

QUEEN OF THE SOUTH

by

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BEGIN FLASHFORWARD

We HEAR Azealia Banks & Pharrell's ATM Jam as we CUT TO:

EXT. SANTA MONICA, CALIFORNIA AIRFIELD - DAY

The blazing sun SHINES over a parked Airbus A380 on an empty tarmac. Before the aircraft stands a woman flanked by a quartet of **MALE BODYGUARDS** (30s to 40s, alternately conservative-to-tricked out in flashy Western gear) and a plainly-dressed, sunglasses-clad **FEMALE ASSISTANT** (30). They're OUT OF FOCUS... but as they walk towards us, they come into view--

The woman has her black hair severely parted in the middle, pulled back; Gucci sunglasses covering her eyes, tasteful lipcolor, and a white Missoni suit on. This is **TERESA MENDOZA** (28).

TERESA (V.O.)
My name is Teresa Mendoza.

QUICK CUTS: Of Teresa being SEATED into a BLACK BENTLEY--

--INSIDE THE CAR: her Bodyguards fielding CALLS, asking her hushed questions-- she replies with only nods or shakes of her head--

TERESA (V.O.)
I am from Mexico.

--OUTSIDE a MALIBU ESTATE: that would be ostentatious if it wasn't so tasteful-- Teresa WALKS out of her car--

TERESA (V.O.)
I was born poor, without a future.

--FOYER: Greeted by a DOZEN STAFF who remove her coat for her, avoiding her gaze-- BEYOND THE CENTRAL STAIRCASE, A BACKYARD WITH AN INFINITY POOL THAT'S HOME TO A HALF-DOZEN BEAUTIFUL YOUNG THINGS (male and female, 20s) WHO TAN, SWIM, PASS JOINTS, DO BUMPS OF COKE--

--MASTER BEDROOM: a rococo dream of gold and marble opulence, TERESA SHEDS her clothes and walks into her massive bathroom to run a bath as we PAN AWAY modestly to SURVEY the ARTWORK on the walls, the massive bed, matching walk-in closets devoted to both DESIGNER CLOTHES and AUTOMATIC WEAPONS--

TERESA (V.O.)
I am one of the wealthiest women in the world.

--Teresa EMERGES from the bathroom in a robe, removing her earrings--

TERESA (V.O.)
*And in less than five minutes, I
 will be dead.*

Teresa LOOKS to her left, out the window, **as a HELICOPTER SUDDENLY DROPS INTO VIEW RIGHT OUTSIDE THE HOUSE**-- her eyes WIDENING--

--and TWO MEN HANG OUT of the CHOPPER with AK-47s--

--**and they FIRE!!!** Teresa LEAPS for the SAFETY of her floor, behind the bed as the entire room is DECIMATED BY BULLETS-- priceless art, objets d'art--

--Teresa INCHES her way towards her WEAPONS CLOSET-- there's a PAUSE in the gunfire as she ATTEMPTS to STAND UP to get inside the walk-in area--

--and a STRAY BULLET HITS HER in the side of the head--

We HEAR Chavela Vargas' Piensa En Mi PLAY as we switch to

SLOW MOTION: as Teresa begins to SPIN from the impact, her HAIR SPLAYING out, a SPRAY of BLOOD dusting the white walls as she starts to fall to the ground, balletic--

TERESA (V.O.)
*You're probably thinking that I had
 it coming. Maybe I did. Maybe not.
 Look, I only started with all this
 gangsta crap just to get you
 gringos' attention. You guys love
 to watch pretty shit go boom. So
 did I, if I'm gonna be honest.
 (beat)
 But before we go on, I got
 something else to say.*

We PULL AWAY from Teresa's BODY, her DYING eyes FLUTTERING--

TERESA (V.O.)
*Go ahead. Get it out of your
 system. Shake your heads get all
 that judgmental shit out of the way
 now.
 (beat)
 This is my story. You won't like
 me, you already don't, and guess
 what: I don't give a fuck. I don't
 need you to like me. I just want
 you to need me.*

EXT. MANSION BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

As we PAN the dead bodies of the pool **PARTIERS** strewn about the area-- the pool RED with blood-- drug paraphernalia dashed about.

TERESA (V.O.)

Why do you do drugs? 'Cause life sucks. I mean, you can sit there all high and mighty because you don't know an ounce from a kilo, but guess what?

(beat)

Every time you smoked weed in high school or at your stupid weekend dinner parties, I was there. Every time you scored illegal Adderall in college, or got a gram for your shitty bachelorette thing, I was there too. I was always around when you needed me. You wanted out from the life you're in, 'cause you were too much of a pussy to make the big decisions like me. You wanted to escape. So I let you. You're welcome, pendejos.

(beat)

OK. Let's start at the beginning.

END FLASHFORWARD**INT. JALISCO, MEXICO HOME - DAY**

Title Card: *Today*

TERESA (21, former street girl who landed well, nouveau riche accoutrements) walks through her overdone upper-middle-class home in a robe past a SMILING HOUSEKEEPER, past a PAINTING of her and her fiance, the handsome **GUERO** (mid-30s, more on him later), into her

MASTER BATHROOM

Where she drops her ROBE to the Chavela Vargas tune and steps into a bath. She LIGHTS a joint, luxuriates in the suds. **She's WATCHING a HORROR MOVIE on a little TV on the edge of the tub-- she COVERS her EYES at a scary moment, giggling.** **THEN:** A CELL PHONE from somewhere in the house starts to RING insistently. Beat. She LOOKS at the phone next to her-- it's not the one ringing. Teresa's face FALLS.

Teresa gets out of the bath and WALKS into her

BEDROOM

To REALIZE the RINGING is coming from inside a DRAWER. She REACHES inside and retrieves a black Tracfone... that's RINGING. Teresa's face falls. After a long beat, she ANSWERS IT.

TERESA

...Yes.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

Guero is dead.

(long beat)

They wasted him, Teresa.

TERESA

I--

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

You have to leave your house. Don't wait. Just go.

(beat)

Run. ...Run, *Teresita*.

The CLICK of the line hanging up. We CLOSE IN on the STUNNED TERESA, who can't even think--

TIME CUT

Teresa DASHING about the house, panicking, GRABBING a few random things-- a small bag, some clothes, her wallet and IDs, and then RUNS OUT OF FRAME into a--

EXT. MEXICAN CITY STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Teresa walking quickly, resisting the urge to RUN, through the busy streets, EYES darting everywhere, clutching her bag-- she DUCKS into a marketplace, dodging bodies, salespeople, MUSICIANS-- Teresa, gasping for breath, comes to a STOP, having HUSTLED ALONG for a dozen blocks. She ATTEMPTS to straighten up, look a little less frazzled-- she SURVEYS the crowd around her--

--TERESA'S POV: the FACES of young and old, male and female, innocent-to-shifty looking. Anyone could be watching her.

She TAKES a few steps into a

CAFE

And sits, nervously lighting a cigarette.

VOICE (O.S.)

Hey, girl.

Teresa JUMPS-- and then we SEE it's just a WAITRESS, smiling.

WAITRESS

What's it gonna be? You solo?

TERESA

I-- uh. Nopal.

WAITRESS

OK. Where's that fine-ass man of yours today? Working?

Teresa, ashen, NODS. The WAITRESS strolls off to COUNT CHANGE for another customer--

WAITRESS (O.S.) (CONT'D)

OK-- 800, 900--

Off Teresa's DISTANT look-- the face of a woman trying to comprehend just how her life took this turn--

TERESA (V.O.)

You're probably wondering how I got myself in this mess in the first place.

And we CUT TO:

START FLASHBACK

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Teresa, at 17, looking a little rough-around-the-edges, tube-top and short-shorts, on a corner, EXCHANGING American dollars to a car of **YOUNG TOURISTS** (20s, drunk, male driver, female passenger)--

TERESA (V.O.)

It's just 'cause of one simple drug.

TERESA

1000, 1100. ...Here.

She HANDS them the PESOS, and we WATCH her silently COVET their belongings in the car: the NAME-LABEL clothes, SHOES, CELLPHONES. The driver's WALLET, fat with American dollars.

DRUNK GIRL

(eyes on Teresa)

Let's go, Chad.

The CAR speeds off. Behind Teresa, her **CAMBIADOR BOSS** (50s, fat, lecherous) sidles up behind her.

CAMBIADOR BOSS
Need more cash, *mi novia*?

He FEELS UP her ass and SLIDES another WAD of PESOS into the back of her shorts, taking her STACK of American Dollars. She SMILES at him passively, and he WALKS AWAY. JUST THEN: a BLACK BRONCO pulls up. Teresa PEERS at the DRIVER.

TERESA (V.O.)
One I was never able to kick...

BEGIN SLOW MOTION

The WINDOW LOWERS: inside is **GUERO DAVILA** (30, blond Chicano, very handsome-- a combination of devil's eyes and the boy-next-door's kind voice). He TURNS to look at her like a living fantasy. His NAME APPEARS on the SCREEN as she SPEAKS IT ALOUD: G-U-E-R-O.

TERESA (V.O.)
...Men.
(beat)
His name was Guero. For you white people out there, it's pronounced "Where-oh." Got it? Now you try.

END SLOW MOTION

Teresa APPROACHES the Bronco.

GUERO
Hey.

In the backseat are **CHINO** (20s, wiry and cocky) and his girlfriend **BRENDA** (20, overly done up, her makeup almost masking her natural beauty), making out. Guero PULLS out a cigarette.

GUERO (CONT'D)
You got a light?

BRENDA
(to Teresa)
Oh my God, look at you. You are so pretty. Chino, look at her. *Put a madre.* You're too fucking pretty to be doin' this shit, honey. You wanna come dancing with us? We're goin' to Circus--

CHINO
(to Teresa)
She's high. Ignore her.
(off Brenda's look)
(MORE)

CHINO (CONT'D)

What? OK, she's pretty.

(to Teresa, laughing)

You're beautiful! You two could be twins!

They start making out. Teresa gives a faint smile, looks at Guero. Guero reaches down and pulls out a crisp, clean stack of American dollars. Teresa's eyes barely widen. She EXCHANGES her stack for his. He OFFERS her a cigarette. Teresa takes it.

GUERO

Got no light, huh.

She SHAKES her head. After a moment, Guero produces a gold-plated ZIPPO with a design on it: it's St. Malverde in bright colors. He LIGHTS his smoke, then hers, and SLIPS the Zippo into her hand.

GUERO (CONT'D)

(winks)

Now you do.

And he DRIVES away. She GAZES at the Saint on the lighter.

LATER

Teresa walking along the street when she SEES the Black Bronco parked outside CIRCUS NIGHTCLUB. She stops, considers it.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - MOMENTS LATER

The place is hopping to a **Los Indomitables** song-- and Teresa reddens when she gets a look at how glammed-up the women here are.

TERESA (V.O.)

*I dunno how, but I sorta just knew
I was supposed to be there that
night.*

CLUB BATHROOM

Teresa at the crowded mirror, trying to arrange her hair in a more alluring way. Out of one of the stalls comes Brenda, who SQUEALS when she sees Teresa. Teresa TURNS and looks at her, surprised, when Brenda HUGS her out of nowhere.

TERESA (V.O.)

*I never had much of a family... so
God sent me a new one. Trust me, I
could do a hell of a lot worse than
Brenda and Chino.*

MOMENTS LATER

Teresa sitting on the counter while Brenda, chewing gum, high on coke, does her makeup, talking a mile-a-minute.

BRENDA

What do you think of Chino? I mean, he talks too much but that's men, am I right? I mean you always gotta be like, you're so handsome, your cock is so big, blah blah blah. Chino's not the brightest but at least he's not complicated. ...Are you blushing?

(off her shrug)

How old are you?

TERESA

...17.

BRENDA

Shit, I'm 20. I could be your mother, the way I'm talking.

TERESA

You're a lot nicer than my mother.

Brenda looks at Teresa with unexpected tenderness and TURNS Teresa around to face the mirror-- Teresa smiles at how adult she looks-- Cleopatra eyes and lipliner. When she TURNS back, Brenda's SNIFFING A BUMP OF COKE off her pinkie nail. She EXTENDS a bump to Teresa.

BRENDA

Go on, honey. You'd be doing me a favor. I wanna dump this stuff 'cause I think I might be pregnant.

Teresa DOES the bump and then SMILES at Brenda.

TERESA

Congratulations.

DANCE FLOOR (MOMENTS LATER)

Teresa stands idly by the bar as Brenda orders drinks. She LOOKS past the dancers towards a table, where Chino is chatting up a couple of GIRLS-- and next to him is Guero, who's already looking at Teresa. He GOES to her, and they start to DANCE slowly, intimately. After a long beat of this:

INT. GUERO'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Guero and Teresa entering his apartment, KISSING. They FALL on the bed, removing each others' clothes. He LIFTS her up-- she WRAPS her legs around him and he presses her against the wall, pushing up her skirt, undoing his belt-- and then he NOTICES that she's trembling.

Guero looks into her eyes, concerned for a moment-- and then, she takes the leap-- and KISSES HIM softly at first, then hungrily-- and she GASPS as he enters her, her head falling back-- and we PULL AWAY from them as they continue--

TERESA (V.O.)

It was like Heaven. I wanted it to last forever.

The SUDDEN SOFT-TO-LOUD HONKING of a CAR CUTS US BACK TO:

END FLASHBACK

EXT. CAFE (PRESENT) - DAY

Teresa SNAPS out of her memory-- DIALS on her CELLPHONE--

TERESA (V.O.)

I got about four good years. Better than nothing.

TERESA

(eyes closing)

Come on. ...Please.

INSERT: a KITCHEN somewhere, middle-class, could be anywhere. The LANDLINE on the counter RINGS AND RINGS. But no one's there to pick up.

BACK TO TERESA (CAFE)

Teresa HANGS UP, starting to panic. Her glass of Nopal arrives and she DOWNS it. A WIND kicks up through the STREET-- and Teresa pulls on a light sweater. HER CELL RINGS-- she GRABS IT--

TERESA (CONT'D)

Hello?

BRENDA (V.O.)

T, you still coming over later--?

Teresa's stomach SINKS when she realizes who it is.

TERESA

Brenda-- Jesus-- you-- is Chino there?

BRENDA (V.O.)

Yeah, he's here, what's the--

TERESA

Listen to me. Get Chino and the kids and go--

BRENDA (V.O.)

Whoa whoa whoa slow down honey what's wrong--

TERESA

(beat)

They-- you have to get out of the house. You have to get Chino and Tony and go--

INT. BRENDA & CHINO'S HOUSE - SIMULTANEOUS

Brenda's in the middle of DOING HER NAILS, the cellphone between her ear and shoulder, reality dawning on her--

BRENDA

What?

TERESA (V.O.)

--get out of there, now, now!

BRENDA

Oh my God-- oh Jesus-- CHINO!!

We FOLLOW BRENDA through her *Real Housewives*-esque house along the hallways towards her

SON'S ROOM

Young **Tony Montana Parra** (5) is playing video games--

CHINO (O.S.)

What is it?

Brenda YANKS the plug from the wall, STOPPING the noise--

TONY

Mooooommm...!

BRENDA

QUIET. Get your shoes on-- get--

And then Brenda LOOKS out the bedroom window: a PICKUP TRUCK has just pulled into the house driveway. Getting out of the car are **GATO FIERROS** (30s, slick like an eel, cowboy chic) and **POTE GALVEZ** (40s, wrestler's body, perhaps a soul behind those killer's eyes), making their way to the front door.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

Oh FUCK--

Brenda HUGS the wall away from the window just in time for Gato and Pote to not see her.

TERESA (V.O.)

What-- what is it?!

BRENDA

(whispering)

They're here.

(to Tony)

Get in the closet. Shhh. Shhh-shh-shh.

BACK TO TERESA (STREET)

Who starts RUNNING, RUNNING, RUNNING--

TERESA

(into phone)

Hide. Hide right now...!

BRENDA (V.O.)

Oh God, oh God--

BACK TO BRENDA (HOUSE)

Brenda and Tony get into the closet, shutting the door--

--and then we PULL AWAY from the closet, out of the room, drifting along the opulent hallways until we reach the

DINING ROOM

Where CHINO is sitting, weighing BAGS OF COCAINE--

CHINO

(calling)

I said what is it?!

SUDDENLY: The FRONT FOYER DOOR is KICKED IN-- Gato and Pote enter-- CHINO stands, startled, suddenly afraid--

GATO

(smiling)

Wassup, *cabron*?

EXT. STREETS - SIMULTANEOUS

Teresa bolting like mad into a side street, her cellphone still at her ear--

TERESA

Listen to me-- I'm coming-- don't make a sound--

BRENDA (V.O.)

NO. Teresa no-- don't-- stay with Guero-- wh--

(beat)

Is Guero--

TERESA

Quiet. Hang up. I'm almost there--!

Teresa HANGS UP and keeps running into a

RESIDENTIAL AREA

Whereupon she reaches BRENDA & CHINO'S HOUSE. The PICKUP truck is still in the driveway. She SIDLES up to a window in front of the house, staying low to the ground-- and then PEEKS in to look--

TERESA'S POV: Pote holding Chino at gunpoint in the dining room, while Gato returns from the nearby kitchen... with a CLEAVER.

INSIDE THE DINING ROOM

POTE extends Chino's ARM by force across the table. Gato sniffs, sits.

CHINO

Whatever it is you think I did, man, I didn't.

GATO

Where's your woman?

Chino takes a beat, then LIES convincingly.

CHINO

...At her fuckin' mother's house with the kids. And I hope the bitch stays there.

Beat. Gato GENTLY SPLAYS Chino's FINGERS as far as they'll go.

GATO

This can go slow. Or it can go
fast. You say nothing, we go slow.
(beat)
You admit what you did, we go fast.

CHINO

(panicking)
I didn't do anything-- man, just
lemme talk to Guemes and--

Gato SUDDENLY stands and SLAMS the CLEAVER DOWN onto Chino's
pinkie finger-- Chino SCREAMS in pain--

BACK TO TERESA (OUTSIDE)

Who DUCKS back down, covering her mouth-- she HUSTLES along
the rest of the house--

BACK TO BRENDA (BEDROOM CLOSET)

Who TENSES at the sound of Chino's SCREAMING-- opening the
door slightly--

TONY

Daddy--!

BACK TO DINING ROOM

Where Gato has Chino by the throat--

CHINO

Again. What did you do? Say it.

--but Pote, convinced he heard something at the other end of
the house, starts to WANDER towards TONY'S ROOM--

BACK TO BRENDA (BEDROOM CLOSET)

Who LOOKS at the window-- Teresa is there, pushing it open--
waving them to follow her--

BACK TO POTE (HALLWAY)

Who is getting very close to Tony's Room--

BACK TO BRENDA (TONY'S ROOM)

Who is pushing Tony out of the window into Teresa's arms,
preparing to climb out herself when she hears the *CREAK* of
Pote's FOOTSTEPS--

BACK TO DINING ROOM (GATO & CHINO)

Chino, looking pale and terror-stricken, babbles his plea as Gato RAISES the CLEAVER AGAIN--

CHINO (CONT'D)
I DON'T KNOW I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU
THINK I--

--SLAM! Down again, this time on his RING FINGER. Fresh blood-curdling SHRIEKS of pain from CHINO--

BACK TO POTE (HALLWAY)

About to enter the TWINS' ROOM when Chino's SCREAMS cause him to turn around--

--and then he ENTERS the

TONY'S ROOM

To find it EMPTY. He WALKS through the space, considering the disarray-- a sign of recent flight, or simply the mess of a child? We PAN down to his snakeskin boots to SEE that BRENDA is hiding under the bed, covering her mouth--

--and then POTE wanders over to the WINDOW to look outside--

OUTSIDE THE WINDOW

--and we PAN DOWN to see, just barely out of Pote's sight, Teresa and Tony hugging the wall, staying as still as possible--

BACK TO DINING ROOM

Gato looks away from an agonized Chino and calls out:

GATO
Eh yo Pote!

BACK TO TONY'S ROOM

We SEE Brenda's relief as Pote's BOOTS wander out of the room, out of sight and earshot--

BACK TO DINING ROOM

Gato, bored, lights a smoke, starts looking at different things around the house-- maybe looking for something to take on the way out--

POTE
What is it?

GATO
 (re: Chino)
 Do him.

CHINO
 No-- no no no no no no--

OUTSIDE THE HOUSE

As Teresa and the others CRAWL under the front window--

BRENDA
 (whispering)
 Oh my God-- Chino--

TERESA
 Don't. Look. Just don't. Get in the
 car. Look at me.
 (holding Brenda's face)
 Do not look. Go.

Brenda, hysterical, NODS quickly, and after Teresa CRAWLS
 along the ground, Brenda GOES--

--but as she MOVES below that window--

CHINO (O.S.)
 No-- no no please wait I can
 explain everything--

--and Brenda, almost involuntarily, LOOKS UP just enough to
 see in the window--

BRENDA'S POV: Pote with his gun to CHINO'S HEAD--

--and CHINO SEES Brenda IN THE WINDOW-- they lock eyes, one
 final moment of connection--

--then BANG! Pote FIRES--

--and BRENDA SCREAMS! Gato and Pote WHIRL AROUND to see
 Brenda in the window--

ANGLE ON TERESA

Who's just gotten TONY into Brenda's Range Rover-- she's
 AGHAST at the sound, their cover blown--

SLOW MOTION START

-As Brenda, STANDING, RUNS for the Range Rover;

-As Gato & Pote RUN for the front door of the house to come
 outside, guns drawn;

-As Brenda DIVES into the passenger seat;

-As Teresa CHECKS the ignition for KEYS-- **they're not there;**

-As Gato & Pote COME OUTSIDE, cocking the hammers on their guns;

-As Teresa LOOKS UP at her VISOR-- and LOWERS it, the KEYS falling into her hand-- she PLUNGES the KEYS into the IGNITION;

-And as we HEAR the SOUND OF THE CAR STARTING, we

END SLOW MOTION

And Teresa GUNS the motor and FLIES into reverse out of the driveway--

--Gato & Pote COME into the street, readying their aim--

TERESA

HOLD ON!

--and Teresa, knowing she can't stop for a SECOND, CONTINUES DRIVING DOWN THE STREET in REVERSE, going WAY too fast--

--Gato & Pote FIRE, Brenda SCREAMING as the BULLETS hit the front fender, one of the headlights, the windshield--

--until Gato & Pote RECEDE from their view. Teresa DOES a reckless three-point TURN and DRIVES OFF--

ANGLE ON GATO

Who just shakes his head, cracks his neck. He LOOKS across the street, where SOMEONE is in the window of their HOUSE, peering out from behind a curtain, having heard the commotion. Gato SMILES and TIPS HIS HAT to the Neighbor, who QUICKLY DRAWS the curtains.

TERESA (V.O.)

You're probably wondering why the hell anyone would get wrapped up with a guy like Guero. Well, I'll tell you.

START FLASHBACK

INT. GUERO'S APARTMENT - MORNING

It's the morning after they first met. Guero asleep in bed. Teresa awake, sitting up in bed, slipping on a shirt. She looks around the place-- 70s ROCK posters on the walls. Clothes. Money. Take-out boxes.

TERESA (V.O.)
*Guero was the only guy... who
 ever... I dunno. Saw me.*

We CLOSE IN on her as she LOOKS at Guero, giving a soft smile... then bringing her hands to her face (*Jesus, what did I do last night?*)-- Then biting her lip, remembering, enjoying the mix of pleasure and shame.

TERESA (V.O.)
*Maybe you think that sounds stupid.
 Ask me if I give a shit.*

TIME CUT

Teresa & Guero cozied up in bed, talking.

TERESA (V.O.)
*That first morning together, I told
 Guero about how I'd gotten that job
 as a money-changer. My rapist boss
 had a habit of forcing himself on
 every girl who asked for a job.
 (beat)
 I was no exception.*

INT. CAMBIADOR HQ - LATER

Guero is behind the counter and has the CAMBIADOR BOSS by the back of his NECK-- and SLAMS his head down OVER AND OVER into the counter-- Teresa, SPEECHLESS, watching this with the other GIRLS nearby--

GUERO
 If you--
 (SLAM)
 --ever--
 (SLAM)
 --do that to another girl--
 (SLAM)
 --I'll come back. And I will make
 you wish you'd never met--
 (re: Teresa)
 --this angel over here. Say you're
 sorry.

CAMBIADOR BOSS
 I-- I'm sorryyyy--

GUERO

No no no no no. Take a breath.
Think about how repulsive it was
for this beautiful creature to
endure even a second of having to
touch your greasy pig body. Think.

CAMBIADOR BOSS

(long beat, to Teresa)

I'm sorry.

GUERO

Teresita, what do you say? Does he
mean it?

TERESA

...Yes. Yes.

Guero DROPS his ass onto the ground, where he wails. Guero
sniffs, adjusts his cuffs, pulls out a cigarette. After a
moment, TWO GIRLS each proffer a LIGHTER, instantly enamored.
But Guero just LOOKS at Teresa, who, after a beat, TAKES OUT
the St. Malverde ZIPPO Guero gave her, and LIGHTS his smoke.

GUERO

Look at me.

(beat)

You never have to be afraid again.

Not with me. Do you understand?

(beat; she NODS)

Cool. Let's go, baby.

And he walks out. The GIRLS look at Teresa, who doesn't move.

GIRL #1

(smiling)

Bitch, if you don't go, I will.

Then, Teresa WALKS OUT, gets into the waiting Bronco (Guero
standing at the passenger door, waiting to close it for her)--
and then they drive away.

TERESA (V.O.)

*Now if you think you'd have walked
away from that, with the life I had
then... you're even dumber than I
thought.*

END FLASHBACK

INT. RANGE ROVER - MOMENTS LATER (PRESENT)

Teresa SPEEDING away, Brenda in the passenger seat, Tony in the backseat. Brenda is in a state of blank shock. Tony WAILS.

TERESA (V.O.)

*Fuck, man. I've always been a
hopeless romantic.*

TERESA

We gotta get to the safe house--
Guero told me to get there if shit
like this ever went down--

(to Tony)

Shh. Shh-shh-shh, baby, it's OK--

(to Brenda)

We're gonna be OK. OK? Just-- let's
just--

Brenda slowly TURNS her head to look at Teresa.

BRENDA

We're already dead. Do you
understand that?

(face twisting in panic)

We're already *dead...*!

TERESA

Brenda, stop it-- you're scaring
Tony--

BRENDA

(to Tony)

SHUT UP. SHUT THE FUCK UP.

Brenda WEEPS-- Teresa shaking, trying to navigate traffic as well as the chaos in the car--

TERESA

The safe house is--

BRENDA

What safe house?! What makes you
think they don't already know about
it? Huh?!

Tony STARTS to BREATHE with difficulty.

TERESA

What's wrong with little Tony?

BRENDA

When he gets panicked he has trouble breathing.

(turns to him)

Tony Montana *Parra*. Be a man. Calm down.

TERESA

Does he need an inhaler...?

BRENDA

What, you wanna stop at a pharmacy? Bitch, this ain't a fuckin' road trip...! What are you thinking? They're *everywhere*. Get it together and think straight.

TERESA

(looking at Tony)

What if he stops breathing?

BRENDA

(turning around again)

You need to stop all that crying. Now. I'm serious. Otherwise I'm going to drop you off. *Entiendes?*

Tony CRIES HARDER. Brenda rifles through her purse and finds a small baggie of snow, takes a hit.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

(to Teresa)

Don't look at me like that. I just gotta calm down, OK?

TERESA

Hey Tony. You ever been to California?

BRENDA

What kind of stupid question is that?

TERESA

(to Tony)

We're going to go to California.

TONY

What about *Papi*?

TERESA

He's going to go too. He's going to meet us there. Right, Bee?

Brenda just stares at Teresa like she's lost her mind.

TONY

What's in California?

TERESA

There's an ocean, and it's so blue.
And it's warm all the time.

TONY

Can you swim there?

TERESA

You can swim all you want. My *Papi*,
he lives there. He took me once
when I was five years old and we
spent the whole weekend together
and we went to the ocean, and we
ate crab legs, and we swam far into
the sea. You like the ocean?

Tony NODS, his breathing becoming less labored.

TERESA (CONT'D)

It's like Heaven in California. And
you can see forever. And the
water... it's so warm, you can go
swimming all day long. That's what
I did with my *Papi*. He took me far
out into the ocean and lifted me
above his shoulders and I could see
forever.

Tony's calmer now. Brenda sits in silence. As they ZOOM on,
they PASS a billboard for **EPIFANIO VARGAS** for public office--
he's a very dashing man, 60s, with a wholesome smile. **FREEZE**
FRAME on the BILLBOARD:

TERESA (V.O.)

*That's Don Epifanio. Remember him.
He's important.*

START FLASHBACK

EXT. DON EPIFANIO'S MANSION, JALISCO - EVENING

The RANGE ROVER comes around the semi-circle drive before
this gaily-lit, Christmas-decor-festooned pueblo home on
steroids. VALETS open the doors of the car-- Chino and Brenda
come out of the front seats, looking wealthier and more
dolled-up than usual-- and Guero & Teresa come out of the
back.

TERESA (V.O.)
We'll get to him later.

Teresa's looking nice, carrying TWO POTTED POINSETTIAS with her-- but she's already aware that her clothes look more like a "very nice school picture day" outfit than a formal party ensemble. She freezes in the drive-- and as Chino and Brenda enter the house, Guero wanders back over to her.

TERESA
 I'm not going in.
 (off his look)
 Look at me. They're gonna think I'm
 one of the caterers. My dress is
 too black!

Guero LOOKS around and sees a few MALE CATERERS entering the party. He SAUNTERS over to one of them, WHISTLING-- and Teresa watches as Guero TRADES his own VEST for the CATERER'S BLACK ONE. Teresa GIGGLES as he strolls back to her.

GUERO
 Whaddya think?

TERESA
 (laughing)
 Oh my God. You are so stupid...!

GUERO
 Yeah? I look stupid, huh? Well now
 we match, woman...!

And he GRABS her, kissing her, and she SQUEALS-- we HEAR THE POPPING OF CHAMPAGNE CORKS as we CUT TO:

INSIDE THE MANSION (GREAT ROOM)

Teresa SITS on a couch, observing the people around her as a PIANO PLAYER plinks out Xmas tunes-- around her, the MEN OF THE CARTEL dressed in their very best, some flashy, some less so, some handsome, some less so--

TERESA'S POV: The WOMEN who are with/married to these men-- different ages, done up, some more skillfully than others-- their movements-- **the way they toss their hair, adjust their expensive watches around their wrists, smile and extend their hands to receive greetings and kisses.**

SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY (MOMENTS LATER)

Teresa, alone before a WALL MIRROR, play-acting/practicing some of the movements/attitudes of the WOMEN she was just watching.

In the reflection, though, she SPIES **THREE PREGNANT GIRLS** (18-20) walking out of a different room, where a jovial **CESAR "BATMAN" GUEMES** (40s, jug ears, unctuous) leans in the doorway, smiling at them. Teresa recedes instinctively, listening.

GUEMES

Don't worry, ladies. You're the pictures of innocence.

PREGNANT GIRL #1

What if they stop me at the gate...? What if it hurts the baby...?

The girl's **BOYFRIEND** (late 20s, twitchy, wannabe gangster) massages her shoulders and smiles at GUEMES.

BOYFRIEND

Baby, I got a debt to Epifanio. You wanna help me help us outta this, right? All you gotta do is fly to LA. Take a holiday. Go to Hollywood. Huh?

The GIRL smiles sheepishly.

PREGNANT GIRL #1

And then I come back, right?

BOYFRIEND

And then you come back.

PREGNANT GIRL #1

OK. And then I come back. OK.

The GIRL looks down, hugs her boyfriend. GUEMES smiles at the boyfriend, shaking his head. What a smooth talker.

BACK TO TERESA

Who listens blankly, unsure of what to think.

THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY (MOMENTS LATER)

Teresa sniffs and walks the halls, looking for a bathroom-- taking in the various rooms-- a private, fully-equipped GYM, a SCREENING ROOM, etc-- and then she OPENS a door onto the

MASTER BEDROOM

Where a MALE FIGURE (DON EPIFANIO) is barely glimpsed before he ENTERS an adjoining bathroom and SLAMS the DOOR.

Left behind is his wife **CAMILA** (40s, blonde, gorgeous, think Carmen Maura) in an absolute dragon's fury--

CAMILA
 --makes you think you can walk away
 from me you--
 (door slams in her face)
 --AHHHHH!
 (pounds on door)
 OPEN THIS DOOR! Now!

She PICKS UP a bottle of perfume nearby and WHIPS it at the door-- it shatters-- and Teresa, stunned still and silent, doesn't move--

CAMILA (CONT'D)
 (suddenly fragile)
 Epifanio. Please don't shut me out.
 (beat, then furious)
 Open this FUCKING door. Or I'll--
 I'll leave. I will. I'll--

And then CAMILA notices Teresa in the doorway. Her face falls from anguish to mortification. Teresa SQUIRMS.

TERESA
 I-- I am so, so sorry-- I was
 looking for a bathroom--

Camila WIPES her eyes and LIGHTS a cigarette, walks slowly to Teresa.

TERESA (CONT'D)
 You must be Dona Vargas. I'm--

CAMILA
 I know who you are. You're Guero's
 girl. ...The new one.

TERESA
 ...Are you... OK?

Camila WAVES off her concern, looks at the ground.

TERESA (CONT'D)
 (sympathetic)
 These boys, huh. What are we gonna
 do with them, right?

CAMILA
 There's no we here, honey. I know
 what I'm going to do.
 (looks her up & down)
 (MORE)

CAMILA (CONT'D)

You, though... I'm not so sure about.

Teresa suddenly wishes she could disappear under Camila's gaze.

CAMILA (CONT'D)

Don't just stand there.

(beat, leans in)

Go.

Teresa turns on her heel and WALKS SWIFTLY back to the stairs, utterly humiliated... and we

END FLASHBACK

EXT. ALLEY - LATER (PRESENT)

The Range Rover is PARKED in this tight space between building. Brenda studies Teresa, who stares into space. The tension in the car is thick. Teresa LOOKS at Brenda, who's already staring at her.

BRENDA

How do I know this isn't all because of your man?

TERESA

Are you being for real right now?

BRENDA

He was skimming. Everybody knew that.

TERESA

You need to step off. 'Cause you're wrong. We got bigger things to--

BRENDA

Look, I don't know what kind of shit he got into, OK? And all I know is that Chino was *stupid*, but not stupid enough to--

(beat, crying)

He *never* would fuck around with the cartel...!

TERESA

Chino was a fucking idiot. So if Guero was into something stupid, you better believe that Chino--

BRENDA

Don't even right now. I'm serious.

They CALM down for a moment. Teresa continues:

TERESA

I don't know anything. I swear on my life. All I did was get a call from someone who told me they got Guero. That's all I know.

BRENDA

Your man did this. I know it. Your man *fucked* you. And he fucked *us* too. I should've known. Blue-eyed *pinche* half-gringo motherfucker...

TERESA

HEY. Guero was smart. He wouldn't put us in danger on purpose.

BRENDA

Girl, you're so blind. How stupid can you be? You think Guero was clean? *Nobody* is clean in this world. Wake up.

Sickening silence. Teresa gathers her bag, readying to exit the car--

TERESA

We need help. We need Don Epi. Guero told me I could go to him if things--

BRENDA

Oh what is this fantasy, Tee? Why's he going to help? He's not in the game anymore. I say we--

SHIFT TO TERESA'S POV

As she's LOOKING at Brenda talking, then FACING FORWARD, glancing in the REARVIEW MIRROR-- and SEEING, in the reflection, at the back end of the ALLEY, an SUV pull up, BLOCKING that END of the ALLEY--

--and then Teresa LOOKS FORWARD, seeing that another SUV is pulling up to the OTHER END of the alley, ostensibly BLOCKING THEM IN-- and Teresa SHUSHES Brenda QUIETLY... and reaches for her seatbelt.

TERESA

Brenda.

BRENDA

--What?

TERESA

...Buckle up.

And then TERESA FLOORS IT, driving FORWARD TOWARDS the SUV blocking the alley-- **the NARCOS BEHIND them OPENING FIRE--** BRENDA SCREAMS--

SLAM!!! Teresa PLOWS right into the SUV at the other end of the alley, SENDING IT SKIDDING across the street sideways, **CRUSHING/KILLING the TWO MEN who were inside--** and TOTALING the Range Rover in the process. Amid SCREAMS and PANIC on the STREET, Teresa, Brenda and Tony EXIT the car, BOLTING--

TERESA (CONT'D)

RUN!!

MORE GUNFIRE-- but from where?! The trio DUCK, and Brenda, panicking, PICKS UP Tony, RUNS into a nearby RESTAURANT--

TERESA (CONT'D)

Brenda! WAIT!

--and before Teresa can FOLLOW, she SEES the other SUV closing in from the ALLEY-- she LOOKS for Brenda & Tony AGAIN-- **but they're out of sight--** Teresa, frantic-- **GUNFIRE from the approaching SUV--**

--and so Teresa RUNS in the opposite direction, alone, down the STREET, HANGING A RIGHT TURN-- PASSING STOREFRONTS that CLOSE as she APPROACHES--

TERESA (CONT'D)

Please--

(as door closes, to
another)

Help-- help me *please*--!

One by one, Teresa looks at RESIDENCES where the DOORS SHUT-- people seeing trouble, not wanting to get involved--

Teresa's TERROR MOUNTS as she GETS DOORS SLAMMED in her face-- she LOOKS BEHIND HER, HEARING the REVVING of motors, CARS that will be coming any moment--

TERESA (CONT'D)

Please-- please-- I--

And then FINALLY, around a corner, a DOOR OPENS-- a modest little flat-- and Teresa BOLTS for it-- and we FOLLOW her as she SLAMS THE DOOR SHUT on us, **BRINGING US TO BLACK.**

INT. ABUELA'S HOUSE - LATER

Teresa's sitting at the base of a CLOSET, in the dark, LISTENING to the SOUNDS of the street outside. She TENSES when she SEES a SHADOW APPROACH at the BASE OF THE DOOR.

ABUELA (O.S.)

The men are gone now. The street is empty.

Her SHADOW shuffles away.

MOMENTS LATER

Teresa PEERS out of a window from behind some curtains-- the streets are quiet now. The **ABUELA** (70, kindly, nicotine-stained fingers, more concerned with her TV shows than Teresa) watches her from a chair by her TV, which is running a talent competition show. After a long beat:

TERESA

Thank you.

ABUELA

(motioning to TV)

Would you...?

Teresa GOES to the TV, changes the channel MANUALLY until a GAME SHOW is reached. The Abuela NODS, smiles softly.

TERESA

How... can I repay you?

ABUELA

I don't need anything. Everyday above ground is a good day.

Beat. Teresa GETS a WAD OF BILLS from her pocket, PLACES them on a side table-- something to thank this old woman with. She LOOKS at a WALL behind the Abuela: an entire surface COVERED with shabbily-framed PHOTOS, B&W, COLOR-- of this woman's family, her history, the pictures from the 30s to present day. Teresa STARES at them, the faces, the smiles of these strangers.

TERESA (V.O.)

Having pictures of your family's a hell of a lot easier than having to see them in real life.

(beat)

But when you set down roots in Narcoland, you gotta have a plan for when things go south.

START FLASHBACK**INT. TERESA & GUERO'S HOUSE - (FLASHBACK) EVENING**

Teresa, in a loud summer dress, moves away from a steaming, lit-up kitchen to place napkins on a dining room table--

TERESA (V.O.)

About a year before all this went down, Guero came back from a run with just such a plan.

The OFFSCREEN DOOR CLOSES. She CALLS OUT:

TERESA

Jesus, *Guerito*, where you been?
Brenda and Chino are gonna be here
in--

She TURNS around to find a bruised and battered Guero standing in the living room, his LEFT ARM broken, in a sling.

MOMENTS LATER

Guero RECOUNTS what happened to a rapt Teresa in the living room.

TERESA (V.O.)

It was just a regular run. Nothing seemed unusual at first.

INT. CESSNA - EARLIER THAT DAY

Guero, in the pilot's seat, flying over a body of water rimmed by tall pines. Clear blue skies.

TERESA (V.O.)

He had three hundred kilos to drop in Baja before one o'clock.

We DRIFT BACK into the plane to SEE BOXES of "canned goods" strapped tight with masking tape in the cargo area.

TERESA (V.O.)

And then, at the airfield, is when he saw them.

GUERO'S POV: a SLEW of FEDERALES are waiting there on the ground. AR-15s DRAWN. Their SIRENS starting, BULLHORNS booming. Then, he LOOKS UP: TWO FEDERALES PLANES in the DISTANCE ahead of him--

Guero's EYES widen--

GUERO'S POV: THREE of the RECEPTION TEAM MEN (who are waiting for Guero to deliver the cargo) are RUNNING from the FEDERALES-- and they're SHOT dead right there on the landing strip--

Guero STEERS the plane SHARPLY away from the airstrip-- the AR-15s on the ground already FIRING-- BULLETS PIERCING the plane's hull, the windshield-- and, trying to maintain his calm, Guero eyes a TINY STRIP of land between some TREES down below-- and he starts to DESCEND, way, WAY too fast--

TERESA (V.O.)
He barely made it out alive.

A terrible commotion and BANG as the plane SLAMS down onto the uneven ground, TWISTING along before SLAMMING into some TREES-- Guero FLINGS HIS ARMS up to his face--

TERESA (V.O.)
But that wasn't the worst of it.

PRELAP: A *THWACK*, THEN A HOLLER OF UNIMAGINABLE PAIN AS WE CUT TO:

INT. WAREHOUSE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Guero, sweating, injured, depleted, HOLDING the arm that has just been RE-BROKEN by GATO & POTE-- who, it turns out, are the right-hand men of **CESAR "BATMAN" GUEMES**, his feet up on a table, barely blinking at the display.

TERESA (V.O.)
He had to prove to his boss, Cesar Guemes, that his three hundred kilos were seized.

GUEMES sighs and PICKS UP a late-edition NEWSPAPER on the table next to a cup of coffee-- and then we see what he sees: A late-breaking story on the Federales' seizure of cocaine from a crashed Cessna near Baja. Guemes looks up at Guero, starts to chuckle. What a day.

TERESA (V.O.)
Thank God for the late edition.
(beat)
They figured out who snitched to the Federales pretty quick.

INT. SHABBY MEXICAN HOME - NIGHT

CLOSE UP: On a **YOUNG MAN** (22, terrified) as a PLASTIC BAG is placed over his head.

TERESA (V.O.)

This new kid Guemes hired a year ago, from Badiraguato. He'd been talking to the Federales on retainer for about a month.

We PULL BACK to REVEAL that next to the kneeling Young Man, his Mother, Father and Sister are all on their knees, bags on their heads, the women sobbing, their hands all TIED behind their backs with ZIP TIES-- GATO & POTE behind them--

TERESA (V.O.)

Gato & Pote took care of him. And his family too. That's how it works, babies. Clean slate: mocharon parejo.

--and we PULL OUT OF THE HOUSE ENTIRELY, into the

STREET OUTSIDE

Where, within the house, we see GATO & POTE walking around the FAMILY to DRAW the CURTAINS, obscuring our view--

--and, as a FEW CHILDREN (7-10) play outside, lighting LOUD FIRECRACKERS as we see FLASHES OF GUNSHOTS from within the house, the SOUNDS CLOUDED by the firecrackers.

INT. TERESA & GUERO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Teresa's face is ashen as she listens. She's never seen Guero looking so vulnerable, traumatized. Guero LAYS OUT a series of OBJECTS BEFORE HER:

A BLACK TRACFONE (which we saw Teresa answer this morning), \$20K in cash, TWO AMERICAN PASSPORTS, a FEW GRAMS OF COKE, a DOUBLE EAGLE chrome-plated GUN, and a worn, weather-beaten NOTEBOOK.

GUERO

(holds up Tracfone)

If this ever rings, it means I'm dead. And that you'll have to run. To a safe house. I'll tell you where later.

(beat)

And if you're ever really fucked-- I mean really, truly fucked-- take this notebook to Don Epifanio and trade it for your life.

TERESA

What's in it?

GUERO
 You don't wanna know.
 (off her silence)
 Say something, *mija*.

We CLOSE IN ON TERESA LOOKING at the OBJECTS, shaken. She LOOKS into Guero's eyes.

TERESA (V.O.)
*You wanna know the truth? This shit
 excited me. I thought, this guy
must really fuckin' love me.*

END FLASHBACK

EXT. MEXICO STREET - LATER THAT NIGHT (PRESENT)

Teresa takes the back roads to a new location: the safe house. She EYES everyone she passes, scared to make eye contact, too scared to look away.

EXT. DRAB APARTMENT COMPLEX - MOMENTS LATER

Teresa enters, climbing a flight of stairs--

--and PAUSES before an apartment door just as she's placing the blue-colored key in the lock. She PRESSES her ear against the door, listening: no sound from inside. She ENTERS the

SAFE HOUSE APARTMENT

And LOCKS the door, leans against the wall. She CLOSES her eyes, runs her hands through her hair.

TIME CUT

A few minutes later: Teresa WALKS past a COT to a WARDROBE, and retrieves a small GYM BAG from inside. She UNZIPS it, looks at the contents, PLACING them on the bed: **A Double Eagle PISTOL. A stack of \$20,000. A 10oz bag of COCAINE. And the worn, tattered NOTEBOOK.**

She TAKES the NOTEBOOK into her lap, thinking. And then, she OPENS it: inside are MAPS, coordinates, dead drop locations, airfield GPS numbers, and names: Don Epifanio. Cesar Guemes. And on and on.

Teresa SHUTS the book. Shit. This thing is dangerous. Shaking, she PINCHES OUT a bit of COKE from the baggie, takes a sniff, and sets the baggie onto a night table. She SHOVES everything else into the GYM BAG, sets it on the floor.

THEN: suddenly, she LOOKS towards the apartment door when she HEARS a CREAK from outside-- she STANDS--

--and then BAM! The door IS KICKED OPEN... and in walk GATO & POTE.

GATO
(smiling)
Hola. ...Nice place.

Teresa stands stock still in horror as Gato & Pote stroll around like they own the place.

GATO (CONT'D)
(leaning against wall)
Have a seat. All that running
must've made you tired.

TERESA
I don't know anything.

GATO
(nodding)
I know.

TERESA
...Where is he?

GATO
Hear that, Pote? She's asking about
Guero. My, my...

Pote shakes his head, looking impatient, uncomfortable. He LOCKS eyes with Teresa for a moment, then looks away, possible ashamed. He BRUSHES his jacket back for a moment-- and Teresa SEES the BUTT OF HIS REVOLVER at his waist.

GATO (CONT'D)
(pensive)
Guero. ...Guero, Guero, Guero...
(beat)
Poor *mamacita*. Your man thought he
was smart. Skimming from Guemes.
Tut-tut-tut.

TERESA
(panic mounting)
Where is he?

Gato WALKS over to her until his nose is an inch from hers.

GATO
He's nowhere. He's dead.

As Gato is turning around to walk back to Pote--

TERESA
 (quietly)
Hijos de la chingada.

--he STOPS. Did she really just say that?

GATO
 Not nice.

And he SMACKS her across the face, sending her reeling across the bed. Teresa, in shock, doesn't move as Gato goes to the night table, and opens the bag of COKE, taking a snort from his fingers.

GATO (CONT'D)
 Hmm. Not bad. Cut, but it's good.
 (to Pote, whistling)
 Hey. You?

POTE
 (shakes his head)
 Let's get this over with.

But Gato is already coming close to Teresa... UNBUCKLING his belt.

GATO
 I always did want a piece of this.

Pote, losing patience, UNSHEATHES his GUN and comes over, POINTING it at Teresa's forehead. Teresa, still with fright, can only STARE at the men before her, totally frozen.

POTE
 Gato. Come on. ...Guero was one of
 ours. He was--
 (beat)
 This was his woman.

Gato continues to undo his pants with his left hand, while his right brushes the hair out of Teresa's eyes.

GATO
 She's gonna die anyway. It'd be a
 waste.

Gato PUSHES Pote's gun away from Teresa's head gently-- and Pote backs off, looking at the open front doorway as Gato CLIMBS ON TOP OF TERESA--

ANGLE ON TERESA

Whose EYES just go to the ceiling-- darting around-- and then GATO PUSHES her LEGS UP and FORWARD to give himself room, shifting her body-- making Teresa's HEAD HANG OFF the edge of the bed-- she SHUTS her eyes TIGHT--

TERESA'S POV: an UPSIDE-DOWN view of POTE, who looks away from Teresa with resignation and humiliation--

ANGLE ON TERESA

As she STIFLES a SOB as GATO, having RIPPED her JEANS off, begins to VIOLATE HER--

TERESA'S POV: --her eyes OPEN AGAIN as we see, UPSIDE DOWN, POTE go out into the hall to keep watch-- and then someone else in the room:

It's Teresa, but as we saw her in the PROLOGUE/TEASER, in a clean, crisp suit. Slick hair. The Queen of the South.

TERESA (V.O.)

When the shit hits the fan, and you're really at the bottom, some people say they have a vision of Jesus. Or the Virgin. ...But me?

And this VISION just looks back at Teresa... and then LOOKS DOWN at something at the foot of the bed.

THE OTHER TERESA

(nodding to gym bag on floor)

Well, go on, honey.

And then, as Gato ruts away on top of her--

THE OTHER TERESA (CONT'D)

You know what to do.

Beat. Teresa, in a fugue state, as the repulsive Gato GRINDS away atop her, SLOWLY REACHES with her free arm down to the GYM BAG, reaching INSIDE IT...

TERESA (V.O.)

All I saw was myself.

ANGLE ON GATO

Who pauses his rape when he HEARS the distinct *CLICK* of a hammer being PULLED BACK on a GUN. He LOOKS UP to SEE Teresa's furious, still face looking him dead in the eye as she brings the DOUBLE EAGLE'S BARREL to his left cheek.

AGONIZING SILENCE as neither of them moves or makes a sound--
and then BANG! SHE FIRES, SHOOTING THE BASTARD IN HIS CHEEK!
 Gato SHRIEKS in pain, falling off of her-- and Teresa is on
 her feet as Gato WAILS-- POTE RUSHING BACK INTO THE ROOM--

POTE

What the--

**POTE freezes as Teresa POINTS the GUN at him-- a TENSE moment
 as he BACKS AWAY slowly from her, her hand SHAKING the gun
 she's aiming-- and then, finally:**

TERESA

Get. The fuck. *Out.*

Beat. POTE RUNS OUT OF THE APARTMENT as GATO WAILS in pain--

GATO

*OH JESUS YOU BITCH YOU FUCKING
 BITCH OH G-O-O-O-O-D--*

--and Teresa, HYSTERICAL, grabs the GYM BAG and goes for the
 window-- and, with only a t-shirt on, CLIMBS OUT onto the

FIRE ESCAPE

--and BOLTS down the stairs, taking them two, three at a time
 UNTIL she JUMPS down into the alley, SCRAPING her KNEES-- she
 CRIES OUT in pain-- and she GRABS a hanging pair of PANTS
 from a clothesline before RUNNING OFF into the night.

CUT TO BLACK.

EXT. ST. MALVERDE'S CHAPEL - MUCH LATER

It's quiet. No one in the streets. After a moment, we realize
 that Teresa is HIDING in an alcove, shivering, her t-shirt
 barely covering her legs, her bare ass against the concrete.
 She's STARING into space, barely there. After a few moments,
 she LOOKS in the GYM BAG at her side, parting the folds:

She TOUCHES the notebook. And then, after a moment, gets the
 Tracfone out, and dials. It RINGS once, twice, and then:

DON EPIFANIO (V.O.)

Hello. ...Hello?

(long beat)

...Teresita?

Teresa CLOSES her eyes, unable to speak.

TERESA (V.O.)

*Remember the guy from the
 billboard?*

START FLASHBACK**INT. DON EPIFANIO'S MANSION - NIGHT**

It's later, on the night of the CHRISTMAS PARTY where Teresa met Camila. Teresa stands in front of a a LARGE GOYA ETCHING of a man sleeping, with various CREATURES encroaching on him.

TERESA (V.O.)

This guy was my last hope.

EPIFANIO (O.S.)

"The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters."

TERESA

(startled, turning)

I'm so sorry. I started wandering--

EPIFANIO

It's OK. It's good to be curious.

She smiles shyly, then LOOKS BACK at the etching.

TERESA

Why are they gonna attack him?

EPIFANIO

Goya... painted the man as asleep. Not awake, not thinking. His fatal flaw is that he is unable to reflect. One must *always* reflect upon one's circumstance. If not...

(winks)

...things can become very bad.

TERESA

I might never sleep again.

(off his laugh)

I bet that's why you're so successful, right? Smart. I'd like to go to college. I never went.

EPIFANIO

You don't need college. You can learn by just watching everything. Just ask Guero. ...I wanted him to come work for me, you know, when I decided to move into politics. But he said no. He said, "I'm a pilot, *padrino*." I had to indulge him. Besides, Batman says he would go crazy without Guero running his team.

TERESA

...Batman?

Epifanio POINTS to GUEMES, who's chatting up some LADIES in the main PARTY down the hall.

EPIFANIO

Batman Guemes. Guero's boss.

(presses his ears
forward, looking bat-
like)

That's why we call him "Batman."

TERESA

Oh. Hah. That's funny.

EPIFANIO

...You're from Alvarado, correct?

TERESA

How did you know?

EPIFANIO

A little birdie told me.

(off her smile)

My *abuela* was from Monte Vista.

TERESA

Oh, no shit...!

(reddening)

I mean, that's so interesting.

Maybe we're related, huh.

Epifanio notes that Teresa's hands are shaking. He takes them in his own.

EPIFANIO

We're all family here. Do you understand?

TERESA

I... I'm not scared or anything stupid like that. Just nervous.

See, I never really had a family...?

(beat)

My father-- he's, like, dead. And my mother, Jesus, I don't even *know* where she is. That's all. You know?

EPIFANIO

When I was a boy... the Colombians visited by family. My father was proud.

(MORE)

EPIFANIO (CONT'D)

He wouldn't work for them on his own land. So, one night, when I was on a trip to town to buy supplies, they came back... and burned my father, my mother, and my sister alive. I returned to a mountain of ashes.

THERESA

(aghast)

Oh my God. What did you do?

EPIFANIO

I never slept the same way again.

(beat)

Come with me, Teresa.

He WALKS OFF down the hall. Before Teresa follows him, she LOOKS at the Goya etching one last time.

EPIFANIO'S STUDY (MOMENTS LATER)

Teresa enters this dark-wood-paneled room, covered in decorative POINSETTIAS, to find Epifanio rummaging for a small, gift-wrapped box. He holds it out to her.

EPIFANIO

Open it.

TERESA

Oh, I-- I can't.

EPIFANIO

I insist.

(beat, smiling)

You don't want to offend your host.

Teresa opens the gift-- and discovers a SIMPLE, BEAUTIFUL EMERALD on a gold chain. She holds her hair forward as Epifanio clasps it to her neck.

TERESA

Thank you. This is...

EPIFANIO

Normal. Guero is like my son, which would make you like a daughter. Why would I treat you any other way?

She SUDDENLY STANDS, and gives him a kiss on the cheek. Epifanio laughs, hugs her. She pulls back, rolling her eyes.

TERESA

I feel terrible. All I brought were these potted Poinsettias? Two of them.

(looking, laughing)

But I don't think you need them...!

EPIFANIO

Nonsense. They're a perfect gift. One of my favorite signs of the holiday season.

(beat)

My *abuela* once told me that when you see a butterfly near a poinsettia, it's a sign. The butterfly is a fallen warrior, returned to earth, to life, to drink the nectar.

THERESA

That's beautiful.

(beat)

Feliz Navidad, Don Epifanio.

EPIFANIO

Feliz Navidad, Teresa...?

THERESA

Mendoza. Teresa Mendoza.

EPIFANIO

...Mendoza?

THERESA

Mmm-hmm.

She gives him a kiss on the cheek, and, sensing it's time to leave, she starts to walk out.

EPIFANIO

I heard you met my wife Camila.

THERESA

Oh... it was just an accident. I won't say anything--

EPIFANIO

Please.

(beat)

Love is complicated. Sometimes you want to kiss them, sometimes... who knows.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. CHAPEL - (PRESENT) LATER THAT NIGHT

Theresa, where we left her, waiting, looking down the street.

TERESA (V.O.)

*He said I was family. I was about
to find out if he meant it.*

Then: a car approaching in the distance. It slowly drives up to the chapel. It STOPS twenty feet from her, the headlights ILLUMINATING the chapel's alcove, and Teresa herself.

Theresa firmly grips the gun she's holding in her left hand... and RAISES it, trembling, towards the car. **TWO MALE SILHOUETTES** come out of the car, SLAMMING the doors, backlit by the street lamps.

EPIFANIO

(in silhouette)

Teresita.

In that moment, relief washes across Teresa's face. She LOWERS the pistol.

INSIDE THE CHAPEL (MOMENTS LATER)

CLOSE UP: A cigar being lit.

REVEAL Teresa & Epifanio in the semidarkness of the pews. He smokes his cigar, Guero's notebook in his right hand.

EPIFANIO (CONT'D)

What I've heard... is that your man
has been tempting fate a long time,
Teresita. It had to come sooner or
later.

Teresa looks suspiciously at the BODYGUARD by the door with a PISTOL. She tries to breathe STEADILY so as not to weep.

TERESA

...Is he really dead?

EPIFANIO

Of course he's dead. They caught
him up in the Sierra... it wasn't
soldiers, or Federales, or anybody.
It was his own people.

TERESA

Who?

EPIFANIO

What difference does it make? Do you know what kind of deals Guero was doing?

(beat)

He got caught playing both sides. And someone finally blew the whistle on him.

Epifanio opens the notebook. He holds it to the nearby candlelight, turning pages at random.

EPIFANIO (CONT'D)

Have you read what's in here?

TERESA

I just brought it to you, like he told me to. I don't know anything about these things.

EPIFANIO

You're lucky. For the time being... you're alive.

(studying her)

What do you plan to do?

TERESA

I don't know.

(beat)

Guero said you'd help me. He said, if anything-- he said, 'Give the book to Don Epifanio and ask him to help you.'

(beat)

That's what he said.

EPIFANIO

Guero was always an optimist.

Teresa's stomach drops. She looks as though she may vomit.

TERESA

...He loved you.

EPIFANIO

Teresa. I can't get mixed up in this--

TERESA

You have a lot of power--

EPIFANIO

(impatient)

Teresa. In this business, power is relative, ephemeral, subject to many rules. I've kept my place in this world because I didn't stick my nose into other people's business. I have no control over what Guero did. He hadn't worked for me for a very long time.

(beat)

Guemes and his men don't have anything personal against you, *Teresita*. You know these people. But it's their way of doing things. They have to make an example when people fuck with them.

TERESA

You could talk to them. Tell them I don't know anything, that I--

EPIFANIO

They *already* know you don't now anything. That's not the issue.

(beat)

Besides, what you've told me just makes things worse. If they can't let a man get away, imagine if they let a woman escape. They'd be laughingstocks of the business.

(beat)

No. I can't get involved.

Epifanio STANDS. Teresa is mute with horror, shock. He LEANS down, and KISSES her on the forehead. She GRIPS his hands, growing desperate--

TERESA

No, no-- Guero told me you would help me, "take him the book and trade it for your life," he said--

EPIFANIO

Your man liked his little jokes.

(long beat)

I'm so sorry, Teresa.

Silence. Carrying the NOTEBOOK, he WALKS towards the BODYGUARD by the entrance-- and Teresa, speechless, JUST STANDS THERE.

INT. EPIFANIO'S SUV - MOMENTS LATER

Riding in the backseat, Epifanio LOOKS out his window, his face still, lost in thought.

EXT. PALATIAL HOME - LATER

Epifanio STEPS out of his SUV and walks into a FUNDRAISER for his MAYORAL RUN.

INSIDE THE PARTY

Epifanio SMILES, glad-hands, makes conversation under BANNERS for his run. He SPIES CESAR "BATMAN" GUEMES at the other end of the room. They LOCK EYES-- and GUEMES raises his glass, SMILES at Epifanio.

Epifanio RETURNS the gestures weakly.

INT. EPIFANIO'S SUV - LATER

Epifanio TAPS the NOTEBOOK in his lap.

DRIVER (O.S.)

Home, *senor*.

EXT. DON EPIFANIO'S MANSION - CONTINUOUS

Epifanio STEPS out of the car-- and as he's walking towards his door--

TERESA (O.S.)

Who saved your life?

Epifanio stops-- TURNS-- to find TERESA, in the shadows. Epifanio's DRIVER reaches for his gun-- but Epifanio MOTIONS for him to stop. Teresa COMES forward a few steps, nearly VIBRATING with desperation and adrenaline.

TERESA (CONT'D)

When your family was burned. And you were running. And in danger. And had nothing. And no one.

(beat)

Who saved you?

Epifanio is visibly shaken at the sight of her now: stripped raw. Ravaged. Shaking. He thinks for an agonizingly long beat.

EPIFANIO

Teresa--

TERESA

I'm your daughter, you said. So you got one more chance. Say no again and I'll die. And it'll be on your head. And one way or another?

(beat)

I'll haunt the living *shit* out of you.

Epifanio is speechless. Who is this girl he thought he knew?

EPIFANIO

...*Cono*. You got some balls, coming here. ...*Madre de Dios*.

(long beat, re: book)

You swear you didn't read anything?

THERESA

(cracking)

I swear to you...!

EPIFANIO

(beat)

You've got just one chance. Have you got a passport?

THERESA

Yes-- and a, a U.S. Visa--

EPIFANIO

And money?

THERESA

Twenty thousand dollars and a few pesos, uh, a ten-or-twelve ounce bag of snow--

EPIFANIO

Leave that. It's dangerous to travel with it.

(beat)

We can't let you go alone. You won't be able to get across the border anyway. They'd pick up your trail there, and you wouldn't be safe among the gringos.

Teresa STARTS to weep silently with gratitude. She NODS, willing to do anything.

EPIFANIO (CONT'D)

The best thing is to get away tonight. We'll drive you so you're safe.

(MORE)

EPIFANIO (CONT'D)
 We can take you all the way to Mexico City. Straight to the airport, and there, you catch the first plane out.

THERESA
 To where?

EPIFANIO
 Anywhere. If you want to go to Spain, I've got friends there. People that owe me favors. I'll give you a name and telephone number.

(beat)
 After that, you're on your own.

Teresa's face steadies, betraying fear at what lies ahead.

EPIFANIO (CONT'D)
 It's this way or no way. You get led by the rope, or it hangs you. Decide.

TERESA
 Yes. Yes.

EPIFANIO
 ...Alright, then.

Epifanio watches as she puts the safety on her PISTOL, and TUCKS IT into the waist of her jeans.

INSIDE THE SUV

Teresa & Epifanio inside. The CAR is idling. Epifanio SPEAKS with urgency.

EPIFANIO (CONT'D)
 Just remember... you won't be safe over there, either. ...I've got friends, but Guemes does, too. So bury yourself deep enough that they don't find you.

Teresa, almost still with relief, doesn't look at him. She just faces forward.

EPIFANIO (CONT'D)
 I'm truly sorry about Guero. He was a good man.

Beat. Teresa TURNS to him with an unusual look-- almost a smile of acceptance on her lips.

TERESA

No.

(beat)

Guero was not a good man. He was *un hijo de su pinche madre*.

CUT TO BLACK.

EXT. DESERT LANDSCAPE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Don Epifanio's SUV drives along a desolate, barren area.

INT. DON EPIFANIO'S SUV - CONTINUOUS

Teresa, in the backseat with Epifanio, looking out the window at the barely-visible scenery. Up in front, a **DRIVER** (30s, silent, no neck) navigates the roads quickly and easily.

EPIFANIO

Will you miss this?

(beat)

Mexico?

Teresa doesn't answer-- she's spent. Epifanio sighs.

EPIFANIO (CONT'D)

Spain is... remarkable. You'll find much to like there. A new life. New sights. There are worse places to start over.

Teresa NODS softly after a moment.

EPIFANIO (CONT'D)

(taking her hand)

I only wish your new start was coming under different circumstances. That you were not alone.

(beat)

No man deserves to die in such a way. Especially not Guero.

Teresa tenses ever so slightly. She LOOKS at Epifanio.

TERESA

How did he die?

EPIFANIO

Shot, of course. While in flight. He may not have even felt the Cessna burned by the time it crashed.

(MORE)

EPIFANIO (CONT'D)
 (off her silence)
 It was on the news.

Beat. Teresa NODS and then LOOKS back out the window, her eyes darting slightly. Something is amiss here. Maybe.

LATER (MIDDLE OF NOWHERE)

The SUV is stopped in the desert, on the side of the road. Teresa still in the backseat. She LOOKS through the windshield: in the headlights, we can see, several YARDS ahead, that the DRIVER & DON EPIFANIO are taking a leak.

TERESA'S POV: Epifanio & the Driver TALKING QUIETLY... about what, we can't see. The DRIVER looks back at the CAR, then back at Teresa.

Teresa SITS BACK in her seat, her breathing becoming labored, her dread escalating.

THE OTHER TERESA (O.C.)
 Wonder what they're talking about.

Teresa LOOKS to her right to see **THE OTHER TERESA** (future self, chic and deadpan) sitting stock still next to her.

THE OTHER TERESA (CONT'D)
 They're not comparing routes to the airport, honey, I know that much.

TERESA
 Epifanio wouldn't do that to me.

THE OTHER TERESA
 (beat, piteous)
 You poor dumb bitch. You thought you could trust Guero, too.

Teresa's blood runs cold. She PEERS out the WINDSHIELD AGAIN:

TERESA'S POV: Don Epifanio, finished urinating, stops WALKING back to the SUV when a BUTTERFLY LANDS on his SLEEVE. Gingerly, he brings his hand to the butterfly... and it HOPS into his open palm, where it FLUTTERS for a moment... and then, EPIFANIO'S FINGERS SLOWLY CLOSE OVER IT-- CRUSHING IT.

BACK TO TERESA

Who now, at this point, right or wrong, is convinced she's fucked. A few beats where she considers her options-- and we follow her GAZE as it lands on the front PASSENGER SEAT of the SUV... where the DRIVER'S JACKET, and GUN, are visible.

TIME CUT (LATER)

We're DRIVING once again. Teresa sits facing the front, her hands at her side. The DRIVER looks at Teresa in the rearview mirror-- then at Epifanio, who returns the look.

Epifanio TURNS to Teresa--

EPIFANIO

Are you hungry?

(beat)

Teresa?

(beat)

Teresita?

SUDDENLY: Teresa PULLS OUT the DRIVER'S GUN that she was HIDING under her leg-- and POINTS it at EPIFANIO'S HEAD!

TERESA

Stop. The car. Now.

EPIFANIO

(evenly)

Teresa. ...What are you doing?

The SUV swerves slightly at this development-- but doesn't stop--

TERESA

I'm not gonna end up buried out here-- lemme out!

EPIFANIO

Teresa. Look at me.

TERESA

STOP THE FUCKING CAR--

EPIFANIO

Look at me.

(once she does)

He takes orders from me. Not you.

The CAR IS SPEEDING UP--

TERESA

THEN TELL HIM--

EPIFANIO

You're afraid. You're exhausted. And right now you are making the biggest mistake of what could be a much shorter life.

(beat)

You're safe here. You're safe.

Teresa's HYSTERIA wanes for a brief moment-- and in a flash, EPIFANIO grips her hand, and the GUN is being waved about--

BANG! A BULLET FLIES through the DRIVER'S HEAD, blood EXPLODING onto the WINDSHIELD--

OUTSIDE

The SUV swerves chaotically, heading for a PATCH OF CACTI--

INSIDE THE SUV

Epifanio and Teresa STRUGGLE for a moment--

--and the CAR SPINS over itself-- once, twice--

OUTSIDE

--before SKIDDING to a halt, upside-down, on this silent dirt road. **BLACK.**

INT. MENDOZA HOME KITCHEN - EARLY MORNING (FLASHBACK)

QUICK CUTS: **Teresa at 13 years of age**, stands at a counter, slicing stale corn tortillas into strips, frying them in oil, covering them in a salsa roja, and then finishing the dish: one plate of Chilaquiles, looking delicious.

Title Card: 2009

KITCHEN TABLE - LATER

Teresa sits opposite her father **IGNACIO** (40s), dressed nicely in a Western shirt, jeans and boots. He eats quietly, and smiles at his daughter.

TERESA (V.O.)

My father was a low-level runner when I was a kid. He got pinched one day with a couple of kilos of coke in his tires and that was that. He was lucky, really. He got to go to prison for a couple of years instead of a grave.

Teresa's POV: Taking in every angle of this man: his face. His hands. His brow.

IGNACIO

Take a picture, *mija*.

(off her head shake)

It's my best shirt. Go on.

Ignacio's forced humor fades. Teresa LOOKS to her right: her Salvadorean mother **CONCEPCION** (40s) is in the next room, on her knees, praying at a small ALTAR in a corner.

CONCEPCION

(whispered)

*--through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and
the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever
and ever. Amen.*

(beat)

*O God, you have prepared for
those...*

Teresa looks back at her father, who's already LOOKING out the window: a FEDERALE TRUCK has quietly pulled up to the curb outside.

TIME CUT

Ignacio OPENS the door-- three grave-faced **FEDERALES** (30s) are there, nodding their hellos. Ignacio nods back and looks at Teresa, who's CRYING softly, not looking at him: she's staring at his empty plate.

FEDERALE #1

It's time, Ignacio.

As one of the other Federales walks over to Ignacio to CUFF him-- Teresa LUNGES at her father to HUG HIM-- he embraces her tightly, whispering into her ear--

IGNACIO

One day this will be over. One day,
you and me, we will go back to
California. OK?

--as the FEDERALES cuff him, he SPEAKS with hushed urgency--

IGNACIO (CONT'D)

We won't even remember this. Don't
forget...!

And we CUT BACK TO:

INSIDE THE SUV, DESERT (PRESENT)

Teresa, in a heap on the floor of the wrecked car, COMES TO. She GASPS for air and WINCES as she TAKES the GUN sitting next to her and starts to CRAWL OUT through a SHATTERED WINDOW--

OUTSIDE (DESERT)

--and she CRIES OUT when her LEG is CUT with broken glass. Teresa PULLS HERSELF UP as best she can-- and then LOOKS BACK at the CAR when she hears a CLICK--

--it's DON EPIFANIO, who's released himself from his seatbelt which was holding him upside down. He CRIES OUT when he lands on the ground, turning over with difficulty-- and he LOOKS at Teresa, who, TREMBLING, aims the gun at him--

EPIFANIO

Help me. Teresa. ...Help me.

ANGLE ON TERESA

Who doesn't move-- and behind her, THE OTHER TERESA is standing there, smoking a cigarette.

THE OTHER TERESA

Well, don't just stand there, dummy.

Teresa LOOKS at the wreckage, apoplectic-- and then sees the NOTEBOOK lying on the ground, flung outside from the crash.

THE OTHER TERESA (CONT'D)

Take it.

Teresa KNEELS slowly, PICKS IT UP--

THE OTHER TERESA (CONT'D)

Good girl.

--and then EPIFANIO speaks again, in pain:

EPIFANIO

Help me, Goddammit!

TERESA

(beat, backing away)
I'm... I'm leaving. I'll send help.

EPIFANIO

Leave me now and you die.

(beat)

That is a promise.

Teresa, overcome, aghast at what's become of her life, LOWERS the gun, starting to cry--

TERESA

I'm sorry-- I'm leaving...!

EPIFANIO

You won't leave. Girls like you never do.

TERESA

(weeping)

I have to go...! I--

EPIFANIO

Teresa.

(beat)

I know you. A street rat desperate for any kind of life other than the one you left behind. And all you girls ever do is wander back like an animal following bread crumbs.

TERESA

(darkening)

You don't know me at all.

EPIFANIO

But you were different. You were special, *mija*.

(reaches for her)

One. Last. Time.

(reaching harder)

Help me.

Teresa STEPS towards him once-- and then takes a pause-- and then STARTS to BACK AWAY into the darkness of the desert.

TERESA

I'm so sorry.

EPIFANIO

(beat)

Wrong. ...The dead have no regrets.

Off these chilling words, Teresa RUNS into the night.

TIME CUT (NIGHT INTO DAWN)

Teresa, completely worn, RUNNING, stumbling her way through the desert-- MULTIPLE DISSOLVES as she moves into exhaustion, then pushes through it to keep moving-- until she SPOTS a

RUN-DOWN GAS STATION

Where an **OLD MAN** (70s) is sitting, smoking next to his solitary gas pump. He barely blinks as Teresa, bloodied & battered, lopes her way over to him. Long pause.

TERESA

Do you... have a telephone?

He LOOKS HER up and down, and then, without blinking, he POINTS to his ramshackle office a few yards away.

MOMENTS LATER

Teresa, on her knees, DRINKING hungrily from a WATER HOSE on the side of the office building. She GASPS, coughing-- guzzling as much as she can-- then STANDS, wobbling towards the office door-- but she PAUSES to VOMIT, water she just drank SPILLING onto the dirt.

OFFICE

Teresa, on something beyond what we call "autopilot," SITTING on a stool next to the OLD MAN, who POURS TEQUILA into a JAR... and then DROPS a LIVE SCORPION inside it. The POISON inside the scorpion SEEPS out into the tequila in a CLOUD. After a moment, he DIPS a CLOTH into the liquid, and RUBS it on Teresa's WOUNDS. She WINCES.

OLD MAN

(subtitled Spanish)

This will help. Just don't drink it, mija.

TERESA

(vacantly)

I'm... I'm nobody's fucking daughter.

He stares at her blankly for a moment-- and then PUSHES a PHONE to her, and slowly, she begins dialing a NUMBER. It RINGS. **And RINGS. And RINGS.** And after ten RINGS, Teresa starts to SOB. Her face contorts into a mask of sheer pain, degradation, despair. And then: a MALE VOICE answers.

IGNACIO (V.O.)

Yes.

(beat)

Hello.

TERESA

(like a child)

...Daddy?

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. BARBER SHOP BACK ROOM (CALIFORNIA) - DAY

IGNACIO sits in this nondescript room in a chair opposite someone of power: his body language and even tone reflect it clearly.

IGNACIO

I would not bother you with this if I did not think that I had no other solution.

(beat)

I understand that this is not your problem. But she is my only daughter. And... I will repay you in whatever way I can.

(beat)

She is... in danger. She will die.

We PAN slightly to see **MALIK** (20s, Blatino, beautiful, quietly aggressive) leaning against a wall, listening.

MALIK

Who's killing her?

IGNACIO

...Guemes, certainly. But she--

(beat)

She has information that is of great interest to Epifanio and his people.

We WHIRL AROUND TO **REVEAL** that the person behind the desk is CAMILA, Epifanio's ex-wife, looking beautiful and put-together as ever. She PERKS UP slightly.

CAMILA

Well, why didn't you say so?

EXT. DESERT GAS STATION - LATER THAT DAY

Teresa sitting on the ground, waiting. The OLD MAN approaches her with a dirty, wet rag, and STARTS to gently DAB at the DRIED BLOOD on her face, singing/whispering softly:

OLD MAN

*Quando lejos me encuentre de ti/
cuando quieras que yo este contigo/
no hallaras un recuerdo de mi/
ni tendrás mas amores conmigo...*

After a few moments, a VAN appears in the far distance, kicking up dust--

Teresa TENSES-- who is that? And the VAN (old-school, airbrushed with early-80s-inspired Wizard/fantasy artwork) finally arrives at the station. Two **MEN** (one white, one Hispanic, both late 20s) get out.

They **START** to walk towards Teresa, who scrambles to her feet-- she backs away when she sees **ONE OF THEM** has a **BLACK CANVAS BAG** in his hands--

TERESA

No-- no no no--

But she's too **WEAK** to get away-- one of them **HOLDS** her while the other **PUTS THE BAG OVER HER HEAD**-- she **STRUGGLES** and **CRIES OUT** as she's **ROUGHLY CARRIED BACK** to the **VAN**--

--where one of the **MEN LIFTS UP** the backseat, **REVEALING** a secret compartment large enough for one person-- they **DROP HER IN THERE**, and then **SLAM** the **SEAT DECK** back into place, making her disappear--

TIME CUT

The **VAN DRIVES** away from the gas station. The **OLD MAN**, who watched the whole thing, **LIGHTS** another cigarette, and just stares into space.

We HEAR Gustavo Santaolalla's Iguazu start to PLAY as we CUT TO:

INSIDE THE SECRET VAN TRUNK

Teresa, in foetal position, trapped, **SWEATING**, the bottom half of her face visible out of the canvas bag. Her **HANDS** are **CLASPED** together in prayer, her **LIPS MOVING**:

TERESA (CONT'D)

*--through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and
the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever
and ever. Amen.*

(beat)

*O God, you have prepared for
those...*

TIME LAPSE

Of **MEXICAN ROADS** going from day to night, **STARS** replacing the **CLOUDS** in the sky--

INT. VAN - MUCH LATER

Teresa GASPS for air LIKE A NEWBORN when the SEAT DECK is taken off, and she's LIFTED out of the hiding place by the TWO MEN--

DESERT

--and CARRIED under her arms, bag still on her head, in the night towards an 18-WHEELER TRUCK whose BACK END OPENS--

MOMENTS LATER

Teresa, still shrouded in the BAG, is placed on the FLOOR of the 18-WHEELER'S darkened CARGO AREA--

--and they REMOVE the BAG from her head-- TERESA BLINKS, looking around--

TERESA'S POV: And in the seconds before the MEN CLOSE the CARGO DOORS, plunging her into darkness again, WE SEE the DOZEN or so **YOUNG MEXICAN WOMEN** (17-24) sitting against the walls of the CARGO area, amid its BOXES, who LOOK at Teresa wearily. Teresa SITS next to a **SICKLY GIRL** (19) who COUGHS, looking FEVERISH, shivering.

EXT. WAREHOUSE LOADING AREA - DAWN

The 18-WHEELER is BEEPING as it BACKS UP into a LOADING DOCK.

INSIDE THE WAREHOUSE

The CARGO DOORS of the TRUCK OPEN-- and INSIDE, nothing but a WALL of BOXES. **SIX GUARDS** (30s) JUMP INSIDE THE TRUCK, and start to MOVE the BOXES OFF THE TRUCK--

--bit by bit-- until we see Teresa and the other stowaways huddled in the back of the SPACE. A toilet bucket is in the corner. Filth and dirt everywhere.

TIME CUT

The LINE of WOMEN (exhausted, dehydrated) walk in single file behind one of the GUARDS down a HALLWAY.

BATHROOM/SHOWER

We PAN this SPACE as MOST OF THE WOMEN HUDDLE for space around the TWO SINKS for water to CLEAN themselves off--

--and we REACH the **SHOWER AREA** (three heads only) where Teresa sits on the floor of the tiled space, under the tepid water, staring into space, unsure whether to be afraid or relieved.

DORMITORY

In this CRAMPED ROOM filled with a DOZEN BEDS, the WOMEN are TALKING, EATING-- and Teresa STARES at the SICKLY GIRL on a cot, who LOOKS awful. Two GUARDS enter and PICK UP the SICKLY GIRL, carrying her out. A THIRD GUARD comes to Teresa.

TERESA

(re: Sickly Girl)

Where are they taking her?

GUARD

Doctor.

(beat)

Come with me.

HALLWAY (MOMENTS LATER)

Teresa is LED to an

OFFICE

Which is empty, save for a few chairs, a table, and a COVERED DISH. A WINDOW covered with CLOSED BLINDS on the opposite wall. Teresa SITS and waits, uncertain. After a moment, CAMILA enters, and Teresa STANDS--

CAMILA

Please. Sit.

Teresa does so, and Camila does as well. Silence. After a moment, MALIK enters, shuts the door, and STANDS by it quietly. Teresa CLOCKS the GUN he has in his waistband.

CAMILA (CONT'D)

So. Did you ever come up with an answer to your question?

(beat)

"These boys. What are we going to do with them?"

Teresa doesn't know what to say.

CAMILA (CONT'D)

You know, since that night-- and I apologize for my rudeness, but something tells me you understand, considering the state I was in when you found me-- I have not been able to shake the words. They have followed me since my divorce, my emigration from Mexico, my... re-establishment.

(beat)

(MORE)

CAMILA (CONT'D)

Funny. How I mistook you for some, I don't know, *barrio trash* when I first laid eyes on you. I thought-- and again, forgive me-- I thought, *if that little pinche puta ever found herself against the wall... she'd just end up painting it with her brains.*

(beat, smiling)

And yet, here you are. What with all you've been through... are you sure there aren't more than one of you, running around? ...Wouldn't *that* be helpful, yes?

Teresa's eyes and face begin to water, crumple.

CAMILA (CONT'D)

See, I once thought you were a girl who only wanted money, and jewelry, and snow. But you were more. ...You are a girl who wants *life*.

Teresa breaks into silent SOBS.

CAMILA (CONT'D)

Shhh. Shhh, Teresa. It's alright.

Camila LOOKS at Malik, who comes forward to PUSH a box of Kleenex towards her. Teresa takes one, trying to regain control of herself.

TERESA

Thank you. Thank you, Miss--

CAMILA

Oh no, none of that. You'll call me Camila. OK?

(smiles warmly)

Is that clear?

TERESA

(smiling softly)

Yes. Camila.

CAMILA

Alright then. Anyone who's tangled with my ex-husband-- for starters-- deserves my respect and admiration.

TERESA

I-- I don't know how to repay you.

CAMILA
Oh, I'll think of something.

TERESA
When-- when can I see my father?

CAMILA
Later. Men will come to question him, *Teresita*. They will want to know where you are. ...No. It's best if he has no idea, *verdad?*

Camila, preparing to EXIT, stands, walking towards the door. She STOPS to LOOK at Teresa.

CAMILA (CONT'D)
I almost forgot.

Camila REMOVES the cover from the dish-- it's CHILAQUILES.

CAMILA (CONT'D)
Your father asked Malik to bring this to you. Such a loving man. Rest now. You're a very lucky girl, you know. Your whole future is just... *waiting* for you, *mija*. You'll see. But... tell me one thing, please.
(beat)
Why did you not shoot Epifanio when you had the chance?

Teresa LOOKS UP slowly, confused.

TERESA
I-- I don't know--

CAMILA
He is alive, Teresa. It's all over the news. And he will find you. Sooner or later.

A wave of horror washes over Teresa. Camila shrugs.

CAMILA (CONT'D)
You're safe here. For now. It may not be fancy, but... it's better than a grave. So what are you going to do about it?
(beat, smiles)
Welcome to America, *prietita*.

Camila & Malik EXIT. Teresa, alone, TEARS OF RAGE STREAMING down her face, sitting before the dish of chilaquiles.

She LOOKS UP: and there, on the opposite end of the room, is **THE OTHER TERESA**, who smiles sweetly to her.

THE OTHER TERESA
Well go on, bitch. Eat up.
(beat)
Life is for the living.

Teresa, DESPONDENT at what her life has become, STARES at the dish, not moving.

INT. WAREHOUSE DORM AREA - NIGHT

Teresa, as the others SLEEP, SOBBING quietly on her bed.

HALLWAY (MOMENTS LATER)

Teresa SLIPS quietly along the passage until she reaches a DOOR that's AJAR... and she PEEKS inside to see--

REVERSE ANGLE (OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR)

--and we START CLOSE on Teresa and then PULL BACK to REVEAL a MODEST COCAINE-PROCESSING PLANT-- WOMEN in their UNDERWEAR, or even less, in FACE-MASKS, at tables WEIGHING COKE, CUTTING IT, BAGGING IT--

BACK TO TERESA

Who STARES at this in wonder. She STEPS into the room unnoticed and SEES a COLD STORAGE LOCKER on her right-- some KNIVES on a shelf inside-- she goes inside the

COLD STORAGE LOCKER

And GRABS a KNIFE-- HOLDS it to her WRIST-- working up the courage to SLASH HER WRISTS-- we CLOSE IN on her as she closes her eyes, breathes-- and just as she's about to do it-- a CREAK sounds from deeper in the locker-- Teresa, seeing something strange, WALKS through the hanging PLASTIC TARPS to the REAR--

--where she finds the SICKLY GIRL, covered in PLASTIC, dead, HANGING like chattel from the ceiling. Teresa COVERS her mouth & eyes, horrified...

...and then, slowly, she LOWERS her hand. DROPS the KNIFE. And STARES at the body. Takes in *death* right before her. She doesn't move.

TERESA (V.O.)
Everyday above ground is a good day.

DORMITORY ROOM (MOMENTS LATER)

Teresa, shaking, at her bed, LOOKING at the NOTEBOOK. **The Maps. The Coordinates. The Names. She EATS from the DISH of Chilaguiles as she STUDIES the information, her wheels turning.**

TERESA (V.O.)

*The dead have no regrets. And life
is for the living.*

(beat)

*I didn't come this far to just die
on you, my little putos. So the
next time I get my shot... I'm
gonna take it. Anything's possible.
After all...*

And Teresa LOOKS UP at US, with the faintest hint of a determined SMILE.

TERESA (V.O.)

...this is America, right?

SLAM TO BLACK.

*

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