

POUR VIDA

Written by

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EXT/INT. BOYLE HEIGHTS/VIDALIA'S BUILDING - VARIOUS - MORNING

We wake up in Boyle Heights with a SERIES OF SHOTS:

A STORE OWNER lifting up the METAL ROLLING SHUTTERS to open up his storefront... a MEXICAN DAD taking his son to school on A BICYCLE, his son in a Dodgers cap standing on the back wheel pegs... an OLD LADY dragging a small shopping cart with a loose wheel as she passes by VIDALIA'S BUILDING...

...We enter the building to the background sounds of "Suavecito" playing on an actual CD player that plays actual old school CDs, as a MIDDLE-AGED CHICANO man, with a long white braid wrapped around his neck, takes his time rolling a fat doobie like an O.G., as...

...We hear the laughter of a SEÑORA in mid-conversation with an unseen someone, enjoying whatever joke they've just shared as she sprinkles copal onto a charcoal disk...

INT. VIDALIA'S BUILDING - LUPE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

We follow as the copal SMOKE CRAWLS UP to reveal LUPE MACIAS (a "Señora," an old-school curandera healer with an affable personality) as she sits at her kitchen table.

LUPE

(still laughing)

...me vas a decir quel Donal Trump no tiene alguna bruja por ahi haciendole sus trabajitos? Por favor --

[...you're going to tell me that the Donald Trump doesn't have somebody doing spells for him? Please --]

Something her OUT-OF-SIGHT COMPANION says stops her in her tracks. Lupe goes cold.

LUPE (CONT'D)

¿Que? *[What?]* No--no--no, it's too soon for her to go. Oye, why didn't you warn me?

Lupe doesn't wait for a response, she heads for her crowded altar, populated by candles and statues of saints. She grabs a SAN LAZARO CANDLE, strikes a match and lights it, as...

INT. VIDALIA'S BUILDING - VIDALIA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Upstairs, in the largest and best-appointed of the units, as if woken by Lupe's whispers, a woman's eyes OPEN ABRUPTLY. It's VIDALIA (early-50's but with that kind of brown-don't-frown beauty that still holds up) who lies in bed, short of breath, as if recovering from a bad dream, the strong brown arms spooning her from behind doing nothing to relieve whatever ails her. Carefully, she untangles herself from her bed-mate and heads for the bathroom, grabbing the door jamb to steady her footing...

The following two scenes coexist in a stylish INTERCUT SEQUENCE:

Lupe raises her hands to the heavens in urgent prayer. Suddenly, she stops and responds to her unseen companion --

LUPE

You don't think it's too late for
her? I don't want to owe the
Santisima if we don't have to.

Reluctantly, Lupe walks to her hidden altar of The Holy Death (skeleton dressed as a virgin). Kneeling respectfully as...

...Vidalia closes the bathroom door behind her. She stares squarely at her face in the mirror. A look of panic as she heaves over in pain for a moment before reaching for the medicine cabinet...

...Downstairs, Lupe grabs a GREEN CANDLE IN THE SHAPE OF A WOMAN and starts brushing it with a bunch of cilantro. She whacks the figurine while uttering ancient words, working herself up into a frenzied chant, sweat starting to form on her brow. The whacks grow in intensity until A STRANGE WIND knocks over a red candle from the Santisima altar -- BRIGHT RED WAX SPILLING all over. Suddenly, Lupe stands still, her face knowingly blank, as...

...Upstairs, Vidalia's nose has started to bleed crimson. She tries to hold onto the sink but the dripping blood makes her lose her grip and she slips to the floor with a thud.

A VOICE (O.C.)

You okei, mi vida? Babe?

A pair of pijama-ed feet rush in.

A VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Vidalia!

The last thing we see is Vidalia's blood spreading like an inkblot on the cold-white tile floor.

INT. CHICAGO - A CONSULTING FIRM - SAME DAY

We hear trapped BREATHING in quick adrenaline-laden gasps. They're coming from EMMA (31, strong-willed, too smart for her own damn good, passes for White but if you know what to look for, you'll know she's true rice-and-beans) who's sitting in the visitor's chair, across from her supervisor JACK's desk. Jack's one of those Ivy League bros who thinks he's super chill as he leans on his desk and lectures Emma. Emma's PHONE VIBRATES which takes her out of her head and brings her back into the room. She rejects the call without taking the phone out of her pocket.

JACK

... and again, in no way do I want to be doing this. But today was out of hand. I'm not going to lie, I'm like really bummed you threw us under the bus like that --

EMMA

Jack, I have been shouting from the fucking rooftops that a large percentage of the analysis we have been feeding Morgan Drake is fiction. I actually went back and took a look at ten years of numbers to put that document together --

JACK

But, Emma. How are we supposed to be chill and collaborate with someone who goes and tattles about it, you know what I mean? It's not chill.

Emma's phone starts buzzing again; she shuts it off angrily.

EMMA

Jack, if we had done our fucking job to begin with --

JACK

(might as well...)
Ok, well, I'm supposed to tell you that right now, the guys and I are not so comfortable with you on the team. So.

Emma lets this hit her right in the gut.

JACK (CONT'D)

And, if I may, a bit of friendly advice, from someone who basically respects you: You really should --

EMMA

(now fully in her cunt)

Let me stop you right there.

(her phone vibrates again)

Because, frankly, fuck your condescending advice.

(getting up; taking out her phone)

And also. Eat a bag of dicks, Jack.

Answering phone as she walks out, leaving Jack like "whoa."

EMMA (CONT'D)

Yeah, did you need something?

The answer from the other end stops her cold in her tracks. OFF Emma, the blood draining from her face, as...

INT. SAN FRANCISCO - A CHIC NOB HILL APARTMENT - THAT NIGHT

We are in the hippest apartment in the Bay Area. The furniture is like... beyond chic. There are eight or so hipster GUESTS lounging around smoking from one-of-a-kind hookahs and vaporizers. JUNIPER (mid-30's, White, moneyed, man-bunned) sits at the head of the table. In the middle, holding court, is his girlfriend LYN (27, indigenous features made of cinnamon, calls herself Chicana but it's doubtful if she knows what that even means). She passes around different skin creams and lotions to the delight of her guests.

LYN

(re: lotion)

...I'm calling this one 'Coatlicue' after the Aztec goddess. It's a cocoa butter base, but I've added cinnamon and a hint of coffee.

GUEST

I want to eat it like batter.

LYN

(taking a hit of vaporizer)

Right?!

(MORE)

LYN (CONT'D)

And each one's inspired by a different Aztec deity who sort of embodies the divine feminine, you know?

JUNIPER

Babe, can you bring out the mezcal?

LYN

Sure, babe.

Lyn takes another hit of the vaporizer before going to get the bottle of mezcal. When she's up, her PHONE RINGS -- sending everyone into a clumsy flurry of digging for their phones.

LYN (CONT'D)

It's me! Mine...

A little shaky from that last drag, Lyn reads her phone screen. It reads: MAMI. What the hell, Lyn decides to answer.

LYN (CONT'D)

Hola, Mami, sorry I didn't call you back last wee--

A long pause as Lyn listens on the other end. And then, out of nowhere, she STARTS TO LAUGH. A mild, surprising laugh at first, which then turns into a frenzied cackle.

LYN (CONT'D)

Somebody... touch me. You guys... come touch me. Comeandtouchme!

Two of the guests, who are lit as fuck by this point, gladly come rub and touch up on Lyn. She leans back into them -- her laughter becoming infectious.

GUEST #2

(laughing)

...what's so funny?

Now we see that those aren't tears of laughter in Lyn's eyes.

LYN

(pained but still laughing)
My mother is dead.

SMASH CUT TO: [STYLISH OPENING CREDITS]

INT. A BEDROOM IN BOYLE HEIGHTS - NEXT MORNING

We see the back of a gordita (*chubby girl*), blue manic-panic dyed hair in a razabilly-style pony tail, as she's setting up her laptop to record something. She pulls a SKULL BANDANA over her face right before pressing RECORD...

P.O.V. OF YOUTUBE VIDEO: Now we see what the internet sees, LA CHINCHE (21, uppity, super politicized, a baddass chingona with a purpose and hips) in full vlogging glory -- complete with floating screen links -- as if we had clicked play.

LA CHINCHE

(not fucking around)

Que pasa, mi raza? This is your girl La Pinche Chinche, and this morning I'm here to say BASTA to the bullshit that's transpiring in our hood. This is a manifesto, mi gente, so grab a pencil and take note. We will not take this occupation, this re-Colonization lying down. Como dijo Zapata, we're not fucking kneeling for you, putos. If you come in here replacing places and displacing people -- good working class people too -- you've got another thing coming. You're gonna see us rise up, you're going to see us --

MALE VOICE (O.C.)

MARI! Marisol! Ven a hacerme unos huevos! [*Come make me some eggs!*]

"La Chinche" wilts. Her radical demeanor dropping as she stops the video.

BACK TO REAL TIME P.O.V.: Mari pulls down the skull bandana and now we see her for the first time. She sighs.

MARI

Si, Apa! Ya voy! [*Yes, Dad. Coming!*]

And with that she shuts her laptop and shuffles out to perform her daughterly duties.

EXT./INT GOLDEN STATE FREEWAY - A HYBRID SUV - DAY

Cheeks streaked with tears, Lyn drives South on the 5 into LA. After a beat, she dials on the car phone.

EMMA'S VOICE (V.O.)

*It's Emma. Just say what you need
to say after the beep.*

(beep)

LYN

Hey, will you text me as soon as
you land? Like, while you're still
on the tarmac. Please, okay? Bye.

As she keeps driving, Lyn starts to see the familiar sights that say she's nearing home: The San Antonio Winery; the old hospitals across the newer USC Medical Complex; the abandoned rail yards. Lyn nervously takes a pull of the bright green concoction that's been sitting in her cup-holder as she passes the sign that reads "BOYLE HEIGHTS."

INT. - VIDALIA'S BUILDING - VIDALIA'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

Lyn sits uncomfortably at the dining room table. As EDDY (30-50's, warm, masculine-of-center lesbian who feels her feelings) whizzes about clumsily, bringing more food to the already brimming table. Eddy places a plate of enchiladas before Lyn.

LYN

(barely audible)

No, sorry, I'm Vegetarian...

EDDY

(steamrollering, nervous)

You should see how todo mundo's
behaving. Real stand-up. As soon as
they heard, everyone showed up.

LYN

That's really nice.

EDDY

I know. Bien touching to see the
outpouring of flan.

Both behold the grotesque amount of flan, of every variety, which covers most surfaces.

EDDY (CONT'D)

Flan is your basic mourning staple.

Eddy erupts into ugly tears. Lyn doesn't know what to do.

LYN

Oh, no.
(giving her a moment)
You okay?

EDDY

Yeah. Sorry. Man up, Eddy.

LYN

Yeah.

Lyn is saved by the bell -- well by a KNOCK on the front door. She goes to open it. It's Emma. Lyn lunges at her sister with a hug.

LYN (CONT'D)

(bursting into tears)
Oh, thank God.

The hug is only partially returned, but only because Emma doesn't go for these displays in front of strangers. Lyn clocks Emma's eyes locked on Eddy and comes to the rescue.

LYN (CONT'D)

This is Eddy.

EDDY

(to Emma)
Hi, I'm Eddy.

LYN

She was Mami's roommate.

EMMA

(hold up...)
What?

LYN

I guess, for like... extra money.

EDDY

(quickly)
The pinche recession, man.

EMMA

We're not in a recession.

EDDY

Thank God, right? Phew!
(why is she so nervous?)
Ey, it's so nice to finally meet you, I mean, not in these circumstances, pero, yeah.

(MORE)

EDDY (CONT'D)

I'd gotten a chance to meet Lyn here --

(Emma shoots Lyn a look which Lyn ignores)

-- but I'm glad I'm finally meeting you in person. Your ama no se callaba about you.

EMMA

I doubt that.

Alrighty then...

EDDY

So we're all set for tomorrow with the funeral. It's gonna be at Evergreen of course. Afterwards, we're coming back here to have the reception downstairs. That's what makes the most sense. People knew your Ama from La Japonesa, so I figured --

EMMA

You made that decision?

EDDY

Pues, I guess I did.

EMMA

Why were we not consulted?

EDDY

To tell you the truth, I'm just following your Mamacita's wishes. It's all in her page that she made online. She sorta made all her...
(trying not to lose it)
...arrangements a while ago. When she found out. Lemme know if you wanna see it.

Eddy can tell that this hits both sisters in the gut.

EDDY (CONT'D)

Why don't I give you guys some private time? I'll be... este, I'll be downstairs. I wasn't going to open the bar, but maybe I'll open.

She starts for the door...

EDDY (CONT'D)

Give a grito if you need anything.

The Hernandez sisters remain motionless as Eddy steps out...

INT. - VIDALIA'S BUILDING - VIDALIA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

A heaviness lingers in the air around the sisters.

EMMA

Who the fuck is that person?

LYN

She's mom's -- she was mom's roommate. She just told you.

EMMA

(glaring at Lyn)

Yeah. She just told me. News to me.

Lyn lowers her eyes. Emma drops it; she takes the place in...

EMMA (CONT'D)

What's with all the fucking flan?

LYN

Emma, you haven't seen her in a while, but I saw her in November and she didn't look sick. Why didn't she tell us --

EMMA

You know what? I don't even want to know what it was. And I don't need anyone telling me. The fact that she didn't want me -- us to know says everything to me.

(beat)

Hold up. Did you know?

LYN

What? No. Of course not. I told you. It was horrible to find out like that, out of the -- God, no. Of course not.

EMMA

You better not be lying. I know how you are.

(a moment, then...)

Seriously. What's with all the fucking flan?

LYN

I'm hurt too, Emma. I'm hurt that she didn't say anything to me. Because like what if she was in pain and she needed us. I know you and her never talked anymore, but I did talk to Mami, so the fact that she didn't --

EMMA

You guys talking for five minutes anytime you need some money is not "talking."

Fuck. Emma didn't mean to sting so hard.

LYN

(hurt)

What's wrong with you? Our mother is dead! Can that please override the cuntiness, just this time?

Lyn becomes a puddle of tears. Emma stands there, stifling a response. Finally, she heads for the door.

LYN (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

Emma's response is slamming the door, leaving Lyn to fend for herself, as always. Lyn's phone vibrates, she looks at the text from Juniper on the screen. It reads: **"Call me back, babe. Don't like how we left things. I want 2B there for you. Also, I need my car."** OFF Lyn, who can't deal right now...

EXT. - VIDALIA'S BUILDING - THE ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Emma ascends the stairs that lead to her old haven: the roof. She's met with a welcoming gust of wind and takes her time walking towards the roof's edge. Emma's been standing there for a moment when a pair of peering eyes scare the fuck out of her. It's the creepiest sight: A LITTLE GIRL, about eight or nine, sitting on the corner of the building with a little army of butchered-haired dolls perched next to her.

EMMA

Hey, get off that edge right now. I said, come down from there.

The kid stares back before jumping off.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Get out of here. Go. And don't come
up here again, you hear me?

The girl shoots Emma a "FUCK YOU" look before turning to go downstairs. When Emma's sure the Little Girl is gone, she turns to look out at Boyle Heights. She can see Olympic from here; the boarded up storefronts; the murals of the Virgin of Guadalupe defaced by graffiti; the stores that sell nothing and everything. All Emma can see is the reasons why she left...

EXT. EVERGREEN CEMETERY - FUNERAL - LATER

We come in and the first thing we notice as the camera travels is the great irony of the name Evergreen Cemetery -- because it is anything but. The second thing we see is the CROWD OF BAWLING MOURNERS around the CASKET -- this is no WASPY funeral choking suppressed emotions, no, at this Mexican entierro the tears and the mocos freely flow. Except for Emma's. She seems to be the only one not getting in on the wet-hanky action. The CASKET IS LOWERED which makes Lyn finally join everyone in losing her shit. Off Emma, softening, but not enough to comfort her sister, we...

INT. VIDALIA'S BUILDING - LA JAPONESA BAR - LATER

The funeral reception's in full swing. Plates of food pass from hand to hand and people are mingling and consoling one another. Lupe, goes up to Eddy, who is still a hot mess.

LUPE

Mi'ja, I'm supposed to tell you to
stop crying and to be a mujercita.
That's not me saying it. That's you-
know-who talking to me.

Eddy's face freezes into a horrific frown that then scrunches up like a lemon before she starts to all-out bawl. Oh, dear.

LUPE (CONT'D)

(talking to the air)

See? I told you she's not ready...

Lupe walks off.

OTHER END OF THE BAR:

Lyn and Emma stand awkwardly by a blown up BARRIO GLAMOUR SHOT OF THEIR MOTHER with a wreath around it.

Emma looks around, her eyes lingering on the aging portraits of 80's Mexican superstars and old ads hanging on the walls.

EMMA

God, when was the last time Mom did anything with this place? Look at these tables, they're barely standing.

LYN

(wiping her cheek)
And why do viejitas wear so much lipstick at funerals?

EMMA

(still re: Mami)
She never knew what to do with this bar. She could have done so much.

Lyn spots something across the bar.

LYN

OhmyfuckingGod.

She hides behind Emma like a teenager.

EMMA

What the hell --

LYN

Emma. Look right there, 4 o'clock, no, 2 o'clock... or whatever time is right there to the left.

EMMA

That's nothing near 4 o'clock.

LYN

OhmyGah. It's Johnny.

Emma finally spots JOHNNY TREJO (28, Lyn's first love, a stand-up guy) looking dapper in his blue suit.

LYN (CONT'D)

Holy shitfuck. Why didn't I think I'd see him today?

EMMA

That is Johnny. And that's definitely some kind of wifey or baby mama he's got with him.

LYN
Shut up, what?

Lyn looks again and sure enough, a PREGNANT WOMAN is with him, now holding on to his arm, looking very territorial.

LYN (CONT'D)
Oh, God. I know her. We were in
homerom together.
(beat)
Her name is Letty, I think. She
used to call me 90210. Bitch. Eeww.

CUAHUTEMOC (60'S, a 'Chicano-saurus' and an original Brown Beret, once activist stud of the barrio, long-time tenant of Vidalia's) approaches the girls. Emma stiffens.

CUAUHTÉMOC
(friendly, familiar)
Man-oh-man-oh-man. Mira nomas who's
come back to the fold. My girls,
all grown up and fancified.

LYN
(hugging him)
Como esta, Temo?

CUAUHTÉMOC
You know, maintaining. I'm real
sorry about the reason that brought
you back, though.
(he zeroes on Emma)
You okay there, Miss Chicago?

Emma nods sharply, but it's weird, it's like Emma can't look him in the eye.

CUAUHTÉMOC (CONT'D)
Hope you know we're real proud of
you. Por siempre.

Emma finally looks up to hold Cuauhtémoc's gaze. A strange moment between them which he breaks with:

CUAUHTÉMOC (CONT'D)
Again, I'm sorry about your moms.

Emma nods awkwardly. Temo squeezes Lyn's hand and goes off.

LYN
Are you okay?

EMMA

What? Why?

LYN

Emma, come on.

Oh, wait a minute... No, no, no.

EMMA

I don't know how you got that into your head. He never touched me. Nothing ever happened.

LYN

Okay.

Lyn drops it for now. They stand there; Emma looking after Cuauhtémoc as she swallows blades; Lyn gawking at Johnny and his tacky preggerz.

EMMA

How much longer do we have to endure this shit?

Lyn gives Emma a concerned look, but doesn't respond. They see TWO NEIGHBORHOOD WOMEN approaching to pay their respects...

EMMA (CONT'D)

I can't. I can't talk to any more of these Living La Vida Locas today. Nobody wants to say hi to me anyway.

Emma peaces out straight for the door.

LYN

(to herself)

That's probably true...

Lyn is waiting helplessly as the two women get closer when a GUT-WRENCHING WAIL is heard from the bar. It's Eddy...

EDDY

Dejame! Dejame, Yoli!!

YOLI (a chubby lesbian), as well as a protective THRONG OF DYKES, surround Eddy attempting to subdue her in case she goes HAM, as she tends to do. Lyn approaches and overhears:

PREGNANT WOMAN

Siempre so dramatic, La Eddy.

Eddy BREAKS A BOTTLE of Mezcal on the counter and puts the broken shard semi-close to her neck which causes a GASP from the crowd...

YOLI
Don't do it, Eddy!

EDDY
Stand the fuck back, Yoli!

This is when Johnny steps in. Cutting through the madness as if he walked on pure air.

JOHNNY
(calm, firm, steady)
Hey, man, this is not the way. Look at what you're doing and look around. You think all this gente could handle another funeral? You'd put them all through that again? Come on, man. You don't want this.

The crowd is mesmerized. Including drama-king Eddy. Lyn can't take her eyes off Johnny as he takes the broken bottle away from Eddy. Everyone lets out a sigh of relief.

YOLI
(to Manuel/a)
Manuel/a, will you play already?

MANUEL/A (a gender-bending musician in a modern zoot-suit) goes up to the little stage with their guitar and starts singing Juanga's "Amor Eterno." The crowd goes back to normal as Lyn sees Johnny headed to the back. She follows...

INT. LA JAPONESA BAR - BACK AREA/STORAGE CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

When Lyn catches up with Johnny, he's by the bathrooms.

LYN
Hey.

A long fucking tension-filled beat.

JOHNNY
Hello.
(beat)
Looking for a broom to clean the glass.

LYN
Here, maybe in the closet?

They both go into the storage closet. Lyn finds a broom and grabs it. The air between them is awkward and charged.

LYN (CONT'D)
You look fantastic.
(he doesn't respond; she
hands him the broom)
Is that your... is that your wife?

JOHNNY
My fiance. You know her.

LYN
Letty, right?

JOHNNY
Yeah. Alright, I'm gonna...
(starting for door, then)
I'm real sorry about your mom.

LYN
Thanks. Thank you.

Johnny has made it to the threshold when...

LYN (CONT'D)
(bursting into tears)
It's so hard Johnny, like to think
that my Mami's really gone, you
know? I can't even say the words
out loud...

Lyn is bawling now which is Johnny's kryptonite -- just anyone crying. Fuck. In spite of himself, he gets closer to Lyn and puts his hand on her arm -- She looks up, wretched, destroyed, her big eyes pleading, as we...

CUT TO:

Lyn is on a crate, legs in an "M" froggy-position, with Johnny's face deep between her legs. She grinds his face like a feral cat as she pulls his hair. She's so in the throes, which makes Johnny crazy -- All his decorum and steadiness from before, completely gone. He's like a rabid dog with her. She pulls back his head and licks his face of her, then kisses his mouth as she brings him up to her...

...Johnny stands in front of her, unzipping as Lyn sucks and bites his face. Finally he manages to lower his pants and he lifts her from the crate and onto his crotch. A moment while they fiddle with the penetration logistics before they get going. Johnny bounces Lyn on his cock, and Lyn rides expertly, never stopping the biting and licking...

...He shoves her against a dirty wall and really goes to town before finishing. The moment is intense but quick. After he cums, they remain suspended for a moment before he puts her down and pulls up his pants. They stand there, panting, glistening, looking at each other incredulously...

LYN (CONT'D)

Now what? Back to the baby mama?

JOHNNY

(stiffening)

She's not my baby mama. She's my fiance.

LYN

That's what I meant.

JOHNNY

Oh, man. How could I fucking forget Miss Superior ass Lynda Alvarez.

LYN

What? She's pregnant, that's all I meant.

JOHNNY

Yeah. With my baby. And that doesn't make her a baby mama. God, I'm a pendejo.

LYN

Oh, don't do that. And don't play the games. We can be grown about this. You came because you wanted to see me, and that's fine --

JOHNNY

You still think everything is all about you, don't you? I came because Eddy's good people and her wife just died. That's why I came.

LYN

Her what?

WTF??? OFF Lyn's dumbstruck-ass face...

EXT. ACROSS FROM VIDALIA'S BUILDING - SIDEWALK - SAME TIME

Emma taking a breather across the street, staring at the faded sign that reads "La Japonesa" for a bit, before turning to look across at a VATO VENTURES POSTER.

Something draws her gaze to the roof -- that weird Little Girl from last night is standing there, peering down at her.

VAPING GUY

You know my grandfather worked for the real Japonesa, the one you all named the bar after.

Emma pivots to see who's talking: It's VLADIMIR (30's, Serbian-Mexican, sweet and charming). He's VAPING. Emma looks back at the roof; the girl's gone.

VAPING GUY (CONT'D)

(re: vaporizer)

Sorry, does it bother you?

Emma shakes her head -- Why is this guy talking to her?

VAPING GUY (CONT'D)

(genuinely charming)

You don't remember me, do you? We used to live over on Soto. My mom and your mom used to volunteer at Casa together.

EMMA

(yeah, don't remember you)

Sorry.

VAPING GUY

And I used to always see you, just walking around. Anyhoo, nice to meet you -- again.

(pointing to himself)

Vladimir Lopez. My deepest condolences to you.

EMMA

Thanks.

A beat as if preparing to say something about loss, then:

VLADIMIR

What are you guys thinking of doing with the building?

(then)

Like I said, I grew up here so I understand from a very particular vantage point what's happening with the neighborhood. So if you ever want to talk options--

EMMA

And what exactly is happening to the neighborhood, from your vantage point?

VLADIMIR

It's a fucking gold rush. Pardon my French. And it might not be bad to get some of this gold. Especially because as I understand, you guys are under a couple of mortgages.

(off Emma's wincing; it's news to her)

Bueno, get in touch if you're thinking of selling. I can be a bridge between you and a company that would be very interested in buying your building. And because, you know, I know you, I could --

EMMA

(sarcastic)

Right. We go way back.

Oooh, he likes that feistiness...

VLADIMIR

I'd just make sure you'd walk away with a profit. More than it's worth with all the debt. Think about it and call me. Shoot, call me anyway.

Vlad beams Emma a flirty smile when Lyn interrupts...

LYN

(to Emma)

Um. Sorry. Emma? I think we might need to talk.

CUT TO:

INT. - VIDALIA'S BUILDING - VIDALIA'S APARTMENT - LATER

We come in hot as the girls are mid-confrontation with Eddy, who cowers in the corner of the kitchen.

EMMA

How long?!

EDDY

Full on married? Just two years.

EMMA
(so fucking disgusted)
That fucking liar.

EDDY
Ey. No. We're not gonna say feo
things about your ama, okei?

EMMA
Wait a minute.
(to Lyn)
Did you know?

LYN
I didn't know they got married, no!

EMMA
But did you know?

LYN
I didn't know -- but I didn't not
know.

EMMA
Fucking Lyn...

LYN
I mean, I come home and Mami's got
a roommate? It was a little weird.
But it wasn't any of my business,
you know?

Emma goes for the iPad and shoves it at Eddy.

EMMA
Pull up the will from that page.

Eddy does so. As they wait, Emma flashes her rage unto Lyn:

EMMA (CONT'D)
I can't believe you never said a
fucking thing to me, Lyn. I could
smash your forehead with this
fucking pan, right now.

LYN
Jesus! Get a hold of yourself.

Eddy gives Emma back the iPad, with the will pulled up.

LYN (CONT'D)
What does it say?

After reading for a beat, Emma's eyes shoot up at Eddy.

EDDY

(bien defensive)

Ey, that was your Ama's idea. She's the one who wanted it that way.

EMMA

Just so you know, this is never happening.

(to Lyn)

Grab your purse.

Emma heads out and Lyn does what she's told and follows...

EXT. - VIDALIA'S BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Emma walks out reading the will, with Lyn trailing behind.

LYN

What does it say?

Emma keeps reading as they stop in front of the building.

LYN (CONT'D)

(self-absorbed)

God, why didn't I mentally prepare to be dealing with a will right now?

EMMA

(re: will)

So fucking phony. Of course she'd leave her dyke-wife the apartment. What a cunt!

LYN

Hey, I'm sorry, but you're going to have to stop being such an unbelievable bitch about Mami! I'm serious --

The girl's fight is INTERRUPTED by two dudes in an OLD CHEVY:

STUPID DUDE

Pinches lesbianas!

The girls pause to realize the dudes where shouting at them for standing in front of 'La Japonesa.' Then, in concert:

LYN

Chinga tu madre puto!

EMMA

Fuck you, asshole!

They stand there reeling as the jerks drive off. Emma decides to leave the fight alone and goes back to the iPad.

LYN

(re: hecklers, to herself)
Imagine how Mami must have been
treated all the time...

(beat)

Emma, I don't want to get into it
with you about every little thing,
please. Can we just, like pretend
to be sisters for like just the 24
hours we're here?

Emma gives Lyn a shrug of concession.

EMMA

(re: the will)
Alright, so Mom's left us the
building. All of it, except for her
apartment.

Emma starts walking again, Lyn keeps up next to her.

LYN

That goes to the wife?
(off Emma's nod)
I mean, I guess that makes sense.

EMMA

(raging)
Over my fucking dead body. I'll
fucking take that carpet-muncher to
court before I let that happen.

LYN

Emma, you sound gross right now.

EMMA

Please understand that I give zero
fucks that mom was a fucking
bulldyke.

(working herself up again)

But, is it not crystal clear by now
why she sent us off? Always telling
people that she wanted us to have
an education, to get out because
she couldn't get out -- all
bullshit! She wanted carte blanche
so she could put her face in every
pussy on the East Side!

Emma storms into a TAQUERIA as Lyn is left trying to get that image out of her mind. A BRIGADE of about nine YOUNG WOMEN ON BIKES, WEARING BANDANAS OVER THEIR FACES swoosh past in dangerous formation. Lyn decides to follow Emma inside...

INT. TAQUERIA - CONTINUOUS

Emma is already at the counter ordering when Lyn catches up.

EMMA

(in perfect Spanish, btw)
Me podria dar una orden de asada,
por favor? Gracias.

LYN

(re: Emma's Spanish)
That always freaks me out.

EMMA

What? That I learned proper Spanish
so I wouldn't have to speak Pocho
Spanglish like mom's?
(then)
You want something?

Lyn squirms at the sight of the greasy meat being cooked in the back.

LYN

God, no. Thanks.

TIME CUT:

Emma scarfs down a grotesque number of tacos as Lyn watches. Her PHONE VIBRATES. Lyn checks it, makes a face and puts it back in her pocket.

EMMA

Was that *Jubilee*?

LYN

Shut up. You know his name is
Juniper and yes. I'll call him back
later. He wants his car back.
(beat)
We're opening a store. Well, I'm
opening a store and Juniper's
investing in it.

EMMA

Oh, God.

LYN

No, you'll love this. I've created this line of Aztec inspired lotions. All fair-sourced ingredients. I'll give you some samples. I'm really excited.

EMMA

Is this like the scrap metal jewelry line that I gave you money for?

LYN

(correcting)

Found object accessories. And I'm still going to pay you back for that.

EMMA

Right.

LYN

I am.

(beat)

I knew that was going to come up right away...

Lyn's obviously wounded. Emma tries to soften the blow...

EMMA

Alright, Maria Felix. You know you don't have to pay me back.

Lyn can't with Emma right now. Emma pulls up the will again.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Okay, this thing says that mom would like us to manage the building or have the Bull Dagger do it, if we can reach an agreement. But there's no way in hell.

(then)

We should sell it. I met someone who would help us sell it. Fast.

OFF Lyn, all this "adulthood" is just too much...

EXT. BOYLE HEIGHTS - SIDEWALK - MINUTES LATER

Emma and Lyn are now walking back from the taqueria.

LYN

What about the Venturas? I'm pretty sure the Venturas are undocumented. Would they be able to rent somewhere else?

EMMA

Lyn, like you really care.

LYN

Of course I care. Hey, and given what happened with Papi --

EMMA

(darkening)
Don't. Stop.

LYN

--I would think that would be the first thing you would think about.

EMMA

I try never to think about that, actually.

They walk for a bit, Emma lost in her thoughts about Papi...

EMMA (CONT'D)

(defensively)
You have to remember that there's also a bar involved and that requires actual attention. We're not staying here to run a hot mess of a bar.

Lyn's become distracted by the storefront they're passing...

LYN

Wait, what? An actual coffee shop in Boyle Heights?

Lyn doesn't wait for her sister, she goes in. Emma's left staring at the sign that says "**Pfftt Cafe.**" She's like "what?" How do you even say that outloud...?

INT. BOYLE HEIGHTS - PFFTT COFFEE SHOP - CONTINUOUS

When Emma walks in, Lyn's already marveling at the menu.

LYN

They've got almond creamer!

Emma does a sweep of the place. In the corner, a "POET" is reading names into a mic as a BARRIO DANDY, with a handlebar mustache and a tartan vest, plays the mandolin. Bright paintings for sale adorn the walls and the tables are covered with ironic Loteria deco-page. Emma's eyes linger on a sign which reads: "B.Y.O.Botella." But what gets Emma's attention is the clientele: young; Latinix; cultured.

LYN (CONT'D)

I ordered a Dirty Chai-cano. Extra cinnamon. Who knew there's a Chipster scene in BH now. Don't you wish we would have had a coffee shop when we were growing up?

Emma turns back to give the cafe another look-over...

EXT. BOYLE HEIGHTS - OUTSIDE A BIRRIA RESTAURANT - LATER

From a distance, we see a WHITE GIRL, early 20's, speaking into a mic as a HIPSTER CAMERA MAN shoots her for one of those "Insider Food" shows that discovers ethnic-food fads.

WHITE GIRL

Birria is a total steal at \$4 a bowl or a buck fifty per taco. It's the goat stew you never thought you needed, but trust me, you so do. So come on down to --

Out of nowhere...

VARIOUS FEMALE VOICES

NO! Nope./ No way, Becky!/ Cease and desist!

Now we see that the CYCLE BRIGADE from earlier, has descended upon the gentrifying duo -- including La Chinche. They all shoot the 'Becky' and the camera man with their smartphones.

LA CHINCHE

I see you, you fucking Becky! I see you trying to Columbus our shit. But birria don't need discovering, cuz birria's been here!

BRIGADIER

(threatening)

And it's pronounced "Bee-RRee-uh."
So act like you know!

WHITE GIRL

Seriously, we're just here to sing
its praises, that's all.

LA CHINCHE

Why? So you can hashtag the shit
out of it so nobody around here can
afford a plate of birria no more?
Next thing we know nobody will
afford a place to live neither?
Fuck that.

WHITE GIRL

Wait, what?

LA CHINCHE

You heard me: Make like a tree,
guera!

CAMERA MAN

Hey, man. It's all good.

LA CHINCHE

No, "man" it's not "all good,"
Warby Parker. You better get to
steppin'.

P.O.V. SHIFT: Emma and Lyn, passing by on their way back from
the coffee shop, are within earshot of the spectacle. Their
gawking unfortunately catches La Chinche's attention.

LA CHINCHE (CONT'D)

(to Lyn and Emma)

What are you looking at, pinches
gringas aguadas? Keep on movin'!

EMMA

(bristling at the word)

Fuck you, you don't tell me where I
can go.

The Brigadiers do an old school "ooooh!"

LYN

Oh, no. Emma, you don't do that
here.

LA CHINCHE

What the pedos did you say to me?

Chinche steps to Emma, chest puffed-up and ready for a pleito -- This gives the real gringos a chance to escape -- Emma doesn't back down. La Chinche rips down her bandana and gets close to Emma's face.

EMMA

What, is that you doing Chola 101
or are you trying to kiss me?

BRIGADIER/ BRIGADIER #3

Aaaww, this bitch./Oh, heeell nah!

La Chinche gears up to do something, when:

LYN

'perate, are you Marisol Estrada?
Little Mari?

Marisol/Chinche turns to Lyn, baffled.

LYN (CONT'D)

It's me! Lyn Hernandez. You're
Johnny's little sister! Oh, my God!
Look at you! Hi! You remember my
sister Emma, don't you?

MARISOL

(looks back at Emma)

Oh, yeah. I remember you used to
walk around here all bougie and
stuck up.

LYN

Yup. That's her.

EMMA

What are you all doing out here
harassing those people?

BRIGADIER GIRL #2

She didn't just say "harassing"...

MARISOL

We're here defending our
neighborhood. We didn't just quit
it like somebody else I know.

EMMA

Have you even considered that maybe
that Birria restaurant could use
the business? When was the last
time you went in there and bought a
plate of birria?

LYN
Don't. Emma, please.

EMMA
Forget it. Not my problem.

Emma starts off.

BRIGADER GIRL
Did you hear that *vendida*?

MARISOL
(shouting after Emma)
Yeah, I see you Tia Tom!

The Brigade reacts with different levels of disgust.

LYN
(starting after Emma)
It was good seeing you, Mari. Hey,
please say hello to your dad for
me.

MARISOL
Sorry, but I won't be doing that.
You're *persona non-grata* 'round our
house. You messed my brother up
pretty bad, Lyn Hernandez and he
thinks you're a fucking puta! PUTA!

OFF Lyn, stung, and struggling to catch up to Emma, who's
taking out her phone...

EXT. VIDALIA'S BUILDING - SIDEWALK

Emma's been on the phone talking to Vladimir about selling
the building since they left La Chinche and her friends. Lyn
has followed pensively the whole way.

EMMA
...And how quickly do you think
that could happen? Okay. Well, I'd
just have to track down all the
paperwork but yeah, I'd love to
meet them. Sure...

Emma goes into the building as Lyn lingers...

INT. VIDALIA'S BUILDING - HALLWAY OUTSIDE OF LUPE'S APARTMENT

Lyn shuffles down the hallway but doesn't follow Emma (still on the phone) into Vidalia's apartment. She stops by Doña Lupe's door and stands there for a moment before knocking.

LUPE
(opening door)
Te estaba esperando, mi'ja! [*I was waiting for you, sweetie.*]

Lupe lets her in, Lyn enters reluctantly...

INT. VIDALIA'S BUILDING - VIDALIA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Emma's at the tail end of her phone call.

EMMA
...Great. Okay. I'll take a look at everything and call you back. Okay. Thanks.

She hangs up and sees Eddy looming near by.

EDDY
That was pinche Vlad, wasn't it? He already came sniffing around here. Those people he works for? They're not good people? They're buying up everything, tearing it down, building it back up in a way that no one can afford it.

EMMA
Somebody's affording it.

EDDY
So it's the money. I know you don't give a rat's ass about the good gente that live in this building. People who have lived here decades. Fine if you don't care about them. If all you care about is making some money, then lease the bar to me. Don't take the only bar mujeres like me have in this neighborhood.

EMMA
Because you and mom have made it such a success so far, right?

Ugh. Emma grabs her bag and storms out of the apartment...

INT. VIDALIA'S BUILDING - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Emma's steaming and headed straight for the stairs when she sees Lyn emerge from her brief visit with the Señora. Lyn's face is wet with tears and she's got little pieces of cilantro on her head.

EMMA

That fucking marimacha just tried to give me the whole --

LYN

(interrupting)

We can't sell the building.

OFF Emma, a "the hell we can't" stankface forming...

CUT TO:

EXT./INT. VIDALIA'S BUILDING - LA JAPONESA - MINUTES LATER

Lyn paces and waves her arms emphatically, as Emma listens.

LYN

What if we actually did something with this place? Because have you looked around? Boyle Heights is like basically ready for a --

EMMA

It's a fucking "gold rush"?

LYN

Yes! Exactly. This would be like taking back our neighborhood.

EMMA

You and I don't give a rat's ass about this neighborhood, Lyn.

LYN

That's not true.

(then, adamant)

I'm not selling my part. Sorry, but I'm not. This is our bar, our birthright --

EMMA

Oh, Jesus.

LYN

I mean it. It's our turn with it. I know that now.

EMMA

Does this have anything to do with you visiting a certain bruja today?

LYN

Don't call her that. And maybe.

(coming close to Emma)

Emmi, I know you would know how to make this work. You're so good with business things. There has to be a way for this place to make money.

EMMA

Of course there's a way. This fucking bar has a liquor license which is almost impossible to get, that alone should make bank. And that would be great for someone who wants to run a bar. But I don't want to run a fucking bar. And neither do you.

LYN

I do, though. I want to run this bar.

EMMA

No. You'd lose interest in a week and I'd be left cleaning up your mess, Lyn. As always. Besides, aren't you about to open up your little store with Jebediah?

LYN

(sad, grounded)

Juniper's never going to open a store with me.

EMMA

(can't blame him)

Well.

Lyn tries her ace:

LYN

Emma, we owe it to Mami.

EMMA
(with fierceness)
Sorry. But no. That's not gonna
work. Fuck her.

Emma jolts out of there, leaving Lyn even more determined
than before...

EXT. BOYLE HEIGHTS - BOYLE HEIGHTS/MARIACHI PLAZA - DUSK

Emma emerges from the glass doors and tries to put distance
between her and her mother's bar...

...She walks through the neighborhood until she makes her way
to Mariachi Plaza -- completely changed from the last time
she saw it. The one constant: the mariachis waiting around to
be hired. She's walking past the steps of the Kiosk when a
HELICOPTER flies by, making a ruckus. Nobody but Emma gives
it a second thought; unsettled by the noise, she peers up at
it, when a familiar voice greets her from the steps:

CUAUHTÉMOC
(rolling a cigarette)
You forgot about the ghetto birds,
huh?
(Emma doesn't answer, then)
So, I hear this is only going to be
a short visit.

EMMA
Ah, one of the many things I don't
miss: How fast gossip spreads
around here.

CUAUHTÉMOC
It's not mitote when it might
affect one's living situation.
That's just good Intel.

EMMA
Sorry, but I wouldn't begin to know
what to do with so much debt.

Temo lights his cigarette ceremoniously, then...

CUAUHTÉMOC
You not gonna sit down?
(Emma hesitates, but
finally sits)
¿Sabes qué? I didn't recognize you
first I saw you.
(MORE)

CUAUHTÉMOC (CONT'D)

I said to myself, 'E' doesn't look like herself anymore. And I don't mean that color of hair you got on your head, I mean, you don't look like you.

Temo reaches across Emma's face and GENTLY BRUSHES A TENDRIL OF HAIR from her cheek. Emma jolts back. She glares at him a "how dare you" look. Student and teacher stare at each other before Emma abruptly stands up and starts walking back.

EXT. MARIACHI PLAZA/STREETS OF BOYLE HEIGHTS - NIGHT

There's a different tinge to Boyle Heights as Emma walks away from Mariachi plaza. It's as if the murals come alive when she walks past them -- the painted faces shifting, the eyes of the drawn subjects following her as she goes. Emma is turning at the crosswalk when she notices the fucking Little Girl from the hallway, crossing the street all by her fucking self as she holds a RED BALLOON.

EMMA

Hey! Get out of the fucking street
you little maniac!

Emma rushes to save her from getting run over, but the Little Girl stares back unfazed.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I'm walking you back. Come on.

They start walking. Emma feeling more awkward than the girl, who's all about her red balloon. After a block or so, they ease into it as they make their way through Boyle Heights. The sidewalk seems to sparkle under this setting light and Emma takes in the lasting hardiness of the place. Tradition after tradition: Jewish, Japanese, Mexican -- the immigrant imprint branded at every turn. In the distance, the looming downtown giants in the form of silhouetted skyscrapers stand witness as the girls stroll past a 60's THEMED MURAL with very distinct United Farm Worker's imagery; it's as if the scene came to life as they walk by...

EXT. VIDALIA'S BUILDING - NIGHT

Emma and the Girl make it back home and can see inside "La Japonesa." It's some sort of drunken Mariachi Memorial underway. Eddy leads the chorus as she holds on to that giant picture of Vidalia. The Little Girl runs inside the building. Before giving the bar one last glance, Emma goes inside too.

INT. VIDALIA'S BUILDING - VIDALIA'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Emma enters her mother's apartment to MUSIC coming from the master bedroom. Why does that song sound familiar? Emma walks towards the room to find Lyn sitting on the bed, looking at an old video (plugged in from an old handheld camera, onto the flat screen TV) of six-year-old Lyn and nine-year-old Emma DANCING TO SELENA'S "Bi di bi di bomb om" -- guided by their mother, who's dancing and cheering them on as the girls prance around. Emma sits next to Lyn letting the images wash through her. Then:

FATHER'S VOICE (O.C.)
A ver, chiquitas, asi como tu mami.
[Come on, sweeties, just like your
mom.]

The girls give out a GASP at hearing their dad's voice.

LYN
 (whispering)
 Papi...

This is almost too much to bear for Emma who -- for the first time in far too long -- let's the tears come. Lyn lets her sister have that cry she's been due. After a long moment...

LYN (CONT'D)
 Emma, we can't sell it.

Emma doesn't reply -- her eyes remain glued to the TV.

We PULL BACK on the two sisters taking in their former selves, to the sight of their mother, full of life... and we keep pulling back to the sound of the infectious "bi-di-bi-di-bom-bom-ing" all mashed-up with the out-of-tune Mariachi sing-along, seeping in from "La Japonesa" downstairs...

...until we travel down and through the streets of Boyle Heights to land back on that 60's themed FARM WORKERS MURAL we saw before. Only this time our eyes linger on the image of a Little Girl in faded paint, smiling as she HOLDS A RED BALLOON.

END OF PILOT