

IN THE HEIGHTS

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Based on In the Heights
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IN BLACK--

Tranquil sounds of a beach. We hear a child's voice, with a strong accent, some mix of Dominican and Nuyorican -

KID'S VOICE

Hey mister, what does sueñito mean?

And then the good-natured response -

MAN'S VOICE

It means "little dream."

FADE IN:

EXT. DOMINICAN REPUBLIC. BEACH. DAY.

Señor Usnavi, 40s, a jokester with a heart of gold, relaxes on the sand. An igloo cooler is his chair. Some kids gather, donning bathing suits and beach gear. They lean in, all ears.

KID 1

That's it? No story?

KID 2

Can we go in the water now?

SHY GIRL

Let him explain.

We linger on this girl. Eyes bright, full of curiosity. The kids wait. Finally--

OLDER USNAVI

Once upon a time there was a handsome bodega owner.

INSERT: Brad Pitt, teeth sparkling, at a bodega counter.

KIDS (O.S.)

No!

BACK TO: The beach. The kids relish the hyperbole.

OLDER USNAVI

Once upon a time there was a moderately attractive bodega owner. In a far off place called Nuevayol. In a disappearing neighborhood called Washington Heights. Say it, so it doesn't disappear.

KIDS
 (eye-rolling but loving it)
 Washington Heights.

EXT. WASHINGTON HEIGHTS AT DAWN.

As seen through an opened tenement window. The streets below are a collection of battered brownstones and prewar apartment buildings. In the distance, twinkling car lights crawl across the George Washington Bridge.

OLDER USNAVI (V.O.)
 Oye... the streets were made of
 music.

SOUNDS EMERGE from the landscape. A cement mixer becomes a scratching turntable. Apartment windows open like drumbeats. Lights flip on to a CLAVE RHYTHM. Thump-thump reggaetón from a bike messenger. MUSIC continues as we

REVERSE ON - USNAVI DE LA VEGA - YOUNGER

Now in his late 20s. Usnavi lies in bed in his modest room, **brow dripping with sweat**, wide awake, pensive. But he's not looking out the window. Instead he's looking at --

A PAINT CHIPPED WALL

On it are several FRAMED PHOTOGRAPHS. They are BEACH SCENES from the Dominican Republic. Snapshots from the halcyon days of Usnavi's youth. Among the photos are--

--Usnavi as an infant, playing in the white sand, his parents hovering above him.

--Usnavi at age 5, learning to swim in the turquoise Caribbean with the help of his mother.

--Usnavi at age 8, piggybacking on his father's shoulders, wrapped in a flag, celebrating Dominican Independence Day.

Usnavi is completely lost in the memories.

USNAVI
 Morning, mom. Morning, pop.

But his reverie is SHATTERED by his radio alarm --

RADIO ANNOUNCER
 1010 WINS time, 5:30. Brownouts
 continue in the Bronx and upper
 Manhattan as the Mayor urges
 residents to limit air conditioner
 use. Tonight's Annual Uptown Jam
 has some residents excited and
 others fretting -

Usnavi sits up and steels himself for the day ahead.

INT. USNAVI'S KITCHEN. DAWN.

MUSIC continues as: Abuela Claudia, mid-70s, pulls candles
 from a junk drawer. She adds them to a pile of batteries,
 flashlights, and hand fans on the table. Despite her frailty,
 ABUELA CLAUDIA is in constant motion.

Usnavi passes through the kitchen and offers a cheek kiss.

USNAVI
 Bendición. You're up early.

ABUELA CLAUDIA
 Preparing, mijo. If the blackout
 comes, estamos listos.

USNAVI
 Sonny'll bring your cafecito.

ABUELA CLAUDIA
 My knees are cooperating. I'll come
 by.

Usnavi grabs his Kangol cap from a hook by the door and the
 MUSIC becomes

"IN THE HEIGHTS"

EXT. USNAVI'S BLOCK. DAWN.

A GRAFFITI ARTIST sprays a BODEGA AWNING with breathtaking
 skill. He's got earbuds and is krumping to a hidden hip-hop
 beat. Usnavi sees this from his stoop.

USNAVI
 Yo!

Usnavi charges at Graffiti Pete, who quickly disappears into
 an alley.

USNAVI (CONT'D)
 LIGHTS UP ON WASHINGTON HEIGHTS AT THE BREAK OF DAY
 I WAKE UP AND I GOT THIS LITTLE PUNK I GOTTA CHASE
 AWAY
 POP THE GRATE AT THE CRACK OF DAWN, SING
 WHILE I WIPE DOWN THE AWNING
 HEY YA'LL, GOOD MORNING

The stubborn gate rolls up noisily. Usnavi looks DIRECTLY AT US and welcomes us into --

INT. USNAVI'S BODEGA. CONTINUOUS.

Fluorescent lights flicker on, illuminating a somewhat outdated bodega. Duct tape holds some fixtures together.

Shelves stretch floor to ceiling with a dizzying array of Goya foods, toilet paper, detergent, cookies. The COLORFUL LABELS and SUN FADED POSTERS create a dazzling GRID, many of them depicting TINY SCENES OF PARADISE.

Behind the counter: a faded WALL-SIZED MURAL of a Caribbean beach bar and a bartender in a guayabera shirt.

USNAVI
 I AM USNAVI AND YOU PROB'LY NEVER HEARD MY NAME
 REPORTS OF MY FAME ARE GREATLY EXAGGERATED
 EXACERBATED BY THE FACT THAT MY SYNTAX
 IS HIGHLY COMPLICATED CUZ IMMIGRATED FROM THE
 SINGLE
 GREATEST LITTLE PLACE IN THE CARIBBEAN

He points to the MURAL on the wall.

USNAVI (CONT'D)
 DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
 I LOVE IT
 JESUS, I'M JEALOUS OF IT
 AND BEYOND THAT, EVER SINCE MY FOLKS PASSED ON
 I HAVEN'T GONE BACK
 GODDAMN, I GOTTA GET ON THAT

He grabs milk from the fridge, sniffing -

USNAVI (CONT'D)
 Fo!
 THE MILK HAS GONE BAD, HOLD UP JUST A SECOND
 WHY IS EVERYTHING IN THIS FRIDGE WARM AND TEPID?
 I BETTER STEP IT UP AND FIGHT THE HEAT
 CUZ I'M NOT MAKIN ANY PROFIT IF THE COFFEE ISN'T
 LIGHT AND SWEET!

ABUELA CLAUDIA (O.S.)

Ooo-oo!

Abuela Claudia scuttles in.

USNAVI

Damn. I'm two fridges down. I got
cafe, but no "con leche."

ABUELA CLAUDIA

Try my mother's recipe: condensed
milk.

USNAVI

(smiling)

Your lottery tickets.

He hands her several LOTTERY TICKETS. A daily ritual. As she
goes, he grabs condensed milk from a shelf.

USNAVI (CONT'D)

THAT WAS ABUELA, SHE'S NOT REALLY MY ABUELA
BUT SHE PRACTICALLY RAISED ME
THIS CORNER IS HER ESCUELA, NOW
YOU'RE PROB'LY THINKIN, "I'M UP SHIT'S CREEK
I'VE NEVER BEEN NORTH OF NINETY-SIXTH STREET!"
WELL YOU MUST TAKE THE A TRAIN
EVEN FARTHER THAN HARLEM TO NORTHERN MANHATTAN AND
MAINTAIN
GET OFF AT 181ST AND TAKE THE ESCALATOR
I HOPE YOU'RE WRITIN THIS DOWN
I'M GONNA TEST YOU LATER
I'M GETTIN TESTED TIMES ARE TOUGH ON THIS BODEGA
TWO MONTHS AGO SOMEBODY BOUGHT ORTEGA'S
OUR NEIGHBORS STARTED PACKIN UP AND PICKIN UP
AND EVER SINCE THE RENTS WENT UP
IT'S GOTTEN MAD EXPENSIVE
BUT WE LIVE WITH JUST ENOUGH

EXT. BODEGA. CONTINUOUS.

Pedestrians head to the bus stop.

Usnavi swings out the bodega door and finds Abuela waiting.
He delivers a cup of coffee into her hands and flips the sign
to OPEN.

PEDESTRIANS

IN THE HEIGHTS
I FLIP THE LIGHTS AND START MY DAY
THERE ARE FIGHTS AND ENDLESS DEBTS
AND BILLS TO PAY
IN THE HEIGHTS

I CAN'T SURVIVE WITHOUT CAFE
 CUZ TONIGHT SEEMS LIKE A MILLION YEARS AWAY
 EN WASHINGTON--

KEVIN ROSARIO steps through the door. Kevin's in his late 40s and wears his evergreen outfit: a crisp white shirt and tie.

INT. BODEGA. CONTINUOUS.

USNAVI
 FIRST UP TO BAT IS ROSARIO
 HE RUNS THE CAB COMPANY
 HE STRUGGLES IN THE BARRIO
 SEE, HIS DAUGHTER NINA'S OFF AT COLLEGE
 TUITION IS MAD STEEP
 SO HE CAN'T SLEEP
 EVERYTHING HE GETS IS MAD CHEAP!

KEVIN
 GOOD MORNING, USNAVI.

Usnavi hands him a bag and a coffee.

USNAVI
 PAN CALIENTE, CAFE CON LECHE!

KEVIN
 PUT SEVEN DOLLARS ON TODAY'S LOTTERY.

They exchange cash and lottery tickets.

USNAVI
 TAKE FIVE, PICK SIX.

KEVIN
 HEY, A MAN'S GOTTA DREAM.

EXT. THE BLOCK. SAME.

DANIELA sashays around the corner. Squeezed into a fitted black dress, her sneakers are a necessary compromise for a woman who works on her feet. Always a few steps behind her is CARLA, her loopy assistant in skin tight jeans.

DANIELA
 SO THEN YESSSENIA WALKS IN THE ROOM

CARLA
 Aha...

DANIELA
 SHE SMELLS SEX AND CHEAP PERFUME!

CARLA

Uh oh...

DANIELA

IT SMELLS LIKE ONE OF THOSE TREES THAT YOU
HANG FROM THE REARVIEW!

CARLA

Ah, no!

INT. BODEGA. CONTINUOUS.

Daniela and Carla head to the lone working fridge. They grab an assortment of diet shakes.

DANIELA

IT'S TRUE! SHE SCREAMS, "WHO'S IN THERE WITH YOU
JULIO?"
GRABS A BAT AND KICKS IN THE DOOR!
HE'S IN BED WITH JOSE FROM THE LIQUOR STORE!

CARLA/USNAVI

No me diga!

Usnavi has their lottery tickets ready.

CARLA/DANIELA

THANKS, USNAVI!

SONNY, 15, speed-walks in. A BLACK LIVES MATTER decal covers his headphones. Usnavi's not pleased.

SONNY

My bad, the protest ran late.

USNAVI

Fridge one and two broke.

They fist bump as Sonny tends to the fridge.

USNAVI (CONT'D)

ME AND MY COUSIN RUNNIN' JUST ANOTHER DIME-A-DOZEN
MOM-AND-POP STOP-AND-SHOP
AND OH MY GOD IT'S GOTTEN TOO DARN HOT
LIKE MY MAN COLE PORTER SAID

EXT. BODEGA.

Usnavi hoses down the sidewalk.

USNAVI

PEOPLE COME THROUGH FOR A FEW COLD WATERS AND A

LOTTERY TICKET, JUST A PART OF THE ROUTINE
 EVERYBODY'S GOT A JOB, EVERYBODY'S GOT A DREAM
 THEY GOSSIP AS I SIP MY COFFEE AND SMIRK
 THE FIRST STOP AS PEOPLE HOP TO WORK
 BUST IT I'M LIKE

INT. BODEGA.

Usnavi wades through a crowded aisle toward the register,
 anticipating the needs of a SURREAL TIDE OF CUSTOMERS.

USNAVI

ONE DOLLAR, TWO DOLLARS, ONE FIFTY, ONE SIXTY-NINE
 I GOT IT, YOU WANT A BOX OF CONDOMS WHAT KIND?
 THAT'S TWO QUARTERS, TWO QUARTER WATERS
 THE NEW YORK TIMES, YOU NEED A BAG FOR THAT?
 THE TAX IS ADDED, ONCE YOU GET SOME PRACTICE AT IT
 YOU DO RAPID MATHEMATICS AUTOMATICALLY
 SELLING MAXIPADS AND FUZZY DICE FOR TAXICABS
 AND PRACTICALLY EVERYONE'S STRESSED, YES,
 BUT THEY PRESS THROUGH THE MESS, BOUNCE CHECKS
 AND WONDER WHAT'S NEXT

EXT. BODEGA.

A LIVERY CAB stops at the hydrant and BENNY BRYANT gets out.
 He is Usnavi's closest friend, African-American, 20s, and has
 spent a lifetime trying to fit in among his Latino neighbors.
 He loosens his tie and goes into--

INT. BODEGA. CONTINUOUS.

BENNY

YOU AIN'T GOT NO SKILLS!

USNAVI

BENNY!

BENNY

LEMME GET A-

USNAVI

MILKY WAY

BENNY

YEAH, LEMME ALSO GET A-

USNAVI

DAILY NEWS

BENNY

AND A-

USNAVI
POST

BENNY
AND MOST IMPORTANT, MY-

USNAVI
BOSS'S SECOND COFFEE, ONE CREAM

USNAVI/BENNY
FIVE SUGARS!

BENNY
I'M THE NUMBER ONE EARNER

USNAVI/SONNY
WHAT!

BENNY
THE FASTEST LEARNER

USNAVI/SONNY
WHAT!

BENNY
MY BOSS CAN'T KEEP ME ON THE DAMN BACK BURNER!

USNAVI
YES HE CAN

BENNY
I'M MAKIN MOVES, I'M MAKIN DEALS, BUT GUESS WHAT?

USNAVI
WHAT?

BENNY/SONNY
YOU STILL AIN'T GOT NO SKILLS!

USNAVI
HARDEE-HAR

BENNY
VANESSA SHOW UP YET?

USNAVI
(tensing)
SHUT UP

BENNY
HEY LITTLE HOMIE DON'T GET SO UPSET
SHOW VANESSA HOW YOU FEEL

BUY THE GIRL A MEAL, ON THE REAL
OR YOU AIN'T GOT NO SKILLS

Usnavi STIFFENS when VANESSA'S VOICE drifts inside.

VANESSA (O.S.)

NOOO!
NO NO NOOO!

EXT. STREET. SAME.

Dragon green high tops march down the block. Above them, a green miniskirt. VANESSA, mid-20s, is a verdant stripe of life. She is tough as the acrylic nails she works on-- a fighter who's had to battle for every inch and opportunity.

VANESSA

(into the phone)

NO NO NOOO, NO NO NO!
NOOO, NO NO NO!
NO NO NO NO NO NO NO NO NO NO NO NO NO!

INT. BODEGA. CONTINUOUS.

VANESSA

(into the phone)

MR. JOHNSON I GOT THE SECURITY DEPOSIT
IT'S LOCKED IN A BOX IN THE BOTTOM OF MY CLOSET
IT'S NOT REFLECTED IN MY BANK STATEMENT
BUT I'VE BEEN SAVING TO MAKE A DOWN PAYMENT AND PAY
RENT
NO NO, I WON'T LET YOU DOWN

BENNY

(aside, to Usnavi)

YO HERE'S YOUR CHANCE ASK HER OUT RIGHT NOW!

VANESSA

(into the phone)

I'LL SEE YOU LATER, WE CAN LOOK AT THAT LEASE!

Vanessa hangs up, hopeful, on the brink of some victory.

BENNY

(aside, to Usnavi)

DO SOMETHIN, MAKE YOUR MOVE, DON'T FREEZE

USNAVI

HEY!

VANESSA

YOU OWE ME A BOTTLE OF COLD CHAMPAGNE!

USNAVI
ARE YOU MOVING?

VANESSA
JUST A LITTLE CREDIT CHECK AND I'M ON THAT
DOWNTOWN TRAIN

USNAVI
WELL YOUR COFFEE'S ON THE HOUSE

VANESSA
OKAY!

BENNY
(nudging him)
USNAVI ASK HER OUT

SONNY
(aside)
NO WAY!

Usnavi stands there, starts to speak... but nothing comes out.

VANESSA
I'LL SEE YOU LATER, SO...

And she's gone. Usnavi has missed his moment. Again.

BENNY
OOH SMOOTH OPERATOR, AW DAMN THERE SHE GO
YO BRO TAKE FIVE, TAKE A WALK OUTSIDE
YOU LOOK EXHAUSTED, LOST, DON'T LET LIFE SLIDE
THE WHOLE HOOD IS STRUGGLIN, TIMES ARE TIGHT
AND YOU'RE STUCK TO THIS CORNER LIKE A STREETLIGHT

Benny heads off.

EXT. BODEGA. SAME.

Usnavi stands frozen in the door frame.

USNAVI
YEAH I'M A STREETLIGHT CHOKING ON THE HEAT
THE WORLD SPINS AROUND WHILE I'M FROZEN TO MY SEAT
THE PEOPLE THAT I KNOW ALL KEEP ON ROLLING DOWN THE
STREET
BUT EVERY DAY IS DIFFERENT SO I'M SWITCHIN UP THE
BEAT
CUZ MY PARENTS CAME WITH NOTHING
THEY GOT A LITTLE MORE AND SURE WE'RE POOR BUT YO
AT LEAST WE GOT THE STORE

AND IT'S ALL ABOUT THE LEGACY THEY LEFT WITH ME
 IT'S DESTINY
 AND ONE DAY I'LL BE ON A BEACH WITH SONNY WRITIN
 CHECKS TO ME

He watches the local businesses in action:

--ROSARIO CAR SERVICE, across the street. Kevin sits at the
 dispatch mic, a Puerto Rican flag on the wall behind him.

KEVIN/COMMUNITY
 IN THE HEIGHTS
 I HANG MY FLAG UP ON DISPLAY

USNAVI
 WE CAME TO WORK AND TO LIVE AND WE GOT A LOT IN
 COMMON

--ROSA LINDA SALON, a few doors down. Daniela, Carla, and
 Vanessa prep for their first appointments.

DANIELA/CARLA/VANESSA/COMMUNITY
 IT REMINDS ME THAT I CAME FROM MILES AWAY

USNAVI
 DR, PR, WE ARE NOT STOPPIN

--ABUELA/USNAVI'S FRONT WINDOW. Abuela Claudia sits at her
 fourth-floor windowsill, fanning herself.

ABUELA CLAUDIA/COMMUNITY
 IN THE HEIGHTS
 EVERY DAY, PACIENCIA Y FE

USNAVI
 UNTIL THE DAY WE GO FROM POVERTY TO STOCK OPTIONS

COMMUNITY
 IN THE HEIGHTS
 I'VE GOT TODAY

USNAVI
 AND TODAY'S ALL WE GOT SO WE CANNOT STOP
 THIS IS OUR BLOCK

The block animates in time-lapse ribbons of movement. It's a
 colorful panorama around Usnavi's door frame.

COMMUNITY
 IN THE HEIGHTS
 I HANG MY FLAG UP ON DISPLAY
 IT REMINDS ME THAT I CAME FROM MILES AWAY
 IN THE HEIGHTS
 IT GETS MORE EXPENSIVE EVERY DAY

AND TONIGHT IS SO FAR AWAY

USNAVI
 BUT AS FOR MAÑANA MI PANA
 YA GOTTA JUST KEEP WATCHIN
 YOU'LL SEE THE LATE NIGHTS
 YOU'LL TASTE BEANS AND RICE
 THE SYRUPS AND SHAVED ICE
 I AIN'T GONNA SAY IT TWICE
 SO TURN UP THE STREET LIGHTS
 WE'RE TAKIN A FLIGHT
 TO A COUPLE DAYS IN THE LIFE OF WHAT IT'S LIKE

USNAVI/COMMUNITY
 EN WASHINGTON HEIGHTS!

As the **song ends** we hear

OLDER USNAVI (V.O.)
 See? Streets made of music.

EXT. BEACH. DOMINICAN REPUBLIC. DAY.

The kids are seated in the sand now. They've made themselves comfortable around Older Usnavi. The SHY GIRL beams.

KID 1
 Cool.

KID 2
 Yo it's hot. Can I get a malta?

Señor Usnavi reaches into his igloo and tosses around juices.

OLDER USNAVI
 The block was vanishing and so was
 the music. But it all sped up when
 Nina returned from college...

EXT. BODEGA. DAY.

A livery cab pulls into the hydrant spot and NINA ROSARIO, 19, steps onto the curb. She's weighted down by large duffel bags. Nina's nerdy-bohemian, with a fierce inner strength and an earthy warmth. But she seems weary beyond her years.

USNAVI (O.S.)
 She made it back!

Usnavi sweeps Nina into an adoring embrace. Sonny emerges and daps Nina.

SONNY

Nina! We ready? You game the system from the inside. I bring the guerilla tactics. Blao, barrio revolution!

NINA

(wistfully)

They don't teach revolution at Stanford.

SONNY

What do they teach?

NINA

Western Civ. Global economies. How to act poor when you're rich.

Usnavi and Nina have the warm rapport of an adoptive brother and sister. Arm-in-arm, they scan the block.

NINA (CONT'D)

Look at this ghost town.

USNAVI

(teasing)

God willing I'll close next!

Nina shoves him: "Not funny."

USNAVI (CONT'D)

I'm not trying to have "Bodega Boy" written on my tombstone.

Nina observes the block's economic struggles, storefront by storefront.

First, she notices a boarded-up travel agency. An eyesore.

Next, she watches as Daniela tapes a FINAL DAY sign in the salon window.

Vanessa swings out the salon door, calling out.

VANESSA

What what?? Come by, free trim!

Nina waves hi as Vanessa disappears back into the salon.

Finally, Nina trains her glance on Rosario Car Service. Beside its timeworn facade, a new dry cleaner/tailor boasts GRAND OPENING! Nina's face burns with rage.

NINA
I begged my dad, do not sell.

USNAVI
Bright side, kid, he kept half the storefront. But the new cleaners? Nine bucks a shirt.

NINA
Ouch.

Usnavi's phone buzzes. He shows her the text.

USNAVI
Benny says hi...

She can't help but smile at the message: "ASK NINA: LUNCH DATE?" She notices BENNY IN THE DISPATCH WINDOW, seated at the mic, grinning at her. She offers a timid flirty wave, but also seems confused.

NINA
Why's he on dispatch? Did my dad lay off the managers, too?!

USNAVI
Hey. We missed you. Breathe, okay?

And Nina does, grateful for the reminder.

INT. KITCHEN. DAY.

A magnificent stove top feast. Seven pots are stacked on four burners. Nina peeks under mismatched lids as steam curls: it smells amazing. Arroz con pollo. Ropa vieja bubbling. A delicate flan on a double boiler.

Abuela Claudia emerges from a closet with a small bundle. She pulls a LACE NAPKIN from the bundle. Vintage and yellowing at the edges, but well-preserved.

ABUELA CLAUDIA
Hand-embroidered by your mother.
May she rest in peace. We'll use them tonight.

NINA
Would you be mad if I canceled the party?

ABUELA CLAUDIA
Porque? You want all that food to yourself?

Nina thumbs the napkin tentatively.

NINA

What do you do when you leave everything you know for some promise land? And then you get there and it's like, "Oh, this promise land? This is for other people's promises."

ABUELA CLAUDIA

Stanford was difficult?

(then:)

When my mamá came from Cuba, she felt very small, like one tiny grain of sand from the beaches we left behind.

NINA

What did she do?

ABUELA CLAUDIA

She bought a winter coat. And a pair of velvet gloves. Her hands were cracked from the all the cleaning fluids, but the gloves hid that. We had to assert our dignity in small ways. That's why these napkins are beautiful. That's why my mother's gloves were beautiful. Little details that tell the world, we're not invisible.

Abuela puts a plate atop the double-boiler like a lid. Holding the dishes together, she carefully flips it then lifts the bowl. Voila: the perfect caramel dome of a flan.

EXT. ARTERIAL STREET. WASHINGTON HEIGHTS. DAY.

Broadway in the 170s is lined with budget storefronts. Street vendors peddle used shoes, picture books, mangos, piraguas.

Nina eyes it all like an outsider, the bustle of life seen at a remove.

A piragüero recognizes Nina and she waves back timidly. A bolero playing on his cart radio becomes...

"BREATHE"

RADIO VOICE

SIGUE ANDANDO EL CAMINO POR TODA SU VIDA

RESPIRA

NINA

BREATHE...

RADIO VOICE

Y SI PIERDAS MIS HUELLAS QUE DIOS TE BENDIGA
RESPIRA

Nina stops at a discount store. Her DISTORTED REFLECTION
MORPHS INTO--

A MEMORY-- Nina as a younger teen, studying. Books piled
high, margins marked. Her father brings coffee.

Nina sees her past, framed in the window.

NINA

THIS IS MY STREET, I SMILE AT THE FACES
I'VE KNOWN ALL MY LIFE, THEY REGARD ME WITH PRIDE
AND EVERYONE'S SWEET, THEY "YOU'RE GOING PLACES!"
SO HOW CAN I SAY THAT WHILE I WAS AWAY I HAD SO
MUCH TO HIDE?
HEY GUYS IT'S ME! THE BIGGEST DISAPPOINTMENT YOU
KNOW!
THE KID COULDN'T HACK IT, SHE'S BACK AND SHE'S
WALKIN REAL SLOW. WELCOME HOME
JUST BREATHE...

A customer leaves, walking right through Nina's reflected
memory.

RADIO VOICE

SIGUE ANDANDO EL CAMINO POR TODA SU VIDA
RESPIRA

NINA

BREATHE...

RADIO VOICE

Y SI PIERDAS MIS HUELLAS QUE DIOS TE BENDIGA
RESPIRA

Nina notices PICTURE FRAMES in the window, one with a stock
photo of a graduate. In her imagination, it ALMOST LOOKS LIKE
HERSELF.

NINA

AS THE RADIO PLAYS OLD FORGOTTEN BOLEROS
I THINK OF THE DAYS WHEN THIS CITY WAS MINE
I REMEMBER THE PRAISE "AY TE ADORO, TE QUIERO"
THE NEIGHBORHOOD WAVED AND SAID NINA BE BRAVE
AND YOU'RE GONNA BE FINE

AND MAYBE IT'S ME BUT IT ALL SEEMS LIKE LIFETIMES
 AGO
 SO WHAT DO I SAY TO THESE FACES THAT I USED TO
 KNOW?
 "HEY I'M HOME..."

We travel INTO THE PHOTO, and INTO NINA'S PAST--

INT. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM. ONE YEAR EARLIER.

Standing room only. Every seat filled with adoring families
 in their Sunday best.

ABUELA CLAUDIA
 MIRA, NINA!

KEVIN/ABUELA CLAUDIA
 NO ME PREOCUPO POR ELLA!

NINA (V.O.)
 THEY'RE NOT WORRIED ABOUT ME

KEVIN/ABUELA CLAUDIA/USNAVI
 MIRA, ALLÍ ESTÁ NUESTRA ESTRELLA!

NINA (V.O.)
 THEY ARE ALL COUNTING ON ME TO SUCCEED

Younger Nina takes the stage in cap and gown and receives her
 diploma.

KEVIN/ABUELA CLAUDIA/USNAVI/VANESSA
 ELLA SÍ DA LA TALLA!

NINA (V.O.)
 I AM THE ONE WHO MADE IT OUT!
 THE ONE WHO ALWAYS MADE THE GRADE
 BUT MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE JUST STAYED HOME...

BACK TO:

EXT. ARTERIAL STREET. WASHINGTON HEIGHTS. PRESENT.

In reality, the frame's STOCK PHOTO is sun-faded and doesn't
 much resemble her. Nina walks away but can't escape the
 memories. Every REFLECTIVE SURFACE frames scenes from her
 youth.

--In a furniture store mirror: NINA LEARNING TO RIDE A BIKE.
 Her dad letting go, as she balances and soars.

--In a barber shop vanity: NINA TUTORING SONNY at the bodega.

--In a church's dark stained-glass: NINA AT A FOOD DRIVE,
handing out canned food.

NINA

WHEN I WAS A CHILD I STAYED WIDE AWAKE
CLIMBED TO THE HIGHEST PLACE
ON EVERY FIRE ESCAPE, RESTLESS TO CLIMB
I GOT EVERY SCHOLARSHIP, SAVED EVERY DOLLAR
THE FIRST TO GO TO COLLEGE, HOW DO I TELL THEM WHY
I'M COMING BACK HOME WITH MY EYES ON THE HORIZON
JUST ME AND THE GWB ASKING "GEE, NINA, WHAT'LL YOU
BE?"

Nina arrives at Caridad Restaurant. Through her ACTUAL
REFLECTION she sees Kevin seated, eyeing a menu.

NINA (CONT'D)

STRAIGHTEN THE SPINE, SMILE FOR THE NEIGHBORS
EVERYTHING'S FINE, EVERYTHING'S COOL
THE STANDARD REPLY: LOTS OF TESTS, LOTS OF PAPERS
SMILE WAVE GOODBYE AND PRAY TO THE SKY, OH GOD...
AND WHAT WILL MY FATHER SAY?

COMMUNITY (V.O.)

NINA!

NINA

CAN I GO IN THERE AND SAY--

COMMUNITY (V.O.)

NINA!

NINA

I KNOW THAT I'M LETTING YOU DOWN...

She taps on the window. Kevin looks up and sees her with joy.
He comes outside, offers an embrace.

KEVIN

NINA...

NINA

JUST BREATHE...

As they go in, the door closes behind them and **the song ends.**

OLDER USNAVI (V.O.)

Our scheming came in all sizes, and
was mutually beneficial. I had a
quaint little sueñito. Make it back
to the Dominican, retain my roots.

EXT. DOMINICAN REPUBLIC. BEACH. DAY.

OLDER USNAVI

Nina had a sueño. A super sized California-king dream. If she became Mayor of Nuevayork, we had the power of self determination.

A JOGGER runs up, waving a dollar bill. Older Usnavi fishes a water from his cooler and tosses it to the jogger.

JOGGER

Telling stories again? Don't believe a word he says.

SHY GIRL

Did you know Washington Heights disappeared?

JOGGER

Sounds serious.

The jogger takes a seat, resting after the run.

EXT. BODEGA. DAY.

HONK HONK! A beer delivery truck cruises to a stop in front of the bodega. Usnavi walks to the back of the truck and greets--

USNAVI

Hector!

Early 60s and graying, HECTOR is as wide-eyed and exuberant as the day he first stepped foot onto American soil.

HECTOR

Usnavi! Help an old geezer down.

Usnavi helps him down to the street and they embrace.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

Crazy scary. You look more like your old man every day. Listen, you got somewhere we can talk?

CUT TO:

SEVERAL PHOTOS

Of a run down BEACH HUT on a beautiful beach in the Dominican. OVER:

USNAVI (O.S.)
It's incredible. Where is it?

EXT. BODEGA. BACK ALLEY. SAME.

Hector leans against the graffiti-riddled wall (compliments of Graffiti Pete). Usnavi stands across from him, looking through the photos.

HECTOR
Puerto Plata. About five miles from where your dad and I grew up. I know you've been itching to find a reason to move there. Here it is.

USNAVI
It could use a paint job.

HECTOR
It could use more than that. The pipes are all rusted. The electric is shot. But check this out...

Hector shows him another photo.

INSERT - AN OLDER PHOTO OF THE BAR

With Usnavi's FATHER standing behind the counter next to a MUCH YOUNGER HECTOR.

USNAVI
You worked there with my father?

HECTOR
Nope. I worked for your father. He owned it... Built it with his own two hands.

This stops Usnavi cold. He looks more closely at the photo.

USNAVI
Wait a minute. The mural --

Usnavi peeks through the back door and into the bodega. He sees the FADED MURAL on the wall behind the counter. IT'S A DUPLICATE OF THE PHOTO HE'S HOLDING. The BEACH BAR and the BARTENDER. Usnavi's stunned.

USNAVI (CONT'D)
All these years... I've been standing right in front of him and never knew it.

HECTOR

When your mom got pregnant, your dad packed up and sold. He thought America would offer the family a better future. But New York never agreed with them. Your mom was homesick, and your old man had a bad case of seller's remorse. He offered to buy the place back, but the owner was never interested... until now.

USNAVI

(to himself)

"El Sueñito."

HECTOR

What?

USNAVI

When I was a kid my father used to talk about "el sueñito." His "little dream." This must be it.

HECTOR

The price is right -- it's gonna move fast. I need you to let me know now: are you interested?

Usnavi glances at the photo again. Then, he looks up at Hector with resolve and a smile.

INT. EL NUEVO CARIDAD RESTAURANT. DAY.

Nina pushes mangu around her untouched plate.

NINA

The first day of classes, I knew. Freshman seminar, kids were dropping political philosophy I had no clue about. They ran circles around me on day one. These kids were theory monsters.

KEVIN

I didn't know how isolated you felt, mija.

NINA

It was like everyone I love-- you, Abuela Claudia, Usnavi... You pushed me into the world like, "Go make our people proud!"

(MORE)

NINA (CONT'D)

Go assimilate! Go integrate!" But it's complicated. Not knowing the basics, being laughed at-- out loud-- when I asked "Who's Nietzsche?", being the only roommate with two jobs, the only one who got ID'd in the library... The Dean invited me to this diversity dinner, for big donors, and I was wearing a black cocktail dress so maybe it looked like a uniform, but I was walking to my seat and one of the patrons shoved her plate into my arms, like, "I ordered the vegetarian option!" I was holding her plate like, "I don't work here." That was an insult on you, on Usnavi, and Sonny, and Vanessa--

KEVIN

Mija, take these things like water in a basket. Let 'em slip away.

She's barely able to muster the words--

NINA

I dropped out.

It nearly knocks the wind out of Kevin. He can barely speak.

KEVIN

Because of one ignorant lady?

Nina proceeds cautiously.

NINA

You're under real financial strain. In part because of me.

Kevin tenses. Finances are a sensitive subject.

NINA (CONT'D)

If you fall behind on tuition they put you on bursar's hold.

KEVIN

What about the extension they gave us?

NINA

There's no extension, dad.

Kevin fumes at the lie.

NINA (CONT'D)
My second job covered expenses for
a while...

KEVIN
If you need money you ask me!

NINA
When you're downsizing by half?

KEVIN
Who's the parent here?! You?

Nina motions for him to lower his voice.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
Keep insulting me, Nina. Lie to me
again.

NINA
(gently)
I noticed Benny on dispatch. Did
you lay off your managers, too?

KEVIN
(standing, motioning)
Check!

The waitress approaches. As Kevin hastily pays and goes, Nina
realizes: EVERYONE'S STARING.

INT. TENEMENT BASEMENT. DAY.

Abuela Claudia struggles down the steps, clutching the bundle
of lace napkins and laundry detergent in one hand, clinging
to the railing with the other.

But a sign taped to the laundry room door reads "CLOSED,
CONSERVE ELECTRICITY, UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE."

A FEW MINUTES LATER.

A hairpin twists in the laundry room lock.

USNAVI (O.S.)
Breaking and entering, nice.

Claudia sees Usnavi standing in the stairwell.

USNAVI (CONT'D)
Come home, I'll do laundry
tomorrow.

ABUELA CLAUDIA
But these are for tonight.

USNAVI
Paper napkins will be fine. Come
upstairs, family meeting.

She notices a sparkle in his eye.

INT. USNAVI'S ROOM. MOMENTS LATER.

Abuela and Usnavi face his wall of beloved family photos. He
tapes the new pictures, of the BEACHSIDE BAR, alongside them.

ABUELA CLAUDIA
I'll go.

USNAVI
(stunned)
For real?

ABUELA CLAUDIA
Thanks for the invitation.

USNAVI
Abuela! I was sure you'd be like
"no way!"

She turns her attention to the window and the street below.

ABUELA CLAUDIA
The block has changed a lot, no?
Many old friends have passed. Many
businesses are gone. Plus, my
knees, carajo, this city is made of
stairs. A fourth floor walk-up. The
subway steps... But mostly, you
need a change! Always working, same
as my mamá. You know what she used
to say?

INSERT - a SEPIA-TONE MEMORY. Claudia's MAMÁ, beautiful but
bone tired, leaning in, intoning

MAMÁ
Paciencia y fe.

BACK TO - Abuela Claudia and Usnavi, present-day.

ABUELA CLAUDIA
"Patience and faith." Morning and
night, year after year, to what
end?

(MORE)

ABUELA CLAUDIA (CONT'D)
 To wake up and do it all over
 again, until the day she died. Mamá
 never lived, Usnavi. There is such
 a thing as too much patience and
 faith. You're gonna live. In the
 Dominican, you can enjoy the fruits
 of your labor.

Usnavi's moved by her generous spirit.

ABUELA CLAUDIA (CONT'D)
 Mira, decades of my life are on
 that block. I did ok, no? I took
 care of my community, no?

USNAVI
 Yes.

ABUELA CLAUDIA
 So have I earned an adventure?

USNAVI
 You have earned an adventure.

ABUELA CLAUDIA
 You have, too.

They stand in the window frame, unified and resolute.

INT. BODEGA. LATER.

Usnavi lays on the floor, struggling to fix the broken
 fridge. Sonny covers the register, overwhelmed.

CUSTOMER 1
 Lemme get six C-batteries, two
 flashlights, and some candles?

SONNY
 All out.

CUSTOMER 1
 Of candles?

SONNY
 Of everything, papa.

Another customer scans the soda shelves. Sees an empty space
 where water should be. Sonny notices.

SONNY (CONT'D)

No more water gallons. Anything related to a power outage: we do not have it.

Usnavi emerges from the fridge, covered in grease and sweat.

USNAVI

Ya'll know the drill. Blackout paranoia, gotta act fast. Sorry.

The customers leave, annoyed. Usnavi takes advantage of the lull.

USNAVI (CONT'D)

So?

SONNY

What?

USNAVI

Did you put any thought into it?

SONNY

Over the last ten minutes?

Usnavi points to the faded mural.

USNAVI

We'll leave at the end of August, in time for you to start school in the Dominican. That gives you all summer to close up shop here.

SONNY

Nah.

Usnavi's not exactly surprised.

USNAVI

That's it? "Nah?"

SONNY

Yup. Nah.

The phone rings, interrupting them. Usnavi answers it as Benny comes in, holding the door open for a young EUROPEAN TOURIST COUPLE behind him.

BENNY

(to Sonny)

I'm running on fumes, son!

SONNY
(re: Benny's pit stains)
And emitting them too.

FEMALE TOURIST
Is this You-snavi Bodega?
(off Sonny's nod)
Two coffees. "Light and sweet."

BENNY
Heading up to the Cloisters?

FEMALE TOURIST
No, we want famous You-snavi
coffee!

She shows her phone to him.

BENNY
"Forget five dollar lattes. A buck
gets you the best café in NYC,
brewed by legendarily long-winded
bodeguero, Usnavi."

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH. DOMINICAN REPUBLIC. DAY.

The kids crack up.

KID 2
Legendarily long-winded!

JOGGER
The Guinness Book's holding a spot
for you!

KID 1
"You talk too much, and you never
shut up."

OLDER USNAVI
Yeah yeah.

BACK TO:

INT. BODEGA. SAME.

BENNY
(still reading)
"Order it 'light and sweet' for an
authentic Dominican sugar coma."

SONNY
 (handing them coffees)
 Two sugar comas.

They taste it and go, pleased. Benny watches the door close behind them, then -

BENNY
 You wrote that review, didn'tchu?

SONNY
 #hustle

Usnavi hangs up the phone with a stupefied expression.

USNAVI
 That was the lottery office. We
 sold a Take Five winner yesterday.

Sonny's eyes widen. Benny pulls out his wallet, feigning disapproval.

BENNY
 The lottery's a tax on working
 people and the unemployed poor!

USNAVI
 You want to hear the winning
 numbers or not?

BENNY
 Shoot.

Benny has found YESTERDAY'S TICKET in his wallet.

USNAVI
 Eighteen.

Nope. Benny crumples the ticket and tosses it at Usnavi's forehead. Direct hit.

BENNY
 Like I said, the lottery is a tax
 on working people--

SONNY
 What's my cut?

USNAVI
 Half of mine. Which is zero.

BENNY
 What's the payout? Don't tell me no
 five hundred dollars.

The DING of the register becomes--

"96,000"

USNAVI
NINETY SIX THOUSAND.

SONNY/BENNY
DAMN...

USNAVI
NINETY SIX THOUSAND.

SONNY
DOLLARS? HOLLER.

USNAVI
NINETY SIX THOUSAND.

Graffiti Pete comes in, helps himself to a candy bar.

GRAFFITI PETE
THAT'S A LOTTA SODA.

USNAVI
(confiscating the candy)
NINETY SIX THOUSAND.

Benny eyes the cigar case. He stacks cigars, one at a time, into Sonny's mouth, fat cat style.

BENNY
YO IF I WON THE LOTTO TOMORROW WELL I KNOW
I WOULDN'T BOTHER GOING ON NO SPENDIN SPREE
I'D PICK A BUSINESS SCHOOL AND PAY THE ENTRANCE FEE
THEN MAYBE IF YOU'RE LUCKY YOU'LL STAY FRIENDS WITH
ME
I'LL BE A BUSINESSMAN RICHER THAN NINA'S DADDY
DONALD TRUMP AND I ON THE LINKS AND HE'S MY CADDY
MY MONEY'S MAKING MONEY, I'M GOIN FROM PO TO MO
DOUGH
KEEP THE BLING I WANT THE BRASS RING LIKE FRODO

Usnavi plucks the cigars from Sonny's mouth, one by one.

USNAVI
OH NO HERE GOES MR. BRAGADOCIO
NEXT THING YOU KNOW YOU'RE LYING LIKE PINOCCHIO

BENNY
WELL IF YOU'RE SCARED OF THE BULL STAY OUT THE
RODEO

PETE
YO I GOT MORE HO'S THAN A PHONE BOOK IN TOKYO

USNAVI
OOH, YOU BETTER STOP RAPPIN YOU'RE NOT READY
IT'S GONNA GET HOT AND HEAVY AND YOU'RE ALREADY
SWEATY

PETE
Y-Y-YO-YO-YO-

USNAVI
YO-YO! I'M SORRY IS THAT AN ANSWER?
SHUT UP, GO HOME, AND PULL YA DAMN PANTS UP!
(to Benny)
AS FOR YOU MR. FRODO OF THE SHIRE
NINETY SIX G'S AIN'T ENOUGH TO RETIRE

BENNY
I'LL HAVE ENOUGH TO KNOCK YOUR ASS OFF ITS AXIS!

USNAVI
YOU'LL HAVE A KNAPSACK FULL OF JACK AFTER TAXES.

EXT. THE BLOCK. MOMENTS LATER.

Abuela Claudia reads the Bible at her window. Sonny runs by, calling up.

SONNY
NINETY SIX THOUSAND!

ABUELA CLAUDIA
AY, ALABANZA!

INT./EXT. THE SALON. SAME.

Sonny throws open the door and shouts inside.

SONNY
NINETY SIX THOUSAND!

DANIELA
NO ME DIGA!

Daniela unzips her pocketbook, feeling lucky.

SONNY
NINETY SIX THOUSAND!

VANESSA
I never win shit.

SONNY
NINETY SIX THOUSAND!

INT. BODEGA. SAME.

Benny grabs a car air freshener from a shelf. He sidles up to Usnavi, his hand on an IMAGINARY STEERING WHEEL.

INSERT - BENNY'S FANTASY. He and Usnavi in a RIDICULOUS pimped-out ROYCE STRETCH CONVERTIBLE.

BENNY
FOR REAL THO, IMAGINE HOW IT WOULD FEEL GOIN
REAL SLOW DOWN THE HIGHWAY OF LIFE WITH NO REGRETS
AND NO BREAKIN YOUR NECK FOR RESPECT OR A PAYCHECK
FOR REAL THO, I'LL TAKE A BREAK FROM THE WHEEL AND
WE'LL THROW THE BIGGEST BLOCK PARTY, EVERYBODY HERE
A WEEKEND WHEN WE CAN BREATHE, TAKE IT EASY...

BACK TO - REALITY. Usnavi plucks the air freshener from Benny's hand and places it back on the shelf.

INT. DANIELA'S SALON. SAME.

DANIELA
(on the phone)
YO MA IT'S ME, CHECK YOUR TICKET.

Carla's face emerges from the pages of a Spanish tabloid. She eyes a DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER AD.

CARLA
CHECK ONE TWO THREE
WHAT WOULD YOU DO WITH NINETY SIX G'S?

DANIELA
WHO ME?

CARLA
I MEAN IF IT'S JUST BETWEEN YOU AND ME?

DANIELA
ESA PREGUNTA ES TRICKY!

CARLA
I KNOW!

Daniela turns the page. A LIPOSUCTION AD beckons: "QUIERES CURVAS?" Bingo. Daniela IMAGINES HERSELF as the WOMAN IN THE AD, with an ABNORMALLY HUGE ASS. She winks at her magazine self. Her magazine self WINKS BACK.

DANIELA
 WITH NINETY SIX G'S
 I'D START MY LIFE WITH A BRAND NEW LEASE
 ATLANTIC CITY WITH A MALIBU BREEZE

CARLA
 AND A BRAND NEW WEAVE

DANIELA
 OR MAYBE JUST BLEACH

VANESSA
 Ya'll are freaks.

EXT. THE BLOCK. CONTINUOUS.

Refusing to get caught up in the craziness, Vanessa drifts outside. Usnavi tends to a small crowd of ticket holders.

USNAVI
 IT'S SILLY WHEN WE GET INTO THESE CRAZY
 HYPOTHETICALS
 YOU REALLY WANT SOME BREAD THEN GO AHEAD CREATE A
 SET OF GOALS
 AND CROSS THEM OFF THE LIST AS YOU PERSUE 'EM
 AND WITH THOSE NINETY SIX I KNOW PRECISELY WHAT I'M
 DOIN'

VANESSA
 WHAT YOU DOIN'?

USNAVI
 WHAT'M I DOIN'? WHAT'M I DOIN'?
 IT TAKES HALF OF THAT CASH JUST TO
 SAVE MY ASS FROM FINANCIAL RUIN
 SONNY CAN KEEP THE COFFEE BREWIN'
 AND I'LL SPEND A FEW ON YOU
 CUZ THE ONLY ROOM WITH A VIEW IS A ROOM WITH YOU IN
 IT
 AND I COULD GIVE ABUELA CLAUDIA THE REST OF IT
 JUST FLY ME DOWN TO PUERTO PLATA
 I'LL MAKE THE BEST OF IT
 (to Sonny)
 YOU REALLY LOVE THIS BUSINESS?

SONNY
 NO.

USNAVI
 TOUGH, MERRY CHRISTMAS.
 YOU'RE NOW THE YOUNGEST TYCOON IN WASHINGTON
 HIZNITS!

All eyes are on Sonny. He spots a BLACK FIST decal on a newspaper machine.

SONNY

YO, WITH NINETY SIX THOUSAND I'D FINALLY FIX
HOUSIN'
GIVE THE BARRIO COMPUTERS WITH WIRELESS WEB
BROWSIN'
YOUR KIDS ARE LIVIN' WITHOUT A GOOD EDUMACATION
CHANGE THE STATION, TEACH 'EM ABOUT GENTRIFICATION
THE RENT IS ESCALATIN'

Graffiti Pete rolls a newspaper into a makeshift megaphone.

GRAFFITI PETE

WHAT?

SONNY

THE RICH ARE PENETRATIN'

GRAFFITI PETE

WHAT?

SONNY

WE PAY OUR CORPORATIONS WHEN WE SHOULD BE
DEMONSTRATIN'
WHAT ABOUT IMMIGRATION? ARIZONA BE HATIN'
RACISM IN THIS NATION'S GONE FROM LATENT TO
BLATANT!

GRAFFITI PETE/OTHERS

WHOO!

SONNY

I'LL CASH MY TICKET AND PICKET, INVEST IN PROTEST
NEVER LOSE MY FOCUS TIL THE CITY TAKES NOTICE
AND YOU KNOW THIS, MAN! I'LL NEVER SLEEP
BECAUSE THE GHETTO HAS A MILLION
PROMISES FOR ME TO KEEP!

Vanessa yanks Sonny down for a cheek smooch.

VANESSA

You are so cute!

SONNY

Straight off the dome, baby.

USNAVI

(to Vanessa)

96K. Go.

All eyes are on Vanessa. She spots a LUXURY LOFTS billboard advertising a lap pool, jacuzzi tubs, city views.

She IMAGINES HERSELF in the billboard, soaking in the spa,
relaxing in the pool, taking in the views.

VANESSA
IF I WIN THE LOTTERY YOU'LL NEVER SEE ME AGAIN.

USNAVI
DAMN WE ONLY JOKIN' STAY BROKE THEN.

VANESSA
I'LL BE DOWNTOWN
GET A NICE STUDIO, GET OUT OF THE BARRIO
IF I WIN THE LOTTERY YOU'LL WONDER WHERE I'VE BEEN
I'LL BE DOWNTOWN
SEE YOU AROUND!

Usnavi tapes a number to the bodega window: 18.

DANIELA/CARLA
CHECK ONE TWO THREE!
WITH 96 G'S
BETWEEN YOU AND ME

TICKET HOLDERS
WHY-OH!
AND WITH THE DOLLAH DOLLAH
WE GET TO HOLLAH HOLLAH

Usnavi tapes the next number: 7. People DANCE WITH
ANTICIPATION.

QUICK FLASHES - hands pulling lottery tickets from pockets,
fingers pointing to lottery numbers with excitement.

VANESSA
I'LL BE DOWNTOWN

USNAVI/SONNY
WE COULD PAY OFF THE DEBTS WE OWE

DANIELA/CARLA
WE COULD TELL EVERYONE WE KNOW

USNAVI
I COULD GET ON A PLANE AND GO

SONNY/BENNY
WE BE SWIMMIN' IN DOUGH YO

TICKET HOLDERS
NO TIP-TOEIN'
WE'LL GET THE DOUGH 'N
ONCE WE GET GOIN'
WE'RE NEVER GONNA

STOP TIP-TOEIN'
 WE'LL GET THE DOUGH 'N
 ONCE WE GET GOIN'
 WE'RE NEVER GONNA

More numbers have been posted: 34 and 41. There are two remaining POSSIBLE WINNERS.

TICKET HOLDERS (CONT'D)
 96,000! 96,000! 96,000! 96,000!
 WE'LL GET THE DOUGH 'N
 ONCE WE GET GOIN'
 WE'RE NEVER GONNA STOP!

Usnavi posts the final number: 38. **The song ends.**

In the ensuing stillness, a voice cuts in -

KID 3 (V.O.)
 So? Who won?

- as the final candidates crumple their tickets. The crowd disperses and we CUT TO

EXT. BEACH. DOMINICAN REPUBLIC. DAY.

The kids are wide-eyed with anticipation.

OLDER USNAVI
 The ticket remains unclaimed to
 this day.

KID 1
 Whaaaaa?

KID 2
 Aw hells no.

The kids are scandalized by the curse word.

KID 3
 Someone got that money. Fess up,
 old-head!

OLDER USNAVI
 The point is not who won...

INT. ROSARIO CAR SERVICE. BACK OFFICE. DAY.

Kevin's on the phone.

OLDER USNAVI (V.O.)
 ...but that we all had a sueñoito.
 And when it comes to dreams,
 there's no shortcuts, no easy
 fixes.

Kevin listens, jots numbers onto a scrap paper: "STANFORD BURSAR" is written at the top.

KEVIN
 (into the phone)
 ...are you sure there's no payment
 plan? No other possible extensions?

PHONE VOICE (O.S.)
 Outstanding tuition plus half next
 year's balance is past due...

INT. LOCAL BANK. LATER.

Kevin negotiates with the Latino BANK MANAGER.

OLDER USNAVI (V.O.)
 The truth is, you could play by the
 rules, work hard all your life, and
 still never achieve your sueñoito.

KEVIN
 How about some loyalty? To one of
 your first customers?

BANK MANAGER
 The fundamentals of your business
 don't justify a loan this large.

INT. IRISH PUB. LATER.

Kevin nurses a beer. Signals "another" to the TATTOOED BARTENDER. Fishes an old photo from his wallet: his WEDDING DAY. Whispers a prayer to his deceased wife--

KEVIN
 Help me.

INT. ORGANIC TAILOR/DRY CLEANER. DAY.

In contrast to the block's outdated interiors, this place gleams with steampunk style-- raw wood shelves, steel racks. High-end dummies sport tailored blazers. PIKE PHILLIPS, the white 40-something owner, inspects a lace napkin.

ABUELA CLAUDIA
For a special event tonight.

PIKE
Wow. The stitch work...

ABUELA CLAUDIA
You're looking at a piece of Puerto Rican cultural history. Made by an old friend. When agriculture declined on the island, home embroidery became big. That way, families earned a little extra.

PIKE
(enchanted)
How much would you take for them?

ABUELA CLAUDIA
(beaming)
Not for sale.

PIKE
I love this neighborhood. Culture and history everywhere you turn. I'll clean them today, no rush fee. They'll run twelve apiece. Are you paying now or at pickup?

Suddenly embarrassed, she returns the napkin to the bundle.

ABUELA CLAUDIA
Bueno, let me think about it.

PIKE
Of course.

ABUELA CLAUDIA
(kindly)
Welcome to the block.

And she turns to go.

INT. ROSA LINDA SALON. DAY.

Through swirls of heat, we see a blow dryer BLASTING, a hot wax tub DRIPPING, a curling iron SINGEING. The salon is crammed with beauty supplies and people. Everyone in line for their final appointment. The radio blasts.

SALSA RADIO VOICE 1
...hottest night of the year,
ya'll! Annual Uptown Jam!

SALSA RADIO VOICE 2

Mm-mm, people get too hype,
shooting off fireworks. I'ma lock
my door and shut the lights!

SALSA RADIO VOICE 1

Come on, there's twelve clubs
participating! Forty eight dj's!

Daniela and Carla maneuver through the standing-room-only crowd, tending to multiple clients-- pinning curls, folding foils.

CRANKY VIEJA

Don't take it personal, I'm just
saying-- you sold out.

DANIELA

Grisel, I been doing your
highlights for how long?

CRANKY VIEJA

Twenty years.

DANIELA

Twenty three. My investment
appreciated. You bet your ass I'ma
cash out!

CRANKY VIEJA

You say that now. Wait till they
flip it for ten times what you
made.

A RECEPTIONIST, dressed for work, waits in line.

RECEPTIONIST

Daniela, I come on my lunch break.
The Bronx is too far.

DANIELA

One: swipe the fare card. Two: ride
three stops. Three: arrive at my
new location. Ten minutes, max!

Carla pats a WAX STRIP onto A BORICUA COP's upper lip.

BORICUA COP

Ten minutes? What are you riding, a
time machine?

RIP! The strip comes off.

BORICUA COP (CONT'D)

Diablo!

DANIELA

Our people survived slave ships. We survived native genocide. We survived conquistadores and dictators! You telling me we won't survive the D train to Grand Concourse?!

FREEZE ON - Daniela's exasperated expression.

OLDER USNAVI (V.O.)

Burning hair spray. Toxic polish remover. Hundred decibel gossip. The salon made Madison Square Garden seem like a Buddhist temple.

WHIP ZOOM TO - Daniela's left eyebrow, raised.

OLDER USNAVI (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Daniela's eyebrows had multiple scandal settings. From "no me diga!"

WHIP OVER TO - her right eyebrow, raised HIGHER.

OLDER USNAVI (V.O.) (CONT'D)

To "Whatchu talkin bout Willis?"

UNFREEZE as Nina comes in and people greet her.

DANIELA

Mira quien es! Tell them, Nina. Will you come to the Bronx when we move?

NINA

You're the only one who touches these eyebrows.

DANIELA

So I see. Tweezers!

Carla passes the tweezers as ladies crack up.

DANIELA (CONT'D)

Vanessa took a long lunch. She'll do your hair when she gets back.

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK. DAY.

Vanessa walks along, navigating on her phone. She's not familiar with the West Village. Looks up to see where she is and instead sees--

PEACE. A verdant lawn with readers, students, artists stretched out on the grass.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET. WEST VILLAGE.

The cobblestone and cast iron rails harken back to another era. A HIPSTER UNICYCLIST rides by. Vanessa rings a doorbell, utterly charmed, and is buzzed in.

INT. STUDIO APARTMENT. OPEN HOUSE. WEST VILLAGE.

It's the size of a postage stamp, but Vanessa runs her hand along the exposed brick wall, seeing only possibility.

AGENT (O.S.)

Without a good credit check, I don't see how it's possible.

Vanessa turns her attention to the REAL ESTATE AGENT who's scanning her credit application.

VANESSA

I have bank checks, as good as cash. First month, last month, and security.

AGENT

Maybe your parents could co-sign? Assuming they can prove an income forty times the rent.

Vanessa blanches.

AGENT (CONT'D)

If you can get it to me by five pm I'll stop showing it.

A HIPSTER COUPLE appears at the door. One holding a unicycle. The agent swoops in their direction.

AGENT (CONT'D)

Open house? Please sign in.

Vanessa ponders the SLIVER OF SKY visible through the lone window. To her, it's enough to hang a dream on...

"IT WON'T BE LONG NOW"

VANESSA

THE ELEVATED TRAIN BY MY WINDOW DOESN'T PHASE ME
ANYMORE
THE RATTLING SCREAMS DON'T DISRUPT MY DREAMS
IT'S A LULLABY IN ITS WAY
THE ELEVATED TRAIN DRIVES EVERYONE INSANE
BUT I DON'T MIND, OH NO
WHEN I BRING BACK BOYS THEY CAN'T TOLERATE THE
NOISE
AND THAT'S OK CUZ I NEVER LET THEM STAY
AND ONE DAY I'M HOPPIN THAT ELEVATED TRAIN
AND I'M RIDING AWAY!
IT WON'T BE LONG NOW...

EXT. THE BLOCK. WASHINGTON HEIGHTS. DAY.

Vanessa soldiers down the sidewalk. Graffiti Pete and his buddies fall in step behind her, ogling.

VANESSA

THE BOYS AROUND THE WAY HOLLER AT ME WHEN I'M
WALKING DOWN THE STREET
THEIR MACHISMO PRIDE DOESN'T BREAK MY STRIDE
IT'S A COMPLIMENT SO THEY SAY
THE BOYS AROUND THE WAY HOLLER AT ME EVERY DAY
BUT I DON'T MIND OH NO
IF I'M IN THE MOOD IT WILL NOT BE WITH SOME DUDE
WHO IS WHISTLING CUZ HE HAS NOTHING TO SAY
OR WHO'S HONKING AT ME FROM HIS CHEVROLET
AND ONE DAY I'M HOPPIN IN A LIMOUSINE
AND I'M DRIVING AWAY
IT WON'T BE LONG NOW!

She pauses at a window BOX FAN, enjoying the breeze.

USNAVI'S POV - Vanessa's tresses wave in a ROMANTIC HALO around her face.

USNAVI

GOOD MORNING, VANESSA
IF IT ISN'T THE LOVELIEST GIRL IN THE PLACE

VANESSA

YOU'VE GOT SOME SCHMUTZ ON YOUR FACE

INT. BODEGA. MOMENTS LATER.

As Usnavi pours Vanessa a coffee--

USNAVI

Maybe it wasn't the right place for you.

VANESSA

But there was exposed brick. Like, on purpose.

She drops her credit application into the trash. Usnavi makes a note of it. Sonny pulls Vanessa aside for a heart-to-heart.

SONNY

Uh, my cousin over there has been meaning to ask what a lady such as yourself might be doin tonight?

VANESSA

Does your cousin dance?

SONNY

Like a drunk Chita Rivera.

VANESSA

It's the **Annual Uptown Jam**. After Nina's dinner, we can hit a few clubs and check out the fireworks.

She plucks her coffee cup from Usnavi-- who's FROZEN, STUPEFIED-- and goes.

USNAVI

OH SNAP WHO'S THAT DON'T TOUCH ME I'M TOO HOT YES!
QUE PASO? HERE I GO! SO DOPE Y TU LO SABES!
NO PARE-

USNAVI/SONNY

SIGUE SIGUE!

USNAVI

DID YOU SEE ME

USNAVI/SONNY

FREAKY FREAK IT!

USNAVI

WHAT A WAY TO BEGIN THE WEEKEND
SONNY ANYTHING YOU WANT IS FREE, MAN
AND MY DEARLY BELOVED DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
I HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN-

USNAVI/SONNY

YOU!

USNAVI

GONNA SEE THIS HONEY, MAKE A LITTLE MONEY
AND ONE DAY I'LL HOP JET-

USNAVI/SONNY

BLUE!

USNAVI

BUT UNTIL THAT FATEFUL DAY I'M GRATEFUL
I GOT A DESTINATION
I'M RUNNING TO MAKE IT HOME AND HOME'S WHAT
VANESSA'S RUNNING AWAY FROM...
I'M RUNNING TO MAKE IT HOME AND HOME'S WHAT
VANESSA'S RUNNING AWAY FROM...

INT. SALON. MINUTES LATER.

Vanessa swirls a comb in disinfectant, then begins to cut
Nina's hair. She sees Nina's reflection with envy.

VANESSA

THE NEIGHBORHOOD SALON IS THE PLACE I AM WORKING
FOR THE MOMENT
AS I CUT THEIR HAIR LADIES TALK AND SHARE
EVERY DAY, WHO'S DOING WHO AND WHY
THE NEIGHBORHOOD SALON DOESN'T PAY ME WHAT I
WANNA BE MAKING BUT I DON'T MIND
AS I SWEEP THE CURB I CAN HEAR THOSE TURBO ENGINES
BLAZING A TRAIL THROUGH THE SKY
I LOOK UP AND THINK ABOUT THE YEARS GONE BY

A nearby client browses a fashion magazine. An ad catches
Vanessa's eye: DIRECT FLIGHTS TO PARIS. She IMAGINES HERSELF
in the ad, comfy in first class, a BLUE SKY beckoning out the
cabin window.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

BUT ONE DAY I'M WALKING TO JFK AND I'M GONNA FLY
IT WON'T BE LONG NOW
ANY DAY...

IN REALITY - the client turns the magazine page, ending the
reverie and **the song**. Vanessa returns to Nina's haircut.

KID 2 (V.O.)

One question.

EXT. BEACH. DOMINICAN REPUBLIC. DAY.

Kid 2 raises his hand, elementary school style. Usnavi calls
on him.

KID 2
Um, who's Chita Rivera?

Older Usnavi's dismay is evident.

KID 3
Ain't she the banana hat lady?

OLDER USNAVI
That's Carmen Miranda.

KID 1
Chita's unibrow artist lady.

OLDER USNAVI
What are they teaching you during
Hispanic Heritage month? Listen up
and repeat after me -

INSERT - PICS OF FAMOUS LATINAS, appearing in time with -

OLDER USNAVI (V.O.)
Chita, Rita, Frida, Celia, Sonia,
Dolores, Isabel, Sandra, Julia,
Rigoberta, Mirabal.

BACK TO - the beach.

OLDER USNAVI
Ready, go!

KIDS
Chita Rita Frida Celia Sonia...

SHY GIRL
Dolores Isabel Sandra Julia
Rigoberta Mirabal.

OLDER USNAVI
Ding ding ding!

He grabs her a pop ice from his cooler. The kids are jealous.

INT. ROSARIO'S CAR SERVICE. DISPATCH STATION. DAY.

Benny rubs his eyes. A few empty coffees and red bulls are on
the desk.

BENNY
(answering a call, in shaky
Spanish)
Rosario's, where are you? Donde
estas? Tu destinacion?
(MORE)

BENNY (CONT'D)

Diez minutos.

(another call)

Rosario's, where are you? What
airline? What are you wearing?

(into the mic)

Two pickups: Broadway two-twelve
two-thirteen and JFK terminal
three, purple dress.

Another DRIVER enters, taps Benny's shoulder.

DRIVER

Nap time.

BENNY

Driving since sunrise, then this.

The driver slips into the dispatch chair as Benny walks down
the hall, taps on the office door.

BENNY (CONT'D)

Heading out, boss.

Cracking open the door, Benny discovers Kevin and PIKE
PHILLIPS, who owns the dry cleaners, going over paperwork.
Benny does a double-take. It's a strange sight, interrupted
when Kevin walks over and CLOSES THE DOOR.

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH. DAY.

Frozen in marble, the Virgin Mary peers down with sadness.
Abuela Claudia lights an altar candle, whispering prayers as
PADRE CARLOS, a middle-aged pastor, approaches.

PADRE CARLOS

Doña Claudia, buenas tardes. Anyone
I should hold in prayer today?

ABUELA CLAUDIA

(embarrassed by her answer)
Me. I'm scared of flying.

PADRE CARLOS

Ah! Where are you traveling to?

ABUELA CLAUDIA

Pues, for today, just uptown,
running errands.

PADRE CARLOS

You're the fountain of youth. I
don't know how you do it.

ABUELA CLAUDIA
Paciencia y fe.

PADRE CARLOS
Patience and faith.

He turns and goes.

ABUELA CLAUDIA
Padre...

She wants advice but thinks twice of it. Covering, she grabs a paper fan from the altar.

ABUELA CLAUDIA (CONT'D)
Nice to see you.

INT. SUBWAY ENTRANCE. DAY.

Abuela Claudia pulls a MetroCard from a mini Bible and passes through the turnstile. Two escalators descend, vertiginously steep, out of order. No choice but to walk.

Someone cuts around, skipping down. Claudia grasps the rail, taking it slow. Only a few steps down, she's fatigued.

"PACIENCIA Y FE"

ABUELA CLAUDIA
AY MAMÁ... THE SUMMER'S HOTTEST DAY
PACIENCIA Y FE, PACIENCIA Y FE
AY CARAJÓ, IT'S HOT!
BUT THAT'S OKAY
MAMÁ WOULD SAY, "PACIENCIA Y FE"

INT. SUBWAY CAR. DAY.

Claudia sits. In the window, work lights zoom past.

ABUELA CLAUDIA
IT WAS HOTTER AT HOME IN LA VIBORA
THE WASHINGTON HEIGHTS OF HAVANA
A CROWDED CITY OF FACES THE SAME AS MINE
BACK AS A CHILD IN LA VIBORA
I CHASED THE BIRDS IN THE PLAZA
PRAYING, MAMÁ YOU WOULD FIND WORK
COMBING THE STARS IN THE SKY FOR SOME SORT OF
SIGN...
AY MAMÁ, SO MANY STARS IN CUBA...
EN NUEVA YORK WE CAN'T SEE BEYOND OUR STREETLIGHTS
TO REACH THE ROOF YOU GOTTA BRIBE THE SUPA'

AIN'T NO CASSIOPEIA EN WASHINGTON HEIGHTS
 BUT AIN'T NO FOOD IN LA VIBORA

The subway window animates with SEPIA SNAPSHOTS of historic Cuba: derelict colonial structures, horse-pulled carts, a square rife with pigeons. We ZOOM IN to the images.

ABUELA CLAUDIA (CONT'D)
 I REMEMBER NIGHTS, ANGER IN THE STREETS
 HUNGER AT THE WINDOWS
 WOMEN FOLDING CLOTHES, PLAYING WITH MY FRIENDS
 IN THE SUMMER RAIN
 MAMÁ NEEDS A JOB, MAMÁ SAYS WE'RE POOR
 ONE DAY YOU SAY, "VAMOS A NUEVA YORK"
 AND NUEVA YORK WAS FAR BUT NUEVA YORK HAD WORK
 AND SO WE CAME

PAN BACK from the window to reveal

INT. AN OLDER SUBWAY. FROM AN EARLIER ERA. 1943.

Claudia is now a passenger through her own memory. Opposite her, a majestic OX OF A WOMAN holds tightly to a girl's hand. It is YOUNGER CLAUDIA and her MAMÁ.

ABUELA CLAUDIA
 AND NOW I'M WIDE AWAKE
 A MILLION YEARS TOO LATE
 I TALK TO YOU, IMAGINING WHAT YOU'D DO
 REMEMBERING WHAT WE WENT THROUGH
 NUEVA YORK, AY MAMÁ!
 IT WASN'T LIKE TODAY, YOU'D SAY
 "PACIENCIA Y FE"

The subway stops and the car floods with old New Yorkers in winter coats. They JOSTLE into the crowded car.

OLD NEW YORKERS
 PACIENCIA Y FE.

ABUELA CLAUDIA
 PACIENCIA Y FE.

OLD NEW YORKERS
 PACIENCIA Y-

ABUELA CLAUDIA
 FRESH OFF THE BOAT IN AMERICA
 FREEZING IN EARLY DECEMBER
 A CROWDED CITY IN 1943!
 LEARNING THE ROPES IN AMERICA
 EN ESPAÑOL I REMEMBER
 DANCING WITH MAYOR LA GUARDIA

ALL OF SOCIETY WELCOMING MAMI AND ME
HA!

Young Claudia and Mamá weave to the door, hostile faces
blocking their path.

OLD NEW YORKER 1
YOU BETTER CLEAN THIS MESS!

ABUELA CLAUDIA (O.S.)
PACIENCIA Y FE...

OLD NEW YORKER 2
YOU BETTER LEARN INGLES!

ABUELA CLAUDIA (O.S.)
PACIENCIA Y FE!

OLD NEW YORKER 3
YOU BETTER NOT BE LATE!

OLD NEW YORKER 4
YOU BETTER PULL YOUR WEIGHT!

OLD NEW YORKERS
ARE YOU BETTER OFF THAN YOU WERE WITH THE
BIRDS OF LA VIBORA?

BACK TO:

INT. 207TH ST SUBWAY PLATFORM. NOW.

The doors slide open and Claudia exits onto the platform. She
rests on a bench, tossing bread crumbs to a pigeon.

ABUELA CLAUDIA
SHARING DOUBLE BEDS, TRYING TO CATCH A BREAK,
STRUGGLING WITH ENGLISH
LISTENING TO FRIENDS, FINALLY GOT A JOB
WORKING AS A MAID
SO WE CLEANED SOME HOMES, POLISHING WITH PRIDE
SCRUBBING THE WHOLE OF THE UPPER EAST SIDE
THE DAYS INTO WEEKS, THE WEEKS INTO YEARS
AND HERE I STAYED

OLD NEW YORKERS (V.O.)
PACIENCIA Y FE
PACIENCIA Y FE
PACIENCIA Y FE

ABUELA CLAUDIA
AND AS I FEED THESE BIRDS MY HANDS BEGIN TO SHAKE
AND AS I SAY THESE WORDS MY HEART'S ABOUT TO BREAK

AND AY MAMÁ, WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOUR DREAMS COME
TRUE?
I'VE SPENT MY LIFE INHERITING DREAMS FROM YOU
WHAT **WOULD I DO WITH A** WINNING TICKET?
WHAT **WOULD** I DO BUT PRAY?

EXT. 207TH ST SUBWAY ENTRANCE. INWOOD.

A Latino neighborhood north of Washington Heights. Claudia leans on a street light, catching her breath in the blazing sun.

ABUELA CLAUDIA
I BUY MY LOAF OF BREAD
CONTINUE WITH MY DAY
AND SEE YOU IN MY HEAD
IMAGINING WHAT YOU'D SAY
THE BIRDS, THEY FLY AWAY
DO THEY FLY TO LA VIBORA?

At the end of the block she IMAGINES them again: Young Claudia and her Mamá, hand in hand. Mamá turns back and nods directly to Claudia-- a blessing, a sign.

ABUELA CLAUDIA (CONT'D)
ALRIGHT MAMÁ, OKAY.
PACIENCIA Y FE!

OLD NEW YORKERS (V.O.)
CALOR, CALOR, CALOR

The song ends as the memory FADES and street sounds resume.

SALESWOMAN (O.S.)
Señora? Estás bien?

Claudia gets her bearings. She's besides a home goods store. An OVERSIZED SUITCASE on the sidewalk catches her interest. The price tag says: "Venta!"

ABUELA CLAUDIA
Si, estoy bien, gracias. ¿Se puede
entregar? ("Do you deliver?")

SALESWOMAN
Claro.

INT. DOMINGUEZ DRY CLEANERS. INWOOD. MINUTES LATER.

The place is crammed with sewing supplies, reams of fabric. DOMINGUEZ, an elderly tailor, hems pants at an old Singer.

SPANISH NEWS ANNOUNCER

(in Spanish)

Everyone's panicking. There's a run for blackout supplies and there's not even a blackout yet. Caller number three?

CALLER NUMBER THREE

(in Spanish)

This happens every year and the politicians do nothing.

A bell dings. Dominguez takes off his glasses and recognizes -

DOMINGUEZ

Doña Claudia! So you brought the treasures for me to inspect?

MOMENTS LATER. Abuela Claudia stands at the counter, clearly fatigued. Dominguez, who speaks with the cadence of an old world gentleman, inspects the lace napkins.

DOMINGUEZ (CONT'D)

Son maravillosas! Unfortunately, I cannot clean them today, my dear.

ABUELA CLAUDIA

No me diga.

DOMINGUEZ

But to make it up to my old compañera, I will clean and deliver them gratis. Is next Tuesday acceptable?

ABUELA CLAUDIA

Sí. Mind if I sit?

EXT. CHITTENDEN AVENUE. WASHINGTON HEIGHTS. DAY.

A one-way cul-de-sac. Apartments on one side, the Hudson opposite. Nina perches on a stone wall, researching on her phone and taking notes.

BENNY (O.S.)

Summer break and guess who's doing homework?

Nina looks up and sees Benny seated on the hood of his parked town car. He nibbles a sandwich, his white dress shirt drenched in sweat. Nina closes her notebook, catches Benny's eye. Where to begin?

NINA
Did dad tell you?

BENNY
Tell me what? He's in a mood today.

NINA
How many drivers did he lay off
this year?

BENNY
Seven.

NINA
Managers?

BENNY
Both of them.

NINA
So who's running dispatch?

BENNY
He is. We help out. Mi español
está... improving.

NINA
Mejorando.

He hops onto the wall beside her. The chemistry is palpable,
as is the tension.

BENNY
How was it?

NINA
Lonely.

He traces his fingertips along hers. A welcome bit of
tenderness, though she's exasperated by it.

BENNY
I missed you, too.

NINA
Then why'd you break up with me?

BENNY
It was mutual.

NINA
Not really.

BENNY

So you could have the full Stanford
experience!

(lightly)

The reality of my life is blue
collar.

She pulls her hand away. They've had this conversation before
and she dislikes it every time.

BENNY (CONT'D)

"Lonely." Got any details?

NINA

Want to go dancing tonight?

BENNY

Why you always gotta ask me out?!

(swallowing his pride)

Yes.

They relax a bit, looking out at the George Washington
Bridge. A barge pushes through the water below.

"WHEN YOU'RE HOME"

NINA

I USED TO THINK WE LIVED AT THE TOP OF THE WORLD
WHEN THE WORLD WAS JUST A SUBWAY MAP
AND THE ONE SLASH NINE CLIMBED A DOTTED LINE
TO MY PLACE

BENNY

THERE'S NO NINE TRAIN NOW

NINA

RIGHT.
I USED TO THINK THE BRONX WAS A PLACE IN THE SKY
WHEN THE WORLD WAS JUST A SUBWAY MAP
AND MY THOUGHTS TOOK SHAPE

NINA/BENNY

ON THAT FIRE ESCAPE

NINA

CAN YOU REMIND ME OF WHAT IT WAS LIKE
AT THE TOP OF THE WORLD?

BENNY

COME WITH ME...

EXT. BENNETT PARK. LATE AFTERNOON.

As children play in the summer heat, Benny points Nina's attention to A MEMORY: TEEN BENNY jacking open a hydrant.

They approach the MEMORY, so close they can almost touch it.

BENNY

WE BEGIN JULY WITH A STOP AT MY
CORNER FIRE HYDRANT

NINA

YOU WOULD OPEN IT EVERY SUMMER!

BENNY

I WOULD BUST IT WITH A WRENCH
TIL MY FACE GOT DRENCHED
TIL I HEARD THE SIRENS
THEN I RAN LIKE HELL

NINA

YOU RAN LIKE HELL!

BENNY

YEAH I RAN LIKE HELL!

NINA

I REMEMBER WELL!

BENNY

TO YOUR FATHER'S DISPATCH WINDOW
"HEY LET ME IN, YO! THEY'RE COMING TO GET ME!"

NINA

YOU WERE ALWAYS IN CONSTANT TROUBLE.

BENNY

THEN YOUR DAD WOULD ACT ALL SNIDE
BUT HE LET ME HIDE
YOU'D BE THERE INSIDE

NINA

LIFE WAS EASIER THEN

BENNY

NINA, EVERYTHING IS EASIER WHEN YOU'RE HOME
THE STREET'S A LITTLE KINDER WHEN YOU'RE HOME
CAN'T YOU SEE THAT THE DAY SEEMS CLEARER
NOW THAT YOU ARE HERE OR IS IT ME?
MAYBE IT'S JUST ME...

EXT. BIKE PATH. MOMENTS LATER.

Sunlight dapples through the canopied trees as Nina and Benny follow switchbacks down to the river. On a bench, they spot another MEMORY: their YOUNGER SELVES, seated flirtatiously-- she studying SAT PREP, he studying STREET MAPS.

BENNY

WE GOTTA GO I WANNA SHOW YOU ALL I KNOW
THE SUN IS SETTING AND THE LIGHT IS GETTING LOW

NINA

ARE WE GOING TO CASTLE GARDEN?

BENNY

MAYBE, MAYBE NOT, BUT WAY TO TAKE A SHOT
WHEN THE DAY IS HOT I GOT A PERFECT SHADY SPOT
A LITTLE WAY'S AWAY THAT OUGHTA COOL US DOWN

NINA

COOL US DOWN

BENNY

WELCOME BACK TO TOWN!

Farther down, a group of HIGH SCHOOLERS pop and lock. This is also a MEMORY. YOUNGER NINA, YOUNGER BENNY, and YOUNGER USNAVI surround GRAFFITI PETE as he battles some B-GIRLS.

NINA

NOW BACK IN HIGH SCHOOL WHEN IT DARKENED
YOU'D HANG OUT IN BENNETT PARK AND

BENNY

USNAVI WOULD BRING HIS RADIO!

NINA

AS I WALKED HOME FROM SENIOR STUDIES
I'D SEE YOU RAPPIN' WITH YOUR BUDDIES

BENNY

WITH THE VOLUME HIGH

NINA

I WALKED ON BY

BENNY

YOU WALKED ON BY

DANCING TEENS

NO PARE, SIGUE SIGUE!
NO PARE, SIGUE SIGUE!
NO PARE, SIGUE SIGUE!
NO PARE, SIGUE SIGUE!

EXT. BEACH. DOMINICAN REPUBLIC. DAY.

The kids are pretty good dancers themselves.

KIDS/OLDER USNAVI
 NO PARE, SIGUE SIGUE!
 NO PARE, SIGUE SIGUE!
 NO PARE, SIGUE SIGUE!
 NO PARE, SIGUE SIGUE!

BACK TO:

EXT. HUDSON RIVER'S EDGE. LATE AFTERNOON.

Water splashes on the river boulders. Nina and Benny hop from rock to rock, past fishermen, picnickers, and past A MEMORY-- as teens, they toss crumbs to ducks swimming in the river.

BENNY
 WHEN YOU'RE HOME
 OH, THE SUMMER NIGHTS ARE COOLER WHEN YOU'RE HOME

NINA
 NOW THAT YOU'RE HERE WITH ME

BENNY
 AND THAT SONG YOU'RE HEARING IS THE
 NEIGHBORHOOD JUST CHEERING YOU ALONG

NINA
 (sensitive)
 DON'T SAY THAT

BENNY
 WHAT'S WRONG?

NINA
 DON'T SAY THAT
 WHEN I WAS YOUNGER I'D IMAGINE WHAT WOULD HAPPEN
 IF MY PARENTS HAD STAYED IN PUERTO RICO
 WHO WOULD I BE IF I HAD NEVER SEEN MANHATTAN
 IF I LIVED IN PUERTO RICO WITH MY PEOPLE?
 MY PEOPLE...
 I FEEL LIKE ALL MY LIFE I'VE TRIED TO FIND THE
 ANSWER
 WORKING HARDER, LEARNING SPANISH, LEARNING ALL I
 CAN
 I THOUGHT I MIGHT FIND THE ANSWER OUT AT STANFORD
 BUT I'D STARE OUT AT THE SEA
 THINKING, "WHERE'M I SUPPOSED TO BE?"
 SO PLEASE DON'T SAY YOU'RE PROUD OF ME
 WHEN I'VE LOST MY WAY

BENNY
 THEN CAN I SAY: I COULDN'T GET MY MIND OFF YOU ALL
 DAY
 NOW LISTEN TO ME.
 THAT MAY BE HOW YOU PERCEIVE IT
 BUT NINA PLEASE BELIEVE THAT WHEN YOU
 FIND YOUR WAY AGAIN
 YOU ARE GONNA CHANGE THE WORLD AND THEN
 WE'RE ALL GONNA BRAG AND SAY WE KNEW YOU WHEN
 THIS WAS YOUR HOME

CAMERA SPINS AROUND, revealing the HISTORIC RED LIGHTHOUSE
 behind them.

AT THE TOP - YOUNGER BENNY and YOUNGER NINA stand at the
 railed gallery, fingers woven together. His face burrows into
 her neck, offering a delicate kiss.

AT THE BOTTOM - Nina and Benny, present-day, relive the
 scene. The interwoven fingers. The neck kiss. Less starry-
 eyed, more earthbound.

NINA
 I'M HOME...

BENNY
 WELCOME HOME!

NINA
 WHEN YOU'RE HERE WITH ME...

BENNY
 WELCOME HOME!

NINA
 I USED TO THINK WE LIVED AT THE TOP OF THE WORLD...

BENNY
 WELCOME HOME-

NINA
 I'M HOME-

BENNY
 YOU'RE FINALLY HOME-

NINA/BENNY
 I'M/YOU'RE HOME!

The CAMERA LIFTS OFF from them, toward the steel spires of
 the GW Bridge. Benny and Nina are swallowed by Washington
 Heights, which is just slipping into DUSK, as **the song ends.**

INT. BODEGA. EVENING.

Sonny and Pete, alone at the bodega, flip through a graffiti magazine.

NEWS RADIO VOICE (V.O.)

After last year's Annual Uptown Jam turned dangerous, the mayor has announced harsh penalties for residents caught lighting fireworks tonight.

MAYOR'S VOICE (V.O.)

(from a press conference)
Arrests will be made. Perpetrators, charged. Our great city can celebrate joyously and safely.

SONNY

You better be careful.

ANGLE ON a bunch of ROMAN CANDLES in Pete's backpack.

A courier enters with a large shrink-wrapped suitcase.

COURIER

Usnavi de la Vega?

SONNY

I can sign.

Sonny signs, puzzled by the suitcase. He finds a delivery slip, with a note:

"FOR OUR ADVENTURE. LOVE, ABUELA CLAUDIA."

Sonny's face changes. He can't help but feel left out.

INT. HOUSING PROJECTS. LOBBY. EVENING.

Usnavi's slick evening getup is out of place in this dilapidated hallway. The elevator is taped off and a sign reads: TAKE STAIRS IN CASE OF BLACKOUT.

INT. HOUSING PROJECTS. LIVING ROOM. EVENING.

Old sheets hang like curtains. There's enough empty beer cans to burden a recycling center. The ballgame is on, volume blasting. GAPO, late 30's, wears an undershirt and jeans.

GAPO

Have a seat, cuz!

He tosses a beer to Usnavi, who places it down, uninterested.

USNAVI

Sonny's been out late four nights
this week.

GAPO

Summer break. At least the kid
ain't dealing.

Usnavi cringes.

USNAVI

The wine coolers I found in his
bag. Did you talk to him?

GAPO

Sit down, relax. Don't be hovering.

Usnavi sits. He hates it here but opts for diplomacy.

USNAVI

I already have him working twelve
hour days.

GAPO

And the other twelve hours he don't
listen to shit I say.

USNAVI

What if it wasn't your problem?
What if I took him to D.R. and put
him in school there?

GAPO

You still dreaming bout that?

USNAVI

The wheels are in motion.

GAPO

Well, Sonny ain't goin witchu.

Gapo opens a beer, gulps it like water. Usnavi mutes the TV,
a bid for attention.

USNAVI

I'll send him back here on
holidays. Christmas, summers.

GAPO

It's not in the cards.

Usnavi's disappointed, but still determined.

INT. ROSARIO HOME. EVENING. LATER.

Abuela and Nina prep for the party, slicing a gargantuan avocado.

NINA

What genetic modification did that involve?

ABUELA CLAUDIA

This is how they grow en el campo!

Usnavi brings in a stack of platters. He places them alongside the elegant dinner spread.

USNAVI

Sonny and Benny are bringing up the rest.

(to Nina)

Did you get my text?

NINA

(eyeing him curiously)

Yes. But tell me why...

INT. NINA'S ROOM. MOMENTS LATER.

Nina and Usnavi look at her notebook. A hand-drawn chart says "HIGH SCHOOLS, D.R." at the top

NINA

This column is public schools, this one is private schools. All within a ten mile radius of Puerto Plata.

USNAVI

How'd they seem?

NINA

I found test scores for three of them, which weren't stellar. The others had no info. But this one...

(she has starred a square)

...has a bilingual program and a good college placement record.

Usnavi taps the star, his dream palpably close.

INT. ABUELA'S KITCHEN. SAME.

Two stories down from the Rosario's, Sonny and Benny wrap food platters with foil.

SONNY
A'ight. Let's roll.

They head out the door and up to -

INT. ROSARIO LIVING ROOM. SAME.

More folks have gathered. Daniela and Carla put out napkins. Benny pours wine glasses. In the kitchen, Sonny and Usnavi remove lids from the food trays.

SONNY
(covering his agitation)
So this D.R. plan, is it for real?
Or you just blowin hot air?

Usnavi pulls the SCHOOLS CHART from his pocket, shows it.

USNAVI
Colegio Adventista. They have a
dual language program. Let me
enroll you for the fall.

Sonny recoils.

SONNY
Do me a favor. Don't be planning my
life around your dreams, ok?

USNAVI
Three month trial. If you hate it,
I'll bring you home.

Sonny goes.

USNAVI (CONT'D)
Hey... Sonny!

LIVING ROOM. Sonny pulls on headphones and slouches in a chair, sullen. But before Usnavi reaches him, Vanessa appears in the front hall, her green dress all but painted on.

VANESSA
Hi, Usnavi.

USNAVI
That's a nice piece of silk. What
keeps it up?

VANESSA
Innocence.

LATER. Daniela, Carla, Benny, Nina, Usnavi, and Abuela Claudia dance to an old bolero, crooning along.

ALL
 NO TE VAYAS
 SI ME DEJAS
 SI TE ALEJAS DE MI
 SEGUIRAS EN MIS RECUERDOS PARA SIEMPRE

The record hits a skip, but Claudia's prepared.

ABUELA CLAUDIA
 PARA SIEMPRE-
 PARA SIEMPRE-
 PARA SIEMPRE-
 The scratch in the record is my
 favorite part!

Kevin comes in, pausing to appreciate the scene, as everyone greets him warmly.

KEVIN
 Did I miss the record scratch?

LATER. The feast is underway. The dining table is at max capacity, chairs squeezed together, plates and platters everywhere. Some guests perch on the sofa, eating. With a formal tap of his wine glass, Kevin stands.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
 When I was a boy...

USNAVI
Now it's a party.

KEVIN
 I took an old rag and coffee can,
 walked to the plaza in Arecibo and
 shined shoes for a nickel. I made
 thirty five cents, invested it in
 shoe polish. Now I had a business!
 (turning to Nina)
 At your age, your mother and I, may
 she rest in peace, came here. We
 emptied our bank accounts and
 bought Rosario's.

ABUELA CLAUDIA
 Two burgundy Cadillacs. That was
 your whole fleet!

KEVIN
 Nina, you are everything. I see her
 in you every day.
 (MORE)

KEVIN (CONT'D)
 Entonces, today I made my next
 investment. I cashed in, mija. So
 you can go back to Stanford.

No one's sure what to make of the announcement.

USNAVI
 Was going back in question?

CARLA
 (socially tone deaf)
 You didn't hear? She flunked out.

USNAVI
What?!

Sonny pulls off his headphones, listening.

KEVIN
 A B-average is not flunking. This
 was a financial issue. I met with
 Mr. Phillips, the guy that owns the
 dry cleaners. When he first
 approached me about buying, he
 wanted the whole space. Now it's
 his.

DANIELA
 Felicidades!

But the rest of the table falls silent.

BENNY
 (to Kevin)
 "No more layoffs." Your words. I
 turned down a management position.

NINA
 (to Kevin)
 Why on earth wouldn't you ask me
 first?

KEVIN
 For permission to be your father?

ABUELA CLAUDIA
 Nina. Say, "thank you, papá."

VANESSA
 Seriously. Some of us can't afford
 two semesters at CUNY.

Nina's rage bubbles just below the surface.

NINA

(re: Abuela Claudia)

I may not have immigrated here as a child.

(re: Kevin)

And I haven't labored for decades. But I have earned some dignity. Not the campus police stopping my buddies like, "Who's got the weed?" Not my roommate's parents searching my drawers because she lost her necklace. Emptying my closet in front of my face, with the RA watching the whole thing. Every manicured pathway made me think of Sonny. How he wouldn't see himself in the faculty, the students. He'd see himself in the guys who trim hedges and vanish before dawn. Is that worth everything you've worked for, dad? Is it worth your blood, sweat, and tears?

VANESSA

Pobre Nina. Sounds really rough.

Benny twists a KEY off his ring, slides it across the table to Kevin.

BENNY

This is yours. It was nice working for you.

As Benny goes--

DANIELA

Kevin paid his dues in the community. Good for you, Kevin!

But the door SLAMS behind Benny. A BEAT BEGINS.

SONNY

(to Nina)

Your roommate's parents? Special place in hell for 'em.

Sonny pulls his headphones back on. Volume high. Higher. The beat TAKING OVER, BECOMING -

LIVE SALSA MUSIC

EMCEE VOICE (V.O.)
 Annual-annual! Uptown-uptown!
 Jaaaaaam!

CUT TO:

EXT. BOUNCER LINE. NIGHT.

A green stilleto taps with agitation. Usnavi and Vanessa's date is off to a tense start.

VANESSA
 Two classes at Community, two A's.
 My college career in a nutshell.
 And now I'm supposed to cry a river
 cuz shit ain't fair? Do me a favor.

Usnavi's all ears.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
 Drag Sonny to the DR kicking and
 screaming. His dad acting like
 Coors Light is some health drink.
 It happens so quick. One or two
 bills missed, one or two paychecks
 guzzled by your parent, and bam,
 you're stuck as gum in the street.

USNAVI
 I've sometimes gotten the
 feeling...

Usnavi stops, not sure if he should continue.

USNAVI (CONT'D)
 You've got seniority at the salon
 but you're always the last one
 there. Are things getting worse
 with your mom?

Stunned by his perception, Vanessa softens.

VANESSA
 I'm not a sob story. I'm a brown
 belt in kick boxing.

She plucks the ID from him and swivels toward the bouncer.

INT. SALSA CLUB. NIGHT.

Vanessa scans the dance floor, the music washing over her.

USNAVI
Have you been here before?

"THE CLUB"

CLUB PEOPLE
VANESSA!

VANESSA
Just once.

And she's off, weaving through the dancers, as Usnavi tries to keep up.

USNAVI
DAMN THIS IS NICE
I REALLY LIKE WHAT THEY'VE DONE WITH THE LIGHTS
SO THE HOT CLUB IN WASHINGTON HEIGHTS
YOU MIGHT BE RIGHT, THIS MUSIC'S TIGHT
YO DID I MENTION THAT YOU LOOK GREAT TONIGHT
BECAUSE YOU DO YOU REALLY-

VANESSA
USNAVI, RELAX!

USNAVI
RELAX, QUE RELAXED? I'M RELAXED!

SEXY COUPLE
WEPA, VANESSA!

USNAVI
SO YOU'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE
I DON'T GO OUT I GET SO BUSY WITH THE STORE
Y CADA DÍA IT'S A BRAND NEW CHORE
MY ARMS ARE SORE, NO TIME FOR THE DANCE FLOOR
BUT MAYBE YOU AND ME SHOULD HANG OUT SOME MORE
I'M SUCH A DORK BUT I-

VANESSA
LET'S GO GET A DRINK.

USNAVI
SOMETHING SWEET?

VANESSA
YOU KNOW ME, A LITTLE BIT OF CINNAMON...

CLUB PEOPLE
WEPA, VANESSA!

AT THE BAR

Empty shot glasses reflect the swirling lights. Usnavi approaches and Benny signals "two more" to the bartender.

BENNY
HERE'S TO GETTING FIRED!

USNAVI
TO KILLING THE MOOD!

BENNY/USNAVI
SALUD!

They clink and gulp. Shots appear in tempo with the music.

BENNY
WITHOUT SO MUCH AS A THANK YOU!

USNAVI
AFTER ALL THESE YEARS.

BENNY/USNAVI
CHEERS!

BENNY
TO FINALLY GETTING VANESSA
MAN FIX YOUR COLLAR

BENNY/USNAVI
HOLLER!

BENNY
TO DOING SHOTS ON A WEEKEND!

USNAVI
AS LONG AS YOU BUY EM, L'CHAIM!

Vanessa emerges from the crowd and Usnavi hands her a drink. JOSE, a club regular, handsome and brash, taps her shoulder.

JOSE
HEY, YOU!

VANESSA
WHO?

JOSE
YOU!

VANESSA
WHO, ME?

JOSE
YOU WANNA DANCE?

VANESSA
 NAW, MAN.

JOSE
 OKAY, I TOOK MY CHANCE.

USNAVI
 IT'S COOL, IT'S COOL, HEY IF YOU WANT TO...

VANESSA
 ("What the hell?")
 YOU DON'T MIND?

USNAVI
 I'M FINE, I'M FINE.

Vanessa, not amused, follows Jose into the dancing crowd.

BENNY
 YO!

USNAVI
 YO.

BENNY
 WHO'S VANESSA TALKING TO?

USNAVI
 SOME DUDE.

BENNY
 SOME DUDE?
 THAT'S MESSED UP, SHE'S TRYIN' TO MAKE YOU JEALOUS.

USNAVI
 JEALOUS, I AIN'T JEALOUS
 I CAN TAKE ALL THESE FELLAS, WHATEVA'!

ON THE DANCE FLOOR

Usnavi pushes through the crowd and sees Vanessa at the nucleus, CLUB GUYS orbiting her. Usnavi has time to make a move, but he wilts against the competition. Jose swoops Vanessa into a dervish spin, her hair WHIPPING Usnavi's face.

IN A HALLWAY

Benny waits by the men's room, his head protesting against the alcohol. Nina pushes through the crowd.

NINA
 BENNY, CAN WE TAKE A WALK OUTSIDE?

BENNY

AND THERE SHE IS.

NINA
I'M SO SORRY, I DIDN'T KNOW.

BENNY
WHO LET YOU IN?
YO THIS IS THE GIRL WHO COST US OUR JOBS TODAY!

NINA
I'M GONNA MAKE IT RIGHT.

BENNY
A TOAST TO THE END OF ALL I KNOW.

Benny yanks a random CLUB GIRL's hand, pulling her onto
THE DANCE FLOOR

But Benny's wobbly on his feet, tipsy. Nearby Jose outshines
Usnavi with virtuosic salsa moves.

CLUB GUYS
VANESSA, LET ME GET THE NEXT ONE
VANESSA, LET ME INTERJECT SOME
THE WAY YOU SWEAT, THE WAY YOU FLEX ON THE FLOOR
IT MAKES ME WANT YOU MORE! (REPEAT)

THE BAR

Dejected, Usnavi finds a ferocious WOMAN IN RED where Benny
had been.

USNAVI
BARTENDER, LET ME GET AN AMARETTO SOUR
FOR THIS GHETTO FLOWER, HOW ARE YOU SO PRETTY?
YOU COMPLETE ME, YOU HAD ME AT HELLO
YOU KNOW YOU NEED ME, TRULY, MADLY, DEEPLY
LET'S GET FREAKY!
OH I GET IT YOU'RE THE STRONG AND SILENT TYPE
WELL I'M THE CARIBBEAN ISLAND TYPE
AND I CAN DRIVE YOU WILD ALL NIGHT
BUT I DIGRESS, SAY SOMETHING SO I DON'T STRESS

WOMAN IN RED
NO HABLO INGLES.

USNAVI
YES!

He takes her hand and leads her to

THE DANCE FLOOR

Despite dancing with the woman in red, Usnavi can't stop staring at Vanessa and Jose. Meanwhile, Nina searches for Benny but is intercepted by Jose, who's now spinning two women at once!

Annoyed by Benny's obvious jealousy, the club girl pairs off with someone else, leaving Benny and Usnavi side by side.

Usnavi busts a nerdy move, culminating with a hat trick: FAIL. Vanessa scoops the Kangol off the floor and takes Usnavi's hand, charmed by the dorkdom. They dance together, reunited at last, having a blast.

Jose, left alone with Nina, grinds on her a little too hard. Benny tries separating them, but Jose slaps his hands. Fists start to fly. It's hard to tell what's going on when suddenly-

THE POWER GOES OUT.

EXT. MANHATTAN. BIRDSEYE VIEW. NIGHT.

Big patches of the city's northern electrical grid BLINK OFF.

INT. SALSA CLUB. SAME.

Complete darkness. Nervous gasps, scattered voices cutting through. A flurry of cell phones light up.

"BLACKOUT"

CLUB GUY
OYE QUE PASÓ?

USNAVI
BLACKOUT, BLACKOUT!

BARTENDER
VINO EL APAGON, AY DIOS!

CLUB GUYS
OYE QUE PASÓ?

USNAVI
BLACKOUT, BLACKOUT!

JOSE
VINO EL APAGON, AY DIOS!

USNAVI
YO I CAN'T SEE
QUIT SHOVIN' MOTHERFUCKER IT'S AN OVEN

AND WE GOTTA BACK OUT
THIS IS A BLACK OUT
CHILL, FOR REAL, OR WE'RE GONNA GET KILLED!

INT. ROSARIO'S CAR SERVICE. NIGHT.

Kevin flips on a backup generator and grabs the dispatch mic.

KEVIN
CALLING ALL TAXIS, EVERYONE RELAX PLEASE!
CALLING ALL TAXIS, EVERYONE RELAX PLEASE!

INT. BODEGA. NIGHT.

A car's high beams send a streak of light into the bodega.

SONNY
WHAT'S GOING ON?
WHAT'S GOING ON?
SUDDENLY I FIND THE ELECTRICITY IS GONE!
NOTHING IS ON!
NOTHING IS ON!
GOTTA FIND USNAVI TELL HIM WHAT IS GOING ON!

INT. SALSA CLUB. NIGHT.

Bottlenecks form as people push their way blindly to the two exits. Nina is swallowed up by the stampeding crowd. Usnavi stands atop a massive speaker, scanning the darkness.

BENNY
NINA, WHERE'D YOU GO?

NINA
HAS ANYONE SEEN BENNY?

USNAVI
VANESSA, VANESSA, VANESSA!

VANESSA
USNAVI HELP ME!

INT. DISPATCH STATION. NIGHT.

KEVIN
PLEASE FIND NINA! BUSCA MI HIJA!
IF YOU SEE MY DAUGHTER BRING HER HOME!

INT. SUBWAY. NIGHT.

A conductor walks through the motionless car, his flashlight beam sweeping past Daniela and Carla.

DANIELA/CARLA
 WE ARE POWERLESS, WE ARE POWERLESS!
 WE ARE POWERLESS, WE ARE POWERLESS!

EXT. BODEGA. NIGHT.

Some folks stroll along, enjoying the novelty of a blackout. Others run, panicking. A few, amped up, are looking for trouble. Sonny struggles to close the roll gate but it's stuck. Graffiti Pete runs up.

GRAFFITI PETE
 THEY THROWIN' BOTTLES IN THE STREET
 PEOPLE LOOTIN' AND SHOOTIN'
 SONNY THEY WANNA SEE A ROBERRY
 WE GOTTA KEEP MOVIN'

SONNY
 NAW MAN, I CAN'T LEAVE I GOTTA GUARD THE STORE

GRAFFITI PETE
 THEY GONNA BOMBARD THE STORE
 UNTIL YOU AIN'T GOT A STORE NO MORE

SONNY
 I GOT A BASEBALL BAT ON A RACK IN THE BACK

GRAFFITI PETE
 I GOTTA COUPLE 'A ROMAN CANDLES
 WE CAN DISTRACT THE VANDALS

SONNY
 HEY YO I SEE SOME THUGS COMIN'
 MAN WE GONNA GET JACKED UP

GRAFFITI PETE
 GIMME A LIGHT, I'LL BE RIGHT BACK
 BACK UP BACK UP BACK UP!

Graffiti Pete strikes a match on his fly then lights a roman candle, holding it out like a weapon.

EXT. SALSA CLUB. NIGHT.

People flood out of the club's main entrance. The dark sky now a rainbow of color and light.

ESCAPING PEOPLE
 LOOK AT THE FIREWORKS!
 LOOK AT THE FIREWORKS FLY!
 LIGHT UP THE NIGHT SKY!
 LIGHT UP THE NIGHT SKY!

Vanessa takes refuge on the curb. She abandons a broken spike heel and hobbles away.

VANESSA
 OH GOD SO MUCH PANIC, THE CROWD WAS MANIC
 WITH EVERYBODY SCREAMING AND SHOVING AND SHOUTING
 AND SLAPPING AND EVERYONE FRANTIC
 I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO

EXT. ANOTHER STREET. NIGHT.

During the INSTRUMENTAL BREAK Vanessa struggles to stay balanced, a phone pressed to her ear.

OPERATOR VOICE
 All lines are busy...

A few DRUNK PRANKSTERS charge at her, taunting, and run off laughing when she flinches.

A PIERCING WHISTLE cuts through the noise. Vanessa fumes and spins, ready to punch cat-caller, but it's Usnavi.

USNAVI
 Give me the other one.

She pulls off the intact stilleto. With some effort, he BREAKS OFF THE HEEL. She slips into the makeshift "flats" as he yanks her hand, running. But she slips, unsteady.

USNAVI (CONT'D)
 Sonny's alone at the bodega.

VANESSA
 Go. I'm fine.

Usnavi offers his own shoes instead. She has to tie the laces tight, but even so she can hardly run in them.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
 I'll take it slow. Go on.

He kisses her cheek and runs off barefoot. Not the romantic flourish she hoped for.

INT. CLAUDIA'S KITCHEN. NIGHT.

The walls are bathed in soft light. Claudia scuttles around, matches in hand, lighting candles on the table, counter, windowsill.

Usnavi runs in.

COMMUNITY (V.O.)
LOOK AT THE FIREWORKS!

USNAVI
ABUELA ARE YOU ALRIGHT?

COMMUNITY (V.O.)
LIGHT UP THE NIGHT SKY!

ABUELA CLAUDIA
THE STARS ARE OUT TONIGHT.

COMMUNITY (V.O.)
LOOK AT THE FIREWORKS!

USNAVI
YOU'RE NOT ALONE TONIGHT.

COMMUNITY (V.O.)
LIGHT UP THE NIGHT SKY!

USNAVI/ABUELA CLAUDIA
YOU'RE NOT ALONE TONIGHT!

EXT. SALSA CLUB. BACK ALLEY. NIGHT.

Nina escapes with a small crowd through a second story back exit. They rush down the fire escape as Benny rounds the corner.

BENNY
NINA THERE YOU ARE!

NINA
I'VE GOTTA GO!

BENNY
I'LL GET YOU OUTTA HERE TONIGHT.

NINA
I DON'T NEED ANYTHING
TONIGHT I CAN FIND MY WAY HOME

BENNY
THEN FIND YOUR WAY HOME!

NINA
WITHOUT YOU-

BENNY
WITHOUT YOU-

CUT TO:

A LIT FIREWORK. A FIST LAUNCHES IT LIKE A GRENADE.

EXT. BODEGA. NIGHT.

The roman candle "bomb" hits the window with a burst, sending glass raining down onto Sonny. In the BG, some teens run away as a glowing ember brightens and the awning catches fire.

COMMUNITY (V.O.)
LOOK AT THE FIREWORKS!
LOOK AT THE FIREWORKS!
LOOK AT THE FIREWORKS!
LOOK AT THE FIREWORKS!
LIGHT UP THE NIGHT SKY!
LIGHT UP THE NIGHT SKY!
EN WASHINGTON--

Usnavi races out his door as colorful bursts of light flash overhead. He stops in his tracks when he sees--

The bodega awning, ENGULFED IN FLAMES. The blaze starting to spread inside...

He grabs the hose, but it's SCORCHING HOT. Drops it, helpless.

INT. BODEGA. MOMENTS LATER.

Flames lap the shelves, but the fire extinguisher is accessible. Usnavi wraps his hand in a rag and BREAKS THE GLASS, but as he jostles the extinguisher from the case, the HEAT and SMOKE overwhelm him. He retreats.

EXT. BODEGA. MOMENTS LATER.

Sonny's CUTS from the broken window are bleeding now. And Usnavi's just a silhouette, set against the raging fire. Watching his life's work disappear.

COMMUNITY (V.O.)
LOOK AT THE FIREWORKS!
LOOK AT THE FIREWORKS!
LIGHT UP THE NIGHT SKY!

LIGHT UP THE NIGHT SKY!
EN WASHINGTON HEIGHTS!

FADE TO BLACK.

IN BLACK--

KID 2 (V.O.)
Did he require stitches?

EXT. BEACH. DOMINICAN REPUBLIC. DAY.

The children are HORRIFIED.

OLDER USNAVI
He had a millipede-shaped scar up
his arm.

KID 2
Did he get general anesthesia?

OLDER USNAVI
Nope.

KID 2
A blood transfusion? A liver
transplant?

OLDER USNAVI
What tv shows are you watching?

INT./EXT. EMERGENCY ROOM. THE NEXT MORNING.

Usnavi paces in the dim emergency lighting. Crowded as the ER is, there's an eerie quiet to the place. Sonny emerges through the triage doors, sucking a lollipop, his forearm wrapped in a bandage.

SONNY
Nurse even kissed my boo boo.

Relieved, Usnavi envelops Sonny in a barrage of noogies.

USNAVI
Free sodas for life. And free
Chipwiches in heaven.

They head out to the curbside drop-off and slide into a cab. Usnavi pulls the seat belt across Sonny's shoulders.

SONNY

Cuz? We tight. But I can buckle
myself in.

But Usnavi clicks it anyway. He really loves this kid.

USNAVI

(to the driver)
181st and Fort Washington.

The cabbie turns up the radio as he pulls away.

SALSA RADIO VOICE 1 (V.O.)

Does the community even respect
itself? Someone burned a bodega!

SALSA RADIO VOICE 2 (V.O.)

You're talking one incident of
accidental arson.

SALSA RADIO VOICE 1 (V.O.)

Arson can't be accidental. That's
what arson means, look it up!

EXT. BODEGA. MINUTES LATER.

A pair of firefighters climb into their truck. The engine
roars to life and the truck pulls out revealing -

THE DESTROYED BODEGA. The awning a charred steel skeleton.
Glass shards crunch underfoot as Usnavi heads inside.

INT. BODEGA. CONTINUOUS.

Sunlight barely illuminates the damage. Shelf after shelf of
burnt inventory. Products dripping wet from the fire hoses.
Sonny pokes around as Usnavi contemplates the DESTROYED
MURAL. It's COVERED OVER, BLACK. He tries to wipe some soot
away, but instead cracks a big paint chip off the wall.

PETE (O.S.)

Daaaamn. They got you good.

Backlit in the doorway, Graffiti Pete is dismayed at the
damage. Usnavi charges, white hot, grabbing his collar -

USNAVI

Stay the hell away from my store!

With a violent SHOVE Usnavi storms past him and out the door.

EXT. ELEVATED 1 TRACKS. MORNING.

Workers monitor a screeching train, testing the backup power system. Below the tracks, Usnavi knocks at a front door. It opens enough to reveal Vanessa, not enough to let him in.

VANESSA

Thought that might be you.

USNAVI

You got home okay?

VANESSA

Slower I walked, clearer I became.

USNAVI

About what?

VANESSA

Not wanting to be someone's second, third, tenth call in an emergency. First call. That's what I'm holding out for.

She rests Usnavi's shoes on the stoop, goes to close the door, but he stops it.

USNAVI

Vanessa--

VANESSA

Third grade. Principal's office. First time we spoke.

USNAVI

You remember that? I was getting busted for my used pencil cartel.

VANESSA

I was on probation for vandalism. You know what I had etched into my desk?

(he doesn't)

"Vanessa Ramirez. Lone warrior."

And she's gone, the door swinging closed, her footsteps echoing up the stairs.

INT. VANESSA'S STUDIO APARTMENT. MOMENTS LATER.

Vanessa's MOM snores on the sofa. Vanessa SNATCHES the empty liquor bottle from her mother's passed-out grip.

Tosses it in a recycling bin piled with empties. Out the window, the metallic brakes of the 1 train rattle her bones.

CUT TO:

HANDS WRINGING FILTHY WATER FROM A RAG

One drop PLUNKS into a bucket, creating a **piano note**. It becomes

"EL SUEÑITO"

INT. BODEGA. DAY.

Lit by a flashlight's paltry beam, Usnavi's attempts at cleaning seem futile - a mop and rag are no match for the extensive fire damage.

Usnavi WET VACS the flooded basement. He stuffs BURNT PRODUCTS into a trash bag. He sweeps GLASS off the floor. He BOARDS UP the broken window.

USNAVI

I GOT A FLOODED BASEMENT SHELF, A BUSTED WATER MAIN
VANESSA'S WALKIN BY HERSELF, SHE'S SITTIN BY THE
TRAIN WITHOUT ME
I WANNA SHOUT, "LET'S GO OUT, V, I'LL BUY THE
CHAMPAGNE."
ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER DOLLAR DOWN THE DRAIN

MY PARENTS CAME FROM PARADISE TO START A BETTER
LIFE
HAD ME AND BATTLED, GOT SADDLED WITH DEBT INSTEAD
OF LIFE
BREATHE. I KNOW I'LL SEE EM IN THE NEXT LIFE
RIGHT NOW I'M CLEANIN OUT DAMNED SPOTS LIKE I'M
MACBETH'S WIFE

AND EVERY TIME I'M CLOSE TO SOMETHING I LIKE
IT'S LIKE THE LIGHTS GET BRIGHT THEN LIFE SAYS
SIKE!
AND SNATCHES IT BACK AND SPLASHES MY ASS WITH COLD
WATER
SWEAR TO GOD I'M GETTIN SICK OF BEIN GOD'S PIÑATA

MY FATHER HAD A PLACE IN PUERTO PLATA
I'VE GOTTA GET BACK HOME, NO IMPORTA SI ME MATA
I KNOW IT'S WHAT HE WANTED AND I'M HAUNTED BY THE
BREEZE OFF THE BEACH
I CAN ALMOST HEAR HIM SINGIN TO ME BUT I CAN'T
REACH THE SHORE

Usnavi rests against the BLACKENED mural. The image is destroyed, but he IMAGINES it with photorealistic precision. He spots himself IN THE IMAGINED MURAL. On the beach. SOOTY SHOES in the sand.

USNAVI (CONT'D)

A LITTLE SUEÑITO, BLINK AND YOU MISS IT
 RIGHT BY THE SHORE... COOL BREEZES BLOW...
 AND THE PICTURE BEHIND ME IS FADED BUT THE PLACE
 ITSELF HAS WAITED
 A LITTLE DREAM OUT THERE WITH MY NAME ON IT
 I CAN'T WAIT FOR THE DAY I CAN SAY, HEY PAPI I MADE
 IT

INT. USNAVI'S BATHROOM. DAY.

Bathroom floor. Filthy clothes tumble onto the tile.

Shower drain. Dirty water swirls down.

Soap dish. The hand soap is darkened by dirt.

Soot is in Usnavi's hair, under his fingernails. He scrubs, washes, sponges.

USNAVI

MAMI, PAPI I AM SO MUCH MORE THAN A CORNER STORE
 THESE EMPTY POCKETS ARE NOT WHAT YOU CROSSED THOSE
 BORDERS FOR
 I WANNA FEEL THE BREEZE ON MY FACE,
 I WANNA TASTE THAT OCEAN FOAM
 SO I GOTTA MAKE MIRACLES HAPPEN
 I SCRAPPIN I'M PACKIN I'M GOING BACK HOME

I'M SICK N TIRED OF BEIN SICK N TIRED, SO I'M TAKIN
 MY TIME
 PUTTIN THIS DREAM ON LAYAWAY
 AND I'M GONNA LAY AWAKE EVERY NIGHT TIL THE FATEFUL
 NIGHT
 MY FLIGHT'S JUST A DAY AWAY
 HEY WAIT JUST A COTTON PICKIN MINUTE
 YO I GOTTA TAKE IT IN AND TAKE IT ALL IN STRIDE
 EVERY DAY I'LL PUT AWAY ANOTHER DOLLAR TO THE SIDE
 ALRIGHT, TRY TO KEEP IT ALL INSIDE

INT. TENEMENT. BEDROOM.

Usnavi towels off, eyeing the FAMILY PHOTOS. Abuela approaches him, the beachside bar beckoning to them.

USNAVI

WHEN I FLY TO MY FOLKS' HOMETOWN

WHO KNOWS HOW MY SHOWIN UP'S GONNA GO DOWN?
 THE THOUGHT ALONE GIVES ME BUTTERFLIES
 AND ABUELA SAYS I'VE GOT MY MOTHER'S EYES
 WILL THEY RECOGNIZE ME DESPISE ME ADVISE ME
 I GOTTA SEE MI GENTE
 WAIT FOR THE MOMENT WHEN THEY
 HAND ME A COLD PRESIDENTE

EXT. BEACH. DOMINICAN REPUBLIC. DAY.

Usnavi's INSIDE THE PHOTO now. In his New York clothes. An incongruous fantasy. Joined by Abuela Claudia and Sonny, who also wear their street clothes.

USNAVI
 "VENTE," THEN THEY
 TAKE ME TO A BEACH WITH A LOTTA SPACE
 "SAY THIS USED TO BE YOUR FATHER'S PLACE.
 ANYONE EVER TELL YOU, YOU GOT HIS FACE?"
 YES. EVERY DAY IN THE MIRROR I SEE HIS FACE A
 LITTLE BIT MORE
 STEP BACK FROM MY SETBACK, GOTTA GET BACK ON THE
 HORSE, SELL THIS STORE AND HIT THE SHORE

Farther off, OLDER USNAVI sits with the KIDS, watching the STORY UNFOLD BEFORE THEIR EYES. OLDER USNAVI and KIDS POV -

USNAVI (CONT'D)
 A LITTLE SUEÑITO, BLINK AND YOU MISS IT
 RIGHT BY THE SHORE...

OLDER USNAVI/USNAVI/SONNY/ABUELA
 CLAUDIA
 COOL BREEZES BLOW...

USNAVI
 AND THE PICTURE BEHIND ME IS FADED BUT THE PLACE
 ITSELF HAS WAITED
 A LITTLE DREAM OUT THERE WITH MY NAME ON IT
 SETTING THE STAGE FOR THE DAY I CAN SAY HEY, "PAPI,
 I MADE IT..."

As the tide WASHES OVER Usnavi's sneakers, a door buzzer shatters the fantasy and **the song ends.**

INT. TENEMENT. SAME.

BUZZ BUZZ. Usnavi answers the door to find Hector there. Sweaty from climbing the steps.

USNAVI

Thanks for doing business on a holiday.

HECTOR

Not much else to do in a blackout. I saw the bodega. You got insurance on that?

USNAVI

Yeah but I doubt I'll reopen. Just sell as-is and fly.

Usnavi has a check at the ready.

USNAVI (CONT'D)

My deposit.

INT. BENNY'S KITCHEN. MORNING.

In a freezer full of melted and dripping products, Benny forages a minor miracle: a sliver of ice.

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE. MINUTES LATER.

An oversized tee drapes lazily on Nina, her makeshift nightgown. Benny glides the ice along Nina's neck. It feels really good.

NINA

My dad texted.

BENNY

You tell him where you are?

NINA

Yeah. It's gonna be a day. Fights on topa fights.

BENNY

You just reminded me of someone.

Nina's all ears.

BENNY (CONT'D)

Nina with a clipboard standing on the corner. Remember her?

NINA

Circa 2008?

BENNY

Registering voters. You were too young to vote but Abuela Claudia pulled that lever for the first time, because of Nina with a clipboard. Thought I glimpsed that Nina for a second.

The ice is tiny now. They watch it swim in Benny's palm, then melt away completely.

NINA

Not sure I'd recognize that Nina if she walked right up to me.

BENNY

I would. Girl was unforgettable.

NINA

What would you see?

BENNY

Love that won't back down. Anger without retreat. Anger because of love.

INT. DANIELA'S SALON. AFTERNOON.

A potted plant wilts. Carla and Vanessa droop, too. Daniela plops some un-taped boxes onto the floor.

CARLA

(overheating)
I'm seeing double.

DANIELA

You say that every time you wear those tight jeans.

Vanessa gets to it, assembling the first box.

VANESSA

Working on the fourth of July.

DANIELA

Coño, then shoo! Go play!

VANESSA

Where? No trains running. No buses without traffic lights.

Daniela snatches the tape gun from Vanessa.

DANIELA
We'll pack tomorrow.

EXT. THE BLOCK. MOMENTS LATER.

Out on the block, the ladies are greeted by a pathetic tableau: catatonic neighbors splayed on stoops, benches, folding chairs.

VANESSA
It's Gilligan's ghetto island.

ANGLE ON a group of teens. GRAFFITI PETE cracks an egg on the street. It actually SIZZLES.

SONNY
This is your brain on the blackout.

ANGLE ON the Piragua guy. **No ice.** Licking his parched lips.

ANGLE ON a domino table. Players move the tiles, sloth-paced.

DANIELA
Mira pa'lla. Some send off.

CARLA
What would Jesus do?

DANIELA
If he was Puerto Rican? He'd make
some noise, mami.
(calling out)
It's the fourth of July, people!
Show some **[BLEEP]** spirit!

Quick CLOSE UPS:

-Graffiti Pete clicks his teeth

-Piragua Guy's shoe sticks in melted tar

-Sweat plummets from a cuatro player's nose onto his instrument.

"CARNAVAL DEL BARRIO"

DANIELA (CONT'D)
HEY! HEY!
WHAT'S THIS TONTERIA THAT I'M SEEING ON THE STREET?
I NEVER THOUGHT I'D SEE THE DAY
SINCE WHEN ARE LATIN PEOPLE SCARED OF HEAT?
WHEN I WAS A LITTLE GIRL GROWING UP IN THE

HILLS OF VEGA ALTA
 MY FAVORITE TIME OF YEAR WAS CHRISTMAS TIME
 ASK ME WHY.

CARLA

WHY?

DANIELA

THERE WASN'T AN OUNCE OF SNOW
 BUT OH, THE COQUITO WOULD FLOW
 AS WE SANG THE AGUINALDO THE CARNAVAL
 WOULD BEING TO GROW!
 BUSINESS IS CLOSED, AND WE'RE ABOUT TO GO...
 LET'S HAVE A CARNAVAL DEL BARRIO!
 CARNAVAL DEL BARRIO
 CARNAVAL DEL BARRIO

Daniela cues Piragüero. He bangs out a rhythm on his cart.
 The cuatrista plucks out a riff. It's enough to make a song.

DANIELA (CONT'D)

CARNAVAL DEL BARRIO
 CARNAVAL DEL BARRIO
 WE DON'T NEED ELECTRICIDAD!
 GET OFF YOUR BUTT, AVANZA!
 SACA LA MARACA, BRING YOUR TAMBOURINE
 COME AND JOIN THE PARRANDA!

Cued by Daniela, neighbors perk up and join the song.

PIRAGÜERO

Wepa!

NEIGHBORS

CARNAVAL DEL BARRIO!
 CARNAVAL DEL BARRIO!

CARLA

OOH ME ME ME, DANI I HAVE A QUESTION
 I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE CANTANDO

DANIELA

JUST MAKE IT UP AS YOU GO
 WE ARE IMPROVISANDO
 LAI LE LO LAI LO LE LO LAI
 YOU CAN SING ANYTHING
 CARLA WHATEVER POPS INTO YOUR HEAD
 JUST SO LONG AS YOU SING

CARLA

UH MY MOM IS DOMINICAN-CUBAN
 MY DAD IS FROM CHILE AND P.R. WHICH MEANS
 I'M CHILE-DOMINI-CU-RICAN.
 BUT I ALWAYS SAY I'M FROM QUEENS!

The domino players form a rhythm section. Scraping water bottles like güiros. Clicking the tiles like claves.

Nina and Benny round the corner, joining the celebration. Usnavi comes out from his apartment building, dancing.

At the corner, Sonny and Graffiti Pete tape off the street, blocking car traffic.

NEIGHBORS

CARNAVAL DEL BARRIO!
 CARNAVAL DEL BARRIO!
 CARNAVAL DEL BARRIO!
 CARNAVAL DEL BARRIO!
 DEL BARRIO--

VANESSA

YO, WHY IS EVERYONE SO HAPPY?
 WE'RE SWEATING AND WE HAVE NO POWER!
 I'VE GOTTA GET OUT OF HERE SOON
 THIS BLOCK'S GETTING WORSE BY THE HOUR
 YOU CAN'T EVEN GO TO A CLUB WITH A FRIEND
 WITHOUT HAVING SOMEBODY SHOVE YOU

DANIELA

AY POR FAVOR!
 VANESSA DON'T PRETEND THAT USNAVI'S YOUR FRIEND
 WE ALL KNOW THAT HE LOOOOOVE YOU.

CARLA

WOW, NOW THAT YOU MENTION THAT SEXUAL TENSION
 IT'S EASY TO SEE

VANESSA

YO THIS IS BOGUS.

DANIELA

HAVEN'T YOU NOTICED YOU GET ALL YOUR COFFEE FOR
 FREE?

An impromptu dance-off takes hold. The old domino players show off traditional, subtle moves. Graffiti Pete and friends have an explosive street style.

Neighbors appear in windows waving various flags: keychains, airbrushed fingernails, dominoes, bandanas, t-shirts - everyone has patriotic tchotchkes!

COMMUNITY

ALZA LA BANDERA
 LA BANDERA DOMINICANA!
 ALZA LA BANDERA
 LA BANDERA PUERTORIQUEÑA!
 ALZA LA BANDERA

LA BANDERA MEJICANA!
 ALZA LA BANDERA
 LA BANDERA CUBANA!

PIRAGÜERO
 PA'RRIBA ESA BANDERA!

COMMUNITY
 HEY!

PIRAGÜERO
 ÁLZALO DONDE QUIERA!

COMMUNITY
 HEY!

PIRAGÜERO
 RECUERDO DE MI TIERRA

USNAVI/PIRAGÜERO
 ME ACUERDO DE MI TIERRA
 ESA BONITA BANDERA!

COMMUNITY
 HEY!

USNAVI/PIRAGÜERO
 CONTIENE MI ALMA ENTERA!

COMMUNITY
 HEY!

USNAVI/PIRAGÜERO
 Y CUANDO YO ME MUERA
 ENTIÉRRAME EN MI TIERRA!

SONNY
 HOLD UP, WAIT A MINUTE
 USNAVI'S LEAVING US FOR THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC?
 AND BENNY WENT AND STOLE THE GIRL THAT I'M IN LOVE
 WITH?
 SHE WAS MY BABY-SITTER FIRST!
 LISTEN UP IS THIS WHAT YA'LL WANT?
 WE CLOSE THE BODEGA, THE NEIGHBORHOOD IS GONE
 THEY SELLIN' THE DISPATCH AND THEY
 CLOSIN' THE SALON AND THEY'LL
 NEVER TURN THE LIGHTS BACK ON CUZ

SONNY/VANESSA
 WE ARE POWERLESS, WE ARE POWERLESS.

SONNY
 BUT YA'LL KEEP DANCIN' AND SINGIN' AND CELEBRATIN'

BUT IT'S GETTIN' LATE AND THIS PLACE IS
DISINTEGRATIN' AND

SONNY/VANESSA
WE ARE POWERLESS, WE ARE POWERLESS.

USNAVI
ALRIGHT WE'RE POWERLESS, WE'LL LIGHT UP A CANDLE
THERE'S NOTHING GOING ON HERE THAT WE CAN'T HANDLE
MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT SONNY, CALL IN THE CORONERS
MAYBE WE'RE POWERLESS, A CORNER FULL OF FOREIGNERS
MAYBE THIS NEIGHBORHOOD'S CHANGING FOREVER
MAYBE TONIGHT IS OUR LAST NIGHT TOGETHER, HOWEVER
HOW DO YOU WANNA FACE IT?
DO YOU WANNA WASTE IT WHEN THE END IS
SO CLOSE YOU CAN TASTE IT?
YA'LL CAN CRY WITH YOUR HEAD IN THE SAND
I'M 'A FLY THIS FLAG THAT I GOT IN MY HAND!

PIRAGÜERO
PA'RRIBA ESA BANDERA! ÁLZALO DONDE QUIERA!

COMMUNITY
HEY!

USNAVI
CAN WE RAISE OUR VOICE TONIGHT?
CAN WE MAKE A LITTLE NOISE TONIGHT?

COMMUNITY
HEY!

DANIELA/PIRAGÜERO
ESA BONITA BANDERA CONTIENE MI ALMA ENTERA!

COMMUNITY
HEY!

USNAVI
IN FACT CAN WE SING SO LOUD AND RAUCOUS
THEY CAN HEAR US ACROSS THE BRIDGE IN EAST
SECAUCUS?

DANIELA/PIRAGÜERO
ESA BONITA BANDERA CONTIENE MI ALMA ENTERA!

USNAVI
FROM PUERTO RICO TO SANTO DOMINGO
WHEREVER WE GO WE REP OUR PEOPLE AND THE BEAT GO

COMMUNITY
CARNAVAL DEL BARRIO!

USNAVI

VANESSA, FORGET ABOUT WHAT COULDA BEEN
DANCE WITH ME ONE LAST NIGHT IN THE HOOD AGAIN

DANIELA/CARLA

Wepa...

Vanessa imitates Usnavi's dorky moves, adding a little spice,
as they fall into step together.

COMMUNITY

CARNAVAL DEL BARRIO! CARNAVAL DEL BARRIO!

DANIELA

P'ARRIBA ESA BANDERA! OYE!

COMMUNITY

CARNAVAL DEL BARRIO!

DANIELA

Y CUANDO YO ME MUERA, ENTIÉRRAME EN MI TIERRA!
DEL BARRIO!

COMMUNITY

ALZA LA BANDERA, LA BANDERA DOMINICANA!
ALZA LA BANDERA, LA BANDERA PUERTORIQUEÑA!

DANIELA

ADIOS, ADIOS, ADIOS!

COMMUNITY

ALZA LA BANDERA, LA BANDERA, LA BANDERA!
ALZA LA BANDERA!

Abuela Claudia waves a Cuban flag in her upstairs window.
Nina and Usnavi see this.

NINA

That woman owes me a dance!

USNAVI

Grab her a folding chair.

INT. TENEMENT KITCHEN. MOMENTS LATER.

Party music bleeds inside. Nina holds the door for Claudia.

ABUELA CLAUDIA

A gozar!

INT. STAIRWELL. CONTINUOUS.

Nina carries a folding chair down, feeling her way in the dark. Claudia's candlestick offers a flicker of light, but she loses her grip on the railing, steadies herself.

NINA

You ok?

Abuela drops the candlestick. The hall is swathed in DARKNESS.

NINA (CONT'D)

Abuela?

Abuela's foot misses the edge of a step. Her fingertips catch then slip from the railing...

LATER.

HUSHED VOICES IN THE UNLIT STAIRWELL. Whispered panic.

USNAVI (O.S.)

Call your dad!

NINA (O.S.)

His phone must be dead.

USNAVI (O.S.)

Where the hell is the ambulance?

EXT. WASHINGTON HEIGHTS. DAY.

A hush permeates the afternoon streets. Traffic lights remain off at an empty intersection. A ball lies motionless in a vacant handball court.

INT. ROSARIO'S CAR SERVICE. DISPATCH STATION. DAY.

A FLIP SWITCHES. The emergency generator hums to life. Kevin tests the mic. It's live.

"ATENCIÓN"

KEVIN

ATENCIÓN, ATENCIÓN
 ROLL DOWN YOUR WINDOWS
 TURN UP YOUR RADIOS
 UN MOMENTO, POR FAVOR
 ATENCIÓN, ATENCIÓN
 PLEASE DRIVE SLOW

LET EVERYBODY KNOW
 DOÑA CLAUDIA PASSED AWAY
 AT NOON TODAY
 AND SHE WAS AN EXTRAORDINARY WOMAN
 SHE WAS HERE BEFORE US ALL
 MANY KNEW HER AS THE WOMAN WHO FED THE BIRDS
 BUT SHE WAS SO MUCH MORE
 AND SO I HUMBLY ASK FOR YOUR

We INTERCUT between the DISPATCH and VARIOUS LIVERY CABS.
 Drivers hear the news and pass it along via radios and open
 car windows.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
 ATENCIÓN

DRIVERS
 ATENCIÓN

KEVIN
 ATENCIÓN

DRIVERS
 ATENCIÓN

KEVIN
 ROLL DOWN YOUR WINDOWS

DRIVERS
 ROLL DOWN YOUR WINDOWS

KEVIN
 TURN UP YOUR RADIOS

DRIVERS
 TURN UP YOUR RADIOS

KEVIN
 UN MOMENTO, POR FAVOR

DRIVERS/PEDESTRIANS
 ATENCIÓN, ATENCIÓN

KEVIN
 FORT TRYON PARK CANDLELIGHT VIGIL AT SUNSET
 DOÑA CLAUDIA PASSED AWAY AT NOON TODAY

EXT. FORT TRYON PARK. DUSK.

The vigil. Flickering candles cast a warm glow on the crowd.
 A flagpole is piled with mementos and flowers. Usnavi hands
 out candles, his face a mask of numbness.

KEVIN

I REMEMBER WHEN I ARRIVED FROM PUERTO RICO
SHE WAS THERE WITH OPEN ARMS
AND I'LL REMEMBER HER AS THE WOMAN WHO PAVED THE
WAY
THAT WE MIGHT ACCOMPLISH MORE
TONIGHT WE'LL TAKE A MOMENT FOR...
ATENCIÓN...

CLOSE ON a framed black and white photo of a much younger Abuela Claudia, which leans on the sign pole. She's in Cuba, a suitcase at her feet, about to leave for the U.S. Her eyes filled with dreams for a better future.

NEWS RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

...in what is believed to be the
first death caused by the blackout.
Residents want answers and
ConEdison faces mounting pressure.
The Mayor will hold a press
conference tomorrow...

The RUMBLE OF THUNDER **ends the song** and carries us to

VARIOUS SHOTS OF WASHINGTON HEIGHTS

Rain slashes the streets, steam rising from the pavement.
Relief at last.

INT. SALON. DAY.

Rain beats against the fogged windows. Vanessa wipes away a circle of condensation and peers at a van out front, Daniela directing movers like an army general. Carla holds an umbrella above Daniela's head. Vanessa notices Usnavi farther off, scraping the charred bodega awning.

EXT. SALON. MINUTES LATER.

Usnavi approaches, takes a soggy box from Daniela's arms.

USNAVI

Can I bother you for a minute?

INT. MOVING TRUCK. MINUTES LATER.

USNAVI

One thing survived with no damage.
I think the trash can flipped over
and kept it safe...

Usnavi reveals an APARTMENT LEASE. The one Vanessa had thrown out.

USNAVI (CONT'D)

I called. Apparently it's still available but Vanessa needs a cosigner. And not one who's about leave the country. Would you do it? As a personal favor?

But before Daniela can respond they're interrupted by -

MOVER

Ma'am? I think that's everything.

MOMENTS LATER.

The salon is empty now. The truck pulls away. Usnavi watches it go then posts a BUSINESS FOR SALE sign on the plywood "window."

Across the street, OLDER USNAVI talks to the KIDS. His igloo cooler now planted on the curb. The kids gathered in their (now incongruous) beach gear.

OLDER USNAVI

Pay attention. Notice anything different?

The kids study the scene.

KID 2

No music?

They all realize how strange that is.

SHY GIRL

So what were the streets made of that day?

OLDER USNAVI

Concrete.

EXT. ALLEYWAY. DAY.

Graffiti Pete balances precariously atop a fire escape, spraying a mural. He pulls the bandana away from his mouth and breathes.

PETE

Did you get it?

Below him, Sonny is a guerrilla filmmaker, capturing the work-in-progress on his phone. He notices the time.

SONNY

Shoot, I gotta jet.

Sonny climbs down and sees Usnavi in the alleyway below.

USNAVI

Family meeting. And he's not family.

Graffiti Pete pulls on headphones, offering "privacy."

USNAVI (CONT'D)

You okay? I missed you at the vigil.

SONNY

I was there.

Usnavi shows his phone. On the screen: an E-TICKET to the DOMINICAN REPUBLIC.

USNAVI

August 31. Window seat. Non-refundable. So you can't say no.

SONNY

Sonny ain't goin to no island.

USNAVI

Give it a month. If you hate it, I'll fly you home.

SONNY

Are we done yet?!

USNAVI

It's what Abuela wanted. And I can't do it without you. What do I have left here, Sonny?

Sonny bristles, looks up to make sure Graffiti Pete isn't listening.

SONNY

How do I like to get paid?

USNAVI

Cash.

SONNY

You never put two and two together on that? If I go to the Dominican, ain't no return trip for me. I got no papers. Which means no reentry. No reentry means no leaving.

USNAVI

But my dad paid an immigration lawyer when you arrived.

SONNY

Yeah, enough to get fake IDs and fake socials. Don't tell nobody, a'ight? Bon voyage. End of an era.

Sonny turns and goes.

EXT. CITY COUNCILMAN'S OFFICE. MINUTES LATER.

Community activists gather on the curb. Protest signs abound. "ELECTRICIDAD AHORA!" "WE DEMAND POWER!" "JUSTICIA! PODER!" Nina is galvanized. An old-school activist hands her a noisemaker.

ELDERLY ACTIVIST

Te conozco... We registered voters together! Keep raising hell!

Nina beams as Sonny emerges through the crowd. They dap.

NINA

Just in time. We'll have to march side by side.

She hands him a sign. Held next to hers, they read: "RIP CLAUDIA." A BULLHORN squeaks on.

PROTEST LEADER

We ready to make some noise?

People shake maracas, blow whistles, bang pots, etc.

PROTEST LEADER (CONT'D)

Now when Councilman Rodriguez comes outside for his press conference, we'll show those cameras what a united barrio looks like! El pueblo unido nunca jamas vencido!

ALL

El pueblo! Unido! Nunca jamas vencido!

INT. USNAVI'S LIVING ROOM. EVENING.

Stuff is everywhere - decades of mementos, sorted into piles. Emptying a closet, Usnavi finds a box of paper slips, the ink on them faded.

USNAVI

Losing lottery tickets. Trash.

He puts them into a discard pile. Another box is more promising: an old report card, art projects. He ponders a book report, deciphering the writing.

USNAVI (CONT'D)

"My Abuela's front door is busted-ed. Because so many people comes over to see her..." A check minus was generous.

Nearby, Nina fishes through film strips as Kevin ponders an aged Polaroid.

INSERT - ROSARIO CAR SERVICE, FROM AN EARLIER TIME. AN IRISHMAN OUT FRONT, ARM AROUND KEVIN. Over:

KEVIN (O.S.)

Mr. O'Hanrahan sold me the business. Back then, half the block was Irish.

(caught in the memory)

I felt pulled in two directions: island me, city me. But Mr. O'Hanrahan bled green. He said, "Kevin, it's not here or there. It's here and there."

In the bg Benny comes in, Chinese takeout in each hand.

BENNY

General Tso's and tostones! Hey, there's a package at the door.

EXT. HALLWAY. MOMENTS LATER.

A dry cleaning package rests on the floor. The delivery slip says "CLAUDIA VALDEZ." Peeling away the cellophane wrapping, Nina discovers the **LACE NAPKINS**, beautifully cleaned.

ABUELA CLAUDIA'S VOICE

(echoing from the past)

We had to assert our dignity in small ways. That's why these napkins are beautiful.

(MORE)

ABUELA CLAUDIA'S VOICE (CONT'D)
 That's why my mother's gloves were
 beautiful. Little details that tell
 the world, we're not invisible.

INT. USNAVI'S LIVING ROOM. MOMENTS LATER.

Absorbed in more photos, Kevin realizes Nina's standing above him.

NINA
 So if I go back... what's your next
 move?

KEVIN
 Do you trust me enough to let me
 figure that out?

NINA
 Those Stanford kids knew a lot. But
 I had a master teacher.

Benny watches in the bg as Nina sits, leans into her father's shoulder. Clutching a napkin.

NINA (CONT'D)
 Thanks, dad.

A truce. Kevin exhales, relieved.

LATER. Benny, Nina, and Kevin eat right out of the cartons.

BENNY
 (calling out)
 Yo Usnavi! Tostones are getting
 cold!

But Usnavi's IN CLAUDIA'S BEDROOM, standing before the very Catholic, very Afro-Cuban altar. He removes the cross from the wall. Slipping it delicately into a box, he is overcome with grief. He weeps quietly so no one will hear.

NINA (O.S.)
 Usnavi! Come eat!

Then suddenly

THE POWER RETURNS

DEAFENING SPANISH EXPLODES from the end-table TV. The lights FLASH ON. The ceiling fan jolts and SPINS.

Usnavi startles. Can't help but laugh through the tears. Nina, Benny, and Kevin scream their delight in the bg.

USNAVI
Ever the jokester...

EXT. WASHINGTON HEIGHTS. VARIOUS SHOTS. SAME.

Sounds of neighbors cheering as -

A neon sign blinks on: LO MEIN, TOSTONES.

A rat, illuminated by a streetlight, scurries away.

A traffic light turns GREEN. Cars honk with celebration.

FADE TO BLACK.

TITLE. "AUGUST."

INT. CITY COUNCILMAN'S OFFICE. LATE AFTERNOON.

Staff members pass around cake slices. A group of local college-aged INTERNS wear party hats.

COUNCILMAN

Last but not least... They didn't name a storm after her on accident. Hurricane Nina, our resident force of nature.

Nods of agreement, some friendly prods and chuckles.

COUNCILMAN (CONT'D)

Next summer if you re-up, the corner office is yours. Cuz when you fight on the phone, you fight loud. And when you gather students in town halls? You Town Hall loud. In fact, let me shut up. Nina?

NINA

I feel like I should whisper now. We raised some alright hell this summer. Food drives. The college fair. Going up to Albany with the PS 218 kids. Buying suits for them to testify in. They looked sharp.

Snaps of approval.

NINA (CONT'D)

Intern Brigade Three...

The interns listen with affection. Clearly a tight group.

NINA (CONT'D)

Years from now, may we still be
dreaming and scheming.

INTERN 1

Yes.

INTERN 2

Count on that.

As they toast, the sound cuts away and we hear -

OLDER USNAVI (V.O.)

Yup, Nina met some fellow
travelers. Kids with one foot in
the neighborhood and one foot on
the horizon. As for me...

EXT. BODEGA. DAY.

A new sign replaces the BUSINESS FOR SALE posting. It says
PRICE REDUCED.

OLDER USNAVI (V.O.)

I kept myself busy getting ready
for the big move.

INT. TENEMENT FOYER. DAY.

A new flier replaces an APARTMENT AVAILABLE posting. It says
RENT REDUCED.

OLDER USNAVI (V.O.)

That way I could ignore my cold
feet about leaving.

INT. USNAVI'S APARTMENT. DAY.

It's empty. No furniture, no tchotchkes, just boxes. Usnavi,
seated atop one, sighs.

EXT. ALLEYWAY. FIRE ESCAPE. DAY.

SOUNDS drift in from open windows. A tv set. A radio. An
electric bassist, practicing. The bass line becomes

"WHEN THE SUN GOES DOWN"

Nina and Benny perch on a fire escape. She unwraps a present: two clipboards.

BENNY
His and hers.

NINA
(playful, curious)
What do you need a clipboard for?

Benny grins: he's got plans. Kevin appears at the door.

KEVIN
Ready?

INT. STAIRWELL. MOMENTS LATER.

Nina, Benny, and Kevin carry suitcases and duffel bags down the steps. The BASS LINE continues.

EXT. STOOP. MOMENTS LATER.

Kevin loads up the car as Benny and Nina linger at the door.

BENNY
WHEN YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN
AND SUDDENLY WITHOUT ME
WILL YOU FORGET ABOUT ME?

NINA
I COULDN'T IF I TRIED

BENNY
WHEN I'M ALL ALONE AND I CLOSE MY EYES

NINA/BENNY
THAT'S WHEN I'LL SEE YOUR FACE AGAIN

BENNY
AND WHEN YOU'RE GONE
YOU KNOW THAT I'LL BE WAITING WHEN YOU'RE GONE

NINA
BUT YOU'RE HERE WITH ME RIGHT NOW

INT. SEMINAR ROOM. STANFORD. THE FUTURE.

Nina holds her CLIPBOARD and looks through notes. She raises her hand, begins to pontificate. She's got the attention of the room.

BENNY (V.O.)
WE'LL BE WORKING HARD BUT IF WE SHOULD DRIFT APART

NINA (V.O.)
BENNY-

BENNY (V.O.)
LET ME TAKE THIS MOMENT JUST TO SAY

NINA (V.O.)
NO NO

INT. BENNY'S UBER. THE FUTURE.

Benny leans his CLIPBOARD on the steering wheel, filling out a BUSINESS SCHOOL application. The back door opens and a client slides in.

BENNY (V.O.)
YOU ARE GONNA CHANGE THE WORLD SOMEDAY

NINA (V.O.)
I'LL BE THINKING OF HOME

NINA/BENNY (V.O.)
AND I'LL THINK OF YOU EVERY NIGHT
AT THE SAME TIME

BACK TO:

EXT. STOOP. NOW.

BENNY
WHEN THE SUN GOES DOWN

NINA
WHEN THE SUN GOES DOWN

BENNY
WHEN THE SUN GOES DOWN

Nina gets into her dad's car. The engine's ZOOM **ends the song** as Benny watches them drive away.

INT. ABUELA'S BEDROOM. EVENING.

The room is empty except for a bare mattress and frame. Usnavi vacuums. Pushing the bed aside, he spots a slip of paper. It's a **LOTTERY TICKET**, dated July 3. Handwriting at the top reads "FOR USNAVI DE LA VEGA." He notes the numbers.

A MEMORY FLASHES - posting "18" to the bodega window.

ANOTHER FLASH - 7

THEN - 24 41 38

Usnavi turns off the vacuum. Confused. Stunned.

USNAVI

Ha. Haha. Hahahahahaha. Abuela!!!!

He moonwalks, runs in place Flashdance style, busts a touchdown dance. Then STOPS. Eyes lighting up with an idea...

LATER. Usnavi paces, excitedly, on the phone.

USNAVI (CONT'D)

What time do you close today?

PHONE VOICE (O.S.)

Six o'clock.

He hangs up, determined. Grabs his Kangol and throws open the door open revealing

VANESSA. Poised to knock. Startled.

VANESSA

Whoa!

USNAVI

Hi!

They haven't seen each other in a minute.

VANESSA

I heard your flight's tomorrow.

USNAVI

Nine am.

He pockets the lottery ticket, checks his watch.

VANESSA

Is now a bad time?

USNAVI

No, I have a minute. Come in!

She does. But the empty apartment's a killjoy. They speak at the same time -

USNAVI (CONT'D)

How's the new apartment?

VANESSA
 (overlapping)
 Ready for your flight?

This is awkward.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
 My new place... There's the elderly
 neighbor who roams the hall in his
 bathrobe. At least I assume he
 lives in the building. There's the
 drummer who lives directly above
 me. Oh, and there's this nifty
 thing called a door. It opens and
 shuts. My very own door.

"CHAMPAGNE"

VANESSA (CONT'D)
 SO I BOUGHT YOU A PRESENT
 I'VE BEEN MEANING TO GET IT
 DOING ANYTHING TONIGHT?

USNAVI
 CLEANING.

VANESSA
 YOU'RE DONE FOR THE DAY.

USNAVI
 NO WAY.

VANESSA
 CUZ WE GOT A DATE.

USNAVI
 OKAY!

VANESSA
 BEFORE YOU BOARD THAT PLANE
 I OWE YOU A BOTTLE OF COLD CHAMPAGNE!

She pulls a glistening bottle from her tote bag.

INT. STAIRWELL. MOMENTS LATER.

Champagne in hand, Vanessa leads Usnavi up the steps.

USNAVI
 NO...

VANESSA

YEAH! COLD CHAMPAGNE.

USNAVI
DAMN THE BOTTLE'S ALL SWEATY AND EVERYTHING
YOU WENT AND GOT THIS

VANESSA
POP THE CHAMPAGNE

USNAVI
I DON'T KNOW IF WE HAVE COFFEE CUPS
OR PLASTIC CUPS, I ALREADY PACKED THE CUPS

VANESSA
TONIGHT, WE'RE DRINKING STRAIGHT FROM THE BOTTLE

They go out to -

EXT. ROOFTOP. CONTINUOUS.

Viewed from the top of Usnavi's building, Manhattan is a 360 degree sweeping vista. CAMERA ARCS AROUND revealing Washington Heights, the Hudson, and the GW Bridge.

VANESSA
USNAVI?

USNAVI
YEAH?

VANESSA
DANIELA TOLD ME WHAT YOU DID FOR ME
AND IT'S HONESTLY THE SWEETEST THING
ANYONE EVER DID FOR ME, NOW
WHAT CAN I SAY OR DO TO
POSSIBLY REPAY YOU FOR YOUR KINDNESS?

Usnavi tries to open the champagne - a novice.

USNAVI
HOW DO YOU GET THIS GOLD SHIT OFF?

VANESSA
USNAVI?

USNAVI
YEAH?

VANESSA
BEFORE WE BOTH LEAVE TOWN
BEFORE THE CORNER CHANGES AND THE SIGNS ARE TAKEN
DOWN
LET'S WALK AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD

AND SAY OUR GOODBYES.
USNAVI, ARE YOU ALRIGHT?

USNAVI
I'M FINE, I'M TRYIN'A OPEN THIS CHAMPAGNE.
SEE THE TWISTY THING IS BROKEN
BUT I'M GONNA OPEN THIS DAMN CHAMPAGNE!

VANESSA
LEMME SEE IT-

USNAVI
NO I GOT IT!

VANESSA
YO USNAVI, DROP THE CHAMPAGNE!

USNAVI
I MEAN YOU WENT TO ALL THIS TROUBLE
TO GET US A LITTLE BUBBLY

VANESSA
AND IT'S GONNA BE OKAY.

USNAVI
I'M SORRY IT'S BEEN A LONG DAY.

VANESSA
YOU OUGHTA STAY.

USNAVI
WHAT?

VANESSA
YOU CAN USE THAT MONEY TO FIX THIS PLACE.

USNAVI
HA HA, VERY FUNNY.

VANESSA
AND IT'S NOT LIKE SONNY'S GOT ROLE MODELS-

USNAVI
ROLE MODELS?

VANESSA
STEPPING UP TO THE PLATE.

USNAVI
YO WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

VANESSA
I'M JUST SAYING, I THINK YOUR VACATION CAN WAIT.

USNAVI
VACATION? VANESSA YOU LEFT US, TOO.

VANESSA
AND I WENT DOWN TO WEST FOURTH STREET
YOU CAN TAKE THE A.

USNAVI
WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY?

VANESSA
YOU'RE LEAVING THE COUNTRY
AND WE'RE NEVER GONNA SEE YOU AGAIN.

USNAVI
WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY?

VANESSA
YOU GET EVERYONE ADDICTED TO YOUR COFFEE
THEN OFF YOU GO.

USNAVI
VANESSA, I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU'RE MAD AT ME.

VANESSA
I WISH I WAS MAD!

She pulls Usnavi close and kisses him. They melt into it, a **perfect match**. But she gently pulls away.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
I'M JUST TOO LATE.

Usnavi glances at his watch. Doesn't want this moment to end.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
You have somewhere to be.

EXT. ALLEYWAY. EVENING.

Pete and Sonny chill in the shade. An UBER rolls up and the window lowers. Benny's in the driver seat, Usnavi beside him.

USNAVI
Sonny! Hop in.

Sonny makes a real show of ignoring Usnavi.

USNAVI (CONT'D)
Let's go, we have three minutes!

EXT. LAW OFFICE. MINUTES LATER.

Usnavi bangs at the door, jostles it. Locked.

SONNY

What's going on? They're closed.

There's a light on in a back office. Usnavi bangs louder. A LAWYER peeks out from the back.

LAWYER

Come back tomorrow!

But Usnavi recognizes her.

USNAVI

Soy milk no sugar...
(banging, calling out)
Soy milk no sugar! Soy milk no
sugar!

She approaches, chuckles when she recognizes Usnavi. She grabs the office keys.

INT. LAW OFFICE. MINUTES LATER.

Sonny fills out a "personal information" form.

USNAVI

How long does the process usually
take?

LAWYER

From the original application,
court appearances, appeals, to a
final decision? Years. For a good
result or bad one.

USNAVI

Then we start today. I don't know
your fee.

Usnavi places the lottery ticket on the desk before her.

USNAVI (CONT'D)

This is worth ninety-six thousand.
How much fight will that buy?

Sonny's jaw drops. The lawyer pulls on her reading glasses, eyes the ticket.

LAWYER

Payment in check is more common.

USNAVI

I leave in the morning. No time to
cash in.

The Lawyer scrutinizes Usnavi for a second. Turns to Sonny.

LAWYER

This will be an emotional roller
coaster. It may end in heartbreak.

SONNY

But there's a chance, right? A shot
at a green card?

LAWYER

Yes.

ON SONNY, resolute and moved, we -

FADE OUT.

A BEAUTIFUL URBAN SYMPHONY, PLAYED IN DARKNESS

The steam pistons of a garbage truck. A car horn. The
subterranean rumble of the subway. A kneeling bus.

OLDER USNAVI (V.O.)

Hear that? Voices of the gods.

EXT. BEACH. DOMINICAN REPUBLIC. DAY.

More kids have joined. Usnavi's tale has amassed quite the
youthful crowd.

OLDER USNAVI

My final morning. The 1 train
sounded like Mozart. The garbage,
piled high as the Empire States,
smelled like Coco Chanel.

INT. USNAVI'S ROOM. DAWN.

The URBAN SOUNDS are drifting in from Usnavi's opened window.

Usnavi sits on his bare mattress, dressed, suitcases beside
him, gazing out the window. His reverie is SHATTERED by-

BENNY (O.S.)

Just like a girl, huh?

Usnavi turns. Benny's in the doorway, twirling his car keys.

BENNY (CONT'D)
 Always prettiest when you're saying
 goodbye.

As his last act, Usnavi walks to the wall of FRAMED PHOTOS.

USNAVI
 Here I come, pop.

Pulling the frames down from the wall, Usnavi drops one. It falls to the floor and shatters. Usnavi kneels down and fishes the PHOTO from the cracked glass. He notices handwriting on the white backing of the photo. The words are faded but distinct: "*Mi sueñito.*" Usnavi flips the photo over and sees it's an IMAGE OF HIMSELF AS A CHILD. He shudders.

USNAVI (CONT'D)
 It was me. I was his little dream.
 Not the bar.

Benny takes a beat. Pats Usnavi on the shoulder.

BENNY
 We better go --

INT. USNAVI'S APARTMENT. HALLWAY. CONTINUOUS.

Usnavi passes Abuela's empty room. He stops and looks in. IN HIS MEMORY, a needle lands on a record as a bolero echoes.

"FINALE"

BOLERO SINGER (V.O.)
 NO TE VAYAS. SI ME DEJAS.
 SI TE ALEJAS DE MI.
 SEGUIRÁS EN MIS RECUERDOS PARA SIEMPRE
 PARA SIEMPRE, PARA SIEMPRE...

ABUELA CLAUDIA'S VOICE
 (echoing from the past)
 The scratch in the record is my
 favorite part!

Usnavi looks directly at us.

USNAVI
 LIGHTS UP ON WASHINGTON HEIGHTS
 AND NOW THE CRACK OF DAWN
 POWER'S BACK, AND LIFE GOES ON AND ON AND ON
 PACKED MY BAGS, GOTTA TAKE OUT THE TRASH
 AS I THINK ABOUT THE PAST WITH A SACK FULL OF CASH
 ABUELA REALLY WANTED ME UP ON A BEACH

WITH MARGARITAS IN MY REACH
 AND NOW THAT'S HOW IT'S GONNA BE
 IMAGINE ME, LEAVING TODAY
 ON A SEVEN FORTY SEVEN BOARDIN' JFK...

A VOICE drifts in from the sidewalk.

CARLA (O.S.)
 THE HYDRANTS ARE OPEN, COOL BREEZES BLOW

Usnavi goes to the window, looks out and there they are:
 Kevin, Vanessa, Daniela, Carla, Piragüero-- joined by Benny.

DANIELA/CARLA
 THE HYDRANTS ARE OPEN, COOL BREEZES BLOW

KEVIN
 GOOD MORNING.

PIRAGÜERO
 PIRAGUA, PIRAGUA
 NEW BLOCK OF ICE, PIRAGUA
 SO SWEET AND NICE, PIRAGUA
 PIRAGUA, PIRAGUA

VANESSA
 I'LL BE DOWNTOWN, IT WON'T BE LONG NOW!

Usnavi's touched. He grabs his Kangol and heads downstairs.

EXT. THE BLOCK. CONTINUOUS.

The block is almost unrecognizable. Where Rosario's once was, the organic cleaner's has taken over. A beer garden stands in the salon's old spot - hipsters crowding sidewalk tables. A yoga studio has replaced the boarded-up travel agency.

Usnavi emerges from his building and greets his extended family of neighbors. They wait for words of farewell from their beloved "leader."

USNAVI
 THERE'S A BREEZE OFF THE HUDSON
 AND JUST WHEN YOU THINK YOU'RE SICK OF LIVING HERE
 THE MEMORY FLOODS IN
 THE MORNING LIGHT OFF THE FIRE ESCAPES
 THE NIGHTS IN BENNETT PARK BLASTING BIG PUN TAPES
 I'M 'A MISS THIS PLACE, TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH
 KEVIN DISPENSIN' WISDOM FROM HIS DISPATCH BOOTH
 AND AT DAWN, VANESSA AT THE SALON, WE GOTTA MOVE ON
 BUT WHO'S GONNA NOTICE WE'RE GONE?
 WHEN OUR JOB'S DONE, AS THE EVENING WINDS
 DOWN TO A CRAWL, SON, CAN I EASE MY MIND?

WHEN WE'RE ALL DONE, WHEN WE'VE RESIGNED
 IN THE LONG RUN, WHAT DO WE LEAVE BEHIND?
 MOST OF ALL I MISS ABUELA'S WHISPERS
 DOIN' THE LOTTO PICK SIX EVERY CHRISTMAS
 IN FIVE YEARS WHEN THIS WHOLE CITY'S
 RICH FOLKS AND HIPSTERS
 WHO'S GONNA MISS THIS RAGGEDY LITTLE BUSINESS?

Sonny and Graffiti Pete emerge from the bodega.

PETE

What it do? Great sunlight this
 morning.

USNAVI

Yo what did I tell you about this
 punk?

SONNY

You have to commission an artist
 while his rate is still good.

PETE

First work in my new series.

Pete leads them all into--

INT. BODEGA. CONTINUOUS.

Darkened walls and shelves are lingering evidence of the
 destruction. But amidst the fire damage, a few bare bulbs
 illuminate -

A NEW GRAFFITI MURAL. It sparkles where the old one was
 destroyed. The same beachside bar is rendered in bolder hues.
 Usnavi traces his fingers along a new element: "EL SUEÑITO"
 in big bubble letters at the top. The mural's unfinished, but
 it's stunning.

PETE

He hates it.

SONNY

Sh. He's forming an artistic
 opinion.

USNAVI

YOU DID THIS LAST NIGHT?

GRAFFITI PETE

YEAH.

USNAVI

THERE GOES MY FLIGHT.

SONNY

WHAT?

Usnavi empties his wallet, shoves a wad of cash into Graffiti Pete's hands.

USNAVI

GRAFFITI PETE YOU'RE GONNA NEED SOME NEW CANS
HERE'S SOME MONEY, FINISH UP
THERE'S BEEN A SLIGHT CHANGE OF PLANS

GRAFFITI PETE

NICE!

USNAVI

LISTEN UP GUYS, YOU GOT A JOB, I'M NOT PLAYIN'
YOU GOTTA GO NOW, TELL THE WHOLE BLOCK I'M STAYIN'!
YA'LL GO AHEAD, TELL EVERYONE WE KNOW!
SONNY... ALRIGHT GO.

Sonny pumps his fist and practically flies out the door.

USNAVI (CONT'D)

YEAH I'M A STREETLIGHT, CHILLIN' IN THE HEAT!
I ILLUMINATE THE STORIES OF THE PEOPLE IN THE
STREET
SOME HAVE HAPPY ENDINGS, SOME ARE BITTERSWEET
BUT I KNOW THEM ALL AND THAT'S WHAT
MAKES MY LIFE COMPLETE

COMMUNITY

WE'RE HOME!

USNAVI

AND IF NOT ME, WHO KEEPS OUR LEGACIES?
WHO'S GONNA KEEP THE COFFEE SWEET WITH SECRET
RECIPES?
ABUELA REST IN PEACE, YOU LIVE IN MY MEMORIES
BUT SONNY'S GOTTA EAT AND THIS CORNER IS MY DESTINY

Sonny reappears at the door, holding it open as neighbors file in to see the mural.

SONNY

WE'RE HOME!

USNAVI

BRINGS OUT THE BEST IN ME, WE PASS A TEST AND WE
KEEP PRESSIN' AND YES INDEED, YOU KNOW I'LL NEVER
LEAVE
IF YOU CLOSE YOUR EYES THAT HYDRANT IS A BEACH
THAT SIREN IS A BREEZE, THAT FIRE ESCAPE'S

A LEAF ON A PALM TREE

SONNY/COMMUNITY
WE'RE HOME!

USNAVI
ABUELA, I'M SORRY
BUT I AIN'T GOIN' BACK BECAUSE I'M TELLIN' YOUR
STORY!
AND I CAN SAY GOODBYE TO YOU SMILIN'
I FOUND MY ISLAND
I BEEN ON IT THIS WHOLE TIME I'M HOME!

The music pauses. The image freezes.

The bodega transforms. The fire damage disappears as GLEAMING SHELVES and NEW PRODUCTS appear in its place. The unfinished graffiti mural completes itself. The refurbished bodega sparkles.

ZOOM IN ON food labels and posters that depict little scenes of paradise. Everyday items that, when seen together, create a collage version of Older Usnavi's beach. Indeed, "the beach" is just how Older Usnavi sees the world. In reality, it's comprised of the mural and the everyday objects around him.

Older Usnavi is at the counter, the kids in swim gear crowded around him.

OLDER USNAVI
That's what sueño means. My
little dream. And this bodega is
mine.

SHY GIRL
Can we go in the water now, papi?

OLDER USNAVI
Ask your mom.

The kids run out to--

EXT. BODEGA. FUTURE.

Older Vanessa is there.

SHY GIRL
Mami, can I get wet?

OLDER VANESSA
Sure, mi'jita!

Older Usnavi jacks open the hydrant. The kids rush into the water as Older Usnavi embraces Older Vanessa, laughing. The SPRAY HITS THE CAMERA, sending us back to -

EXT. BODEGA. BEFORE. BURNT.

COMMUNITY

THE HYDRANTS ARE OPEN, COOL BREEZES BLOW!

USNAVI

THIS IS A WONDERFUL LIFE THAT I'VE KNOWN
MERRY CHRISTMAS YOU OLD BUILDING AND LOAN!
I'M HOME!

COMMUNITY

THE HYDRANTS ARE OPEN, COOL BREEZES BLOW!

USNAVI

ABUELA THAT AIN'T A STOOP, THAT'S YOUR THRONE!
LONG AFTER YOUR BIRDS HAVE ALL FLOWN, I'M HOME!
WHERE THE COFFEE'S NONSTOP AND I
DROP THIS HIP HOP IN MY MOM AND POP SHOP, I'M HOME!
WHERE PEOPLE COME, PEOPLE GO
LET ME SHOW ALL OF THESE PEOPLE WHAT I KNOW
THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME!
AND LET ME SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT
I'M STEPPIN' TO VANESSA, I'M GETTIN' A SECOND DATE!
I'M HOME!
WHERE IT'S A HUNDRED IN THE SHADE BUT WITH
PATIENCE AND FAITH WE REMAIN UNAFRAID
I'M HOME!
YOU HEAR THAT MUSIC IN THE AIR?
TAKE THE TRAIN TO THE TOP OF THE WORLD AND I'M
THERE
I'M HOME!

CLOSE ON Shy Girl, splashing in the spray. A glimpse of the future, shining in the present. She is the embodiment of Usnavi's hopes and dreams.

OLDER USNAVI (V.O.)

They haven't kicked me out of
paradise yet.

TITLE: "EL FIN"

TITLE: "COLORÍN COLORADO, MI CUENTO SE HA ACABADO"