

FADE IN:

1 INT. BEDROOM - MEDIUM CLOSE - MALE FORM - LATE AFTERNOON 1

A shape fills the lower portion of the screen. It is a man's back..... a perfect back... good dark color, slim, muscular.

LATIN MUSIC PLAYS... a song.... if you understood the words you would hear love confronted and considered in a very specific way...We are in a Mexico City suburb. The day is hot; small beads of sweat are seen on the man's back, the first indication that we are in slow motion..Perfect red fingernails come into view...and now a woman's hand goes beautifully to work...part sensual back scratch, part massage. The hand cups bits of the man's back, a strong thumb probes his spine, a long finger teases the very top of his ass in a cute finger-pirouette and then continues down -- and, as the hand rises once more to the top of his back for another trip down his upper body...

MAIN TITLES BEGIN: Full titles, minute after minute of titles with some key dissolves helping us to represent some 30 minutes of time passage as the hand continues to scratch and rub, the man making sounds of pleasure. The hand is getting tired. Flirtatious no more, this is getting to be work...The unseen woman shakes the hand vigorously, the man says a single sound urging her to continue, the exhausted hand complies, then stops, then the unseen woman changes hands as TITLES CONTINUE.....The new hand, wearing a wedding ring, goes to work then it too stops to rest..the man says something in Spanish...important for us because it will establish that there will be no subtitles and yet we understand perfectly that he is asking her to continue. She replies in Spanish lightheartedly, with a small and pretty laugh, that her hands are tired. We understand. The man tells her to continue. She continues, the rub now desultory and resentful. She stops for another rest. The man wants more and grabs forcibly at her hand -- his own hand coming into view for the first time. She says, in Spanish, with no particular anger, "you said you would never push me around again. If you do, I will somehow break your arm so you can rub your own back as high as you want." (NOTE: All Spanish dialogue will be worked hard to provide something extra for the Spanish speaking..working in tidbits or extra exposition, jokes etc.) For now, the man's tone changes, placating her to continue. Even as she resumes the massage they begin to have a domestic argument in Spanish. This is no longer a massage we envy. This back rub, going as it does from sex and hope to discord and alienation, will be our only full direct knowledge of their marriage.

2 INT./EXT. BEDROOM / DUSTY ROAD - OTHER ANGLE 2

Showing us the room and beyond, through the window, a school bus stopping at the corner on a dusty road.

We now see the full figure of the woman's back as she looks up with excitement and stops rubbing with the word,

"Cristina." When the man protests her stopping she indicates they should both run and meet their daughter. He waves her off. Stunned by his disinterest, she runs from the room.....

3 EXT. DUSTY ROAD - THE BUS

3

As CRISTINA, six years old and adorable, waits patiently to step down. She sees her mother and grins and waves excitedly, digging into her little pack to pull out an English book which she displays with pride. Now she steps down from the bus and, as she walks TOWARD CAMERA, narration begins. The voice is of a girl eleven years older than the child we see.

NARRATOR

To Princeton University's Director of Admissions: In considering me for a scholarship you have asked for, and have every reason to expect, an essay from me about myself. And, as a clever high school graduate, I of course realize the subtext of this essay about who I am and why I want to enter Princeton, is actually to make clear to you why you should have me. I have gotten tips, from friends who have preceded me to college, that being a Latina, with my grades, list of activities and relative poverty, I am as good as in if I simply do the dance and work in a word like "bipolarization" every so often. And while I love dances -- this dance of self is one I am afraid to master.

(young girl looks off and
lights up)

I prefer to write about my mother.

4 INT. / EXT. HOUSE - SCHOOL GIRL'S POV - MOM

4

A drop-dead gorgeous Latin woman in her early 20's. As mother and daughter move inside, a car pulls up with an ominous man getting out. He nods in another direction calling our attention to a police car parked off the street. The woman does not notice - instead shepherding the child to her father. The woman makes a big fuss over the text books the child has..this is one supportive mom..again she is disbelieving that her husband shows no interest, especially when the child seems briefly hurt. The woman's husband looks from the window and sees the ominous man coming. The woman now does everything humanly possible to distract the child so she does not see what is transpiring.

NARRATOR

For my mother, that afternoon eleven years ago was a watershed not because of my father's

(MORE)

NARRATOR (cont'd)
imprisonment but because it was my
first day at school....

5 INT. KITCHEN / HUSBAND'S ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

5

This room is directly across from the husband's room. The woman looks up to see her husband open the suitcase to show the man a huge store of Mont Blanc pens and high-end watches. The man gives her husband some money..all the time the woman is chattering to distract the girl. Looking off --the woman grows wide-eyed as she sees her husband count some money. The undercover cop begins shouting orders. The woman raises her voice to cover the argument in the next room which puzzles her daughter.

NARRATOR

There was never any pretense that the gorgeous, vital, clever, temperamental animal that was my mother ever for a heartbeat considered having any life of her own. She ignored all her needs and was alive only for me. It was terrific.

(a long beat)
At the time.

ON MOM.

As she watches her daughter chew a cookie. Her daughter begins to tell about her day, her young mother taking on a glow we have not yet seen. And all the while she eyes the action in the next room. Her husband makes a break for the window. The other man points a gun at the ceiling preparing to fire a warning shot. The woman moves ever so quickly to a shelf of her favorite dishes, all the while talking to her daughter, making much over the kid's new school books. It is an impressive charade.

FULL SHOT - TAKING IN BOTH ROOMS.

And just as the cop shoots at the ceiling, in perfect timing, she upsets the dishes, the resulting noise covering the shot.. The woman asks her daughter what she learned today..the daughter says she was taught a little English. Mother is impressed as she watches the cop move her husband toward the front door where other police await. Her daughter starts to follow her gaze and she distracts her..brandishing the Spanish/English book and asking her to say something.

6 INT. / EXT. KITCHEN - ON GIRL.

6

Standing proudly, smoothing her skirt.

CLOSE UP GIRL.

As she clears her throat and says directly into camera.

GIRL

Hi.

The girl and woman are enormously excited over this word even though, outside, her life's mate is being loaded into the back of a police car. (Note: Mexican police DO NOT duck the perpetrator's head WHEN LOADING THEM IN THE BACK SEAT..they just allow the concussion.) It seems the mother will save her child the trauma of her father being carted off; but the police turn on their siren and the girl turns to see her father as the car pulls away. The child is stricken. A tear starts to form in her eye. Her mother acts quickly. We are about to see powerful emotion reversed by sheer force of will..the mother leans down, gives three quick kisses - power pecks - to the girl's cheeks and then an admonition in Spanish.

MOTHER

Una lágrima...sola una sola...Haz
la mejor possible.

NARRATOR

"One tear..only one...so make it a
good one." This was my mother's
instruction to me.

ON CHILD.

Baffled by the edict..

ON MOTHER.

Holding up one finger. That's it..one tear..she means it.

ON CHILD..

As she complies..one great tear forming and falling..Her mother's thumb wipes it away..But now her eyes well with more tears..her mother gestures she must have strength and resolve..and so she does..a toss of her pretty little head...the eyes clear.

7 INT. MOTHER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

7

As the mother, lying in bed with her daughter loses her own fight with tears..managing with difficulty to keep her convulsive sobs silent since her daughter and she are intertwined like pretzels.

DISSOLVE TO:

8 INT. GIRL'S ROOM - DAY

8

The girl works on her lesson plan..She is a study in beauty. Her mother's daughter. Across the small hallway her mother greets and deals with friends and family in a:

12 INT. SMALL AIRPLANE - MAGIC HOUR

12

The mother and daughter seating themselves. The mother is enormously nervous with the prospect of flight. She sits, the daughter ignores an empty seat and goes on her lap, mother hugging daughter, daughter hugging the hug.

AMERICAN PILOT

(to girl)
How you doing?

GIRL

(accented English)
Hi. How are you? I am fine..
(she checks her book of
English synonyms)
..happy, merry, joyful, glad,
contented, frisky.

As they taxi.

AMERICAN PILOT

(to mother)
Are you her mother, sister..what?

The mother says, "solo español"---"only Spanish." The daughter starts to chatter excitedly about the imminent flight. Her mother quiets her firmly in order to pray for their safety.. As the plane continues to taxi...We HEAR the mother's prayer in Spanish. She then nudges her daughter..who, with this gentlest of prods, repeats the same prayer.

13 EXT. AERIAL SHOT..

13

The plane crossing the Rio Grande.

NARRATOR

My mother's prayer for us, which she made me repeat exactly, represented a stunning look into our future. "Please God, let only the bad things change."

14 INT. SMALL PLANE - CLOSE ON THE TWO FEMALES..

14

Use this image if ever you want to strike a coin depicting the moment of no return. The child aglow with happy anticipation..the adult brave and enormously anxious.

OTHER ANGLE.

The pilot taken with the mother's looks.

AMERICAN PILOT

How can I reach you? Address?
Telephone? Por favor. Por favor.

He glances over..this is not lechery, it is art appreciation..an errant but decent man awed by the creature he is drawn to..

NARRATOR

My mother had redefined her own passions. Blaming herself for the father she gave me, she would never again be lured by a man's rough edges..She had decided that goodness would be her catnip.

ON MOTHER..

As she feels him looking at her and turns. With some affection and regret, she shakes her head, "no."

THE PILOT.

As he mouths the word "ouch."

15 EXT. FIELD - NIGHT... 15

Plane landing on a dirt and grass strip...

16 EXT. FIELD - LATER - NIGHT - ON MOTHER AND DAUGHTER.. 16

Standing on the tarmac..Latin flavored music suddenly gives way to a Texas country harmonica riff..The child tries to comfort her apprehensive mother with the one wondrous fact she finds so thrilling.

GIRL

(exulting)
Texas...

The mother hurries her along in the direction of distant lights.

GIRL (CONT'D)

(more emphatically)
Texas.

17 EXT. ELEVATED HIGH SHOT...HIGHWAY 17

The two of them waiting, small figures.

GIRL

Mamá, Texas..

She raises her fingers like pistols. Shoots, blows in them and reholsters them.

18 EXT. HIGHWAY - DUSK 18

Bus traveling the highway. The child looks out sadly.

GIRL
Adios, Texas.

TRANSITION TO:

19 EXT. NORTH VALLEY STREET - EARLY EVENING 19

As they disembark...the mother studying a slip of paper...fearing she has made the mistake of a lifetime. The child fascinated by all.

NARRATOR

At the time, I was oblivious to my mother's anguish. She loved and lived to talk. Now, as if by a witch's spell, words were no longer her bridge but her barrier. In a very real sense she feared she had left herself behind.

ON THE TWO FEMALES.

The mother sees something. Joy returns.

HER POV.

A street full of stores with SIGNS IN SPANISH..She begins walking the street asking passers-by for directions in Spanish and is answered..her step lightens..she beams with relief. So far so very, very good.

20 EXT. APT. COMPLEX - DAY - FIVE MONTHS LATER.. 20

An iron gate in front..small courtyard ringed by a second floor horseshoe of apartments.

NARRATOR

We moved into a place managed by my mother's aunt. My mother worked two jobs in two local stores paying a total of 450 dollars a week...

21 INT. APT. - DAY 21

As the mother enters.

NARRATOR

..just ever so barely enough.

22 INT. APT. - KITCHEN - CLOSER SHOT.. 22

Cristina taking a newspaper from her book bag and seriously pondering - then circling grocery coupons.

ANGLE ON KITCHEN AREA.

Cristina taking a snack from the refrigerator..smiling at the note her mother left...lighting a burner and melting cheese on a tortilla.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

But we were fine. We had it down.
If only I could have stayed six.

The CAMERA MOVES QUICKLY from the child to:

23 EXT. APT. COMPLEX - ELEVATED SHOT - SIX YEARS LATER. 23

The courtyard is lit with colored lights and candles..a wedding reception is in progress -

EXTREME CLOSE UP - THE BRIDE.

Gorgeous round and full cheeks stretched into a deep, explosive smile.

BACK TO SCENE... music plays and we focus on Cristina, now nearing 12 years of age..dancing with her mother and some other smaller children.. The mother eyes the muscular back of a Great Looking Man...who turns, and quickly oozes quality sex appeal. She is turned on..They talk in Spanish...him saying something hushed like, "I have been afraid to talk to you. I need oxygen when I look at you." She indicates the six children she is dancing with and offers to include him in some ring around the rosey dance...He indicates the magic of just the two of them...She quickly leads her little flock away..

OTHER ANGLE..

A reed-thin FOURTEEN YEAR OLD BOY is staring at them...at first the mother thinks this is adorable...the child eyeing her as if he were a man..she indicates he should join the rest of the children for a dance..

MOVING WITH THE BOY..

As he steps forward and it becomes clear it is Cristina he is interested in... Before the mom can do anything about it, he asks Cristina to dance and she readily accepts.

ON CRISTINA..

Satellite virginitities falling with alarming speed..the first time held by a male, the first time held close, the first sexy (albeit touchingly awkward) gaze from half-closed male eyes which utterly confuses Cristina. He begins to grind his hips into his dancing partner.

ON HER MOTHER.

Not confused. It is exactly as if she sees her daughter about to be run down by a car..only this time the thing to do is scare the car.

She runs toward the boy -- he sees the force of nature coming his way and makes a break but she gets him and actually lifts him and throws him to the sidelines. Then pats him on the head maternally and goes back to Cristina.

CRISTINA.

Somewhat proud of her mom as the boy leaves the scene.

NARRATOR

That quickly it was clear she could no longer work two jobs and leave me to my own at night. The following morning she did something about it. A boy I never saw again had changed our lives.

24 INT. BUS - DAY 24

The mother and her aunt, MONICA, take their seats..the bus is filled with domestics..the mother, nervous, looks over to see and greet... THE BRIDE from last night's wedding.

25 INT. BUS - DAY - 90 MINUTES LATER. 25

BRIDE
(to mom)
Este es Stone Canyon.

26 EXT. STONE CANYON - DAY 26

MUSIC CHANGE..as they disembark and start walking, joining the busload of domestics into the canyon and up the hill....they walk past a perfect country club fairway. Grand trees from either side meet each other high over the road.

ON OUR GAL..AS THEY WALK

She sees the stuff...the dream that makes you migrate. She is not awed..she is jazzed. To her aunt she does the Latin version of OH.....MY...GOD!!!!!!!!!!!!!!...At regular intervals in the background, one black SUV after another has a mother taking kids home from school.

27 EXT. ATTRACTIVE HOME SECURITY GATE - DAY 27

Monica presses the security intercom. The gate swings open.

28 EXT. HOUSE - DAY. 28

In the foreground an expanse of turned up dirt...and huge rolls of sod ready to be laid down. A catering truck stands in the driveway.

29 INT. / EXT. HOUSE - GREAT KITCHEN / POOL - DAY 29

They enter..lots of glass French doors STAND OPEN to lawn, pool and pool house. They look off.

THEIR POV.

DEBORAH NORWICH CLASKY, a cool beauty in her mid 30's, sits dominating this three generation portrait of the Good Life. She is wearing a straw hat and killer Hawaiian shirt..She is a perfect dresser; meaning her clothes seem to say she doesn't care, while every article is a true and gifted find. She is drinking from a tumbler which is also of the "don't hold your breath while you try to find something as terrific" variety. She is flanked by her mother, EVELYN, 60, who is drinking from a stemmed glass with two olives and her 14 year old overweight daughter, BERNICE..who is reading, her grandmother idly holding her hand..In the immediate area more rolls of sod wait to be laid.

THE TWO LATINAS.

As they stand inside the kitchen not sure what to do next. Then Deborah gestures that they should join her at the pool..as they start out..

THEIR EXIT.

Boink..three stooges retro..those French doors were not open after all. Monica hits first. The women at the pool react. Deborah and Bernice running. Evelyn momentarily attempts to join the rush.. she half rises and then thinks better of it..too late in the day for sudden movements.

KITCHEN DOORWAY.

BERNICE

Gee whiz in heaven...How are you?
Please?

DEBORAH

(a bit hyper)
Don't worry..I'm not mad...I was looking for decoration to put on the glass so people would stop walking into it and instead of taking what they had in stock, which was awful, I special ordered. I'll design something myself which I should have done in the fi...

Our heroine, seeing the blood flow from her aunt's nose, gestures that Monica needs help not conversation.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

..and what difference does that make when your nose is bleeding. Shut up, Deborah.

BERNICE

Now you got it, Mom.

Deborah grabs at paper towels, gets an ice pack from the freezer and then grabs some cash from a bowl in the kitchen..She has, moment to moment, the enormous desire to feel loved that only the seriously hard to love can experience.

DEBORAH
Here, take these.
(second thought)
Was that strange to give you
money..I just felt badly that..

MONICA
It's okay.

She pockets the cash.

30

EXT. HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

30

Moments later. As the group arrives at the outdoor table. Evelyn makes half-hearted incomplete gestures of shaking hands, nodding, indicating a seat...each simple act a test which she fails -- every gesture a bit too late and then some..simply too much for her to manage with the drinks under her belt. In the background workers roll out sod, the yard becoming more beautiful even as we look.

MONICA
She is my niece. She and her
daughter live in the apartment I
manage. Yolanda, who worked for
you, lived there before she went
back home. That's how I heard about
the job.

DEBORAH
So who am I interviewing?

MONICA
Her.

DEBORAH
(forcefully)
You're gorgeous.

On our gal..as she, not understanding the word, smiles and nods.

MONICA
(translating sotto)
Vistosos.

Our gal thrown. Not knowing how now to react.

EVELYN
She doesn't mean it as a
compliment. It's more of an
accusation.

DEBORAH
This is my daughter Bernice and
this is my mother, Evelyn Norwich..

BERNICE
(rising)
Excuse me...Glad you're okay.
(then to other Latina)
Good luck.

Our gal smiles back in appreciation.

DEBORAH
No, stay..this involves you.

BERNICE
I wouldn't want some kid around for
my interview. You understand, Mom.

EVELYN
(to Bernice)
Strength of character..empathy..big
heart..taste for futility - God I
love you.

She eyes with disapproval her mother's empty glass.

DEBORAH
MOTHER!
(then to Bernice)
Stop. It's just a conversation -
not an interview. Please sit.
(to visitors)
Don't you want to get out of the
sun?

She indicates a shaded seat. Deborah is protected by hat,
umbrella, sun glasses while her guest sits bareheaded
enjoying the rays and indicates she is fine. Underneath
Deborah's surface is a Russian roulette of deeply felt
emotions..at this moment she is earnest and vulnerable.

DEBORAH (TO OUR GAL) (CONT'D)
You guys want some lemonade?
(they demur)
Let's just talk. I have two
children. My husband works
nights..he's a chef and has his own
place.

MONICA
Do you work?

DEBORAH
I helped run a commercial design
company until ten months ago when

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
 it was downsized to zip. Okay. I
 have two children. I like the house
 to be like me in that I'm very
 loose and meticulous at the same
 time. It's all about first names
 and closeness here but I care about
 the place, you know. It's what they
 used to call homemaker..

The two visitors exchange a wide-eyed look. Which Deborah
 sees and understands.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
 (to Monica)
 I'm not leaving time for you to
 translate.

Monica says, in Spanish, "this woman is very strange. The
 only thing I understand is she has two kids." Deborah leans
 into Monica. Face to face, tender but unblinking..

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
 Too bad for you that it just never
 occurred to you to check on how
 much Spanish I know.

MONICA
 (a solid beat of
 humiliation then)
 I'm sorry what I say about
 you...don't hold it against her.

BERNICE
 Mom!!

DEBORAH
 I don't speak any Spanish. But I'm
 not an idiot - I talk for an hour
 and you say two words. What did you
 say?

Monica squirms - unusual for her.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
 Never mind. You got your nose
 bopped. I got my feelings hurt.
 Onward.

As Monica paraphrases what has happened, her translation is
 DIALED DOWN for the:

NARRATOR
 (as Deborah continues
 talking)
 I will major in linguistics and
 make sociology my sub-
 concentration. Because it has been
 my experience that the barriers of
 (MORE)

NARRATOR (cont'd)
 language are more than we dare
 admit. That, as much as we
 translate, finally we will never
 understand each other. My mother's
 name, for example, beautiful in
 Spanish, becomes leaden and awful
 when pronounced by a non-Latin.

DEBORAH (IN THE CLEAR)
 What's your name? Llamó? One of my
 five Spanish words..

OUR GAL
 Flor Moreno.

She pronounces Flor in the Latin way...lots of RRRR's with a
 curling of the tongue sound at the end.

DEBORAH
 Flor.

She pronounces it flat like the "floor" we walk
 on...throughout the following each of the women sticks to
 their pronunciation as indicated by the extra "r's."

FLOR
 (correcting)
 Florrrrrr.

DEBORAH
 Flor.

FLOR
 (correcting)
 Florrrrrr.

DEBORAH
 Flor.

FLOR
 (correcting)
 Florrrrrr.

DEBORAH
 Flor.

FLOR
 (trying)
 Florrrrrr.

DEBORAH
 Flor..what I walk on?

MONICA AND EVELYN
 Florrrrrr.

FLOR
Florrrrrr.

BERNICE
It means flower, right?

MONICA
Yes. Flower. Florrrrrr.

EVELYN
Florrrrrr.

FLOR
Florrrrrr.

Deborah is beginning to feel criticized...she takes a beat..eyes everyone with some hostility.

DEBORAH
(directly to Flor)
Is there some school of the ear I'm
flunking out of right now?

Flor says to Monica, in Spanish, a tip to pronounce her name. Monica warns Flor to leave it rest..since Deborah is becoming clearly and strangely pissed..

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
What did she say?

CLOSE ON FLOR...

She feels the tension but, so far in her life, her own irrepressible personality has served her - so she moves forward with surprising and quiet confidence and assurance. She tells her aunt to repeat her words so that now, for the first time, she is, through Monica, talking directly to Deborah.

MONICA
(translating)
She says..If you curl your tongue
and let it be loose you will have
it..that it's hard for Americans..
She says it's great that you try so
hard. Many people wouldn't bother.

DEBORAH
(an emotional
pronouncement/her
greatest accolade)
She gets me....

She smiles at Flor, who returns the smile.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
 You want some lemonade? Take some
 lemonade.

She pours some for Flor and Monica. Then she closes her eyes
 and pauses in utter dedication to a final effort:

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
 Florrrrrr.

It is perfect..Flor grins at Deborah's victory...claps her
 hands together.

FLOR
 (a Spanish word)
 Sublime.

Deborah feels relief..free for a moment from the dark
 corridors of self-criticism..She is lighter, prettier,
 innocent..Wholly and completely attractive.

DEBORAH
 Whew, dense but stubborn, right?
 Thanks.
 (an important declaration)
 What you just did with me is just
 what kids need..patience and
 encouragement. Alright, money...

Bernice rises like a shot to take off..

BERNICE
 Goodbye, really..
 (to Flor)
 Look forward to seeing you.

As she leaves.

DEBORAH
 (absently to Bernie)
 Love you...
 (then with not a
 monoseconds break)
 ... the job is six days a week,
 seven to seven..the kids and all
 housekeeping, how much a week would
 you like?

Monica translates..Flor, embarrassed a bit by the directness,
 ducks the question..saying in Spanish -- "whatever you say.."

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
 No.. This is an important
 question..if you ask for too little
 it means you don't value

yourself..too much and you're
taking advantage.
(after Monica translates)
So?

Flor is dumbstruck by the challenge of this pop quiz but not without some native wit and style to maneuver around it.

FLOR
(extremely heavy accent)
One thousand dollars.

Deborah falls for it until Flor laughs..others join...Deborah now a big smile, snort of a laugh, putting her hand to her face and shaking her head.

OTHER ANGLE..

As Monica uses Deborah's reaction time to, in mid-laugh, flash four fingers to Flor..

ON EVELYN.

Catching the gesture and secretly indicating to Monica they should go for six.

MONICA
(firmly)
Six hundred dollars.

Flor shoots her a look of fear...a tense beat.

DEBORAH
Welcome to the family..

Deborah kisses her..sort of on the mouth. In the midst of Flor's delight she is thrown by Deborah's kiss...it is the first of many borders to be violated.

31 EXT. CLASKY HOUSE - DAY. 31

As Flor and Monica exit and can finally show their full joy.

DISSOLVE TO:

32 EXT. STONE CANYON - EVENING. 32

JOHN CLASKY driving a smallish SUV. He is an upbeat, talented, successful man with an ego as balanced as a high-end watch; who loves his wife, kids and job. In other words, watch out, John.

33 EXT. CLASKY HOUSE - EVENING. 33

As John pulls into the driveway next to a catering truck and exits his SUV carrying a large wrapped tray..

34 INT. CLASKY HOUSE - EVENING.

34

As John moves quickly through the downstairs, he puts the tray on a counter where food servers are working.

JOHN

I brought some dessert.

As he moves on, we see in the background the workers unwrap and react to a fantastic concoction. A caterer (who we may notice looks at him like royalty) falls in beside him and whispers to him.

CATERER

She came down to check on the party and realized the gardeners hadn't finished rolling the sod.

35 INT. / EXT. CLASKY HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

35

JOHN'S POV - DEBORAH AND TWO FEMALE CATERERS.

Deborah is wearing a party dress. They are rolling out the last huge cylinder of sod, completing the now beautifully manicured backyard. It is hard manual labor involving physical strength. The female caterers are complaining that it's too heavy but Deborah is undeterred.

DEBORAH

(to catering women)
We can do it. Come on.

She falls over the roll..getting filthy..but it gives and they gain momentum...one of the catering women falling down, one losing pace.. Deborah,however, gains the upper hand. Yet, even while succeeding, she remonstrates herself.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

(great exertion)
Why... do... I... care.. so..
much.. about.... CRAP?

And now she wins.. the cylinder of grass rolls all the way out and she jumps on the seam in victory. She is dirty, spent and triumphant..the components for a solid sexual experience..and, in truth, as the exhausted caterers half-heartedly applaud the bizarre victory, she has gotten off. She looks with mother's pride at the lawn. Then sees John.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

Can you believe they left without finishing?

As she looks at her handiwork - John looks at her..A grin..half laugh.. He loves the dame.

DEBORAH (BREATHLESS) (CONT'D)
Looks great, huh?.... You're not
looking.

JOHN
I was getting a kick looking at you
look at it.

Not the answer she wanted..

DEBORAH
I better get dressed again in case
anybody's just a half hour late.

She hits a switch at the door and the backyard area is now fully illuminated -- set up for a dinner party for 20 or so....all details thought about and done to a "T". This is the outdoor lighting nobody nails..the twinkling of a half acre..the path to the pool like a runway to heaven. As she looks at it all she has a wistful moment.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
(a replenishing sigh)
Okay..We're okay here.
(then)
Why can't everything be like sod?
There's no wait, no dung, nothing
you have to do right and yet it's
perfect. It covers up all your
dirt and makes things immediately
pretty..then, the miracle, if you
just give it time, it roots and you
can't tell it from the real thing.
(a look to her husband)
No reaction. Nothing to say.

JOHN
Huh? Oh sure..I, uh..Well, no, I
don't have anything particular to
say.

DEBORAH
Oh, John why don't you just take
out a knife and kill me all
together.

Somewhat crushed, she prepares to exit.

JOHN
How'd you get there..Hey, wait a
minute..Deb..stop..come on.
(she turns)
I'd like to figure this one out.
What would have been the great
thing for me to say after you said
the sod sentence?...Really.

DEBORAH

That's actually a good question.

JOHN

There you go. I surprise sometimes.

DEBORAH

I would have liked, if after I compared the sod to life, if you had said, "Exactly!"

She turns to leave.

JOHN

Yeah. But to say that and mean it I'd have to think the same way you do.

DEBORAH

(some sense of mischief)
It's worth a try...I had something else to tell you...it'll come to me..

36 INT. OLIVE GARDEN TYPE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

36

Standing in a nicely decorated middle class restaurant, Cristina, totally bilingual, speaks to the American hostess with a pronounced and charming accent as her mother, standing beside her, bounces with energy and joy.

CRISTINA

Could we have a table for two, please?

Flor says something to her in Spanish..the daughter waves it off and when the mother persists, she translates.

CRISTINA (CONT'D)

We're celebrating.

HOSTESS

Smoking or non-smoking?

Before her daughter can translate.

FLOR

Dancing!

The hostess laughs..They are seated at the two ends of a banquette and each automatically picks up her place setting and "scootches" closely together. Cristina picks up a menu and points to the prices.

CRISTINA

Wow, expensive..

Flor scoffs -- says she's making six hundred dollars a week..then looks at the prices and does a take. The hostess returns --- Cristina points to the menu.

CRISTINA (CONT'D)
This is just for the starter?

Flor, encouraging her daughter's spirit of adventure, places her hand over the prices in the menu.

HOSTESS
Uh-huh..And those men would like to buy you a drink.

The daughter translates...the hostess points out the early 30's, well dressed, quite nice looking businessmen. Flor addresses the men who are several tables away. Cristina moves uncomfortably but responds to her mother's nudge to translate.

CRISTINA
(to men)
This is very embarrassing but--
"what's wrong with you? I'm with my daughter for God's sake!"

Then hostess, Flor and finally Cristina laugh. Cristina relishes getting back to ordering from the menu...in a moment that is a bit noteworthy..

CRISTINA (CONT'D)
And I would like to begin with the Jumbo Shrimp.

37 EXT. STONE CANYON - DAY - 6:30 A.M. 37

Flor smiling..enjoying the canyon..as she walks the mile plus from the bus stop to work..one of a straggly line of domestics. Deborah jogs into view.

DEBORAH
Hi, Flor..See you up there.

Deborah runs past..She is clearly upset..She is also more than a stay-in-shape jogger. She is an athletic woman fueled by an ever flickering pilot light of anxiety. This makes her seriously quick. She is highly aware of passing everybody..She needs to pass everybody..Her voice trails behind her as she announces to all as she approaches.."left, please," "left," "left."

38 INT. CLASKY HOUSE - UPSTAIRS - DAY 38

John enters his son's room..GEORGIE, age 9.

JOHN
 Okay...think SERIOUSLY about
 getting up. You don't have to get
 up yet but are you thinking
 seriously about it?

GEORGIE
 Yes.

JOHN
 Okay.

39 INT. CLASKY HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY. 39

Bernice is making French Toast, doing something novel with
 the filling and the last cooking process. Some great idea
 which will have us making a mental note to try it at home.

40 INT. CLASKY HOUSE - UPSTAIRS DAY - DAY 40

John opens Georgie's door again.

GEORGIE
 Now?

JOHN
 Yes..actual up..

Georgie gets up..

GEORGIE
 Morning, Dad.

JOHN
 Yeah, good morning.

GEORGIE
 You as mad at me as Mom 'cause of
 what happened?

John pauses..aware his answer will have repercussions but
 integrity wins.

JOHN
 No, Georgie, I'm not.

GEORGIE
 Are you mad at me?

JOHN
 Uh...okay, no..

41 INT. CLASKY HOUSE - KITCHEN DOORWAY - DAY 41

As Flor enters from outside.

BERNICE
 Morning, good to see you.

FLOR
Morning. Good too.

She notices the French Toast.

BERNICE
Try some.

She demurs. Bernice holds out one slice on a spatula, indicating Flor should just tear a piece off which she does...One taste and she marvels -- her mouth dropping open at this kid's ability to make something mundane special..Bernice laughs.

BERNICE (CONT'D)
Thanks.

Her mother enters on her way upstairs. She is thoughtful, tense and sweaty - her run having failed to exorcise her current demon. She greets Flor and then shakes her head, making a vain attempt to communicate her troubled mood to Flor in some sort of sisterhood based on life being a fucker.

DEBORAH
Tough day.

Bernice prepares a plate for her mom while, in the b.g., a GOLDEN RETRIEVER named CHUM approaches Flor from behind with a ball in its mouth. Flor is checking out the kitchen... what's in each drawer, etcDeborah is impressed by the self-starter display and indicates same to Bernice.

BERNICE
I had an idea for a breakthrough in French toast so I made breakfast. I don't want to be teased about it.. No sarcasm. No tough love. Just try it and if by any chance you have a positive reaction...

DEBORAH
Right..mean ol' me. I can't play right now. I have to do something about your brother.

BERNICE
I had an idea for a recipe. When has that happened? I got up early to do this. At least taste it, for God's sakes!

She does..

DEBORAH
Oh, it's good...oh God, it's rich -- Oh God, it's good.

DEBORAH
 (sudden alarm)
 By the way, you could do without
 this.

The approval rug pulled out from under her, Bernice looks at her mother. But Deborah is unaware of having hurt her daughter because her attention has been diverted so that Deborah AND THE CAMERA LOSE FOCUS ON BERNICE as the teenager, distraught, moves from the room.

DEBORAH (TO FLOR) (CONT'D)
 NO..NO! FLOR!....Never do fetch.

Chum is nudging Flor with the ball and Flor was about to accommodate him by taking it before Deborah's warning shout stopped her in mid-sentence.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
 I mean it, NEVER!

ON Flor's stunned reaction to the outburst.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
 I'm not mad. I'm thinking of you.
 This is me being nice..

Then using her hands to demonstrate.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
 Just no taking ball from dog.
 (broadly)
 Trust me on that one.

CLOSE UP ON Chum going nuts with Deborah's hand passing in front of his face ignoring how urgently he offers the ball.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
 You and me. We are fine. Just a
 tip.
 (she gives her waist a
 little squeeze)
 Girlfriends.
 (Flor is totally confused)
 Could you make some coffee? Cafe?

FLOR
 Yes.

Deborah directs her to the most complicated cappuccino machine Italian overpriced artists ever devised.

42 INT. CLASKY HOUSE - UPSTAIRS - MASTER BATHROOM - DAY 42

Deb in the shower...you have never seen so many shampoos, conditioners and bath balms...never seen so huge a sponge..such fluffy towels.

Skylight over the shower allows a beam of God's warmth. There is a fireplace in the bathroom. The only significance of this being that these people have a fireplace in their bathroom. The woman who made it all happen is putting in a contact lens..She is upset. We see that she has one blue eye and one brown.

JOHN

This isn't an argument, honey.

DEBORAH

Yes. Yes it is. So stop being so maniacally calm.

JOHN

(emphatically)

No..it's not. Because I understand your side.

DEBORAH

I can't be wrong about that too. This is a fight. We're having a fight. Yo, I feel anger.

Deborah turns from the sink revealing one brown eye and one blue. She blinks, realizes one lens is not in and turns back to the sink.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

Can I have a moment?

John exits into the..

43 INT. CLASKY HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY 43

As John awaits his wife...a beat and she enters with two blue eyes. Even though she is attempting reason and self-control her voice is filled with tension and goes from loud to borderline yelling.

DEBORAH

Okay..Let's get someplace here.

44 INT. CLASKY HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY 44

As Flor works methodically - orienting herself..she is able to hear their totally foreign words and though their volume registers on her a bit - basically she remains blithe. Loading a dishwasher, memorizing where everything is..

45 INT. CLASKY HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY 45

BACK TO SCENE:

DEBORAH

You, mister, are crazy making..I can't take this calm thing you've

DEBORAH
 started doing. It's like this is
 your way of letting me know there's
 something deeply wrong with me
 because I'm not calm.

JOHN
 (calmly)
 Let's not go all over the
 place..Can't we...

DEBORAH
 (shouted burst)
 If you're going to talk to me
 please have the decency to raise
 your voice.

JOHN
 (a beat then sudden
 urgency and change of
 tone)
 Let's make a break for it.

DEBORAH
 What are you talking about?

He signals her with his eyes and head and then takes a large
 but tentative step away from the spot where he was
 standing...then additional faster steps. He gestures with
 enormous energy for her to follow him to his new spot in the
 room. She eyes him suspiciously.

JOHN
 Just for a second.

She walks to him...he puts an arm around her shoulder. And
 gestures back to where they were standing. He talks in an
 almost hushed, conspiratorial voice.

JOHN (CONT'D)
 We don't have to be those people.
 Nobody's watching. They've been
 masquerading as us for a while
 here..I'll distract them - you make
 a break for it and I'll meet you
 outside.

DEBORAH
 You're ridiculing me because I care
 about this.

JOHN
 (firmly)
 No. I'm not. I mean this..let's get
 away from those two in case they're
 as miserable as they look..

JOHN
 (urging..like a Southern
 coach)
 Come on, baby.

He is looking at her with wit and conviction..trying to
 squirt lighter fluid at the flame of their love. Deborah
 looks up at him..intimacy of a different sort.

DEBORAH
 Let me ask you a question..let me
 change the subject..Forget for a
 moment that you won't support me
 with Georgie..

JOHN
 (reasonably)
 Well, I don't think...

She makes a noise of frustration to stop him..It works. John
 is rendered still and intimidated by her conduct but he is
 "man" enough for his jaw to set...to pause for a beat as he
 looks her straight in the eye..And walks back to the spot
 they occupied previously.

JOHN (CONT'D)
 Go ahead.

DEBORAH
 Here's the question. It's been on
 my mind more and more. Do you do
 that calm thing for the purpose of
 infuriating me?

JOHN
 (genuinely puzzled)
 What? Why would ...
 (on her exasperated look)
 Why would anyone do something to
 someone they love for the purpose
 of messing them up?

DEBORAH
 (unconvinced/distant)
 Okay.

He hates that look of isolation on her face..He needs to make
 her feel better.

JOHN
 Deb, since high school we've been
 able to read each other...take
 advantage of it..The answer to the
 question is,"absolutely not." Now
 take a look and tell me if you
 believe me.

She looks at him..with a finger motion he directs her gaze to his eyes..

CLOSE on JOHN'S EYES.

Open, smiling, trusting. Trying to get a laugh out of her.

CLOSE ON DEBORAH'S EYES.

Studying, questioning, probing, doubting, exhausted...

DEBORAH
I don't.. believe you. I think you
just want me to feel badly about
myself..Sorry, honey.

46

INT. CLASKY HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

46

John enters - not seeing Flor - goes to the Sparkletts water container and fills a cup...He is shaken..

JOHN
(to himself)
Great God in heaven save me.

Boy meets girl.

FLOR
Hi.

He turns with a start to see Flor smiling at him. Gorgeous squared. His first word is inadvertent.

JOHN
Whoa...whoa...I didn't know Deborah
had found someone... You work here?
You're going to help with the house
and kids?

FLOR
Solo español.

JOHN
You work here and you don't speak
any English at all?

The sound of feet on the stairs..Deborah and Georgie enter.

DEBORAH
All she has to do is dial 9-1-1 and
press two for Spanish.
(even before she enters)
Flor...John.
(to John enunciating the
name)
This is Flor.

JOHN
 (pronouncing it perfectly)
 Hi, Flor.

Deborah reacts, grabs some coffee and pushes Georgie along.

JOHN (CONT'D)
 (to Deborah)
 Look, I'll take Georgie to school.

DEBORAH
 No. I'm doing it..show Flor the ropes.

Flor is trying to figure out what's expected of her then Deborah gestures impatiently for her to fall into step and come with her.

47 EXT. CLASKY HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

47

The biggest, baddest, BLACKEST SUV..there is some subtle custom work so the vehicle impacts us in ways we cannot quite fathom. Deborah is wiping away a tear as she gets in and shares a woman to woman moment with Flor.

DEBORAH
 Fuckin' hombres, huh?

She sniffles. Flor nods uncertainly. A small voice from the back seat..Georgie..

GEORGIE
 I just didn't want to sing last night.

DEBORAH'S VOICE
 (hurt)
 Yeah. Well you said you would..You said you wanted to. I asked you five times. Then when I have the whole party paying attention you refused.

As she puts the car in gear...Georgie sings insanely well. But he's just two lines into an old blues standard:

DEBORAH
 It doesn't do any good now,
 Georgie.

She presses a button on her dash and a glass partition comes up between front and back seat thereby cutting him off in mid-song. Flor is utterly baffled by the notion of putting a divider between parent and child. But Deborah is calling for her to pay attention to the car's navigation screen.. a Spanish voice says, "route guidance system starting."

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
 I've programmed it for Spanish..
 Look, it will take you anywhere and
 then back home. If you figured out
 how to make coffee on that thing
 it's all downhill.

The MALE SPANISH VOICE talks about imminent left turns. Flor is thrown by the amount of oddness..All the while Georgie is singing his little heart out in the back seat. Flor, amused by the boy, suppresses a smile...maybe the first time in her life she's had to suppress joy. But Deborah never misses anything.

DEBORAH (TO FLOR) (CONT'D)
 This is stop gap..You, kiddo,
 you're going to have to learn
 English.

48

INT. RESTAURANT KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON

48

John cooking...the theory that nobody's sexier than when they are seen doing what they do best applies here.. In the BACKGROUND John's number two, PETER, the Sous Chef, being bossy and anal as he organizes his cooking and GWEN, who spends most nights trying not to show her enormous affection for John. At the moment, John's work is a strange mixture of art and cloddishness.....the hands blur with expertise...but he keeps dropping items.....each time a Latin kitchen worker, ALEX, 20, dives on the spillage..At one point they bump.

JOHN
 Sorry...

PETER
 (sharply to Alex)
 Not the best place to stand, fella.

JOHN
 (to Alex)
 No. It's me. You're the new
 helper, huh..

ALEX
 I didn't mean to...

JOHN
 No..no..it's okay. It's me being
 bugged.

Two people head for John almost simultaneously. PEG, an arty looking woman in her late 50's..wild, scraggly gray hair, enters lugging an ice chest and the maitre d'.

PEG
 You are going to be so happy..

The Maitre D' enters.

MAITRE D'

I have something very important to tell you.

John makes a no-brainer of a decision pointing to the woman who promised happiness. She hefts her ice chest up on the counter.

PEG

Perfect cod this is John -- John, perfect cod..Best one I've seen all season and he was swimming twenty minutes ago.

The fish is that special, a sentence that kicks out for a writer, the right brush stroke for an artist. You get it..

JOHN

Knockout.
(to Alex)
You want to learn something? You want to pack it away?

The kid nods.. he picks up the fish.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Cradle it...Put it in the cooler but not on its side.. In the same position it swims.
(important added thought)
And check the ice pack..make sure it can drain away..if it can't the chlorine can hurt the flesh. Do all that and nobody can put a fish in the fridge better than you...and that's a solid start.. First day and you already did something perfect.

KID

(smiling)
Yes, I understand.

MAITRE D'

Please. Now?

JOHN

Oh, sorry..I forgot.

He whispers in John's ear..

JOHN (CONT'D)

Damn.. "ohhhh damn."

PETER

What, buddy, what?

JOHN
Victor spotted a food critic..

PETER
From?

VICTOR
The New York Times..I'll bet they
sent her out just for us.
(hands John a slip)
Here's what she ordered.

PETER
Look, if you're nervous take a
walk..

JOHN
I don't need a walk.

GWEN
I'll walk with you..I know a
breathing thing.

JOHN
What do you think I'm worried
about... how I'll cook? That's not
the problem..
(looks at slip/then to
Alex)
The lady wants fish. Get the fish.

He starts to prepare for cooking.

JOHN (CONT'D)
I worked in a kitchen once in New
York that got four stars. It was
like a line formed for the chance
to become an asshole. People's
accents changed. The heart went out
of the place. You understand.

PETER
No.

GWEN
(w/barely understated
passion)
I agree with everything you've
said. I admire you for your
feelings. I hope to adopt them as
my own....

ON JOHN.

As he works..Let's be clear here...this is that sequence that
either kicks out or doesn't..no food channel..no simple knife
stuff..something casually brilliant..meticulous...smart and
gifted as he prepares the critic's meal.

He is talking quickly..almost to himself.

JOHN

I don't know what to root for.. the thought of one star makes me nauseous..but with four there's no place to go but, "Oh my God, they took away a star."

(musing)

Three..three and a half. That's what you want..No. Wrong! Three and a half you feel disappointed that you just missed out on four. You know what you want? Three and a quarter..

(a eureka moment)

That would be perfect!!

(getting off on it)

It would mean you're good..but you're not good enough to feel disappointed that you just missed out on excellent..but nothing truly bad happened, you still got your three and a quarter stars. Which encourages you to try and improve..And you still get enough respect so that you can get good people to work with you..Business is good but not crazy. You're right there underneath the radar where you get to mind your own business. That's a solid life.

He tastes a sliver of the food dish he is preparing.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(with professional honesty and some regret)

Aw, man..this is amazing. No three and a quarter here.

49 INT. CLASKY KITCHEN - DAY.

49

Evelyn, having a glass of white wine and a sandwich, is talking to Bernice in the kitchen also including Flor though she is only catching a word here or there..

EVELYN

Well, I'm in the vitamin section and this little hip hop girl..what's her name..Grammys - adorable -- big voice..subtle phrasing...oh, she's famous..the kids know her...oh - little blue shoes..darn me.

Flor looks concerned over Evelyn's displeasure with herself, a fact picked up by the older woman...It is actually a small

but resonant good-natured, affectionate moment between the lush and the Latina.

EVELYN (CONT'D)
 God Bless the language barrier, it
 keeps you from being bored with me.

Spoken to directly like this, Flor is confused..

EVELYN (CONT'D)
 Anyway, she said, "aren't you
 Evelyn Wright?" First of all, that
 she recognized me from the old
 covers and then she Oh, please
 her name..it makes the story so
 much better...She said,
 (genuinely stirred)
 "Whenever I think everything is.."
 (aside)
 Pardon my French..pardon her French
 (back to quote)
 "a mother hmmmhmmm...I put on one
 of your records.."

BERNICE
 Awwww. How sweet....

Evelyn looks transparently vulnerable for a second. Flor reacts. Bernie squeezes her grandmother's hand..Flor smiles.

EVELYN
 Just such a lovely thing to come
 from the blue....

Deborah enters, carrying a load of packages. With lightning speed, her eye picks out...the glass her mother is drinking from.

DEBORAH
 Oh, Mother...It's not even noon.

EVELYN
 (defensively)
 It's almost two o'clock.

DEBORAH
 God, where is this day going...Flor
 could you come with me?

BERNICE
 Grandma, tell Mom what happened.

EVELYN
 (very deliberately)
 No.

Deborah leads the way out...but Flor stops before following her out to give Evelyn a gesture of support and appreciation.

50 INT. BERNIE'S ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

50

John is in Bernie's room - helping her with her homework. They lay at right angles to each other..He is testing her.

JOHN

This is going to work.

BERNICE

I don't know anything.

JOHN

Free your mind...the president whose policies many consider responsible for the Great Depression...

BERNICE

I don't know...

JOHN

Name a vacuum cleaner..

BERNICE

Okay. Yes..thanks.

JOHN

And this vacuum whooshed all this money out of everyone's pockets.

BERNICE

Got it. I no longer know nothing.

JOHN

And Hoover was followed in office by..

BERNICE

I'm just drawing blanks. I'm embarrassed. It's my own fault I spent my time on math, which I'm lucky if I don't flunk anyway and..

JOHN

The guy we are looking for is not a ruse..

BERNICE

What's ruse mean?

JOHN

Phony. So this president was not a ruse..He was the real thing.

JOHN
 (she looks at him blankly)
 Ruse??

BERNICE
 (enjoying her father's
 absurdity)
 Rusevelt..If I'd ever heard of the
 word before - that would lock it
 in..It's so stupid it might work
 anyway...

Deborah enters followed by Flor. They are carrying several
 boxes of clothes...

DEBORAH
 Surprise new clothes..

Bernie gasps..As she looks at a sweater..

BERNICE
 What'd I do right?

DEBORAH
 Warehouse sale..

Bernice tries on the sweater over her T-shirt..and mirth
 ends..The sweater is tight...Bernice picks up a blouse and
 then skirt and checks the size.

ON FLOR AND JOHN.

As they are COUPLED BY THE CAMERA ANGLE as each catches on
 and is dumbfounded.

ON BERNICE..

Whose style, wit and grace should not have to be used to
 deflect such trauma. But so be it, as, though mightily stung:

BERNICE
 Thanks, mom..I'm glad you didn't
 get here a little earlier or else I
 wouldn't be able to tell you that
 your gift is a ruse. Please, excuse
 me..

She exits to her bathroom.

51 INT. STAIRWELL - EARLY EVENING

51

Flor one step behind John and Deborah who are moving quickly
 down the stairs...John pissed..Deborah feeling the futility
 of anyone understanding her point even as she makes it.

DEBORAH

She's right between the two sizes..I thought about it..what am I supposed to do encourage her...what is it? - DENIAL? Or motivate her to get herself in shape.

Flor tries to slide by..Something surreptitious in her behavior..Deborah suddenly turns to Flor.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

Flor..

She holds out her hand in a "we women understand" gesture. Flor does not waver..just meets her eyes.

FLOR

Me puedo ir?...go..can go?

DEBORAH

(a bit nonplussed)
Sure. Go.

JOHN

I'll drive you to the bus stop.

And that fast they are gone.

52 EXT. CLASKY HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

52

As John gets in his seat..then sees Flor approaching the door and hops out to open her door...apologizing as he goes.

JOHN

Sorry. I'm cracking.

As he moves back to his side of the vehicle.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(a shout)
Shiiiiiiit!

Flor hears this from inside and nods in agreement.

53 INT. JOHN'S CAR - EARLY EVENING..

53

As they drive down the canyon. He is wildly frustrated. Even if Flor were not there, he would be talking to himself anyway, in the manner of bag ladies and all of us.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I am running out of excuses for the lady of the house.

Flor doesn't understand his words...yet fully agrees. But then John takes rein of his emotions.

JOHN (CONT'D)

But you know, you gotta watch out for the times you think you're absolutely right..But, man, Bernice has finals tomorrow. She didn't need this one..And just that look on her face when she got the gifts--
 (now his voice cracks; he grows wet-eyed)
 --like for a second she thought all her problems with her mother had been solved...

Flor is flabbergasted..she peeks to see if he is actually crying. At first her heart is touched by John but then there is distinct disapproval (a real roll of the eyes) that the macho meter can read that low. He looks at her and she faces front quickly.

NARRATOR

My mother did not understand her male boss. His heart was good and he was rare in not flirting with her. But they were starkly different. Privacy and dignity were the same word to my mother. Naturally, when she found herself sitting next to a man who cried over his child's hurt she had no idea how to process the event.

Meanwhile, he has stopped for traffic near the end of the canyon. Flor takes the opportunity to bolt.

FLOR

Gracias.

She opens the door and starts to get out though the car is still rolling a bit...

JOHN

What are you doing? Let me take you all the way.

Reluctantly she re-enters the car..It rolls another ten feet to her bus stop and she gets out again.

JOHN (CONT'D)

How weird was this ride? Sorry.

FLOR

No es nada.

He doesn't quite know what that means...indicates same in a little helpless gesture..

54 EXT. BUS STOP - EARLY EVENING.. 54

As Flor is dropped off...the goodbye awkward.

NARRATOR

The job was taxing her. She had no template for confusion let alone frustration.

While waiting for the bus, Flor suddenly turns and runs a few yards...and then back..and waves off the looks from her colleagues - many of whom are overweight..many of them adorable. All puzzled for the moment as they watch Flor unsuccessfully try to shake off her day.

55 INT. FLOR'S APT. - EVENING 55

As Flor enters -- kisses her daughter..distracted and distracted. She walks immediately to the refrigerator and takes out a chocolate cake and a bottle of milk...she cuts a huge slice of cake and puts it in front of her startled daughter..in Spanish riding her on being too thin..the daughter gestures at her mother's own slim figure.

NARRATOR

It was so unusual for my mother to ask my help that I realized immediately she was losing her battle to be uninvolved with the Claskys.

Flor asks her daughter how to say something in English.

CRISTINA

Try it on.

Flor asks again in Spanish...trying to find a precise phrase.. The nuance important to her.

CRISTINA (CONT'D)

Please try it on?

Flor knows the word "please"..it's not what she wants...what she wants is a way to say, "try it on" in a manner which is not a request..or order, but is, rather, friendly and caring. Her daughter works on the problem.

CRISTINA (CONT'D)

Just try it on?

FLOR

(thickly accented)
Just try it on.

CRISTINA

(small accent)
Just try it on.

FLOR
 (improvement each time)
 Just try it on...just try it on..

She's got it.

NARRATOR
 Our culture embraces fullness in a woman. You, the women of the admissions committee, as intelligent as you are, have no idea how casual and complete such acceptance is back home, in the land of the size 16 bikini.

56 EXT. BUS STOP - NORTH VALLEY - PRE-DAWN 56

Flor is the only one waiting. An empty bus stops and she gets on.

57 EXT. STREET - NEAR BUS STOP - HIGH SHOT - FIRST LIGHT 57

As we see Deborah cross Sunset Blvd., overtake and pass two UCLA men running at a good clip as Flor's bus stops.

CLOSE ON FLOR..

As she strides purposefully up the street.

NARRATOR
 This is one of the cultural differences between us which I wish to explore academically at Princeton. American women, I believe, actually feel the same as Hispanic women about weight.

58 INT. CLASKY HOUSE - EXTREME EARLY MORNING 58

The house asleep. Flor walks carefully up the steps.

NARRATOR
a desire for the comfort of fullness.

59 INT. BERNIE'S ROOM - FIRST LIGHT 59

Bernie asleep on the bed...Kleenex abounds...the solid sleep earned by a few hours of sobbing. She looks touchingly pretty and decidedly round. Flor looks for, finds and carries out the new clothes Deborah had given her daughter.

NARRATOR
 And, when that desire is suppressed for style and deprivation allowed to rule...

60 EXT. STREET - STEEP INCLINE 60

ANGLE ON DEBORAH & KILLER HILL:

Two young athletic men and one woman considerably ahead of her on the steep incline.

DEBORAH
Left..left..

ON RUNNERS.

They turn and look confused at Deborah who is so far behind them she has no need to pass..They turn away. Deborah struggles to turn it on and does so...huffing to just behind them where she utters one more strained:

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
Left.

And then passes.

NARRATOR
...dieting, exercising American women become afraid of everything associated with being curvaceous, such as wantonness, lustfulness, sex, food, motherhood..all that is good in life.

61 INT. CLASKY MAID'S ROOM - EARLY MORNING. 61

Flor at work on a sewing machine..opening seams, moving buttons, even steaming where the buttons have been changed..etc.

62 INT. BERNIE'S ROOM - MORNING 62

Flor is in the room...having put the altered clothes back in place..Bernie's alarm clock rings..She wakes and sees Flor.

BERNICE
Hey..buenas dias, Flor..

Flor holds up the new clothes and indicates that they are beautiful.

BERNICE (CONT'D)
(ruefully)
Yes..Well, taste she has..

Bernie starts her morning routine..her back to us when:

FLOR
(damn good English)
Just try it on.

Bernie, though her back is to us, does a "take" then turns grinning.

BERNICE
Hey!!!! When did you learn to...

FLOR
(cutting her off)
Just try it on..

BERNICE
Too tight..it doesn't fit.

Flor clearly doesn't understand..

FLOR
Just try it on..Hey?!

Flor extends a blouse and skirt.

FLOR (CONT'D)
Just..

BERNICE
Okay. I'll show you..

She steps behind a closet door to try the clothes on, muttering pessimistically before she does so. CAMERA STAYS ON FLOR..

BERNICE (O.C.) (CONT'D)
Lovely way to start the day.
World's most trim Mexican learns
her first sentence and uses it to
watch me grrrrunt my way into...

And then....silence...Bernie, open mouthed, steps out wearing the clothes which fit like a glove. Flor beams..then laughs at Bernie's reaction as she keeps checking the waist and looks into the mirror.

INTO MIRROR.

To see Bernie in the foreground as Flor looks on..nods approval and leaves.

ON BERNIE..

The fit of the clothes is as mystifying as it is nice..she picks up another shirt..checks the size tag and then studies it a bit.

CLOSE UP SHIRT..

As Bernie's fingers find the barely visible holes where the buttons have previously been.

63 INT. CLASKY HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY 63

Flor at work..Chum, ball in mouth, comes to her and nudges her.

FLOR
(to dog)
Lo siento. No.

Chum, momentarily depressed, walks away..Bernie enters. She is a bit overwhelmed -- her voice breaking a bit even with one word.

BERNICE
Hey..

Flor turns..Bernie moves to embrace her.

64 INT. CLASKY HOUSE - DAY - FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER 64

As John comes down the stairs..He looks apprehensive..From the den comes the sound of singing..it stops him from going out the front door as he turns to check it out.

65 INT. DEN - DAY.. 65

John finds Evelyn and Georgie in their night clothes. They are singing an old song...something like "LUSH LIFE" - something preposterous for a nine year-old boy..but you can't knock the quality of the voices..world class. They see him and stop.

EVELYN
Every time he has a nightmare, I teach him one of my old songs. That way the nightmares have a purpose.

GEORGIE
But I don't have to sing it for anyone.

JOHN
Right. You're clear on that..

GEORGIE
How many did you sell of this song?

EVELYN
(embarrassed in front of John)
He likes to know that stuff.

JOHN
(to Georgie)
She was huge.

EVELYN
 Seventy-six thousand..which is
 great for a jazz album.

They resume harmonizing. As John leaves, the song lyric
 making some comment on:

66 EXT. CLASKY HOUSE - DAY 66

As John, growing tense, walks toward the front gate..Chum
 proffers a ball and accepts defeat as he bends down to pick
 up the New York Times. John's body chemistry launches a
 surprise attack...anxiety and dread...He takes his newspaper
 to a wire bench in the front driveway..He finds the
 section..opens to the page..and just like that his life
 changes forevermore.

67 INT. CLASKY HOUSE - DAY. 67

John enters..Georgie is going up the stairs..Flor putting out
 breakfast food.

EVELYN
 You okay?

JOHN
 (strangely)
 I am okay.
 (to Flor)
 Deborah around?

FLOR
 She run.

John nods and heads upstairs.

67A INT. CLASKY HOUSE - UPSTAIRS - BERNIE'S ROOM - DAY 67A

He looks in Bernie's room. She is loading her backpack for
 school..

JOHN
 Hey, honey.

BERNICE
 What's wrong?

JOHN
 No..nothing...just that..

Georgie enters the scene..

GEORGIE
 A kid offered me a trade..Let me
 show you.

JOHN
 Yeah..

He starts to follow him to his room.

BERNICE
Dad!!! He can wait.

JOHN
No..It's okay..

BERNICE
Let him wait..Yours is obviously
important.

GEORGIE
You don't even know how important
the trade is..

JOHN
Let me just do Georgie.... Here.

He hands her the newspaper...

68

INT. CLASKY HOUSE - GEORGIE'S ROOM

68

We MOVE with John and Georgie to Georgie's room where he goes
to his collectibles..He holds up a card..

GEORGIE
He says he'll give me any three
silvers for him.

JOHN
I don't know...This is the one you
started with..You really want to
give up your first card?

Note: this is an involved discussion on both their
parts..NOTHING in John thinks it is trivial.

GEORGIE
I know..that's why I needed you.

JOHN
..this is your favorite..

GEORGIE
I think he'd go higher.

JOHN
But it's not numbers..it's.....

They are interrupted by a never quite heard before sound of
exultation..

69

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

69

Flor and Evelyn jolted..they exit to follow the sound..

As they enter holding the paper. She has been smacked in the heart by gleeful and prideful emotions...It is disorienting for her to experience the rush of pleasure.

JOHN

For God's sake..why did you...

BERNICE

WHY?!?!? CRAZY FATHER, WHY?!?!? Why aren't YOU screaming?..

JOHN

I'm getting there..just the stunned thing has to get dealt with...

BERNICE

(reading from newspaper)
John Clasky, who at 25 made his mark on the New York restaurant scene when JAMMED lived up to and survived its silly name, has re-emerged as a young and confident veteran taking chances with his combinations in so subtle a manner.."

GEORGIE

If he gave me six...

JOHN

(catching her excitement)
Wait a minute, your sister's talking.

Evelyn indicates to Flor that the good news is about John..and so she studies him a bit..

BERNICE

"...beginning with the succession of appetizers, each one with its own stunning and fully realized agenda, is constantly yet casually daring."

(emotional and earnest aside)

Ah, Dad...this is so great...

(to others)

Now here's the thing...

She tears up...Evelyn rubs Bernie's back..looks at Flor and taps her heart...Flor indicates she should leave and does. Bernice continues reading with a lovely sense of mission and moment. John is taken with his daughter's delivery.

BERNICE (CONT'D)
 "Eating at this perfect smaller,
 passionate restaurant inspires
 one's own abandonment of caution.
 To wit: John Clasky is the best
 chef in the United States."

JOHN
 (genuinely enthusiastic)
 Look how great you read it.

BERNICE
 (massive irony)
 Perfect, Dad.

Evelyn and Bernice hug him..

EVELYN
 John..John...Oh, my God you even
 look different to me....

JOHN
 What are you talking about?

BERNICE
 I wonder what mom will do?

71 INT. BEDROOM - LATE AFTERNOON 71

Deborah is ripping John's clothes off..buttons fly..shreds of
 cloth..John is laughing - happy.

JOHN
 What is this?

DEBORAH
 I don't know.

She rips at her own clothes and then exclaims in passion.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
 Oooohhch!

72 EXT. NORTH VALLEY - DAY. 72

Flor walks to the news stand - as if to buy something --
 changes her mind and LEAVES THE FRAME only to RETURN A HALF-
 BEAT LATER where she reads to the dealer from a note.

FLOR
 (heavily accented)
 New York Times..

73 INT. FLOR'S APT. - NIGHT... 73

Cristina, standing, translating the review into Spanish for
 her mother...as she comes to the last sentence.

CRISTINA
 Wow..."John Clasky es el mejor chef
 en Los Estados Unidos..

FLOR
 (easily)
 Ah, bravo...

74 INT. CLASKY MASTER BEDROOM - DAY.

74

The Claskys are engaged in sex. John's brief sounds are exuberant..they shift position so that Deborah is on top BRINGING DEBORAH INTO A CLOSE SINGLE. Suddenly her smile fades - she hits the skids.

DEBORAH
 Oh, damn it --- what am I going to
 do? Everything seems so surely
 pointless...

ON JOHN.

This IS WEIRD. And then the small, distinctive sound of Deb's climax...then, in a relatively small voice.

DEBORAH'S VOICE
 Okay here...okay there...good,
 good, good.

She falls off him...an arm across her eyes, lying on her back down the bed from him...

ON JOHN.

Puzzling over what just happened..a few false starts forming his thought...then finally..hesitantly...

JOHN
 Hey, Deb?

DEBORAH
 (from the vortex of
 depression)
 Yeah?

He scoots to her side.

JOHN
 You know, I guess I got used to you
 getting a little blue after
 intercourse...But DURING...??

DEBORAH
 Something else I do wrong.

She grabs something and starts walking toward the bedroom.

JOHN
You've gotta stop walking away.

DEBORAH
(turning)
If I stay, I will say awful things
to you that I might not even
mean..You pick.

JOHN
See ya.

She exits to the bathroom.

75 INT. JOHN'S CAR - DAY.

75

Very upset as he drives. Then comes to the red light at the end of the street and sees Flor walking with others. An awkward beat as he waits for the light to change and they acknowledge each other..the light remains red..she confers with another woman.

FLOR
(to woman)
Yo leí la crítica buena.

The woman tells Flor how to say it in English.

FLOR (CONT'D)
(parroting woman)
I read your good review.

He nods..still the light doesn't change.

FLOR (CONT'D)
It's nice.

The light changes.

JOHN
Not so far...How you doing?

The light has changed - cars are beeping..she is about to let him go off but realizes he will wait for her answer.

FLOR
I do fine.

He nods and drives off.

76 INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

76

As he enters....the phone is going off the hook..As he passes the maitre d's desk. Their conversation is strangely hushed and very, very quick.

VICTOR
Should I stop answering? We're
booked for two months solid.

JOHN
No, no, no, no, no....I want to
keep some walk-in business..I want
this to stay neighborhood.

VICTOR
Impossible. There would be
riots..You should hear the
desperation in their voices..Best
day of my life.

JOHN
We'll serve a full menu at the bar
then.

VICTOR
Then where do I put the people
waiting for a table? It won't work.

JOHN
Do this for me.

VICTOR
There's no way.

JOHN
Do this for me or I'll set my hair
on fire and start punching myself
in the face.

VICTOR
Huh?

JOHN
Yeah..you're right...that was an
unusual way for me to make myself
understood..But you'll do the bar
thing?

VICTOR
Yes, of course, John..

77 INT. RESTAURANT KITCHEN - DAY

77

PETER
I need to talk to you.

JOHN
Ah, man..Okay.

They walk into the cooling room.

78 INT. RESTAURANT - COOLING ROOM - DAY

78

Again there is a kind of strange rapidity to the conversation sparked by John..

JOHN

What's up? What's wrong?

PETER

I've gotten a fantastic offer for my own place..Everybody wants to back me since the paper came out.

JOHN

What's your reaction?

PETER

Honestly? Because I've had this very unusual reaction.

JOHN

Yeah.

PETER

I've had a hard on almost all day and it won't go away. Like I'm riding on the back seat of a bus with bad shocks and every other passenger is a gorgeous woman with a yellow sports top whose leaning over. It's like every dream I ever had and some even I didn't have the balls to dream..

JOHN

So you're considering taking it?...
 (he looks at him)
 Okay, here's the thing. I can't lose you and still keep the hours I'm keeping. I can't do my life unless I can hold onto you.
 (sudden thought)
 I think I just gave you an incredible bargaining position.

79 INT. CLASKY BEDROOM - NIGHT

79

As John and Deborah lay next to each other.

DEBORAH

So you gave away twenty percent of the restaurant without talking to me about it.

JOHN

Yeah. If I didn't do it - I'd have been coming home just to sleep.

DEBORAH
 (trying to make livid more
 attractive)
 Remember the other day when you
 asked me the perfect response to
 something I said?...I'm asking you
 now..what would you like my
 response to be to your giving away
 twenty percent of the business
 without asking me?

JOHN
 (with great enthusiasm)
 "You're ma man!"

DEBORAH
 Okay! So that would be???

JOHN
 My dream response from you, yes.

DEBORAH
 (measured)
 I'm not quite there..Actually, I
 just had this flash that the reason
 women in the old days used to faint
 was to avoid doing acts of violence
 against men.
 (a beat then)
 And I was all worried about
 figuring out the timing just to
 talk to you about renting a place
 for the summer.

JOHN
 Well, I think you got your timing.

80 EXT. CLASKY HOUSE - DAY 80

A man is parked at the gate in an open convertible..He is
 great looking...We HEAR Deborah's excited voice over the gate
 speaker...

DEBORAH
 Be right out...

81 EXT. CLASKY DRIVEWAY - DAY.. 81

As Deborah calls behind her as she opens the door...

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
 Mom, you want to come?..the
 realtor's here..Okay, see you
 later.

She clicks the gate open and walks to the man..perfect 40
 year old great looking surfer sort..Deborah does the very
 slightest of "takes" at his looks..As she gets in..

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

Hi.

REALTOR

I'm Mike..there's one great rental
that just came on..so we're
starting at the top..

As they pull away...

82 EXT. CONVERTIBLE - DAY..

82

Deborah's hair whips across her face...it's bothersome.

DEBORAH

I'll never be one of those girls
whose hair blows perfectly in a
convertible.

REALTOR

Move your seat forward..

Puzzled, she uses the electric lever and the seat budes
forward..

REALTOR (CONT'D)

A little more..just..good.

The Realtor uses his switches and raises his window a
bit..her window a bit less and monkeys the position of the
half windows in back...Deborah turns around checking out the
odd tweaking and then faces forward. Her hair blows perfectly
and beautifully behind her...

DEBORAH

Oh, you must be trouble.

On his small laugh...

83 EXT. CLASKY RENTED BEACH HOUSE - DAY.

83

As they move toward the house...seeing the beach beyond.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

Gorgeous, huh..Pretty, fabulous,
beautiful. What word is the same in
Spanish?

FLOR

Fabuloso.

DEBORAH

(taking it as a
compliment)
Thanks.

84 INT. CLASKY RENTED BEACH HOUSE - DAY.

84

As Deborah, Flor and Evelyn enter. They carry boxes of stuff.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
I don't care if it's a rental..this
place is getting a fixing.

She leads Flor to a small bedroom.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
(to Flor with gestures)
This will be yours..

Flor doesn't understand..certainly doesn't want to.

EVELYN
Did you ask her if she could live
in?

DEBORAH
Come on...there's no buses from her
to here. There's no question.
Double come on...

Deborah uses her hand as if weighing something momentous like
the law vs. the bible then with heavy sarcasm.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
The Barrio - Carbon Beach..The
Barrio - Carbon Beach. What to do?
(to Flor)
Don't worry. I'm putting nicer
stuff in here too.

When Flor gives no indication of anything - just standing,
somewhat stupefied..Deborah takes her by the hand and leads
her out.

85 EXT. CLASKY - BEACH RENTAL - DAY

85

As they move through a little courtyard area toward the
street.

DEBORAH
You must learn English. Why won't
she learn English? I'm going to
have to learn, "you must learn
English," in Spanish.

EVELYN
I think Flor is perfect and we
should do all we can to keep her
from changing.

DEBORAH
Gee, you took the words right out
of my mouthay.

86 EXT. PCH - DAY

86

As she leads Flor along the highway side of Carbon Beach - passing houses until she sees a Hispanic man washing someone's car in a driveway. Evelyn is many steps back.

DEBORAH

Oh, good. Do you speak English?

HISPANIC MAN

Yes, I do.

DEBORAH

Would you translate for me?

He looks at Flor..my God.

HISPANIC MAN

Sure...forever.

He speaks to her in Spanish..a lavish, poetic compliment. Flor, in full control, says, in Spanish.. "Would you please just find out what she wants." Evelyn joins them.

DEBORAH

Wait till I say something before you start in..

(he looks at her)

I rented a house here for the summer and now she must sleep at the house because of the bus schedule.

He translates along with Deborah's speech.

ON FLOR.

Stricken. She turns to Deborah.

FLOR

No.. Sorry.

DEBORAH

What? Why?

Flor talks briefly in Spanish.

HISPANIC MAN

She can't because of her daughter.

DEBORAH

You have a daughter? You have a whole daughter you haven't mentioned..How old?

FLOR

Twelve.

DEBORAH
 (to Evelyn)
 It's a little crazy that I don't
 know that.

The man translates.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
 (to man)
 Don't translate asides.

The man says in Spanish to Flor.. "You work for her?"--Flor
 answers, "just tell her that I can't live here." Deborah
 doesn't like that the man has initiated more conversation.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
 Hey!

HISPANIC MAN
 She can't live here. Her daughter.

DEBORAH
 Okay..
 (beat then big decision)
 Her daughter can also live with us
 for the summer..

The man tells Flor..she answers directly to Deborah..

FLOR
 (big decision)
 No, sorry.

DEBORAH
 Why?

The man asks Flor who speaks in Spanish..

HISPANIC MAN
 I don't know. She just doesn't want
 to.

DEBORAH
 Will you please just tell me what
 she said.

HISPANIC MAN
 She said, "I just don't want to."

EVELYN
 If she didn't tell us about her
 child she has to have a deep sense
 of privacy. We can figure out how
 she can still live at home. Hell, I
 don't mind driving her at night.

DEBORAH
 Let's spare the world you on the
 roads.
 (to Flor)
 Well, what do we do?

The Hispanic man translates the last sentence. Deborah and Flor stare at each other..Deborah's next words are somber and have enough body language to transcend the need for translation...the jig is up.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
 (big decision)
 I'm sorry, my friend, this is what
 I need. It's just for the summer. I
 don't want to lose you. But

Flor indicates there is no need to translate. A beat.

FLOR
 (enormous decision)
 Yo vivo aquí.

HISPANIC MAN
 She'll live here.

The man says something in Spanish to Flor as she starts to walk away and she is thrown enough by the statement to actually stumble as she looks back at him...then, before Deborah can admonish him.

HISPANIC MAN (CONT'D)
 I said, "God protect you from that
 boss."

87 EXT. FLOR'S APT. COMPLEX - DAY 87

As Cristina, trying to suppress her grin, skips quickly down the stairs moving towards a truck from John's restaurant. Flor follows tight lipped - resolved. They each carry many clothes on wire hangers. A group of girls on the balcony literally cheer Cristina on.

BALCONY GIRLS
 (accented)
 MAL-----I-----BU!

Cristina grins hugely back at them.

88 INT. MALIBU TUNNEL - DAY 88

The two women in the truck and then..

89 INT. TRUCK - DAY. 89

As the truck leaves the tunnel and all is cliffs, sand, and waves..Cristina taking it in, unaware that her mother's eyes never leave her.

She gasps frequently..MAJOR GIANT ORGANIC GASPS OF WONDER AND PLEASURE..This is awe as an active physical exercise. The MOVING SHOT dramatizes the crossroads of the mother-daughter relationship as the TWO SHOT finds Flor becoming first blurred then lost as we focus on Cristina exclaiming over each new sight.

NARRATOR
(over this incidental
dialogue)

The first time one sees natural beauty which is owned by others confounds the senses.. I had never imagined the word "money" could be associated with anything but the anxiety of not having enough. I didn't know God had a toy store for the rich.

90 EXT. CLASKY BEACH HOUSE - STREET SIDE - DAY 90

The truck in the driveway..the women walking through a front door into a court yard.

91 EXT. CLASKY BEACH HOUSE - BEACH SIDE - DAY 91

Georgie, in a swim suit, talking to CHUM in the manner of people trying to excite dogs.

GEORGIE
Who wants to go swimming?..Yes, who
wants to go swimming?

The dog goes crazy with excitement -- then, droll for a nine year old, Georgie turns to his grandmother (who is sunning herself and reading) and addresses her in precisely the same way. Evelyn has a drink in hand..

GEORGIE (CONT'D)
(to grandmother)
Who wants to go swimming?..Huh..

EVELYN
Not now..But I promise I'll go in
the summer after next.

John enters the scene..

JOHN
You want to go swimming?

GEORGIE
Oh yeah, you're off.

JOHN
What do you think, wet suits?

GEORGIE
Wet suits are for wimps..

JOHN
Yeah, you're right..let me get
mine..

Georgie laughs..

GEORGIE
(to Dad)
You're good.

92 INT./EXT. HALLWAY / PATIO - DAY

92

Behind Flor and Cristina as they move toward the Claskys and their destiny....Flor behind her daughter.

REVERSE - CLOSE ON CRISTINA.

As her eyes pop on seeing the Clasky beach house.

VERY CLOSE ON DEBORAH

As her eyes pop on seeing the stunning twelve year-old enter her home, haloed by the sun. Again, Flor less distinct in the background.

Bernice, just outside the open patio door, is putting on a shirt over her bathing suit as she looks at Cristina and emits a small, prescient moan.

DEBORAH
(to Flor)
Look at this child..Flor, you could
make a fortune at surrogate
pregnancy....

Flor looks to her daughter for some understanding of what Deborah said..

FLOR
Que?

Cristina is as nonplussed by the remark as her mother.

JOHN
Hi. I'm John..It's good to see you.
(to Flor indicating
Cristina)
Great..

DEBORAH
(to Cristina)
Hi. This is my daughter,
Bernice..I'm Deborah..And out
there...are Georgie and.

As she turns to gesture toward her mother and son, Evelyn has almost reached them ..

EVELYN
I'm so glad to meet you. I'm a fan
of your mother's.

CRISTINA
I'm Cristina.

As all acknowledge each other Deborah tugs at Bernie's top which is half tucked in.

BERNICE
(kidding around but right
on)
No comparisons, please, no
comparisons.

Evelyn shoves her granddaughter for the self-deprecation..Flor says something to her daughter in Spanish.

CRISTINA
My mother says it's best if we get
out of the way and put our things
away.

JOHN
Have you ever been to the beach
here?

CRISTINA
I've never been anyplace but Mexico
and Texas.....before today.

John goes to a big toy box and opens it up..it is filled with beach paddles, Frisbees and boogie boards.

JOHN
Here's the most important place in
the house..grab this stuff whenever
you want.

CRISTINA
(delighted)
Thank you..thank you so much.

DEBORAH
Very little accent?

FLOR
(suspiciously)
Que?

CRISTINA
(to Flor)
Sin acento.

Her mom, not crazy about the lack of accent to begin with,
nods.

CRISTINA (CONT'D)
(to Deborah)
Thank you..there's an A.P. total
fluency class where they work you
pretty hard at sounding American.

Flor doesn't want her daughter to have an extended
conversation with Deborah of which she doesn't understand a
word.

FLOR
Cristina..

DEBORAH
Right. Settle in..

CRISTINA
Thank you. I am thrilled to be
here.

93 INT. MAID'S ROOM - AFTERNOON 93

Deborah has re-decorated the room with casual
brilliance...Flor is tense..distracted...her daughter
giddy...excited over the sheets, the tv, the pile of
towels..a chaise..She goes to work on her mother to go
swimming...wanting her to appreciate the fun element of
being here...the spirit of the kid such that Flor relents....

94 EXT. BEACH - EVENING 94

Flor and Cristina, two sea nymphs, lit by the floodlights
from the beach homes.

OTHER ANGLE.

John and Georgie in the waves..body surfing...they get to
shore...John sees the two females..dashing in the water in
their bathing suits..He remains hidden in a very shallow wave
as they run in...then once they are in he starts taking off
his wet suit hurriedly...

ON JOHN..

As he suffers the cold -- Georgie enjoying every moment.

95 EXT. CLASKY BEACH RENTAL - DAWN'S EARLY LIGHT 95

Wave lights still shining..On a dune sits Cristina, looking
out.

96 INT. MASTER BEDROOM 96

As Deborah steps out on the deck and sees Cristina.

DEBORAH
 (in a loud whisper)
 Hey, Cristina...hey...hey..What are
 you doing up?

Cristina looks around -- then up..

CRISTINA
 Oh, hi..so beautiful..I was just
 excited.

DEBORAH
 I know..Would you believe I had to
 talk my husband into this?
 (no reply/then more
 pointedly)
 Would you believe I had to talk my
 husband into it?...do you hear me?

CRISTINA
 Yes...I just ..
 (awash..a shy laugh)
 I didn't know what to say?

DEBORAH
 (still calling down)
 Do you want to come with me? -- I'm
 going to the flea market.

CRISTINA
 I don't know what that...

DEBORAH
 It's the Rose Bowl... miles, actual
 miles, of great things for sale for
 God's sake...We can have brunch in
 Pasadena.

CRISTINA
 I don't want to wake my mother so
 early.

DEBORAH
 I'll leave her a note...I'll

97 INT. FLOR'S ROOM - MORNING - TWO HOURS LATER

97

As Flor wakes..looks around.

FLOR
 Cristina?

She goes to Cristina's bed...atop the bed is a note. She
 picks it up.

INSERT..THE NOTE

Dear Flor,

I decided to steal your daughter for a bit.

LOVE,

DEBORAH

With great energy born of bottled fury, Flor begins to go through her daughter's things...finding her backpack and extracting a Spanish/English dictionary.

INSERT DICTIONARY.

As her finger points to:

"Steal...robar"

And then she flips some pages feverishly..Her finger indicating:

"daughter hija"

98

EXT. PCH - EARLY AFTERNOON.

98

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

Stop thanking me. I love having the company.

CRISTINA

It was an adventure which I'll remember.

DEBORAH

Your English is genius. Do you dream in Spanish or English?

CRISTINA

Just recently I've had a dream in English.

DEBORAH

What was it?

CRISTINA

I am so sorry. I -- uh..I'd ..I uh, can't tell ..This is so uncomfortable.

DEBORAH

You could have just said you didn't remember.

CRISTINA

I, uh, guess so..but I do.

DEBORAH

Look who's sensational.

99 EXT. CLASKY RENTED BEACH HOUSE - DAY.

99

Evelyn is sitting on the patio making sangria..Flor enters.
She is pissed.

EVELYN

What's wrong?

She shows her the letter. Evelyn reads it and hands it
back..She is about to offer something..Flor waves it off and
enters the house..John comes in from the beach with his
kids..boogie boards...Evelyn hands him the letter..

EVELYN (CONT'D)

She's wild-eyed over this..

John moves after Flor as Bernie reads the letter..

BERNICE

Aw, shit..
(then quickly)
Sorry about the word, Georgie.

GEORGIE

It's okay.

BERNICE

You want to know what happened?

GEORGIE

No thank you.

100 INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

100

John enters..

JOHN

Hey, Flor..

She turns..

JOHN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry..very sorry..

He indicates his watch -- then holds his fingers together.

JOHN (CONT'D)

They should be back soon..

Flor starts to cry. She sits in a chair..He sits not far from
her.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Hey, Flor..

Embarrassed, she says, in Spanish, to please leave her
alone..she turns from him..He walks to the wet bar and gets a
bottle of water...pours some..Her crying soft in the

background...He walks to her, sits near her and offers her the glass of water which she takes.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Deborah made a mistake. I understand how you feel...Do you understand me at all, generally? Is simpático the word?

He pats her on the back..She looks at him..

CLOSE ON FLOR..

Is he coming on?..

HER POV..

His kind eyes.

FULL SHOT..

This is real eye contact..two vaguely humiliated people finding real company for an instant. Without thought, she duplicates his gesture and pats his back.

FLOR
Simpático, yes.

And when he seeks to add another pat, he misses, because she is out of her chair..(This is as intimate as John has been with another woman since he was married..) He calls out to stop her.

JOHN
Un momento, huh?

She stops and turns to him.

JOHN (CONT'D)
I'm really sorry this is happening.
I just want you to know that. I am real sorry.

He taps his heart as an indication of sincerity -- then a flash of worry that he has inadvertently come on to her.

JOHN (CONT'D)
I didn't mean..

He makes a gesture of ardent love..

JOHN (CONT'D)
I meant..

Makes a person to person innocent gesture..She finds herself smiling.

JOHN (CONT'D)
 Well, the good thing about being an
 idiot is that every once in a while
 you cheer people up..Got to get to
 work.

CAMERA STAYS WITH FLOR

As he exits...thinks about John's demeanor, smiles again,
 shakes it off as her mind fills with concern for Cristina.

101 EXT. CLASKY RENTED BEACH HOUSE - SUNSET. 101

Deborah's SUV loaded at the curb..She and Cristina begin to
 carry things in...(NOTE: Cristina's hair has been restyled.)

102 INT. CLASKY RENTED BEACH HOUSE - DAY 102

Evelyn, Bernie and Flor are gathered in the living room. All
 staring at her.

DEBORAH
 What? Something bad happen?

ON CRISTINA..

Enormously anxious on reading her mother's mood.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
 Cristina, tell your mother I just
 played around with your hair..she
 can put it back..no hurt feelings.

CRISTINA
 Not right now.

Flor puts an arm around her shoulder, leading her off and
 speaking to her forcefully in Spanish.

DEBORAH
 What? --

EVELYN
 You can't just take someone
 else's.....

DEBORAH
 Nuh-uh, Mom..don't go there..or
 I'll go there and you know where
 "there" is.

Evelyn stops on a dime. She leaves. Deborah crosses to
 Bernice, who is highly concerned about Flor, and puts an arm
 around her. A pleasant surprise..

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
 Can you believe what Flor is making
 this into..Shoot me if I ever get
 that hard to deal with.

Bernice, unseen by Mom, does a long, muted, mock scream.

103 INT. FLOR'S ROOM - EVENING 103

MUSIC IN: Action, purpose, energy.. Flor is dictating in Spanish as Cristina writes it down in English on a pad. Cristina enormously uncomfortable.

INSERT - THE PAD.

The pad, in effect, lends subtitles to Flor's words. Cristina winces with the words she records even while punctuating perfectly.

PAD WRITING
 You cannot take my child without my
 permission..And, if you had asked
 me I would not have given
 permission. Is this why you did not
 ask? Because you knew this. You
 have no rights over my private
 life.

ON FLOR..

Reaching a decisive conclusion.

PAD
 If you have any disagreement with
 this, I no longer wish to work
 here.

ON CRISTINA'S LOOK

This is awful news.

ON FLOR.

For a decisive nod of affirmation. She adjusts her daughter's hair to the way it was, takes the note and exits.

104 INT. CLASKY RENTED BEACH HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY 104

Flor enters in something of a fury and holds the letter out to Deborah, who hates being cornered in this manner. She actually places her hands behind her so as to avoid the note.

DEBORAH
 What's this?

Flor shakes the letter at her.

OTHER ANGLE..

Showing Cristina hidden but looking on... like a stage prompter in the wings.

FLOR
For you.

DEBORAH
From?

Flor with enormous emphasis stabs her finger at her own chest.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
You are not yourself...This was written in anger. You sleep on it and then if you still want me to have it -- fine..I don't think you will once calm and rational thought returns. Just sleep on it.

Deborah exits to a bathroom and closes the door...leaving Flor in the hall with the letter..Cristina reveals herself and explains the situation to her mother. The last word we hear before scene's end is "mañana."

105 INT. CLASKY RENTED BEACH HOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING 105

Deborah surreptitiously finishing putting on her running clothes and is making for the door when the alarm clock goes off and John awakens.

JOHN
She didn't even want us to know she had a daughter - then, on the first day, you take the kid without asking. I think that's...

DEBORAH
(starting to lose it)
What!?! Insensitive? Elitist?
Irresponsible? Perverse? Dizzy?

JOHN
(slow and emphatic)
Dumb.

She looks at him...He has been atypical...Her immediate emotional cocktail is panic, fury and deep, deep hurt. Her words are slow...her voice ragged...

DEBORAH
When is anyone in this damn house or this damn life going to consider my feelings? I just tried to make a lovely kid feel welcome. There's no reason to rake it over...I let it go..and gave Flor the room to let it go. Which I'm sure she has! It's over!! So get on board.

She opens the door and almost runs into Flor who is standing immediately in her way holding the letter.

FLOR
I slept.

106 INT. CLASKY BEACH RENTAL - DEN - DAY 106

Deborah stands over Cristina, who is writing in Spanish a note Deborah is dictating. As John passes through the room.

DEBORAH
I am deeply and sincerely sorry to have upset you. Especially in light of the deep connection, as women, I believe us to have.

EVELYN
(sotto to John)
And to think I was worried about Flor living here with her kid?

107 EXT. CLASKY BEACH RENTAL - PATIO 107

John is talking to all three kids in an effort to lift the overall atmosphere. IN THE BACKGROUND we see Deborah handing Flor her letter..Cristina taking sidelong glances...relieved to see them shake hands (Flor engaging), hug (Flor reluctant).

JOHN
So here's the idea..I want to make a serving platter for serving fish using sea glass like this..

He holds out some sea glass.

JOHN (CONT'D)
I used to hunt for this stuff every free minute when I apprenticed in Italy. This is bits of broken glass that the ocean sand blasts over the years..great looking, huh? So you guys go hunting and I'll pay 50 cents for any piece, a dollar for anything as big as this and five dollars for any color that isn't brown, clear or green.

GEORGIE
Do we have to do this?

BERNICE
(to Georgie)
Oh, come on...

Georgie and Bernice start off..

JOHN

Come on, Cristina - go get em.

Her eyes widen and off she runs, intoxicated with being included and having the chance to make money.

108 EXT. BEACH - DAY - VARIOUS SHOTS 108

The kids combing through pebbles.

Georgie becoming bored and stopping..

Bernie stopping.

109 EXT. BEACH - SAME SCENE - SUNSET.. 109

Lots of people on their decks..hot-tubbing, sunning, partying..rich people forming New Yorker cartoons in the background as Cristina continues to doggedly collect her sea glass. At one point, she comes upon a teenage couple making out near a mass of pebbles, and politely asks them to roll over so she can search the area.

110 INT. FLOR'S ROOM - PRE-DAWN 110

Cristina arising..

111 EXT. BEACH - PRE-DAWN.. 111

Cristina collecting sea glass.

112 EXT. BEACH - SAME SCENE - NIGHT. 112

Illuminated by the surf lights of the beach homes, Cristina plugs away.

DISSOLVE TO:

113 EXT. CLASKY'S RENTED BEACH HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON. 113

John exits his door and steps to his car..as he is about to get in..

CRISTINA'S VOICE

Excuse me.

He looks up and steps around to where she is...there is a battered wood table along the side of the house.

JOHN

Hi..what's doing?

She overturns a large bucket and a small mountain of sea glass spills on the table.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I'm broke.

CRISTINA
(feeling horrible)
No..you don't have to pay..I'm
sorry. Don't worry, please.

JOHN
No. I'm kidding..Instead of a
platter -- I'll just build a sea
glass building and serve fish
inside... Great, Cristina..Why
don't you count it and..

CRISTINA
I have... Many times..I didn't
sleep. I counted.

JOHN
So what's the damage...total?

Her eyes locked on his.

CRISTINA
(dead serious)
It depends on whether you consider
these four a color other than
green, brown or clear..

She takes them from her pocket.

JOHN
Well, this one is borderline.

CRISTINA
I agree.

JOHN
Oh my God, you found a blue..Nobody
finds a blue..You know how a blue
happens? I mean, before the ocean
blasts it for 30-40 years. Somebody
had to throw away an old Milk of
Magnesia bottle. You know what Milk
of Magnesia is?

CRISTINA
Unfortunately.

He smiles broadly. The kid's a trip. He likes her.

JOHN
So how much for the whole deal?

CRISTINA
(unable to look at him)
Eleven hundred and one dollar.

He reacts..then..

JOHN
 Okay. We'll finish dealing with it
 when I get home from work.

She gasps..

114 INT. FLOR'S ROOM - ONE A.M. 114

Flor asleep -- Cristina awake, alert..footsteps. She hears John enter. She moves slowly so as not to awaken Flor.

115 INT. HALLWAY - ONE A.M. 115

As she enters from the back room and sees that John is walking into the kitchen. Her eye goes to the hall table on which there sits a fat envelope with her name on it.

116 INT. CLASKY BEDROOM - ONE A.M. 116

John enters the bedroom to find a note from Deb that she will be late. He is disappointed.

117 INT. FLOR'S ROOM - NIGHT - ON CRISTINA 117

Not aware of being observed..opens the envelope and takes out a thick wad of cash..almost swoons..as she goes about hiding it..she is jolted by her mother's whispered incredulity...

FLOR
 Cristina..

She turns...the wad of money in her hand..

118 INT. POCKET KITCHEN - LATE NIGHT 118

The best chef in America has just fixed himself a snack as a salve to his spirits. It's a little like Dagwood Bumstead as a culinary genius..This is a snack we will remember and copy...John is approaching a perfect moment...and this is a guy who appreciates simple pleasures to the fullest...

119 INT. CLASKY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM 119

He carries the brilliant snack to the living room and is just about to take his first bite when he hears emotional Spanish voices approaching. He looks up.

ANGLE ON FLOR AND CRISTINA

As they enter. Cristina translating her mother's words.

CRISTINA
 My mother wishes me to represent
 exactly what she says, nothing
 else.

And so, for the remainder of the scene, Flor will speak in Spanish and Cristina will not only translate but render her mother's emotion, sometimes including body language. It is not only a translation but a reenactment.

CRISTINA AS FLOR
May I talk to you?

JOHN
You mean your mother....

Cristina nods...not comfortable breaking the rule of only speaking for her mother...She faces him, her back to Flor.

JOHN (CONT'D)
(looking at Flor)
Sure you can talk to me..

Cristina begins translating as her mother speaks in Spanish..

CRISTINA AS FLOR
I don't have to sleep first?

JOHN
What's wrong?

Flor waves the money..Cristina waves an empty hand as she speaks for her mother.

CRISTINA AS FLOR
Did you give this money to my daughter?

JOHN
I made this little deal..with all the kids to...

CRISTINA AS FLOR
(interrupting)
Please..

Flor advances on him past her daughter so Cristina now translates from the background.

CRISTINA AS FLOR (CONT'D)
You don't tell or ask the mother when you give a child a fortune for looking on the beach for stones..what is the word for this..

JOHN
Sea glass?

On hearing the translation of "sea glass" an exasperated Flor turns so that her back is to John as Cristina admonishes him.

CRISTINA AS FLOR
 No..not a name for the stones..a
 name for the act..what you did..

ON FLOR..

As she spits out the word to her daughter.

FLOR
 Engreido.

ON JOHN..

As his eyes shift to Cristina fearing the word he will hear.

JOHN
 Oh, no..engreido's going to be
 rough.

ON CRISTINA..

Reluctantly taking the emotional stance of her mother to
 deliver the word.

CRISTINA
 (briefly being herself)
 It's hard to translate.

She takes half a beat..finds the word and now spits it out.

CRISTINA AS FLOR
 Smug.

John gets up and takes a conciliatory step toward Flor so
 that now Cristina is in the middle looking up at them as she
 translates for John

JOHN
 I had no idea it would amount to
 that kind of money..I thought ---
 sort of tops fifty dollars.

CRISTINA AS FLOR
 Fifty dollars is a lot of money..

JOHN
 Okay. Right.

He has no idea where to take it from here -- the two females
 look as he searches for the right thing to say..

JOHN (CONT'D)
 (sighing to himself)
 Ah, shit..

That fast Cristina translates.. Before Flor can react. John
 talks directly to Flor..quiet,compassionate, a bit beaten.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry....I get why you are upset. It might not look it but I am good at getting things. Doing something about it is something else..I was going to talk to you before I actually gave her the money..but maybe I should have checked before I started the whole thing.

(he smiles/they don't)

I know what it's like when you feel your kid is being messed with..I get the message. It won't happen again. It's late..I'm sure we'd all like...

Flor lets it out...her daughter hard pressed to keep up.

CRISTINA AS FLOR

To what..sleep? If this was small enough to be helped by some little apology, I would be a fool to bring it up..I need to say more no matter what the result. I need to be impolite. You leave someone else's child alone. It's simple, no? It is too easy for children to feel contradictions..It encourages questioning their parents..and that makes them less safe. Your wife takes her for rides and changes her hair..You give her money. Here..

(this next sentence

Cristina translates with alarm and adds her own question mark.)

Take back the money??????????????

Flor hands John the envelope under her daughter's wrenching gaze. They begin to exit..but Flor turns inadvertently bumping into her daughter. Her voice softens.

CRISTINA AS FLOR (CONT'D)

I did not mean to be angry to you - only emotional..

They turn to leave. John speaks with sudden volume and muscle.

JOHN

What about hypocritical?

Cristina turns back..confused..her mother asks her for a translation and she complies.. Flor then wearing the same confused expression.

JOHN (CONT'D)
 Yeah, you heard me. It's not like
 you didn't do the same thing...

FLOR
 (hard on the translation)
 No!

JOHN
 Oh, yes. So go lecture
 yourself..you won't need a
 translator for that one...I mean
 what am I lately... A recycling
 bin?..just anyone dump in your
 garbage and hope I make something
 useful out of it...

Flor is confused and getting pissed but he is moving now and
 pointing a finger at her.

JOHN (CONT'D)
 Yes, you did the same thing...you
 think I didn't know about altering
 those outfits for Bernie..She tells
 me her stuff....So, am I missing
 something? Is there a real
 difference between that and what
 you are complaining about?

Cristina waits for a comeback from her mother to
 translate..but doesn't get one..Instead her mother is a bit
 mortified and considerably humbled..the pie smack into the
 face.

FLOR
 Sin diferencia. Yo interferì.

CRISTINA AS FLOR
 No difference. I interfered.

JOHN
 Okay.....I'm still not sure I did
 the right thing keeping it to
 myself. It felt disloyal to
 Deborah..but my daughter really
 needed someone to be kind to her
 right then..so..so.

CRISTINA AS FLOR
 I am very embarrassed. You are very
 right. Hypocrisy..yes.

JOHN
 (something strikes him, he
 softens, disoriented)
 I'll tell you, it's pretty wild to
 say something and have the other
 person just concede the point. I'm
 dazed here.

CRISTINA AS FLOR
 I will leave whenever it is good
 for you and...

JOHN
 No..no..come on, man..

CRISTINA AS FLOR
 But how can I work for you after we
 talk like this?

JOHN
 You can't quit even if you want to
 and you know why.

FLOR
 No..

JOHN
 Yes, you do..

Flor is worried as John looks right at her..Is he coming on?

JOHN (CONT'D)
 Because then Cristina will blame
 herself for costing you the
 job...and that guilt...I don't know
 if you know about guilt..

Cristina doesn't have to check with her mother on this one.

CRISTINA
 Culpa, guilt, si. We know. We are
 Catholics.

FLOR
 (after her daughter's
 translation)
 Culpa, si..Por Dios, Si.

CRISTINA
 (on her own)
 We know.

FLOR
 (big nod)
 We know.

John gestures that there is nothing to be done. Flor nods.

JOHN
So, welcome back.

She smiles..gets up..extends her hand..they shake.

FLOR
Good night, Mr. Clasky..

CRISTINA
Good night As they exit..their
backs to John, daughter following
mother...Flor speaks to her
daughter.

FLOR
(an aside)
No te puedo tener haciendo esto por
mi. Ahora tengo que aprender
inglEs.

CRISTINA AS FLOR
(over her shoulder to John
as they move)
I can't have you doing this for me.
I must learn English now.

FLOR
No, dije eso por ti - no por John.

That translates to "No, I meant that for you, not John." But
Cristina does not translate the line. Nor..

JOHN
You have a wonderful mother.

FLOR
Que?

CRISTINA
Nada.

120 INT. FLOR'S ROOM - NIGHT

120

A Spanish commercial for learning English in a hurry is on
television..Flor on the phone ordering it..

NARRATOR
Learning English would cost five
hundred and ninety nine dollars
down and 15 monthly payments of one
hundred and ten dollars...which
represents 48 percent
interest..Mexicans marketing
Mexicans. But not a penny was
wasted.

121 EXT. MAIL BOX - DAY 121

As Flor takes a package from the box.

NARRATOR
My mother showed an extraordinary
facility for learning the language.

DISSOLVE TO:

122 INT. BEACH HOUSE - LAUNDRY ROOM - DAY 122

Flor listening to the tapes as she does laundry.

NARRATOR
..as well as a totally committed,
obsessive work ethic, which blocked
out all else..She was her
daughter's mother.

As Flor silently mouths some English while listening to a
tape, Chum nudges her with a ball and, without thinking, she
takes it from his mouth and tosses it..Realizing, with alarm,
a beat too late that she has broken the rule.

DISSOLVE TO:

123 EXT. BEACH - LATE AT NIGHT 123

Flor sitting on the sand...listening to her
tapes..continually forced by Chum's obsessive persistence to
throw him the ball.

DISSOLVE TO:

124 EXT. BEACH HOUSE - LATE NIGHT 124

As John arrives...He bumps the walls on entering.

125 INT. BEACH HOUSE - LATE NIGHT 125

As John enters the house, clearly drunk. There is the sound
of skittering paws as CHUM approaches.

JOHN
(cheering)
Hey, boy, I can use some up
company.

But Chum feverishly digs his snout against a nearby piece of
furniture and retrieves a tennis ball and rockets away. John
follows, weaving a bit.

126 INT. BEACH HOUSE - DEN - LATE NIGHT 126

As John enters the room to find CHUM proffering the ball to
Flor who is watching one of video language tapes. She tosses
the ball without a look or a thought..then starts when she
sees John standing there. He cheers, seeing her predicament.

When she speaks English, at this point, her words are halting.

JOHN
You gotta do something about
Chum..Your arm's going to go.

She waves it off and hurries to get her tape and get out of his way. Chum complicates the task, proffering the ball. Flor wearily throws it.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Don't you sleep anymore?

FLOR
No..You get more if you keep at it.

JOHN
You're doing fantastic.

FLOR
Now I am like a three year-old.
Your wife go out.

JOHN
She say where?

FLOR
No.
(on his reaction)
Sorry.

JOHN
Listen..I just forgot she was going
out..don't be a smart ass.
(jolted by his own remark)
Uh-oh..well, you and I communicate
mostly in apologies anyway..I'm
sorry. I should be whipped. I
should be stoned- it's been a while
- I meant to say, I think, don't be
smart, don't be kind, don't be
sensitive, don't be beautiful. I
meant to say, "hi, Flor, good night
Flor..that show you're watching is
going to be a hit."

He staggers out. Flor watches his lonely back for a beat and then urgently gestures Chum to join him. Chum is reluctant, but relenting, runs and accompanies his appreciative master. Flor, now alone, finds herself staring at a framed picture of John in the den. He is younger and smiling. She studies the picture and then blinks when she realizes her own emotion and purposefully goes back to her lessons.

127 EXT. P.C.H. - LA SALSA FAST FOOD PLACE - DAY.

127

Cristina and Bernice waiting in line at the Mexican fast food place on P.C.H. with the towering signature Mexican male figure on its roof. Deborah is parked curbside in the SUV.

BERNICE

How'd you get your mother to let you go with my mother?

CRISTINA

Well, your mother just said she could use my help on a few errands while you're in class...

Bernice nods. Then unconsciously moans.

CRISTINA (CONT'D)

What?

BERNICE

No. Just that I hate summer school.

CRISTINA

Why do you go then?

BERNICE

(looks at her)

I'm not sure I can explain to you the concept of not doing well in a class..in this case math...and the system kind of insists on the illusion that you've learned math -- so they make you go to summer school..It helps them avoid facing that they have failed in their mission.

CRISTINA

What do you mean they failed?

BERNICE

Joking.

CRISTINA

Oh. I see. Forgive me, I don't have a real sense of humor.

BERNICE

(looking skyward)

Thank you, God.

(on Cristina's reaction)

Joking...

CRISTINA

The joke is?

As they get in the car..Bernice doing a little stutter step offering Cristina the front seat..Cristina demurs.

128 INT. SUV - DAY. 128

As they get in..Deborah privy to the conversation now.

BERNICE
That you're better at everything
than I am...and I was thanking God
for there being this one thing
where I might have my nose in
front.

Deborah can't think of what single thing Bernice could possibly feel superior about. She is genuinely puzzled.

DEBORAH
And that thing is???

Bernice deeply resents the question..She turns to her mother.

BERNICE
Sexual experience..

Cristina laughs.

BERNICE (CONT'D)
(ruefully to self)
That one even she knows is funny.

Cristina gives Bernice an appreciative push from behind. Deborah, for some reason, feels she deserves credit for their connection.

DEBORAH
Look at you girls.

129 INT. BEACH BEDROOM - DAY 129

Deb working an outfit..her mother eyeing her..

DEBORAH
Cristina's already read, on her
own, everything on Bernice's summer
reading list..And she's two grades
behind..Imagine if she went to
Bernice's school..And they'd kill
to give her a scholarship.

EVELYN
Talk to Flor...

DEBORAH
(sarcastic)
Yeah..she's so open to new things.

130 EXT. GORGEOUS PRIVATE SCHOOL -DAY.

130

Deborah and Cristina standing in a grass bordered parking lot...Deborah, feigning upset, tearing into her bag but her focus is elsewhere as she periodically looks off. She is clearly stalling.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
Can't find my keys..

Another woman, ARLENE FOLSOM, calls to her..

ARLENE
Deborah...

DEBORAH
(acting surprised)
Hi, Arlene..
(to Cristina)
Come on.

They walk to greet Arlene.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
Hi. This is Cristina..the girl I'm
always raving about..This is Arlene
Folsom..the school director.

ARLENE
Hi..

CRISTINA
(Barbara Boxer couldn't do
it better)
Hello..a pleasure to meet you, Ms.
Folsom. I couldn't believe how
beautiful the grounds were as we
drove in. I just think the balance
of the buildings to open ground is
so wonderful and must have been
very difficult to achieve.

Deborah smiles with pride at the elegant first impression
Cristina is making..all are grinning...the two adults
suspiciously so...sharing their delight.

ARLENE
Would you like a little tour?

MOVING CAMERA..

First showing Cristina in foreground and her POV of this Drop
Dead Gorgeous Rich Kids School in the background and then we
MOVE CLOSER ON CRISTINA. We see lust in her reaction.

NARRATOR

The experience was literally mind boggling. My mind did boggle. My cranial cells stunned. Even if I had enough sense of wonder to imagine such a school existed; my sense of fairness made it unthinkable that any school could offer this much more than my own..

131

INT. BEACH LIVING ROOM - DAY

131

This is the last day of the summer rental - many packed cartons on the floor. Deborah, Flor and Cristina engaged in a momentous conversation..(NOTE: Throughout the following, and quite beside the point, we see Flor periodically make the motion of throwing the ball. But we do not cut to Chum, rather we just hear his claws skittering after the ball as we maintain focus on the momentous conversation.)

DEBORAH

Nuh-uh, Flor you are not pinning this one on me. I've got to finish packing up.

FLOR

(no longer sure of herself
or anything)
I just don't....Out of space this school wants her to go for free?

DEBORAH

We ran into the school head. They want diversity...Cristina knocked her out...I had nothing to do with it. By the way, the scholarship is worth twenty thousand dollars. And early registration is tomorrow.

FLOR

It is too far from our home.

DEBORAH

You could move in with us in town.

FLOR

Never, thank you...

DEBORAH

Okay, then don't..By the way..the phrase is "NO, thank you."

132

INT. FLOR'S ROOM - NIGHT

132

Flor has her earphones on listening to her English tapes..but she is enormously upset as she watches her daughter passionately pray in English..soon taking off the ear phones.

CRISTINA
Please, dear God..Enter my mother's
heart and make her understand what
this school would mean.

FLOR
Alright. I look.

CRISTINA
Amen.

133 EXT. L.A. PUBLIC SCHOOL - FLOR AT CRISTINA'S SCHOOL - DAY 133
Summer session - L.A. public school..ninety percent Hispanic.
Through Flor's POV, the place is seen not as crowded and worn
but as vibrant with community.

134 EXT. PRIVATE SCHOOL - FLOR AT BERNICE'S SCHOOL - DAY 134
Highly anxious and out of place, she sees the upper-scale
students..five percent Latino...No brochure can do it
justice. Overwhelmed by the implications, Flor's eyes tear.

135 INT. FLOR'S ROOM - LATE NIGHT 135
Cristina sleeps. Flor sits on her bed - no thought of sleep.

136 INT. BEACH HOUSE - LATE NIGHT 136
John enters, home from work ... as he passes Flor's door it
opens and she steps out. Before she can continue on, she sees
Evelyn at the foot of the stairs, carrying a glass of port.

EVELYN
Hi, Flor, want some port?

FLOR
No, thank you, Evelyn.

EVELYN
(going up stairs)
Thanks for never judging me..Love
you. Love everybody. That's what's
killing me.. Sleep well.

EVELYN'S POV.

She sees Flor approach John. Evelyn looks thoughtful.

137 INT. DEN - LATE NIGHT 137
John is about to pour himself a stiff drink. Flor startles
him.

FLOR
May I talk with you?

JOHN
 Me?
 (she nods)
 Deborah will be home soon. I just
 talked to her.

FLOR
 I need real talk..Is it okay?

John does not answer immediately. The brief pause is noted.

FLOR (CONT'D)
 No?

JOHN
 Sure.

FLOR
 Outside? Private?

JOHN
 Sure.....
 (as they exit to beach
 with a nervous laugh)
 You have me a little worried...

He glances back, hoping to have his fears assuaged, they are not.

138 EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

138

He sits..she stands, gorgeous..The wind gusts periodically blowing her dress against her body. He tries not to notice.

FLOR
 You know about Cristina and your
 great school?

JOHN
 Oh, it's happened. Is it driving
 you nuts?

FLOR
 Yes, nuts. I have no idea what to
 do. Such an important thing.

JOHN
 Yeah.

FLOR
 It's a good school?

JOHN
 Tops. It's tops.

FLOR
 So you like it?

JOHN

No. I hate the damn school. But that's because they keep sending my daughter home anxiety-ridden, mostly over geometry..I mean you "get" Bernice..In a decent world her school should let her know how great she is, right?

FLOR

Very right.

JOHN

So, don't ask me..I'm worried about my own kid there.

FLOR

You don't have to worry about Bernice. Nothing is going to change that heart.

He looks at her..Out of nowhere overwhelmed by someone echoing and affirming his deepest most private thoughts about his daughter..It is odd..being this deeply touched before he knows what hit him..He makes little adjustments until the moment passes..

JOHN

Um.....yeah..thanks...

(then)

It's great to hear someone else say that out loud..Hard to explain.

FLOR

I "get" it.

JOHN

(a beat..then deeply, with core feelings, a lament)

Ah, man..

FLOR

(caring)

It will be okay.

JOHN

No, I was thinking about you..

FLOR

(instantly alarmed)

Your, "Ah, man" was for me? You think I am in trouble with Cristina?

JOHN

It's just tough to be sane.

(MORE)

JOHN (cont'd)

To know you're not just making something out of nothing. That when you think you're at some crossroads - you are.

FLOR

(she takes this in/nods)
I never know a man who can put himself in my place like you do. How do you become that man?

JOHN

I don't know...You introduce two Jews in the desert and wait five thousand years. Then, bingo, somebody else who can see trouble coming but can't do anything about it.

FLOR

I don't understand.

JOHN

That's okay.

FLOR

I want to.

JOHN

Nothing. I don't know what I'm talking about..

A sustained gust of wind which celebrates her shape in a way which cannot be ignored.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Will you sit down.. Get out of the damn wind.

She sits. It helps.

JOHN (CONT'D)

So you going to send her?

FLOR

I don't know. But it does not feel good. I think if she goes there it will be one of two things..either she will be odd...or she will make herself the same as them.

JOHN

(in wonderment)
 That is EXACTLY the way I felt about Bernice going there..Exactly.

(MORE)

JOHN (cont'd)
I wasn't able to think it that clearly...But that's how I felt. So between odd and the same...you gotta root for odd, don't you?

FLOR
Yes, you gotta.

Camera begins to pull back...early in the move John's words stop the movement.

JOHN
This was a crummy summer.

Flor nods ruefully..then suddenly off a glance at him.

FLOR
Not all crummy.

Suddenly there is a bit of danger..she rises quickly, changing mode.

FLOR (CONT'D)
Thank you, good night. I go sleep.

JOHN
Good night..Hey?

She turns..

JOHN (CONT'D)
You speaking English...It's, uh..

FLOR
What?

JOHN
Nothing. Just.... Nice meeting you.

She gulps and exits...as the CAMERA PULLS BACK..ending the summer at the rented house...as we transition to....

139 EXT. BIG BLUE BUS IN MOTION - MORNING. 139

Through the unusual center window we see Flor and Cristina. Flor, at this moment, is assimilating against every fiber in her body. Cristina is excited, certain her life is taking an incandescent turn. Quite a contrast.

140 EXT. STONE CANYON AND SUNSET - MORNING 140

As the bus stops...Bernice is across the street, along with some other kids and Deborah, who is wearing her running clothes..Flor and Cristina exit the bus...

BERNICE
 (calling)
 You just made it...I was getting
 worried..

Deborah has a backpack loaded with books which she hands to
 Cristina..

DEBORAH
 I picked up your books yesterday..
 (by way of explanation to
 Flor)
 This is one of Bernie's
 old..ancient backpacks.

Cristina taking it...

CRISTINA
 Oh, thank you..

As she shoulders it and almost falls over..

CRISTINA (CONT'D)
 (impressed with the heft)
 This is a great school.

DEBORAH
 (to Cristina)
 I got you a little first-day-at-a-
 new-school present...

A school bus appears and heads toward them putting a certain
 deadline pressure on the transaction.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
 It's from me and....Bernice.
 (to Flor)
 Okay? It is a big day.

Flor's uncertain reaction is taken as a yes.

BERNICE
 (dry)
 What did we get her?

Deborah hands Cristina a locket..then, noting Flor's
 expression.

DEBORAH
 (to Cristina)
 It's from ALL of us. Your mother
 too.

FLOR
 (to Cristina)
 It's not from me...

Deborah does a good-natured "TAKE" accepting Flor's reaction as if it were an eccentricity..As Cristina and Bernice board the bus, Cristina generally says goodbye to both women, thereby depriving Flor of her own moment of passage with her daughter.

DEBORAH
Have a great year, girls..
(for Flor)
This is so great. It fills your
heart, doesn't it?

Deborah turns and sees Flor has already started doggedly up the hill..

141 EXT. STREET - HILL - ANGLE ON FLOR... 141

Walking up the hill, blinking in disbelief at her own fury..Deborah in the background feeling a bit abandoned..Flor keeps walking toward the camera..

NARRATOR
There is a terrible crisis which
comes when your own personality is
not equal to the challenge you
face. When being who you are no
longer works.

Deborah has started to jog. As she approaches Flor, she calls for a clear path well in advance.

DEBORAH
Left...left.

Flor does not alter course though she does start to walk faster...

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
Left...left...

Deborah is close behind now.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
LEFT!

Suddenly, Flor breaks into a run..She is lithe and quick.

ON DEBORAH...

A blink of confusion...then something resembling innate satisfaction as she quickens her gait and...the Race is on.

ANGLE AS DEBORAH DRAWS ABREAST OF FLOR.

Strangely, she is interpreting this as closeness. She is genuinely warm.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
 (to Flor)
 Why am I not surprised you're
 competitive?

Deborah looks up the street at a delivery truck.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
 Oh, they're delivering my table.

Flor stays on task ..forces her stride. She just needs to win
 so very much..that's all..to her current surprise, that's
 everything...

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
 You are fast.. Better pace yourself
 though..

Flor, even more upset and provoked by the words now lets it
 all out...

ON DEBORAH..

Realizing she may not be a certain winner...she is concerned
 as she goes after the rabbit.

OTHER ANGLE.

Showing the delivery truck as finish line in the distance...

VARIOUS SHOTS..

Flor fueled by desperation. Deborah, relentlessly gaining,
 exhilarated.

THE FINISH..

Decidedly anti-climactic..Deborah draws even -- passes her--
 arrives at the house with a large margin of victory.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
 (calling back)
 I love you for trying.

142 EXT. CLASKY HOUSE - DAY

142

She exits into her home.

ON FLOR..

Bent over, hands on knees, sweaty, gasping for breath. Flor
 finally straightens up and, there being no other course,
 continues her walk up the hill, to work.

NARRATOR
 When people exist under one roof, a
 tiny society forms..the stuff of

(MORE)

NARRATOR (cont'd)
 novelas: masters and servants
 unconsciously dancing in lock step
 so that, when things go wrong,
 traumas converge.

143 INT. CLASKY HOME - NIGHT... 143

As John moves past Evelyn on his way to work. She looks at him a little wild-eyed as they both stand in the doorway. Straining a bit for breath.

JOHN
 You feel okay?

EVELYN
 No. I've given up drinking.
 (he looks at her/she sadly
 nods affirmation)
 I had to do it John..I need every
 brain cell to watch out for all of
 us..given the current climate.
 Anyway. John, I think you're great
 and I'm going to act accordingly.

JOHN
 (totally confused)
 Good deal.

EVELYN
 Let's hope.

144 INT. FLOR'S APT. - LATE AFTERNOON 144

Flor cooking alongside Monica --- a table is set for ten..A banner proclaiming BIENVENIDA, MAMÁ.

NARRATOR
 My great Aunt Monica had finally
 managed to get her mother to Los
 Angeles and my mother was making a
 party.

145 INT./EXT. DEBORAH'S CAR / CLASKY HOME - DAY 145

Bernice sitting amidst Cristina and two other golden girls as they arrive at the Clasky home.

NARRATOR
 I was with my friends who had
 helped me understand real optimism.

As they pull in the driveway. Cristina and her friends exit the car and squeal loudly at each other with the excitement of having it all. Bernice exits last. She is not squealing.

146 INT. CLASKY HOUSE - NIGHT

146

As Deb finishes dialing a call..Cristina looking on...her two friends watching a movie in the family room. A clock prominently reads nine p.m.

DEBORAH

(into phone)

Flor? Deb..Look, sorry to call you so late, but they're still studying and I'm going out but I promised to get her back so if you want me to cut off the school work, fine...whatever you want me to do. Well, okay..you think about it..

(she holds on to give Flor time)

And hey, if you're tired, or want to play, let her sleep here and I'll get her back there tomorrow. You still want to think about it? Okay..

She hangs up...and exchanges a mischievous look with Cristina.

147 INT. FLOR'S APT. - NIGHT

147

As Flor hangs up..

NARRATOR

Though it is possible to judge harshly my conduct toward my mother in my first year at school; almost all professional literature excuses my behavior as developmental, since I was entering an age where rebellion and narcissism were to be expected. And I was being mentored.

Monica and her newly arrived mother are there along with the bride from an earlier scene and some of the girls who saw Cristina off to Malibu..Women cooking in the kitchen..She tells the girls, in Spanish, that Cristina may not make it. They are disappointed...Flor thinks - then says something to Monica who nods in agreement. Flor exits.

148 EXT./INT. CLASKY FRONT DRIVEWAY..NIGHT

148

As Evelyn stands there...a little in the shadows..

HER POV...

Deborah somewhat dolled up moving through the interior of the house..

149 EXT. CLASKY DRIVEWAY - NIGHT...

149

As Deborah leaves the house in a hurry.

EVELYN
(calling out)
Wait!

Deborah turns, startled.

EVELYN (CONT'D)
I need to talk to you privately,
honey.

DEBORAH
"Honey?"-- Can't now, Mom...I'm
late..I was looking all over for
you...keep an eye on the kids. You
know my secret cell number.

EVELYN
Just give me a moment to talk
here..

DEBORAH
What is it? Are you buzzed?

EVELYN
No. I gave up drinking weeks ago.
(on Deborah's reaction)
Yes. Nobody noticed -- which shows
I probably conducted myself pretty
well as a drunk. But duty called
and I'm sober so may I say just one
thing.

DEBORAH
One thing..go ahead...

EVELYN
Thanks..Deborah, you're going to
lose your husband and you'll never
find someone as good. There will
only be men who you know are cheap
and shallow and have no real warmth
in their souls. You may have gotten
by on those surfaces once but now
you've been spoiled by a good man
and you can no longer glide on such
thin ice. If you do not act
quickly you will soon cement an
awful fate for yourself. A life,
with no hope of repair, which has
already begun to turn desperate and
dumb. That's it. Drive safely.

She grabs a deep breath and then turns and walks to the
house.

EVELYN (CONT'D)
 (to herself)
 If we're out of coffee, it's over
 for me.

Suddenly a sharp horn is heard..Evelyn jumps..then turns to see her daughter calling to her from the driver's seat of the SUV..

DEBORAH
 You've done it again, Mom, made me
 hate myself..One of the things I
 can count on..

EVELYN
 Honey, lately your low self-esteem
 is just good common sense.

Deborah considers that last thought for a long beat before she drives off..

DISSOLVE TO:

150 EXT. STONE CANYON - LATE NIGHT... 150

Flor walking from the beginning of the hill.....She looks off to see John's vehicle approaching..She brightens..

ON JOHN..

Who doesn't see her..We can see his car's digital clock reading 11:30.

ON FLOR..

As he drives past her.

151 INT. CLASKY HOME - NIGHT... 151

As John enters..Evelyn, in an adjoining room, moves to intercept him.

EVELYN (CONT'D)
 John, better wait a minute.

But John hears Deb's crying from upstairs..

JOHN
 (concerned)
 What the hell's wrong?

EVELYN
 Nothing. In all futility, can I
 urge you not to go up there.

But he is already moving quickly up the stairs..As he turns at the top of the stairs WE SEE THE DOOR CLOSE TO BERNICE'S ROOM.

ON EVELYN..

EVELYN (CONT'D)
 (to herself)
 Denouement.

152 INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT...

152

John enters the room on the double...passes Deborah without knowing it..(she is partially obscured by the drape or some such). As he passes....camera HOLDS ON DEBORAH..she is a mess...goopy tear stains..seeing him and his concern brings her grief to a higher ground...a sinner humbled by goodness..a trembling lip of childlike vulnerability...

JOHN
 Deb..Deb?..where are you?

He is about to leave the room...she is about to let him but an instinct leads her astray once more.

DEBORAH
 Here I am.

JOHN
 Baby, what?

DEBORAH
 "Baby?" Stay there, John...Sit down..I suddenly get what I have to do...I just have to get the guts.

JOHN
 Is it absolutely necessary to make it this...this scary..can you just say it?

DEBORAH
 Not so easy.

JOHN
 (tender/ready for the big healing)
 Yeah..come on..it's me. We can talk.

DEBORAH
 Do I ever hope so...I've been seeing another man for the last eleven weeks and it was nothing and I ended it tonight..At first it was just keeping an eye on the real estate market..Then it was...what? Me being insecure and looking for some ridiculous vali...

ON JOHN...

A shock victim..he holds up a hand to stop her..

JOHN
Go -- hold on...hold on...I'm
missing what you're saying..You
can't just keep talking and expect
me to follow it when you start the
way you did.....

DEBORAH
Just what did you hear?

JOHN
Well there was the crack in the
planet. That was noisy...

She looks at him...a solid beat...

JOHN (CONT'D)
There's an actual noise in my
head.....no kidding..

Briefly he does the noise...

DEBORAH
(slowly)
I met him about...

John holds up a hand to stop her...he needs to gather himself
to hear this..She waits...and waits...as he waits he grows
flushed and stunned with dread. Finally a word..

JOHN
You..

She takes that as a cue to start..

DEBORAH
I met him..

He puts up his hand..

JOHN
If you talk that fast...I'll never
hear you..there's a lot going
through my mind....Have you said
yet whether you slept with him?

DEBORAH
So far I've just been talking about
a flirtation because the really
important thing for you to know...

JOHN
Have you said yet whether you've
had sex with someone else? Because
I really am missing most of your
words. So help me out here..

DEBORAH
I've been trying to explain that
for the first ten weeks there was
almost nothing to ...

JOHN
(sincerely checking but
wild)
You still haven't said, right?

DEBORAH
Is this your way of...

JOHN
This is my way of...this is my way
of asking you whether..

He stops... staggering on the threshold of a diminished
future.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Oh man, once I ask it...give me a
second.
(several beats then some
conversational good
manners for keeping her
waiting)
I'm just trying to figure out
whether there's any way to avoid
knowing..no, damn
(quickly closing this
argument with himself)
There's not...
(to her)
Okay, you're on..real short answer,
huh? Have you had sex with
another..

DEBORAH
I know you're very angry?

JOHN
(considering/then
repressed answer)
Ahhhh...I'm getting there, yes.

DEBORAH
(softly)
John?
(on his look)
I think if you let me tell you the
full everything of this we'd be in
a position to deal with it
better..because eleven weeks ago
when...

JOHN
 You don't believe that I miss your words..I get three or four tops...and then just see your mouth moving with nothing coming out and then I spin out and there's this noise...But there's no way to miss a "yes" or "no."

DEBORAH
 (blurts)
 Yes..

JOHN
 (core simple/eight years old)
 Really?

DEBORAH
 (this gets her)
 I made up my mind that I would answer every question you had..I'll answer anything and everything and more.

JOHN
 (perplexed)
 What other questions could there be?

DEBORAH
 Are you really that much nicer than me?

JOHN
 Well, you don't set the bar real high.

He get up and starts to exit..

DEBORAH
 No. Please, please, please..I think if you listen to exactly what happened and then do whatever you need to...we'll..just let me tell you everything..

The doorbell rings...it's quite late...Deborah wondering what's up..she looks out the window.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
 Oh, it's just Flor.

153 EXT. STONE CANYON NIGHT..

153

As Flor enters the Clasky House...

154 INT. CLASKY HOUSE - LATE NIGHT

154

Flor sees Evelyn in the living room.

EVELYN

What are you doing here?

FLOR

I want Cristina. I want to talk to Mrs. Clasky. I want to quit.

EVELYN

I don't think you can do any of it right this minute..

FLOR

Oh, yes..Where's Cristina?

155 INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

155

Deborah can barely look at him...

DEBORAH

...then, when I was driving back tonight after I ended the whole yuck thing..I was feeling human. I'm done with what's his name..a relief... ..and now it can be like it never happened and then I thought that the only hope was that I own that it did happen and that I take my medicine here..because if I'm walking around with what I did and you don't know what I did..there is a real limit to how close we can be..you're with me and I'm this person who has this bad secret and we aren't really on the same page ever again..so the reason I took this chance in telling -- is because I want us to be good..I want us to be close. I want to feel like you're not nuts to be in love with me..So what I think is we should talk till we pass out .. Talk till we're so sick of each other that there's nothing left to do but take the first step out of hell..So please let's not leave this room until you've heard and said everything..please say, okay..

She awaits his answer..He has heard barely a few words..

JOHN

What?

DEBORAH

John..

JOHN

I've got to get out of
here..because you keep talking.
(as she starts to follow
him)
Stay put!

She does. Just before he exits.

DEBORAH

You've got to say something.

JOHN

You are a terrible wife.

He exits.

156 INT. MAID'S ROOM - NIGHT...

156

Evelyn stands in the doorway with Flor..they are looking at
Cristina and her two friends sleeping together.

EVELYN

I don't think you want to wake her
when you're this upset and the
other kids are right there and...

Flor makes a noise of frustration and retreats from the room.

157 INT. ENTRANCE HALL - NIGHT

157

As they arrive at the interior entrance, John comes down the
stairs just as Flor opens the front door.

JOHN

Where you going?

FLOR

I'm leaving....I have finally..

JOHN

Me too..I'll drive you.

FLOR

No.

JOHN

Yes..come on...it's past midnight
here.

FLOR

If you truly don't know why I say
"no" let me at last say the reason.
At least that will be a relief.
Have you no idea that I....

Before she can there is the sound of scratching toes on the floor and a ball comes into lower frame with a dog's snout..Flor loses her thought and tosses the ball.

OTHER ANGLE.

As Chum, now the only happy creature in the house, fetches it and returns.

JOHN
Look I have to get out of here
right now..

FLOR
Go..

John exits to driveway...Flor makes one last toss..these tosses have not made a dent in her anger and frustration.

FLOR (CONT'D)
Goodbye, Chum.

Another toss and Flor follows John out the door.

ON CHUM.

No longer happy. He has lost his only easy mark. He stares at the closed door..the ball drops from his mouth to the floor.

158 EXT. CLASKY DRIVEWAY - NIGHT...

158

John is at the car but Flor heads for the gate.

JOHN
(as decisive as we've seen
him)
I'm taking you.

FLOR
(with anger)
Why?!?

JOHN
Because if I don't -- I'll worry
about you and I can't handle that
right now, okay?

Flor emits a crooning sound.

FLOR
Ahhhhh.
(stunned and worried)
I never made that sound over a man
before..

Flor shudders at her own sappiness as John opens the passenger door for her...very much into his own torture he nonetheless grabs her arm and guides her up and in..she catches and appreciates his automatic gracious manners while he is clearly fucked up...She is impatient with his solicitousness almost slapping his hands away as he makes sure her skirt doesn't get crushed in the door..The frustration roiling in her.

FLOR (CONT'D)
Please!?! Mandilón.

OTHER ANGLE..

Deborah watching them...

HER POV.

Her cuckolded husband closing the door behind her gorgeous, soon-to-be ex-housekeeper.

CLOSE ON DEBORAH..

She trembles under the force of imminent justice.

159

INT. JOHN'S CAR - LATE NIGHT

159

Two pissed-off people..jaws set...breathing labored..As the car starts and Flor looks back, she lets out a guttural and explosive shout...

FLOR
(a quick and mighty vent)
Arrchhhhyeeeeiii!

For John, the first clear thing he has heard in a while..

JOHN
Yes! Exactly! Well put! Teach me that word sometime. I can really use it.

She nods..there is almost a moment of relaxation..then the anger fires an immediate need..She leans across the seat to deliver an urgent message to him. The words come out exponentially too forcefully.

FLOR
I quit this job!

His spontaneous and forceful reaction surprises her..

JOHN
I quit this job!!!!

As he turns onto Sunset.

FLOR
That's the bus stop.

JOHN
I'll take you home.

FLOR
No. Drop me at a bus.

JOHN
Oh, shut up and stop telling me
what to do.

FLOR
Okay...then let's do something
besides driving me home where my
daughter isn't.

JOHN
Okay..we'll do something.

FLOR
And I'm supposed to figure out what
because I'm a housekeeper and you
don't have to think.

JOHN
Oh, don't do the class thing,
man..You don't know where I come
from.

FLOR
Alright, I know. But I can't be
responsible no more for making sure
nothing happens. That's another
terrible job I quit.

JOHN
What are you talking about? I take
responsibility for anything within
a block. You have nothing to worry
about. That's my job.

FLOR
Excellent. So you're going to
figure out what we do, right?

JOHN
Yes. Okay. Big man figure out!

FLOR
Stop there.

She points to a mall..He looks at her and pulls in.

160 EXT. MALL PARKING LOT - LATE NIGHT. 160
 As she leaves the car and goes into a drug store. John, sober faced, looks at Flor making an attractive and zestful beeline toward an Hispanic market. This could be where it hits him that he's on a date...If so..it's too late to duck..

161 INT. MEXICAN MARKET - LATE NIGHT. 161
 As Flor enters the market..She calls to the young shop girl as Marine medics for morphine.

FLOR (CONT'D)
 Maquillaje!

CUT TO:

The shop girl directs her to the make-up counter where she starts shopping..lip gloss, blush, eye stuff..She starts applying it at the check out counter.

162 EXT. OUTDOOR MALL - LATE NIGHT 162
 As she runs back to the car.

163 INT. JOHN'S VEHICLE - 163
 As she enters, there is a fury to her which he almost matches.

FLOR
 This is me when I'm not working..
 You have never seen me!

JOHN
 Well, you look familiar.

FLOR
 So,
 (parodying him)
 "man," where we heading?

JOHN
 I don't think I can handle public..

FLOR
 Yes, no...lots of people right now
 is..

JOHN
 I know.

FLOR
 You were going to figure this out!

JOHN
 My place!

164 INT. JOHN'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT...

164

As they enter the main restaurant...

FLOR

I've never seen your place. Very perfect.

He heads for the kitchen.

JOHN

I'm going to cook, Beautiful.
(on a dime correction)
I'm going to cook beautifully.

FLOR

Hey..please..

He turns.

FLOR (CONT'D)

We both were not normal because we are angry and we act like we are angry with each other and we are not..I am not. I am glad to be with you. It feels comfortable to be with you. If I just left the job and never spoke with you it would have been sin. You understand?

JOHN

Ummmmmmmmmm...Yes.

He stands next to her and, for want of a better physical expression, pats her on her back..She eyes him, almost critical about the lame extent of his aggression....He can't quite look at her...He pats her again..

REAR ANGLE..THE PAT ON THE BACK.

The pat is becoming a rub..he cups her back..slides his hand..she responds just a bit..

JOHN (CONT'D)

I think I'm inventing a horrible new way of making out..

FLOR

Not so horrible.....

His hand keeps going..he now hugs her to him even though they both still face front.. like a loving couple on a walk to the market. His hand squeezes her shoulder.

JOHN

My hand is the only sane part of my body..every other part wants to jump off a cliff.

FLOR
 (digging this/almost
 growing a sense of humor)
 If the other hand could cheer up,
 you could lift me up and carry me
 off.

He laughs. He takes his hand from around her. It is a bit awkward.

JOHN
 I don't know how to handle that
 one. I think I already broke my
 record for smooth.

FLOR
 I don't understand.

JOHN
 It's me. I'm not making sense. But
 I can get you fed.

He goes to the kitchen. She begins to explore a little. She goes to a cabinet and opens it to find a CD player. She digs in her purse and takes out a CD.

165 INT. RESTAURANT KITCHEN - NIGHT 165

As John starts cooking up a storm...there is some velocity to his cooking...he still seethes. Then reacts as Spanish Music starts to play. He clears his throat as if he must make a speech. Then does so again..some vocal spasm paying tribute to the increasingly intoxicating tension he feels.

166 INT. RESTAURANT - DINING AREA - NIGHT... 166

Flor is lighting the candle at each of the twenty tables.

167 INT. RESTAURANT KITCHEN - NIGHT... 167

He is cooking..He is talking to himself.

JOHN
 Nothing to be nervous about. You
 are not on a date...
 (calls out)
 Hey, Flor?

FLOR'S VOICE (O.S.)
 Yes, John.

JOHN
 What are you doing?

She enters the room...dancing a bit..

FLOR
Just lighting candles and picking
music.
(notices his cooking)
Oooh.

She gets up on one of the counters and sits there, her feet
dangling...sings along a bit in Spanish. He is uncomfortable
anew. The nervousness mounting.

JOHN
You want a drink?

She considers the question totally..He is busy cooking..not
realizing how weighty she considers his question...finally
aware she has not answered and looks at her..

JOHN (CONT'D)
Huh?

She regards him levelly..then makes her decision.

FLOR
No.

He gets out a bottle of vodka.

FLOR (CONT'D)
I, uh...don't think you should
either.

JOHN
Then excuse me, because if I had
the equipment I'd inject the vodka.

He starts to pour.

FLOR
Wait!
(he stops)
I think it is so important that we
are each clear-headed.

He looks at her..a beat...he puts the vodka away. Flor
beams..we have not seen her smile like this for quite some
time.

FLOR (CONT'D)
It is very good that you did not
ask, "why?"

JOHN
(quietly)
Keep things real, right?

FLOR
(impressed)
I wouldn't have put it so well.

168

INT. RESTAURANT KITCHEN - HALF HOUR LATER - NIGHT

168

They sit at a small table in the kitchen..finishing the greatest late-night meal in the history of Western man.

FLOR

I will remember every
taste..forever.

JOHN

Tell you the truth..I wanted a shot
at cooking for you.
(shy/his heart)
I'm very glad you liked it.

FLOR

It's something watching you.

He looks up at her...she has not been seen like this for a very long time, if ever.. lit up by a man.

JOHN

Well, if it's anything at your end
imagine over here...scratch
that..the last thing you want to
hear is somebody going off on your
looks.

FLOR

Don't be crazy. Tell me every
detail.

JOHN

Okay, Flor, yes I will...They
should name a gender after
you..Looking at you doesn't do
it..Staring is the only thing that
makes sense..and trying not to
blink so you don't miss anything.

She squeals with laughter..He laughs a little himself and in so doing loses his courage..He looks down at his hands..shyness again belting him a good one..Still looking down.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Look..forgive me..I'm.....It's just
that you are drop-dead, crazy-
gorgeous..so much so that I am
really considering looking at you
again before we finish up here.

FLOR

Soon, please.

And now he looks at her.

CLOSE ON FLOR..

Utterly open...utterly optimistic...the half second before being swept away.

FLOR (CONT'D)
Right now....immediately..we have
to dance or kiss.

He stands. She stands..He kids just a bit, clowning at weighing the two options and then:

HIS POV..

Her face..

JOHN
No contest.

They kiss.

FLOR
You sure you're not Mexican.

JOHN
(smiling/he likes this)
What do you mean?

FLOR
I meant you talk like a Spanish
song.

JOHN
You kiss like a Spanish fly..
(on her confusion)
Joking around. I don't know what
I'm talking about...

FLOR
Yes you do.

She breaks and heads for the dining room. John has a moment to consider.. He does not have his wits about him..a condition every bit as fearsome as liberating.

169 INT. RESTAURANT - DINING ROOM. 169

As Flor rummages for another CD, enjoying every minute. She places the disk in the player and exits.

170 INT. RESTAURANT KITCHEN. 170

As she returns...

FLOR (CONT'D)
This song...You see what a good
thing to tell you how you talk like
a Mexican song.

She begins to translate the lyrics.

FLOR (CONT'D)
 When I kiss you, entire oceans rush
 through my veins..
 (he is wildly
 uncomfortable)
 Gardens of flowers blossom in my
 body.

He starts to make a comic gesture of awkwardness to get past the event..she shakes her head at him..driving the words -- pointing emphatically..she will not have her poetry laughed at..

FLOR (CONT'D)
 And you wander along my fertile
 soil, picking its ripe fruit..A
 nightingale undresses on my
 tongue..And under its wings..

He laughs. She stops cold. Looks down..though just seconds long, this still constitutes the first depression of her life.

JOHN
 I'm sorry. I don't know what I just
 took out of you but tell me how to
 get it back in there..I'm sorry.
 Flor..I'm sorry.

CLOSE ON HER..

The downcast eyes rise to see him..

FLOR
 Then respect this.

He looks at her...they kiss..It is a kiss without an author. God at the controls. They break. There is a beat then..

JOHN
 Here's something I never asked
 anyone..Did nightingales undress on
 your tongue?

Flor looks at him with enormous warmth. Her arms looped around his neck..aware of the music.

FLOR
 Did they on yours?

JOHN
 (a long beat of
 reflection/then sincere
 and surprised)
 Yeah...

171 EXT. RESTAURANT - SOME TIME LATER 171

Moving camera...the small house turned restaurant..little flickers of light...

NARRATOR

My mother never told me the details of her visit to the restaurant. But she often referred to it as the greatest conversation of her life.

172 INT. RESTAURANT - VERY LATE NIGHT... 172

They are lying post coitally in each other's arms on a sofa just inside the dining room..They are covered by a table cloth. They hold hands above the cover...each private but still somehow in contact.

FLOR

Oh, Johnny, why is everything so damn confusing?

JOHN

Culpa.

Flor's pleasure zone is rocked. She smiles at his first Spanish word. She is wrestling with large feelings of pleasure and large ominous thoughts.

FLOR

(a beat)
Is your mind racing?

JOHN

I would say my mind has evaporated...but that there are remnants still standing waiting to fall. It feels pretty good.

FLOR

Like happy?

JOHN

Like happy.

FLOR

You think that will last?

JOHN

It's already gone.

FLOR

I understand what you mean.

JOHN

I don't understand what I mean.

FLOR

That it's getting late. That responsibilities have entered your brain. Don't hide that from me. And really, one large reason we are here is because you respect me as a mother and I respect you as a father..

He is looking at her...she is disconcerted.

JOHN

You're a great and wild mother.

FLOR

You are a beautiful father.

She looks at him..they kiss...tenderness..heat...intimacy.

FLOR (CONT'D)

When Cristina was young, I would say I want to take any man who wants me to the park and I will tell whether I want him from the way he is with Cristina. I wish you had been in the park then.

(a beat)

Any reaction?

John considering and then the answer comes to him.

JOHN

Exactly!..

FLOR

You know, I always think about when you...Oh, there's no point. I talk too much...

(a bit of emotion)

...because I don't know if we ever talk again.

JOHN

Hey, hey..How do you get there? Wait.

FLOR

Yes you do. Be honest.

JOHN

I'm being honest.

(indicates their bodies)

Look at us - I think I call it honesty.

FLOR
 What are we going to do -- go home,
 let our hearts go back in our
 bodies, see each other a few more
 times. Make a tragedy out of us..

She kisses him again...starts to cry....looks at him..emits a
 small cooing sound.

FLOR (CONT'D)
 Ahhhhhhh.
 (sudden energy)
 There are some mistakes you cannot
 risk when you have kids...Please,
 are you ready to go?

JOHN
 (urgently)
 No. I'm not. No.
 (then)
 Stay put for a second. Stay here.
 Once our feet touch that floor, I'm
 going to get too many brain cells
 back. So don't be in such a hurry.
 That floor, Flor, is going to eat
 us alive.
 (she settles back/he is
 energized)
 So you think it was a mistake up to
 now.
 (she nods "yes")
 That's rough.

She nods again..trying to gut things out...but as her foot
 touches the floor, she must say one last thing to him.

FLOR
 The mistake....I love it.

173 INT. CLASKY HOME - MASTER BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT.

173

Deborah's face is bleached from crying...the tear ducts of
 her now brown eyes are parched dry..Evelyn sits eyeing her as
 she looks through the window at the pre-dawn emptiness of
 Stone Canyon. In her current shape she would give pause to a
 staff worker at Promises..a shock victim walking through the
 rubble after the bomb has dropped. Deborah's voice is
 scratchy when she speaks.

DEBORAH
 Tell me again why I can't call him
 on the cell.

EVELYN
 Besides that he turned it off?

DEBORAH
 Yes.

EVELYN

Forty messages start to look needy.

DEBORAH

Mother, you're enjoying this.

EVELYN

No..Definitely not in the way you think.

DEBORAH

(staggered)

You are enjoying it?!?

EVELYN

(rising/honest)

I am enjoying actually being of use to my daughter. I am enjoying the fact that I really know how to advise you and the miracle that you are so deeply disoriented that you are gobbling up everything I say.

Deborah nods in agreement -- then looks at her mother in a somewhat new way..as if Evelyn were an actual person instead of an upsetting extension of herself.

DEBORAH

(vulnerable)

There's one thing I'd like to say to you about you and me.

EVELYN

You don't have to.

DEBORAH

I want to.

EVELYN

Okay.

DEBORAH

(quite vulnerable and appealing)

You were an alcoholic and wildly promiscuous woman during my formative years so that I am in this fix because of you. It is your fault. I just needed..

(gestures heart to heart)

..that moment for us.

EVELYN

You have a solid point, dear. But right now the lessons of my life are coming in handy for you.

DEBORAH
There's a car coming....

Evelyn moves to her.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
It's him...he's got to tell me
everything..

Evelyn shakes her head "no."

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
(wild-eyed)
Yes!

EVELYN
Do you know that right now you are
your own worst enemy..that you
can't trust one thought in your
brain?

DEBORAH
Duh.

EVELYN
Then trust me and only allow
yourself to say one thing to
him..One thing..."I'm so glad
you're back."

DEBORAH
Huh?

EVELYN
Yes.

DEBORAH
(babbling)
But I've got to know whether he
touched her - where he touched her -
how he touched her - if they broke
a sweat --- what they said - who
made the first move - how they left
it -- if anyone loves anyone or has
an intention of making contact in
the future - what she wore - how he
felt afterwards - whether anyone
mentioned me..
(a wail)
..whether they held hands when they
left..

The distinct sound of a door opening and closing from
downstairs.

EVELYN
Just those words I said. If you
want a prayer of coming out of
this.

DEBORAH
I know you're right..But..

EVELYN
But what?

DEBORAH
(a small voice)
I forgot the sentence you said I
should say.

EVELYN
"I'm so glad you're back."

DEBORAH
Okay..do I have to wait here?

EVELYN
No..he may not come up here..go to
him.

DEBORAH
Why wouldn't he come up here?

EVELYN
Just go.

DEBORAH
Do I need a little makeup?

EVELYN
You need a hose but you don't have
the time. It's fine that you look
like that. It's genuine..You can
use genuine.

DEBORAH
Thank you, mom.

She takes a breath exits...

174 INT. STAIRWELL 174

She pauses at the top of the stairs..a breath..then unable to
help herself runs down them at breakneck speed.

175 INT. DOWNSTAIRS.. 175

John turning a light on when Deborah bursts into the room.

DEBORAH
I'm so glad to see you
(correcting self)
..that you're back.

John looks up at her - not knowing what to say...he is thrown. His demeanor has changed...deeper..serious..

JOHN
It's late, Deborah.

The wrong words start to form..she stops herself..

DEBORAH
Well, I just wanted to say.. what I said..

She is on the stairway..he turns to go in the opposite direction.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
(way too loud)
Uhhhh..

He turns back to her...she stops herself from straying into untried words but gestures whether he is coming upstairs to bed.

JOHN
(a beat then)
I can't sleep upstairs with you..
Just can't for now.

This rocks her..panicked she grabs at her life preserver.

DEBORAH
I'm just so glad you're back.

Deborah's suddenly classy demeanor provides just the barest of footings for them...He looks at her directly for the first time since she told him.

JOHN
Yeah..okay.

She nods..then goes back up the stairs..

176

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

176

Evelyn, who has been standing close to the doorway, stands clear to let her enter. As Deborah flies in wildly vulnerable - her breath racing.

DEBORAH
I am literally choking on unsaid words..seriously. If this were a restaurant ten people would have their knuckles in my sternum.

EVELYN

The fact that you didn't just make things worse should fill you with hope..

In her current state, she has to process that one..and does. Her breath slows.

177 INT. MAID'S ROOM - NIGHT...

177

The first time we've seen this room since Flor was working the sewing machine...John enters. He is down, longing and finality make for a brutal cocktail..He rubs his head and sits near the sewing machine..He glances over and sees Flor's Spanish/English dictionary..There is a knock on the door.

JOHN

Deb, I'm done tonight. I don't think we can jam anything else in.

BERNICE'S VOICE

It's me, Dad.

He springs from the bed and opens the door.

JOHN

What's up, honey?

BERNICE

Just thought I'd check that you were back and okay and all.

JOHN

(feigning innocence)
Because?

BERNICE

Mom was crying for six hours straight and Grandma was in with her all that time mostly saying, "he'll be back..he'll be back." I've got to get back to Georgie.

JOHN

I just hate that you had that kind of a night.

BERNICE

It's good for me to worry about something that really matters instead of the stupid stuff that's usually on my mind...

JOHN

Like?

BERNICE
 (a big grin)
 Surviving.

JOHN
 You're fantastic, Bernie...I love
 you.

BERNICE
 It's a slant...
 (pause then)
 Hey..I know there's a lot you went
 through but I knew all along that
 Grandma was right about you coming
 back..I mean totally knew it so I
 wasn't that worried. But still I...
 (some emotion out of
 hiding)
 I really appreciate it, Dad.
 Thanks....Stop staring at me..what?
 You don't know what to say?

JOHN
 Right. I don't know what to say.

BERNICE
 Just what you taught me..You're
 welcome.

JOHN
 You're welcome.

They kiss.

178 EXT. STONE CANYON - MORNING. 178

Flor purposefully walking up the hill..

179 INT. CLASKY HOUSE - DAY. 179

As Flor enters...walks through a few empty rooms..then once
 in the kitchen she sees the children and Evelyn are swimming
 in the pool...she opens the glass door Monica bumped into on
 interview day.

180 EXT. CLASKY POOL - DAY. 180

Evelyn, Bernice and Georgie are in the pool..Cristina,
 wearing a bathing suit, is on a chaise reading...

CRISTINA
 Hey, mom...Is it okay if we don't
 leave right away?

The others call greetings..save Evelyn who studies the
 situation and gets out of the pool..Flor is awkward..no idea
 how to handle this...so she goes direct.

FLOR

No...

(as Cristina begins to
protest)

No..and we must say "goodbye." I
don't work here anymore.

She then talks Spanish to Cristina..admonishing her not to
embarrass them..something about Flor being prepared to go
nuts all over her daughter if she hurts their dignity...but
it is said with total calm.

GEORGIE

Do I have to get out?

FLOR

No, Georgie..Stay. I think you are
a wonderful boy..be good..like you
are. There are no monsters.

GEORGIE

Thanks..thanks. Okay.

Bernice climbs out of the pool. Meanwhile, a flabbergasted
Cristina is staring at her mom who gives quiet two and three
word proddings in Spanish.

BERNICE

(severely to Georgie)

I can't believe you didn't get out.

GEORGIE

Flor said.

BERNICE

(to Flor)

I don't want to get you wet.

FLOR

Get me wet.

BERNICE

(rushing to hug her)

Thanks.

Bernice hugs her. Evelyn hugs Cristina..

EVELYN

You...are...a...trip.

FLOR

(to Bernice)

You're a beauty. Amazing girl.

Despite herself, Bernice starts to cry..moans to herself over the display...Now, in the background, we hear a subliminal human voice. Incrementally it will grow louder and be recognizable as Deborah calling Flor from the master bedroom window..Bit by bit, the others will become aware of this as Flor ignores it...Bernice goes to embrace Cristina.

BERNICE

My last chance to have some of you
rub off on me..

(Cristina doesn't
understand)

I'm sorry you're so sad but this
could have been so much worse.

CRISTINA

(from her depths)

How?

And now Deborah calling "Flor" is getting hard to ignore but Flor manages..

EVELYN

(to Cristina)

Why don't you run upstairs and say
goodbye to Deborah?

Flor flashes a look of thanks.

FLOR

I'll be in front.

Upset, Cristina runs off. She kisses Bernice..and walks toward the house. As she passes under the bedroom..

DEBORAH

Please come see me.

And then a crying Cristina appears on the deck. Flor glances up and keeps moving underneath the deck where she faintly hears the beginning of their exchange

DEBORAH'S VOICE

It's okay, honey..we'll see each
other at school..I'm going to keep
an eye on you..I will.

Flor enters the house...

181 INT. KITCHEN - DAY.

181

She stands waiting..walks to the hallway and cranes her head to see into rooms, wondering if John is there. Finally, as she passes the stairwell, she sees Cristina on an upper landing and says, in Spanish, that Cristina should get her things and meet her out front. Cristina, agitated, moves off to comply...then Deborah appears in the same spot.

DEBORAH
Please stick your head in here for
a minute.

Flor nods and starts up the stairs...

182 INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

182

Deborah holds open the door while Flor walks inside..then
closes it.

DEBORAH
What's with avoiding me, am I this
horrible person?

As Flor just looks at her.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
I know. It's a ridiculous question
but sometimes I'm ridi...

FLOR
No. It's a good question. A fine
question. Complicated.
(beat then)
I was just thinking to answer.

DEBORAH
Oh stop. Come on. Weren't we
close?

FLOR
(like a shot)
No.

DEBORAH
(truly hurt)
Well, I'm very, very disappointed
to hear that. It makes me feel like
a fool.

FLOR
(compassion forces a
crumb)
We weren't close..but we were
connected...in a bad way.

DEBORAH
(strangely soothed)
You know something, I think we're
saying the same thing...Look as
long as we're doing closure..What
did you and my husband, John, do
last night?

Flor pauses for less of a beat than we would have imagined.

FLOR
I can only tell you what I did.

DEBORAH
That will be sufficient.

FLOR
(these are tender
feelings)
I became sure of what an incredibly
lucky woman you are and I must make
myself not envy you which is hard.
No, it's not hard. It's impossible.
Now please..I am exhausted.

DEBORAH
Same here - believe me.

Deborah would hug..but it's only an eighth of a gesture
because Flor has turned to exit, calling for her daughter to
hurry as she goes.

FLOR
Cristina, apúrate.

183 EXT. CLASKY HOUSE - DAY 183

As she exits the house and moves to the gate where she
punches in the exit code...

ANGLE ON GATE

As it swings open to reveal John...

184 EXT. STREET - DAY. 184

As she moves alongside him and the gate closes behind her.

JOHN
I was hanging out here waiting.
Can't give you guys a lift?

Flor shakes her head "no." She looks away for a beat so the
next thing she does is a considered action. She leans forward
and kisses him on the lips. John looks at her.

JOHN (CONT'D)
This is killer.
(on her confusion)
Incredibly hard.

FLOR
Yes, Cari..

The gate opens and a sniffling Cristina is holding an armful
of loot.

JOHN
(reading Flor)
Let her have it..party favors.

She nods..bites back some emotion and turns from him.

FLOR
Cristina..

CRISTINA
Goodbye, Mr. Clasky..I am very
sorry we will not see each other as
frequently.

She offers her hand, which John shakes while patting her on
the back.

FLOR
Yes.

They turn and begin walking down the street.

SHOT - STONE CANYON

The women walking toward camera, John briefly in the
background...As they begin their walk Flor begins talking in
Spanish.

NARRATOR
The first minute we were alone, my
mother told me that I would no
longer go to the private school.

CRISTINA
No. No..You can't. I won't be able
to forgive you..It will be the end.
I won't let you.

And then Cristina moves her hysterics to Spanish as she stops
walking and her mother takes her hand and pulls her along
with enormous dedication. CAMERA BEGINS A PULL BACK.
Cristina dropping presents..picking them up..one of them left
by the wayside..People noticing..Cristina's conduct violating
tacit zoning laws.

CLOSER SHOT..

So we can see their faces in the struggle.

185 EXT. BUS STOP..

185

As they wait...Flor talks sharply to Cristina to control
herself.

NARRATOR
My mother changed our lives once
more. This time because she saw in
me, to her great alarm, a character
flaw of some size. She has taught
me to be a watch dog of my
character, to control my ambition.
I am not quite there.

One last yelp from Cristina as the bus arrives.

186

INT. BUS - DAY.

186

Almost empty - it's Saturday. Mother and daughter sit together by the giant window in the center of the bus. Cristina eyes her mother who is bearing her own heartbreak with stoic dignity. The girl is becoming less inconsolable and more in need of mothering.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

For that reason should you choose to grant me your scholarship my mother, at my request, will be relocating to the New York Metropolitan Area so that she can stay close during my time at Princeton.

Cristina moves closer to Flor, who senses it immediately and wraps her in her arms.. kisses her head.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

I hope my essay has done her justice. I love her with all my heart.

FADE OUT.