy-go-lucky daughter.

She notices the note on the bed, folded into the notebook paper origami that was the 90's version of texting. Big bubble letters decorate the front. She opens it and we see the greeting: "BLANCA (coven-mate aka soul-sister aka bff),"

Debbie's attention moves to the top of the notebook paper. Crudely drawn butterflies decorate the top and more bubble letters spell out: "Butterflies are free..."

FADE OUT:

94 INT. DR. SHERMANN'S ENERGY HEALING ROOM

DR. SHERMANN

(gently)

Blanca? Would you like a glass of water while you transition back?

Blanca opens her eyes and looks around. Dr. Shermann peers down at her, with an expression of compassion and concern. She is visibly sweating.

BLANCA

Did you say anything? Is the session over? I didn't hear you say anything.

Dr. Shermann sits in a recliner and drinks from a bottle of water.

DR. SHERMANN

I said lots of things. It was a complex session. Your energy is very strong.

(drinks more water)

Did you travel?

BLANCA

(looks only slightly embarrassed about it now)

I think so. Korina showed me her mother.

DR. SHERMANN

I felt the energy. There was a lot of love present. How did you feel about seeing Korina and her mother?

BLANCA

(sits up slowly)

Whew. I feel like I've just run about ten miles.

DR. SHERMANN

Completely normal. Hydration is important for the rest of the day, as is rest.

BLANCA

I felt sad. Overwhelmingly sad. But it came from place of love. I think Korina wanted me to see Debbie from her eyes.

(a beat)

Debbie saw Korina too. In the dream. And she was older...

DR. SHERMANN

(Dr. Sherman nods)

Why do you think you traveled or 'dreamed' you were there to see that?

BLANCA

(averts her eyes)

Who knows what these visions mean... Did the healing work? Will the episodes stop now?

DR. SHERMANN

The episodes are *symptoms* of something. I think you are the ultimate healer of it. But I did try to clear your energy and cull the tangled cords...or connections you had to several different and - without judgement- lower vibration energy sources.

BLANCA

Are those sources people?

DR. SHERMANN

That, I can't say. But you had many different energetic connections and some weren't...conducive to your health. Your talent; your ability to travel makes you a very attractive being to these energies. You are like a beacon of light, drawing them near like moths to the flame. Spiritual work will help you learn to control it.

(she stands and

smoothes her skirt)

Your should begin to feel lighter and clearer in the coming days.

(MORE)

DR. SHERMANN (CONT'D)

But that doesn't mean to stop coming in for therapy. The trauma will take some time to heal, but we can make it much easier to enjoy your life.

Blanca slowly starts to get up off of the table.

BLANCA

I'm willing to do anything it takes.
(slips her shoes on)
I've started traumatizing my daughter.

DR. SHERMANN

I'm sure it's not that extreme. Be easy on yourself. You're doing work that a lot of people never allow themselves to do. I really admire your dedication to yourself and your family.

BLANCA

(looking stung)
Thank you Dr. Shermann. I wish they agreed with you.

DR. SHERMANN

They do. They can't understand everything you are dealing with. Be easy with them too.

CUT TO:

95 INT. BLANCA'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Driving home, Blanca makes her way up a tall bridge, her fists tightening on the steering wheels as fog encroaches and obscures her vision as she makes the ascent.

The fog is so thick that visibility barely goes beyond the hood of her car.

It clears as she reaches the apex of the pitch. A yellow butterfly flits past her window. A spontaneous smile lifts the corners of her mouth.

A SWARM of butterflies-monarchs this time-surround the car, tiny bodies clicking against the windshield-and dissipate as quickly as they arrived.

CUT TO:

96 INT. KORINA'S APARTMENT-FLASHBACK

Blanca flips through an old year book while Korina writes on her mirror with a worn-down black lipstick.

YOUNG BLANCA
Why do you always write that?

KORINA
(looks up from her
lipsticked graffiti)
Because it's beautiful. And it's
true... It's the title of a really
sweet play I read once.
(tilts her head)
Butterflies are free. It's what I
want people to think of when they
think of me.

FADE OUT:

97 INT. BLANCAS BEDROOM- NIGHT

Blanca is sitting cross-legged on her bed, elbows on her knees, head in her hands. Her laptop is open to the missing children's web page for Korina.

She looks tortured.

Blanca licks her dry lips and sharply inhales, summoning her nerve.

She quickly dials the number for SAPD and puts the phone to her ear, pacing while she listens to the whirr and click of the ringing line on the other end.

BLANCA
Uh yes. Hi. Um. Yes, I need to
speak to an officer regarding a
missing child case.
(uncomfortable beat)
A cold case. Korina Gallegos.

She shakes and fights the impulse to hang up while she is on hold.

BLANCA (CONT'D)
Yes, hi. I...I know this is going
to sound crazy, and I don't know if
there is a statute of limitations on
this kind of thing, but I have
information about Korina's
disappearance-or rather-people who
might need to be questioned-that
(MORE)

BLANCA (CONT'D)

I...failed to report when I was questioned back in '99.

(nods as she listens)

Yes. Yes sir. Yes, I do believe this might be relevant to the case today. Yes, 8a.m. will be fine.

She wipes her mouth and closes her laptop.

CUT TO:

98 INT. SAN ANTONIO POLICE DEPARTMENT STATION - DAY

Blanca waits nervously in the lobby of the busy police station.

DISPATCHER

Ms? Detective Guillermo is ready for you.

CUT TO:

99 INT. DETECTIVE GUILLERMO'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Detective looks up as Blanca enters and smiles affably, but makes no move to get up and greet her. He motions toward the chair in front of his desk.

DET. GUILLERMO

Ms. Praeger. Have a seat.

Blanca sits and immediately begins to shift nervously in her seat.

DET. GUILLERMO (CONT'D)

Blanca, let me begin by letting you know you aren't in any trouble by releasing this information.

(watches as Blanca calms down)

You had no knowledge or involvement in a crime.

(a long beat)

Now,

(reaches down for a file)

I remember this case. The girl's mother called me twice a week for TEN YEARS after she disappeared. I retire this year. Giving that woman some peace after all this time would be one helluva parting gift.

(MORE)

DET. GUILLERMO (CONT'D)

So please, don't let fear keep you
from feeling comfortable. We are on
the same side here.

Blanca's shoulders had relaxed as he spoke and her nervous
leg bouncing slowed.

BLANCA

(clears her throat)

Thank you. That helps.
I...uh...honestly didn't think about
the implications of what I kept to
myself until recently. I let myself
believe Korina must've just done
something foolish. OR maybe she ran
away. But something about my daughter
being around that age clicked my
subconscious into gear. And I
realized how dark and ominous what
we had been doing before her
disappearance was.

DET. GUILLERMO

Go on...

(prepared to write in
his report book)

BLANCA

There were two guys we were hanging
around with that summer.

(turns bright red)

I didn't want my parents to know
about it- and I really didn't think
they knew anything!

BLANCA (CONT'D)

They were older.

(a beat)

Much older.

DET. GUILLERMO

Names?

BLANCA

(licks her lips, knowing
this will seal their
fate)

John McAdams. Gary Childs.

DET. GUILLERMO
(writes the names
down)
How old were you that summer?

BLANCA
Same age as Korina. 15.

DET. GUILLERMO
And these guys? What were their
ages?

BLANCA
(squirming)
Early twenties. Old enough to buy
beer for sure.

DET. GUILLERMO
(puts down his report
book)
In Texas, sexual assault has no
statute of limitations. The age of
consent is 17. If the party in
question is more than 3 years older
than the minor-the party can be
charged with sexual assault whether
it is the victim pressing the charges
or us.

Blanca stares at her hands while she digests this.

DET. GUILLERMO (CONT'D)
Are you fully aware of the
implications here?

BLANCA
I am.

DET. GUILLERMO
Ok.
(clicks pen eagerly)
Start from the beginning.

CUT TO:

100 EXT- JOHN MCADAM'S HOUSE - DAY

The house is nice, two stories, with a basketball hoop in
the driveway and bikes laying on the lawn.

BLANCA (V.O.)
I met him when I was walking home
from school...I met John first, Gary
was his tag-along.
(MORE)

BLANCA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
John was really nice, but I was a
child. And he was a grown man. He
should have known better. I should
have too.

John opens the door and is greeted by two uniformed police officers.

John smiles, greets them easily and lets the officers in the house. His children are watching T.V in the living room. He guides the officers away to the formal dining room out of earshot.

DISSOLVE TO:

101 INT-GARY'S LIVING ROOM- DAY

Gary and his mother are sitting in the grubby living room with two police officers. Beer cans and cigarette butts litter the coffee table between them.

 BLANCA (V.O.)
He had this friend. Gary. He
was...weird..off. He had a thing
for Korina.

Gary sits with his shoulders rolled forward, biting at the cuff of his hoodie.

 BLANCA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I know they fooled around. They hung
out with her sometimes without me.
God, it would make me jealous.

His mother protests at the police officers sitting next to them on the ratty couch.

Gary is saying something. His face registers no emotion.

DISSOLVE TO:

102 INT- GARY'S BEDROOM

The bedroom is an even filthier version of the house. Dishes with petrified food are scattered around the sagging twin bed.

 BLANCA (V.O.)
I never really liked him then, but
when I went to ask John about him
recently, I didn't like how he steered
me away. It gave me the
feeling...almost like he was trying
to protect Gary?

Gary is hunched over a lower dresser drawer while the officers exchange looks.

DET. GUILLERMO (V.O.)
You went to see John...recently?

Gary is reaching in and cradling something he had swaddled carefully in a t-shirt.

BLANCA (V.O.)
I went my whole life denying what happened and once it started coming back, guilt and shame and a NEED to talk to them and then talk to you plagued me. I've literally been going crazy with this.

He offers his relic reverently to the officers. It is a charred, black human skull, looking very small in the resting place it had been hidden inside for the last 20 years.

The officers, hands on their guns, force Gary to his knees. He limply yields to the handcuffs.

CUT TO:

103 INT. JOHN MCADAM'S HOUSE - DAY

John walks with the officers back through his house. When he closes the front door behind him, safely shielded from his children's eyes they cuff him and lead him towards their squad car.

BLANCA (V.O.)
I'm know I'm probably ruining his life by doing this. I don't take this lightly. But I am telling a truth that is long overdue.

CUT TO:

104 INT BLANCA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Blanca sits curled on the couch watching the news. Trent comes and sits next to her and she quickly changes the channel.

TRENT
You don't have to change it.

BLANCA
I know you and Bella are sick of all of this drama.

Trent grabs the remote and puts it back on the news.

TRENT

We were worried about you. We had no idea how...complicated its been for you.

BLANCA

I tried to tell you. Once the dreams started, it was like a veil of denial that I put on when I was 15 suddenly lifted.

(looks down shamefully)

I was too disgusted to tell you everything. I've been a coward.

BLANCA (CONT'D)

I can't believe I let that woman suffer for 20 years.

TRENT

Hey..hey.. What you did was *unbelievably* brave. Putting yourself in the crosshairs like that. On display.

BLANCA

Putting all of us on display-

TRENT

Bella and I don't give a shit about any of that. If we cared about other people's opinions you think I'd dedicate my life to coaching teenagers to chase a ball and throw it the best for chump change?

Blanca smiles.

BLANCA

I'll have to testify.

TRENT

And you'll be a living example to our daughter of how important it is to do the right thing-no matter how difficult it is.

Blanca's head snaps toward the television at the sound of Korina's name.

NEWS ANCHOR

...One of the city's oldest cold cases that was recently solved.

(MORE)

NEWS ANCHOR (CONT'D)

Nearly two decades after the disappearance of the young girl, a tip came in revealing new information that ultimately led to the arrest of two local men, one of which has been charged with her murder. The remains of Korina Gallegos were uncovered and will be finally be put to rest at Meadowforest Cemetery this Saturday.

TRENT

I heard the brother was involved too.

BLANCA

Not really. He did the same thing I did. When Gary and John snuck over that night, he tried to leave with them but Korina wouldn't let him. When he was questioned the next day he just...didn't say anything. His testimony is going to nail John.

TRENT

He's still denying his involvement?

BLANCA

Gary confessed to everything. How it was an

(air quotes)

accident and John was just trying to be a good friend by helping him cover it up. How him paying him off all these years was doing him a favor and not just covering his own ass.

(she shakes her head
in disgust)

I mean, he has *children*. How could he live with knowing that her charred bones were buried under that burn pile in that shitty fucking yard all these years? Meanwhile Debbie was suspended in purgatory and never even allowed the release of her grief.

TRENT

Well at least she has that now.

CUT TO:

105 INT. BELLA'S BEDROOM DOOR - LATER

Blanca stares at the closed door for a long moment before knocking softly.

BELLA

Ya?

BLANCA

I'm going to bed.

BELLA

Ok. Goodnight!

BLANCA

I'm coming in.

Blanca opens the door to reveal her daughter in the middle of a spread of books and notes covering her bed, her laptop in the center.

BELLA

Of course you are.

BLANCA

What teenager is actually doing homework on a Friday night?

BELLA

The kind who can actually think beyond vapid high school dramas and career aspirations that stop at "instagram model" or "influencer"

BLANCA

(smiling)

How did I create such a little bad ass?

BELLA

(raising an eyebrow)

Umm *I* take the credit for my awesomeness, thank you.

Blanca clears a corner of the bed and sits down.

BLANCA

Hey so-

BELLA

Don't mom.

BLANCA

Don't what?

BELLA

You don't need to apologize or put me into counseling because you scarred me for life. I'm fine. I go to a public high school in San Antonio.

(holds eye contact
with her mother)

I'm really impressed that you reported it.

BLANCA

Really? You don't have any questions for me?

BELLA

Not right now. I probably will after this test. But I'm much too level-headed to let this throw me off my game.

(a beat)

I'm just glad you got to put your friend to rest.

BLANCA

You know, I probably don't have a job anymore and know I've destroyed lives- albeit bad guys' lives but still, lives- over this. But knowing she's finally...*found* in some way makes me feel better than I have in a really long time.

BELLA

That's really nice, mom.

Blanca gets up.

BLANCA

Goodnight Bell. I love you.

She closes the door behind her.

CUT TO:

106 EXT. MEADOWFOREST CEMETERY - DAY

Blanca pulls into a beautifully manicured cemetery. She surveys the grounds, relieved by how nice they are. A very small handful of people are gathered around the fresh dirt lining Korina's grave.

Blanca sits in her car for a long time, watching.

People start to drift back to their cars, and Blanca gets out and heads toward the woman she knew would linger.

She is sitting in an aluminum folding chair, holding a rosary and smoking a cigarette.

She looks exactly like Blanca's dreams of her.

BLANCA

Ms. Gallegos?

DEBBIE

(expecting to see
Blanca)

I think you better start calling me
Debbie now.

Blanca sits in a chair next to her, painfully uncomfortable.

A long silence stretches out over them as Debbie smokes.

BLANCA

(deeply inhales)

I didn't know.

(a beat)

How hard it is being mother.

(long beat)

I was a selfish kid and you had to
pay for it.

DEBBIE

(as though she didn't
hear her)

I saw her just the other day. It's
been years since I've even dreamed
of her. But this was *HER*. Like I
could touch her if she hadn't walked
away.

BLANCA

(not sure how to
respond)

Where did she go?

DEBBIE

(reaches into her
pocket and pulls out
the origami note)

She walked into my bedroom and this
is what I found.

Blanca holds the note in her hands. Tears well up, spill over. She traces the butterflies. The bubble letters spelling out her name.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Right after that visit, they found
her.

(MORE)

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

(she drops her
cigarette butt and
twists the embers
out under her shoe)

If she can forgive you, then so can
I.

DISSOLVE TO:

107 INT. BLANCA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

It's dark. Blanca and Trent are asleep in their beds. Blanca's eyes roll back and forth under her eyelids as she dreams.

The hair on her arms raise and goosebumps form hundreds of tiny elevations on her skin.

An orb of light travels toward her face, briefly illuminating her. It crosses over her forehead from left to right and back again and collapses inward.

Blanca sighs and rolls over, breathing deeply.

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END

