

The Curse of the Fuentes Women

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. MIAMI SKYLINE - DAY

Monstrous grey clouds SWIRL in off the ocean, enveloping Miami. Rain pounds the city as FLASHES of lightning illuminate the midday darkness.

NARRATOR

On September 23rd, 2015, Tropical Storm Eileen swooped in off the Atlantic making landfall just north of Miami Beach at approximately 3:42 PM.

INT. CAFÉ FUENTES - DAY

A Cuban restaurant in Little Havana. Faded pastel walls, mismatched chairs. This place has seen better days. LOLA FUENTES, (34) an understated Latina beauty, stands by the front door, hurrying out the last customer.

NARRATOR

At the same time, Lola Fuentes was closing up her family restaurant in anticipation of the storm.

Lola sighs, looks at her drab surroundings...

INT. CAFÉ FUENTES - DAY - FLASHBACK

The restaurant is in pristine condition and peppered with the oddball regulars who make up its loyal customer base. Lola's mother, and the chef at Cafe Fuentes, ESPERANZA FUENTES, (50s) slides a dish across the counter. A YOUNGER LOLA swipes it up and carries it over to a waiting customer.

NARRATOR

Cafe Fuentes had been kept afloat for decades by the odd assortment of loyal customers who came to the restaurant to savor the delicacies of Lola's mother, head chef Esperanza Fuentes, and bask in the melancholy atmosphere that earned it the nickname "Cafe Tristeza" or "Sadness Cafe". However, in recent years, as Esperanza became too ill to cook...

TIME LAPSE: Lights DIM and colors FADE. Lola goes to grab a plate from the kitchen and we see that her mother has been replaced by another cook...

INT. CAFE FUENTES - DAY - PRESENT

NARRATOR

...the restaurant became a shadow of its former self.

(MORE)

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

With mounting debt, Lola became increasingly desperate. She hatched a plan she saw as her only way out...

Lola stares down at the document in her hand: CAFE FUENTES. INSURANCE POLICY.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

She decided to blow up Cafe Fuentes.

INT. CAFE FUENTES - KITCHEN - DAY

Lola grabs a meat tenderizer and with a powerful THWACK, punctures the gas main. Gas HISSES into the restaurant.

NARRATOR

Meanwhile, on the other side of town, Lola's mother, Esperanza was experiencing a rare moment of clarity.

INT. FUENTES HOME - DAY

Two slices of toast POP out of a bright pink toaster oven.

NARRATOR

And she decided she would make use of one of her kitchen appliances.

Esperanza spreads jam on the toast, takes a bite, savoring it. She unplugs the toaster oven, carries it out through the living room, past her snoring caretaker, and up the stairs into the bathroom where she plugs it in. As she fills the tub with water she catches her reflection in the mirror...

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Lola had known for years that something was wrong with her mother.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY - FLASHBACK

TIGHT ON Esperanza, a wall of lights cutting across her face as she passes into an MRI machine. 3D scans of her brain appear on a screen behind her.

NARRATOR

Esperanza was still in the prime of her life. The diagnosis of Early Onset Alzheimer's took them completely by surprise.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

As the tub fills, Esperanza stands in the shallow water, clutching the toaster oven. We slowly PUSH IN on a solemn, statuesque Esperanza...

NARRATOR

As the disease decimated her mind,
Esperanza realized what a burden she'd
become on her family and she became
determined to end her own life.

INT. ROOM - DAY

TIGHT ON SOLEDAD FUENTES, (16) resting her head on a pillow,
listening to the avalanche of rain POUNDING the roof.

NARRATOR

At the same time, Lola's daughter,
Soledad Fuentes found herself recalling
the last time she was in this exact same
position.

INT. JANITOR'S CLOSET - DAY - FLASHBACK

TIGHT ON Soledad's face. She's lying on the floor as a man
clumsily THRUSTS himself into her. She looks like she can't
wait for this to be over.

NARRATOR

If she knew then what she knows now, she
would have been more insistent he use the
condom that had been shoved into her hand
at the Feminist League meeting she'd
attended earlier that month.
Unfortunately, her foresight was
lacking...

INT. ROOM - DAY

As we PULL BACK from Soledad's face we realize she's lying
in an operating room, her legs in stirrups. A DOCTOR turns
to her wielding a pair of FORCEPS. She's here to terminate
an unwanted pregnancy.

NARRATOR

It was no coincidence that the three
Fuentes women were facing a crisis at
this very moment. Unbeknownst to them, a
powerful curse had been placed on them,
setting each woman on a downward spiral
that would culminate in this moment.

IN QUICK CUTS, a FLASH OF LIGHTNING ILLUMINATES each of the
THREE WOMEN in their respective locations.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

But today, salvation was coming for them...

INT. CAFÉ FUENTES - DAY

As GAS fills the restaurant, Lola ignites a stove burner and makes for the exit. Suddenly, a violent GUST OF WIND FLINGS open the windows. The gas begins to dissipate, as does Lola's plan.

LOLA

No... no!

INT. FUENTES HOME - BATHROOM - DAY

Esperanza takes a deep breath and drops the toaster into the water. At that exact moment, THE ROOM GOES DARK. She stands there, confused. The POWER HAS GONE OUT across the neighborhood.

INT. ABORTION CLINIC - DAY

The abortion is about to begin. Soledad lies back, closes her eyes. Suddenly, we go INSIDE HER HEAD. She's having a VISION: An unkempt muscular man, the ocean, seaweed...

The lights in the room start FLICKERING wildly. Suddenly, Soledad snaps out of it with a JOLT, only to find THEY'RE IN THE PITCH BLACK. She seems completely freaked out.

SOLEDAD

You can't be serious.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

The storm is passing and we see a hand CLAWING its way out of the ocean. A MAN collapses on the beach, his face obscured by the sand.

NARRATOR

This salvation would come in the most unexpected form, and it would change the course of the Fuentes women's lives forever.

We PAN across his sinewy, muscular back, seaweed wrapped around his torso.

SMASH CUT TO:

TITLE CARD: THE CURSE OF THE FUENTES WOMEN

ACT I

OVER BLACK:

NARRATOR

To understand the curse we must go back
to the source...

EXT. FUENTES, CUBA - DAY - FLASHBACK

Title Card: Fuentes, Cuba 1961

ORQUIDIA (4) crouches in the dirt, gleefully dismembering a majestic praying mantis. NOTE: FLASHBACKS TO CUBA WILL BE IN SPANISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES.

JOSE (O.S.)

Orquidia! Get in here and help your
mother clean the boniato!

She SMASHES the insect under her foot and heads into...

INT. FUENTES INN - DAY

JOSE FUENTES (30), proudly stands behind the counter.

NARRATOR

Jose and Marta Fuentes could trace their lineage all the way back to the original founders of Fuentes, which legend had it, was the actual site of the fountain of youth. They ran the town's only Inn and Jose was renowned throughout the countryside for his Ropa Vieja. He took great pride in his family, even when his only daughter, Orquidia, showed signs of being a very peculiar young girl...

Orquidia cleans boniato while her mother, MARTA, slices them. Her mother KNICKS her finger, WINCES. Orquidia CHUCKLES. Marta shoots her an angry stare.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

She never smiled or laughed, except at the least appropriate of times.

MARTA

What's wrong with you? It's not funny.

NARRATOR

As odd as Orquidia was, she was her parents' only child, and she was the center of their world.

As Marta stands we see that she's very PREGNANT.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

But that was not to last...

INT. FUENTES HOME - DAY - FLASHBACK

Orquidia glares from the doorway as her mother gives birth. The DOCTOR passes the newborn to her mother.

NARRATOR

As Esperanza took her first hungry breaths, it was as if she was sucking the air directly out of Orquidia's lungs. Esperanza was the beautiful happy child her parents always wanted...

INT. FUENTES INN - KITCHEN - 1968 - FLASHBACK

Orquidia carefully measures out ingredients.

NARRATOR

Determined to make her father proud, Orquidia dedicated herself to the family business and was determined to be the best chef in Fuentes.

EIGHT YEAR OLD ESPERANZA is GIGGLING in the hallway as she plays tag with her COUSIN.

ORQUIDIA

Keep it down out there! You're disrupting my concentration.

Esperanza pauses in the doorway, her innocent eyes full of curiosity.

ORQUIDIA (CONT'D)

Damnit. I forgot the flour. Esperanza! Get over here and stir this till I get back. And don't touch anything else.

As Orquidia heads out, we stay on Esperanza, stirring with a wondrous smile on her face. Little balls of light, almost like a stream of pixie dust, begin to swirl around her, gliding into the pot.

NARRATOR

This is how Esperanza and her family discovered that she not only had a knack for cooking, but she had the remarkable ability to transfer her emotions into the food she made. And for someone as happy as Esperanza, her food brought pure joy to everyone. Almost everyone.

INT. FUENTES INN - DAY - FLASHBACK

Orquidia returns hauling a big bag of flour. The kitchen is empty, her pot unattended.

ORQUIDIA

Esperanza! Where did you --

We hear LAUGHTER coming from the next room. She walks over to find her mother, father, and sister in the midst of eating. Her father bounces Esperanza on his lap.

JOSE

You surprise me every day. What a blessing to have a daughter like you.

Orquidia looks absolutely crushed.

FADE TO:

INT. FUENTES INN - PARLOR - AFTERNOON - FLASHBACK

Orquidia, now in her early 20s, sits on the settee, sandwiched between her parents. They're all wearing their finest clothes. She fidgets with her draping dress, clearly uncomfortable.

NARRATOR

As the sisters grew older, Cuba changed forever. The revolution led by Fidel Castro affected everyone who remained in the island nation. Jose Fuentes wanted to protect himself and his family. So he arranged for Orquidia to wed the eldest son of Martin Aguilar, the owner of the largest hacienda near Fuentes.

The front door opens and the Aguilar family enters: MARTIN, his WIFE, and SALVADOR (32), their ruggedly handsome son. Orquidia, suddenly smitten, rises to her feet. Salvador smiles politely.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

For Orquidia, it was love at first sight. For Salvador, this was about loyalty and fulfilling an obligation to his family.

EXT. FUENTES, CUBA - DAY - FLASHBACK

Salvador steers a 1950s Cadillac convertible through winding country roads. Orquidia, in the passenger seat, places her hand on Salvador's. She looks at him delighted.

NARRATOR

Salvador was everything she'd ever wanted.

(MORE)

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Handsome, educated, and most importantly, all hers. She loved him so much that she even turned a blind eye to his night time activities...

INT. FUENTES INN - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

A single lamp illuminates a map of Fuentes and the surrounding province. Salvador hunches over the table, plotting with a group of men in hushed tones.

NARRATOR

Long after they were closed, Salvador would hold secret, counter-revolutionary meetings in the privacy of Fuentes Inn.

Just then, the men hear the sound of pots CLANKING in the back room. Salvador jumps up and draws his weapon. He slowly approaches the kitchen, turning the corner to find... TEENAGE ESPERANZA. It's the first time he's seeing her, and even though she's got flour in her hair and she's wearing a dirty apron, she radiates kindness and beauty. Salvador holsters his gun.

SALVADOR

I... I'm sorry.

ESPERANZA

Your secret's safe with me.

As Esperanza brushes past the men, Salvador watches after her with a look of absolute wonder.

NARRATOR

Salvador knew he had an obligation to his family. But he could not get Esperanza out of his mind.

INT. ESPERANZA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Esperanza lies in bed, staring at the ceiling.

NARRATOR

Likewise, Salvador began to occupy her every thought...

We hear the TAP TAP of rocks against the window. She walks over, opens it. It's Salvador. Assuming he's got the wrong room, she points toward her sister's window. But Salvador shakes his head "no". Points at her. Esperanza looks shocked, before breaking into a smile.

EXT. FUENTES, CUBA - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Esperanza and Salvador walk side by side through the deserted cobble stone streets of their small town.

NARRATOR

They talked about their childhoods, about their friends and families. Their wants and desires. She didn't know why, but that night, Esperanza told Salvador things she'd never told anyone.

Their hands brush against each other's. Their eyes meet.

FADE TO:

EXT. FUENTES, CUBA - TOWNSQUARE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Though there's no music, Esperanza shows Salvador some dance moves in the deserted town square in front of the ornate fountain. Suddenly he pulls her in and they kiss.

NARRATOR

As the rest of Fuentes slept, their hearts grew ever closer together. They didn't set out to hurt anyone. But love is an unstoppable force. And it was only a matter before the truth came out...

EXT. FUENTES INN - COURTYARD - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

A large party. All the guests seem bored. A lifeless BAND plays bland music. Esperanza goes around serving the meal she's prepared for the occasion.

NARRATOR

As the guests devoured Esperanza's food, everyone became overwhelmed with one emotion. Love. Old enemies became best friends. Best friends became lovers.

Guests start loosening their ties, untucking their shirts. The band starts playing LIVELY SALSA MUSIC and everyone starts dancing closely. Soon the buttoned up party has turned into an emotional, affectionate, love-fest. Orquidia watches the scene, suspicious.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Orquidia knew something was not right. If her sister's food was overwhelming people with love, it must mean her sister was in love. But with who?

Just then, a photographer pops up in front of Orquidia and Salvador.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Una foto!

Orquidia grabs Salvador and smiles. The camera flash POPS.

INT. PHOTOGRAPHER'S STUDIO - DAY

TIGHT ON: The kodachrome photo slowly developing. Orquidia has a big smile. But Salvador looks distracted. We follow his adoring gaze across the photo to... Esperanza. Who's staring back at him with equal adoration.

We see Orquidia staring at the photo, her face lined with equal parts anger and pain.

NARRATOR

Orquidia believed Esperanza had always taken everything from her. Finally, she had someone she loved more than anything. But Esperanza took that as well. So Orquidia decided she would take EVERYTHING away from her.

INT. MILITARY POLICE STATION - DAY - FLASHBACK

Orquidia sits across the desk from a MILITARY OFFICER. Behind him are large framed portraits of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara. She slides the picture from the party across the desk to him and points to Esperanza and Salvador.

EXT. FUENTES INN - EVENING - FLASHBACK

As a military convoy approaches Fuentes Inn, a panicked Salvador sneaks Esperanza out the back door. Orquidia watches them run away from her upstairs window.

NARRATOR

A friend in the military had tipped off Salvador to Orquidia's betrayal. Knowing what awaited them if they stayed, there was only one thing they could do...

EXT. CUBAN SHORELINE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Esperanza and Salvador waded out into the ocean pushing a big wooden raft. Dogs BARK VICIOUSLY in the distance. A hunting party. As the raft carries them out to sea...

NARRATOR

They began the 90 mile trek to Florida on September 22nd, 1978. The odds were in their favor that night. The ocean was calm and the skies crystal clear. They safely made their way into international waters, beyond the reach of Cuban authorities. But they were not beyond the reach of Orquidia's wrath...

INT. SANTERIA DEN - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Orquidia, tears streaming down her cheeks, stands around a flaming altar with REMELDA, a Santeria priestess, holding hands and chanting. Remelda tosses ingredients into the fire as FLAMES whirl around them.

REMELDA

Tell me, my child. Do you want her dead?

ORQUIDIA

Worse. I want her to feel this pain. To live the rest of her life feeling what I'm feeling right now.

EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT

Suddenly, powerful winds shriek through the dark night. Waves come out of nowhere to batter the tiny raft. Salvador and Esperanza hold on for dear life.

A GIANT WAVE washes over the raft, plunging them underwater. We see FLASHES of their faces. BUBBLES. Two HANDS slipping away from each other.

ORQUIDIA (V.O.)

That awful unbearable ache, when love is ripped from your heart forever.

The raft reemerges. Only Esperanza is left.

INT. SANTERIA DEN - NIGHT

ORQUIDIA

I want her children, and her children's children, to suffer the same fate. Her sin will poison her bloodline for the rest of time.

REMELDA

And so it shall be.

Remelda smiles wickedly as flames dance around them...

NARRATOR

Orquidia wouldn't know it for many years, but her curse worked exactly as she'd hoped...

EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN - FLASHBACK - MORNING

Esperanza, nearly unconscious, floats on the dilapidated raft. A US COAST GUARD vessel approaches her.

NARRATOR

Esperanza Fuentes arrived in Florida on September 23rd 1978, scared and alone. Though she'd never love again, eventually she married a decent man. Together they had a beautiful baby girl, Lola, and Esperanza found a new reason to live. The years went on, Lola grew up. Esperanza lost her husband. But in all that time she never once spoke of Salvador.

INT. FUENTES HOME - FLASHBACK

Orquidia sits by her ailing father's bedside.

NARRATOR

Jose Fuentes never recovered from the loss of his beloved daughter. Fuentes Inn was confiscated by the government for its role in aiding the counter-revolutionaries. Orquidia stayed in Fuentes and cared for their father for many years. But the hatred she felt toward her sister didn't abate with time. It only grew stronger.

Jose motions for Orquidia to come closer. With his dying breath, he whispers in her ear...

JOSE

Essssperanzaaaa.

Off Orquidia, her anguish turning to stony determination...

INT. FUENTES HOME - KITCHEN - EVENING - PRESENT DAY

TITLE CARD READS: Miami, Florida. Present Day.

Lola is at the stove, preparing a dish that is clearly burning. Esperanza sits at the kitchen table while her caretaker, PUCCI, 30s, brushes her hair.

PUCCI

What are you doing? You know what happens when you try a recipe that doesn't involve the microwave.

LOLA

It's been a long day.

Just then, Soledad walks in lugging her backpack.

LOLA (CONT'D)

Why are you so late? And why haven't you returned any of my texts?

SOLEDAD

I was helping set up for the science fair and my phone ran out of juice. Who cares?

LOLA

I'm not allowed to worry now? That was a bad storm.

SOLEDAD

Well I'm fine. Wait, is that dinner? Mom you know the microwave rule.

LOLA

Looks like it's gonna be a Domino's night. Will you check the coupon drawer?

Lola notices the bright pink toaster oven in the middle of the counter. She picks it up and water pours out.

LOLA (CONT'D)

What the hell? Pucci...?

PUCCI

Don't look at me. Maybe Esperanza did it?

LOLA

What do you have to say for yourself, Mami?

Esperanza has a far away look on her face but the mention of her name snaps her out of it. She looks at Lola, nervous.

ESPERANZA

What are you doing in my kitchen?

LOLA

(to Pucci)

Care to rethink that?

PUCCI

I don't know. Why am I the one always getting blamed around here?

LOLA

Because it's your job to watch her.

PUCCI

Calling it a job implies that you're actually paying me. And Lola... it's been two weeks. I can't keep doing this. I got bills too.

LOLA

I know, Pucci. I'm sorry. Look, I'll have some money for you tomorrow and the rest, end of the week. Please just hang on a little longer. I need you. She needs you.

INT. CASA ORQUIDIA - NIGHT

A chic, starkly designed Cuban restaurant that couldn't be more different than Cafe Fuentes. Everything is white, minimalist and the crowd is standing room only with a mix of locals, tourists, hipsters. Its owner and head chef is none other than the now adult ORQUIDIA.

NARRATOR

Orquidia arrived in Miami in 1985, determined to make a life for herself outside of Cuba. She married a handsome businessman and opened her own restaurant. As far as she was concerned, she was the clear winner in this family feud and rarely thought of her younger sister anymore. Until today, that is.

Orquidia stands near the kitchen entrance, surveying her domain. She spots a bus boy holding a tray of plates, awkwardly covering his shirt. She pulls his arm away, revealing a large stain.

BUSBOY

I'm sorry I --

ORQUIDIA

Change. Now.

ANGLE ON a large booth where we find MANOLO, Orquidia's husband, entertaining a group of business heavyweights. Orquidia approaches and gives him a kiss on the lips.

ORQUIDIA (CONT'D)

Gentlemen. How is everything?

BUSINESSMAN #1

Absolutely delicious.

Another BUSINESSMAN starts coughing. He reaches into his bowl and pulls out a strand of SEAWEED.

MANOLO

Is this a new dish?

Orquidia looks horrified but tries to cover.

ORQUIDIA

Sometimes my sous-chef gets experimental. Let me bring you something else.

As she hurries back to the kitchen, she looks around the restaurant: Other people are picking strands of SEAWEED out of their food. A couple of them COUGH it up.

INT. CASA ORQUIDIA - KITCHEN - NIGHT

She marches toward a SOUS-CHEF and shows him the seaweed.

ORQUIDIA
Did you do this?

SOUS CHEF
Of course not!

Orquidia digs around in the stew. It's full of the stuff.

INT. CASA ORQUIDIA - BACK ROOM - NIGHT

REMELDA, the Santeria priestess, searches for ingredients on a wall lined with jars of pickled chicken legs, rare herbs, different types of holy water. There's a KNOCK at the door.

REMELDA
Si?

Orquidia rushes in, plops the seaweed in front of her.

ORQUIDIA
This started appearing in all our dishes tonight. What does it mean?

Remelda closes her eyes, runs her hands over the seaweed. She takes a big foreboding breath.

REMELDA
It's a warning.

ORQUIDIA
From who?

REMELDA
It's not who but what. Nature has a way of dealing with imbalances. The time has come.

ORQUIDIA
What are you talking about?

REMELDA
When we placed the curse on your sister, we threw off the natural order of things. A force is coming that could change that. And if we're not careful it will destroy us too.

Off Orquidia, scared...

INT. CAFÉ FUENTES - MORNING

The Haitian line cook JEAN BAPTISTE (30s) is busy trying to fix the gas main while GLORIA (20s), the transsexual waitress, berates him from the side.

GLORIA

I'm just sayin, I barely trust you with the food let alone these pipes.

JEAN BAPTISTE

My uncle was a plumber in Haiti. I saw him do this a million times.

LOLA

Will you please keep it down!

(beat, into phone)

Sorry. I know it's a big job but, see, we're just in a tight spot right now and my source of income depends on this getting fixed... I can give you a check if you promise not to deposit it till Monday.. Hello? Hello?

GLORIA

Mama you can't get a plumber like that. You're too honest. Get them here first, then, SURPRISE! We're broke ass bitches.

LOLA

I'm sorry Gloria. I can't be like you. I believe in karma. Things like that come back to you.

(beat, defeated)

What are we gonna do?

Just then, the door opens and a man enters. The bright morning sun casts him in silhouette. As he steps forward, we reveal SALVADOR, the same man we thought died at sea nearly forty years ago. AND HE HASN'T AGED A DAY.

SALVADOR

Is this Cafe Fuentes?

END OF ACT I

ACT II**INT. CAFE FUENTES - DAY**

We pick up right where we left off. Lola can barely take her eyes off Salvador. Men who look like him don't just walk in here everyday. Before she can say a word, Gloria rushes over to him.

GLORIA

The one and only Cafe Fuentes! I'm head waitress Gloria Del Rey. You're in luck, the best table in the house is available.

LOLA

Gloria every table in the house is available. Listen, we're having some gas issues -- I mean heating gas issues. As in, no hot food. But we can fix you anything you want.

GLORIA

And it's pretty slow so I can keep you company... I mean who likes eating alone?

SALVADOR

I'm actually not here to eat.

(beat)

I was told this was Esperanza Fuentes' restaurant.

LOLA

It is -- well, was. I'm her daughter Lola...

Salvador looks completely taken aback by this news. But when he realizes they're staring at him he quickly recovers. Lola reaches out to shake his hand, but he leans in and kisses her on the cheek as is custom.

SALVADOR

Salvador. Un placer.

LOLA

I've taken things over here since...

SALVADOR

(concerned)

Since what?

LOLA

She's fine. She's just. She has Alzheimer's. Her mind is gone. She's there... but she isn't.

(a beat)

How do you know Esperanza?

SALVADOR

(covering)

Well... I'm from Fuentes... And...

LOLA

(catching on)

Gotcha. And you just got to Miami.

GLORIA

Um... I drank like half a bottle of Sambuca last night so I'm feeling a little slow.

LOLA

Everybody knew Mami helped refugees from Fuentes when they made it over here. But things aren't what they used to be. And we just don't have anything to offer.

GLORIA

Lola, we had another busboy quit last week and I've been pulling double duty.

(holding up hand)

Look at these nails. These were not meant to serve *and* bus. We need some muscle.

Lola and Gloria continue their argument, oblivious to Salvador, who follows the CLANKING of tools back into the kitchen where Jean-Baptiste is attempting to fix the gas main.

LOLA

Gloria, how much have you been making in tips lately?

GLORIA

Not enough.

LOLA

We hire more people, it's going to be even less.

GLORIA

Lola! That man is going to end up paying for himself. I can just feel it.

LOLA

You just wanna sleep with him.

GLORIA

Who wouldn't?

LOLA

To start with, anyone not overdoing it with the estrogen shots.

GLORIA

You know what... you could use a little injection yourself. You haven't been with a man in seventeen years. SEVENTEEN YEARS. Think about that. The last time you had sex you probably owned a pager!

Suddenly, a loud CLANK and a heavy HISS from the kitchen.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

Oh lord, Jean Bapiste's gonna blow us all up! RUN!

But then, the hiss quiets down and we hear CHEERS and HIGH FIVES. Salvador emerges from the kitchen surrounded by other workers praising him and giving him high fives. Jean Baptiste trails behind, sulking.

LOLA

(to Salvador)

You fixed it?

SALVADOR

With the help of these good men.

GLORIA

What did I tell you! When I get a feeling about things...

(grabbing Salvador's bicep)

...You need to listen.

LOLA

Thank you... So, by any chance are you looking for some work?

SALVADOR

If that's an offer, I'll take it.

Gloria CHEERS. Lola smiles broadly, her eyes sparkling as she looks at Salvador. Jean-Baptiste clocks this. As Gloria and Lola give Salvador a tour of the restaurant...

INT. SAINT IGNACIUS GIRL'S SCHOOL - BATHROOM - DAY

We hear the sound of someone VOMITING.

INSIDE THE BATHROOM STALL we see Soledad. She flushes the toilet, wipes her face with her sleeve, and steps out to find...

Mean girl MEGAN CORCORAN (17), leaning against the sink.

MEGAN

I don't know what's more ratchet, you walking out of the stall still wiping off barf spackle from your face or the fact that you're barfing in the school bathroom at all.

Soledad tries to ignore her, walks to the sink to wash her hands.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Tell me, as your face hovered above the porcelain, did you think for a moment about those poor menstruating nuns, who for years hid their secret shame by clogging up that toilet with those old school maxi-pads they wear?

SOLEDAD

No, your cliched depiction of nunhood didn't enter my brain once.

MEGAN

So tell me... what is your secret shame?

SOLEDAD

What are you talking about?

MEGAN

Jenna told me she heard you throwing up yesterday too. At right around the same time which means you're either pregnant or bulimic.

SOLEDAD

I'm neither.

MEGAN

Listen, irregardless of the truth --

SOLEDAD

Irregardless isn't a word. You'd just say regardless --

MEGAN

Whatever. We're gonna spread rumors either way so just pick one. Personally I'd go with pregnant. Miss uptight little goody two shoes is really a Whorey McSlut? That's like a no-brainer storyline on 16 and Pregnant. Bulimia is so over and it's not even working... you still have no thigh gap.

Soledad bites her tongue, tries to walk past Megan who's blocking the exit, but Megan grabs her arm.

Just then we go tight on Soledad's eyes as she has a VISION: Megan on the hallway floor, writhing in pain, grasping her ankle.

SOLEDAD

And you still have no prescription glasses. Slippery when wet, bitch. Sorry about the gap in your bones.

Soledad steps out into...

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

As she tries to walk away, Megan follows her.

MEGAN

What the hell was that freak show?!

But Megan doesn't notice the WET FLOOR sign that Soledad bypassed and suddenly she has an ugly, violent slip on the floor. WE hear an audible CRACK. Soledad turns and looks back as Megan writhes around in pain, grabbing a hold of her ankle.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

AWWWWWWW!! My ankle!

Soledad should be happy with this little victory, but instead she seems disturbed. How did she see this before it happened?

INT. CAFÉ FUENTES - DAY

Salvador admires a wall of dusty old photographs: the Fuentes women with favorite customers. Employees. Pictures of a teenage Esperanza in Cuba, beaming. A young girl clearly in love. Lola comes up behind Salvador.

LOLA

She was beautiful.

(beat)

Still is. Even if she doesn't know who she is most of the time.

SALVADOR

So many of your mother's memories are here. In these pictures, this restaurant. And forgive me, but how can her mind be clear and vivid when this very space is no longer those things?

LOLA

What do you mean?

SALVADOR

These photographs are covered in a layer of dust. When's the last time these walls were repainted? The restaurant is named Cafe Fuentes but when was the last time that fountain actually worked? And wouldn't it be nice to play a little Salsa music, liven things up?

LOLA

(getting defensive)

We have spent a fortune trying to get that fountain working again and without fail, it always breaks. The pictures could be cleaner but no one's even looking at them. And the walls... Salvador. All this is money. Money we've had to spend on the basics. Maybe it's not as chi chi as it could be -

SALVADOR

It's not about that. It's about your mother's memories.

LOLA

(snapping)

My mother's mind is gone because she has a disease. Not because this place is a little rundown or there's no Salsa music. And seriously, you're being a little familiar here and I don't like it. Thank you for fixing the gas main and I'm happy to help you out here but watch it.

SALVADOR

Understood.

LOLA

Good. 'Cause in order to justify a new hire, I need a lot more business during lunch. And we ain't got time to paint right now. What bright ideas you got, Salvador?

We push in on Salvador. On the spot.

INT./EXT. CAFE FUENTES - DAY - MONTAGE SEQUENCE

In a series of QUICK POPS we see Salvador outside the restaurant, calling out to people on the street.

SALVADOR

Señoras y Señores! When is the last time you paid a visit to Cafe Fuentes? Clearly too long because there's no way you've had a chance to savor the bacalao...

Everyone ignores him. Damn. This is not gonna be easy.

-- With Gloria's help, Salvador puts a couple of speakers in front of the restaurant. He gives her the signal and suddenly, SALSA MUSIC is blaring. He repeats his sales pitch except this time he's dancing salsa and is stripped down to a wife beater. Several passerbys come in.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. FUENTES HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Pucci is cutting up Esperanza's food and is trying to feed it to her when Esperanza starts HUMMING a salsa beat. She gets up out of her seat and starts doing a solo salsa dance. Pucci looks at her, totally surprised, then looks back at the food she's been eating. She takes a curious sniff of it.

INT. CAFE FUENTES - DAY

While not full, the restaurant is seeing an unusual influx of customers. Lola looks around, happily surprised. Just then, Salvador grabs her, spins her to the salsa music. She can't help but laugh.

ON JEAN-BAPTISTE witnessing this moment between Salvador and Lola. He is not happy. And when Gloria comes back with five more orders he seems overwhelmed.

EXT. CAFÉ FUENTES - DAY

Salvador walks a couple of SECRETARIES on their lunch break out the door.

SALVADOR

Remember to tell all your friends we're staying open later for lunch. Come to Cafe Fuentes. The food is delicious.

As they walk away...

SECRETARY #1

More like, come to Cafe Fuentes, the new guy working there is delicious.

They giggle like little girls.

INT. CAFÉ FUENTES - DAY

Just when it seems like the lunch hour rush is over, a new wave of people start walking in. Jean Baptiste looks like he's having a panic attack.

SALVADOR

Jean, what do you need? I can help. Here... you want me to chop these up?

As Salvador takes a load off Jean Baptiste in the kitchen, Lola stares at him from across the way. The kitchen is steaming and the wife beater looks practically painted onto Salvador's muscles. She tries to look away but she can't. She's completely in lust. The heat overwhelming her, she grabs the ends of the counter to prop herself up and finds herself holding A LARGE RIPE PLANTAIN.

She stares at it, then at Salvador. She heads into...

INT. SUPPLY CLOSET - DAY

Locks the door. Her back against the wall, we see the plantain disappear beneath frame, her eyes roll to the back of her head. She bites her lip, to stay quiet as...

INT. CAFÉ FUENTES - DAY

Customers are enjoying their meals when we hear a sudden, undeniable, MOAN. Everyone looks around... what was that?

GLORIA

And just wait till you order dessert!

The crowd laughs.

NARRATOR

And while that cold, hard plantain was no substitute for the real thing, it was enough to make Lola experience something she'd denied herself for seventeen years.

INT. HOTEL - HONEYMOON SUITE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Title Card: Miami Beach. July, 1998.

A HANDSOME MAN in a tuxedo carries YOUNG LOLA, in a wedding dress, across the room and deposits her on the bed. He unzips the dress and hastily lowers it off her. As she's about to remove the veil.

HANDSOME MAN

No, leave it. It's kinda kinky.

Lola laughs. They stare into each other's eyes as they make love. Just as he's about to climax, BOOM. A single gunshot RINGS out, spattering BLOOD all over her veil.

NARRATOR

Lola knew she was taking a risk when she married a low level capo in the Colombian Cartel, but never in her worst nightmares did she imagine it would end like this.

As he collapses on top of her, dead, Lola SCREAMS.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Another victim of Orquidia's curse, Lola became a newlywed and a widow in the same day. And nine months later, she also became a mother. But even today this vicious cycle was showing no signs of stopping...

INT. SAINT IGNACIUS CLASSROOM - DAY

JOE WALKER (23), the handsome young physics teacher who often gets mistaken for a student, is finishing his lecture, as the school bell RINGS. We find Soledad at her usual place near the front of the classroom. She quickly gathers her things and starts off when --

MR. WALKER

Soledad!

SOLEDAD

Yeah?

MR. WALKER

We need to discuss your assignment.

As Mr. Walker closes the door behind the last student, Soledad slumps over to his desk.

MR. WALKER (CONT'D)

You haven't returned a single call or text! What's going on?

SOLEDAD

I didn't go through with it.

MR. WALKER

Okay... are you having second thoughts?

SOLEDAD

Oh hell to the no. I wanna do it. Trust me. But I don't know if you noticed but there was a pretty big storm in Miami yesterday and the power went out at the clinic.

MR. WALKER

So... what now?

SOLEDAD

I don't know. I just gotta reschedule or something.

MR. WALKER

Well let me help you here. Soledad this is my responsibility too.

SOLEDAD

For both personal and legal reasons I
wouldn't go tossing the word
"responsibility" around.

MR. WALKER

I-I --

SOLEDAD

You don't have to explain. Mr. Walker --

MR. WALKER

What'd I tell you about that!?

SOLEDAD

Sorry. *Joe*. I'm taking care of this.
Myself.

(staring at paper)

And stop giving me check pluses on half-
assed answers. It's unbecoming.

On this, she turns to leave...

INT. CAFE FUENTES - DAY

The lunch rush is over and though everyone appears
exhausted, they're also oddly exhilarated. Salvador is
wiping down tables. Gloria is counting her tips. Jean-
Baptiste seems happy to have a fridge devoid of leftovers.
And Lola, one hand on a calculator, is adding up the days
receipts.

LOLA

Look at that. Best day we've had...

GLORIA

Ever?

LOLA

In a while. Not counting the holidays.
Wonder what was different?

JEAN BAPTISTE

I made sure that cod soaked overnight. 18
hours. The least salty cod in history.

She looks over to Salvador, smiles.

LOLA

I'm sure that was it. I only wish Mami
would've been here to see it.

SALVADOR

As do I.

(beat)

(MORE)

SALVADOR (CONT'D)

Lola, tomorrow night, if you don't have other plans, I was thinking, I would love to meet Esperanza. Maybe we can have dinner at your house?

LOLA

You wanna have dinner together?

SALVADOR

(not getting it)

Yes of course.

LOLA

So... dinner. Tomorrow. It's a date.

Just then, the front door opens and in walks Soledad.

LOLA (CONT'D)

Hey mija... you missed quite the day!

SOLEDAD

Oh yeah? Well mine sucked.

LOLA

I want you to meet our new busboy/jack of all trades. This is...

As she turns Soledad toward Salvador, her eyes go wide. Suddenly we're IN HER HEAD: the vision from the abortion clinic. A MAN WASHING UP ON A BEACH. GASPING FOR AIR. HIS FACE COMES INTO SHARP FOCUS. IT'S...

SOLEDAD

Salvador.

LOLA

How'd you know his name?

SALVADOR

Un placer.

Soledad looks like she's seen a ghost. She's now had two premonitions that have come true. Megan's accident. And more importantly... this man's arrival.

SOLEDAD

(faint)

I need to sit.

LOLA

What's wrong Sole?

SOLEDAD

I just... I'm fine... some sugar... something... I've barely eaten all day. I'm a little dizzy.

Lola rushes back to the kitchen. Soledad eyes Salvador.

SOLEDAD (CONT'D)

Who are you?

SALVADOR

Salvador.

SOLEDAD

No seriously.

SALVADOR

I'm not sure I understand the question.
But if I were you, you need to make sure
you eat as much as possible. You're not
just eating for one anymore.

Soledad's jaw drops. HE KNOWS. Just then Lola comes out with Soledad's favorite sweets.

LOLA

Honey I know you're always trying to
avoid sugar but this is organic sugar
cane... all natural. EAT... Oh, and
tomorrow night, Salvador's coming to the
house for dinner.

Soledad seems paralyzed with fear. This man who SOMEHOW FIGURED OUT HER SECRET is coming to dinner at her house. She forces a smile.

INT. ORQUIDIA'S CAR - DAY

Orquidia drives past Cafe Fuentes, slowing down a bit to spy on the competition. And that's when she sees him.

ORQUIDIA

SALVADOR?!?

She GASPS. Her eyes widen. She forgets to brake and CRASHES into the car in front of her. Before the driver has a chance to get out, Orquidia shifts gears and SLAMS the accelerator, hightailing it out of there.

INT. REMELDA'S DEN - EVENING

Orquidia paces back and forth in front of Remelda.

ORQUIDIA

It was him! I know it. And he hasn't aged
a day in nearly forty years. How is this
possible?!

REMELDA

The problem is you're focusing on the how when you should be focusing on the why. He's here to save them.

ORQUIDIA

Save them? You told me this curse would destroy them!

REMELDA

I also told you that every action has an equal and opposite reaction. It's a universal law.

ORQUIDIA

Well you could've been a little more specific!

REMELDA

How's this for specific... If we don't get rid of him, not only will the curse be broken, but everything your sister and her family has suffered will come back to you.

As we PUSH IN on Orquidia taking this in...

END OF ACT II

ACT III**INT. MICHAEL'S SALON - DAY**

Lola is SPUN around in a salon chair to face the mirror. Her best friend and hairdresser, MICHAEL, 40, handsome, tattooed, dramatically drapes a cape over her body.

MICHAEL

So, mi preciosa. Talk to me. Which View host's hairstyle we going for this month? Nicole or Rosie?

LOLA

I was thinking I should mix it up. Can we try something a little sexier than usual?

Michael's eyes light up.

MICHAEL

Yasssss!

INT. MICHAEL'S SALON - A LITTLE LATER

Lola has her head back in the sink as Michael massages shampoo into her scalp.

MICHAEL

So what's his name?

LOLA

What's who's name?

MICHAEL

Please, hunty. I've known you for too long and I always suspected your heart hadn't completely turned to stone.

Lola BLUSHES.

INT. MICHAEL'S SALON - A LITTLE LATER

Michael snips away at Lola's hair.

LOLA

I mean he seems like the real deal. He can fix things, he's strong. But not the kind of guy who goes to the gym... The kind of guy who works with his hands. But at the same time, there's something really smart and sensitive about him.

MICHAEL

An old school man's man. LOVE. As long as they don't chew tobacco.

INT. MICHAEL'S SALON - A LITTLE LATER

Lola's hair is wrapped in foil and she's sitting under an industrial dryer while flipping through magazines. Two older, colorful LATINA WOMEN sit on either side of her.

LATINA WOMAN

He sounds like a real catch.

LATINA WOMAN #2

You know I have a son around your age. Very handsome. Making a killing in the avocado trade.

The other woman SMACKS her friend.

LATINA WOMAN #2 (CONT'D)

I'm just saying... You're too pretty to put all your huevos in one rancho.

Lola smiles shyly.

INT. MICHAEL'S SALON - A LITTLE LATER

Michael spins Lola around to face the mirror.

LATINA WOMAN

You look --

MICHAEL

(nearly tearing up)
-- Unbelievable. Kelly Rowland has emerged from her cocoon a full blown Beyoncé!

Lola GASPS. Her plain dark brown hair has been transformed into a glamorous, wavy, come-hither do. Michael removes her cape, revealing her drab clothes.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

(re: her outfit)
Now you just gotta worry about everything else.

INT. GLORIA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Gloria sits on the edge of her bed under a giant poster for Pedro Almodovar's "Bad Education".

GLORIA

Just show me already!

LOLA (O.S.)

I don't know about this.

GLORIA

Now when you come out I wanna see you
owning it!

The closet door opens and Lola steps into the room wearing a
very short, super revealing blue and yellow dress.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

You look like the chiquita banana lady!
Those puppies have never seen so much
daylight!

LOLA

Gloria this is...

GLORIA

Sexy!

LOLA

I had another word, but let's go with
that. Problem is it's way way too sexy.

Gloria shrugs her shoulders, holds up her iPhone and snaps a
picture.

LOLA (CONT'D)

What was that?

GLORIA

I always like having a lil' blackmail on
everyone.

(beat)

Anyways, isn't this just a hook up? I'm
all about getting to the point. And easy
access.

LOLA

No this isn't a hook up. That's not what
I'm looking for. There's something about
him. I know this sounds crazy, I just met
this guy for chrissakes, but I feel a
connection. You know what I mean?

GLORIA

You know what? I got the perfect dress
for you.

INT. ORQUIDIA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Orquidia is applying her makeup when her CLEANING LADY
nervously approaches.

CLEANING LADY

Mrs. Reyes. Which drawer you want I put
these in?

Orquidia turns to face her. She's holding up a pair of SEXY RED PANTIES. Orquidia snatches them out of her hand, examining them with a look of anger.

INT. ORQUIDIA'S HOME - BATHROOM - DAY

Orquidia furiously scrubs her hands, covers them with rubber gloves, and slips a surgical mask over her face.

NARRATOR

What little was left of Orquidia's heart after losing Salvador belonged to her only child, Robert.

We follow Orquidia into...

INT. ROBERT'S ROOM - DAY

Aside from the high-tech air filtration system, this is a dream teenager's room. Superhero posters line the walls and there's a giant flat screen TV with every video game console from the last five years. ROBERT lies in bed on his laptop. At 17, he's a little too old for a lot of this stuff, but it's all he's got.

NARRATOR

As a baby, Robert was diagnosed with a rare immune disorder that's kept him confined indoors, away from almost all human contact. To make up for it, Orquidia spoiled him. But there were some things even she couldn't provide.

Orquidia sits at the foot of his bed.

ROBERT

I was just reading this article about a doctor in Denver doing gene therapy trials on people with my disorder.

ORQUIDIA

Mi amor, don't you think if there was something out there that could help you that Dr. Aaronofsky would already know about it?

ROBERT

But this is new and --

ORQUIDIA

-- And probably extremely dangerous. How would we even get you to Denver? It's out of the question.

ROBERT

I just want to be able to go outside.
Make friends. Like a normal person.

ORQUIDIA

I'm your friend.

ROBERT

Parents don't count.

She places a comforting hand over Robert's.

ORQUIDIA

Speaking of which, I was trying to get a hold of your father and he's not answering his phone.

ROBERT

What else is new?

ORQUIDIA

Could you do that special thing you do with the tracking device?

ROBERT

It's called find my iPhone, Mom. Anyone who has a password can do it.

ORQUIDIA

I wasn't as lucky as you to grow up with all the latest technology. I had to play with the same toys my entire childhood...

ROBERT

Yeah yeah. I know.

(beat)

Why is dad at Hacienda Motel?

Robert has already pulled up his father's location. He turns the computer to his mother. Her eyes narrow.

ORQUIDIA

(covering)

The owner is a big political donor. He might help with your father's campaign.

Orquidia pulls up the surgical mask, gives him a kiss on the forehead, from which he winces in mock pain.

ORQUIDIA (CONT'D)

Gracias, mi amor.

INT. CAFE FUENTES - DAY

The lunch hour is coming to an end and Salvador is clearing plates from the counter when...

REMELDA (O.S.)
Un cafe Cubano, por favor.

Reveal REMELDA. A scarf wrapped around her head. She removes her dark sunglasses and smiles at Salvador.

SALVADOR
Coming right up.

Salvador sets the coffee down in front of her. The following conversation takes place in SPANISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES.

REMELDA
You're new here?

SALVADOR
How can you tell?

REMELDA
You can tell a lot about a person just by looking at them. Come.

Remelda motions for Salvador to give her his hand. He cautiously extends his arm and she grabs it, tracing the lines in his palm. Her brazenness stuns him into submission.

REMELDA (CONT'D)
For example... Your fortune line is thick and long. You're going to do very well here in America... That's strange --

SALVADOR
What?

REMELDA
Your life line. It begins... and then it stops here. And it picks up again. I've never seen anything like it.

Salvador tries to YANK his arm away, but Remelda DIGS her nails into his flesh.

SALVADOR
That hurts.

He RIPS his arm away and stares at it. He's BLEEDING where she scratched him. He gives her a look like "What the hell?"

REMELDA
(shrugging)
Bad things happen when you try to ignore your future.

Salvador disappears into the kitchen to get something to clean his arm. Remelda wipes her nails on a paper napkin. There's a few DROPS OF BLOOD. She puts it in her purse.

Moment's later, Salvador comes back out to the counter. He's about to say something, but Remelda has vanished.

GLORIA
Everything okay?

SALVADOR
I... think so.

GLORIA
Good cause you got plans tonight.

Salvador lights up, quickly pushing this strange encounter out of his mind.

INT./EXT. FUENTES HOME - NIGHT

Salvador approaches the house carrying a bottle of wine. He KNOCKS on the door. Moments later, Pucci answers.

PUCCI
You must be Salvador. I'm Pucci.

SALVADOR
Un placer.

PUCCI
She'll be right down.

Pucci shows him into the dimly lit living room. As he takes a seat she quickly exits.

TIGHT ON an iPhone as a finger presses PLAY on the Pandora station titled FIRST DATE RADIO. Music comes on over the living room speakers. Salvador looks around. Where's that coming from?

Just then, we hear someone clearing their throat and Salvador turns to find Lola. And this is a Lola we have not seen before. She looks gorgeous in a form-fitting cherry-red dress.

LOLA
Oh! I didn't realize you were here already.

Not used to high heels, she stumbles her way down the stairs. Salvador stands, taken aback.

SALVADOR
You look... That dress...

LOLA
This old thing?
(beat)
I'm gonna go check on the food.

She strolls casually into...

INT. FUENTES HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Soledad and Pucci are taking food from take out boxes and putting it on plates.

LOLA

Don't make it too perfect. It's gotta look like I cooked it.

PUCCI

Honey, if it looked like you cooked it he'd get on a raft back to Cuba.

Lola takes a big swig of her wine.

LOLA

Soledad get out there and offer him a pastelito.

SOLEDAD

Fine. But not because you demanded but because I'm a polite hostess.

INT. FUENTES HOME - LIVING ROOM

Soledad sets the tray down by Salvador.

SALVADOR

Hola.

SOLEDAD

Don't you "hola" me. Listen, I don't know what your angle is here but that stuff you said yesterday at the cafe has gotta stay between you and me.

Salvador looks taken aback.

SALVADOR

Of course... it's not my intention to cause you any trouble.

SOLEDAD

What is your intention?

SALVADOR

I just wanna help.

SOLEDAD

You know what... we've gotten by just fine on our own. Comprende amigo?

Soledad shoots him a final glare then turns and exits. Just as Salvador begins to shake off this encounter...

ESPERANZA (O.S.)

Are you here to fix the fountain?

He turns to find himself staring at Esperanza. He looks overcome with emotion. His voice cracks as he speaks.

SALVADOR

The fountain?

He's fighting back the tears welling up in his eyes.

ESPERANZA

I really hope you can fix it. Five times already and each time more expensive.

(she smiles)

Something tells me you know what to do.

SALVADOR

I hope so.

Just then, Lola walks out of the kitchen.

LOLA

I see you two met.

SALVADOR

Yes. We have.

Esperanza looks at him.

ESPERANZA

Are you here to fix the fountain?

LOLA

Yeah Mami. It's gonna be very noisy. Let's get you to bed.

SALVADOR

It's okay if she eats with us.

LOLA

She already ate. And she's gotta get to bed soon... Pucci!

Pucci runs in and leads Esperanza away.

SALVADOR

Un placer, Esperanza.

LOLA

On that note, dinner is served.

INT./EXT. FUENTES HOME - PATIO - NIGHT

A lovely, candle-lit patio. We find them sitting down, eating. He's looking around, uncomfortable.

Lola pours them each some more wine. She's getting drunker. They smile at each other, each at a loss for words. Then:

LOLA SALVADOR
It must have been very scary You have a lovely home.

--

LOLA
Sorry... oh thank you.

SALVADOR
No... you were saying.

LOLA
I was just thinking, it must have been very scary making the journey from Cuba on a raft. I mean, Mami never really talked about her experience. I think it was really traumatic for her.

SALVADOR
To be honest, I'm not even sure how I made it.

LOLA
I hear that. God bless.

SALVADOR
I'm not sure if it was God or something else, but somebody, something has a plan for me.

LOLA
You seem so certain.

SALVADOR
If you were in my shoes, you'd be certain too.

LOLA
Can I ask you something?

SALVADOR
Of course. Anything.

Lola looks into his eyes. Her guard is down and she seems to be getting swept up in the moment. She doesn't even notice when the CANDLES on the patio BURN OUT.

NARRATOR
Lola had blocked out any possibility of love for seventeen years. She wasn't punishing herself, at least not intentionally. Being alone was the only thing she could fathom.

As they gaze into each other's eyes, a SWARM OF FIREFLIES surrounds them, bathing them in a SOFT AMBER GLOW. It's intensely romantic and magical.

LOLA

Why did you come into Cafe Fuentes?

SALVADOR

I'm still trying to figure that out.

LOLA

Made any progress?

Just then, through the window that looks into the house, Salvador sees Esperanza appear. She stares out blankly toward them. We see Pucci grabs her arm, leads her off, back to her room. Lola is oblivious to what's occurred.

SALVADOR

Things are getting clearer.

LOLA

I think they're starting to get clearer for me too.

Lola leans in to kiss him. Suddenly, Salvador pulls away.

SALVADOR

I -- I'm sorry if I gave you the wrong impression. I didn't mean it like that.

LOLA

Didn't mean what like what?

SALVADOR

What I'm trying to say is, there's a woman --

LOLA

Excuse me?

SALVADOR

It's very complicated. But I'm in love with someone else. And even though it seems like I can never be with her --

LOLA

-- Let me get this straight... you come into my restaurant, turn up the charm, strip down to your wife beater, pull some Magic Mike moves... you reel me in hook line and sinker. And now you tell me you're seeing someone else?

SALVADOR

It's not like that.

LOLA

I should have learned my lesson a long time ago. And this stupid Pretty Woman dress... I start thinking I'm Julia Roberts but the truth is I'm Lindsay Lohan in that movie where she played a one-legged stripper.

SALVADOR

(confused)

Are those friends of yours?

LOLA

Oh yeah. Besties.

SALVADOR

Lola --

LOLA

Salvador, please. It's not that big of a house. You know where the door is.

Salvador looks hurt, but he gets up and leaves. Lola takes another swig of her wine.

NARRATOR

And just when she didn't think the night could get any worse...

Lola's phone VIBRATES. She answers.

LOLA

Hello? You've gotta be kidding me?! I'll be right over.

INT. CAFE FUENTES - KITCHEN - NIGHT

The restaurant is empty save for Jean Baptiste and Lola. They're standing in front of the giant freezer which is LEAKING WATER.

LOLA

I don't know what I'm gonna do. We can't afford a new freezer right now.

JEAN BAPTISTE

I think we should try to salvage what we can and make do tomorrow.

Lola suddenly starts crying. Jean puts his arm around her.

JEAN BAPTISTE (CONT'D)

Lola! It's okay. It's just a freezer. If repair is too much, I put in money myself. I've been saving you know.

LOLA

It's not the freakin' freezer... Can I ask you a question and just be honest with me? Do you think I'm attractive? And don't feel obligated to say yes just 'cause I'm your boss.

JEAN BAPTISTE

Lola you're one of the most beautiful women I've ever met.

LOLA

Thank you. I just really needed to hear that tonight.

An uncomfortable silence. His arm is still around her and their faces are close to one another. Suddenly, they're furiously making out. Within moments, the two of them are ripping each others clothes off. He grabs her and pushes her against the freezer.

LOLA (CONT'D)

Watch the freezer!

NARRATOR

For Jean Baptiste, his greatest fantasy was coming true. For Lola, her eyes closed, it wasn't Jean Baptiste she was making love to. And while he was not the man she wanted...

As Jean Baptiste hoists her onto the counter, Lola throws her head back, unleashing a long lustful SCREAM...

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

The experience was certainly more satisfying than a quickie with a plantain.

END OF ACT III

ACT IV**INT. REMELDA'S DEN - NIGHT**

Orquidia and Remelda stand around an altar covered in candles. As Remelda ticks off different ingredients, Orquidia places them on the altar.

REMELDA

Sap from the manchineel tree. Two drops of mercury. The seaweed. And finally...

Orquidia handles the last item with great care. It's the NAPKIN with Salvador's blood. Remelda takes a big drag from a Cuban cigar and blows a giant cloud of smoke onto the pile...

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. METRO MOVER - NIGHT

Salvador is riding one of the automated trams that are part of the Miami public transportation system, when he starts coughing. The cough gets progressively harsher until... he pulls a long strand of SEAWEED from his mouth. The OTHER PASSENGERS watch him with a look of disgust. The train pulls into the station and they all hurry out.

REMELDA (V.O.)

Orisha Yegua, we call on your powers...

Salvador starts projectile vomiting incredible amounts of water. SEA WATER. He grabs his throat, collapsing onto the floor of the tram. The small compartment quickly starts filling with water.

REMELDA (V.O.)

...to carry this man back into the darkness...

The water starts collecting in the train and begins to rise. Soon Salvador is entirely submerged. He's CHOKING.

REMELDA (V.O.)

And restore order to our world.

Off Salvador, losing consciousness...

INT. CAFE FUENTES - MORNING

Gloria is leaning over the host stand, texting, when Lola walks in.

GLORIA

How'd it go last night? I want details, mami.

LOLA
Is that how you'd greet a paying
customer? Put the phone away.

GLORIA
(to herself)
I guess not so hot.

Lola sets her things down in the back room. Jean Baptiste,
smiling from ear to ear, comes up behind her and puts a hand
on her waist.

JEAN BAPTISTE
Bonjour!

Lola JUMPS up in shock, knocking him away.

LOLA
Sorry I'm a little jumpy this morning.

JEAN BAPTISTE
I don't want to make too much out of it,
but last night was...

LOLA
I'm with you Jean. I think the best thing
to do is pretend last night never
happened.

Jean Baptiste's face falls considerably but he tries to play
it cool.

JEAN BAPTISTE
Of course.

As Lola leaves the kitchen, we stay on Jean Baptiste. He
walks over to a side counter and picks up a bouquet of roses
he'd clearly brought for Lola, and dumps them in the trash.

INT. CAFE FUENTES - MORNING

Lola steps out into the dining room. Gloria approaches.

GLORIA
Don't wanna bring up any sensitive
subjects, but the new busboy is MIA, if
you know what I mean. His shift started
an hour ago.

LOLA
Salvador?

GLORIA
(under her breath)
That bad?

Lola looks suddenly guilty. Perhaps she was a little harsh on him.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

Oh well. Looks like it's gonna be another stellar day at Cafe Fuentes.

Without Salvador, the energy of the restaurant has dissipated. Lola is keenly aware of what's happening. She grabs a dining chair and stands up on it.

LOLA

Everybody! Cafe Fuentes family. Please, gather around.

Everyone looks at each other. Murmuring. "Is she making a speech?" "This is weird."

LOLA (CONT'D)

It looks like Salvador won't be working here anymore.

On Jean Baptiste, quietly pumping his arm in victory.

LOLA (CONT'D)

And while I'll be the first to admit that the energy and enthusiasm he brought to our restaurant in the past couple days has been great, he hasn't done anything that any one of us couldn't have done. We've had a great couple of days and I am determined to keep having them.

(pointing to busboy)

You... you've been working out. I want you out there ASAP, charming the tourists with our Arroz con Pollo special. Gloria, that Salsa mix from the other day was great... but what about getting a live band?

She looks around the restaurant at the dusty photos, the broken fountain, recalling Salvador's earlier words.

LOLA (CONT'D)

As I'm looking around here, I see a place that isn't reaching its full potential. It needs a face lift... No. Scratch that. This place needs the full Renee Zelwegger. And it's up to everybody to do their part. So who's with me!?

JEAN BAPTISTE

I know I'm with you, Lola.

GLORIA

Hell yeah, I'm with you. You want a live band, I've been putting together a demo --

As all the workers start excitedly jumping in, inspired by her, we PUSH IN on Lola, beaming with pride...

INT./EXT. CAFE FUENTES - DAY

A MONTAGE of the staff setting to work on the restaurant. Dusting, scrubbing, making long-neglected repairs. Lola takes down the wall of old photographs and cleans each of them. She notices the grime covered mural behind the photos and sets to work scrubbing it clean.

NARRATOR

As years of grime came off the walls of Cafe Fuentes, the dense fog began to lift from Esperanza's mind...

INT. FUENTES HOME - DAY

Pucci is asleep in her recliner as a telenovela plays on the TV. Esperanza rushes through the room in the background.

NARRATOR

With each dusting, wipe, and brush stroke, the broken pieces of her mind started to come together like a jigsaw puzzle. But there was still one piece missing. One that she was determined to find...

As she putters around the house...

ESPERANZA

I know it's around here somewhere...

INT. SAINT IGNACIUS CLASSROOM - DAY

Soledad sits at her desk as Mr. Walker lectures the class.

MR. WALKER

Who can tell me what the second law of thermodynamics says?

We PUSH in on Soledad as her eyes close and she starts to shake: She's having another vision.

SOLEDAD

No!

She LEAPS out of her seat. The whole class stares at her.

MR. WALKER

Ms. Fuentes. Is everything okay?

SOLEDAD

I have to warn her.

Soledad bolts from the room.

MEGAN

Whatever, Carrie!

Nobody laughs. Megan shifts uncomfortably in her seat.

MEGAN (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

It was that movie with the girl from Kick Ass?

(beat)

Whatever losers.

INT. CAFE FUENTES - DAY

Lola finishes cleaning the mural and takes a step back to admire it: A GIANT SET OF EYES, staring out at her.

LOLA

I never even noticed this was here.

GLORIA

They look so familiar...

From the EYES on the mural, we...

MATCH CUT TO:

A pair of eyes slowly opening. From their POV: the bright room comes into focus. The RATTLE of metal. We're in...

INT. ICE HOLDING FACILITY - NIGHT

And the RATTLE is a set of handcuffs attaching Salvador to a hospital bed. He struggles to free himself but it's no use. Two plainclothes ICE AGENTS stride into the room. We'll call them GOOD COP and BAD COP.

GOOD COP

Easy now. You took quite a spill there.

SALVADOR

Where am I?

BAD COP

You severely damaged public property and you have no ID or fingerprint match in the database. You're in an Immigration and Customs Enforcement Holding Facility.

SALVADOR

I need to get out of here.

BAD COP

You're not going anywhere until we can establish your immigration status in this country. When did you first enter the United States?

Salvador clams up.

GOOD COP

We're here to help you, son. But we need you to help us out first. Do you have any family or friends here we could call?

INT. FUENTES HOME - BEDROOM - DAY

Esperanza pushes a stepladder in front of a book shelf and climbs up on it to reach for an old photo album. Just then, the house phone RINGS. She loses her balance and STUMBLES backward, SMACKING HER HEAD against the floor. She's quickly losing consciousness when:

SOLEDAD (O.S.)

Abuela!

Soledad rushes to her side. It's now obvious what she saw in her vision. She whips out her phone and dials 911.

SOLEDAD (CONT'D)

Yes. I need an ambulance at 8551 Southwest Sierra Bonita Avenue.
(to Esperanza)
It's gonna be okay, Abuela.

INT./EXT. FUENTES HOME/AMBULANCE - DAY

LIGHTS AND SIRENS. EMTs load Esperanza into an ambulance and Soledad climbs in with them. She takes out her phone, dials.

INT. CAFE FUENTES - DAY

Lola is admiring the incredible teamwork of her staff when her phone rings.

LOLA

Hola mi amor. What!? I'm on my way.
(to Gloria)
Mami had an accident. I've gotta go to the hospital. Can you --

GLORIA

-- I got it. Just go!

As Lola rushes off to the hospital...

END OF ACT IV

ACT V**INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - NIGHT**

Lola steps out of her mother's room to talk to the DOCTOR.
In the B.G. we see Soledad sitting in the waiting room.

DOCTOR

She's been stabilized for now. But she's very weak.

LOLA

So what are you saying?

DOCTOR

If there's any other family members that may want to say goodbye, this may be their last chance. I'm very sorry.

Lola peers at her mother through the window, her whole world shattering around her.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Soledad hears a phone BUZZING in her mother's purse. She looks over at her mother down the hallway -- she looks totally inconsolable -- and decides to answer it herself.

SOLEDAD

(answering, sotto)

Hello? No she's... unavailable right now.
But I'm her daughter... Yes I know
Salvador. What!?

INT. ICE HOLDING FACILITY - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Soledad is sitting in the office with Good Cop and Bad Cop.

SOLEDAD

Salvador is a Cuban citizen. Clearly, you're aware of the 1995 revision to the Cuban Adjustment Act, commonly referred to as the "Wet Foot, Dry Foot Policy" that automatically granted him temporary immigrant status the moment he dug one of his toes into our lovely Miami beaches?

GOOD COP

(exhausted with her)

Listen, we just wanted to make sure he had somewhere to go. We don't deal with damage to public property. Just take him and go. *Please.*

EXT. ICE HOLDING FACILITY - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Soledad walks triumphantly out of the facility with Salvador by her side. She stops and turns to him.

SOLEDAD

Salvador, I need you to be straight with me.

SALVADOR

What do you mean?

SOLEDAD

I have a feeling you know more than you're letting on. As do I. Look, the day before you walked into Cafe Fuentes, I was about to get an abortion when I had some sort of vision. I saw you coming out of the ocean. And then I saw this girl having an accident before it happened. Please tell me I'm not going completely crazy?

SALVADOR

You're not going crazy, Soledad. What you're describing is an incredible gift.

SOLEDAD

But why is this happening now?

SALVADOR

You have a life growing inside you now. I don't think it's a coincidence.

SOLEDAD

Are you just saying that cause you're one of those pro-life people?

SALVADOR

I'm only telling you what you already know.

(beat)

Why didn't Lola come herself?

SOLEDAD

She's at the hospital. My grandmother had an accident. In fact, I saw it before it happened.

SALVADOR

Esperanza? Is she okay?

SOLEDAD

I got to her just as it happened. It's not looking great...

SALVADOR

There's hope. If you hadn't had that premonition, she might not be with us at all right now.

SOLEDAD

Maybe you're right. Look, I have to get back to the hospital. Do you wanna come?

He thinks about it for a moment.

SALVADOR

There's something else I have to do.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Lola sits by her mother's bedside, gripping her hand, as if squeezing hard enough might wake her mother up.

LOLA

I never know if you can hear anything I say, or if you even know it's me talking. But I just want you to know, I miss you so much. I'd give up everything to have you back. But I have to accept that's not gonna happen. So Mami, if you can hear me, I want you to know it's okay. Me and Soledad, we're gonna be fine. I know you're a fighter, but you can stop fighting now. Te quiero siempre.

As tears stream down Lola's face...

INT. CAFÉ FUENTES - NIGHT

Salvador breaks in through a back door. He surveys the restaurant... the newly uncovered mural, the pictures scattered everywhere, the half-painted new sign. And the non-functioning fountain. He's got his work cut out.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Lola has fallen asleep at her mother's bedside. We go TIGHT ON Esperanza, her eyelids flickering. Her EKG machine BEEPS erratically...

INT. CAFÉ FUENTES - NIGHT

Salvador polishes and hangs each photo. Scrubs the grime out of the fountain and makes repairs to the pump...

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

TIGHT ON Esperanza's face. The color seems to return to her cheeks and lips before our very eyes.

INT. CAFÉ FUENTES - NIGHT

Salvador holds the plug for the fountain and an extension cord in either hand. As he slowly brings them together, a look of triumph in his eye, the sequence is at its a crescendo, when we...

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - MORNING

Lola eyes flutter open. She slept all night in the hospital chair. As she massages her creaking neck, we PAN UP to reveal Esperanza's hospital bed is empty. Lola jumps up in panic.

END OF ACT V

ACT VI**INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - MORNING**

Lola is surrounded by a team of concerned DOCTORS and NURSES.

LOLA

An woman in a coma doesn't just go missing!

NURSE

Ma'am, you need to calm down.

LOLA

Calm down!? This is about as calm as you're gonna get until you can tell me where my mother is.

Just then, Lola's phone rings.

LOLA (CONT'D)

Hello?... What!?

INT. CAFÉ FUENTES - KITCHEN - MORNING

A sautéed pan full of bright sizzling peppers. A giant vat steaming over the stove. The CHOP CHOP CHOP of a knife against a cutting board. We PAN ACROSS the restaurant staff. Jean Baptiste and Gloria stand slack jawed in the doorway.

JEAN BAPTISTE

Should we stop her? She could hurt herself?

GLORIA

Herself? What about me? I ain't gettin' near that knife.

We TURN AROUND to reveal they're talking about... Esperanza. She's in her hospital gown, standing over the cutting board. She seems almost *possessed* as she works around the kitchen. Jean Baptiste approaches her cautiously.

JEAN BAPTISTE

Esperanza, you sure you don't wanna take a seat. Rest for a moment?

ESPERANZA

Rest?! Lunch time is coming and nothing's ready. If you're not gonna help, get out of my way.

Just then, Lola pushes past them into the kitchen.

LOLA

Ay dios mio, Mami what the hell is going on?

ESPERANZA

I'm getting everything ready, Lola. What the hell is going on with you?

Lola stops in her tracks. She can't remember the last time her mother has recognized her. Her eyes well with tears.

LOLA

That's fine. But we really gotta get you back to the hospital.

Esperanza whips around toward Lola, flailing the big cutting knife around sort of haphazardly.

ESPERANZA

Those reservations aren't gonna start taking themselves.

LOLA

Reservations?

Just then, the LAND LINE RINGS. Every eye in the restaurant goes to it. Lola answers.

LOLA (CONT'D)

Hello?.. Ummm... Yes we take reservations. Six... for lunch. Great. See you then Mr. Gonzalez.

Lola hangs up the phone. Everyone seems totally confused except for Esperanza who has already gone back to work.

ESPERANZA

So much work to do! Big crowds today!

The phone starts RINGING again. Lola looks around the restaurant, noticing for the first time that the place is completely spotless. The FOUNTAIN is shooting three streams of crystal clear water into the air. She turns to the staff.

LOLA

You heard her. Snap to it.
(beat, answering phone)
Cafe Fuentes. Yes for how many?...

The staff scurries about the restaurant preparing for this theoretical onslaught of patrons. In ONE LONG CONTINUOUS SHOT, WE FOLLOW the vapor rising from the kitchen, up through the vents and out into...

EXT. CAFE FUENTES - STREET - CONTINUOUS

... The street above Cafe Fuentes. A MAGICAL WIND seems to carry it down to street level where it pauses by every person it sees, enveloping them in a fragrant cloud...

MAN

Mmmm que rico!

WOMAN

Is it too early for lunch yet?

OLD MAN

That smells like my mother's ropa vieja!

The vapor makes its way past a dozen or more people like this, eventually circling back around to...

EXT. CAFE FUENTES - CONTINUOUS

AN HOUR HAS PASSED and we're now in the middle of a CHAOTIC LUNCH RUSH. People are waiting in the doorway to get a table. Salvador pushes his way through the crowd...

INT. CAFE FUENTES - CONTINUOUS

Every table in the restaurant is full and the place is bustling with conversation and laughter. Lola is helping customers at the hostess stand when she spots Salvador.

LOLA

YOU!

Salvador cowers. It looks like she's about to scream at him. Instead she pulls him close.

LOLA (CONT'D)

You did all this, didn't you?

SALAVADOR

I just finished what you started. The place looks wonderful. But what's the point of calling it Cafe Fuentes if you don't have a fountain that works?

LOLA

Or the chef who built it all. How did you know that fixing all this would --

She motions toward her mother, vibrant in a way that she hasn't been in years.

SALVADOR

Some things you don't know. You just feel.

Lola stares into his eyes, her look full of romantic yearning.

LOLA
 I know exactly what you mean.
 (snapping out of it)
 So I hope you're still working here.
 'Cause we're gonna need a lot of help.

Off Salvador's broad smile...

INT. ORQUIDIA'S CAR - AFTERNOON

Orquidia drives along Calle Ocho, Remelda in her passenger seat.

ORQUIDIA
 The place is probably boarded up by now.

REMELDA
 All the dominoes are falling into place.

They round the corner and spot the line of people outside Cafe Fuentes.

ORQUIDIA
 What the hell!?

Coasting slowly by the restaurant, she spots Salvador inside, laughing with some customers as he serves their food.

ORQUIDIA (CONT'D)
 That was some spell you did there.

REMELDA
 (fuming)
 Callate!

INT. MOTEL - EVENING

An iPhone BUZZES on a cheap night table: 6 NEW MESSAGES FROM ORQUIDIA. A hand reaches over, hits POWER OFF. PULLING BACK, we see the hand belongs to Manolo. And as he rolls over, we see that he's not in bed alone. He's with... GLORIA.

GLORIA
 Again?

MANOLO
 I turned it off, mi amor.

GLORIA
 When are you going to tell her?

MANOLO

Soon. I promise.

GLORIA

As soon as I have the money, I'm having my last operation. And then we can be together all the time.

MANOLO

I don't wanna hear you talking like that. You know I love you just the way you are... all of you.

In one swift motion, Gloria flips Manolo over onto his stomach and climbs on top of him.

GLORIA

But can you take all of me?

CUT TO:

POV OF A FIRST PERSON SHOOTER VIDEO GAME. A SNIPER takes out a TALIBAN TERRORIST. The screen reads "SNIPER COMMENDATION: NICE WORK SOLDIER!"

ROBERT (O.S.)

Oh yeah baby!

INT. ROBERT'S ROOM - NIGHT

Robert toggles his joystick like a pro. He's too immersed in his game to notice, but we see the outline of a BODY climb in through the window behind him. The floor CREAKS. Robert smiles.

ROBERT

Hey loser!

Soledad PLOPS down into a bean bag chair beside him and picks up a REMOTE to play.

SOLEDAD

Hey bubble boy.

ROBERT

That was barely funny the first dozen times.

(beat)

Are you sure no one saw you?

SOLEDAD

You know what? I'm so over this family drama. I should be able to come through your front door without having to worry that your mom is gonna banish me to the seventh circle of hell.

ROBERT

Yeah well I should be able to go outside anytime I want. But life's not fair.

SOLEDAD

Speaking of... did you get that article I sent you about the clinical trials in Denver.

ROBERT

Yeah... I looked into it. I don't think I qualify.

SOLEDAD

Just as well, I guess... you know. I'm starting to think maybe science doesn't have all the answers. Maybe the cure for your condition is closer than you think.

Soledad turns her attention back to the video game. But this comment definitely lands on Robert.

INT. FUENTES HOME - NIGHT

Salvador and Lola are on either side of Esperanza, helping her up the entrance stairs.

ESPERANZA

Ay cariña I may be old but I can go up some stairs.

LOLA

I'm not taking any more chances today.

Esperanza shakes them both off.

ESPERANZA

Let's put on some music. I feel like dancing.

LOLA

(laughing)

My feet are so sore I can't even think about moving.

ESPERANZA

Que aburrida.

She grabs Salvador's hand and gestures for him to dance with her. As they start to rock back and forth...

LOLA

Keep an eye on her for a second. I've gotta grab her pills.

Lola heads upstairs.

ESPERANZA
You're a good dancer.

SALVADOR
I had a good teacher.

Salvador spins her around, then pulls her in close.

ESPERANZA
Have we met before?

As he SPINS her back out...

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. FUENTES TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Salvador TWIRLING young Esperanza. The flashback from earlier where they dance in front of the fountain. And kiss. Only this time we stay with them. Esperanza pulls away, looks up at Salvador.

ESPERANZA
Promise me something?

SALVADOR
Anything.

ESPERANZA
No matter what happens... promise me that we'll always be together.

Salvador pulls Esperanza toward him.

SALVADOR
Esperanza Fuentes, I love you more than life itself. I would move heaven and earth to be with you.

WE'RE ON Esperanza's face, the happiest woman on earth.

FADE TO:

INT. FUENTES HOME - NIGHT - PRESENT

Esperanza's face now. Gray. Hollow. But slowly, that twinkle of JOY seeps into her gaze.

ESPERANZA
Salvador?

SALVADOR
Si.

Her eyes well with tears, her voice cracking...

ESPERANZA

How is this possible?

SALVADOR

I don't know.

Esperanza is overcome with emotion. She looks like she's about to faint and Salvador eases her down on the couch. She looks back up at him, the glimmer now gone.

ESPERANZA

Are you here to fix the fountain?

INT. FUENTES HOME - NIGHT

Lola grabs her mother's pills when she notices the ALBUM her mother had been reaching for earlier, on the floor, several of the photos spilled out. We go TIGHT ON one in particular: It's the one photo Esperanza has with Salvador. The one taken that night in the restaurant. Orquidia smiling toward camera while Salvador and Esperanza stare at each other. Not noticing it, Lola shuffles the photo back in the album and places the album back on the shelf.

INT. FUENTES HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lola finds Salvador and Esperanza sitting on the couch.

LOLA

Is everything okay?

SALVADOR

I think so. It's just been an overwhelming day.

LOLA

Tell me about it.

(beat)

But you know what? Good things are coming. I can feel it.

INT. ORQUIDIA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Orquidia paces in front of Remelda.

ORQUIDIA

This is bad. Very bad. One minute she's in the hospital and the next minute she's back and stronger than ever!?

REMELDA

It all comes back to Salvador. Apparently it's going to be much harder to get rid of him than I thought.

ORQUIDIA

So let's not get rid of him.

REMELDA

Please don't tell me you still have feelings for him?

Orquidia LAUGHS loudly.

ORQUIDIA

After all these years you still underestimate me. I know what has to be done. As long as my sister and her wretched little brood need his help, he's got a reason to be here. But if we get rid of them, there's nothing left keeping him in this world.

REMELDA

(smiling)

I like the way you're thinking.

We slowly PUSH IN on Orquidia.

ORQUIDIA

We are going to destroy those Fuentes women. One by one.

END OF PILOT