

COYOTES

"PILOT"

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coyote | 'kī ōt, kī ōdē |

noun

1 a wolflike wild dog native to North America

2 a person who smuggles Latin Americans across the US border

Typically this is done for a high fee, exploiting desperate immigrants who have no other options.

But in some rare cases, it's done solely to give them a chance at a better life.

One could almost call this feat... heroic.

IN THE DARKNESS

We hear the VOICE of LUISA CASTILLO:

LUISA (V.O.)
It's hard to imagine, but there was
a time superheroes didn't exist.
But that was over seventy years
ago. Before the Second World War.

FADE IN on a COLLAGE OF SHOTS from all around the world. New
York City. Paris. Tokyo. Big cities. Millions of people.

LUISA (V.O.)
Now some people can fly. Others
can lift cars over their head
without even breaking a sweat.

In each city, a SUPERHERO saves the day from a SUPERVILLAIN.

LUISA (V.O.)
Some use their powers for good.
Others use them for evil.

But these heroes don't wear capes. They don't wear spandex.
Their uniforms are tactical. Durable. Made of kevlar.

LUISA (V.O.)
Fortunately, the good guys win
more than they lose.

These are the superheroes of the **real world**. Our world.

LUISA (V.O.)
And although we're grateful every
time they save the world, there are
some things that can't be fixed with
superhuman strength or X-ray vision.

The COLLAGE ends at the DESERT. The sun bears down on the
jagged, harsh landscape. Its expansiveness awe-inspiring.

LUISA (V.O.)
There are some things that aren't
affected one fucking bit.

CHYRON: Sonoran Desert, Mexico

Seemingly from the sky, a pair of PANTIES flutters down and
lands next to a BOX TURTLE resting in the shade of a tree.

We TILT UP the tree - a VELVET MESQUITE. It towers over the
surrounding cacti and brittlebush.

But that isn't the tree's only distinction...

Strung over its branches are dozens of FEMALE UNDERGARMENTS. Tattered bras. Floral cotton underwear. This is a RAPE TREE.

Now we hear FOOTSTEPS. Several of them. They belong to...

A nuclear family: a HUSBAND, a WIFE, and their two SONS: a 9-YEAR-OLD and a 7-YEAR-OLD. The younger boy grips a plastic action figure of a real-life superhero known as JUSTICE (*the closest thing our world has to Captain America or Superman*).

The family is tired. Disheveled. They are Mexicans attempting to make their dream of a better life in America come true.

There are TWO OTHERS on this journey with them. Hard-looking men. Rough. Intimidating. They are COYOTES.

The two coyotes look at the tree and stop.

NOTE: ITALICS DENOTE SPANISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES

COYOTE #1

Time to pay the second fee.

HUSBAND

Second fee? We already paid you seven thousand dollars.

COYOTE #1

Now it's time to pay again.

WIFE

But... that's not fair.

COYOTE #2

Nothing's fair in the desert.

The husband looks at his wife. She's scared. His sons are too. He starts to pull out his wallet.

WIFE

Sergio, no, we can't.

HUSBAND

(ignoring her)

Here's six hundred. It's all we have. Every single dollar.

Coyote #1 smirks and takes his money.

COYOTE #1

Thanks. But it's not enough.

COYOTE #2
*Don't worry, there are other ways
 to settle your debt.*

Coyote #2 grabs the wife and starts pulling her away.

Before the husband can even try to stop him: Coyote #1 has a 9mm PISTOL pointed at his face.

9-YEAR-OLD BOY
Dad, what's happening?

HUSBAND
 (to Coyote #1)
Please. Please, don't do this.

The husband watches Coyote #2 shove his wife up against the Rape Tree. Both of his sons are crying now.

The husband lunges for Coyote #1, who SHOOTs. The bullet clips his arm, but he still gets his hands on Coyote #1.

A struggle ensues. They fight over control of the gun.

Suddenly... **BANG**. Coyote #1's gun goes off -- a WILD SHOT.

The husband - knowing in his gut what happened - glances at his oldest son long enough for Coyote #1 to AIM HIS GUN...

On the **BANG**: CUT TO the youngest boy, clutching his Justice toy. In front of him, his dad falls to the ground. Dead.

His older brother lies next to his dad. Also dead.

CUT TO the dry, cracked sand -- as we hear one last **BANG**.

It's followed by a light THUMP.

The boy's small hand falls into frame. Still wrapped around his Justice toy. Splattered with **blood**.

FADE TO BLACK.

TITLE CARD: COYOTES

FADE IN on... famed superhero JUSTICE in the flesh.

Well, kind of. We're watching NEWS COVERAGE on a TV screen.

We see pixelated iPhone footage of Justice - moving with otherworldly speed - towards a SUPERVILLAIN - engulfing a skyscraper with FIREBALLS that shoot from his hands.

Justice evades a fireball and delivers a PUNCH that sends the Supervillain crashing into a parked car.

At the bottom of the TV screen, a caption reads: "JUSTICE OVERCOMES TERRORIST, SAVES 42 HOSTAGES"

PULL OUT to reveal we're in a--

LIVING ROOM

Two 15-year-old boys - CARLOS CASTILLO and his friend BRETT - lie on the floor, eyes glued to the TV.

On the TV: a FEMALE REPORTER addresses the camera:

FEMALE REPORTER

What you just saw was an exclusive video of Justice successfully apprehending a dangerous and as of now: unidentified Super.

As the Reporter continues, we see footage of...

- The fire department dousing the burning building with water.
- Rescued hostages crying and hugging their loved ones.
- A paramilitary law enforcement unit - SCIS (Superhuman Criminal Investigation Service) - fastening POWER-DAMPENING HANDCUFFS onto the Supervillain and taking him into custody.

FEMALE REPORTER (V.O.)

This marks the third time this month that a member of the Protectors has saved American civilians from an upstart supervillain.

Carlos turns to Brett.

CARLOS

Who do you think would win in a fight? Justice or Lady Siren?

Just then: Carlos's sister LUISA, 25, our narrator from the opening, walks by.

LUISA

You two gotta have something better to talk about.

STAY ON Carlos and Brett as Luisa exits the frame.

BRETT
Think your sister would ever join
the Protectors?

CARLOS
Naw. She's as lame as her powers.

EXT. CASTILLO HOME - SAME

Luisa walks across the lawn to the mailbox at the curb.

We're in the SUBURBS. A picture of good old-fashioned American normalcy. The only thing missing is a white picket fence.

CHYRON: Tucson, Arizona

Instead of opening the mailbox, Luisa **PHASES** HER HAND THROUGH IT and grabs a handful of envelopes.

Luisa's superpower is the ability to pass through solid matter by passing her atomic particles through the spaces between the atoms of the object through which she is moving.

Translation: she can walk through walls.

Or in this case: "phase" her hand through the mailbox.

Speaking of the mail... there's a PAMPHLET addressed to Luisa from the U.S. GOVERNMENT. In big bold letters it says:

DON'T JUST BE A SUPER, BE A SUPERHERO

It's followed by a PHOTO of Justice, flanked by two other superheroes: an AMAZONIAN WOMAN and a MUSCULAR MAN with crystal-like skin. They all wear a similar uniform.

The TAGLINE at the bottom says:

Be one of the Mighty and the Faithful. Be a PROTECTOR.

LUISA
(shaking her head)
Fucking propaganda.

Luisa looks up to see that Brett's parents - RYAN and JANELLE BURCHFIELD - have pulled up in their SUV.

They lower their window halfway and give Luisa a small wave. Not hiding that they're a *little* uncomfortable around her.

LUISA (CONT'D)
Hey Ryan, hey Jan. I'll let the
boys know you're here.

As Luisa walks back toward her house, STAY ON the Burchfields:

RYAN

It's a good thing Carlos isn't a
freak too. Or Brett would be
finding himself a new friend.

Janelle nods.

JANELLE

If they're not pulling me from a
burning building, keep 'em away.

ON LUISA

Knowing they're probably talking about her, she rolls her
eyes. When she gets to the front door, she starts to **PHASE**
through it, but stops. Then, after another eye roll, she
opens the door like a "normal" person.

INT. CASTILLO HOME - DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Luisa drops the stack of mail - except for the Protectors
pamphlet - in front of her father MIGUEL CASTILLO, late 40s,
hard lines on a handsome face. He drinks coffee.

Next to him is Luisa's other brother TOMÁS, 21, stuck
somewhere between boy and man. He laces up hiking boots.

LUISA

(calls to the living room)
Brett, your parents are here.

She throws the pamphlet into the kitchen trash can.

At the sink: her mother LORENA, mid 40s, deserves a break but
doesn't have time for one, cranes her neck toward Luisa.

LORENA

Mija, can you bring me the plates?

Luisa walks over and takes Tomás's plate.

TOMÁS

Hey! I'm not done, asshole.

MIGUEL

Language.

LORENA

Language.

LUISA

Whaddaya gonna do, lick it clean?

Tomás opens his mouth to retort, but Carlos and Brett burst into the room. Carlos grabs a basketball.

MIGUEL

You're staying at Brett's tonight?

CARLOS

Yup.

MIGUEL

Don't forget: your mother and I are helping your cousin with the baby all weekend. Luisa's in charge.

CARLOS

(on his way out the door
with Brett)

Peace!

The front door SLAMS. Luisa looks at her dad, eyebrow raised.

LUISA

Baby, huh?

MIGUEL

He has dozens of cousins. He wouldn't know either way.

LORENA

I just don't like lying to him.

MIGUEL

It's no different than telling him el chupacabra chases after little boys that don't eat their vegetables.

(getting down to business)

Have you heard from Angel?

LORENA

Not yet.

TOMÁS

Why? What's up?

MIGUEL

Our group got cold feet. And if Angel can't find a new one in the next couple hours, no run this month.

TOMÁS

Really? What about next weekend?

MIGUEL

We have Carlos's basketball camp.

LORENA

And I'm hosting book club the following Sunday. This is a family business. Family comes first.

MIGUEL

Your mother's right. Do you have the map?

Tomás brings up a map on his iPhone. Miguel snatches it away from him and sets it on the table.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)

The one I gave you.

TOMÁS

(mumbling as he reaches
into his backpack)

Think it's in here with my sundial.

LUISA

I can't believe you're letting him navigate. He can't even find his way home from the mall without Waze.

TOMÁS

I'm more helpful than you'd be.

(feigning worry)

"My god - a barbed wire fence! If only Luisa was here to phase us through it!"

(then)

Oh wait, we have wire cutters.
Crisis averted.

Before Luisa can snipe back, Miguel finishes his coffee.

MIGUEL

Mija, can you make a fresh pot?

Luisa sighs, but doesn't protest.

Tomás smirks as she heads to the kitchen. Then, he spreads a LARGE MAP of the Sonoran Desert onto the table. Several ROUTES have been OUTLINED in red marker.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

CHYRON: Naco, Sonora, Mexico - Near the Arizona border

A camp of would-be IMMIGRANTS stuck at the border due to fear, lack of money, or both. So they wait here. Desperate.

Some sleep on flattened cardboard boxes under the little shade available. One woman kneels over a makeshift cross. Children kick an empty water jug like it's a soccer ball.

Along a fence, border-crossing SIGNS flutter in the wind:

¡NO LO HAGAN! ("Don't do it!")

¡NO HAY SUFICIENTE AGUA! ("There's not enough water!")

¡NO VALE LA PENA! ("It's not worth it!")

The last sign is a picture of a MEXICAN SUPERHERO. He has big muscles and an even bigger smile.

But he is encompassed by the international prohibition sign, aka the "Ghostbusters" sign, with the words: ¡LOS HÉROES NO LOS RESCATARAN! ("The heroes won't rescue you!")

ANGEL ORTIZ, 50s, grizzled beard and leathery skin, walks through the slums. He scans the crowd and finds a YOUNG WOMAN and her 4-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER sitting in the shade.

ANGEL

Looking to cross?

The woman nods. She's anxious. Jittery. Angel clocks this.

ANGEL (CONT'D)

Pull up your sleeves.

YOUNG WOMAN

I don't use. I promise.

ANGEL

*Track marks aren't the only thing
I'm looking for. Your sleeves.*

YOUNG WOMAN

My daughter, I need to--

Angel takes her wrist. She tries to twist away but he pushes up her sleeve, revealing a NUMERIC CODE embedded in her skin. *Picture: a futuristic concentration camp ID tattoo. It's implanted in Supers at birth, worldwide.*

ANGEL

No Supers.

He lets her go and starts walking away.

YOUNG WOMAN

Wait! Please!

Angel continues on. He spots a GROUP OF FOUR sharing a meal for one. The mother ANA, 40s, talks quietly with her son DIEGO, 18, and another boy FELIX, 19. The father GUILLERMO, 40s, keeps his eyes trained on Angel as he approaches.

ANGEL

United States?

GUILLERMO

Yes.

ANGEL

What's your name?

GUILLERMO

Guillermo Mendez.

ANGEL

Okay, Mendez. English?

GUILLERMO

Yes. I lived in Phoenix until I was deported a month ago.

ANA

Please, the air here isn't good for my husband--

GUILLERMO

Ana! I'm handling it.

Angel rubs the stubble on his chin, as he sizes up Guillermo.

ANGEL

I can't risk any complications.

GUILLERMO

*I've made the trip twice before.
There will be no complications.*

Angel nods.

ANGEL

You do everything you're told. It's about twenty hours on foot with delivery to a safe house outside of Tucson. It's thirty-five hundred total, half now, half later.

GUILLERMO
Only thirty-five hundred? For all
four of us??

ANGEL
Guess you could say my partner's
one of the good guys.
(then, serious)
No drugs, no weapons, no Supers.

Guillermo looks at his wife. They have a silent conversation.

GUILLERMO
Okay.

ANGEL
Show me your wrists.

INT. CASTILLO HOME - KITCHEN/DINING ROOM - MEANWHILE

Luisa loads the dishwasher. She glances over at Tomás pointing to the map - flanked by Miguel and Lorena.

TOMÁS
Since Border Patrol's been
monitoring our regular route, this
is our safest bet.
(then)
Even though the shortcut would save
four hours...

MIGUEL
Shortcuts are highly trafficked. We
can't--

TOMÁS
Dad, I know. It was a joke.

They're interrupted by the FRONT DOOR swinging OPEN.

Miguel's younger brother JAIME, late 30s, enters. Between his tattooed arms and shaved head, he's Miguel's opposite.

TOMÁS (CONT'D)
Tío Jaime!

MIGUEL
You're late.

JAIME
(to Tomás)
Ready to lead your first run, kid?

TOMÁS

Hell yeah.

LORENA

Now that Jaime's here, I have something for you...

She opens a closet and pulls out three pairs of boots.

JAIME

Wow, Lori, our old boots? You shouldn't have.

LORENA

It's what I did to your boots.

She flips one over -- the sole is lined with carpet.

TOMÁS

Carpet?

LUISA

So you won't leave tracks.

MIGUEL

(smiles at Lorena)
You think of everything.

LORENA

There's more.

She takes three CamelBak hydration packs out of the closet.

JAIME

Seriously? We're gonna look like a bunch of gringo hikers.

Tomás laughs. Even Miguel can't hold back a grin.

LORENA

Now you won't have to carry those ridiculous water jugs. They're heavy and they're for amateurs.

JAIME

Won't argue that.

Miguel's phone CHIMES. He reads a text.

MIGUEL

Angel came through. Let's pack up the car.

He and Lorena jump into action and exit. Jaime turns to Luisa.

JAIME
How'd our secret mission go?

LUISA
It'll be handled tonight.

TOMÁS
What secret mission?

LUISA
None of your business.

Lorena returns to the dining room.

LORENA
Boys, vámonos.

Jaime stuffs pan dulce in his mouth and heads off with Tomás.

Lorena notices Luisa's frustration. This isn't the first time she's seen this - and it probably won't be the last.

LORENA (CONT'D)
Mija, if you--

LUISA
I know, I know.
(by rote)
It's too dangerous - because I'm
too dangerous. If I get caught,
I'll get sent away. Forever.
(then, quieter)
I just wanna help.

LORENA
You do. You're studying to be--

LUISA
I wanna do more.

Lorena takes a breath.

LORENA
You know how your father and I
feel, but if you really want--

LUISA
Please don't say try out for the
Protectors. Mom, I wanna help you
and Dad. I don't wanna police other
Supers and call it "being a hero."

A beat. Lorena wishes she could say or do more. But she can't.

LORENA

Keep an eye on Carlos. We'll text
you when we're at the safe house.

She kisses Luisa's forehead and exits.

Luisa looks around the now empty house and sighs. Then she
checks her phone and notices the time.

LUISA

Shit.

INT. HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

Luisa, wearing scrubs, hurries around a corner and spots TWO
MED STUDENTS. She gives them a sheepish smile. The male
student, TODD NGUYEN, mid 20s, looks unimpressed. But the
female student, PRIYA NIM, mid 20s, grins and shakes her head.

PRIYA

Girl, if you phased through ICU,
you would've made it on time.

LUISA

Think I'd rather be late than get
fired for using my powers at work.

MALE VOICE (O.C.)

Miss Castillo.

Luisa turns to see DOCTOR MATTHEW GLAZIER, 38, a generically
handsome white guy.

DR. GLAZIER

Honored you could join us. We were
just about to check on Mr. Weber.

LUISA

Great. I'd love to jump right in.

Dr. Glazier scans a chart. He frowns.

DR. GLAZIER

The patient noted he's not willing--
that he'd prefer treatment from a
non-Super. I'm sorry, Luisa.
(to Todd)
Todd, let's have you assess.

Todd smirks at Luisa as he follows Dr. Glazier into the
patient's room.

PRIYA

Todd's an ass.

(looks at Dr. Glazier
through the window)

But my God, even when Glazier's
apologizing to you for a bigot
patient, there's sexual tension.

LUISA

(fighting a smile)

You're so full of shit.

Dr. Glazier and Todd step back into the hallway.

TODD

(oozing confidence)

The patient's complaining about a
sudden and severe headache. He also
has neck and muscle pain. The most
likely explanation is that Mr.
Weber has aseptic meningitis, so we
should order blood work and
prescribe pain meds.

DR. GLAZIER

Interesting.

(to Luisa and Priya)

Any thoughts to add?

Priya's got nothing. Luisa takes the patient's chart. She
furrows her brow, then glances in the room.

LUISA

Wait, he was here last week with
phantom pain, trying to get an Rx
for tramadol. He doesn't have
meningitis - he's a drug addict.

(shows Todd the chart)

He came in three times last month.

DR. GLAZIER

Correct. Mr. Weber here is one of
our "frequent flyers."

Dr. Glazier smiles at Luisa, impressed. In spite of herself,
Luisa smiles back, charmed. Then:

PRIYA

So he's a bigot and a junkie. Fun.

EXT. NOGALES-MARIPOSA PORT OF ENTRY - DAY

Lines of cars waiting at the border checkpoint stretch into the desert on both sides. PASSENGERS sweat in their vehicles. Many are anxious. Tense. Even if they're not doing anything illegal, crossing the border is still nerve-wracking.

But... INSIDE THE CASTILLOS' SUV the mood is calm.

Lorena drives. Miguel rides shotgun. Jaime and Tomás are in the back. They've all made this trip several times.

INT. CHEAP MOTEL - LATER

Flies buzz and land on the stained wallpaper.

The Mendez family: Guillermo, Ana, Diego, and Felix sit on a bed in the small room. Felix nervously bites his fingernails.

FELIX

What the hell's taking so long?

ANA

(to Guillermo)

I'm worried too.

GUILLERMO

We have to trust them.

ANA

What if it's so cheap just to trick us? What if they work for El Ojo--

GUILLERMO

Do you want to go back home?

Ana stops talking. Felix steals a glance out the window.

EXT. CHEAP MOTEL - SAME

Jaime and Angel speak in intense whispers. Tomás listens but stays out of it, while Miguel is focused on the Mendez family inside. Namely, Felix. Still biting his fingernails.

JAIME

We can't keep making runs for such small groups.

ANGEL

What am I supposed to do with Miguel's impossible standards?!

Jaime sighs. He knows Angel is right. He turns to his brother.

JAIME

I get the no Super thing - it's not
like I'm itching to spend the rest
of my life in an orange jumpsuit.
But we gotta figure out another...
(notices Miguel staring)
Miguel?

MIGUEL

Look. Those three are scared. But
the other boy, he's nervous.

Without saying another word, Miguel enters the motel room.
Jaime and Angel share a look, then follow him inside.

INT. CHEAP MOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Miguel beelines to Felix.

MIGUEL

Give me your bag.

FELIX

What? Why?

MIGUEL

Give me your bag. Now.

Reluctantly, Felix does as he's told. Miguel opens the bag
and dumps it onto the bed.

He finds what he's looking for: two pounds of heroin.

FELIX

I can explain. I'm just trying to--

Miguel silences Felix with one word:

MIGUEL

No.

He turns to Angel.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)

You need to be more thorough.
(to Felix)
We don't smuggle drugs.

Before Felix can even react, Jaime pulls Miguel aside:

JAIME

Then we're not smuggling anyone.
They're a family, you think they're
leaving one of their own behind?

Miguel turns away from Jaime and addresses Guillermo and Ana:

MIGUEL

We can't help your son. I'm sorry.

Felix's eyes grow wide. Ana puts a hand on his shoulder.

ANA

*Felix isn't my son, but he's a good
kid. He's just in a bad situation.
(looking at Tomás)
You have a boy his age. Please.*

Miguel glances back at Tomás.

TOMÁS

Dad, c'mon, we can't just--

MIGUEL

(cutting him off)
It's non-negotiable.

FELIX

*Sir, my mom, she's sick. I'm just
trying to make some money to help
her. After that, I'm out. I swear.*

Miguel considers Felix's plea. But then:

MIGUEL

*I'm sure you'll find another way.
(to Guillermo and Ana)
If you still want to go, we leave
in five minutes.*

Felix looks at the Mendez family, begging them to say something, to help him. But they stay silent.

INT. HOSPITAL - CAFETERIA - EVENING

Luisa and Priya eat shitty hospital food and study. Luisa holds a medical textbook, quizzing Priya.

PRIYA

Is it... abdominal aortic aneurysm?

LUISA

Nope. This is like that zebra thing Dr. Glazier's always talking about. "When you hear hoofbeats, think of horses, not zebras."

(off Priya's blank stare)

When patients describe their symptoms, med students almost always give the most exotic diagnosis. But the answer is usually just a horse.

PRIYA

Wow, if he tells you that horse story at work, just imagine how sexy your pillow talk will be.

LUISA

Hilarious. Any other guesses?

PRIYA

Ugh. If I had your powers, I wouldn't even waste my time with this crap. I'd just join the Protectors and be surrounded by sexy, muscular superheroes all day.

Luisa doesn't respond. Priya hit a nerve, and she knows it.

PRIYA (CONT'D)

Sorry, I know it's not that simple. You do you, girl.

(then)

Plus, if you weren't here, I'd blow my brains out.

Luisa smiles, the tension dissolved. Then: their pagers BEEP.

LUISA

ER?

PRIYA

Yup.

They both scarf down one last bite of food.

LUISA

The correct answer was "gas."

PRIYA

I can't believe you're stifling my inner zebra with "gas."

As they rush off to the ER, we launch into a MONTAGE...

- DUSK. Miguel, Jaime, Tomás, and the Mendez family - sans Felix - trudge through the barren SONORAN DESERT.
- Luisa checks a patient's vitals, then carefully pushes drugs into his IV line. She makes a note on his chart.
- The group walks through brush. There's a RATTLE. A snake strikes at Miguel! But Jaime pins it down and severs its head.
- A CODING PATIENT is wheeled into the ER. Dr. Glazier calls Luisa over. She administers CPR quickly and effectively.
- As the SUN RISES over the desert, our group eases down a ravine. Ana slips and falls onto the ground -- and onto some BROKEN GLASS. A shard gets embedded in her calf. But she just rips fabric from her shirt and wraps it, then continues on.
- Luisa tries to steal a few minutes of sleep in the on-call room. But as soon as her eyes close, her PAGER goes off.

END MONTAGE

EXT. SONORAN DESERT - MORNING

Guillermo starts to fall behind. His BREATHING strained. Diego notices his father struggling and catches up with Tomás.

DIEGO
How close are we?

Tomás glances down at his map.

TOMÁS
Couple more hours.

DIEGO
My dad doesn't have that long. He's asthmatic.

TOMÁS
He's having an attack?!

DIEGO
He's fighting one off, but his inhaler is almost empty.

TOMÁS
Shit. You should've said something earlier. We're still far from--

DIEGO
(defensive)
You think your dad would've helped
us if he knew walking up stairs
makes my dad wheeze?

Tomás runs a hand through his hair. This is bad.

TOMÁS
What'll happen if he--

DIEGO
He'll die.

This hangs there heavily for a beat.

DIEGO (CONT'D)
There has to be a faster way.

Tomás looks at his map again. Their route is outlined in red,
but he traces his finger along another route. A shortcut.

TOMÁS
Alright, hold on.

Tomás catches up with Miguel and Jaime.

TOMÁS (CONT'D)
I don't think Mr. Mendez is gonna
make it.

Miguel glances back at Guillermo. Ana helps him drink water.

MIGUEL
I know these people. They're
anxious. Tired. Guillermo will be
fine.

TOMÁS
But Dad, he's--

MIGUEL
(snaps)
Tomás.
(then, softer)
You're compassionate like your
mother, and you should never lose
that. But trust me, he'll be fine.

They continue in silence until they reach a FORK in the path.

JAIME
Which way?

Tomás glances at his map. The longer route is to their right, the shortcut is to their left.

TOMÁS

Left.

MIGUEL

You're sure?

TOMÁS

Yeah, I'm sure.

Miguel trusts his son and begins down the path to the left.

INT. HOSPITAL - NURSE'S STATION - DAY

Luisa's long shift is finally over. Exhausted, she musters a smile as she passes the NURSE sitting behind the desk.

There's just one thing left to do... Jaime's secret mission.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Luisa stands in front of a door marked "Medical Supplies - Authorized Personnel Only."

She tries the handle, knowing it'll be locked.

Then, she hears VOICES. She leans over to take a drink from a water fountain, waiting for TWO DOCTORS to walk by.

As soon as the coast is clear, Luisa **PHASES** THROUGH THE DOOR.

IN THE CLOSET

Luisa scans the shelves, picking up bottles to read the labels. She unzips her backpack and quickly loads it up with supplies (hypodermic needles, vials of medicine, etc.).

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Luisa **PHASES** through the door and begins walking calmly toward the exit. But then:

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.C.)

Miss?

Luisa jumps, thinking she's busted. She whirls around to see... an OLD WOMAN patient, late 70s, in a wheelchair.

LUISA
Sorry, I didn't see you there.

OLD WOMAN
But I saw you.

Shit.

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)
It's been... I don't know, fifty
years since I've seen a phaser.

Shit shit.

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)
You're okay.

The Old Woman lifts her hospital bracelet to reveal a numeric code on her wrist. But hers is different. She has a faded INK TATTOO of her numbers below the futuristic embedded one.

LUISA
Whoa. You're a first gen?

The Old Woman nods.

LUISA (CONT'D)
So wait, you really weren't born a
Super? How old were you when--

OLD WOMAN
I was six.

LUISA
That's... wild. I've never met a
first gen.

OLD WOMAN
Not many of us left to meet.

LUISA
I have so many questions. Do you
think it was the Nazis? Because I
read some stuff about the Allies
that makes me question everything.
Or what about the meteor, have you--
(she catches herself)
Sorry, I'll shut up.

OLD WOMAN
I don't know any better'n you. All
I'll say is... whoever wins the
wars, writes the history.

LUISA

Right. Damn.

(then, suddenly)

Wait, are you okay? Do you need medical attention?

The Old Woman chuckles.

OLD WOMAN

I'm as good as I'm gonna be. I just like to say hi when I see one of us. Especially one who chose the other path.

LUISA

Yeah. Not too many Super doctors, I guess. What about you? Were you one of the "mighty and the faithful"?

OLD WOMAN

I was a lawyer.

Luisa nods, surprised. Then, almost thinking out loud:

LUISA

Ever wish you would've joined?

The Old Woman takes a beat before answering.

OLD WOMAN

Sometimes. Woulda been easier to be a hero than a freak.

They share sad, knowing smiles.

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)

Be careful out there. Especially with whatever you got in that backpack.

LUISA

I will. Thank you.

Luisa gives her one last look, then walks away. Instinctively gripping the strap of her backpack tighter.

EXT. SONORAN DESERT - EVENING

The hot sun finally begins to recede as the Castillo and Mendez families carry on.

Miguel notices a few items along the path: a bicycle tire, an empty prescription bottle, a blacked-out water jug.

MIGUEL
This isn't right.

JAIME
The garbage? It happens.

MIGUEL
It's too much. I think I've--I think
the Border Patrol monitors this...

Miguel suddenly trails off. He listens intently.

JAIME
What? What is it?

MIGUEL
Head for the brush!

Everyone scampers to some brush and crouches low. Then...

A HELICOPTER roars by overhead. It's white with two green
words on the tail: BORDER PATROL.

The helicopter's SPOTLIGHT scans the flat landscape.

Luckily, it continues on, passing out of sight. Everyone
waits for Miguel's signal, then they all stand.

Miguel's face flushes with anger as he turns to Tomás.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)
Where's our marker?

TOMÁS
About six miles east.

Miguel knows exactly what this means: they took a shortcut.

MIGUEL
This entire area is heavily
patrolled. That's why we needed to
take the other route.

TOMÁS
I was... what should we--

MIGUEL
Just keep walking.

LATER

It's dark. Only the moon sheds light on the arid desert
around them. Miguel holds up his hand to halt the group.

MIGUEL

(to the Mendezes)

Our car is waiting near the highway. It's only about two hundred yards, but there's no coverage so we have to run.

GUILLERMO

(between breaths)

I don't think... I can make it.

MIGUEL

You'll make it. I promise.

GUILLERMO

(between breaths)

I... lied to you. I have...
eosinophils asthma. I'm... sorry.

There's no time for Miguel to be angry at Guillermo.

MIGUEL

Tomás and Diego can help you. We
have to be quick.

Tomás and Diego go to Guillermo and prop him up.

Miguel gives them a nod. It's time.

The group makes a run for it across the uneven terrain,
nothing to shield or protect them.

One hundred yards.

Guillermo stumbles, but Tomás and Diego hold him up.

Fifty yards.

Miguel keeps his eyes trained on a cluster of trees up ahead.

Twenty-five yards.

Everyone's sprinting as fast as they can. Breathing hard.

As they get closer to the trees, they see the Castillos' SUV
-- camouflaged by branches.

Lorena jumps out of the SUV, pulling off the branches. The
group reaches her and they all pile in.

Lorena hits the gas the moment the doors close. She drives
expertly with the headlights off.

INSIDE THE SUV

Ana tends to Guillermo, wiping his brow. She doesn't even notice her leg is bleeding again (from the shard of glass).

LORENA
(glancing back at Miguel)
Is everyone okay?

MIGUEL
No thanks to your son.
(to Tomás)
What the hell were you thinking?

TOMÁS
(shrinks)
I was... I was trying to get us
back quicker so Mr. Mendez--

MIGUEL
You deliberately disobeyed me!

JAIME
Cut him a break, Miguel.

MIGUEL
This is between me and my son.
(to Tomás)
Today you were impulsive and stupid.

TOMÁS
I did what I thought was best.

MIGUEL
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT'S BEST!

There's a beat of silence. Lorena turns onto the highway and flips the headlights on.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)
No runs for a year.

TOMÁS
What?!

LORENA
Miguel...

MIGUEL
Maybe that will give you time to
grow up.

Tomás is shocked. Lorena is too.

LORENA
(softly, to Miguel)
We can discuss this at home.

MIGUEL
I've made up my mind.

INT. CASTILLO HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Carlos lounges in the recliner, texting. The TV is on.

Suddenly, a pair of hands **PHASE** through the chair, grab Carlos by the shoulders, and pull him through it.

He lands on his butt with a THUD.

CARLOS
God damn it!

REVEAL Luisa standing over him. She can't help laughing.

CARLOS (CONT'D)
(shivers)
You know I hate when you do that.

LUISA
You know that's my spot.

She takes a seat. The TV news report catches her attention:

NEWS ANCHOR (ON TV)
Today, Arizona residents were shocked to learn that the cartel leader known only as "El Ojo" struck again, this time just outside of Kino Springs. Warning: the images you're about to see are graphic.

CARLOS
(plops onto the couch)
Dope.

LUISA
Shh!

The newscast continues over footage from a crime scene:

NEWS ANCHOR (ON TV)
The bodies of eleven undocumented immigrants were found in an abandoned residence just north of the border. A U.S.
(MORE)

NEWS ANCHOR (ON TV) (CONT'D)

Border Patrol official confirmed that the victims had provided information leading to a tunnel bust in exchange for asylum. The underground system was controlled by El Ojo, who used it to smuggle narcotics, weapons, and women seeking passage across the border, only to end up in forced prostitution.

Luisa shakes her head, disgusted.

NEWS ANCHOR (ON TV) (CONT'D)

As of now, the only evidence to link El Ojo is his signature: removing the eyes of his victims and leaving two mohavea confertiflora - ghost flowers - in their place.

There's a haunting final image of a DEAD MAN with two slightly wilted GHOST FLOWERS in his empty eye sockets.

Luisa and Carlos stare at the image on the screen, disturbed but unable to look away. Luisa's phone BUZZES, breaking their trance. It's a TEXT from Lorena: "20 minutes."

Luisa slips on her shoes and grabs her backpack.

LUISA

I need to run an errand, I'll be back in a couple hours.

Carlos's attention is already back on his cell phone.

LUISA (CONT'D)

(as she exits)

Do your homework, or whatever.

Without looking up, Carlos calls after her:

CARLOS

It's summer!

EXT. SAFE HOUSE - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING SHOT

A low-income neighborhood. The Castillos' SUV is parked outside a small, unassuming house.

INT. SAFE HOUSE - BEDROOM - SAME

Guillermo sits up in bed as Luisa administers a shot.

LUISA

Try to relax. Focus on taking slow breaths.

Guillermo nods. He lies back and closes his eyes.

Luisa's cell phone BUZZES. It's Priya. Luisa declines the call and turns to Ana.

LUISA (CONT'D)

Can I take a look at your leg?

Ana nods. Luisa carefully peels back the bloody scrap of fabric to reveal the piece of glass in Ana's calf.

LUISA (CONT'D)

Looks like a triangle-shaped shard. Unfortunately, it may hurt more coming out than it did going in.

As Luisa puts on latex gloves, Ana stares at the numeric code on her wrist. Luisa notices.

LUISA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I should've told you. I can--

Ana places her hand on Luisa's wrist. Gently.

ANA

It's okay.

Luisa smiles. Thankful. She thinks for a beat, then:

LUISA

I'm not allowed to do this at the hospital, but I could remove the glass... another way. I guarantee it'll hurt less.

Ana hesitates, but only for a second.

ANA

Do it. Please.

Luisa nods. Then... she **PHASES** her hand through Ana's leg -- and removes the glass. Ana doesn't feel a thing. *Whoa.*

Luisa presses gauze against the gash to stop the bleeding.

ANA (CONT'D)

Thank you.

Luisa's phone BUZZES again with a text from Priya: EMERGENCY.

LUISA
*Keep pressure on it. I'll be right
back.*

As Luisa calls Priya, she **PHASES** into...

THE HALLWAY

LUISA
(into phone)
Priya? What's wrong?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. PRIYA'S APARTMENT

Priya wiggles into a short, tight dress as she cradles her phone between her ear and shoulder.

PRIYA
I'm picking you up in thirty minutes and we're going to the new club on Congress. Trina said it's only like, fifty percent fuck boys.

LUISA
You said it was an emergency.

PRIYA
It is. I assume you have nothing to wear. Luckily, I'm bringing you something so sexy it'll make me question my sexuality.

LUISA
You're bi.

PRIYA
Also, I invited the other loser med students to come out. And guess who said he'd "stop by"?
(pausing for effect)
DR. GLAZIER. You're welcome.

Luisa hesitates, unable to deny her interest. But:

LUISA
It's just... I'm--

PRIYA
(finishing her sentence)
"--exhausted and I could really use
a night in."

LUISA
Cute. No, it's not that. I have a
family thing.

Priya groans.

PRIYA
Nobody understands "family things"
like unmarried Indian daughters.
Just do what I do and lie to them.

LUISA
Bye, Priya.

PRIYA
Fifty percent is really good for
Tucson!

Luisa hangs up. She stares at her phone, conflicted.

INT. SAFE HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

Lorena makes tea. Luisa walks in and holds up the glass shard.

LUISA
This was in Ana's leg.
(throws the glass away)
I cleaned and disinfected the
wound. And I gave Guillermo a shot
to stabilize his breathing, but if
anything changes, call me.
(then, looking around)
Where's Tomás?

LORENA
He's upset. He's staying at Jaime's.

LUISA
Upset about what?

Lorena is about to respond, but she cocks her head.

LORENA
You gave Guillermo a shot? What
kind of shot?

Shit. Luisa shouldn't have mentioned that.

LUISA
Corticosteroid. It's perfectly safe.

LORENA
That doesn't sound "over-the-counter."

LUISA
(instantly combative)
It saved his life. Basic supplies aren't gonna cut it. Even Uncle Jaime knows that.

LORENA
Luisa--

LUISA
Never thought he'd be the only one in this damn family that sees my value.

LORENA
(hushed)
Lower your voice!

Lorena glances down the hall, then shakes her head at Luisa.

LORENA (CONT'D)
You and Tomás think you're so different, but you both act without thinking.

LUISA
We are different. I have to be... perfect.
(facetious)
I can't jaywalk. I can't try pot. God forbid I use what I was born with to get a few medical supplies.

All the color drains from Lorena's face.

LORENA
You used your powers to steal from the hospital??

Luisa's silence is the only answer Lorena needs.

LORENA (CONT'D)
You know there are sanctions against that. They'd send you to the...

Lorena can't even say it. She takes a breath.

LORENA (CONT'D)
If you truly want to help this family, then you don't have to be "perfect." You have to be invisible. Because if we have to worry about you, then we can't help all these people.

Luisa blinks back tears of frustration.

LUISA
I gotta get back home.
(then, bitter)
You're welcome by the way.

Luisa storms out -- as Miguel walks in. But he barely notices. He's looking at Diego, sitting alone in the living room.

INT. DIVE BAR - MEANWHILE

Jaime and Tomás sit in the mostly-empty bar. The BARTENDER sets down two tequila shots.

TOMÁS
Ugh. Tequila?

Jaime chuckles.

JAIME
It'll grow on you.

TOMÁS
Can I at least get a lime?

He reaches for a lime wedge. Jaime smacks his hand away.

JAIME
This isn't a bachelorette party.

TOMÁS
Whatever.

Tomás pounds his shot. (And fights to keep it down.) Then:

TOMÁS (CONT'D)
Was my dad always this much of an asshole, or has he just become self-righteous and bitter in his old age?

JAIME
His "code" and "ethics" crap drives me crazy too. But with his job, you know, it's... complicated.

TOMÁS
So self-righteous and bitter in his
old age, got it.

JAIME
(laughs)
He's just looking out for you.

TOMÁS
Bullshit. I know I did the right
thing.

Jaime takes a long look at his nephew. He finishes his drink
and throws some money on the bar.

JAIME
Let's get out of here.

TOMÁS
Already? But... tequila's fine,
really, I don't mind.

Jaime smirks.

JAIME
I got a bottle at my place. I wanna
talk to you about something, and I
don't wanna do it here.

Jaime heads for the exit. Tomás follows after him, intrigued.

INT. SAFE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MEANWHILE

Lorena says goodbye to Ana.

LORENA
*We'll have the Social Security
cards for you tomorrow.*

ANA
*I can't thank you enough. Your
daughter saved my husband's life.*

Lorena feels a pang of guilt, but covers it with a smile.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Miguel takes a seat on the couch. But Diego doesn't
acknowledge him, he just keeps his eyes on the small TV.

MIGUEL
Your father is going to be okay.

DIEGO
I know. I just... I just hope Felix
makes it across.

Miguel nods.

MIGUEL
I had to keep your family - and my
family - safe. It was the only way.

Diego doesn't respond, still facing the TV. Miguel stands.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)
Tomorrow I'll look into Felix's
status. I have some sources I can
check.

Diego finally makes eye contact.

DIEGO
Thank you.

EXT. US CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION - THE NEXT DAY

People file in and out of the sturdy brick building with an
American Flag proudly displayed out front. A fleet of Border
Patrol vehicles painted white and green are parked outside.

MIGUEL (PRE-LAP)
I'm not the bad guy.

INT. US BORDER PROTECTION - HOLDING CELL

CLOSE ON Miguel's face.

MIGUEL
I'm trying to help you.
(no response)
*If you don't say something, they're
going to send you back to Mexico.*

REVEAL: Miguel is a Border Patrol officer. He sits in a
holding cell with a MEXICAN MAN, 40s.

The man says nothing. Miguel stands to leave.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)
Okay. I'm sorry, Mr. Briseño.

INT. US BORDER PROTECTION - BULLPEN - MOMENTS LATER

Miguel takes a seat at his desk. He rubs his tired eyes, then searches his computer database for the keyword "Felix."

Miguel's coworker EDDIE GAINES, mid 30s, walks up behind him.

EDDIE

Castillo, you ready to roll?

Miguel closes the window on his computer.

MIGUEL

Let's do it.

He stands up, and for the first time, he notices that his coworkers are all silent, the room grim.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)

What's going on?

A young FEMALE AGENT, mid 20s, leans over.

FEMALE AGENT

You didn't hear about Schreiber?

MIGUEL

The new guy? What happened?

FEMALE AGENT

(lowering her voice)

Anderson found his head in the driver's seat of their jeep.

MIGUEL

His eyes, were they...?

She nods.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)

What about the body?

EDDIE

Haven't found it yet.

Another MALE AGENT, 50s, ex-military, chimes in:

MALE AGENT

Schreiber was a good kid. He shouldn't have had to pay the price for these fuckin' tonks.

FEMALE AGENT

Tonks?

MIGUEL

(dry)

The sound it makes when illegals are
hit over the head with our batons.

MALE AGENT

Music to my ears if ya ask me.

EDDIE

No one asked you.

(then, to Miguel)

C'mon, cabrón. Let's hit the sky.

EXT. CASTILLO HOME - DAY

The Castillos' SUV is parked in the driveway. Lorena grabs
the last bag of groceries from the trunk, as she calls Tomás.

But then she notices a BLOODSTAIN on the carpeted floor.

LORENA

Damn...

Tomás's phone goes straight to VOICEMAIL.

LORENA (CONT'D)

(into phone)

It's me, just making sure you're--

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.C.)

That's a nasty stain.

Lorena whips around to see her neighbor SHEILA, 50s.

SHEILA

What is it?

Lorena shuts the trunk.

LORENA

Merlot. Between the careless bagger
at Albertsons and the pothole on
6th, I should've known better.

SHEILA

Unbelievable. I've called about
that pothole twice already.

Lorena gives Sheila her best smile.

LORENA

What can I do for you, Sheila?

SHEILA

Oh, nothing, just being nosy. But I have some excellent all-natural stain remover if you want to borrow it. Just say the word!

Lorena isn't listening. She watches a black UNMARKED VAN pull up and stop. Next: she watches Luisa walk out of the house.

ON LUISA

The numeric code on her wrist GLOWS.

She doesn't even glance over at her mom as she gets in the van. (They haven't spoken since the safe house argument.)

BACK ON LORENA

Watching the van drive off. She looks uneasy, but not surprised. Meaning: this van pickup seems "routine."

SHEILA (CONT'D)

(trying to lighten the mood)
At least with that new bill, she only has to go in, what, once every three months now?

Lorena doesn't respond. Shelia takes the hint and walks away.

Lorena just stands there for a moment. Then, she calls Tomás back. She gets his voicemail again.

LORENA

(into phone)
It's me again. Just wanted to make sure you're okay. Call me back.

EXT. SONORAN DESERT - MEANWHILE

CLOSE ON two words: NO SERVICE.

PULL OUT to see Tomás's iPhone. He's using the electronic compass app. Jaime walks next to him.

TOMÁS

Still can't believe we're doing this. Mom and Dad would kill me.

JAIME

Well, kid, it's my business too. And yours.

REVEAL: They're leading a group of illegal immigrants, including Felix (the drug smuggler/Diego's friend).

CHYRON: South of the Mexico-Arizona border

Also in the group: three THIRTY-SOMETHING MEN, a MOTHER with her 14-year-old DAUGHTER, and a YOUNG WOMAN and her HUSBAND.

TOMÁS

Look at how many people we're helping. Especially Felix. I'd do anything to help my mom.

(then)

How'd you find them all so quick?

JAIME

Let's just say, Angel was thrilled to get some real business. And we're making good money. Everybody wins.

Tomás is quiet for a second. Then:

TOMÁS

Would you ever smuggle a Super?

JAIME

I doubt it. The risk isn't worth the reward.

TOMÁS

Yeah. Well, glad Luisa was born in the States at least.

JAIME

You know... it wouldn't kill you to say something nice to her face every once in a while.

Tomás doesn't respond - he knows Jaime's right.

JAIME (CONT'D)

How far to the river?

Tomás checks his phone's compass app.

TOMÁS

We should hit it any minute.

MOMENTS LATER

Tomás and the group arrive at a calm, murky river. Jaime motions them to follow as he wades through, waist-deep.

When they're about halfway across, there's the unmistakable THUN THUN THUN of an approaching HELICOPTER.

JAIME
(urgently)
*Get underwater - but do it slowly.
Hold your breath as long as you can.*

Everyone takes a deep breath and ducks under - careful not to create any ripples in the water.

INSIDE THE HELICOPTER

BINOCULAR POV of the murky river below. There's no movement.

Miguel lowers his binoculars. Next to him: Eddie pilots the chopper.

EDDIE
Anything?

MIGUEL
Nope. Nothing.

BACK AT THE RIVER

The sound of the helicopter fades into the distance. Suddenly, Jaime surfaces, gasping for air. The others do too.

TOMÁS
(still catching his breath)
Do you think that was--

Jaime silences Tomás with a look.

JAIME
(to the others)
*Good job, everyone. Let's keep
moving.*

INT. BLACK VAN - MEANWHILE

Luisa sits in the quiet van with a handful of other SUPERS, each of them with GLOWING NUMERIC CODES on their wrists.

Across from her: a TEENAGED BOY plays a Nintendo Switch without using his hands (he uses **TELEKINESIS** to press the buttons, as the gaming console hovers in front of him).

Next to her: a **PURPLE-SKINNED** WOMAN swipes on a dating app. Luisa looks down and sees that she looks Caucasian in her PROFILE PIC. The woman notices Luisa staring and shifts in her seat to get more privacy (and continue "catfishing").

Luisa faces forward. She takes a breath and exhales. This is the last place she wants to be right now.

EXT. SONORAN DESERT - MEANWHILE

Jaime and Tomás climb up a rocky pass as the weary immigrants follow. At the top, Tomás looks ahead.

TOMÁS
Hey... is that?

He points to some shrubs in the distance.

JAIME
What? The bushes?

TOMÁS
No, behind them. There's a body.

JAIME
There are tons of bodies out here.
Comes with the job.

TOMÁS
Just look.

Jaime squints as he looks toward the shrubs.

TOMÁS (CONT'D)
I think it's--

JAIME
You're right.
(a beat)
I'll check it out. Take the lead.

THE SHRUBS - MOMENTS LATER

Jaime kneels down to look behind the brush and freezes. On the ground lies a DECAPITATED BORDER PATROLMAN.

It's clear based on the amount of flesh that hasn't been eaten by rodents, the kill was somewhat recent.

JAIME
Shit...

He checks the patrolman's shirt pocket. It reads: SCHREIBER.

Suddenly, Jaime hears a low RUMBLE.

Instinctively, he ducks behind the shrubs. Then he turns back and sees a CARGO VAN speeding towards Tomás and the group.

JAIME (CONT'D)

What the hell?

He sees TWO MASKED MEN - both armed with ASSAULT RIFLES - get out of the van. The immigrants cower and cover their heads.

Jaime looks around, weighing his options. Neither are good...

He can return to the group and become another hostage. Or... he pulls out his HANDGUN: he can get into a firefight.

For now, he just stays hidden, lying next to the decapitated body. The smell is overwhelming.

BACK AT THE GROUP

The two men, GAEL & ARTURO, corral the group with their guns. They both wear DAY OF THE DEAD MASKS, only their eyes exposed.

Tomás desperately looks around for Jaime.

GAEL

Everyone line up! Now!

ARTURO

Come on, let's fucking go!

Tomás and the group do as they're told.

ARTURO (CONT'D)

(to Gael)

Check their wrists and check for guns. Last thing we need is someone trying to be a hero.

Gael makes his way down the line, searching for weapons and superpowers.

Felix keeps his head down, trying to remain unseen. But Gael yanks him forward.

GAEL

You fucking traitor.

FELIX

*Please, no, my mom's sick. I
just... I need to--*

Gael

*You think we care about your mommy,
Felix? You think our boss cares?*

Panicking, Felix takes off his backpack and holds it out.

FELIX

*Here, it's in here. Two pounds.
Take it.*

Arturo grabs the backpack. A tense beat. *What happens next?*

FELIX (CONT'D)

Please, I'll do anything. I swear.

Gael

There's only one thing left to do.

He forces Felix onto his back, then unsheathes a large KNIFE.

We STAY ON the group as Felix SCREAMS, his legs flailing.

AT THE SHRUBS

Jaime only allows his shock to last a second, then he checks to make sure his gun is loaded. It is.

BACK AT THE GROUP

Felix's legs stop kicking. Gael stands up and wipes his bloody knife on his black jeans.

Arturo continues his assessment of the immigrants. He stops when he reaches the 14-year-old Girl.

ARTURO

(to Gael)

What do you think? Too young?

Gael circles the girl slowly, a predator sizing up his prey.

TOMÁS

Leave her alone!

Gael turns toward Tomás.

Gael
English? We got a fucking college
boy.

He slams Tomás in the head with the butt of his rifle. Tomás falls to his knees. His ears RINGING.

Gael presses his gun to Tomás's temple, ready to shoot.

Suddenly, Tomás blurts out:

Tomás
My father works for Border Patrol!

Gael pauses. This was Tomás's last-ditch effort to save his life, but he doesn't know what to say next. His mind races.

Tomás (CONT'D)
If you kill me, he'll never stop
coming after you.

Gael
We're not worried about some border
patrol pendejo.

Gael re-aims his rifle at Tomás's head.

Arturo
Hold on.

Arturo whispers something in Gael's ear. He lowers his rifle.

Gael
Ladies! It's your lucky day.
(motions to the van)
You're getting a free ride to the
United States.

The immigrants share worried glances. None of them move.

Arturo
You heard him, if you have a cunt
between your legs, get in the
fucking van!

As Arturo herds the women into the cargo van...

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

Within seconds, Gael has SHOT AND KILLED EVERY MAN in the group. Except Tomás.

Gael
You too, college boy.

AT THE SHRUBS

Jaime starts running towards his nephew...

He sees Tomás being forced into the van.

Jaime aims his gun, but he's too far away to get a clear shot.

The van doors close and it speeds off, kicking up a cloud of dust in its wake.

Jaime drops to his knees.

JAIME

Oh my God...

He stares into the endless desert. Helpless.

INT. DEPARTMENT OF SUPERHUMAN MANAGEMENT - MEANWHILE

CLOSE ON: A framed poster of the **"DON'T JUST BE A SUPER, BE A SUPERHERO"** photo with Justice and the two other Protectors.

REVEAL: Luisa and other Supers sitting in a windowless WAITING ROOM. Think: a slightly futuristic DMV but equally as shitty.

INTERCOM

Number 4122113, please report to
Cubicle Six.

That's Luisa's numeric code. She sighs and stands up.

INT. DSM - CUBICLE #6 - MOMENTS LATER

Luisa sits in the cramped "office" as a DSM REP asks her a series of questions. This also feels "routine."

DSM REP

Have you felt any stress or anxiety
due to your abilities? If so, a
government-appointed therapist can
be provided to you.

LUISA

I'm good, thanks.

DSM REP

I see you're still not interested in
applying to the Protectors' cadet
program, is that correct?

LUISA

Yep.

He types a quick note in her computer file.

DSM REP

Have you used your abilities to break any law in accordance with the United States Federal Government, or the United Nations Super Act of 1960?

Luisa is paying attention now - but she doesn't answer.

DSM REP (CONT'D)

It's a standard question, Ms. Castillo. I'll repeat it: have you--

LUISA

No, I know. Sorry.

(lying)

I haven't broken any laws.

(frustrated)

In fact... I've never done anything wrong. I've been sitting on the sidelines like a good little girl ever since I was born and you put this damn microchip in my wrist!

Luisa and the DSM Rep just stare at each other for a beat. Then: he starts typing another note in her file.

PRE-LAP: the sound of RUNNING WATER.

INT. SECLUDED ROOM - UNKNOWN

From a FIRST-PERSON POV (Tomás), our head is SUBMERGED UNDERWATER. We thrash around, SCREAMING. DROWNING.

After what feels like an eternity, we come up for air, COUGHING and SPUTTERING.

We see a BLURRY IMAGE of TWO MEN looming over us.

Gael

We're going to play a game. You answer our questions. Or...

SPLASH! We're back UNDERWATER. It's another impossibly long period of time until we're back up.

Gael (CONT'D)

Your father. What's his name?

We don't answer. Back UNDER. It's too long now. Can't breathe. Nostrils burning. Finally...

We're ripped out of the water.

Gael (CONT'D)
Next time, we won't pull you out.
Understand?

It's impossible to form words. Our BREATHS are too shallow.

Gael (CONT'D)
Okay then...

A hand GRABS US by the hair to submerge us again.

TOMÁS
Miguel Castillo.
(voice starts to crack)
My father's name is Miguel Castillo.

For a moment, all we hear is our own LABORED BREATHING. Then:

Gael
(to Arturo)
Time to call the boss.

We lose CONSCIOUSNESS...

INT. CASTILLO HOME - EVENING

Luisa **PHASES** through the front door. She heads into the kitchen, but pauses when she sees her mother. Lorena prepares masa, a mountain of corn husks on the counter beside her.

Lorena looks up. They each wait for the other to speak. Finally, Lorena's maternal guilt gets the better of her.

LORENA
How was your check-up?

LUISA
It was fine. It was whatever.

A beat. Lorena tries again:

LORENA
Are you hungry?

LUISA

Not really.
(then, extending an olive
branch)
That's a lot of tamales.

LORENA

I'm bringing some to the Mendezes.
Do you remember how to make them?

Luisa shrugs - kinda.

LORENA (CONT'D)

Add a little stock to the dough
while I knead it.

Luisa tries to pour slowly but splashes onto the masa mixture.

LUISA

Shit. Sorry.

LORENA

(with a smile)
I hope you're better with a scalpel.

Luisa fights a smile of her own as Lorena holds the mixing
bowl over the sink, letting the excess liquid drain out.

LORENA (CONT'D)

Have you heard from your brother?

LUISA

No. Why, is he still pouting at
Jaime's?

LORENA

He won't return my calls. Maybe you
could try?

LUISA

If he's not talking to you, I doubt
he'll talk to me.
(off Lorena's look)
Fine, I'll text him.

LORENA

Thank you. Do you want to unroll
the husks?

LUISA

Sure.

LORENA
It's good practice. You'll have a family of your own one day.

LUISA
(scoffs)
There's a lot I wanna do before all that.

Lorena looks at her daughter, then she returns to the masa.

LORENA
Well, as long as you don't end up like Tía Maria.

LUISA
What, gay?

LORENA
Unmarried.

Luisa rolls her eyes, but can't stifle a laugh.

The mother-daughter moment is shattered by the sound of the FRONT DOOR BURSTING OPEN.

LORENA (CONT'D)
Tomás?

But it's not Tomás, it's Jaime. He staggers in, his clothes dirty and sweat-stained. He looks like shit.

LORENA (CONT'D)
Jaime, dios mío. What happened?

JAIME
Where's Miguel?

EXT. NOGALES - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING SHOT

A city cut in half by a tall rusted barrier along the border.

CHYRON: Nogales, Arizona

At the center of a bad neighborhood sits a small, run-down FLOWER SHOP. But not even the flowers inside can brighten it.

INT. FLOWER SHOP - SAME

A harsh-looking ELDERLY MEXICAN WOMAN, 80s, cuts the heads off **GHOST FLOWERS**... one by one. Her wrinkled, calloused hands move swiftly and efficiently.

EL OJO, late 40s, whose real name is SANTOS TORINO, enters.

Santos is handsome and wears a tailored suit. He has a dark, piercing eye - the other is completely WHITE. He's half-blind.

Without pausing her work, the Elderly Woman looks up at him. Santos nods. He adjusts his cufflinks and then makes his way to a back staircase.

INT. FLOWER SHOP - BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

In contrast to the quiet shop above, the basement is a dirty room full of SWEATY MEN HOOTING and HOLLERING.

They surround a wire fence where two chickens FIGHT and CLAW at each other with RAZORBLADES tied to their talons.

Santos arrives at a door in the back, guarded by a LARGE MAN, who steps aside to allow him passage.

INT. SECLUDED ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The room is silent once the door is closed. A single overhead light shines on Tomás, tied to a chair with a bag over his head. Next to him stand Gael and Arturo, who we see clearly for the first time without their Day of the Dead masks.

Santos rips the bag off Tomás's head. His face is bloodied and swollen; he blinks as his eyes adjust to the light.

SANTOS
English or Spanish?

Gael
He spoke English earlier.

SANTOS
(to Tomás)
I expected you to be older, the way
my men talk about you. You have
some cojones.

Tomás says nothing.

SANTOS (CONT'D)
Your father was a Field Agent for
five years, and he's been in
Aviation Enforcement for six. He's
even received the Meritorious
Service Award for Valor. Very
impressive.
(then)
(MORE)

SANTOS (CONT'D)

But you are a coyote. So tell me:
whose side is your father really on?

Tomás still says nothing. Santos turns to Gael and Arturo.

SANTOS (CONT'D)

*Take me to the others. Perhaps one
of them knows something.*

Arturo walks Santos to a door that leads to...

A SMALL ROOM

That serves as a makeshift holding area. Santos looks through the women from Tomás and Jaime's group.

They're dirty. Scared. Huddled close together.

Santos sees something that not only gets his attention...

It **enrages** him.

INT. SECLUDED ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Santos and Arturo return with -- the 14-Year-Old Girl. Santos holds her by the arm, she looks terrified.

SANTOS

(to Gael)

Do you know how old she is?

Gael's eyes widen in fear. He doesn't respond.

Santos leans down to the girl.

SANTOS (CONT'D)

Turn around and cover your ears.

She does, facing the wall. Santos turns back to Gael.

SANTOS (CONT'D)

This is no place for a child.

GAEEL

*It's not like we were checking IDs,
I just thought you could--*

BANG. In one swift motion, Santos has pulled a pistol from his belt and shot Gael in the kneecap.

Howling, Gael collapses to the ground, clutching his knee.

SANTOS
 (to Arturo)
Take him to the ring.

Arturo does as he's told and grabs Gael by the arms.

Gael
 (struggling)
Santos, no! Please!

The 14-Year-Old Girl cowers in the corner - still facing the wall with her hands over her ears. But Tomás watches in horror as Arturo hauls Gael to the door that leads to...

THE COCKFIGHTING RING

Arturo clamps a squirming Gael to a pair of SHACKLES bolted to the floor. Arturo steps out of the pen and locks the door. He signals to two men, who then let their chickens loose.

BACK IN THE SECLUDED ROOM

Tomás can't tear his eyes from the open door. The crowd's CHEERS drown out Gael's SCREAMS as the chickens' razors slice him up. Arturo closes the door and the sounds stop.

Santos adjusts his cufflinks. Then he walks over to Tomás and leans in close to him.

SANTOS
 I'd like to have a talk with your father.

INT. CASTILLO HOME - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Miguel paces back and forth, his blood boiling.

All Lorena and Luisa can do is watch. Helplessly. Jaime can't even do that - he stares at his feet.

JAIME
 Miguel. I don't-- I'm, I'm sorry--

MIGUEL
 Sorry isn't good enough!

He slams Jaime up against the wall.

	LORENA		LUISA
Miguel!		Dad!	

MIGUEL
Where'd they take him?

JAIME
(voice cracking)
Everything happened so fast...

MIGUEL
WHERE?

CARLOS (O.S.)
What's going on?

Everyone turns to see Carlos, standing on the staircase. He's confused. Scared.

LORENA
Carlos, you should go back to your room.

CARLOS
Did something happen? Where's Tomás?

MIGUEL
GO TO YOUR ROOM NOW!

Shaken, Carlos runs up the stairs.

LUISA
We need to call the police.

Miguel ignores her and turns back to Jaime.

MIGUEL
Where is my son?

JAIME
I don't know. That's... that's why I didn't call right away. I was trying to get information. I was trying to find where--

MIGUEL
Don't say another fucking word.
(shakes his head)
In one day, you've destroyed everything this family has built.

Lorena can no longer hold back tears. Luisa sits down next to her mother and tries to comfort her.

Miguel heads to the front door.

LORENA
Where are you going?

MIGUEL
I can't sit here and do nothing.

JAIME
Miguel, wait.

Miguel doesn't. He rips the front door open and...

EXT. CASTILLO HOME - CONTINUOUS

...stops dead in his tracks.

Illuminated like a spotlight by the porch light -- is a VASE
of GHOST FLOWERS with a NOTE.

Miguel's heart stops beating for a moment.

He kneels down to look at the note. GPS coordinates are
written on it, along with two words:

**TOMORROW
MIDNIGHT**

INT. CASTILLO LIVING ROOM - EARLY THE NEXT MORNING

Luisa trudges down the stairs. She's surprised to find her
father wide awake. He sits rigidly in a recliner, his hand
gripped around a half-empty glass of whiskey.

LUISA
Did you sleep?

Miguel shakes his head.

LUISA (CONT'D)
Do you want me to make coffee?

MIGUEL
He's going to make me his pawn.
(off Luisa's confusion)
El Ojo. He's going to force me to
turn a blind eye, or worse: help
him with the trafficking.

LUISA
Papá, you can't.

MIGUEL
What choice do I have?

Luisa can't answer that question.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)

I wanted to help good people. But
also protect my family from the bad
ones. And now... I can't do either.

Miguel would never cry in front of his daughter. But right
now, it takes a Herculean effort to accomplish this.

And it breaks Luisa's heart. She blinks back tears.

LUISA

I want to go.

MIGUEL

Go where?

LUISA

To Mexico, to wherever Tomás is.

MIGUEL

There's nothing you can do.

LUISA

What if he needs a doctor? Or what
if he's being held in a cell, I can
phase through it--

MIGUEL

(stern)

I said no. If we double-cross El
Ojo, what do you think will happen?

Luisa doesn't answer him. Instead, she storms into...

THE KITCHEN

Luisa grabs the Brita from the fridge. But it's empty. She
fills it, but the water drips so slowly.

Screw it. She sets it aside and closes her eyes. Big exhale.

As she opens her eyes, she finds herself staring at the vase
of GHOST FLOWERS - and the note - sitting on the counter.

INT. BUS - LATER THAT DAY

Luisa sits on the bus, lost in thought.

But then she looks down at her phone. We see a SCREENSHOT of
the GPS coordinates where Tomás is being held.

INT. HOSPITAL - LATER

Luisa stands just inside the main entrance, fidgeting and waiting for... Priya. She walks up.

PRIYA

Hey, I got your text. Is this like an actual emergency?

LUISA

I need you to cover my shift tonight. I need to borrow your car. And I need you to not ask me why.

Priya blinks a few times, then smiles.

PRIYA

Thank god.
(off Luisa's look)
You're finally doing something exciting. Granted, I don't know what it is, but it's exciting.

LUISA

So is that a...?

Priya takes her keys out of her pocket.

PRIYA

I gotchu, Castillo.

EXT. HOSPITAL - PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Luisa presses a button on Priya's keychain and finds her Mini Cooper. She unlocks it and gets in.

EXT. CASTILLO HOME - MEANWHILE

Miguel and Jaime get in the SUV. Lorena watches them from the porch -- willing them to return safely with her child.

I/E. LUISA IN PRIYA'S MINI COOPER ON I-19 SOUTH - EVENING

Luisa drives. Intense. Focused. No music on the radio. Just the sound of the wind through the open window.

She passes a sign: BORDER PATROL CHECKPOINT - 10 MILES

Immediately after, there's another SIGN with a picture of a RUNNING FAMILY. It's a warning. "Immigrants crossing."

I/E. MIGUEL'S SUV ON I-19 SOUTH - LATER

Miguel drives. Intense. Focused. Jaime steals a glance at his brother, but neither man speaks.

They pass the same TWO SIGNS Luisa did just moments before.

EXT. NOGALES-MARIPOSA PORT OF ENTRY - LATER

We find Luisa in Priya's Mini Cooper -- stuck in the multi-lane traffic jam leading to the border.

Luckily, there are just a few cars in front of her.

Up ahead, she watches US HOMELAND SECURITY OFFICERS standing with their rifles and making a very public show of force.

THIRTY CARS behind her, we find...

INT. MIGUEL'S SUV - CONTINUOUS

Miguel grips the wheel, white-knuckled. He glances at his watch. Willing the cars in front of him to move faster.

JAIME

We have time.

Miguel clenches his jaw, but says nothing.

All around them, cars HONK, echoing Miguel's frustration. He tries not to lose his fucking mind.

EXT. SONORAN DESERT - NIGHT

CHYRON: 18 miles south of the border

Luisa drives up to an abandoned 17th-century Spanish mission. It's eerie in the moonlight; more haunted than spiritual.

She clocks two ARMED GUARDS posted by the front door.

ON THE GUARDS

Dumbfounded, they watch the Mini Cooper park. Then, they're even more confused when they see Luisa get out of the car.

GUARD #1

I think you're lost.

Luisa puts on her bravest face.

LUISA
I'm not lost, but thanks.

She starts walking towards them. The Guards share a look.

GUARD #1
*Listen, bitch, turn around and get
 back in your car.*

GUARD #2
We won't tell you again.

Luisa continues. Guard #2 shrugs.

GUARD #2 (CONT'D)
Kill her.

He aims his rifle at her and FIRES!

But Luisa **PHASES** and the bullet goes right through her!

GUARD #2 (CONT'D)
What the...

Guard #1 throws a punch. His fist goes through her too.

GUARD #1
She's a Super!

Luisa **PHASES** through the door of the mission.

INT. ABANDONED MISSION - CONTINUOUS

Luisa looks around the old run-down cathedral. It's empty.
 Quiet. Then, a voice from the SHADOWS.

SANTOS (O.C.)
 You are not who I was expecting.

Just then: the two Guards burst through the door.

GUARD #1
Mr. Torino, be careful, she's a--

SANTOS (O.C.)
It's okay.

Santos and an armed Arturo step forward.

SANTOS (CONT'D)
 I know who - and what - she is.
 (then, to Luisa)
 Shouldn't you be at work?
 (MORE)

SANTOS (CONT'D)

The 5:00pm to 5:00am shift at St.
Mary's, if I'm not mistaken.

The fact that he knows this makes Luisa's skin crawl.

LUISA

Change of plans, I guess.

Santos stares at her for a beat. Then:

SANTOS

(to his two guards)
You can return to your posts.

The guards exchange confused looks, but then exit.

SANTOS (CONT'D)

Miss Castillo, how can I help you?

LUISA

Where's my brother?

SANTOS

Tomás is on the premises.

LUISA

Can I see him?

SANTOS

No.

LUISA

Thought you were supposed to use
honey instead of vinegar.

SANTOS

I didn't realize we were
negotiating.
(before she can respond)
But you, Miss Castillo, should
realize my patience is growing thin.

LUISA

My father will be here any minute,
but I want to make you a
counteroffer. Leave my family out
of this and let my brother go, and
I'll help you.

(before he can respond)

I know you wanna force some sort of
partnership on my dad. I get it. A
man on the inside would be
beneficial. But I can offer more.

SANTOS

You're bold, I will give you that.
But there is one very simple reason
why I don't employ Supers. The
moment you show the world a
"supervillain," the superheroes
will show up to save the day.

LUISA

If you know "what" I am, then you
know I can't knock down buildings
with my fists, or fly people over
the border. My powers are the
definition of under the radar.

Santos stares at her again. He adjusts his cufflinks, then:

SANTOS

Get her out of here.

Arturo moves toward Luisa.

LUISA

(urgent)

I've seen the news. I know you use
tunnels.

Arturo grabs her, but Luisa remains focused on Santos:

LUISA (CONT'D)

They get discovered because Border
Patrol keeps finding the entrances.

Arturo starts dragging her away. She **PHASES** out of his grasp.
He aims his rifle at her.

LUISA (CONT'D)

Imagine if you had an entire
underground system with no doors!
That's what I could give you!

SANTOS

Stop.

Arturo lowers his rifle. But Luisa continues:

LUISA

I know you don't use Supers but
think about--

SANTOS

Stop.

Luisa shuts up.

Santos walks up to her. He gets close. Both his blind eye and his good eye, boring a hole through her.

SANTOS (CONT'D)

Why?

LUISA

My father. I just... I can't let
you destroy everything he's built.

(then)

And you and I both know my offer's
better than what he can do for you.

Off Santos, his cryptic expression gives nothing away...

EXT. ABANDONED MISSION - MOMENTS LATER

Miguel and Jaime pull up and park.

INT. MIGUEL'S SUV - SAME

Miguel double-checks the coordinates on his hand-held GPS.

JAIME

Smart of him to pick a place in the
middle of nowhere. Dumb of us to
agree to it.

The muscles in Miguel's jaw bulge against his cheeks.

MIGUEL

Stay in the car.

JAIME

No, you have to let me help.

MIGUEL

You've done enough.

JAIME

Miguel, look!

Jaime points. Miguel turns his head to see...

Tomás. He's being walked out by Santos's guards. He has a
bloody lip, a black eye, and a few bruises. But he's alive.

EXT. MIGUEL'S SUV/ABANDONED MISSION - CONTINUOUS

Miguel and Jaime both get out of the car.

MIGUEL

Tomás! Son, are you okay?

Santos emerges from the front door of the mission.

SANTOS

He is very strong. I have to assume
he gets that from you, Miguel.

The guards let go of Tomás.

He collapses into his father's arms. Tomás wants to say he's
sorry, but he knows it'd only make everything worse.

Jaime looks away. Guilt smeared all over his face.

But helplessness is smeared over Miguel's. He looks at
Santos, expecting to make a deal with the devil. Instead:

SANTOS (CONT'D)

My apologies for wasting your time,
but your services are no longer
required.

Miguel glances at Jaime: *This is way too good to be true.*

MIGUEL

I don't understand.

But then: Luisa **PHASES** through the door of the mission.

Miguel puts the pieces together...

He thought his son getting kidnapped by El Ojo was his worst
nightmare. But his only daughter partnering with him...?

That's even worse.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)

Luisa, what have you done?

Luisa can't even look her father in the eye.

As Santos watches the father-daughter exchange, he adjusts
his cufflinks again, and we get a glimpse of his wrist. In
the same place as Luisa's numeric code -- Santos has a SCAR.

Does that mean...?

Then, we see something else the Castillos don't. Santos's
BLIND EYE glints with a RUBY RED color.

Yes. El Ojo is a SUPER too.

We slowly RISE UP over the moonlit desert. Jagged and harsh.
Its expansiveness awe-inspiring.

LUISA (V.O.)

When you hear hoofbeats, think of
horses not zebras. But what if it's
not as simple as one or the other?
What if I described a young woman -
who made a difficult, if not
impossible decision - and did
terrible things to protect her
family. Would you think of her as a
hero? Or a villain?

FADE TO BLACK.

But we're only in the black for a few seconds.

INT. UNDERGROUND BUNKER - UNKNOWN

We find ourselves in a small WAR ROOM.

There are paper maps with handwritten coordinates next to LCD
screens with information flashing faster than we can read.

Part high-tech, part low-tech.

An assembly of MEN and WOMEN sit around a long table in the
middle of the room. They're talking intensely. Strategizing.

Some of them appear to be soldiers, others look more like
politicians. But they are all Supers.

Soon, we'll learn why they call themselves **THE VIGILANTES**.

At the front of the room: a BLAST DOOR slides open. Then...

The Old Woman from the hospital wheels herself inside.

OLD WOMAN

Luisa Castillo has made a huge
mistake. It's time.

END OF PILOT