

There's No Place Like Home  
'The Story Of Mom'

written by

Andrea Villacres

FADE IN:

EXT. A STREAMING RIVER- AN EARLY, BRIGHT DAY

SUPER: ECUADOR, MARCH 1984

NOTE: All conversations in Ecuador are in Spanish.

The river flows gently around MIRIAN'S feet. Tiny fishes swim peacefully around them. Mirian's presence does not bother the fish.

Although Mirian is sixteen, she still vividly sees the world in her own way. The world is her own playground. It's joyous and fun.

She has a short stature and a thin frame. Her thick and curly dark hair is tangled. The light freckles on her face are kissed by the sun and her tan glistens. Heavy sweat droplets travel down her forehead.

She wears a dirty, moth-eaten white tank with a pair of white shorts.

The heat is excruciating yet she pays no mind.

Nothing is heard but the water running down the stream and the birds CHIRPING.

Surrounding Mirian and the river are thousands of heavy rocks and then behind the rocks lays a large rainforest.

Mirian smiles down at her feet. Her feet are shown CLICKING together like how Dorothy did in the *Wizard Of Oz*.

ABUELA (O.S)  
(shouting)

Mirian!

Mirian peaks her head up behind her.

ABUELA (O.S) (CONT'D)  
(shouting)

Mirian! Where are you!

She quickly pulls her feet out of the water and climbs over the rocks looking like Tarzan.

EXT. THE RAINFOREST- CONTINUOUS

Mirian runs her bare feet through the forest and up a hill where a small shack is shown.

CUT TO:

INT. THE KITCHEN INSIDE THE SHACK- MOMENTS LATER

ABUELA, looks tired as she stirs beans in a pot. Her hands are SHAKY and CHAPPED as she stirs. Sadly she already has wrinkles and sagged skin being only in her late forties.

Suddenly a cat walks around the stove. Abuela shoos it away. The cat puts itself into one of the unused, empty pots.

Mirian comes running in out of breath.

ABUELA

(angry)

Where were you? I hope you weren't by the river again.

MIRIAN

(nervous)

I was...I was...

ABUELA

(ranting)

Every time I need you you're always gone! Well this time it was something impor-

In walks a man named GREGORY. Gregory stares at Mirian with such intensity and she looks back at him with utter shock.

The cat comes out of the pot, flipping it over as a result. The pot drops to the ground making the loudest noise cutting that silent tension.

CUT TO:

INT. THE KITCHEN INSIDE THE SHACK- LATER

Mirian and Gregory sit across from each other on the small wooden table.

He's very tall and looks awkward being in such a small space. His back is very hunched.

Off screen a chicken is heard CLUCKING. Then it's wings are heard FLAPPING repeatedly.

Gregory takes a sip of his chunky guava juice in a cup while Mirian stares at him.

Then continually off screen the chicken makes the loudest CLUCK and a SHARP weapon is heard landing on what seems like a piece of wood.

They pay no attention.

Gregory puts his cup down, wiping off the juice from his dark, thick heavy mustache. He eyes the cup. Unsatisfied he keeps moving the cup in different positions on the table. He stops once its moved to the one he approves of.

Mirian is still fixed on him.

Abuela comes in through the open front door. Her apron a bit bloody.

ABUELA  
(sweaty)  
Dinner's going to be late.

She heads off.

Both don't turn to look at her and Gregory not once looks up at Mirian.

CUT TO:

INT. MIRIAN'S TINY BEDROOM- NIGHT

Mirian's room is so small it fits only one single bed. The only light source coming in is through the one from the hallway. The bed sheet is extremely dirty but she still tucks herself in.

Abuela comes in and makes sure she's nicely tucked.

ABUELA  
What are you thinking Miriancita?

MIRIAN  
Nothing.

ABUELA  
If you're this quiet it means you're overthinking. Now don't. God will look out for you. I know this won't be easy but he's your father.

MIRIAN

I didn't know the process would take so long to approve my residency. Now that it's here it's...scary.

ABUELA

That's why he's worked so hard and now he can maintain you there in the best way. He wants to finally be united together with you and his family. You belong to him Mirian.

MIRIAN

Abuela, I love him no matter but I also belong to you.

Abuela gives her a piercing look. She continues.

ABUELA

Don't be scared, my darling. This is a new life for you. One where you will be grateful for. One where you'll bloom. Your father considers you now as a beautiful young woman.

MIRIAN

(unsure)

He sees that now because he hasn't seen me in years.

ABUELA

It may have looked like he abandoned you but it has turned for the best. You'll grow to love it. I know you will. It might be different at first.

MIRIAN

Will it?

ABUELA

I would never lie to you.

MIRIAN

Abuela?

ABUELA

Hmm?

MIRIAN

Will he love it?

Beat.

ABUELA

He loves you. Now promise me you'll  
give it a chance. It'll be worth it  
in the end.

Abuela makes a funny face at her. Mirian can't help but  
laugh.

MIRIAN

Okay. I'll make it work.

ABUELA

Good.

Abuela gives her a kiss on the forehead.

ABUELA (CONT'D)

Sweet dreams Miriancita. Don't  
forget to pray.

She leaves the room.

Mirian turns her body to look at moon outside the window.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE SHACK- DAYS LATER

Mirian is surrounded by a group of people, all old and young.  
The people are wearing very limited, poor looking clothing.  
One by one they hug Mirian wishing her good luck.

Gregory watches her as he leans on a car.

Mirian cries heavily as she says goodbye.

Once done she heads to her Abuela. They hug tightly and both  
weep out loud. Abuela whispers in her ear and once she's  
finished she lets go. She wipes off Mirian's tears.

Mirian grabs her small luggage.

She heads to the car where Gregory grabs the luggage for her,  
putting it in the trunk.

She waves a big goodbye to everyone, blowing kisses. Then she  
enters inside the car.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR- CONTINUOUS

Gregory comes in and starts the car.

Mirian looks at the buttons and presses one. It rolls down a window. She continues her waves of goodbye.

They drive away along a bumpy road.

Gregory closes her window. She doesn't expect this.

She turns and smiles at him, unbothered.

He gives her a quick glance then looks at her feet.

GREGORY  
(staring at the road)  
Where are your shoes?

Mirian sees her bare feet. She giggles and shrugs.

She CLICKS her feet together again.

MIRIAN (V.O.)  
(looking out the window)  
I click my naked feet together like  
I do in the river. The river calls  
to me constantly. I forgot to say  
goodbye to it. It cries to me to  
come back because I've been through  
a lot with it. I am a part of it. I  
am the river... I'm going to miss  
it. I'm going to miss that  
innocence of playing in dirt and  
water. That wilderness I so craved  
every time I woke up from sleep.  
This place is one of a kind. That  
love, that part of me that now has  
to change. Change for him. That  
part I will never forget as I am  
now a woman in my father's eyes.

CUT

TO:

INT. AIRPLANE- HOURS LATER

NOTE: Mirian and her father have changed to winter clothing. Ecuador's hottest temperature is around the month of March.

Mirian and her father are sitting next to each other. Her father reads a newspaper while she sits there amazed at her situation.

She picks up a magazine that reads 'Top Things To Do In New York Today'. She flips through the pages and stops at one with the Empire State Building in it.

She nudges her father and points to it. He looks at it.

MIRIAN  
(excited)  
Dad, can we please go here?

GREGORY  
(brushing it off)  
Yea, yea of course.

He continues to read his magazine and she puts it away.

The carts carrying food and drinks moves down next to them. Gregory opens their trays.

The pretty STEWARDESS puts down two packaged pastas. It is smoking from being in the microwave.

Mirian opens and inspects it.

GREGORY (CONT'D)  
You'll like it.

Mirian takes the smallest bite. Chewing it softly.

CUT TO:

EXT: BESIDES THE RIVER- DAY- FLASHBACK

SUPER: Ecuador, 1972

It is a sunny, hot day. The same river as the one in the beginning is running it's usual coarse.

Young Mirian, 5, swims in it along with a few kids. They SPLASH each other.

Abuela comes through the trees.

ABUELA  
(yelling)  
Mirian! Get out!

Young Mirian gasps.

EXT. THE RAINFOREST- MOMENTS LATER

Abuela drags Young Mirian away. She wears no shoes.

ABUELA

You know God knows when you lie. I told you if you go in the river you'll get sick. Remember Jose's little girl got ill from that dirty water. Nearly had her legs cut off.

MIRIAN (V.O.)

At the time I thought she was bluffing.

YOUNG MIRIAN

(pulling her arm away)

Abuela I'm fine. Let go!

Abuela abruptly stops walking. She bends down to her height and gives her an intimidating look.

ABUELA

Very well. But remember God gave us earth but earth cannot be our home sometimes. It belongs to the wild. I hope to God you don't get ill.

Abuela continues walking and Mirian obediently follows.

MIRIAN (V.O.)

I saw myself as the wild.

CUT TO:

INT. YOUNG MIRIAN'S TINY BEDROOM- MORNING

Young Mirian is laying pale on her bed. She MOANS and GROANS holding onto her stomach.

She coughs loudly and sweats massively.

Abuela hears this and comes in.

ABUELA

What happened to school?

Young Mirian turns to the side of the mattress and vomits.

CUT TO:

INT. YOUNG MIRIAN'S TINY BEDROOM- A FEW DAYS LATER

Young Mirian is shivering under a blanket. She is now even more pale.

Abuela stands over her with a female NEIGHBOR. The neighbor seems disheveled in appearance with knotted hair and rotting teeth. She has a cigarette in her mouth.

ABUELA  
(panicking)  
She hasn't eaten in days. I keep giving her water but she can't even keep that down. I don't know what to do?

The neighbor puffs outsmoke and puts her hands over Young Mirian's head.

She inspects the girl smugly.

NEIGHBOR  
Fever. As expected Satan has touched her with fire. A little girl who runs around, disobeys, and lies. The devil has a hold of her now.

ABUELA  
Should I bring her to Miguel?

NEIGHBOR  
No. Miquel wouldn't cure her. I suggest you bring her to the House of God. Take her to the priest. Has she been baptized?

ABUELA  
I believe so when she was 1. I've been told she was but who knows.

NEIGHBOR  
Either way God can help her.

CUT TO:

INT. A SMALL CHURCH- THE SAME AFTERNOON

Abuela carries Young Mirian. Young Mirian is extremely weak and cannot keep her eyes open. She cries out loud.

ABUELA  
Mirian! It's going to help! Trust in God.

MIRIAN (V.O.)  
What a novella this was.

Abuela and Young Mirian reach the middle-aged, balding PRIEST at the altar.

PRIEST  
(a little annoyed)  
Yes?

ABUELA  
Father! Father, please, we need  
Jesus to touch this little girl.  
She's dying!

PRIEST  
Oh I've seen her during service.  
She's very quiet. So weak she  
seems...she might die I'm afraid.

ABUELA  
Please, Father. Anything!

The priest quickly dips his hand in a pot of holy water and wipes the sign of the cross on her forehead.

He whispers a quick prayer.

PRIEST  
Pray the devil will rid itself.

ABUELA  
(steadying her breath)  
Thank you Father. Thank you God.

MIRIAN (V.O.)  
Yes, thank you Father for nothing.

CUT TO:

INT. YOUNG MIRIAN'S TINY BEDROOM- A DAY LATER- NIGHT

Young Mirian is finally sleeping. She hears movement and opens her eyes. She sees a shadowy figure illuminate in the hallway.

YOUNG MIRIAN  
(weakly)  
Mom?

ABUELA (O.S.)  
(crying)  
I don't know what else to do?

The shadowy figure turns out to be a young man with a stethoscope around his neck. It's MIGUEL, the town's doctor.

Abuela follows him into the room.

MIGUEL

Don't worry I'm here to help.

He gives her a physical check up.

ABUELA

Everything's going to be okay  
Miriancita. Miguel is the best  
doctor around.

CUT TO:

INT. AN OUTHOUSE OUTSIDE YOUNG MIRIAN'S SHACK- NEXT MORNING

Young Mirian is sitting on a toilet located on the ground.

Abuela is forcing her to drink a heavy thick-looking oil in a cup.

Young Mirian moves her head away. Abuela grabs her face harshly and holds it high.

ABUELA

Open your mouth! You need to get  
rid of those tapeworms!

YOUNG MIRIAN

No! Abuela, please! I don't want  
them to come out!

ABUELA

If you don't do it you'll die!

YOUNG MIRIAN

(screaming)  
I want mommy!

ABUELA

Drink!

Abuela pours it down her throat.

YOUNG MIRIAN

(spitting everywhere)  
It tastes so bad!

ABUELA

I told you to wear those shoes I  
bought you! And not go to the damn  
river! Now look, you have worms!

YOUNG MIRIAN  
I hate wearing shoes!

ABUELA  
Where'd you learn that! From her?  
Now you're extremely lucky we have  
a doctor around! Drink!

END OF FLASHBACK

CUT TO:

INT. AIRPLANE- PRESENT

Mirian holds onto her belly.

She gives a look of disgust but then quickly changes that.

MIRIAN  
(to her father)  
It's good.

The plane shakes and with fear she holds herself on the arms of the chair.

Her father gives her an odd look.

With embarrassment she closes the lid on her food and cleans herself up.

She lays her head on her father's shoulder. He stiffly pats her head like she were a puppy.

She looks down at her feet and she's now wearing boots.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE JFK AIRPORT- HOURS LATER- NIGHT

NOTE: All conversations with Mirian are in Spanish

The ground is covered in HEAVY snow. Gregory and Mirian TRUDGE through it.

A taxi is waiting for them, parked on the side of the street.

Gregory and the old TAXI DRIVER put all the luggages in the taxi.

Mirian is shaking with the cold but she doesn't mind as she bends down to touch the snow.

People walk around her as she's in the middle.

She attempts to make a TINY snowman on the ground.

A HONK interrupts her fun.

Mirian looks at the cab and they both are already seated.

She runs to the cab and then her TINY snowman is stepped on by someone.

CUT TO:

INT. CAB- LATER

Mirian looks at the city that never sleeps for the first time.

Lights SHINE bright as the taxi passes from building to building. Also it shines on the mass of people walking and driving.

She looks up and sees the magnificent tall buildings.

MIRIAN

Incredible.

GREGORY

You're in for a wake up call now.

MIRIAN

(putting her hands on the  
glass)

I've never felt snow. It runs  
through my hands and numbs them.  
It's so cold...

GREGORY

No more rivers Mirian.

CUT TO:

EXT. A MANHATTAN COMPLEX- LATER

The cab comes to a halt in front of the complex.

They take out the luggages.

Gregory pays the cab driver with cash.

Mirian looks at that money. Gregory notices and shakes a dollar bill in front of her face.

GREGORY  
 (handing her the bill)  
 Here you can keep this.

Mirian thanks him and looks at it as if it's the best prize in the world.

GREGORY (CONT'D)  
 (in English to the driver)  
 Thank you. Have a good night.

For a moment Mirian looks up at the skyline. It's beautiful.

GREGORY (CONT'D)  
 (interrupting)  
 Ready?

Gregory moves forward while Mirian hastily grabs her luggage and pushes it. It's so heavy for her.

A DOORMAN opens a golden framed door for them.

Mirian smiles at him but crashes into a HOMELESS MAN, dressed in ripped clothing.

The Homeless Man opens up the palm of his hand.

She fearfully runs toward the entrance after her father.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MANHATTAN COMPLEX- CONTINUOUS

Gregory greets the old bearded CONCEIRGE.

CONCEIRGE  
 Nice to see you again, Mr. Cabal.

GREGORY  
 (in English)  
 This is my daughter Mirian. It's her first day here in New York.

CONCEIRGE  
 Welcome Mirian.

She looks at them, not answering.

GREGORY  
 (in English, laughing)  
 She doesn't know any English.

They both go ahead and wait for the elevator to arrive.

CUT TO:

INT. ELEVATOR- CONTINUOUS

In the silent elevator they hear nothing but some faint music.

The elevator lifts up and SHAKES.

Mirian is scared and holds onto the railing.

It stops SHAKING and she laughs.

MIRIAN

I like this place. It's beautiful.

The elevator lands on the 5th floor.

CUT TO:

INT. 5TH FLOOR HALLWAY- CONTINUOUS

Mirian waits outside a door while Gregory opens it.

GREGORY

(making an unfunny joke)  
Don't get too excited.

It unlocks.

CUT TO:

INT. GREGORY'S APARTMENT- CONTINUOUS

Walking inside Mirian notices the family sitting, watching television.

GREGORY

(taking off his coat)  
Judy this is Mirian. Mirian, Judy.

JUDY, a heavy woman with dark hair and a big nose, gives Mirian a faceless expression. She gets up and hugs her. The both seem uncomfortable with the hug.

JUDY

(letting go of the hug)  
Its nice to finally see Gregory's daughter in person.

Gregory walks over and puts his hands on JULIE'S shoulders.

GREGORY  
And this is my oldest Julie.

Julie seems to be in her early teens. She gives a slight grin.

JULIE  
(in English)  
Hi.

GREGORY  
You girls will get along easily. Then there's Christina.

CHRISTINA'S a bit younger and she gives a quick wave.

GREGORY (CONT'D)  
Here's Liti.

LITI is a small child who can't sit still. She doesn't pay any attention.

All of them look exactly like their mother. They all are a bit heavy and have the same distinct nose.

GREGORY (CONT'D)  
And Robert but I think he's already been put to sleep.

MIRIAN  
(with the biggest smile)  
Hello everybody!

They stare. The television is heard...

JUDY  
Gregory why don't you show her to her room? I'm sure she's exhausted.

GREGORY  
Right. Well, Mirian this is the living room and to the right is the kitchen. Feel free to eat whatever.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY- CONTINUOUS

Gregory and Mirian walk down the hallway. He opens a door, turning on the light. Mirian follows him, standing outside the room.

GREGORY

Here's your room. You'll be sharing  
with Julie, Christina, and Liti. I  
put an extra bed by the window.

It's a crowded room filled with toys, beds, and dressers.

MIRIAN

It's so great! I love it dad!

GREGORY

And the bathroom is across.

He reaches to turn on the bathroom light.

MIRIAN

I'm grateful for everything and our  
family is great.

She goes in to hug him.

He uncomfortably pats her back and quickly pulls away.

GREGORY

I told the girls to leave you a  
towel on the bed. We'll talk in the  
morning.

He paces away.

GREGORY (CONT'D)

Night.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM- MINUTES LATER

Mirian locks the door and turns on the shower water.

She tests it with her hand and raises the heat up a bit.

Mist starts forming in the air.

CUT TO:

INT. THE SHOWER- CONTINUOUS

Mirian pulls the flowered printed curtain closed.

She wets her hair and massages her scalp.

All the dirt from her hair drips down the drain.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM- AFTER HER SHOWER

Mirian with a towel on brushes her teeth.

Once done she puts her toothbrush amongst their toothbrush holder. There's no more room but she crams hers in with theirs.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY- CONTINUOUS

Mirian with a towel still on accidentally bumps into Judy.

MIRIAN  
Oh Judy. I'm sorry.

JUDY  
(cold)  
You think we're made of money?

MIRIAN  
Oh I-

JUDY  
Hot water costs us. Two minute  
showers only.

She turns away.

Mirian has the most confused look.

CUT TO:

INT. THE GIRL'S BEDROOM- MINUTES LATER

All the girls have gone to sleep and the room is dark with only a light source coming through the window.

Mirian sits on her bed by the window and brushes her knotted hair. She winces with pain.

She puts the brush back on the white dresser and lays herself in bed.

She tries to sleep but hears the loud city life right outside.

She covers her ears.

CUT TO:

EXT. YOUNG MIRIAN'S SHACK- DAY- FLASHBACK

Abuela washes Young Mirian who stands over a bucket. Young Mirian tries to cover her nakedness and is SHIVERING.

The birds are CHRIPPING.

Abuela splashes a bucket of water over her.

ABUELA

Stop fidgeting! The more you stay still the quicker this will go. You smell like a beast just like your mother did when she was your age.

YOUNG MIRIAN

When can I see her?

ABUELA

Soon.

YOUNG MIRIAN

It's so cold!

Young Mirian begins to cry.

ABUELA

(scrubbing her with a tiny towel harshly)  
Stop being a baby. You know there are worse things in life. You should be thanking God we have a house, food, water... each other!

YOUNG MIRIAN

(whiny)

No!

ABUELA

At least you have someone here with you! Now raise your arms.

Young Mirian hesitates to raise them but she eventually does.

ABUELA (CONT'D)

You should thank God you have a mother and a father still living.

YOUNG MIRIAN

They don't care.

ABUELA

They do it's just...complicated.  
You'll understand one day. They'll  
be back. I know they will. I have  
faith.

Abuela scrubs her underarms. Young Mirian is ticklish and giggles.

ABUELA (CONT'D)

I know it tickles but we have to.

Mirian keeps giggling.

ABUELA (CONT'D)

(shaking her head)

Mirian I'm exhausted! Washing  
other's laundry is better than  
washing you.

Abuela puts down the towel. Her fragile, chapped hands shake.

END OF FLASHBACK

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN- NEXT MORNING

Ornaments and pictures surround every part of the wall  
creating the kitchen to look even TINIER and overcrowded.

Gregory sits at the table laughing along with his family.  
Joining them is ROBERT, the youngest baby who sits on a high  
chair.

Judy pours Gregory a cup of coffee and places a plate of hot  
breakfast before him. She also does so for the rest of the  
children.

Mirian walks in all cheery with her pajamas on. It's  
different compared to everyone else being dressed for the  
day.

JUDY

(a fake smile)

Well your up late.

MIRIAN

Good morning Dad.

GREGORY  
 (unemotional)  
 Morning.

She goes up to kiss his cheek. Everyone stares at them.

Gregory uncomfortably pulls a small grin.

JUDY  
 So how did you sleep?

MIRIAN  
 Very well, thanks. Morning  
 everyone. You know I've watched you  
 all grow up in the photos dad sent.

JULIE  
 I saw my hair brushed was moved.  
 Did you use it?

MIRIAN  
 I'm sorry I don't have my own yet.

JULIE  
 (a little annoyed)  
 You should have asked.

Judy sits down.

JUDY  
 Foods on the stove.

Mirian gets up and grabs herself a plate.

She then places a chair next to her father.

MIRIAN  
 Looks delicious. What is that?

Mirian points to an item on her plate.

Judy leans over to see what she's pointing at.

JUDY  
 Bacon.

MIRIAN  
 Bacon?

JUDY  
 It's made from pigs.

Mirian takes a tiny bit and tries to chew it.

MIRIAN  
 (faking her enjoyment)  
 It's chewy...but delicious.

JUDY  
 You'll see bacon around here a lot.  
 It's an American thing.

MIRIAN  
 Right...

JUDY  
 (in English)  
 Well everyone its time to go to  
 school. Hurry or you'll miss the  
 bus.

GREGORY  
 (in English)  
 And work.

Everyone puts on their coats and bags.

THE THREE HALF-SISTERS  
 (In English)  
 Bye!

Judy gives Gregory a quick kiss.

JUDY  
 Bye. Take care.

They all head out the door together.

MIRIAN  
 (shouting)  
 Bye Dad!

The door shuts closed. Now it's silent.

JUDY  
 Well as you know we are trying to  
 enroll you in school but it takes a  
 bit of time given paperwork and  
 all.

MIRIAN  
 I understand.

JUDY  
 In the meantime I might need some  
 help around here.

MIRIAN  
(eating her food slowly)  
In what way?

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM- LATER THAT AFTERNOON

Mirian is sweating as she scrubs the hard wood floor. The floor is now so SHINY.

She gets up and wipes her sweaty forehead.

She takes off her gloves and tosses them.

Taking a break she walks around inspecting the living room.

She notices every inch of the wall is covered with picture frames. All with Gregory's family.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY- CONTINUOUS

She walks through the hallway and notices the bathroom is closed and being used.

A DIALING of numbers is heard in the background.

Stepping over she enters a bedroom.

CUT TO:

INT. GREGORY'S BEDROOM- CONTINUOUS

A RINGING is heard.

She also sees every inch of the wall covered in pictures of only his family.

MIRIAN (V.O. IN A PHONE CALL)  
Hello, Abuela can you hear me?  
Can you hear me now? It's Mirian! I  
meant to call you earlier but I've  
been so busy getting settled! I  
really need to talk to you about  
something... But first how are you?  
Oh me? Well I'm...

She notices a big garbage bag on the side of the bed.

She opens it and peaks at it.

There are many empty glass beer bottles.

MIRIAN (V.O. IN A PHONE CALL) (CONT'D)  
 Everything's great here! I love it!  
 I get along with everyone so well.

She lifts one bottle out of the bag.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM- ONE MORNING

The classroom is rather large and noisy, filled with young teenagers of all kinds of races.

The desks and chairs are all scratched up and breaking apart.

The bricked walls look YELLOW. They are peeling and written excessively on.

Some teens are running around wildly, and others are sitting down talking to one another.

The teacher, MRS. VARGAS is an old, uptight lady sitting at her desk reading a book. She peers up at Mirian who steps before her.

Mirian just smiles and hands her a piece of paper.

Mrs. Vargas reads it.

MRS. VARGAS  
 (in English)  
 Okay, Miriam. You can take a seat.

Mirian looks at her, not moving.

MRS. VARGAS (CONT'D)  
 (in English)  
 Spanish?

Mirian nods her head.

MRS. VARGAS (CONT'D)  
 In this class we speak and write in English. You are older than the rest so I expect you to learn quick and move to a grade more suitable for you, understand Miriam?

Mirian nods her head again, a bit nervous now.

MRS. VARGAS (CONT'D)

Do you ever talk?

She goes back to reading her book.

Some of the kids stare at her as she strides through the classroom.

A few boys almost knock her over as they run around in front of her.

Mirian spots an empty desk in the back and plunges onto the seat.

She puts her backpack on the floor and takes off her coat, hanging it on the back of her chair.

A FEMALE CLASSMATE in front of her, with a half ponied updo and braces turns around.

FEMALE CLASSMATE

(in English)

How old are you?

MIRIAN

(confused)

What?

The girl turns back around to continue chatting with her friends.

Some of the grouped up boys throw paper balls at her. One boy in particular SNICKERS very loud.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM- LATER THAT NIGHT

Mirian walks in and sees her father who is alone watching TV. She PLOPS down on the couch next to him.

GREGORY

(only looking at the TV)

I forgot to ask how was school?

MIRIAN

It was good, dad.

GREGORY

Make any friends?

MIRIAN

I've met some...interesting people.  
I think it's not easy because I'm  
older and taller but it'll happen.

GREGORY

That's good. Judy explained the bus  
to you well?

MIRIAN

Yea. I've never taken three buses  
to get to school before. Two public  
and one school bus.

GREGORY

That's New York for you.

MIRIAN

Yea...

There is a long silence.

MIRIAN (CONT'D)

How was work?

GREGORY

Construction, always the same.

MIRIAN

Oh. What made you work in  
construction?

Gregory turns off the TV and yawns.

GREGORY

I'm sleepy.

He gets up from the couch.

GREGORY (CONT'D)

(walking away)

Well, goodnight.

MIRIAN

(smile fading)

Goodnight.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL BATHROOM- ANOTHER DAY

Mirian comes out of the stall.

She stops and becomes fixated on her THREE CLASSMATES.

Her three classmates are snorting cocaine from the top of a pocket mirror.

They notice her looking at them.

CLASSMATE 1  
(rude, in English)  
What are you looking at?

Mirian quickly turns away and leaves.

CLASSMATE 2  
(in English)  
I forgot she can't speak English.

They giggle.

CLASSMATE 1  
(in English)  
Isn't her name Maryann or something.

CLASSMATE 3  
(in English)  
Pretty sure it's Maria.

Coming out of another stall, CIARA, a tall, slim Hispanic girl with braided pigtails and large hoop earrings appears.

NOTE: Ciara always wears overalls.

CIARA  
(in English)  
It's Mirian, you pendejas!

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM- MOMENTS LATER

Mrs. Vargas is explaining to the class about equations as she writes on the chalkboard.

Mirian's face is full of confusion but she tries to copy down the notes.

CUT TO:

EXT. A SMALL SCHOOLHOUSE- AFTERNOON- FLASHBACK

In Ecuador Young Mirian runs out of small schoolhouse in the middle of field.

She is wearing her school uniform, consisting of a blue skirt and white button down shirt.

She runs up to her Abuela and hugs her.

ABUELA  
 (pulling back, shocked)  
 I thought I told you to tuck in  
 that shirt!

She forcibly tucks it in. Mirian moans in annoyance.

ABUELA (CONT'D)  
 No complaining. Have you been  
 crying?

Young Mirian nods her head.

ABUELA (CONT'D)  
 What happened?

YOUNG MIRIAN  
 She's mean.

ABUELA  
 Who?

YOUNG MIRIAN  
 The teacher. She hit my hand with a  
 ruler. I couldn't figure out the  
 math problem.

ABUELA  
 Be lucky that's all they do. In my  
 day they spanked you.

YOUNG MIRIAN  
 (gasp)  
 On the butt?

ABUELA  
 Yes. The butt. Things changed.  
 Things are better now.

YOUNG MIRIAN  
 (crying)  
 No!

ABUELA  
 (sighing)  
 Please Mirian no crying. I had a  
 hard day's work.

END OF FLASHBACK

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM- PRESENT

MIRIAN (V.O)  
 (writing down her notes)  
 This place confuses me. I realize  
 now I knew nothing of the outside  
 world. I was only living in a  
 trapped bubble. Nothing here is  
 what I expected. The food, the  
 clothes, the people, my own father.  
 I miss everything in Ecuador.  
 Although here I'm given more, over  
 there I loved every single minute  
 of my suffering. I don't understand  
 how things are harder here. The  
 American dream they say lies here.  
 What is the dream?

Suddenly a crumbled up paper lands on her desk.

CIARA  
 Pst, pst! Hi.

Mirian gives her a weird look.

CIARA (CONT'D)  
 I heard you're Mirian. I'm Ciara,  
 we should hang later.

RONALD, the boy who snickered earlier at Mirian, HUFFS out in  
 annoyance.

RONALD  
 (in English)  
 Will you two shut up!

MRS. VARGAS  
 (scolding, in English)  
 What's going on back there?

CIARA  
 (a cheeky fake smile, in  
 English)  
 Nothing Mrs. Vargas.

CUT TO:

INT. A CLOTHING STORE IN NYC- AFTER SCHOOL

Mirian and Ciara are walking around, searching the racks of clothes together.

CIARA  
 I can't believe your stepmom treats you that way. If I were you I'd hit her. She gives us Puerto Ricans a bad name!

MIRIAN  
 It's not like I can do anything about it. Dad just lets it happen.

CIARA  
 What a wimp.

MIRIAN  
 He's my father and I do need to respect him.

CIARA  
 Dads are overrated and shitty. Trust me.

Ciara sees a shirt on a hanger she likes. She looks around the store.

She removes the tag on the shirt and stuffs it in her bag.

MIRIAN  
 (surprised)  
 You aren't paying?

CIARA  
 Mirian, dear, I see things in a clear way for my future. I live poor and I fail all my classes. I'm basically never going to get a good future so why the hell not?

MIRIAN  
 You shouldn't say things like that.

CIARA

I'm stupid. At least I'm honest about myself. Does your shitty dad pay everything for you?

MIRIAN

Yea he buys my stuff.

CIARA

(looking her up and down)

Sorry but he needs to look at a fashion magazine more closely.

MIRIAN

(unbothered)

I think he's making up those years by buying me stuff.

CIARA

You think?

They continue searching.

CIARA (CONT'D)

(deeply involved)

Now tell me more.

MIRIAN

Well she put me in a horrible school with horrible kids, no offense to you, while her kids are in a much closer, much nicer one.

CIARA

You think I don't know our school is terrible?

MIRIAN

She said it was the only one accepting me because of my 'lack of education'. I don't even know if that's true. Now I'm stuck with a bunch of tiny eighth graders. I look like Godzilla to them.

Ciara steals another shirt.

MIRIAN (CONT'D)

(unnoticing and ranting)

She makes me cook, clean, take care of her baby! I'm like their mother now and they treat me like I ruined their life!

CIARA

Can I ask about your actual mother?

MIRIAN

(changing demeanor)

She's never been in my life.

CIARA

Oh sorry. I guess moms are overrated too. Mine's a total bitch.

MIRIAN

I don't know what to do. I hate it here Ciara, yet I have to keep my mouth shut to try to be with my father.

CIARA

Mirian, girl, if I was you I would talk to dad about that witch bitch.

MIRIAN

But things will get better. I just know it. I trust him.

Ciara gives her a skeptical look.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE NEW YORK STREETS- HOURS LATER

Mirian is walking through the noisy, crowded streets. She looks down on the ground as she walks, avoiding everyone.

HONKS, and BEEPS are heard.

She walks next to a van where two SMOKING MEN are leaning on it.

They puff out their cigarettes and catcall her.

SMOKING MAN 1

(in English)

Hey chica, want to be a model?

SMOKING MAN 2

(in English)

Mami, you're making me all hot!

Mirian looks at them with fear and walks away faster.

CUT TO:

INT. GREGROY'S APARTMENT- MINUTES LATER

Mirian enters the apartment, putting her keys back in her bag.

Suddenly Judy shows up.

JUDY  
(angered)  
Do you know what time it is?

MIRIAN  
(nervous)  
I'm sorry Judy, I was with a friend.

JUDY  
Sneaking of with God knows who!

Gregory appears.

GREGORY  
Now, now, what's wrong?

JUDY  
She was supposed to be back by 6 to help with dinner.

GREGORY  
(laughing it off)  
I think once is okay. She made a mistake.

JUDY  
(shocked)  
You're defending her?

GREGORY  
What do you mean I'm defending her? She's just a child.

Mirian looks at him disappointed.

JUDY  
She's the oldest and I could use some help around the house!

GREGORY  
I'll let this slide once.

JUDY  
She needs to be disciplined! She needs to know when she's wrong!

GREGORY  
Relax honey, please.

JUDY  
(sighing in annoyance)  
Gregory, I need to speak to you  
now.

Judy stomps over to the bedroom and Gregory follows her, eyeing Mirian.

He shuts the door and ARGUING can be heard.

Mirian anguishly begins taking off her coat.

CUT TO:

INT. MIRIAN'S ROOM- LATER THAT NIGHT

In the dark room, everyone is sleeping.

Crying can be heard and Mirian's eyes open.

She slowly inspects the sound and gets up.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM- CONTINUOUS

Mirian enters and spots her father who's weeping on the couch.

He chugs a large bottle of whiskey and then sees her.

MIRIAN  
(squinting her eyes)  
Dad? What are you doing?

GREGORY  
(acting normal)  
Just having a drink.

MIRIAN  
Why were you crying?

GREGORY  
I wasn't.

MIRIAN  
I heard you.

GREGORY  
(speaking drunkenly)  
Whatever you heard is wrong.

MIRIAN  
Was it because of the fight I  
caused?

GREGORY  
You caused?

MIRIAN  
I'm sorry dad, I didn't mean to  
come home late. She was the only  
friend I made in school and I  
really wanted to hang out with her  
and-

GREGORY  
(interrupting)  
How is that your fault?

MIRIAN  
(shrugging)  
I don't know.

GREGORY  
I was young once. I was once like  
you. I had so many dreams.

MIRIAN  
Really?

She sits by him.

GREGORY  
I was in love at your age.

MIRIAN  
I haven't been in love yet.

GREGORY  
I was in love with your mother.

Beat.

He chugs another sip of the bottle.

MIRIAN  
You loved my mother?

GREGORY  
Of course I did.

MIRIAN

Did she love you back? I'm sorry I don't know much to the story.

GREGORY

I think so. Everyone thought we weren't because we were so young but it can happen at any age. We strived to be a family together. Good God, you even look like her.

He chugs another sip.

GREGORY (CONT'D)

She was waiting for me to come back. I must have broken her heart.

MIRIAN

She just couldn't see how hardworking you were but I understand you dad. I'm sorry other people don't.

GREGORY

I was making a life here to bring you both. I remember she had this sparkle to her. She reminded me of a floating angel. She was such magic to me.

MIRIAN

Dad, that's so sweet.

GREGORY

(saddened)

And then she married. She didn't want to wait anymore.

Gregory begins to gag. He holds his mouth ready to vomit.

He runs out of the living room.

CUT

TO:

INT. MIRIAN'S ROOM- MOMENTS LATER

Mirian walks into the dark bedroom and tip toes towards her bed.

As Mirian walks past Julie's bed, Julie opens her eyes.

JULIE  
 (in English)  
 You know this happens often.

Mirian stops walking and turns to look at her, confused at the language.

JULIE (CONT'D)  
 (stoic, in Spanish)  
 I guess this is you're first time seeing him like that, huh. He has two sides to him. Don't worry mom's used to it already, she doesn't even bother anymore. I guess it'll happen more now that you're in the picture.

Julie turns in bed to face away from her.

CUT

TO:

INT. KITCHEN- NEXT MORNING

Judy is scrubbing heavily on the kitchen counter.

Mirian walks in with her pajamas on.

MIRIAN  
 (noticing her harsh scrubbing)  
 Judy is everything okay?

JUDY  
 (stops scrubbing)  
 Gregory's mother is coming for her yearly visit. You should have woken up earlier. I need help for God's sake.

Mirian looks at the living room and sees the three girls cleaning.

JUDY (CONT'D)  
 Go help the girls.

MIRIAN  
 Where's dad?

JUDY  
 Catching up on his sleep. Now go.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM- CONTINUOUS

All three girls run around the room, rearranging everything intensely.

Mirian starts to help them.

MIRIAN  
 Morning.

The three girls just continue with their cleaning.

CUT TO:

INT. BY THE FRONT DOOR- THAT AFTERNOON

A DOORBELL is heard.

The door is opened by Judy.

FLO, is a rich, stern, and wise lady in her 60s. She is seen covered up in a fur coat and a luggage by her side.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM- LATER

Everyone is sitting, eating their meals in silence.

Knives and forks CLANK.

NOTE: Flo only speaks Spanish.

FLO  
 Very nice meal Judy.

She wipes her mouth with a napkin.

JUDY  
 Thank you.

FLO  
 (sarcastic)  
 Fried goodness I suppose.

GREGORY  
 (imploring)  
 You want seconds Mom?

FLO  
 No thank you. Judy maybe a  
 vegetable next time?

GREGORY  
 We do eat vegetables mom just not  
 today.

FLO  
 This house could use some.

GREGORY  
 Sometimes Mirian uses vegetables.

Judy gives him a look.

GREGORY (CONT'D)  
 (changing the topic)  
 So are you planning on visiting  
 Ruth and Luis?

FLO  
 If I didn't know any better I'd  
 think you'd want me gone.

GREGORY  
 (getting nervous)  
 No it's not that.

FLO  
 I sense it.

GREGORY  
 Please mom I didn't mean it that  
 way.

FLO  
 I see the children keep growing and  
 growing. Are they disciplined well?

JUDY  
 (laughing it off)  
 Oh yes very much so. They are well  
 behaved.

FLO  
 Do they speak Spanish?

JUDY  
 Well Julie the most.

FLO  
They all need to learn. It's good  
for them to learn.

GREGORY  
You're right. I've been so busy.

FLO  
(speaking to Mirian)  
And what about you?

Mirian stops helping feeding Robert with a spoon.

MIRIAN  
(looking at her)  
Me?

FLO  
Mirian this is my first time seeing  
you and you seem so lost. What's  
wrong?

MIRIAN  
I do?

FLO  
You need to speak louder. Have you  
learned any English living here?

MIRIAN  
I'm trying.

FLO  
Say something to me in English.

MIRIAN  
I'm sorry I-

FLO  
Gregory I thought you would make  
sure she learned.

GREGORY  
As a father I'm trying my best-

Flo sighs loudly and then drinks her glass of water.

Knives and forks continue CLANKING.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA- ANOTHER DAY

Mirian and Ciara are sitting at a table by themselves. Mirian studies a Spanish/English dictionary.

CIARA

Mirian eat! Take a break for goodness sakes.

MIRIAN

She's right. I've been here for a month and I haven't learned any English. It's embarrassing.

CIARA

Food will make your brain work more. Besides English is not easy to learn in a month.

MIRIAN

(looking at her)

Dad was being so weird yesterday. More weird than he already is. It was like he was afraid of her.

CIARA

Grandma's are way overrated. My grandma is the worst. She's so gross like she smells.

MIRIAN

They seemed distant. It's funny how they both come from the same place, same family. Yet they aren't alike. Living in different places now changes them.

CIARA

Your dad hasn't said anything about her before?

MIRIAN

(shaking her head no)

You should have seen it. They all were acting so nervous even Judy.

CIARA

Maybe your dad did something that pissed her off?

MIRIAN

Yea maybe.

CIARA  
 Forget it. Give me a sentence in  
 English.

MIRIAN  
 (clearing her throat,  
 speaking in English)  
 It is nnow Sppringg.

CIARA  
 Hey not too bad.

MIRIAN  
 Okay now its your turn. Take out  
 your textbook.

CIARA  
 Mirian I don't know if you can help  
 me.

MIRIAN  
 Don't give up. Now C'mon.

Mirian gets water SPLASHED on her suddenly.

Ronald stands over her laughing with a group of friends.

CIARA  
 (in English)  
 Dude what the fuck is your problem!

Mirian looks like she is about to cry.

RONALD  
 (in English)  
 She's my problem.

CIARA  
 (in English)  
 What?

RONALD  
 (in English)  
 Her face and fat body is my  
 problem. She's so embarrassing.  
 Tell her in Spanish to get out of  
 my school.

Ronald and his group of friends walk away.

MIRIAN  
 What did he say?

CIARA

You don't need to hear what that jerk said. It shouldn't be worth your time.

MIRIAN

(wiping herself off)  
He acts like some sort of wild monkey.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM- MIDNIGHT

The lights are off and everyone is asleep.

Mirian is on the couch watching an episode of *Who's The Boss*.

She is interrupted by the sound of someone going into the kitchen and rummaging in the fridge.

She notices its her dad.

MIRIAN

Dad, what are you doing up?

GREGORY

I could say the same to you. Go to sleep before Judy sees.

MIRIAN

I'm sorry I couldn't sleep. Were you hungry?

GREGORY

I have no idea.

He snorts.

MIRIAN

Dad?

GREGORY

Everything's fine.

MIRIAN

Have you been drinking again?

GREGORY

No I haven't.

MIRIAN

You're lying. I can tell.

Mirian gets up and tries to hold onto her father who's losing his balance.

GREGORY  
I'm just the worst. I'm so embarrassing.

He starts to cry.

MIRIAN  
Let's get you to bed.

GREGORY  
(taking her hands off him)  
No!

MIRIAN  
Shh! Everyone's asleep.

GREGORY  
I said no!

Judy comes in and grabs Gregory.

JUDY  
What did you do?

MIRIAN  
Me?

GREGORY  
Mirian you need a haircut!

MIRIAN  
Shh! Dad please.

JUDY  
He's gotten worse since you came here. Help me take him to his room before she finds out he's like this or else he'll be even more worse. Hopefully she'll leave soon.

MIRIAN  
Grandma?

JUDY  
Just help me.

Mirian helps carry him to his room.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN- NEXT MORNING

Everyone is either eating nonchalantly at the table or chatting with one another.

JUDY  
 (pouring Gregory more  
 coffee)  
 Feeling better?

GREGORY  
 Yea a little.

FLO  
 What do you have Gregory?

JUDY  
 Oh he's just-

FLO  
 A drunk.

GREGORY  
 Under the weather.

FLO  
 You think I don't know you? I'm a  
 mother! I know everything! I've  
 been through it all!

JUDY  
 Please let's talk later.

FLO  
 (shaking her head with  
 disappointment)  
 I heard you last night! I suppose  
 old habits come back easily!

GREGORY  
 Please mom-

FLO  
 (interrupting)  
 I thought you would have grown up  
 by now! Being here is a waste then!

GREGORY  
 It's not a waste. Living her-

FLO  
 (interrupting)  
 You're lying!

GREGORY  
 (screaming)  
 I'm not lying!

FLO  
 You were supposed to stop this  
 disgusting habit!

Robert starts crying.

A DIALING of numbers is played in the background again. Then RINGING. Abuela doesn't answer.

Gregory leaves the kitchen with frustration.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM- DAY

Mrs. Vargas hands out graded quizzes. She calls out students names so they can come up one by one.

Ciara receives hers and sits down.

MIRIAN  
 How is it?

CIARA  
 A bit better.

MIRIAN  
 That's good.

CIARA  
 And here I thought fame was the  
 solution. I always wanted to be  
 like Cindi Lauper.

MIRIAN  
 I don't know who that is...

MRS. VARGAS  
 Miriam.

Miriam gets up and the teacher hands back her test.

MRS. VARGAS (CONT'D)  
 (in English)  
 Keep this up and you'll fail.  
 Understand what I'm saying?

MIRIAN  
(in English)

I do.

Mirian goes back to her desk.

CIARA  
How did you do?

MIRIAN  
Not so good.

CIARA  
She makes it so goddamn difficult.

MIRIAN  
I've had a lot in my mind lately.

CIARA  
Maybe your dad can help out?

MIRIAN  
I don't think so. He's not like  
that with me.

CIARA  
Have you even asked?

Mrs. Vargas starts a new lesson. They both drop the conversation and concentrate at what she is saying.

CUT

TO:

EXT. CENTRAL PARK- A SUNNY DAY

On a sunny, spring day the family is having a picnic on the grass. Flo sits on a bench with her sunglasses on observing the family.

JUDY  
(to Flo)  
It's such a pretty day.

FLO  
It's a bit windy.

GREGORY  
Mom, you okay? Need anything?

FLO  
I'm fine Gregory.

LITI  
 (to her sisters, in  
 English)  
 Do you want to ride your bikes with  
 me?

CHRISTINA  
 (in English)  
 I guess.

They get up and begin to get on their bikes.

JUDY  
 Gregory will you watch over them? I  
 have to use the restroom. Mirian?

Mirian awakes from laying in the field of flowers. She makes  
 a big yawn.

JUDY (CONT'D)  
 Stop sleeping. Take him please.

Judy hands Mirian the baby. Judy and Gregory leave.

Mirian sits next to Flo.

FLO  
 Happy Easter.

MIRIAN  
 (smiling)  
 Happy Easter.

FLO  
 I like your dress.

MIRIAN  
 Dad bought it for me.

FLO  
 It's a gorgeous baby blue. And  
 lovely shoes.

MIRIAN  
 I love the color red. He got me  
 these too.

FLO  
 Interesting combination. Looks nice  
 for church. Too bad this family  
 doesn't go.

They both watch Gregory in helping Liti ride her bike.

FLO (CONT'D)

Now that is a picture worth taking.  
I bet you wish a lot of things  
happened between you and your  
father like that.

MIRIAN

Time was missed but we're working  
on it.

FLO

I know I may seem mean and scary  
sometimes.

MIRIAN

No. I think you help your family  
the best way you can.

FLO

You see family is important to me.  
I want them to succeed and make a  
living like my ancestors did.

Beat.

MIRIAN

You mentioned you owned a farming  
factory in Ecuador.

FLO

Cows everywhere over there. It  
reminds me of the people walking  
the streets here.

MIRIAN

It must be nice.

FLO

I'm still trying to figure out  
which one of my nine children will  
own it as soon as I'm gone. It  
seems Gregory has long passed that  
option. He has his whole life here.

MIRIAN

And it's great.

FLO

You look like her you know.

MIRIAN

My mother?

FLO  
And your Abuela.

MIRIAN  
You knew them?

FLO  
She once worked for me.

MIRIAN  
(intrigued)  
She did?

FLO  
Both of them did. They'd come over  
and do my laundry. Then your mother  
met my son.

MIRIAN  
They fell in love...

FLO  
Young love most of the time never  
lasts dear. Sorry to say.

MIRIAN  
But it was just a misunderstanding  
between them.

FLO  
Perhaps... But she was far too  
young to understand what its like  
taking care of you. What it's like  
to be a mother.

MIRIAN  
(realization)  
I guess her dream was to have a  
real complete family, without me.

FLO  
We all have dreams. I bet you do  
too.

MIRIAN  
The sacrifices we make in order to  
make our dreams come true. I don't  
know my dream yet.

FLO  
This is it. Right here. Being here.

Another beat.

FLO (CONT'D)

Mine is being a mom. The conversation the other day wasn't pleasant but you might have heard some confusing things. You see I visit yearly to check on your father. To see if he fulfilled his promise in caring for his family, to have not spent it all on booze. No one probably told you but I sent your father here and I took him away from your mother. He was acting a fool and not being a good person. And your mother just let him... She wasn't thinking about what was best for you. He needed to mature from the alcoholism. It took him years to finally get to where he needed to be. I pray everyday God makes him stop. He has it all already. I know it's hard to take in but I think you're mature enough to finally hear it.

Judy comes back and takes Robert from Mirian.

JUDY

(looking at her daughters)  
How are they doing?

Mirian looks down as if she's about to cry.

FLO

They're doing great.

CUT

TO:

INT. KITCHEN- DAY

Mirian with her bookbag rushes out the door.

Gregory and Judy are sitting at the kitchen table.

JUDY

(putting her coffee mug  
down)  
Well that was weird. She's usually suffocating you.

Gregory shrugs and drinks from his mug.

CUT

TO:

INT. MCDONALDS- DAY

Ciara brings in their tray of food to the table.

CIARA  
Want more ketchup?

MIRIAN  
No. I think we have enough.

She takes the food out of the bag and starts eating quickly.

CIARA  
Whoa. Slow down.

MIRIAN  
(embarrassed)  
I know I've gained some weight.

CIARA  
It's better than being bones like  
how you were before.

Mirian continues to eat.

CIARA (CONT'D)  
Thank your dad for me. For buying  
us lunch.

MIRIAN  
Too bad he isn't here with us.

Mirian stops eating.

CIARA  
You okay?

MIRIAN  
Just things on my mind again.

CIARA  
Mirian you really should be talking  
to him if you trust him so much.  
It's not good to hold it in.

MIRIAN  
And Abuela hasn't been answering me  
lately. It's hard to reach her. The  
service there is not great.

CIARA  
 Have you been leaving messages?  
 Maybe she's busy.

MIRIAN  
 Yea or maybe she forgot about me.

She stuffs her mouth again.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM- ANOTHER NIGHT

Everyone is seated in the living room.

Judy hands everyone a piece of cake.

She then hands one to Mirian.

JUDY  
 (unemotional)  
 Happy Birthday Mirian.

MIRIAN  
 (a slight grin)  
 Thanks.

They all eat their piece in silence.

Mirian looks around the room and observes everyone.

Her father reads a newspaper.

She forcibly eats the cake with anxiety.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE THE SHACK- DAY- FLASHBACK- MONTAGE

QUICK CUTS:

-Abuela carries a large sack.

-She opens the sack.

-She scrubs the laundry against a wash board over a bucket of water while her hands shake.

END OF MONTAGE

Young Mirian is heard off screen wailing.

Abuela looks behind her at the shack and wipes her sweaty forehead.

CUT TO:

INT. MIRIAN'S TINY BEDROOM- MOMENTS LATER

Her Abuela cuddles with her in bed.

ABUELA

Shh. It's okay I know you wanted a cake and some presents. I promise I'll walk to town and get some ingredients tomorrow. I just had to get this laundry done today. You know we need the money.

YOUNG MIRIAN

I don't want to wait.

ABUELA

Tomorrow is better than me saying no.

YOUNG MIRIAN

Will you get me a present?

ABUELA

I'm saving up for it. It's going to take a while.

YOUNG MIRIAN

Will mommy and daddy get me anything?

ABUELA

Maybe this year they would.

MIRIAN (V.O.)

But they never did.

END OF FLASHBACK

CUT TO:

INT. THE GIRL'S BEDROOM- PRESENT- LATER THAT SAME NIGHT

Mirian brushes her knotted hair.

Gregory knocks and walks in. He is carrying a cardboard box.

He offers the box to her. She takes it.

GREGORY  
Happy Birthday.

He pats her head and leaves the room.

She opens the box and gasps.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN- NEXT MORNING

Judy's three girls are sitting and crying.

JUDY  
(holding Robert)  
Really Gregory?

Mirian holds her bunny and looks at all of them crying. She then glances at her father in fear.

JUDY (CONT'D)  
You buy her one but not the girls!

GREGORY  
Of course not. He's for everyone.

JUDY  
But that's not the point!

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM- LATER THAT AFTERNOON

The girls play with the bunny as Mirian watches from afar.

Gregory comes in the apartment and has bought something. He runs to his bedroom with the plastic bag he carries.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM- ANOTHER DAY

Mrs. Vargas writes new math problems on the board.

She turns around and inspects the classroom.

MRS. VARGAS  
(in English)  
Miriam. Come up and do the first  
problem. And...Ronald come do this  
other one.

Mrs. Vargas calls out some other students to complete the problems.

A depressed looking Mirian goes to the chalkboard and starts the problem. Ronald solves the one next to her.

Mirian's arm accidentally bumps into Ronald's arm, screwing up his writing. Ronald does the same to her arm.

Mirian gives him a dirty look.

She does it back but harder. He does the same.

They keep doing this until he throws the chalk at her and she does as well.

She then throws the chalk eraser.

Mrs. Vargas who was helping a student at their desk sees Mirian throw the eraser.

MRS. VARGAS (CONT'D)  
(in English)

What is going on!

RONALD  
(in English)

She started it!

MRS. VARGAS  
(in English)

Both of you detention!

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM- SAME NIGHT

Mirian finishes towel drying her hair.

She wipes the mirror looking at her reflection unsatisfied.

There's a loud KNOCK.

CHRISTINA (O.S.)  
(in English)

Mirian dinner!

Mirian rolls her eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM- MOMENTS LATER

All the family, including Flo, are eating.

In slow motion Mirian focuses on some of them talking to one another.

MIRIAN (V.O)

I watch them like they were creatures. I belong to none of them. I belong nowhere. I want to go back home but I'm afraid to disappoint my father and Abuela. I made her a promise. Today dad didn't really care that I got in trouble. Does he even care at all? Judy on the other hand was furious. She and dad had another fight again. They are ignoring each other now. She wanted to punish me. I'm causing trouble for everyone. Maybe I should just go back...go back to the river.

CUT TO:

INT. THE GIRL'S BEDROOM- AFTER DINNER

Mirian lays down on her bed looking up at the ceiling.

Her arms and legs are spread apart with the bunny laying on her chest.

She looks at her bare feet on the bed.

Abruptly Flo comes in and sits on one of the beds.

FLO

Damn kids are so noisy. At least here I can be at peace.

She points to the bunny.

FLO (CONT'D)

It looks like you can finally be with him in peace.

MIRIAN

(petting her bunny)

Even if it's for just a few minutes.

She opens up her Bible and continues reading. Mirian looks at it.

MIRIAN (CONT'D)  
My Abuela has one just like that.

FLO  
I'm glad someone in this house recognizes it.

MIRIAN  
I should really pray more. I forget to now.

Beat.

MIRIAN (CONT'D)  
Grandma?

FLO  
(looking at her Bible)  
Hmm?

MIRIAN  
Have you ever felt like running away?

FLO  
(looking at her)  
Sometimes I did. Even as a mother I wanted to. Your grandfather wasn't always pleasant to be around. Having nine children is a disaster but as a woman I stuck through it because I had to for the sake of others.

MIRIAN  
Oh.

FLO  
If you plan on running away then don't. It's not worth it.

She turns a page and continues reading.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN- DAY

A phone RINGS. Judy answers it.

JUDY  
 (in English)  
 Hello?

The bunny steps over her legs. She lifts her leg up.

JUDY (CONT'D)  
 (to the bunny)  
 Go away.

She returns to the phone call and leans on the wall. She fans herself as she sweats.

JUDY (CONT'D)  
 (in English)  
 Sorry who is this?...Yes this is  
 Mrs. Cabal...Really?

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE THE COMPLEX- LATER

Ciara and Mirian are walking with milkshakes in their hands and their backpacks on.

CIARA  
 I'm telling you watch out for your  
 milkshakes now. Cocaine is being  
 transported through the vanilla  
 ones. That's why chocolate is the  
 way to go.

MIRIAN  
 I don't think cocaine would be in  
 Dairy Queen.

CIARA  
 It was on the news.

MIRIAN  
 I think people are just scared.

CIARA  
 Escobar ain't playing.

They arrive in front on Mirian's complex.

MIRIAN  
 Well I just hope I can have a  
 relaxing day in there.

She hugs Ciara bye.



MIRIAN  
Where is everybody?

JUDY  
Don't worry about that. Gregory I  
think you should start.

Gregory stirs around in his seat and clears his throat. He  
looks even more uncomfortable than ever.

GREGORY  
Mirian your behavior is not good.  
Not good at all. Your teacher says  
your failing. She called us  
earlier.

MIRIAN  
(whispering)  
I can do better.

JUDY  
Mirian be realistic here. You have  
two more weeks of school. You can't  
move your marks up by then.

GREGORY  
She said you can't move up.

JUDY  
You should have asked for help.

GREGORY  
I could have helped.

MIRIAN  
Your never showed much interest I  
thought-

JUDY  
(interrupting)  
As a woman I expected you to be  
responsible.

GREGORY  
(disagreeing)  
Judy she's still young.

JUDY  
Here we go again Gregory! You're  
always defending her!

MIRIAN  
(whispering)  
I'm not young.

GREGORY  
She's having trouble! She needs my  
help!

JUDY  
You treat her better than your  
other kids.

GREGORY  
That's not true. Not at all.

JUDY  
You always get her gifts!

MIRIAN  
Please stop this.

GREGORY  
I love my kids all the same.

MIRIAN  
I promise to focus more.

Flo appears in the room, watching the argument.

JUDY  
Mirian you aren't adapting well  
here. Maybe you will somewhere  
else.

MIRIAN  
You're going to send me to another  
school?

JUDY  
You need to learn work and  
discipline. Something your father  
seems to be lacking in.

GREGORY  
(slamming his fist)  
That's enough!

MIRIAN  
(crying)  
What? But I like it here. Things  
will get better! Dad, please.

JUDY

I think living with Ruth and Luis  
will be good for you. They can  
teach her. What do you think?

Gregory gives no answer.

FLO

Gregory say something. You have to  
guide her. You're her father.

MIRIAN

Don't worry I now know my father.

Gregory gets up and looks at the wall. He massages his head.

MIRIAN (CONT'D)

(pained)

I get it. I'm an embarrassment to  
your family. I cause you pain. I'm  
the reason you drink more again  
like how you did when I was born. I  
can tell because you won't even  
look at me. I was never wanted by  
any of you. So why did you tell me  
to come here all of a sudden? To  
impress your mother after she made  
you come here? You never gave a  
damn about me.

Mirian storms off.

CUT TO:

INT. GREGORY'S APARTMENT- ANOTHER DAY- MONTAGE

QUICK CUTS:

-Mirian is packing her things while Flo watches her.

-Gregory is watching TV surrounded by his children looking  
conflicted.

-In her bedroom Judy picks out the empty alcohol bottles  
around the room. She throws them in a large garbage bag.

-Mirian touches the cage where the bunny is seen.

-Gregory carries Mirian's bags.

-Mirian sees everyone in the living room. She looks at them  
and leaves without saying goodbye.

END OF MONTAGE

CUT TO:

INT. CAR- LATER

Gregory drives Mirian and she looks out the window trying to ignore him.

Gregory constantly looks at her direction.

CUT TO:

EXT. AN EMERALD HOUSE- LATER

SUPER: QUEENS

The car stops in front of the house. The neighborhood is quiet and suburban.

CUT TO:

INT. THE EMERALD HOUSE IN QUEENS- LIVING ROOM- MINUTES LATER

The living room is plagued with religious ornaments. Doilies and flowers also cover the furniture in the room.

RUTH, Mirian's very classy and hardworking aunt, brings in a tray of tea. Ruth is very short and has the fluffiest red permed hair.

Ruth picks up the tin kettle and pours hot water to the cup.

Mirian is sitting on a couch that's completely wrapped in plastic. She accepts the cup being offered.

Ruth sits across from Mirian.

RUTH  
(sarcastic)

Well I never seen such love coming  
from a daughter before.

MIRIAN

As you could tell I'm not too happy  
with my father .

Mirian sips her tea.

MIRIAN (CONT'D)  
So you're my father's older sister?

RUTH

Yes there's many of us. It wasn't always comfortable growing up together. We were all so different. Did my mother say anything?

MIRIAN

Just that she might visit sometime. Nothing else. I'm sorry.

RUTH

Well I'll call her later tonight.

Ruth sips her tea.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Did your dad say what you'll be doing while you're here?

Mirian shakes her head.

MIRIAN

I don't even know how long I'm staying.

RUTH

That'll be up to you. We considered the whole summer at least and then we'll see how you're doing.

MIRIAN

No it's up to my father and Judy.

RUTH

My dear, God guided you to here for a reason. You may hold a grudge to your father but God is doing His best to point him in the right path. In the meantime you will grow here as a person. You will be responsible and hardworking.

MIRIAN

I thought I was.

RUTH

You are but you'll win him back by proving it to him.

LUIS, the loudest, shortest man barges in through the front door.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Mirian this Luis. Your uncle.

Mirian gets up and is greeted by happy hugs and kisses.

LUIS

So this is the famous Mirian. We  
heard a lot about you, you  
troublemaker.

He pokes at her nose. Mirian is stunned.

LUIS (CONT'D)

I've always wanted a daughter. I  
finally have one.

They all sit. Luis sits next to Ruth and they hold hands.

MIRIAN

I didn't expect you to be so nice.  
To have a heart...

LUIS

We discipline...

Mirian gives a look of worry.

LUIS (CONT'D)

With respect.

RUTH

All we ask is you respect us and we  
will back.

MIRIAN

Okay. I can do that.

LUIS

Let's see what else do we need to  
tell you...

RUTH

Be clean.

LUIS

Oh yes be clean.

RUTH

Be nice.

LUIS

No sneaking off.

RUTH

You must let us know where you go.

LUIS  
Sleep early.

RUTH  
Help us around the house and the  
shop.

MIRIAN  
Shop?

CUT TO:

INT. A SMALL SEWING STORE IN QUEENS- LATER

Employees are sitting in rows sewing on machines.

They greet Ruth as she walks in with Mirian.

RUTH  
This is my shop. We create dresses  
for any occasions even Halloween  
costumes.

Mirian with awe looks around. She is actually interested.

RUTH (CONT'D)  
Don't worry I will train you how to  
sew and use the register. We get  
all kinds of customers from all  
over the world.

MIRIAN  
(embarrassed)  
Oh I don't speak English very well.

RUTH  
It's okay dear. We all learn  
sometime.

CUT TO:

INT. MIRIAN'S BEDROOM- NIGHT

A phone RINGS by her nightstand.

LUIS (O.S.)  
Mirian! It's for you!

Mirian picks up the phone.

MIRIAN

Hello.

ABUELA (O.S.)

Miriancita.

MIRIAN

Abuela! Where have you been?

ABUELA (O.S.)

I've been a bit ill lately.

MIRIAN

(sitting on her bed)

What do you mean? How?

ABUELA (O.S.)

I was at Miguel's for some time.  
He's been a great help.

MIRIAN

Are you okay now?

ABUELA (O.S.)

I feel better. I'm sorry I haven't  
called you. I didn't want to worry  
you but now I'm better. I called  
your father's place earlier.

MIRIAN

So you heard.

ABUELA (O.S.)

Yes.

MIRIAN

I haven't broken that promise yet  
Abuela. I'll tell you everything.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM- NIGHT

Mirian breathes a deep sigh and takes a pair of scissors from  
the sink.

CUT TO:

EXT. A MCDONALD'S- DAY

Ciara brings in a tray of food and sits where Mirian is  
sitting.

Mirian's hair is extremely short. It's above her neck kind of short.

CIARA  
(opening her straw)  
I can't believe you cut your hair.

MIRIAN  
Why? You don't like it?

CIARA  
It's just...different. It looks good.

MIRIAN  
I needed different.

CIARA  
(unwrapping the burger)  
Aren't you going to order something?

MIRIAN  
I'm trying to eat healthy.

CIARA  
Look at you being all healthy and shit. I wish I had your willpower.

Ciara sloppily eats the burger.

MIRIAN  
Thanks for coming all the way here.

CIARA  
I don't mind. I hate being home. Wait...

MIRIAN  
What?

CIARA  
Home is way better than summer school. Thank you Jesus.

MIRIAN  
I knew you would pass.

CIARA  
I do have a brain after all. So have you talked to your dad?

MIRIAN

Nope. And I don't intend to right now.

CIARA

But he's your father.

MIRIAN

What happened to father's being overrated?

CIARA

Hey at least you have a dad in your life.

Mirian looks at her contemplating.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY- FOR A PERIOD OF TIME- MONTAGE

QUICK CUTS:

-Mirian with Ruth and Luis are taking photos and videos. First they go to the Statue of Liberty.

-Then Times Square.

-A boat ride to Ellis Island.

-Finally on top of the Empire State Building where the wind blows Mirian's hair like crazy.

END OF MONTAGE

CUT TO:

INT. RUTH AND LUIS'S EMERALD HOUSE- DINING ROOM- NIGHT

The table is being set by Mirian and Flo. They don't look at each other.

They simultaneously put down the same utensils.

Once done they both sit.

Luis and Ruth bring in bowls and plates of hot food.

LUIS

Don't dig in yet. It's extremely hot.

They sit and begin to pray.

They each serve their plates.

RUTH  
What kind of dinner conversations  
should we have?

LUIS  
I for one will not want to talk  
about news. Too much tragedy today.

MIRIAN  
Not everything is tragic.

LUIS  
More deaths caused by Escobar,  
drugs, aids. No thank you.

RUTH  
It's tragic but it's good to hear.  
Am I wrong in this? It's important  
to know current events.

MIRIAN  
I think you're right. It's tough to  
hear but we're mature enough.

RUTH  
What do you think mom?

FLO  
(clearing her throat)  
I think she's right.

They continue eating.

CUT TO:

EXT. RUTH AND LUIS'S EMERALD HOUSE- HOURS LATER

They wait outside.

RUTH  
Why is he always late?

FLO  
Like father like son. Not a  
surprise.

LUIS  
At least it's warm out now.

MIRIAN  
I'm going to the bathroom. I'll be  
back.

Flo holds onto her arm.

FLO  
Don't runaway. Talk to him.

MIRIAN  
I have to use the restroom.

Flo let's Mirian's arm go. Mirian heads inside.

CUT TO:

INT. SEWING STORE- DAY

LUIS  
And you press this when you want to  
open the register.

The register opens with a DING.

LUIS (CONT'D)  
Easy right?

MIRIAN  
It might not be-

LUIS  
Don't short guess yourself. You got  
it.

A customer walks to the register.

LUIS (CONT'D)  
I'll leave you to it.

Mirian has a look of unsureness. She takes a deep breath.

CUT TO:

INT. SEWING STORE- DAY

SUPER: TWO YEARS LATER

NOTE: Mirian speaks some English now with an accent.

Mirian finishes giving cash to a customer.

MIRIAN  
 (in English, smiling)  
 Have a nice day sir.

LUIS comes in from the back room.

LUIS  
 Wedding suit rented again?

MIRIAN  
 Yea.

LUIS  
 Speaking of which when will yours  
 be?

MIRIAN  
 Tío, I'm too young.

LUIS  
 Nineteen isn't young.

MIRIAN  
 These days it is.

LUIS  
 When will I meet this Victor?

MIRIAN  
 I'll ask him today.

LUIS  
 Invite him over for dinner.

Mirian puts on her coat.

LUIS (CONT'D)  
 By the way how's it going with him?

MIRIAN  
 (zipping her coat)  
 It's steady. It's going good.

LUIS  
 I hope he treats you well. You know  
 older guys can be-

MIRIAN  
 It's not like that. He's far from  
 that. Trust me. Now bye.

She gives him a kiss on the cheek.

MIRIAN (CONT'D)

I have to clock out. I won't be home too late.

CUT TO:

INT. A LIBRARY- LATER

Mirian and VICTOR are at one of the tables.

Victor is in his late twenties who's always dressed in a professional manner. He's very intelligent but also very gentle and clumsy.

He hands her a packet.

VICTOR

So after I corrected the test I suggest you take the real one.

MIRIAN

You mean I passed?

VICTOR

(pushing his glasses back)  
I think you're ready.

MIRIAN

I'll finally be a citizen. Then next it'll be a driver's license.

VICTOR

(laughing)  
I don't know if I trust you behind a car yet.

MIRIAN

You're probably right.

She laughs as she gets up and packs her things.

VICTOR

If you want I could help out with your midterm coming up.

MIRIAN

That would be nice. Maybe we can study next week.

VICTOR

I know school isn't easy.

MIRIAN  
I have to ask.

VICTOR  
What is it?

MIRIAN  
My aunt and uncle want to get to know you. Will you come over for dinner? How about tomorrow?

VICTOR  
(fearful)  
What if they won't like me?

MIRIAN  
You shouldn't be afraid. Their nice people. You're great.

Mirian gives him a peck and leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM- NEXT NIGHT

Mirian with her aunt and uncle sit at the table, eating. Victor seems nervous as he eats.

LUIS  
Is it hot in here son? The heat on too much?

VICTOR  
No it must be my suit.

He loosens his tie a bit.

RUTH  
So you two met at a party right?

MIRIAN  
Yea it was his friend's birthday. My friend knows his friend kind of thing.

RUTH  
That must have been fun.

VICTOR  
Please don't think I'm a wild, party guy. I'm really not. I'm very responsible.

MIRIAN  
 (laughing)  
 Victor relax.

She holds his hand.

LUIS  
 When's your birthday?

VICTOR  
 August first.

LUIS  
 A Leo? I didn't expect that.

He shrugs and puts a spoonful of food in his mouth.

RUTH  
 I've heard you're from Guayaquil.

VICTOR  
 Yes ma'am. I left when I was  
 fifteen with my whole family.

RUTH  
 And you studied accounting?

VICTOR  
 Yes I work for a firm in Manhattan.

RUTH  
 That's wonderful.

MIRIAN  
 He always helps me with math.  
 Pretty soon I'll be in college  
 because of him.

RUTH  
 It seems like everything is going  
 great for you two.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN- AFTER DINNER

Mirian is washing dishes while Ruth dries them.

RUTH  
 He's good to you.

MIRIAN  
 (blushing)  
 Yes he really is.

RUTH  
 Don't ever let him go.

MIRIAN  
 I don't plan to.

RUTH  
 I can't believe how grown you've become. I'm so proud of you. Your Abuela would be too. May God rest her soul... and your father would be too.

MIRIAN  
 (snorting)  
 My father...

RUTH  
 Did you get the gift he sent for Christmas?

MIRIAN  
 Yes tío gave it to me.

Ruth finishes drying the last dish.

RUTH  
 You finally going to call him back?

MIRIAN  
 Nope. I think us being apart is for the best.

RUTH  
 Really?

MIRIAN  
 Yes tía.

RUTH  
 Because I think you're ready.

CUT TO:

INT. A NAIL SALON- DAY

Ciara and Mirian are having their toe nails dried. They sit next to each other.

Their nails are such a pretty color.

CIARA

I can't believe you passed. You've really come a long way.

MIRIAN

I didn't think I ever could.

CIARA

Now school's next. I hope college is better. High school sucks.

MIRIAN

You'll get there. We both will.

CIARA

Any plans to go back to Ecuador soon?

MIRIAN

Maybe for the summer. I really want to take Victor there sometime. It would be fun. I want to visit Abuela's grave. Set some nice flowers down.

CIARA

Any word from your mother?

MIRIAN

(saddened)

She didn't go to the funeral. Maybe she'll visit soon.

Ciara gives her an unsure look.

MIRIAN (CONT'D)

She's completely bound to her new family. I just don't understand anymore.

The machine ends. Mirian and Ciara get up and put on their shoes.

CUT TO:

INT. SEWING STORE IN QUEENS- ANOTHER DAY

Mirian is sewing a veil for a wedding dress.

She is deeply focused when Luis comes by and puts his hand on her shoulder.

LUIS  
Mirian we need to talk.

MIRIAN  
(still sewing)  
Not now tío. I'm on a roll here.

LUIS  
Mirian.

Luis turns off the machine and she looks at him dumbfounded.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY- DAY

Mirian walks through the hallways of the hospital with her aunt and uncle.

She holds flowers in her hands and looks uncomfortable.

Outside a hospital room is Judy with all her kids nearby.

The kids look at Mirian and whisper in each other's ear.

Judy is crying and she goes to hug Luis and Ruth.

She gives Mirian a look and hugs her too.

JUDY  
Mirian you look...different.

Judy lets go of the hug and notices Mirian's stiffness.

RUTH  
What happened?

JUDY  
He was passed out and was shaking.  
I thought I was going to lose him.  
I've never seen him like this  
before.

RUTH  
Was he drinking?

JUDY  
More than usual.

RUTH  
Judy he needs help.

JUDY  
I know. I know.

RUTH  
I mean professional help this time.

LUIS  
Is he awake?

JUDY  
This morning he woke up. You can  
see him now if you want but he's  
extremely weak.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM- CONTINUOUS

Gregory is so sick looking. He looks aged with dark circles  
under his eyes and greying hair.

When everyone comes in he notices Mirian.

He shuts off the TV and attempts to sit up.

He winces.

LUIS  
Gregory try to stay still.

GREGORY  
(hoarse voice)  
My stomach is swollen.

JUDY  
They pumped his stomach.

RUTH  
I'm glad you're okay now.

Mirian puts the flowers beside his bed.

GREGORY  
My liver isn't doing so well.  
Mirian?

MIRIAN  
Hmm.

Beat.

RUTH

Why don't you two catch up. We'll give you some privacy.

Ruth waves her hand at Judy to come along.

Judy hesitates but does so anyways.

The door shuts. They all are gone.

Mirian paces the room back and forth not saying a word.

GREGORY

I missed you.

MIRIAN

(touching the flowers)

Did you?

GREGORY

I'm your father, of course I did.

MIRIAN

Why do you do this to yourself? Did you do it so I'll feel sorry for you?

GREGORY

I...I don't know. I was young when this all started-

MIRIAN

Because I was born you started drinking. I was the problem. I know.

GREGORY

No it's not-

MIRIAN

I was a mistake. I'm such a burden to the perfect rich life you had.

GREGORY

I thought now you would be mature enough to understand. The alcohol isn't because of you. It's all on me.

MIRIAN

You should have came back sooner! Maybe mom would have stayed!

GREGORY

I'm sorry-

MIRIAN

(getting angry)

You and mom never wanted me! I never had a place or a family I could call home!

GREGORY

Mir-

MIRIAN

Just get better and don't talk to me anymore!

Ruth comes back in and Mirian rushes out of the room.

CUT TO:

EXT. A RIVER IN ECUADOR- DAY

MOTHER, a pretty young 16 year old who looks exactly like Mirian, puts her feet in a river.

Mirian is just a baby. She's about 2 and is being carried by her Mother.

MOTHER

Miriancita. One day you'll understand.

Mirian starts crying. Mother lays her down on a rock.

She walks through the forest disappearing. The baby wails, almost screaming.

END OF DREAM

CUT TO:

INT. MIRIAN'S BEDROOM- IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Mirian awakes from the dream with echoes of the baby's screams continuing.

It slowly fades away.

She picks up the phone next to her and begins DIALING.

She stops herself. Putting the phone back she lies down again.

She looks out the window as the moon illuminates her.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY- DAYS LATER

Mirian and Victor are sitting at a table again.

VICTOR

You've been having these dreams every night right?

MIRIAN

Yes. What does this mean? I've never experienced anything like this before.

VICTOR

Dreams can say a lot about our lives.

MIRIAN

What do you think mine means?

VICTOR

Well from what you've told me... You know what I won't say it. I think you can interpret it yourself.

MIRIAN

What? No I can't.

VICTOR

(holding her hand)

Yes you can. Trust yourself. You think you can't but you have the ability to do anything.

MIRIAN

No I-

VICTOR

Don't be afraid to dig deep. It's hard but you can face it.

MIRIAN

Victor you're stronger than me. I can't.

VICTOR

You're everything in one.

MIRIAN  
Some people don't see that in  
themselves sometimes I suppose.

CUT TO:

INT. GREGORY'S APARTMENT- DAY

The door is opened by Judy and she is in shock to see Mirian.

JUDY  
Mirian, what are you doing here?

MIRIAN  
(nervous)  
Is he here?

JUDY  
Well yes I-

MIRIAN  
Thanks.

Mirian walks in. She sees her caged bunny in the living room  
as she passes by it.

CUT TO:

INT. GREGORY'S BEDROOM- CONTINUOUS

Gregory is laying in bed sleeping.

The room is dark with the blinds closed.

Beer bottles are still around the room. One is in his hand.

Mirian enters and looks around. Tears start pouring down.

She picks up a bottle then puts it down.

She takes the one from his hand and he stirs.

He then awakes. She sits on the bed.

GREGORY  
(crying)  
I didn't want you to see me like  
this. It's embarrassing.

MIRIAN

Dad. I need you to help me with something. I tried to call but just couldn't do it.

GREGORY

What do you mean?

MIRIAN

I've been having this dream...

GREGORY  
(confused)

Dream?

MIRIAN

Yes...Mom is there carrying me. I'm just a baby. She looked so...magical.

GREGORY

Was she at a river?

MIRIAN

Yes. How do you know?

GREGORY

She was always at one. Before we ran away she always told me she loved being in water, rivers. She'd always dip her feet, never having any shoes.

He starts laughing.

MIRIAN

In the dream she says one day I will understand.

GREGORY

I think you do. Otherwise you wouldn't be here.

MIRIAN

Dad do you want me in your life?

GREGORY

Of course I do. You know I do. I'm not perfect but I'm willing to try. People make mistakes and they don't realize the consequences of how it can affect others sometimes. I'm sorry. I truly am. I love you Mirian.

Mirian looks to be in deep thought for a few moments.

MIRIAN

I think we should start over. Be a real family this time. But I want you to get help first and I'm going to help you. You need to stop this and understand yourself better. Promise me you won't give up. I won't.

Mirian opens her palm with the beer bottle showing.

Gregory looks at the bottle and gives her an unanswered look.

CUT TO:

EXT. CENTRAL PARK- DAY

Victor and Mirian are having a picnic on a sunny day.

They are settled on the grass. A light wind blows her hair.

From the distance Gregory and his family appear to walk to them.

Mirian looks up and a light rainbow appears in the sky.

THE END.