

TERESA

Written by

Carlos Portugal

November 27, 2016

FADE IN:

INT. OTIUM RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Style and wealth informs this upscale Downtown Los Angeles restaurant. The place buzzes with an eclectic hip clientele.

TERESA CHAVEZ, 26, stunningly beautiful and deeply ambitious, makes her way through the crowded restaurant. She's poured her voluptuous figure into a sexy Dolce & Gabbana cocktail dress that some of the diners may deem one size too small. But Teresa doesn't give a fuck what they think. She looks hot and she owns it.

ETHAN DARZI, Persian/American, 30's, cocky, in a Zegna suit, sits alone, texting.

TERESA

Ethan?

He looks up and smiles. He likes what he sees.

Teresa stands, waiting. Their eyes lock for a moment.

Getting the hint, Ethan gets up and pulls out her chair.

ETHAN

Old school. I like that.

She sits down.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Can I order you a drink?

TERESA

Champagne cocktail.

Ethan quickly signals the waiter, intrigued by this cool, elegant beauty.

ETHAN

Bottle of Dom Perignon.

(re: Teresa)

I'm celebrating my good luck.

EXT. PENTHOUSE - LATER

An ultra-modern penthouse atop a new DTLA high-rise. Teresa stands on the balcony, looking out onto the glittering carpet of lights that is the Los Angeles skyline. As her gaze shifts toward a poor, dimly-lit neighborhood in the distance, Ethan enters, drink in hand.

TERESA

You're not trying to get me drunk,
are you?

ETHAN

Do I need to?

She smiles at the ruggedly handsome man.

TERESA

Can I see any of your buildings
from here?

ETHAN

You see that building on Grand?
Used to be a retirement home. I
turned it to a luxury condo.

TERESA

Very impressive.

ETHAN

And another one's going over there.
Tearing down an old movie theatre
and turning it into lofts. You'll
have to come back and see it go up.

TERESA

Why come back?

They look at each other. She seductively runs her hand down
his chest and toward the bulge in his pants. Ethan leans over
and they start making out.

INT. PENTHOUSE BEDROOM - LATER

Stripping off their clothes, Teresa and Ethan fall naked onto
his bed. He goes to mount her, but she maneuvers her way on
top, assuming the power position.

She reaches into her bag.

ETHAN

What are you doing?

She pulls out a nylon rope.

TERESA

You said you like a woman who's in
control.

(off his look)

And here I am.

She starts tying his hands and feet to the bedposts. Ethan watches as this powerful force of nature takes charge. He's both scared and turned-on.

Once he's tied, she pulls a black scarf from her bag and goes to blindfold him.

ETHAN

No, wait. I need to see. Let me see

--

TERESA

You need to shut the fuck up.

ETHAN'S POV: As Teresa lowers the scarf over his eyes and everything...

FADES TO BLACK

INT. CHAVEZ FAMILY APARTMENT - NIGHT

Same night, but a completely different world. The rundown apartment is crammed with family photos, religious icons and worn-out furniture. A huge flat-screen TV blasts a Spanish newscast. On screen there's an immigration raid.

TV REPORTER

(in Spanish, alarmist
tone)

*... cell phones captured a police
raid in North Hollywood that turned
violent when ICE agents attacked
this small group of undocumented
immigrants...*

RAQUEL CHAVEZ, mid-40's, a former Jalisco, MEX beauty queen, weathered by the struggles of immigrant life, argues with BRIANNA CHAVEZ, her 17-year-old daughter. Brianna is a cute, activist-type with retro glasses punctuating an effortless sense of entitlement.

BRIANNA

... but you said I could go.

RAQUEL

No, *chiquitita*, not with everything
that's going on --

Raquel turns when she hears someone trying to enter the triple-locked front door. Unable to get in, the person outside starts banging.

RAQUEL (CONT'D)
Francisco?

TERESA
Open up.

Raquel opens the door, Teresa enters still in her D&G dress.

TERESA (CONT'D)
(re: locks)
Hope there's never a fire. You'll
wind up like *chicharrones* (deep
fried pork rinds).

BRIANNA
(to Teresa)
Please talk to her.

RAQUEL
Your father hasn't come back from
work and he's not returning my
calls.

TERESA
It's Saturday. He's out getting
drunk. You should go do the same.

RAQUEL
You know I don't drink, *payasa*.

Brianna seizes the moment.

BRIANNA
What if Teresa comes with me to
Dayna's birthday?

TERESA
I'm not going to some hood party.

BRIANNA
Ah, come on! Please.

RAQUEL
You heard your sister.
(to Teresa)
Where were you?

TERESA
Church.

RAQUEL

Don't bring *Jesucristo* into this.
You were probably out with some
stranger you met on one of those
dirty phone apps --

BRIANNA

Mami, she's twenty-six. Leave her
alone.

RAQUEL

I did. I let her go away to school
and see how she comes back?

TERESA

Educated. With a law degree. Sorry
to disappoint you.

RAQUEL

That's not what I meant. *Asi, tan
liberada*, coming and going like you
please.

TERESA

Don't worry, I plan to just go. I'm
moving out. Soon as I get a job.

Raquel shrugs. Teresa is hurt by her mother's coldness, but
covers.

TERESA (CONT'D)

(to Brianna)

C'mon, we're going to that party.

BRIANNA

Yes!

Raquel is about to say something, but Brianna cuts her off.

BRIANNA (CONT'D)

(to Raquel)

Stop worrying so much. I have my
cell.

Brianna hugs and kisses her mother.

BRIANNA (CONT'D)

Love you, *mami*.

RAQUEL

I love you, *mija*.

Teresa pretends to ignore the loving exchange as she heads
into her bedroom room.

INT. WESTLAKE / MACARTHUR PARK METRO STATION - NIGHT

Tired commuters and homeless mill about the drab station. A street musician plays guitar while an onlooker tosses change into a Dodgers cap.

Teresa and Brianna wait for the train. Teresa, ever-the-chameleon, shed her call girl look to go full hoochie: crop top, booty-hugging jeggings and stilettos.

BRIANNA
So, where were you?

TERESA
You heard. Church.

BRIANNA
Yeah, begging for forgiveness. On your knees.

TERESA
Actually, he was on his. Worshiping this.

BRIANNA
Cochina!

TERESA
Bitch, you started it. Should have seen his penthouse.

Brianna shoots her a look.

TERESA (CONT'D)
What? Just as easy to love a rich man as a poor one. A lot easier. We'd be riding up in a Bentley to your low-rent party.

SFX: Brianna gets a text.

TERESA (CONT'D)
(re: text)
Let me guess. Mom?

BRIANNA
She wants me to stop at Walgreens on the way home.

TERESA
How do you put up with her?

BRIANNA

Somebody has to. You left us before
and now you're leaving us again.

TERESA

Careful. You're starting to sound
like a victim. Just like your
mother.

BRIANNA

Our mother.

At the sound of a train approaching, they move forward ready
to board.

INT. METRO RAIL TRAIN - NIGHT

Teresa and Brianna ride the train.

BRIANNA

... I just can't move out. You see
how she freaks when Dad doesn't
come home. She thinks he's been
deported.

Teresa shoots her sister a knowing look.

BRIANNA (CONT'D)

What? He could be --

TERESA

Dad's drunk or screwing around.
And she's a *pendeja* for putting up
with it. But you stay if you want.

Teresa starts typing into her phone.

BRIANNA

And now with that eviction
notice... we might lose our place.

TERESA

That's not gonna happen.

BRIANNA

Mom's really scared. I found her
crying this morning.

Teresa shifts her focus to watch the world speeding by
through the window. She'd rather focus on anything except the
sympathy she feels for her mom.

INT. METRO STATION/WILSHIRE & NORMANDIE - NIGHT

Teresa shows Brianna an image on her iPhone while they ride the long escalator up to the street level.

TERESA

This one's 450 square feet --

BRIANNA

It's in Santa Monica.

TERESA

Closer to Beverly Hills.

BRIANNA

Just what LA needs right now,
another westside lawyer.

TERESA

That's gonna be me. Defending the
rich from the uber rich.

BRIANNA

You're stupid. With everything
that's going on... You should work
around here. Help your people.

TERESA

They're not my people.

Brianna is about to reply but Teresa starts walking up the moving escalator. End of discussion.

EXT. KOREATOWN NEIGHBORHOOD - CRAFTSMAN BUNGALOW - NIGHT

Teresa and Brianna approach a beat-up bungalow. Party guests hang out on the porch.

INT. CRAFTSMAN BUNGALOW - NIGHT

Teresa and Brianna enter the house packed with art institute-types, stoned slackers and raunchy hoodrats. Everyone is having a good time.

A grungy, Regional Mexican cover band plays to the lit crowd. (Regional Mexican, which is kind of like hip hop with tubas is the #1 music among Latino millennials.)

Teresa looks around, appalled.

TERESA
(to Brianna)
Rasquachi central. Gross.

BRIANNA
I'm getting a beer.

Brianna disappears into the crowd.

YASMIN
Teresa Chavez?

YASMIN, mid-20's, full-figured and proud of it, feigns surprise at seeing her high school frenemy.

TERESA
Yasmin.

YASMIN
I can't believe her majesty would honor us with her presence. May I kiss your highness's ring?

TERESA
Why don't you just kiss my ass?

YASMIN
Hey, *puta*, you broke your promise. You swore you'd never come back to the 'hood after you graduated from high school.

TERESA
Who says I'm back?

Teresa walks away. As she works her way through the crowd, a drunk guy starts grinding on her.

DRUNK GUY
I like the way you feel, *mami*.

Teresa digs into his arm with her freshly manicured nails. Before she can draw blood, he pulls away. He messed with the wrong, "*mami*".

MARCOS (O.S.)
Hey.

It's MARCOS CURIEL, 27, a strapping, tatted-out, steaming hot cholo. Marcos is Teresa's on-and-off boyfriend since high school. They stare at each other. He offers her a beer.

MARCOS (CONT'D)
¿Cerveza?

She takes him in. Marcos is her Achilles heel. Her first in every way: first love, first lover, first - and only - person who's ever seen her vulnerable.

MARCOS (CONT'D)
So, how long you been back?

TERESA
A couple of days.

MARCOS
And you didn't call me or nothing?

TERESA
Didn't you say you never wanted to talk me again?

MARCOS
This isn't a conversation. It's a beer.

Teresa grins. Marcos looks better than she remembers him. Homie must be hitting the gym or something.

MARCOS (CONT'D)
Well?

Marcos dangles the beer bottle, she grabs it away from him.

MARCOS (CONT'D)
So, when were you gonna tell me you were back?

TERESA
Oh, so you are talking to me?

MARCOS
You gonna be like that?

They look at each other. Their sexual attraction is palpable.

JENNA, a sexy, tatted blonde, walks up to the couple.

JENNA
What's going on, M?

MARCOS
(re: Teresa)
Nothing.

Teresa watches as Marcos puts his arm around Jenna. Teresa's not happy about it, but her face betrays nothing.

MARCOS (CONT'D)
Teresa, this is Jenna.

JENNA
Teresa. I've heard so much about
you.

MARCOS
And not all good.

JENNA
Nice to finally meet the ex.

Teresa smiles at Jenna, processing.

TERESA
Love your tatts. Marcos do them?

JENNA
Who else? M's the best.

TERESA
You're not so bad yourself.

Jenna's caught off-guard. Is Teresa coming on to her?

TERESA (CONT'D)
We should all hang sometime,
Marcos.

He hesitates.

MARCOS
Yeah. Sure.

TERESA
Would you like that, J?

JENNA
Depends what you mean.

Teresa smiles, drawing her in.

TERESA
Whatever you want it to mean.

INT. CRAFTSMAN BUNGALOW - NIGHT

At the entrance, the PARTY HOST argues with a couple of
POLICE OFFICERS. Party guests huddle around.

PARTY HOST
Why you shutting us down?

OFFICER #1
Your neighbors are complaining --

Brianna, a little buzzed, charges up to the cops.

BRIANNA
(re: party guests)
They're all the neighbors. What's
your problem?

The police clock Brianna's drunken sway.

OFFICER #1
(to Brianna)
How old are you?

BRIANNA
Am I under arrest?

OFFICER #2
Let me see your I.D.

Dozens of cell phones start recording the exchange as Brianna
hands him her I.D.

OFFICER #1
Seventeen and drunk --

Brianna is about to reply, but Officer #2 steps up.

OFFICER #2
We need to contact your parents.
Name and address?

Teresa emerges from the crowd.

TERESA
She's good, officers. I'm her
sister.

OFFICER #1
So, you're her legal guardian.

TERESA
At the time, yes.

OFFICER #1
Then we're arresting you for
corrupting a minor.

BRIANNA
(buzzed)
You can't arrest her. This isn't
Ferguson.

TERESA
(whispering to Brianna)
And you're not black, so shut the
fuck up.

The police cuff Teresa. Brianna watches, horrified and
instantly sobering up.

BRIANNA
What are you doing -- ?

The cops shove Teresa outside. Things got real. Real quick.

EXT. CRAFTSMAN BUNGALOW - NIGHT

Teresa pleads urgently with the cops as they push her toward
the squad car.

TERESA
If you're arresting me, I want to
contact an attorney.

OFFICER #2
As soon as we get to the police
station.

OFFICER #1
You have the right to remain
silent, anything you say can and
will be held --

He is about to put a terrified Teresa inside the squad car,
when --

NAVARRO (O.S.)
I'll take it from here.

LIEUTENANT HECTOR NAVARRO (mid 40s), an imposing presence,
steps in.

OFFICER #1
Yes sir, Lieutenant Navarro.

The Officers quickly release Teresa. Navarro's clearly in
charge.

NAVARRO
You can uncuff her.

The officers comply. Teresa and Navarro exchange a tense
glance. They have history.

While the officers move aside to talk to Navarro, Brianna rushes up to Teresa.

BRIANNA
You okay?

TERESA
Get outta here.

BRIANNA
I got us a ride --

Teresa cuts her off.

TERESA
Just get the hell out.

Brianna hurries to a friend's car.

Once Teresa sees her sister is safely inside, she turns to where Navarro was previously standing. But he's already in his patrol car.

Teresa and Navarro lock eyes for a moment. He breaks the gaze, giving away nothing as he drives away.

Teresa rubs her now uncuffed wrists, relieved. For now.

EXT. WILSHIRE / NORMANDIE METRO STATION- NIGHT

Teresa walks the empty sidewalk toward the metro stop. She hears a slow-moving car approaching from behind.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Yo!

Shaken, she turns to confront whoever it is - it's Marcos. He rides up in a 2012 black Camaro with Jenna in the drivers' seat.

Jenna leans over and smiles flirtatiously at Teresa.

JENNA
Need a ride?

INT. MARCOS' STUDIO - NIGHT

The lights are dim, Teresa, Marcos and Jenna are tangled together in bed, naked. Teresa caresses her hand down Jenna's face, her breasts, her stomach, and slowly dips a hand between her legs. Jenna breathes heavier with every touch. They kiss, softly at first, then deeply.

Marcos smokes a joint as he watches them caress each other. As Jenna explores Teresa's body with her mouth, Teresa reaches for Marcos and slowly pulls him into the action. She kisses Marcos as Jenna starts going down on him.

It's a full on three-way, until Marcos and Teresa's primal attraction takes over. Teresa pushes Marcos down and climbs on top of him. The foreplay has quickly turned into fucking.

Though Jenna tries to slip herself back into the mix, there's no room for a third. Marcos and Teresa get lost in the thrust of their old rhythm, forgetting they're not alone.

Realizing she's lost Marcos, Jenna gets dressed.

Moments later, Jenna glances back and catches Teresa's eye. Teresa smiles as a defeated Jenna exits. She's got Marcos back exactly like she planned.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MARCOS' STUDIO - THE NEXT MORNING

It's early morning. Teresa wakes up to the sound of a coffee grinder in the one-room apartment. The beautiful day does nothing to perk up the bare room and stained carpets.

The only piece of furniture, besides the bed, is a table littered with highly original albeit disturbingly twisted tattoo designs.

MARCOS

Didn't mean to wake you.

A naked Marcos stands by the hot-plate making coffee.

MARCOS (CONT'D)

I was gonna go out and get you that *pan dulce* you like.

Marcos walks over.

MARCOS (CONT'D)

But since you're up --

He cups his hands hungrily around the curves of her ass, then kisses her neck sensuously. He's ready for another round.

TERESA

Marcus... I gotta go.

MARCOS

Stick around. I'll buy you
breakfast.

She gets a TEXT from Ethan (the penthouse owner.)

1st text: "You fucking bitch. You really hurt me."

2nd text: "Let's do it again :-)"

MARCOS (CONT'D)

Who's texting you so early?

TERESA

(covering)

Brianna. She wanted to make sure
I'm okay.

Teresa puts her phone away.

MARCOS

Aren't you gonna reply?

TERESA

I should get back before my parents
wake up.

He smiles nostalgically.

MARCOS

Just like old times. You back for
good?

TERESA

For now. Moving out as soon as I
get my first paycheck.

MARCOS

You got a job at one of those hi-
tone law firms?

TERESA

Nah. I have a big interview this
Friday.

MARCOS

Look at you -- Miss *chingona*
lawyer. Your face is gonna be on
all the busses and shit.
"Accidentees? Llame a Teresa: 222-
222 -"

TERESA

Asshole. It's only for an
internship. Paid internship.

Teresa gets out of bed.

MARCOS

Gotta start somewhere, right?

Marcos watches as she pours herself a cup of coffee. She
turns and catches him staring at her nude body.

TERESA

What?

MARCOS

What? Nothing...

(changing subject)

Hey, see how the hood's changing?
They're tearing down the corner
strip mall to put up a *pinche* Whole
Foods.

(then)

There goes *Don Raul's Panaderia*.

TERESA

You better run and get that *pan
dulce*.

MARCOS

Right? Only way I'll be able to
afford that overpriced *marketa* is
if I hold up the place.

TERESA

Wouldn't be your first time.

MARCOS

Dang, girl. You're cold.

Teresa leans in and seductively runs her fingers down his
chest and firm stomach.

TERESA

You didn't say that last night...
Maybe 'cause you were too busy
cumming all over me.

An aroused Marcos goes to kiss her, she pulls away.

TERESA (CONT'D)

I said I gotta go. Didn't you hear?

She kisses him passionately. They fall back into bed.

INT. CHAVEZ FAMILY APARTMENT - LATER THAT MORNING

Still in last night's clothes, Teresa enters her parents' apartment. As always, a Spanish-language TV show blares in the background.

FRANCISCO CHAVEZ, late 40s, Teresa's weary father, looks up from the dining room table. He's smoking a cigarette, hungover.

FRANCISCO

Where the hell were you?

Raquel, dressed for church, enters from the bedroom.

RAQUEL

Why are you asking her? She's only gonna lie. Just like her father.

FRANCISCO

Teresa, I'm talking to you!

Teresa walks to her bedroom and shuts the door.

INT. CHAVEZ FAMILY APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATER

Fresh out of the shower, Teresa looks through their closet, while Brianna puts on her Sunday's best. They dress in silence.

BRIANNA

So, how'd it go with Marcos last night?

Still upset with Brianna, Teresa turns her back to her.

BRIANNA (CONT'D)

Must have gone well, considering you spent the night.

TERESA

I almost spent the night in jail because of you.

Brianna gets in Teresa's face, immediately on the defensive.

BRIANNA

I had to speak up! I'm tired of us living in silence.

TERESA

Bitch, you haven't shut up in the last seventeen years. You almost got me arrested.

BRIANNA

I'm sorry... but I'm not gonna live my life in fear like mom and dad--

TERESA

You don't have to, *pendeja*. You were born here. The rest of us can't be running our mouths off. We don't have papers.

BRIANNA

But you do. You got one of those student visas --

TERESA

Which gets revoked if I get arrested. And then I get deported just like the Alonsos down the hall. This shit's for real.

Brianna looks down, silenced by Teresa's truth.

BRIANNA

I'm so sorry. I was drunk.

TERESA

Fucking great. Now you're starting to sound like Dad.

Brianna starts to cry.

Teresa softens a little bit. Brianna looks like she could use a hug. Teresa looks away and goes back to getting ready. She has many strengths, but comforting her sister isn't one.

INT. CHAVEZ FAMILY APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Brianna and Raquel have left for church. Without acknowledging him, Teresa joins her father at the table. She pours herself some generic Cheerios-type cereal.

FRANCISCO

Did you get my text?

Teresa reaches into her bag and tosses her father a roll of Lotto tickets.

FRANCISCO (CONT'D)

¿Y mis Camels?

TERESA

You can buy those yourself, *viejo*.
By the way, you owe me ten bucks.

FRANCISCO

There better be a winner in here.

Francisco starts scratching the Lotto tickets.

FRANCISCO (CONT'D)

I lost my job yesterday.

TERESA

Again? You said your boss liked
you.

FRANCISCO

I thought he did... until he fired
me and stiffed me for two weeks
pay.

TERESA

What bullshit company was this?
Give me the name. I'm gonna report
him.

FRANCISCO

To who? You think the government
cares about us? You got no papers,
you got no rights.

TERESA

Dad, you do have rights.

Teresa frowns. She knows too much about the world and the law
to be that much of an optimist.

TERESA (CONT'D)

You just have to know which ones.

FRANCISCO

But I still got no job.

(then)

How am I gonna tell your mother?

TERESA

Just take this and go find another
job.

She pulls cash out of her wallet. He takes the cash and puts
it in his pocket.

FRANCISCO

At least my daughter's not a loser. You're gonna be a lawyer. That's why I brought you to this country and worked so hard. So you can have the chances I never had. I'm so proud of you, *mija*.

TERESA

Get yourself another job, and we can talk about how proud we are of you.

FRANCISCO

Even if I do, we'll still lose this place.

Francisco grabs a letter from off the table, hands it to her.

FRANCISCO (CONT'D)

They're evicting us for "Capitol Improvements." Whatever the hell that means.

Teresa doesn't take it. She continues calmly eating her cereal.

TERESA

I read it. They're finally gonna make this place livable, so they're throwing you out.

FRANCISCO

On the street like *perros*. Can they really do that to us?

TERESA

They can. But they're not going to.

Teresa gets up and grabs her bag.

FRANCISCO

I know you'll always be here for us. Just like we were always there for you.

Teresa lets this loaded statement sink in as she leaves.

INT. LUXURY BUILDING - RENTAL OFFICE - MORNING

Teresa waits as Ethan (the penthouse owner Teresa had her S&M sex session with) enters.

The office staff perks up when they see that the big boss is here. The receptionist looks especially eager.

RECEPTIONIST

(to Ethan)

Good morning, Mr. Darzi, anything I can do for you?

Ethan ignores his employee and smiles at Teresa. The receptionist clocks this and slips away quietly. He knows the drill.

ETHAN

And how can I help you?

TERESA

I'd like to see one of your units.

ETHAN

Follow me.

(whispering)

Somebody couldn't wait.

Ethan gropes her ass, Teresa moves away.

TERESA

Actually, I came to ask you a favor.

As Teresa and Ethan head toward the elevators --

EXT. SANTEE ALLEY - LATER THAT DAY

Teresa and Marcos walk through Santee Alley, a colorful street bazaar (in the heart of LA's fashion district), that attracts thousands of minority bargain hunters shopping for everything from cheap knockoff handbags to sex toys.

EXT. SANTEE ALLEY - FOOD COURT - MOMENTS LATER

Teresa and Marcos eat gyros in the packed food court alongside the melting pot of shoppers and retail employees.

Marcos talks to Teresa over the loud multilingual chatter, screaming children, blaring *ranchero* music, etc.

MARCOS

-- so the owner's selling the tat-shop. And I was thinking, maybe I could buy it?

TERESA

You always talked about doing that.

Teresa watches as Marcos picks at his plate. She knows all his nervous habits.

MARCOS

I mean, people are always gonna get drunk and make mistakes...

She catches his eye trying to figure out where he's going with this.

MARCOS (CONT'D)

Hey, and I could turn the back room into a little apartment. You know -- for us.

(off her look)

That way we can save on rent.

TERESA

I'm already looking for my own place on the westside.

MARCOS

Where you gonna get the cash? Don't you owe like two-hundred grand in student loans? You can live with me for free.

Marcos takes her by the hand.

MARCOS (CONT'D)

I'm not gonna charge you. But you're gonna have to put out.

TERESA

Has that ever been a problem?

MARCOS

No. That's why it's gonna work out.

Teresa smiles in spite of herself.

TERESA

Let me think about it.

MARCOS

(joking)

You got until five p.m.

Lieutenant Navarro, now in plain clothes, sits beside them. Marcos tenses up.

MARCOS (CONT'D)
What the hell you want?

Navarro ignores Marcos and stares down at Teresa.

NAVARRO
Why are you back?

MARCOS
You got anything to say to her, you
talk to me --

NAVARRO
(ignoring Marcos, to
Teresa)
You weren't supposed to come back
to this neighborhood.

MARCOS
What do you care? We've kept our
mouths shut --

NAVARRO
Shut the fuck up *cholo*, or I'll
throw your ass in the jail.

MARCOS
For what?

NAVARRO
For nothing. Just like last time.

Marcos stares furiously at him.

Navarro leans in toward Teresa, and stares her down.

NAVARRO (CONT'D)
They're reopening Octavio's case.

Marcos and Teresa look disarmed by the news. While Marcos mad
dogs Navarro, Teresa leans back casually, hiding her terror.

MARCOS
That was like seven years ago.

NAVARRO
People are gonna start asking
questions again --

TERESA
We won't say anything, we never did
--

NAVARRO

You know what'll happen to you and your family if you do.

MARCOS

You heard her. We won't say anything.

Navarro stands and glares at Marcos.

NAVARRO

Don't forget, I can make you disappear. Not like anyone's gonna miss your loser-ass.

Navarro leaves, Marcos stands to go after him. Teresa grabs Marcos by the arm, and he reluctantly sits back down.

EXT. SANTEE ALLEY - AFTERNOON

Marcos hustles to keep up with a distraught Teresa down a secluded side-alley.

MARCOS

Will you slow down?

TERESA

I thought this was all behind us --

MARCOS

Don't worry, I'll take care of you.

TERESA

(frustrated)

Yeah? You got some in with immigration? You can't stop him from deporting me and my family.

(off his look)

If Octavio's case is reopened, he's never going to leave us alone.

MARCOS

We'll figure something out.

TERESA

I'm done. I'm moving to Santa Monica.

MARCOS

You think that's gonna stop him? What about our plans?

TERESA

Playing house in the back of a
tattoo shop? I'll pass.

Marcos is stung by the comment.

MARCOS

Oh, so it's like that?

TERESA

I don't belong here. I never have.

MARCOS

Okay, run away. Move. Go do
whatever the fuck you want.

Teresa disappears into the Santee Alley throngs.

INT. LOS ANGELES CITY BUS - MORNING - THE NEXT DAY

CLOSE ON: Teresa's phone with a photo of NOLAN O'CONNOR (30s)
handsome, pedigreed. Above his photo a caption reads:
"Bridges & Richards' New Law Partner."

As Teresa reads the article, Brianna leans over.

BRIANNA

(re: Nolan)

That *guero's* the shit! Who is he?

TERESA

My ticket out of here.

BRIANNA

Is he "penthouse" guy?

Teresa looks at Brianna, shakes her head.

BRIANNA (CONT'D)

Player. You got penthouse guy and
ticket-out-of-here guy. What about
tattoo guy?

TERESA

Marcos and I are keeping it casual.

BRIANNA

Does he know that?

TERESA

If he knows me, he knows.

Teresa shrugs off Brianna's curious gaze as she goes back to reading about Nolan O'Connor.

EXT. USC CAMPUS - EVENING - TWO DAYS LATER

The perfectly manicured university campus is lined with Jacaranda trees in full bloom. It's stately and serene. Though surrounded by impoverished neighborhoods, the USC campus is a sheltered bubble of affluence.

Dressed to impress, Teresa rushes through the quad, heading straight for a towering building. Wherever she's going, she's late.

INT. USC CAMPUS - LAW BUILDING - AUDITORIUM - EVENING

The state-of-the-art lecture hall is packed with law students listening to the guest speaker Nolan O'Connor. The students hang on to his every word.

NOLAN

...so whatever your client tells the police at the time of arrest can never be used to their advantage because it's what's called 'hearsay'. Questions?

Dozens of hands shoot up. Nolan's direct, self-effacing manner allows him to easily connect with his audience.

Nolan points to an AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDENT.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDENT

Even if what my client tells the police is exculpatory?

NOLAN

We're talking about the American justice system. Need I say more? Innocent or guilty doesn't matter. What matters is that your client says nothing to the authorities at the time of the arrest...

Nolan notices as Teresa enters the auditorium and looks for a seat.

NOLAN (CONT'D)

...remember: 'Everything you say can and will be used against you'.
(MORE)

NOLAN (CONT'D)

Even if what your client tells the police is - what's that big word you used - 'exculpatory'?

(to all the students)

And when you're charging five-hundred bucks an hour, you better use big words like that. Okay, one more question.

Teresa, who is now seated in the front row, raises her hand.

NOLAN (CONT'D)

Go ahead.

TERESA

Hi, I'm Teresa Chavez --

NOLAN

Glad you could join us. What's your question?

TERESA

I just graduated from law school. I hear potential employers expect you to know day-to-day tasks, like client intake, filing discovery requests, writing complaints. Where can I learn that?

NOLAN

Look, you can take courses in trial advocacy but the best way to get experience and become a good lawyer is to be around good lawyers. So, find a mentor, get an internship.

TERESA

Great advice, Mr. O'Connor. Thank you. I'll do that. Again, I'm Teresa Chavez.

The law students give each other questioning looks: Who the hell is this Teresa Chavez?

EXT. USC CAMPUS - NIGHT

Nolan finishes shaking hands with a small group of eager students. He heads toward the parking lot when he hears --

TERESA

Excuse me, Mr. O'Connor?

Nolan nods as if he was expecting her.

TERESA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I don't mean to take up
any more of your time --

NOLAN

But...?

TERESA

I wanted to thank you for your
lecture.

NOLAN

You already did.

TERESA

What you said. You're so right.
Every new lawyer needs a mentor.

NOLAN

USC's a top flight law school.
You'll have no problem finding one.

TERESA

I wish. I didn't graduate from SC.

NOLAN

So you just crashed my lecture?

TERESA

Yes. I've read so much about you.
You're the youngest partner at
Bridges and Richards. I really
wanted to meet you.

NOLAN

Does this have anything to do with
your upcoming interview with us?

TERESA

How did you know?

NOLAN

Because I screened all the
prospective interns. I know all
about you.

TERESA

Then you know about my struggles.
How I had to put myself through
school, always worked two jobs and
still graduated with a 4.0.

NOLAN

Four-point-oh, impressive. Just like all the other applicants we're meeting on Friday.

TERESA

You're one of the top firms. Of course you attract the best talent.
(then)
Did I tell you, I speak, read, and write in Spanish?

NOLAN

C'mon, we're in *Los Angeles* -- even I speak Spanish.

She watches him get into his car.

TERESA

I look forward to seeing you again on Friday. *Mi nombre es* --

NOLAN

I know your name.

INT. BRIDGES & RICHARDS LAW FIRM - WAITING ROOM - MORNING

The prestigious Downtown LA firm boasts its success with high-end furnishings and decor. A small group of sharply dressed applicants wait anxiously to be called for their individual interviews.

Teresa, in a figure-hugging business suit, sits and casually checks out the fierce competition.

The fiercest is WHITNEY HILL, 24, redhead, stylish and exacting. Teresa and Whitney lock eyes for a moment. The two type A's size each other up.

WHITNEY

Hi, Whitney Hill.

TERESA

Teresa Chavez.

WHITNEY

I've never seen you at the Ivy League mixers. You must be international.

TERESA

No. I'm a California girl.

WHITNEY

Me too. Stanford. You?

The other applicants eavesdrop.

TERESA

La Verne.

(off Whitney's blank look)

University of La Verne in Ontario,
California.

WHITNEY

Never heard of it.

Whitney picks up her phone, starts texting someone, anyone more important than this Teresa chick. Teresa remains unaffected.

ASSISTANT (O.S.)

Teresa Chavez?

TERESA

Here.

ASSISTANT

They're ready for you.

She strikes a confident pose for all to see, especially Whitney.

TERESA

And I'm ready for them.

WHITNEY

Good luck.

INT. BRIDGES & RICHARDS LAW FIRM - HALLWAY - MORNING

Teresa's breath quickens as she is escorted down a hallway to a huge conference room. This is her big moment.

INT. BRIDGES & RICHARDS LAW FIRM - CONFERENCE ROOM - MORNING

The door opens to reveal a room full of dour, middle-aged, white men.

TERESA

Good morning, gentlemen. I'm Teresa
Chavez.

Teresa smiles. The partners liven up at the sight of this beautiful, young woman.

INT. BRIDGES & RICHARDS LAW FIRM - LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Moments later, Nolan exits the lobby elevator and heads toward the conference room.

INT. BRIDGES & RICHARDS LAW FIRM - CONFERENCE ROOM - MORNING

Nolan enters mid-interview. The partners are impressed with Teresa. It's going well.

LAWYER #1

... so, what special skills would you bring to our firm?

TERESA

For starters, my culture. Having grown up in Los Angeles, I've been privy to what really drives our city. And it's all of us. People like you, and people like me: a hardworking immigrant from a low-income family who came here in search of the American Dream.

Nolan smiles. She sure knows how to lay it on.

LAWYER #1

Thank you, Miss Chavez. Any other questions, gentlemen?

Teresa smiles at each and every interviewee. She knows she nailed this.

LAWYER #2

Since you brought up your culture, what do you think of the undocumented problem?

TERESA

I think you mean our undocumented problem.

The room tenses up.

LAWYER #2

Go on.

Teresa quickly debates: Do I tell them what they want to hear, or what they've got to hear?

TERESA

We're all immigrants here or their progeny. Most came here to work and make our country a better place.

LAWYER #1

But now it's different. They're taking jobs away from people who are here legally.

TERESA

Oh, not that again.

LAWYER #2

It's serious question. Shouldn't they be punished?

TERESA

In my opinion, no. How can we as a society penalize only the person who performs the job and not the person who hires them?

LAWYER

There are laws against hiring the undocumented, Ms. Chavez.

TERESA

And they're poorly enforced. If we're gonna punish the underpaid workers. We need to prosecute their employers as well.

The lawyers exchange disenchanted looks.

LAWYER

But if we go with your premise, then thousands of business owners should be imprisoned.

NOLAN

And all of us who use their services.

TERESA

That's my point. We are all part of what Mr. Johnson referred to as "the" undocumented problem.

Silence. Teresa knows she went too far.

LAWYER #2

Thank you for your time.

LAWYER #1

Please stay in touch. We're starting a diversity program sometime next year.

LAWYER #3

Who's the next applicant?

LAWYER #2

Whitney Hill.

LAWYER #1

Charlie's daughter? Bring her in.

TERESA

Thank you for your time, gentlemen.

No response. Everyone's moved on, and Teresa knows it.

INT. BRIDGES & RICHARDS LAW FIRM - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Teresa exits, Nolan follows.

NOLAN

I thought you wanted this internship.

TERESA

So did I.

NOLAN

If you'd really done your research you'd have known we're a conservative firm.

TERESA

Maybe that's why I said what I said.

NOLAN

Look, I agree with you. But I'm just the token white liberal.

TERESA

Then speak up like I did and help me get the job.

(off his look)

I swear I won't disappoint you.

INT. GLITTER 21 - DRESSING ROOM AREA - DAY

Teresa exits the dressing room and models a conservative business outfit for Brianna, who wears a Glitter 21 name tag.

BRIANNA

Love it. It's on sale and with my employee discount you'll get it for under twenty bucks.

Brianna grabs a top from a nearby display.

BRIANNA (CONT'D)

I'm throwing this in for free.

(off Teresa's look)

You're my hero, you spoke up for *la gente*.

TERESA

Too bad *le gente* aren't hiring.

BRIANNA

Yes, they are. Lots of eastside non-profits are looking for lawyers.

TERESA

You mean, free legal services? Screw that.

Teresa starts changing. Brianna exits the dressing room area.

INT. GLITTER 21 - CONTINUOUS

Brianna enters the store and sees Marcos. He looks slightly uncomfortable among the girly displays.

BRIANNA

Marcos.

MARCOS

Bri?

Brianna hugs him. Maybe a bit too tight.

MARCOS (CONT'D)

Haven't seen you in a while.

BRIANNA

I was at the Dayna's party. Didn't you hear? I almost got arrested!

MARCOS

Teresa didn't say anything. She around?

BRIANNA

Yeah, she's in the dressing room.

(then)

Hey, will you sign my petition?

(MORE)

BRIANNA (CONT'D)

It's to stop the new owners from evicting us.

MARCOS

Yeah, I don't want you guys going anywhere.

BRIANNA

You don't?

Marcos signs the petition, looking around for Teresa.

INT. DRESSING ROOM AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Teresa, now wearing the new top, slides open the curtain to find Marcos standing outside.

TERESA

What are you doing here?

MARCOS

You're the one who keeps texting me. What's up?

TERESA

I gotta talk to you. In private.

Marcos looks around the empty dressing room area.

MARCOS

I don't see nobody around. You?

TERESA

Marcos, when we get together someone always gets hurt. I'm sorry. But that's why we can't live together.

MARCOS

You already made that clear. So, that it?

(off her nod)

Next time you got nothing to say, just text me.

TERESA

I'm serious. I'm ending this. Every time we do this - we fight and break-up.

MARCOS

Way I see it, every time we break-up we get back together.

(MORE)

MARCOS (CONT'D)

(pause)

So what are we now?

TERESA

You fucking asshole.

MARCOS

You're talkin' dirty? Guess we're still together.

Teresa puts her hand on Marcos's chest and gently pushes him away.

TERESA

I better get dressed.

MARCOS

Why?

Marcos doesn't move.

TERESA

You need to get out.

MARCOS

Make me.

Teresa reaches for him with both hands now. Instead of pushing him, she rips off his tattered shirt and runs her hands over his muscular chest. Marcos kisses her. She slowly unzips his pants and reaches into his boxers.

MARCOS (CONT'D)

So, am I still your ride-or-die?

TERESA

You know you are.

Marcos grabs her and pushes her against the mirrored wall. They watch themselves starting to get hot and heavy.

TERESA (CONT'D)

If you don't let me ride that dick, I'm gonna die.

Marcos pulls Teresa's underwear lower.

Teresa grabs a handful of his hair and pushes his head down. As he gently begins to lick her inner thighs, and starts to move between her legs...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SUNSET BOULEVARD - EVENING

Marcos rides his motorcycle with Teresa's arms tightly wrapped around him. Her hair flying in the wind, Teresa enjoys the ride as the bike speeds down Sunset. They pass trendy clubs, foodie restaurants, and iconic music venues as they leave Downtown LA and head towards Echo Park.

MARCOS

You okay back there?

She nods. Marcos looks satisfied. Teresa's back in his life, and that's all that matters.

EXT. ELYSIAN PARK - EVENING

Teresa and Marcos stand atop a sprawling hill in Elysian Park smoking a joint. They watch a golden sunset over the downtown Los Angeles skyline.

MARCOS

... Hey Tere, remember when we met at Berendo Middle School? I asked you what grade you were in and you said, 'No Eenglish'.

She smiles at the memory.

MARCOS (CONT'D)

You remember that?

TERESA

How can I forget? You remind me every time you get high.

(then)

I'm cold.

Marcos puts his arm around her, then leans over and kisses her. As they make out her PHONE RINGS.

Teresa breaks their moment, and answers her phone.

TERESA (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Yeah?

(nodding, listening)

Yes, of course I'll be there.

Thank you.

She ends the call and looks excitedly at Marcos.

TERESA (CONT'D)

I got the internship.

MARCOS
No shit. I thought you tanked.

TERESA
Somebody must have liked me.

MARCOS
I buy that.

Marcos hugs her.

MARCOS (CONT'D)
I'm so proud of you, bae.

INT. BRIDGES & RICHARDS LAW FIRM - LIBRARY - AFTERNOON

Bookcases cover every inch of the walls from ceiling-to-floor. The books are all leather-bound with shiny, gold detailing. Leather and mahogany furniture fill the room.

Nolan and Lawyer (from the interview Teresa thought she bombed) briefs Teresa and Whitney.

LAWYER
We were a little divided about our choice for prospective intern.

Whitney and Teresa give each other their best forced smiles.

NOLAN
Thank you for agreeing to a probation period. This will allow us to gauge which of you is the most compatible with our firm.

WHITNEY
I'm sure the firm will make the right choice, Mr. O'Connor.

TERESA
Good luck, Whitney.

WHITNEY
You too, Teresa.

INT. BRIDGES & RICHARDS LAW FIRM - LIBRARY - LATER

A couple hours later. Teresa and Whitney sit facing each other, working independently on their laptops.

WHITNEY

What's the legal status of the accused?

TERESA

Mr. Mueller is an American born citizen.

WHITNEY

So, he's not illegal like you?

Teresa remains composed, not playing into Whitney's game.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

I've looked you up.

TERESA

Then you should know the term is undocumented.

WHITNEY

Does human resources know that?

TERESA

My immigration status is personal and private information. But since you asked, I'm here legally under DACA --

(off Whitney's blank look)

The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Act? I'm surprised you didn't know that since you did your research. It gives me the same rights as you.

WHITNEY

For now. And I know a lot about DACA. Like how it's at risk for repeal.

Before Teresa can jump this bitch, the door opens and the Lawyer enters with WESLEY RICHARDS, 60's, a distinguished, salt-and-peppered gentleman.

LAWYER

Whitney, Teresa, this is Mr. Richards. He's one of our senior partners.

Teresa and Whitney stand to greet him.

MR. RICHARDS

Senior because I'm the firm's founder, not because I'm old.

LAWYER

Mr. Richards has been briefed about your interviews, and wanted to meet you both.

MR. RICHARDS

(to Teresa)

I heard you had some interesting opinions.

(to Whitney)

And you're Charlie Hill's daughter?

WHITNEY

Yes, sir. He's been a wonderful father and great role model.

MR. RICHARDS

Role model? Should have seen him back in our frat days at Stanford.

WHITNEY

I've heard.

As Mr. Richards and Whitney share a private laugh, Teresa fades into the background. Not used to being ignored, Teresa channels her anger into planning her next move.

INT. DTLA - GRAND CENTRAL MARKET - LATE AFTERNOON

The iconic DTLA indoor farmer's market is crowded with immigrants, hipsters and city officials mingling together for their love of fast ethnic food. Teresa and Marcos walk around carrying plates of food, looking for a place to sit.

MARCOS

So we on for tomorrow night?

TERESA

Can't. I gotta work.

MARCOS

Wanna grab a beer after?

As Teresa is about to reply when she finds herself face-to-face with ALMA GOMEZ, 40's, working class. The women stare at each other awkwardly.

TERESA

Señora Gomez... how are you?

MRS. GOMEZ

No me hables. (Don't talk to me.)

Mrs. Gomez brushes past them. Teresa and Marcos walk silently to their table.

MARCOS

Damn. What that poor lady's been through...

Teresa starts eating, avoiding the topic.

MARCOS (CONT'D)

Hey, now that you're a lawyer, can't you do something to help Octavio?

TERESA

Fuck Octavio.

MARCOS

We already did.
(lowering his voice)
You know he didn't kill anybody --

TERESA

That *pendejo* sold drugs to kids. He can rot in prison for all I care.

MARCOS

Maybe you can forget what you saw, but I can't --

TERESA

Well, you better. Unless you wanna wind up dead or sharing a cell with him.

Marcos stares at her then pushes his plate away. He's lost his appetite.

EXT. GOLF COURSE - AFTERNOON (ONE WEEK LATER)

At the exclusive Los Angeles Country Club, Lieutenant Hector Navarro and an enigmatic Anglo GOLFER in his 50s tee off. His Golfer's hat and harsh sunlight obscures his face, making it difficult to decipher his features.

GOLFER

You have a lot of powerful friends, Hector.

NAVARRO

That's good to know, sir. Can't have too many of those.

GOLFER

We're all very excited about you running for city council.

NAVARRO

I still haven't made up my mind.

Navarro rifles through his golf clubs. He looks for the one that's going to get him safely to the green. A metaphor for his life if there ever was one.

GOLFER

What's stopping you? You're smart, Latino... that never hurts in this town. We're submitting your bid next week.

NAVARRO

I still need to discuss this with my wife.

GOLFER

Don't take too long.

The Golfer studies Navarro as he finally settles on a club and pulls it out of his golf bag.

GOLFER (CONT'D)

You don't want me telling the boys you're waffling on their offer, do you?

NAVARRO

Of course not. City council is a big responsibility, and I want to give it the consideration it deserves.

GOLFER

We'll do the leg work. All you have to do is show up.

Navarro swings his club and squarely hits the ball.

GOLFER (CONT'D)

So, any more news on the Octavio case?

NAVARRO

No, sir. Just that it's been re-opened.

GOLFER

Who cares, right? No one left to
testify.

Off Navarro. Knowing he's gotta tie-up some loose ends.

INT. BRIDGES & RICHARDS LAW FIRM - NIGHT

It's almost midnight. The offices are empty except for Teresa who sits at her desk, dozing off. She's startled awake by the sound of a vacuum cleaner.

Teresa sees a LUPE, a Latina her age, vacuuming. For a moment it's almost as if Teresa sees what her future might have been.

LUPE

Un cafecito, Teresita?

TERESA

No gracias, Lupe. Ya me voy.

INT. BRIDGES & RICHARDS LAW FIRM - NOLAN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

An unkempt Nolan is pulling an all-nighter. His office is cluttered with open files folders, books, and a few items of sports paraphernalia. Nolan looks up from his paperwork when Teresa enters.

TERESA

Do you need anything else?

NOLAN

Did you send me those affidavits?

TERESA

Yeah, a couple of hours ago. Don't
you read your e-mails?

NOLAN

You might want to try to be nicer
to me. There's only one reason
you're here, and you're looking at
him.

She looks at him. She knows.

TERESA

Thank you, Mr. O'Connor. Good
night.

She exits.

INT. BRIDGES & RICHARDS LAW FIRM - ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Teresa enters the elevator. Just as the doors about to close, Whitney rushes in.

WHITNEY

What's up, LaVerne? Working late or working Nolan?

TERESA

We're off the clock. Give it a rest.

Teresa catches herself, quickly changes her strategy, then:

TERESA (CONT'D)

How about I buy you a drink?

WHITNEY

Are you going dyke on me?

TERESA

Would you like me better if I did?

Whitney laughs.

EXT. DTLA BAR - NIGHT - A FEW HOURS LATER

Teresa and Whitney exit the trendy bar noticeably buzzed. Whitney hands her ticket to the valet and turns to Teresa.

WHITNEY

Gracias for the margaritas.

TERESA

You sure can put 'em away... for a white girl.

WHITNEY

Okay, now you're being racist.

TERESA

Hey, I'm glad we got over this. We gotta stick together.

WHITNEY

Yeah, girl power! Or whatever the hell my mother used to say.

Whitney's brand-new BMW pulls up. The valet exits and holds the door open for her. Whitney is about to get in her car when she turns to Teresa.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

If you think I'm buying your nice girl act for one mother-fucking second... Then, you really don't stand a chance.

Teresa watches Whitney drive away then reaches for her cellphone and dials.

OPERATOR (O.S.)

9-1-1, what is your emergency?

As Teresa talks on the phone, she pulls a wallet out of her bag and casually drops it into a nearby trash can.

INT. BRIDGES & RICHARDS LAW FIRM - THE NEXT MORNING

A big meeting is underway. Nolan addresses the other partners and staff.

NOLAN

... so starting next month we're furthering our commitment to the community by expanding our diversity outreach and taking on a new pro-bono case...

Nolan continues, Teresa watches a female employee enter and whisper something to a partner. They both quickly exit.

NOLAN (CONT'D)

... and tonight, I hope to see you all at the Disney Concert Hall to celebrate our firm. We're being honored for our many years of philanthropic work...

EXT. BRIDGES & RICHARDS LAW FIRM - STREET ENTRANCE - LATER

It's lunchtime. Teresa exits the building and walks past Nolan and the partner who was pulled out of the meeting.

Nolan quickly wraps up his conversation and rushes after her.

NOLAN

Teresa, I just forwarded you another dozen affidavits to summarize. That's what you get for doing such a good job on the last batch.

TERESA

I'm on it.

NOLAN

I'm also counting on you to cover for Whitney.

TERESA

Is she okay?

NOLAN

Well... she was arrested last night. Driving without a license while intoxicated.

TERESA

I'm sorry to hear that. Whatever you need, just let me know.

They walk in silence for moment.

NOLAN

Are you going to tonight's gala?

TERESA

Depends if my workaholic boss let's me out early enough.

NOLAN

I'm sure he can be persuaded.

TERESA

Noted.

EXT. WESTSIDE PRIVATE GRAMMAR SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

High-end SUV's and electric cars pull up in front of an idyllic, ivy-covered brick building. Uniformed children with expensive shoes pile into the cars.

INT. MODEL S TESLA - AFTERNOON

Ethan (the penthouse guy) sits behind the wheel waiting for his kids. He gets a text and looks at, his expression goes from calm to upset.

ETHAN

(to himself)

You fucking bitch.

KID (O.S.)

Daddy said a bad word.

Ethan looks up, realizing that his kids have already gotten into the car. As Ethan starts texting furiously --

INT. CHAVEZ FAMILY APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON

Francisco sits drinking beer and watching a local TV newscast.

TV ANNOUNCER

(in Spanish)

... human rights advocates held a rally outside City Hall protesting abuses against Muslim immigrants --

Uninterested, Francisco changes the channel to a soccer game.

Teresa enters from work, carrying a couple of Nordstroms shopping bags. Raquel and Brianna cook dinner.

TERESA

Smells good. Mole?

BRIANNA

Yeah, Mom's teaching me *abuela's* recipe.

TERESA

What are we celebrating? Dad get a job?

FRANCISCO

No, but I'm out looking.

RAQUEL

You know nobody works harder than your father.

Teresa shoots them an "are they fucking kidding me?" look.

RAQUEL (CONT'D)

Estamos celebrando. Tell her, Brianna.

BRIANNA

We're not getting evicted!

RAQUEL

Gracias a Jesucristo.

TERESA

Well, that's good news.

BRIANNA
Don't get too excited.

Teresa heads toward the bedroom.

RAQUEL
Apurate, dinner's almost ready.

TERESA
Can't. I have a work event,
remember?

FRANCISCO
For Teresa work always comes before
family.

TERESA
Would you rather starve? 'Cause I'm
the only one with a job right now.

Teresa and Francisco eye each other, ready to argue.

RAQUEL
(cutting in)
You go to your party, Teresa. More
mole for us, right *familia*?

INT. TATTOO SHOP - LATE AFTERNOON

A hip Echo Park tattoo shop. The walls are covered with
graphic murals. Tattoo artists work on their eclectic
clientele.

Marcos masterfully completes an elaborate and vibrant design
on a military-type man's chest.

A couple of fellow TATTOO ARTISTS crowd around, impressed.
Marcos is a true artist.

TATTOO ARTIST #1
(to Marcos)
Props, bro. I don't know how you
pull it off.

TATTOO ARTIST #2
Yeah, that's fucking original.

Marcos starts to reply, but decides against it. Too humble to
brag about his work.

Instead, he steps back, takes a photo of the tattoo and texts
it to Teresa.

INT. CHAVEZ FAMILY APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Teresa is down to her pasties and thong when Brianna enters.

BRIANNA

I'm going to the market. Need anything?

TERESA

Help me with the dress.

Teresa gets a text. She ignores it.

BRIANNA

(looking at Teresa's phone)

It's Marcos. Says he'll see you tonight. Is he going to the party?

TERESA

Only if he's parking cars. It's a black-tie event. Why would I invite him?

Brianna pulls a classic Calvin Klein gown out of a Nordstroms garment bag. She looks at the price tag. Sticker shock.

TERESA (CONT'D)

Careful with the tag. It's going back tomorrow. Now help me. I'm late.

BRIANNA

When's Nolan picking you up?

TERESA

I'm Ubering. I'd never have him pick me up at this shithole.

BRIANNA

Don't talk that way about our home.

TERESA

Home? It's a crappy old building that belongs to that douchebag.

Brianna helps Teresa wiggle into her designer gown.

TERESA (CONT'D)

The moment I get my first paycheck, I'm out.

BRIANNA

You can't just bail. Dad's still looking for a job --

TERESA

Maybe dad could get sober and mom could go sell *Abuela's* fucking *mole* on the corner.

BRIANNA

You're talking about our parents, *cabrona!*

Teresa grabs her phone and shoves it in Brianna's face.

TERESA

You really want to see why Darzi won't throw us out of here?

CLOSE ON: Teresa's graphic picture of Ethan Darzi blindfolded, tied and gagged (page 2), penetrated by a large dildo.

INT. MARKET - SAME NIGHT

A cramped *marketa* on the corner on Alvarado Street. Still upset, Brianna runs into Marcos.

MARCOS

How's it going, Bri?

BRIANNA

Okay.

MARCOS

How's your petition coming along?

BRIANNA

Don't need it anymore. We're not getting evicted.

MARCOS

Hey, that's great news.

(beat, then)

Man, that law company is sure working your sister long hours.

BRIANNA

Who says she's at work?

Marcos stares at her, confused.

EXT. DISNEY CONCERT HALL - NIGHT

It's a special night in Downtown Los Angeles. The streets are bustling as elegantly-attired guests enter the brightly-lit, architectural masterpiece that is the Disney Concert Hall.

A small group of Bridges & Richards employees stand around chatting. Among them is Nolan, looking hella handsome in a perfectly tailored Tom Ford suit. He talks to a couple of runway-ready SOCIALITES.

SOCIALITE #1

(to Nolan)

We're so proud of the philanthropic work you've been doing.

NOLAN

I'm just part of the team.

SOCIALITE #2

Handsome and humble.

(to Socialite #1)

How is it that he's still single?

Nolan looks up and sees the stunning silhouette of a woman in the distance. Is that Teresa? He smiles, impressed.

EXT. DISNEY CONCERT HALL - STAIRS - NIGHT

Teresa floats up the entrance steps in her stunning new dress. She's a modern-day Cinderella.

Standing atop the entrance, she takes in the view of the high-class crowd, thrilled at how she's becoming part of this elite new world.

MARCOS

Teresa!

Her magical moment is shattered when she sees an agitated Marcos approaching.

TERESA

What are you doing here?

MARCOS

You told me you had to work tonight.

TERESA

This is work. I'll call you later. But you need to go --

Nolan walks up to the couple, unsure of what's going on.

NOLAN
(to Teresa)
Everything okay?

MARCOS
What's it to you?

TERESA
Marcos, this is my boss, Mr.
O'Connor.
(to Nolan)
This is Marcos... he's an old
friend.

NOLAN
Nice to meet you.

Teresa takes in the two men as they reluctantly shake hands. Rich, powerful Nolan and her devoted soulmate Marcos. What's a woman hell-bent on escaping the barrio and making it to the top to do?

TERESA (O.S.)
Good night, Marcos.

Nolan reaches out his hand to help Teresa up the last step. Marcos watches Nolan and Teresa walk away as they disappear into the sea of tuxedos and high couture.

INT. DISNEY CONCERT HALL - GRAND LOBBY - NIGHT

The black-tie event is in full swing. Hundreds of guests mingle in the crowded lobby. Teresa takes in the glittering chandeliers, grand staircase and renaissance touches.

She assimilates quickly into this world of wealth and social status by accepting a passed glass of champagne.

She spots Nolan talking to Wesley Richards, the firm's senior partner. Nolan walks away from Mr. Richards and heads toward her.

NOLAN
It's official. You got the
internship.

TERESA
Me? That's amazing.
(then)
What about Whitney?

NOLAN

She's out. She's gonna be doing
hard time in Malibu for 28 days.
(then)
So, you ready for your first case?

TERESA

Can't wait.

Teresa and Nolan's eyes meet and they smile at each other.

TERESA (CONT'D)

Thank you for all you've done, Mr.
O'Connor.

NOLAN

Call me Nolan.

EXT. ECHO PARK ALLEY - NIGHT

Marcos gets off his bike and heads towards his apartment, he
hears --

DUDE #1

Yo, got a light?

MARCOS

Sure, man.

As Marcos reaches for his lighter, TWO BURLY DUDES jump him.

MARCOS (CONT'D)

What the fuck --

Marcos fights back, but the attackers overpower him. They
pull out brass knuckles and pummel him.

As Marcos struggles to get up, Dude #2 puts a gun to his
head.

DUDE #2

Navarro wants you and your bitch
out of LA. Tonight.

He holsters the gun before kicking Marcos one last time.

The men run off into the night as Marcos falls to the ground
gasping for air.

INT. DISNEY CONCERT HALL - LADIES ROOM - LATER

Teresa freshens up her lipstick in front of the mirror. She's about to exit when the female bathroom ATTENDANT motions to her.

ATTENDANT
Excuse me, miss?

Teresa turns.

TERESA
¿Si, señora?

ATTENDANT
(whispering, re: dress)
Your price tag is showing.

Embarrassed, Teresa starts to tuck the price tag away, but stops herself.

She stares into the mirror and studies her reflection. She likes the woman she sees: confident, intelligent and in control of her life.

Teresa turns to the Attendant.

TERESA
(re: tag)
Can you please cut it off?

Teresa stands taller as the Attendant cuts off the price tag.

INT. DISNEY CONCERT HALL - GRAND LOBBY - NIGHT

As Teresa makes her way through the gala, she spots Nolan. He's talking to a man in a tux who has his back to her.

NOLAN
Teresa, there's someone I want you
to meet.

Her heart drops.

NOLAN (CONT'D)
This is Lieutenant Hector Navarro.
Lieutenant, this is Teresa Chavez.

Navarro, just as surprised to see her, shakes her hand.

NOLAN (CONT'D)

Mr. Navarro just announced his run for City Council. We're going to be seeing a lot of him.

TERESA

Nice to meet you, Lieutenant.

NOLAN

(to Navarro)

I'm assigning Teresa to the Octavio Gomez case. Turns out that she and Octavio are from the same neighborhood.

A guest walks up to Nolan and pulls him away.

NOLAN (CONT'D)

Excuse me.

Teresa narrows her eyes at Navarro, and starts to leave. He grabs her arm firmly to stop her.

TERESA

What are you gonna do? Arrest me? Deport me? I'm not scared of you anymore.

NAVARRO

(quietly)

It's not me you should be scared of, Teresa.

Navarro walks away shaking his head.

Unsteadied by his ominous warning, she looks around the crowded lobby.

As Teresa's entrée into this world of wealth and status abruptly --

CUTS TO BLACK.