

# FICHERA

"Sabado Gigante"  
(Pilot)

written by  
danny cavada

"Fichera"

n. A woman working at, for the most part, (a) latino hole-in-the wall bar that acts as a waitress when you order a drink or, companion when you buy her a drink at 3 times the cost (they receive a cut from these sales from the establishment). The more you buy, the friendlier they get.

*Last night at the bar, that fichera sucked me dry...my wallet that is!*

#fee-ché-da

by Narisonazo June 16, 2017 (UrbanDictionary.com)

TEASER

INT. METRO BUS - EVENING

IXCHEL SANTOS (35, stoic in a young-mom-who-has-seen-some-shit kind of way) digs through her purse and pulls out a pink token. One side reads: OBREROS. The other has the standard mudflap girl silhouette. Her livelihood has come to this.

She unzips her fanny pack and slips the token inside. There's no such thing as a stylish fanny pack, but she makes it work.

Ixchel pulls out a hand mirror and tussles her hair. Her dark brown hair starkly contrasts her tired, light blue eyes.

As she pats the bags under her eyes, AMARA VILLA (21, with a doe-eyed nervousness) and BELINDA (30, dressed very much as a prostitute would be) board and fill the empty seats across.

BELINDA

So you *just* moved here?

Amara nods.

BELINDA (CONT'D)

And they already have you working this route?

AMARA

That was the agreement. I'd have a place to stay until I'm able to have a place on my own, but I have to work for him.

BELINDA

(sighing)

Man, Reggie's a trip. Where you from? Mexico? Your English is real good.

Amara nods. At this, Ixchel closes her mirror and finally gets a good look across at the two women. She puts her mirror away as she pretends not to pay attention, but definitely is. Amara clutches her stomach.

AMARA

Ooof.

BELINDA

What's wrong?

AMARA  
I don't know.

BELINDA  
On your first night. How  
convenient.

Ixchel searches her purse and meets Amara's eyes. She pulls out a bottle of Advil.

IXCHEL  
Excuse me. I couldn't help but  
overhear.

She shakes the Advil container. Amara nods. Ixchel pops it open and shakes out two pills in her hand.

AMARA  
Thank you...

IXCHEL  
Ixchel.

AMARA  
Amara.

Ixchel nods a "you're welcome."

BELINDA  
(to Amara)  
Those better be fast-acting. This  
is La Brea. That's *his* stop. Mine's  
the next one.

REGGIE (37, all athletic gear, white dude with corn rows) gets on and scans the passengers. He struts down the aisle until he reaches Amara and Belinda. He stands in front of them.

He motions a "parting of the seas" gesture and the two ladies open the seat between them for him.

REGGIE  
(to Belinda)  
Wassup girl? How you livin'  
tonight?

BELINDA  
Got you a present, wanna see it?

She opens her purse and puts it on his lap. He rummages through it and opens a box inside the purse so no one else can see. He counts bills and rolls them into his palm.

He returns the purse to her as he pockets the cash in his shorts.

REGGIE

I like those presents.  
 (to Amara)  
 You get a start on your night  
 already too, boo?

BELINDA

Oh, Highland. This is me. Catch you  
 honeys later.

Belinda blows an air kiss to both and winks at Amara. She exits.

Amara holds a beat before clutching her stomach.

AMARA

Reggie, I'm not feeling too well...  
 Is it okay if I--

REGGIE

No. No, no, no. Baby girl, remember  
 what we talked about when I hooked  
 you into this route? There are no  
 sick days.

AMARA

I know, but I don't feel good.

She doesn't look good.

AMARA (CONT'D)

I might throw up.

He grabs Amara by the thigh and squeezes it enough to make her yelp softly.

REGGIE

You think you'll accrue sick days  
 on the job? You want me ask Mr.  
 Shadow about your PTO and 401K?

Ixchel isn't having this.

IXCHEL

Excuse me--

Amara turns, but Reggie remains locked onto Amara.

IXCHEL (CONT'D)

Excuse me-- Reggie, is it?

Reggie slowly turns his glare at Ixchel.

IXCHEL (CONT'D)  
The girl isn't feeling well. We  
were just talking before. Are you  
her "friend"?

He continues staring.

IXCHEL (CONT'D)  
What does she make a night? Maybe I  
can... hire her.

REGGIE  
Bitch, you need to mind your own  
fucking business.

Ixchel smiles and raises her hand. White flag. For now.

REGGIE (CONT'D)  
(back to Amara)  
You might feel sick now, but if I  
don't get your cut, you'll feel  
*much* worse. Mr. Shadow don't fuck  
around-- especially with new girls.

He starts digging his fingers deeper into her thigh and Amara  
struggles to fight the tears. She nods.

IXCHEL  
Okay. Enough.

Ixchel grabs her bag and heads to the BUS DRIVER.

IXCHEL (CONT'D)  
Excuse me.  
(then)  
There's a man back there physically  
hurting a woman.

BUS DRIVER  
If I can't see it through my  
mirror, I can't do nothin' 'bout it  
ma'am. My camera ain't working.

He points at the security cam in the upper corner of the bus.

IXCHEL  
You've got to be fucking kidding  
me.

Ixchel shakes her head and returns to her seat.

REGGIE  
 (to Ixchel)  
 You go snitch on me like a little  
 bitch?

Ixchel bites her tongue for a moment, looking around at the other passengers quietly burying their heads, pretending not to hear.

IXCHEL  
 Here's what's gonna happen. You're  
 gonna remove your filthy hand off  
 of my friend's leg here and let her  
 go.

REGGIE  
 Is that right?

IXCHEL  
 Mnhmm. And when that happens, my  
 friend and I are getting off the  
 bus and you'll never see her again.  
 You won't call her, you won't come  
 looking for her.

Reggie starts to laugh.

REGGIE  
 Wow, you got some balls on you...  
*bitch*. I wonder if they'll shrink  
 once you meet my friend down here.

His feet squeeze the gym bag between them.

IXCHEL  
 Mmm, maybe.

She pauses for a moment.

IXCHEL (CONT'D)  
 Except--  
 (then)  
 I'm not sure if you've said hello  
 to my kitty yet.

He glances down and sees her clutching a self-defense cat keychain aiming directly at him. She playfully twirls it in her hand, slowly inching forward.

IXCHEL (CONT'D)  
 She's fast. And her ears are so  
 wide apart that sometimes they  
 match up with a set of beautiful  
 eyes.

(MORE)

IXCHEL (CONT'D)

You've got some gorgeous brown eyes. It'd be a shame for you to lose them. And this act of self-defense is all being recorded by my friend here (she thumbs at a kid next to her on his phone) who is currently showing everyone on Facebook Live, so watch your fucking mouth for the kids.

(beat)

Then ask yourself, Reggie: Is all of this worth it for you to go to jail? Because let's be honest-- you strike me as the kind of guy who wouldn't survive communal showers.

(beat)

Who are the cops going to believe? A poor little single mom making pennies at a hostess bar or a piece of shit who probably has a rap sheet already?

A stalemate, until Reggie's grip releases. He gives her a condescending slow clap as he smiles suspiciously at the kid on his phone.

Ixchel turns and pulls the bus stop rope and clutches her keychain closer to Reggie.

The bus comes to a stop and Ixchel pulls Amara with her. Reggie's stare lingers on the kid.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

As the bus pulls away with Ixchel and Amara quickly walking in the opposite direction, Ixchel finally starts breathing again.

Once they reach a decent place, Amara hangs back.

AMARA

Holy shit! Wow, that was- Oh my God!

IXCHEL

Let's go. You've retired. We'll get you a new job.

AMARA

Was that kid really recording all that?

IXCHEL  
Who the fuck knows...

END OF TEASER

SMASH TO TITLE:

**FICHERA**

INT. JASON'S CAR / EXT. CHINO MEN'S PRISON - DAY

CHYRON: 30 HOURS PRIOR

Ixchel sits in the passenger seat of a souped up late 90s Honda Civic. She's dressed as nice as she can for someone on a budget.

She picks at the cuticles of her nails while sitting next to driver JASON DUVALL (35, clean-cut, not a man of many words).

She anxiously looks up at the fortress of a prison.

IXCHEL  
Sophomore year. Industrial tech.  
Remember Mr. Jennings? He'd walk  
around calling the girls by their  
names and he'd never bother  
learning the guys' names so he'd  
just call them "Guy"? He'd burp all  
the time?

JASON  
He was so gross.

IXCHEL  
That's the first time Roman and I  
ever noticed each other-- in that  
class. Completely got lost in each  
other's gaze. We weren't paying any  
attention and when Mr. Jennings had  
us make those lamps, I was the one  
who started that huge electrical  
fire.

JASON  
That was you?!

They stare at the fenced gate and see a couple of RELEASED INMATES exiting and hopping in a van. Ixchel sighs.

IXCHEL  
He was supposed to be out 40  
minutes ago.

JASON  
Give it a minute.

IXCHEL  
I'm gonna see what's going on.

JASON  
Ixchel-

Without hesitation, Ixchel exits the car and marches up to the guard booth where a heavy-set GATE OFFICER sits.

IXCHEL  
Hi, I'm here to pick up my husband.  
Roman Santos? He was supposed to be  
released at noon.

GATE OFFICER  
Santos...

He goes to his computer and types.

GATE OFFICER  
Hmm not seeing him on my list.

IXCHEL  
S-A-N-T-O-S? Roman?

The Officer calls the main building.

GATE OFFICER  
(into phone)  
Yes, I have a young lady here  
looking for inmate Roman Santos--  
set for release today.  
(to Ixchel)  
Do you have his-

IXCHEL  
83750-103.

GATE OFFICER  
(into phone)  
83750-103.  
(then)  
Ah. I see. Yeah, that's him. Okay,  
thanks.

He hangs up the phone and sulks for a moment.

IXCHEL  
So...?

GATE OFFICER  
He was released two days ago.

IXCHEL  
Are you sure? He didn't tell me  
about the change.

GATE OFFICER  
I remember him now. Neck tattoo? A  
cute little blonde picked him up.

She takes a moment to collect her anger. Then-

IXCHEL  
That fucking prick.

INT. SANTOS APARTMENT - KITCHEN - MORNING

A disheveled Ixchel stumbles into the kitchen where ROMAN  
"JUNIOR" SANTOS (15, responsible, but still learning how to  
control his anger issues) is frying bacon.

IXCHEL  
Morning, baby.

Junior remains silent.

IXCHEL (CONT'D)  
Smells good.

He serves the bacon and pulls sliced bread from the fridge.

JUNIOR  
Thought it'd be three of us this  
morning, but I guess that wasn't  
the case.

She goes to kiss his forehead and takes the bread from him.  
She continues to toast the bread while Junior sits down to  
eat.

IXCHEL  
(ignoring his comment)  
Your first day! I almost forgot.  
Let me.

JUNIOR  
It's not a big deal. It's just high  
school.

IXCHEL  
Uh, yeah it is. It's a *new* school.

JUNIOR

Who cares. All the same  
douchebags'll be there.

As she sits down--

IXCHEL

I'm sorry baby. I know how excited  
you were that he'd be out in time  
for today. I called the prison and  
they haven't been able to give me  
another release date. The riot's  
still being investigated.

JUNIOR

Fucking bullshit.

IXCHEL

Hey!

(then)

We're still okay without him for a  
little while, aren't we?

He forces a smile. The toast ejects.

EXT. FELIPE DE NEVE HIGH SCHOOL - LATER

Ixchel and Junior hop off the city bus. A line of cars block  
the entrance as other parents arrive to drop off their kids.

IXCHEL

Love you.

JUNIOR

Love you too.

She goes in to kiss his forehead but he pulls back.

JUNIOR (CONT'D)

Mom. High school.

IXCHEL

Right. High school.

Ixchel watches as a piece of her walks away on his next  
chapter. She blinks a few times to fight the glossiness in  
her eyes, turning back to catch the next bus.

As she boards the front of the bus, a quick jump to the rear  
exit sees Amara struggling to get off with her rolling  
suitcase.

The bus pulls away. Amara gussies herself up and puts on her shades before strolling down the street with her suitcase. The next block over, she walks into-

INT. LULU'S LAUNDROMAT - CONTINUOUS

It's a rundown place with a few machines that actually work. She heads for the back dry cleaners counter where an older CLERK sits. Amara removes her shades.

AMARA

Hi. Amara Villa. Mr. Shadow sent me?

EXT. RICOS TACOS - AFTERNOON

Ixchel sits next to her best friend LARA ALVAREZ (30, Cuban and so ripped she could put anyone in a chokehold-- because she sometimes does and gets paid for it) and opposite ESME GOMEZ (27, a little mousey and soft-spoken) on the patio of a restaurant on Broadway, Downtown LA.

LARA

Esme, you're really not gonna miss it? Seeing these faces on the regs?

Lara grabs Ixchel by the chin and squeezes her cheeks together. They laugh.

ESME

I'll miss you guys, but unless Obreros is gonna start offering *this-*

Esme scrolls through her phone and shows them a list. She hands it over to Lara. As Lara thumbs the list--

LARA

(reading)

Jesus. Paid vacation, free child care, year-long maternity leave-- All of this just to get you to work at their Detroit office?

ESME

And finally away from Obreros. No offense.

IXCHEL

Girl, quit hatin'. We're your family, you can't shake us!

(MORE)

IXCHEL (CONT'D)  
 Plus, we got you something for you  
 to remember us.

Lara pulls out a gift bag and hands it to Esme.

LARA  
 Even though you never danced, you  
 always made sure we got paid and  
 the bar stayed open. Now you're one  
 of us. An official *fichera*.

Esme pulls up a t-shirt with the OBREROS logo and the mudflap  
 girl silhouette on it.

Teary-eyed, she gets up to hug them on the opposite end of  
 the table. She sits back down.

LARA  
 We'll miss you, Miss Esme.

ESME  
 (smiling)  
 So will my bank overdraft fees.

IXCHEL  
 I get it. That's why I've been  
 saving up to go to nursing school.

LARA  
 What? News to me.

Ixchel nods.

IXCHEL  
 I can't dance forever. I mean, I  
*can*, just not-- you know what I  
 mean.  
 (then)  
 I had plans to go to school full-  
 time once Roman got out and we'd  
 have another income but, whatever.  
 He sucks.  
 (then)  
 I think I can still make it work.

INT. KOREATOWN APARTMENT COMPLEX - AFTERNOON

The door swings open and Reggie enters with Amara right  
 behind. This place is a DUMP. Amara's smile quickly fades.

REGGIE  
 This is it. Your new digs, your new  
 roommates.

She looks around at the mattresses covering the living room, WOMEN passed out in them in various states of undress. Pizza boxes litter the corners with trash bags piled high.

AMARA

I thought LA apartments would be bigger. At least bigger than the ones in New York. I watched "Friends" and those apartments were bigger than this.

Reggie cackles.

REGGIE

Oh, baby girl...

Amara's look of disgust never wavers.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

It's either this or you go back to Mexico where you'll end up in a box much, much smaller. Underground. Your choice.

Amara nods. I guess we can make this work. He directs her to a bedroom where two queen sized beds are somehow crammed in. A tired Belinda sits painting her toenails.

REGGIE

Belinda. Amara.

(to Belinda)

B, prep her for tonight. I don't want no less than \$300 from each a you's.

He walks out leaving Belinda examining Amara head to toe.

BELINDA

You all shaved down there?

Off Amara suddenly accepting what she's getting into...

INT. METRO BUS - EVENING

We pickup right where we started in the teaser. Amara and Belinda sit opposite Ixchel.

BELINDA

So you *just* moved here?

Amara nods.

Ixchel's eyes flicker for a moment from her mirror to the girls...

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

As the bus pulls away with Ixchel and Amara quickly walking in the opposite direction, Ixchel finally starts breathing again.

AMARA

Was that kid really recording all that?

IXCHEL

Who the fuck knows?!

They run off down the sidewalk.

INT. METRO BUS - MOMENTS LATER

Reggie sits staring at the kid on his phone wondering if he really was recording everything. Just as he's about to go to yank the phone, the KID'S MOTHER pulls him away and off the bus at the stop.

Reggie looks at the seat where Ixchel was sitting and spots something she left behind-- an OBREROS TOKEN...

INT. OBREROS - BAR - NIGHT

Ixchel and Amara burst in. All eyes on them as Ixchel finally laughs to relieve the tension.

IXCHEL

Hi y'all! This is Amara.

A few faint "Hey Ixchel"s are heard. Amara gets her bearings of this dive bar. OSCAR PALACIOS (60s) works the bar, while a handful of LATINO IMMIGRANT PATRONS sit with a drink or play pool.

On the other side are our OBREROS GIRLS (all wearing stylish side-fanny packs) who sit on stools near the dance floor. We'll meet them, but first, Ixchel bangs on the jukebox and enters a memorized code. As the Mexican song ends, something like Bell Biv DeVoe's "POISON" starts playing.

She dance-leads Amara to the end of the bar where they sit. Ixchel waves two fingers at Oscar. He begrudgingly pours two shots.

IXCHEL  
Welcome to Obreros.

AMARA  
It's... nice.

IXCHEL  
It's not.

She laughs.

IXCHEL  
But 'round these parts we watch  
each others' backs.

Oscar serves two shots.

AMARA  
Do you work here?

Ixchel nods.

IXCHEL  
And I *think* there might be an  
opening if you're interested. No  
douchebags with corn rows here.  
Just some fun, un-family friendly,  
legal dancing. Well, *somewhat*  
legal. And you'd be free.

Freedom has a nice ring to Amara's ears.

AMARA  
I can't dance. The only job I ever  
really had before was keeping track  
of my ex-husband's finances.

Ixchel smiles at her.

IXCHEL  
Even better.  
(then)  
Though, fair warning-- shit gets a  
little crazy around here sometimes.  
But you never have to feel  
uncomfortable.

AMARA  
So, is this a strip club?

IXCHEL  
This is a fichera bar. You didn't  
have those in your town?

Amara shakes her head.

IXCHEL (CONT'D)

Well, *mira*...

She spins Amara's stool around so they see the girls.

IXCHEL (CONT'D)

See that pretty blonde over there shaking her shit on her own? That's Carmen. She's baiting that guy down at the other end of the bar who's watching her.

CARMEN CASTRO (26, blonde, bubbly Colombian) dances on her own.

IXCHEL

She's good people. Tried to do the whole acting thing and then found out how gross it all was.

QUICK-CUT to Carmen entering a casting room with a slimy WEINSTEIN-LOOKING DIRECTOR unbuttoning his pants. She quickly exits instead.

IXCHEL

That ripped Cuban girl who just got handed a token? That's my best friend Lara.

Lara takes the token from the BAR PATRON and takes his hand to dance.

IXCHEL

I never really have to worry about her. She can kick anyone's ass.

QUICK-CUT to Lara wrestling another WOMAN with a FEMALE DIRECTOR tracking with a camera. The leotards begin to come off...

IXCHEL

Then there's Envidia. She's clearly not seeing that homeboy down there has his eye on Carmen.

ENVIDIA MATA (29, trans-- stage name literally translates to "Envy Kills") cluelessly sits next to the LONELY COWBOY who was about to go ask Carmen for a dance. She places her hand on his thigh.

IXCHEL

Envidia's relatively new still and pretty much the bravest person I know. Not many girls like her who are willing to work at places like this. Hips-- insane. She fills her fanny pack with extra tokens to add more sound to get more attention.

QUICK-CUT to Envidia without the wig and makeup watching Shakira's "Hips Don't Lie" video and practicing along to the hip shakes.

IXCHEL

That older gal at the table with that dude who just got drinks is Cuco. Notice how the bartender slipped her a token?

MARIA DEL REFUGIO "CUCO" FERNANDEZ (52, all class, all sass) sips on her drink as Oscar slips her a token from behind.

IXCHEL

That's another way to get one. Get the guys to buy you a drink. Chaching! Cuco doesn't need to work here, but she likes it for the thrill. Plus, we like having her around.

QUICK-CUT to Cuco kissing her POLICE OFFICER HUSBAND goodbye. She exits her car and tosses the trench coat in, revealing her saucy fichera attire.

IXCHEL

And then there's Soraya...

SORAYA RAMIREZ (33, looks vaguely like IXCHEL but with a well-practiced Resting Bitch Face) grinding up on a DUDE.

IXCHEL

You know how you're not supposed to say Voldemort's name out loud? Same applies to her.

QUICK-CUT to another night at Obreros. Soraya trips Ixchel as she's about to go on a paid dance, her tokens go flying.

AMARA

And what do the tokens do?

IXCHEL

You exchange them for tips at the end of the night.

(MORE)

IXCHEL (CONT'D)

All the guys here are way  
overpaying for their drinks. This  
makes it standardized.

Ixchel catches Oscar's eye. She does a talking hand gesture  
and he nods toward the back.

IXCHEL

Will you excuse me?

INT. OBREROS - OSCAR'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Ixchel sits as Oscar rummages through paperwork on his desk.  
She sits up, attentive. He continues going through documents  
during their conversation.

IXCHEL

What do you think of Amara?

OSCAR

The girl you're with? Pretty.

IXCHEL

Well, I just pulled her out of a  
real bad sitch and she told me  
she's pretty good with numbers. Now  
that Esme's gone, you have a spot  
to fill...

OSCAR

Esme. Pfft.

Okay...?

IXCHEL

And I know this is a tall order  
considering what I just asked, but  
do you think I could also pick up a  
few more shifts?

Oscar stops his paper thumbing and laughs. He lowers his  
glasses a bit.

OSCAR

Sure.

IXCHEL

Really...?

He hands her a stack of invoices and bills.

OSCAR

Do whatever you want.

She looks down at the bills.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Your best friend Esme? She really fucked us over, skimming off the top before she left.

(then)

Do whatever you want, but just know that you really should be looking for a new place of employment instead.

Off Ixchel...

INT. MID-TOWN NURSING SCHOOL - FINANCIAL OFFICE - MORNING

Ixchel sits opposite a FINANCIAL ADVISOR (40s) as they go through stacks of documents.

FINANCIAL ADVISOR

You'll have to fill out a FAFSA, or, if you decide to go the private loan route, we have some options that have helped some of our students in the past.

IXCHEL

I've had a few friends that got bit really hard in the ass with that.

He gives her a pity smile.

FINANCIAL ADVISOR

We could also look into clinical hours you'd be able to put in to cover for the costs. Most students end up opting for that to help pay.

Off Ixchel suddenly so overwhelmed by all of it...

INT. FELIPE DE NEVE HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Junior closes his locker. As he turns around, he bumps into JULIA MCGOWAN (15, tomboy) and reflexively grabs her book as it falls.

JULIA

Wow. Impressive. Thank you.

JUNIOR

I'm sorry. I wasn't looking.

He sees her face and suddenly gets flushed.

JULIA

Do you know where 203B is?

JUNIOR

Uh... yeah. It's down the hallway and you make two lefts, past the bathrooms. But don't drink from those water fountains. Rumor has it they have lead.

JULIA

Noted. Thanks. I'm Julia.

She extends her hand.

JUNIOR

Jun- err... Roman. Roman Santos.

JULIA

Good to meet you. And thanks.

She smiles at him and just as she goes to leave, KEVIN HERNANDEZ (17, and a second-year sophomore) slides up next to her and extends his hand.

KEVIN

Hi. Kevin Hernandez.

Junior rolls his eyes as Julia engages.

JULIA

Julia.

KEVIN

You new around here? I should warn you-- that kid is socially toxic. Steer clear.

JUNIOR

Fuck you, Kevin.

KEVIN

What're you gonna do, MacArthur Park *scum*? Cry to your stripper mommy about me?

Junior WAILS on Kevin's face.

INT. SANTOS APARTMENT - KITCHEN - LATER

Ixchel returns with Junior in tow. He throws his backpack on the floor.

IXCHEL

You can give me the silent treatment all you want, but you know I'll find out sooner or later. Junior, what the fuck happened?

He sits at the table crossing his arms. Finally-

JUNIOR

Do you remember Kevin Hernandez?

IXCHEL

Anaiz's son? The little shit who used to bully you?

Junior nods.

JUNIOR

He's back. Well, he's at this school now, but he's been held back a few years. And his maturity levels match that.

IXCHEL

What did he do?

JUNIOR

(lying)

He was really rude to a new girl. So, I hit him.

Ixchel sighs.

IXCHEL

Fuck, Junior-

JUNIOR

I know, but he-

IXCHEL

Roman Miguel Santos Jr. I swear to God you need to learn how to control yourself. I'm proud of you for sticking up for that girl, but we can't have you blowing a fuse like that. You got the worst parts from your father.

Junior finally gets his in.

JUNIOR  
Have there been any updates?

Ixchel shakes her head.

JUNIOR (CONT'D)  
You know what's weird is that I haven't been able to find anything on Google News about a riot in Chino.

IXCHEL  
(sighing)  
That's because they're keeping the media out of it until the investigation is over. I'm sure we'll hear more soon.

JUNIOR  
Again. Bullshit.

Junior isn't satisfied--

INT. SANTOS APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Junior storms through to his room and slams the door behind him. Ixchel slowly follows behind, but then notices Amara on the couch. She heard it all.

Ixchel sits on the armchair.

AMARA  
Hi.

IXCHEL  
Hi.

Amara gets closer to Ixchel.

AMARA  
Are you sure he's okay with me staying here?

Ixchel nods.

IXCHEL  
He'll be fine.

AMARA  
(whispering)  
So when do you plan on telling him about his dad?

Off Ixchel's look-

AMARA (CONT'D)

I overheard the girls last night.  
Sorry.

Ixchel raises a finger to her lips. She waves for Amara to join her as they step out onto-

EXT. SANTOS APARTMENT - FIRE ESCAPE - CONTINUOUS

Ixchel closes the window behind them. They both sit cross-legged overlooking the street below.

IXCHEL

I can't. Not yet. You see how...  
*passionate*... he gets. He needs  
time to adjust to the new school,  
new friends.

AMARA

But if *my* dad had left, I'd want to  
know-

IXCHEL

(snapping)  
I'm sorry, are you his mother?!

Amara is taken aback. She slowly gets up to leave, but Ixchel pulls her back down.

IXCHEL (CONT'D)

Sorry. Sorry. It's been a long day.  
The Financial Aid office was  
overwhelming. And now with Obreros  
closing and Roman gone, I don't  
know...

(beat)

I guess the reason I haven't told  
him yet is that I'm still holding  
out hope that Roman will just  
suddenly walk through that door.

Amara sighs and continues looking down at the street.

AMARA

You saw me in a desperate situation  
and got me out without even knowing  
me. And now? You helped me get a  
job and you're letting me stay here  
until I find my own place? You're a  
saint, Ixchel Santos.

(MORE)

AMARA (CONT'D)

*Una mera santa chingona (a true badass saint).* I'd kill to have a mom like you.

IXCHEL

Please. Santos are so overrated. I should go back to my maiden name.

They laugh.

IXCHEL

You remind me a lot of me when I suddenly became a single mom and didn't have anyone around to help.

Amara nods as she looks out.

AMARA

You're going to school. *We'll* make it work. I'll cover rent. If Obreros closes, we'll find other jobs. I am in your debt.

IXCHEL

Well, we've got our work cut out for us. You ready for your first night?

Amara shrugs.

IXCHEL (CONT'D)

Here.

Ixchel pulls out her keys and removes the self-defense cat keychain and hands it to her.

IXCHEL (CONT'D)

You got this.

As the sun sets and our ladies go back in...

INT. OBREROS - BAR - NIGHT

Cuco stands outside going through her keys, trying to figure out which one unlocks the bar. An impatient Soraya stands off to the side with her arms crossed, her eyes locked to her phone.

SORAYA

Anytime now, grandma.

Cuco rolls her eyes.

As Cuco unlocks the door, Amara appears and she's dressed for her first night of fitch-ing. Soraya unglues from her phone and smiles.

SORAYA

Hello there, little lady.

Amara smiles back.

INT. OBREROS - BAR - CONTINUOUS

Cuco turns on the lights as Soraya saunters off to the back. Amara nervously folds her coat and cradles it. Cuco looks at her and extends her hand.

CUCO

Here, *mija*. I'll take that.

Amara hands it to her and Cuco stuffs it in a cabinet behind the bar.

AMARA

Thank you.

Cuco winks at her. She goes back to turning the bar lights on and prepping the bottles for the night.

CUCO

You're early. Capricorn?

Off Amara's "How did she know?" face--

CUCO

I know my signs, *hija*. If what Walter Mercado said tonight was correct, which he usually is, I think you're supposed to be careful of someone who might be out to get you.

Amara takes it in. Does she mean Reggie?

CUCO (CONT'D)

But don't worry! We're all family here. The only one you should be careful of is Soraya, but she's *essentially* harmless.

AMARA

Ixchel mentioned that.

CUCO

Soraya's very friendly until-

Soraya emerges from the back.

SORAYA

Until what, Cuco?

(then, to Amara)

Don't listen to this old *bruja babosa*. She just *loves* to scare everyone with her Walter Mercado bullshit.

CUCO

Soraya, I'd watch out if I were you. The outlook for Leos isn't so good either.

Cuco carries a box of bottles to the back. Soraya takes a seat at the bar and measures up Amara.

SORAYA (CONT'D)

Come. Sit.

She pats the stool next to hers. Amara takes it.

SORAYA (CONT'D)

I know my reputation tends to precede me, but it's not all *that* bad. Where are you from? Are you local? Nope. Wait. Save it. I'm taking you to lunch. It's settled. Where am I picking you up from tomorrow?

AMARA

Uh, I'm staying with Ixchel right now.

SORAYA

Oh, interesting.

Off Soraya's newfound interest...

INT. OBREROS - BAR - LATER

All of the girls (minus Ixchel and Cuco) are in for their shift and there's only one BAR PATRON having a drink. Oscar dries glasses behind the bar as Lara casually takes the seat next to the one patron.

He finishes his beer and leaves money on the bar. He nods at Oscar as he exits. The girls in their designated fichera-zone collectively sigh.

LARA

It's Friday night. Where the fuck  
is everyone?

Envidia walks up and takes the stool next to Lara.

ENVIDIA

I heard Don Eligio's construction  
site got raided by ICE a few days  
ago. Lots of workers gone.

CARMEN

The one on sixth street? Wow. Good  
luck finishing *that* high-rise.

ENVIDIA

I have a theory that they're  
raiding construction areas to  
collect workers to help them build  
The Wall.

SORAYA

Please. They've all found better  
watering holes than this dump.  
(then)  
No offense, Oscar.

OSCAR

You're right. Maybe you should  
leave this dump for the night.  
Actually, you should all go home.  
Closing early tonight ladies.

LARA

But Oscar-

Ixchel walks in to the faces of disappointment.

OSCAR

You just missed the announcement.  
No one's coming in. We're closing  
early. Now you're all caught up. Go  
home.

AMARA

Oscar, do you still want me to keep  
going through Esme's books?

Oscar shakes his head as he puts his jacket on.

OSCAR

You all can hang here if you want,  
but if you don't plan on paying for  
the electricity this month, I  
suggest you pack it in and lock up  
behind yourselves.

He exits.

Ixchel sits next to Lara, defeated.

CARMEN

You guys, what are we going to do?

Envidia starts to cry.

LARA

What's wrong?

ENVIDIA

This bar *can't* close. It's the only  
place I've ever felt welcomed in.  
It's my safe zone.

Lara drapes her arm over Envidia.

LARA

We'll find another home.

ENVIDIA

Not together we're not! I know how  
this'll all pan out. You'll all  
find new bars to work at except me.  
Even the WeHo snobs turn their  
noses at me.

SORAYA

Would you blame them?

IXCHEL

Soraya, shut the fuck up. (Now is)  
not the time.

Soraya rolls her eyes as Envidia wipes away the tears.

ENVIDIA

I legit love all of you.  
(to Soraya)  
Even you, you miserable skank.

Soraya smirks.

CARMEN

How do we keep this ship floating?  
*Se está hundiendo más rápido que el  
 Titanic* (We're sinking faster than  
 the Titanic).

Ixchel stands up.

IXCHEL

We throw a party. But not just any  
 party. We tell all of LA that we're  
 putting on a show. We're a talented  
 bunch. We can do this.

CARMEN

Can I show my documentary on  
 underground sweatshops? Because  
 otherwise I'm talentless.

IXCHEL

We don't just have to do a variety  
 show. We can set up a beer pong  
 tournament! Drink specials!  
 Discounted dances!

ENVIDIA

Loteria!

LARA

*Strip* loteria.

She winks at her.

SORAYA

This is all sounds great and all,  
 but with what money?

Ixchel hesitates for a moment.

IXCHEL

I'll dip into my school savings. If  
 it weren't for this place, I  
 wouldn't even have that.

The ladies nervously eye each other.

IXCHEL

If this ship sinks, I'll be that  
 dumbass captain that stayed in the  
 bridge as it filled with water.

(then)

Now, who's in for a "Sabado  
 Gigante" theme night?

(MORE)

IXCHEL (CONT'D)

We bring back the trashy show we  
all grew up watching with our  
parents. Hands?

As the women silently debate whether they'll raise their  
hands...

INT. OBREROS - BAR - NIGHT

It's a few days later. Amara and Soraya are the last two  
ladies working the bar. Amara sits while Soraya pours her a  
drink.

SORAYA

I still can't believe you hadn't  
been to the beach until yesterday.  
That would've been my first stop  
after moving here.

AMARA

Thanks again for taking me to  
Malibu. It's even nicer than it  
looks on TV.

SORAYA

You watched a lot of TV while you  
lived down there, huh?

AMARA

It's pretty much the only thing I  
could do. I was never allowed to  
leave the- how do you say  
*compuesto*?

SORAYA

Compound.

AMARA

Yes, the compound.

SORAYA

I guess the "Narco-Wife Lifestyle"  
isn't as glamorous as *that* looks on  
TV.

AMARA

You don't know the half.

Two PATRONS leave and Soraya returns their wave. As they  
leave, JOSE SALAZAR (40s, nebbish, and unintentionally  
awkward- think a Central American "Milton" from "Office  
Space") enters carrying a rose.

SORAYA  
 (sighing)  
 Oh, fuck me.

Amara looks over at the smiling Jose as he approaches the bar.

JOSE  
 Soraya, my sweetheart!

SORAYA  
 It's last call, Jose.

He places the rose on the bar in front of her.

JOSE  
 I am so sorry I'm late. Work kept me. I meant to come in sooner, *la mera neta* (honest to God).  
 (re: the rose)  
 That's for you.

He smiles sheepishly until he realizes Amara is watching and then turns a beet red.

JOSE (CONT'D)  
 Ay *Dios*, I'm sorry, so rude of me to barge in like this.

SORAYA  
 Go home, Jose.

JOSE  
 That's exactly where I was headed, but needed to see your beautiful face before I go to sleep.

Soraya takes a beat before throwing her hands in the air and jumping over the bar. Amara snatches her drink away, avoiding a spill. Soraya gets all up in Jose's face inching closer as she speaks.

SORAYA  
 You know what you should do tonight, Jose? Take a look in the mirror before going to sleep and remember *that* face. Then think about how that ugly, rodent face will never, ever come closer to mine than it is right now.  
 (then)  
 You're revolting.

She backs away after being mere centimeters away from his face.

Jose anxiously nods and stumbles out in embarrassment. Soraya jumps back behind the bar again and starts closing out the cash drawer.

She catches Amara's glance and focuses on tallying her count.

SORAYA

My stalker.

Off Amara not knowing how to respond...

INT. WALDO'S SHIRT PRESS - LOBBY - MORNING

Ixchel, Lara, and Amara sit waiting in the lobby flipping through a large book full of t-shirt logos and designs.

IXCHEL

These?

LARA

Trashy.

IXCHEL

This one?

AMARA

That looks like the shirts those waitresses wore on that vampire show.

Ixchel closes the book and passes it over to Lara.

IXCHEL

I'm done. You two can decide.

She closes her eyes and rubs her temples.

LARA

Everything okay?

IXCHEL

Fine. Everything's dandy.

LARA

You know, we can take care of this if you wanted to-

IXCHEL

No, really. It's fine. An Obreros regular works here.

(MORE)

IXCHEL (CONT'D)

I know him, he's an awkward guy,  
but he means well. I think he might  
be on the spectrum, but I'm not  
sure. He's always offered us  
discounts. It's where I came for  
Esme's shirt.

(then)

That bitch.

LARA

Okay, but if you need some Ixchel  
time, maybe get a massage, just  
know that we can handle a lot of  
this.

Amara nods along as she begins flipping through the book.

IXCHEL

It helps to be distracted. If I sit  
at home alone, I'll just stew.

(then)

But you'll see. We're gonna throw  
the best fucking party that bar has  
ever seen.

Amara points out a design from the book.

AMARA

What about this one?

Ixchel and Lara both nod.

A door opens and Jose, Soraya's "stalker", emerges. One look  
at Amara and he again turns beet red.

IXCHEL

Hey Jose.

Off Jose nervously stumbling around the front desk...

EXT. LA CENTRAL LIBRARY - EVENING

Junior and Julia exit the closing library and walk toward the  
gardens in front.

JUNIOR

Yeah, there's even a whole sub-  
genre of claims about lizard people  
living in tunnels underneath LA.

JULIA

That's fucking weird, dude. No way Miller will ever let me write a report on that.

JUNIOR

But technically it *is* a part of the city history, so...

JULIA

And I thought Hollywood was the weird part of LA.

And speaking of weird, Kevin skateboards by and grinds on the front steps with TWO LACKEYS doing the same behind him. It's obnoxiously loud. Kevin now sports a shiner on his right eye.

KEVIN

You guys are awesome for picking up my books for me.

They ignore him and keep walking, now toward the street.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Uh, hello?

He shoves Junior from behind. Junior turns around.

JUNIOR

Looking for another black eye?!

LACKEYS

Ooooooh!

KEVIN

You're right. Sorry. The library probably doesn't carry the book I'm looking for. The story I'm writing about for history is based on the one I heard recently of a kid who started high school never fully becoming a man because his dad left prison to go be with another family.

As Junior's fist forms...

INT. DUVAL'S AUTO WORKS - NIGHT

The dark auto shop is lit with dimmed floodlights. From within an open-hooded '67 Chevy Camaro, the sounds of soft moans permeate.

Behind the wheel sits Ixchel with her seat reclined. She lets out a breathy gasp as her eyes roll to the side. Her shallow breaths stop.

IXCHEL  
I can't do this.

Jason's head emerges from her lap.

JASON  
Something wrong?

Ixchel sighs and then adjusts her seat so it's upright.

IXCHEL  
No, no, you're great. There's just so much going on.

JASON  
I get it.

IXCHEL  
I'm sorry.

JASON  
It's fine. I just didn't picture our first time to go like this.

IXCHEL  
I have a lot on my mind. I never thanked you for the ride to Chino, by the way.  
(then)  
Thank you.

Jason nods.

IXCHEL (CONT'D)  
Hey, what are you up to Saturday night? We're throwing a *Sabado Gigante* party at Obreros. Bring your rich car guy friends.

Jason chuckles.

JASON  
I don't think that's a good idea. Maybe next time.

IXCHEL  
Oh. Okay.

As she starts going for the car door-

JASON

Look. I didn't want to say anything, but when I saw that look on your face when Roman never came out, I had never had the urge to punch someone so hard before. Seeing the hurt someone caused you. That's when I realized I have these feelings for you-

She retreats and starts to climb on top of him.

INT. OBREROS - BAR - NIGHT

Amara and Carmen sit at the near-empty bar with pads of paper and pens. Cuco and Lara hang string lights around the bar. Envidia fills a piñata shaped like the "Chacal" character from "Sabado Gigante" with little bottles of liquor. It's beginning to look like a party pad.

CARMEN

Okay, we've got the beer pong tournament, Envidia's singing-- should we try to find a DJ? Is the janky jukebox enough?

ENVIDIA

Oh! My cousins are in a *banda*. I think we can get them to play for free.

Carmen nods.

AMARA

I can hustle the guys at pool. Not to honk my horns or anything, but I'm really good at it.

ENVIDIA

(laughing)  
It's "toot your own horn."

AMARA

Oh.

Amara laughs along.

Junior enters in a light huff.

JUNIOR

Hi everyone.

CUCO  
*Hijo*, what are you doing here?

JUNIOR  
 My mom isn't here, is she?

They shake their heads.

LARA  
 What's the matter?

JUNIOR  
 I can't stop by and say hi to my  
 favorite ladies?

Cuco and Lara step down from the chairs they were standing on  
 to hang the lights.

CUCO  
 You know you're always welcome  
 here, but it's been a while since  
 you've stopped by without your mom.  
 (then)  
 Spit it out, kid.

She pulls up a bar stool for him and goes to open a Coke  
 bottle for him.

He hesitates and keeps looking at the front door until  
 finally taking a seat.

JUNIOR  
 You promise not to tell her?

LARA  
 What's going on? Did you punch  
 another kid? Because your mom  
 already told me about the other day-

He nods.

LARA  
 Shit, Junior. You know I can't keep  
 that stuff from her.

JUNIOR  
 I know, but please-

CUCO  
*Mijo*, you can't keep doing this.  
 Not to your mother who has so much  
 going on right now.

JUNIOR

This kid at school keeps pushing the wrong buttons. Today he was telling this girl that my dad left prison to go be with another family.

(then)

Dad would *never* leave us.

Amara and Envidia exchange a look. Lara and Cuco struggle to not do the same. He registers this.

LARA

He'll be back soon enough.

CUCO

When I was 13, both of my parents were deported back to Mexico and I wasn't able to see them again until I was 26. Thirteen years. For a whole thirteen years, I had tios, tias, older primas, extended family members all looking out for me. I like to think I came out okay. I guess what I'm trying to say is-- don't let anyone tell you you're not complete. You have all of us.

(then)

But you have got to get your anger in control or so help me God...

LARA

For real. Don't test me-- I will kick the shit out of you if you get out of line again.

She punches his shoulder before going in for a hug.

INT. DUVAL'S AUTO WORKS - LATER

We pick up just as Ixchel's getting hot and heavy with Jason-- but he stops her.

JASON

I don't want to push something if you're not ready. We've known each other for too long.

(then)

When you're ready, just know that I'm willing to do anything for you.

Ixchel stops and gets back into the driver's seat. She kisses his forehead before exiting the Camaro.

INT. OBREROS - BAR - NIGHT

Junior is long gone now, but the rest of our ladies from earlier are still here. They're now joined by two VALET GUYS playing pool while Soraya dances with an OFF-DUTY BUSBOY.

Amara sits at a table going through a box of documents. Oscar emerges from the back with a box of files. He drops it at Amara's feet.

OSCAR

Your lucky day. More cooked books for you to sift through. Esme is not getting away with this.

Carmen turns to Envidia.

CARMEN

If Obreros closes, what do you think you'll do?

Envidia shrugs.

ENVIDIA

I guess try to go to college? I don't know. I've always wanted to go to FIDM. I love fashion.

CARMEN

I've been taking USC extension courses for documentary filmmaking, but I'll probably have to stop taking them. They're so expensive. Maybe I can make a documentary on Obreros and submit it to Cannes.

Cuco and Lara laugh from behind the bar. Lara comes around from behind.

LARA

You guys should do standup with those *pendejadas* (*dumb ideas*).

CUCO

Why waste your money like that?

LARA

Y'all gotta be a little more real about your prospects. You're better off going down to LA Trade Tech down the street. Maybe learn some massage therapy. Medical assistant shit.

Soraya joins the group as her dance partner exits the bar.

SORAYA

(to Lara)

And what, you have a backup plan ready to go? Oh, that's right, you *dabble* in porn.

LARA

No shame in that. It's honest work. Sometimes pays more than here.

CARMEN

I had too many close calls with some "mistake" auditions. So many creepy old guys...

Oscar gets restless at this. He lowers his glasses to the tip of his nose.

OSCAR

Cuco. Carmen. Envidia. And I guess you too, Amara. Calling it a night for you. Thank you ladies.

CUCO

Perfect. That crock-pot chicken mole at home is calling my name.

Cuco reaches behind the bar for the girls' things as Soraya goes to replace her. Amara puts her jacket on. As the other ladies begin to head for the door--

AMARA

You guys go ahead. Just have to use the bathroom before the bus ride.

CARMEN

You want a ride? I'll wait for you in the car.

Amara nods and rushes to the bathroom.

Carmen, Cuco, and Envidia exit as Lara approaches the two men still playing pool.

Oscar collects the paperwork on the table and takes it to the back.

Soraya checks herself out on her phone's camera. Out of the corner of the screen, she sees REGGIE ENTERING. She snaps a picture and puts her phone down. Reggie approaches the bar.

SORAYA  
Well hello there, handsome.

He smirks at her.

REGGIE  
Hello to you too, baby girl.

SORAYA  
What can I get you?

He looks around at the almost vacant bar.

REGGIE  
Maybe some help.

SORAYA  
Is that so.

He nods.

REGGIE  
Been trying to find a honey.

He pulls up a picture of Amara on his phone.

REGGIE (CONT'D)  
You seen 'er?

SORAYA  
What do you want with *her*? I am  
much better looking.

REGGIE  
Ain't no doubt about dat, baby  
girl. A friend of mine saw her the  
other night, was hoping I could buy  
him a few dances for his birthday  
comin' up.

SORAYA  
I think she went home, but maybe I  
could make your trip here not go in  
vein?

She winks at him. He smiles at her.

REGGIE  
Got damn, baby girl. You're good.

He pulls out a pen and writes his number on a napkin. He  
hands it to her.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Next time you see her, you shoot me  
a text. While my buddy's busy with  
her, maybe we can get a little  
sump'in sump'in goin' on.

As she takes the napkin, he takes her hand and brings it up  
for a kiss. He winks at her and exits.

Amara returns from the bathroom having JUST missed him! She  
notices Soraya's distant smile as she stares out at the door.

AMARA

You okay?

Soraya turns to her.

SORAYA

Oh. Yes. Everything's great.

Off Soraya's evil smirk, we reach the-

INT. OBREROS - NIGHT

The entire place is PACKED. Cuco and Carmen face off at Beer  
Pong, Lara and Ixchel play a round of pool, Envidia and Amara  
lead a game of Strip Loteria in front of a live band playing  
Mexican music. The creepy "Chacal" piñata hangs near the  
entrance.

Envidia approaches Oscar at the bar.

Oscar's grinning from ear to ear as tokens are selling like  
crazy and the patrons are placing bets on their favorite  
ficheras winning an event.

ENVIDIA

Have you seen the piñata bat? I  
think we should break it soon.

Oscar shrugs as he continues handing out tokens. Ixchel  
joins, raising a finger at Oscar. He turns to grab a beer for  
her.

ENVIDIA

You haven't seen the piñata bat,  
have you?

Ixchel shakes her head.

INT. OBREROS - BAR - LATER

Jose enters the crowded bar carrying a rose just like the previous night we last saw him. As he scans the crowd, Soraya catches his gaze as she dances with a patron. She rolls her eyes and turns to her partner. She raises a finger- (1 sec?).

As she begins to move through the crowd toward him, his gaze turns elsewhere and he begins to go in a different direction than hers. She watches as he makes his way toward Amara, who is now dancing on stage in front of the band.

Amara catches his awkward smile as he raises the rose to her. Mortified, Amara looks into the crowd as she goes down to take the rose. She finds Soraya's death stare looking back.

JOSE

Pretty rose for a pretty girl?

AMARA

Jose, thank you so much. You really shouldn't have.

JOSE

You're nice. You don't talk down to me like Soraya.

AMARA

I prefer to see the good in people first.

JOSE

Well, think of this as a thank you and a welcome gift. Do you think I could ask for a dance?

AMARA

It's beautiful, but I can't. Thank you-- please don't take this the wrong way. It's just that someone else here might see this as something else and I don't want to start any problems with anyone.

JOSE

You mean Soraya?

Soraya approaches the two.

SORAYA

Why does everyone insist on talking about me when I'm not around?

AMARA

Soraya, Jose brought you this rose  
and was just asking if I had seen  
you.

Soraya takes a moment to look at them both. She yanks the rose from Amara and admires it for a moment while getting closer to Jose.

She brings the rose up to her eyes and begins to peel off the petals letting them scatter everywhere. She takes the remaining bulb and rips it off the stem before chucking it to Jose's face.

SORAYA

Next time I'll make you eat this  
gas station rose in front of me.

She saunters off.

AMARA

(to Jose)  
I'm sorry.

He pats off any remaining petals on his coat and hangs his head.

As Soraya continues moving through the crowd, she pulls her phone up and begins to text.

INSERT: Text to Reggie: "That girl you were looking for?  
She's here."

Newly charged, she turns and sees a HANDSOME COWBOY. She winks at him and he tips his hat at her. As she goes to approach him, she walks into Lara's cue stick as she plays pool. It's a scratch for both games.

LARA

Excuse you.

SORAYA

You're excused.

LARA

You made me scratch.

As Ixchel sinks an 8 ball-

IXCHEL

And helped me win!

Soraya looks over to the grinning Ixchel.

SORAYA

You know what, Ixchel? I'm glad I helped you. Lord knows you need help with everything else in life. You can't handle your finances or time, your kid's a mess, and you can't even keep a husband while he's locked up.

The people around them have taken notice. Ixchel stands as if she's just taken a hit to the stomach. The party continues, but there's an noticeable lull surrounding them.

IXCHEL

I refuse to sink to your level. You wanna hash it out, *pendeja*? Let's go. You and me.

The room quiets down. Ixchel curls her finger at her as they make their way to the beer pong table. Soraya scoffs.

SORAYA

You're joking right? You know I whooped everyone in our last tournament.

As the ladies approach, a table nearby starts getting stacks of tokens being divided and piled into separate bets from giddy bar patrons. Both Ixchel and Soraya see this.

IXCHEL

Lara, you still got that set up from the other night?

Ixchel takes off her big hoop earrings. A random CHOLO turns to his FRIEND.

CHOLO

Homegirl just took her earrings off. Shit's about to go down!

Lara approaches the table with two stands and sets them on the both sides of the table. Ixchel hooks her earrings to the top creating a makeshift Aztec Ball Game setup where the ladies will have to get the ball through the hoop and then into a cup-- kind of like Quidditch Beer Pong.

IXCHEL

Aztec rules.

SORAYA

I'm sorry, what?

IXCHEL

You bounce it off the table,  
through the hoop, and into the  
cups.

(then)

A professional like you should be  
able to handle this.

As Soraya sighs, the table full of tokens immediately starts  
to grow exponentially. Ixchel cracks her knuckles.

SORAYA

Bitches first.

Off Ixchel's smirk, the band starts playing a Mexican cover  
of Heart's "Barracuda."

The game is epic and after a series of shots, Ixchel is  
victorious and the crowd goes wild.

Soraya takes the last cup and picks out the ball, tossing it  
behind her. She approaches Ixchel.

SORAYA

I would've wiped you out if it  
hadn't been for your little last  
minute addition.

Ixchel raises a cup to her.

IXCHEL

Well, it all worked out in the end.  
Truce-- for the night at least?

Soraya eyes the tokens being redistributed at the table next  
to her; her loss further stinging. She returns her look to  
Ixchel and as she's about to meet the cup with hers, she  
instead dumps the little beer it had all over Ixchel.

Soraya throws the cup and storms out. Ixchel laughs as she  
wipes off the spill. Amara runs up with a few napkins.

AMARA

Oh my God, are you okay?

Ixchel keeps laughing.

IXCHEL

I got to her. That just made my  
night.

(beat)

I'm gonna go clean up.

Ixchel exits to the back and Amara turns around to see Jose at a table by himself watching the live band. She approaches him.

AMARA

Does the dance offer still stand?

Jose's eyes light up. He begins to pat his jacket and finds an Obreros token. As he's about to hand it to her, a hand interjects between them and snatches the token away!

It's REGGIE!

REGGIE

Sorry, homeboy. Baby girl and I have some unfinished business.

He pats Jose on the shoulder and places the token down Amara's shirt. He nods his head toward the back. A shaken Amara quickly scans the crowd and nods in agreement after not seeing Ixchel.

As they head toward the backroom, Ixchel exits the bathroom just as they walk past it.

INT. OBREROS - OSCAR'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Reggie closes the door behind him as Amara rushes to the back door.

REGGIE

Ah, ah, ah, baby girl.

He points a knife at her.

REGGIE

You ran from me once, but you had a good head start back then.

(then)

You think I run 7 miles every morning for funsies?

Amara stops and turns back around. As she does, Ixchel enters the room.

IXCHEL

What the fuck are you doing here?

REGGIE

Oh ho ho, we got bus bitch up in here! It's like good old times.

IXCHEL  
I'm calling the police.

REGGIE  
Mmm.  
(then)  
Mmm, mmm, mmm. No. You see, you do that, whatever illegal shit y'all got going on down here is gonna come to light. I just want what's mine to come back to me.

IXCHEL  
She isn't yours, 8 Mile.

REGGIE  
You're right.  
(turning back to Amara)  
She's damaged goods now. I just wanna drop her off at ICE's doorstep.  
(then, to Amara)  
Not sure if you know, but I heard your ex-husband just got a pet lion at the compound. You look like you'd be a good kitty snack.

IXCHEL  
You're willing to get involved with federal agents just to see Amara go away? What kind of an idiot pimp are you?

REGGIE  
Bitch, what'd I tell you the first time we met? Keep that trap shut.

AMARA  
It's fine, Ix.

Reggie turns to her. Amara's now clutching the cat self-defense keychain as hard as she can. Reggie laughs at it.

REGGIE  
Oh that's cute! You got a Hello Kitty too.

AMARA  
I'd rather be dead before you drag me back to that hell.

As Reggie approaches closer and closer, he's knocked over the head with a frilly, pink piñata bat.

Ixchel stands over him, bat in hand.

IXCHEL  
Found the piñata bat.

Don't fuck with Ixchel.

INT. OBREROS - OSCAR'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Ixchel and Amara stand over Reggie's (maybe lifeless?) body.

IXCHEL  
Oh my God. What did I do?!

Amara bends down to check his breathing. She checks for a pulse. Nothing. She searches his pockets and pulls out his phone and car keys.

AMARA  
I need to find his car. We can't  
let anyone see him here. Not like  
this.

Amara pulls a rolling desk chair over. They struggle to lift him and finally sit him in it. They start to wheel him to the back door...

EXT. OBREROS - ALLEY - LATER

Ixchel stands staring at Reggie in the chair.

Amara pulls Reggie's gaudy Pontiac Firebird (with flames etched on the sides of it) into the alley and parks in front of Ixchel and Reggie.

IXCHEL  
I can see why he takes the bus  
often.

Ixchel wheels him to the trunk as Amara opens it. Inside is the same gym bag that he was carrying on the bus the night Amara and Ixchel met. Ixchel unzips it and finds a gun with stacks of rubber-banded cash.

AMARA  
*Ay güey!*

Ixchel looks through it and only finds more cash underneath. She zips the bag back up and removes it.

IXCHEL

What the hell was he doing with all  
this money?

Amara is just as baffled. They lift the body and awkwardly try to fit him in the trunk. As Amara bends his legs to make them fit, the Obreros token he slipped in her bra slips into the trunk with him.

They shut the trunk and Ixchel unzips the bag again taking out the gun. She checks the safety and tucks it in her pants. She hands Amara the bag.

IXCHEL

I'll take care of this. Take the  
bag and I'll see you at the  
apartment later?

Amara nods quickly.

IXCHEL (CONT'D)

Don't let anyone see you with it.

Ixchel turns over the car and drives off.

INT. REGGIE'S CAR - LATER

Ixchel rides in silence.

She turns the radio on. At one point, a loud BANG hits along with the song. Was it the song? Was it the trunk? She lowers the volume to listen and pulls over for a moment.

Silence.

She continues driving and fully shuts off the radio. The tension lingers.

EXT. DUVAL'S AUTO WORKS - NIGHT

Ixchel and Jason stand staring at the closed trunk.

IXCHEL

I didn't know where else to go.

JASON

I'll handle it.

IXCHEL

I'm so sorry to involve you in  
this.

JASON

Like I said before-- (I'll do)  
anything.

She hugs him and buries herself in a kiss.

INT. OBREROS - BAR - DAY

The ladies are all in helping to clean up. Ixchel and Amara clearly haven't gotten any sleep. They go to clean the bar together.

IXCHEL

Did you count all of it?

Amara nods.

AMARA

Three times. Just to make sure I  
wasn't off.

IXCHEL

And?

Amara waits until Cuco finishes sweeping by.

AMARA

\$100k.

IXCHEL

You're shitting me.

Amara shakes her head.

AMARA

Three times.

Ixchel goes back to wiping down the bar.

IXCHEL

Where did you-

AMARA

It's in your closet. I made sure  
Junior didn't see.

Ixchel dries the bar with a dry cloth.

IXCHEL

Hey, I never asked how you knew  
what to do so quickly. It's like  
you had handled something like that  
before...

Amara sets a tray of dirty glassware in a sink.

AMARA

When you've seen the things I've seen that my ex-husband would do at the (remembering--) compound, I guess it becomes second nature.

Like the glasses, Ixchel lets that sink in for a moment.

IXCHEL

We'll split it. 50/50. But we need to find a way to-

AMARA

Clean it? Yeah, I was thinking the same thing. This place wouldn't be a bad place to launder it through.

Cuco sweeps by and stops at the bar.

CUCO

Ixchel, I keep forgetting to ask you how Junior's doing. He was in such a panic when he came in the other day.

IXCHEL

He was here?

CUCO

I told him that if he hits that kid again, I'd give him a *cintazo* so hard he wouldn't be able to sit until he graduates. That bully shouldn't be a problem anymore, though. I think the girls have something in mind. No one messes with our son.

She winks at Ixchel and continues sweeping. Oscar emerges from the back room and takes a seat at a table. He takes his glasses off and wipes them. The ladies all stop and look at him.

LARA

So...?

OSCAR

Thank you all for your hard work. Sabado Gigante was so much fun. Probably the most fun I've had in a long time.

(MORE)

OSCAR (CONT'D)

We'll manage to squeeze by for a few extra weeks, but I suggest you start looking for work elsewhere.

A few groans are heard.

CARMEN

Man, I really thought we raked in a lot.

OSCAR

You see all the fancy businesses popping up around us? This place doesn't stand a chance.

Amara turns to Ixchel.

AMARA

I'm putting my half in. That *has* to keep us open for a few more months. I have nothing else to lose.

Off Ixchel wondering if she should do the same...

INT. SANTOS APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ixchel on the couch going through her nursing school paperwork. She opens her laptop and goes to her account financing website.

She closes her computer and takes off her reading glasses.

As she sets down the laptop on the end table, she sees a framed picture of her, Roman, and Junior that was taken at the prison. She passes over it to another framed picture of the Obreros crew with her and a toddler Junior. Only one of the pictures show a happy family.

Ixchel dials on her phone.

IXCHEL

Hey. Are you still thinking of doing it?

EXT. FELIPE DE NEVE HIGH SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

Junior and Julia exit and head toward the row of cars waiting to pick up kids.

JULIA

You sure you don't want a ride?

JUNIOR

Nah, I'm good.

Kevin jumps in front of them as they get closer to the street. He now has two black eyes. Kevin's two lackeys from before join in.

KEVIN

Oh look, it's Little Orphan Juni.  
Gonna try to run again you little  
shit? Did you ever find out where  
your dad left to?

JULIA

Fuck you, Kevin.

KEVIN

Is that an invite?

As Junior stops to address this little asshole again, an Audi convertible cuts off the rest of the parents in their cars and pulls up right in front of our group. It honks and then a woman's voice is heard.

WOMAN (O.S.)

Hey Junior!

Junior turns around to see the car park and Lara, Carmen, and Envidia walk up to the bunch wearing outfits that would make your average PTA mom squirm. Kevin's jaw (along with the jaws of the two lackeys) drops as he watches the women grab Junior by the shoulder.

CARMEN

You ready?

Junior sees the look on Kevin's face and smiles. He nods.

JUNIOR

(to Julia)

Catch you later?

Julia nods. Envidia turns to Kevin.

ENVIDIA

Wait a minute. Aren't you Hector  
Hernandez's kid?

Kevin nods.

KEVIN

That's my dad.

ENVIDIA

I thought you looked familiar. I haven't seen your dad at the bar in a while, is he okay? He had a nasty rash on his penis the last time I saw him. I hope he got it checked out.

(then)

Tell him I said hey!

She blows a kiss at him and the ladies plus Junior return to the convertible. As they peel out, the lackeys laugh at Kevin.

INT. OBREROS - OSCAR'S OFFICE - DAY

Ixchel and Amara sit opposite Oscar at his desk. He closes a briefcase in front of him.

IXCHEL

So?

Oscar lets out a deep sigh.

OSCAR

I don't know where you got all of this money, but I don't care and I'm not gonna ask.

(then)

Ladies, it's been a pleasure doing business with you.

He extends his hand and shakes both of theirs. He turns to collect his things, but pauses and turns back to the ladies now hugging.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

One question, though-- Why was my chair in the alley this morning?

Off Oscar...

EXT. SANTOS APARTMENT - ALLEY - AFTERNOON

Ixchel and Amara stand in front of a metal trash can as Ixchel squeezes lighter fluid in it. She strikes a match and drops it in to the sound of a *woosh!*

IXCHEL

I thought this would be appropriate since my life has been an actual trash fire these past few weeks.

Amara chuckles. Ixchel opens a shoebox full of Roman mementos. She takes a picture of the two of them in high school and throws it in the fire. She throws in old movie ticket stubs.

IXCHEL (CONT'D)

Fuck it.

She turns the box upside down letting everything fall in at once. She chucks the box in too. As the tears begin to fall, Amara hugs her. While they both watch the fire burn, a far pull out reveals a car parked on the street looking into the alley.

Someone watches them. It's ROMAN.

INT. OBREROS - BAR - EVENING

The whole team is here and all sitting at tables near the stage. Ixchel and Amara go up on stage and the chattering silences.

IXCHEL

Great, we can begin.

CARMEN

Where's Oscar? Are we officially done?

IXCHEL

Oscar is on permanent vacation. Said he'd never been to Catalina, so he took a little trip.

ENVIDIA

Did that asshole take our earnings for a vacation?

IXCHEL

Actually, Amara and I kinda bought him out...

ALL

("What"? "What is going on?"  
"Huh?")

CUCO

With what money? There's no way you two made more than we all did.

AMARA

Ixchel and I pooled together our savings.

(MORE)

AMARA (CONT'D)

She took out the rest she had saved for school and I threw in my savings from when I decided to move here.

LARA

Y'all are full of shit.

IXCHEL

We're your new bosses, *cabronas!*

They all cheer except for Soraya who seems to have her eyerolls set forever on repeat.

IXCHEL (CONT'D)

You are all family to me and I couldn't-- we couldn't let that go.

SORAYA

Oh please. This is a place of *employment*. If you think otherwise, you're delusional.

Ixchel hops off the stage and approaches Soraya.

IXCHEL

You have no idea how long I've wanted to say this.

(then)

Soraya, get the fuck out. You're done.

The girls gasp as Soraya, who didn't actually see this response coming, stumbles out of the bar.

Ixchel turns back to address the women.

IXCHEL (CONT'D)

Now, with the help of my math whiz partner, we've also been able to give you all a little bit of a bump in pay *but* there is a new rule that comes with it.

AMARA

Show us you've enrolled in some kind of adult class during the day and you keep that pay bump.

They applaud.

## IXCHEL

We all know this bar won't be around forever unless we start selling \$10 juices and teach cardio barre. We have to be ready to move on to better things.

(beat)

I remember one of my first nights here, a mechanic fresh from Guatemala wandered in by himself. He was lonely and paid for a dance, but by the end of the night he quickly became friends with a group of warehouse workers who had just immigrated here too. As dumpy as we think this place is, it helps to serve as a welcoming community and that's what has kept me here. We're the fucking west coast Statue of Liberty. We embrace all and pull each other up.

## INT. OBREROS - BAR - LATER

The bar's finally open to the public and the halo effect from the *Sabado Gigante* night now sees a healthy amount of patrons visiting. The ladies dance and laugh as the music plays.

Ixchel and Amara watch from the bar as they take in the new energy.

## AMARA

And nursing school? Does this mean it's being put on hold again? What about *your* dreams?

Ixchel shrugs.

## IXCHEL

Dreams mean shit if you don't have a family to share them with.

She wraps her arm around Amara and as she pulls her out to dance with the rest of the women, while...

## EXT. OBREROS - MOMENTS LATER

Soraya stands outside the bumpin' bar. She dials a number on her phone.

SORAYA

Hey, it's me. Soraya. Remember  
Obreros? Well, there's a lot of  
things you should know...

As a DARK FIGURE approaches her from behind, we--

SMASH TO BLACK.

END OF PILOT