

VISITING OLIVIA

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. JULIAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

It's daytime, but it's dark. No lamps or lights are on. The only source of light is from a window with its blinds slightly drawn. The small room's tidy decorations consist of things a straight-A teenage boy would've placed throughout his years; literature, awards, college degrees, posters of classical artwork, and video games are displayed here and there.

At the edge of a full-sized bed is JULIAN, mid-20's Mexican-American kid with a shock of black hair. He sits wearing a corporate fast-food uniform (slacks and a polo shirt). A cap with the restaurant's logo dangles from his fingers.

He's sitting there with a sullen expression and staring at... nothing in particular. He sighs softly.

He suddenly JUMPS at the sound of:

CATRINA (O.S.)

JULIAN!

A look of frustration washes over him. He knows what this is about. He forces himself to stand and leave the room.

INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - DAY

Julian enters the living room of the house. It's a typical tract home, suitable for a non-coastal lower middle class lifestyle such as theirs. Simple mass produced furniture is arranged with a lot of space between them. DAN, a middle-aged caucasian man, sits in a recliner nearby watching TV. He never gets involved.

CATRINA

JULIAN!

JULIAN

What?!

CATRINA, a Mexican-American woman in stuffy office attire with her hair pulled into an (up)tight ponytail, fiddles furiously with a thermostat on the wall. She's nearly too young to be Julian's mother.

CATRINA

Did you turn this down?!

JULIAN

I turned it down to the limit.

CATRINA
The limit is 78!

JULIAN
Since when?!

CATRINA
Since I told you the first time!

JULIAN
You told me 76!

CATRINA
If we get hit with another nasty
electric bill, you're paying for
it! You hear me?!

JULIAN
I put it at 76 because that's the
last thing you told--

CATRINA
Do you hear me?!

He backs down.

JULIAN
(begrudging)
Yes.

CATRINA
No. I don't think you did.

Catrina reaches into the kitchen area for a large waste basket and carries it down the hall. Julian follows.

She runs down the hallway.

INT. JULIAN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Catrina storms through Julian's well kept items. She tosses all sorts of valuable items into the waste basket; books, toys, video games. It all joins the rotting food already at the bottom.

JULIAN
What're you doing?! I said I won't
mess with it!

She ignores him as he tries to block her from taking more.

She yanks his game console, ripping the cords out in the process, and dumps it in the waste basket as well.

JULIAN

Mom!

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME - DAY

Catrina carries the waste basket around to the side of the house, up to the large rolling trash bins. Julian chases her.

JULIAN

Mom!

She opens the larger trash bin and with a big heave, she dumps out the waste basket.

She tosses the empty waste basket aside.

CATRINA

There. Maybe now you'll hear me.

Julian stands there stunned as Katrina marches back inside her house. What did he do?

Julian takes the waste basket and begins to fish his things out of the larger bin.

LATER:

Julian plops into his 15-year-old 4-door sedan. He starts the engine.

He takes a moment to lay his forehead on the steering wheel where he inhales deeply. As he exhales, he lifts himself off the wheel and puts the car into reverse.

Julian backs out of the driveway and into the curvy street of an expansive neighborhood that's made up of small tract homes with fat grassy lawns in front of them.

EXT. UPTOWN SUBS - ESTABLISHING - DAY

A corporate fast food subway-style restaurant sits at the base of a high rise in a bustling downtown city block.

INT. UPTOWN SUBS - DAY

In a cold corporate dining space, lit by overhead florescent tubes, Julian stands opposite a sneeze guard as he helps a CUSTOMER across from him.

Julian slides an open sandwich on the prepping counter to the condiment section. He squirts mayo into the sandwich.

CUSTOMER

More mayo.

TERRY, a mid-20's African-American employee, steps out from the back while tying his apron on. He and Julian give each other a familiar handshake.

TERRY

Look at me! I'm on time!

Julian wraps up the sandwich and rings the customer up.

A stunning Mid-20's Latin woman with model-level good looks, NADIA, walks in to the restaurant with a group of work friends. They all have lanyards with job ID's hanging from their necks. Julian notices Nadia immediately.

Terry begins to take their orders at the opposite end of the counter.

Julian can't keep his eyes off of Nadia.

There are quite a few orders to handle. Terry looks back at Julian.

TERRY

Jules!

Julian takes a slow step backwards. He dips into the back room.

LATER:

Terry is cleaning the counters while Julian is mopping the floors. Julian keeps glancing up at Nadia who eats at a table with her friends.

TERRY

You can't leave me to take a shit ton of orders like that. I don't care how much you think you're too good to work here.

JULIAN

(not listening)

You didn't recognize that girl?

Terry looks up to see what Julian is looking at; Nadia. It takes him a moment.

TERRY

Oooh yeah. She graduated a year after me.

JULIAN

With my class.

TERRY
Did you know her?

JULIAN
I used to have a big crush on her.

Terry looks at him.

TERRY
Used to? Go talk to her.

JULIAN
I'm not talking to her. Not in
this uniform.

TERRY
Dude.

JULIAN
You think she'll want to get to
know someone who works *here*?

TERRY
(offended)
Fine. Don't talk to her.

JULIAN
...Maybe if she knew I had an
MFA...

TERRY
Oh yeah. She'll marry you for sure
when she finds out that you have
an MFA... You didn't have to take
this job when I recommended you.
Go find another one if you're not
happy.

JULIAN
Right. Sorry...

TERRY
And stop being a bitch in the
meantime.

Terry moves past Julian and twists his nipple as he passes by.
Julian punches at him back.

JULIAN
Aw! You dick!

Nadia glances up at Julian as he rubs his damaged nipple
through his shirt.

INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - NIGHT

Catrina is in the middle of a heated conversation with someone on the other end of a landline phone call: OLIVIA (a senior citizen with a raspy, but fiery voice).

CATRINA

It's costing me too much! I told you!

Dan walks in and grabs a drink from the fridge.

OLIVIA (V.O.)

You can't just sell it off! It's been with us--

CATRINA

For generations and generations. I know! I know! But it's not worth the loss! We have plenty of space here!

As Dan leaves, Julian wanders in. He picks up a glass from a cabinet and fills it at a water dispenser while listening. (He's now in his street clothes which consists of button ups and slacks. Something like what a college professor would don.)

OLIVIA (V.O.)

That's what you think! You're not me! You'll just have to wait till I'm dead!

CATRINA

Don't tempt me with a good time!

OLIVIA (V.O.)

Catrina!

Catrina hangs up.

JULIAN

What is going on?

Catrina, lights a cigarette with a match. She tosses the match into the sink aggressively. (They refer to Olivia as "Abue." Pronounced "Aw-bweh," it's short for abuela which means grandmother.)

CATRINA

I've been trying to get your Abue to come live with us to save some money, since I'm still paying for all her upkeep down there. I don't get it! She has no reason to stay there!

JULIAN

Maybe if you weren't so horrible
to each other we'd see her once in
a while.

CATRINA

Shut up. The properties need to
get sold down there too.

JULIAN

Are you tight on money?

She glares at him, wondering if she should tell him.

CATRINA

...the property taxes went up
again...

JULIAN

And then?

CATRINA

...We're falling behind on the
mortgage...

JULIAN

...Oh...

CATRINA

Yeah... "Oh..."

A new thought makes her agitated. She stubs out her cigarette
angrily.

CATRINA

And that's why when I say to keep
the thermostat low, you keep it
low!

JULIAN

(not a question)
Have I touched it since earlier?
Have I?

CATRINA

No, but when I say to do
something, do it!

JULIAN

What have I not done that you told
me to do?

CATRINA

Don't act stupid!

JULIAN
What is your problem with me?

RING RING.

Catrina steps to the other room. Julian picks up the phone.

JULIAN
WHAT?!

OLIVIA (V.O.)
Who's speaking?

JULIAN
You tell me!

OLIVIA (V.O.)
Julian?!... **It's your abuela,
cabron!**

JULIAN
(correcting his tone)
Oh hi.

OLIVIA (V.O.)
**Is everything alright? What's
going on?**

JULIAN
Yes. Sorry. I didn't know it was
you. Uh, everything is as good as
it can be.

OLIVIA (V.O.)
...Good...

JULIAN
You want to talk to my mom?

OLIVIA (V.O.)
Yes, but how are you?

JULIAN
Good. Just dealing with your
daughter, if you can believe it.

OLIVIA (V.O.)
I believe it. **The stories I could
tell you.**

Julian smirks.

JULIAN
How are you?

OLIVIA (V.O.)
 Oh! I'm great. Living life on the
 rancho!
 (snickers)
 I haven't seen you in so long!

JULIAN
 It's been a while.

OLIVIA (V.O.)
 It has. I miss you!

JULIAN
 You do?

Julian can't help but give a charmed smile.

OLIVIA (V.O.)
 Yes! You should come visit!

JULIAN
 That would be nice, abue.

OLIVIA (V.O.)
 Well it's good to talk to you.
 Love you!

JULIAN
 Alright abue! Love you! Bye.

OLIVIA (V.O.)
Adios!

Julian hangs up. Catrina runs back in the room.

CATRINA
 You hung up?!

JULIAN
 Oh! I forgot.

Julian begins to dial the number again. Catrina let's out a BIG GRUNT. She snatches the phone out of Julian's hand.

CATRINA
 You're going to be the end of me!

JULIAN
 Just call her back.

She punches the numbers in the phone. She lifts the receiver up to her ear and listens for the ringtone.

CATRINA
(to Julian)
I swear between you and your
abue... I should've let you live
down there too.

Julian tilts his head, shook by that.

JULIAN
...Do you mean that?

CATRINA
(into phone)
Mom!

OLIVIA (V.O.)
Daughter!

Julian slips into the living room.

CATRINA
**Why won't you sacrifice, for
once?!**

OLIVIA (V.O.)
**You're not one to speak on
sacrifices, little girl!**

CATRINA
**If I have to come drag you out of
that house, I'm willing to do it!**

OLIVIA (V.O.)
**Come on down! I'll have my shot
gun loaded and ready to welcome
you!**

CATRINA
Wow!

OLIVIA (V.O.)
Yeah... "Wow..."

LIVING ROOM:

Julian sits on an armchair, listening to them bicker. He stares off.

EXT. PUB - NIGHT

Julian sits at the bar, still deep in thought, a fresh glass of beer in front of him.

Terry walks in dancing in a goofy manner. A tonal juxtaposition to Julian's brooding vibe. He takes a seat next to Julian.

TERRY

Hey! Just found out that Darryl
and Joey wanna do a weekend Vegas
trip. You down?

Julian reaches for his phone.

JULIAN

(Types a password into his
phone)

Judging by my current balance, I
can't afford this drink that I'm
having... No Vegas for me.

Julian huffs in deep frustration.

TERRY

Those student loans are bleeding
you dry, huh...

(Noting Julian's glum)

Jules, are you moping! Uh-oh, we
have a moper here!

VINNY, the bartender, hops over, excitedly. He drops a beer in front of Terry.

VINNY

No moping in the bar!

Julian gives Terry a stern look.

TERRY

Oh, shit, Vinny! We're gonna make
him cry!

VINNY

No crying in the bar either! Take
that shit to Applebees!

JULIAN

Why do I keep coming here?

Vinny helps out another PATRON.

TERRY

We're fucking with you.

JULIAN

I'm not in the mood.

TERRY

What's the deal?

JULIAN
...I'm just on the edge, I swear.

TERRY
Tell me everything!

JULIAN
It's as if everything is working
against me.
(looks closely at suds in
beer glass)
It's all bubbling up and I'm
exhausted.

TERRY
If it's the job, you can ask for
some time off. Maybe find
something a little better.

JULIAN
I appreciate the job, Terry. I
honestly do... But it's the job.
It's the bills. It's life... I'm
losing and I don't know how...

TERRY
You've been in your feelings since
you came back from college. It's
only been a few months.

JULIAN
It's been almost a year... The
only thing that really bothers me
the most right now is my mom.

TERRY
Hmmm... Have you tried pouring
water on her? She might melt.

JULIAN
I have a bad feeling about what
she really thinks of me... Anyway,
right now, all I think I want is
to escape.

TERRY
Escape how?

JULIAN
(shrugging)
No idea.

TERRY
That's sus.
(MORE)

TERRY (CONT'D)
You're taking things too seriously, my dude. Just be like the rest of us and inebriate your feelings away! I haven't felt an emotion in months!

Terry takes a swig of his beer.

JULIAN
(sarcastic)
That sounds like some solid advice...

Vinny re-approaches.

From behind them, a girl and her BEST FRIEND walk in. Terry turns around to look. The girl is Nadia.

TERRY
Oh shit, Julian. It's your crush.

Julian looks, sees her, then quickly turns back.

JULIAN
Oh damn! Don't say anything!

Vinny, clocks Julian's reaction.

VINNY
(to Nadia)
Ladies! Have a seat right here!

Vinny points at the chairs next to Julian.

Julian looks up at Vinny with a death glare.

TERRY
Come on, get that win!

Nadia takes a seat next to Julian, her best friend sits another one over. Julian and Terry debate and bicker in hushed voices.

NADIA
(to Vinny)
Thank you Vinny! Let me get a Moscow please!

BEST FRIEND
(holding up two fingers)
Two please!

TERRY
(whispering to Julian)
Talk to her! Talk to her!

JULIAN
(whispering)
No!

Terry kicks Julian's stool over, shoving him into Nadia.

JULIAN
Oh! I'm so sorry.

VINNY
Nadia, this is Julian. Julian this
is Nadia.

She forces a smile at him, clearly not in the mood for this.

NADIA
Hey.

JULIAN
Hi... We've met before... in High
School.

NADIA
(not remembering)
Oh... Okay.

JULIAN
We did yearbook together.

NADIA
I vaguely remember that. It's been
a while.

She smiles and turns back to her friend.

Long pause as Julian formulates what to say. He can't think of anything. Shit. Shit. Shit. Shit.

JULIAN
Can I buy you a drink?

NADIA
(turning back)
I just ordered one. Thanks.

JULIAN
Oh. Sorry.

TERRY
(whispering)
Stop apologizing.

JULIAN
Sorry! I mean! Sorry. No!

He's coming off desperate.

NADIA
It's ok.

JULIAN
The next one then!

NADIA
(exhausted)
Um, maybe...

He's losing her.

JULIAN
I have an MFA.

Terry convulses from the cringe.

She forces another smile as Vinny gives them their drinks.

NADIA
Ok...

JULIAN
From Bard. Took a lot of work. But
I got a few scholarships, so it
wasn't too bad. Did you go to
college?

NADIA
I did. I got a degree from the
junior college down the street.

JULIAN
(slightly disappointed)
Oh... Well I guess that's good
too.

She raises her eyebrows and scoffs.

NADIA
...Listen, MFA, if you're so
smart, then why do you work at
Uptown Subs?

Nadia's best friend BURSTS out laughing.

Julian's ego shrinks to the size of a nickel.

JULIAN
Oh. You saw me.

NADIA
Not as much as you saw me...
(to her friend)
Girl, let's move!

She and her friend get up and move further down the bar.

JULIAN
(as they leave)
I just finished school a few
months ago. I'm still looking for
a good job...

TERRY
Aaaaand they're out!

VINNY
Shit man, I shouldn't have put you
on the spot. I apologize.
(clap)
Shots! On the house!

It's too late. Julian stands up. He puts down a few bills. He walks out the door. Terry calls out after him.

TERRY
It's fine, dude!
(Yelling to be heard)
She's basic anyway!

BEST FRIEND
Hey fuck You!

Julian is out the door.

Terry pulls Julian's beer over to him.

INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - NIGHT

Julian enters. Still in a bad mood, he SLAMS the door behind him.

He fluffs his shirt to fan himself, feeling the heat of the house.

Fed up, he marches to the thermostat and punches the down button a few times.

A second later, the air conditioner is heard kicking on with a loud RUMBLE.

He moves to the kitchen and lets himself fall into a dining chair where he rests for a moment. He lets his head lean back, cooling off both physically and mentally.

Footsteps are heard STOMPING toward him from another room.

Catrina enters from a hallway in her pajamas and goes directly to the thermostat.

She sees Julian, his head still leaned back, and steps over to him.

CATRINA
Are you going to tell me you
didn't adjust it this time?!

JULIAN
No, I did.

CATRINA
Why!

JULIAN
Because it's hot!

CATRINA
So open a window!

JULIAN
No!

CATRINA
Listen to me!... I will kick you
out! I really will! You think you
can afford your loans and bills
while also paying for rent?! Get
your shit together!

JULIAN
You've been trying to kick me out
since I was born, woman!

CATRINA
You're ridiculous.

JULIAN
Tell me I'm wrong!

CATRINA
Julian, I don't owe you a goddamn
thing, you understand me? You're
25 years old. I already raised
you!

Julian stands up quickly, knocking his chair back.

JULIAN
Really!
(MORE)

JULIAN (CONT'D)
That's the same shit you told me
when I was 10! You might've even
said it before that!

CATRINA
Keep it up, Julian. You'll be
sleeping in your car before you
know it.

JULIAN
Fuck it! I'll pull the trigger for
you! I'm leaving!

Catrina tilts her head over, smugly.

CATRINA
Oh yeah? Where are you going?

He didn't think this far ahead. He's caught off guard. He
searches for an option. It takes him a moment.

He suddenly remembers.

JULIAN
To abue's!

CATRINA
To Chihuahua?

JULIAN
(defiant)
Yes!

She laughs condescendingly.

CATRINA
I don't believe you.

JULIAN
Watch me.

CATRINA
When?

JULIAN
.....Now!

Julian marches to the hallway. She follows.

INT. JULIAN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Julian marches in. He goes straight to his closet and starts tossing things onto the bed, including quite a few books. Catrina stands in the doorframe.

CATRINA

This will be fun to watch. It's not like Cancun in that part of Mexico! Let me know when I have to fly you back because you couldn't handle it! Something else I'll have to pay for!

Dan crosses the doorway, behind Catrina in the hallway.

JULIAN

Don't worry I'm driving!

She rolls her eyes and leaves the room as he continues packing.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - NIGHT

Julian charges out of the house, lugging 2 suitcases.

He pops the trunk of his car open and loads the luggage in.

Catrina steps out onto the porch smoking a cigarette.

CATRINA

You're in for a *long* drive.

JULIAN

What do you care?!

She takes a drag.

He SLAMS his trunk closed and moves to the driver's side door.

CATRINA

Listen! Here's the situation. When you come back, *and you will come back*, you need to bring your abuela back with you.

He stares at her, surprised by the audacity.

JULIAN

I'm not getting involved with you guys' bullshit.

CATRINA
Then don't bother coming back,
Julian!

JULIAN
...That's how you want to play it?

CATRINA
It is.

He points at her angrily.

JULIAN
I don't get you.

CATRINA
I'm keeping this house one way or
another.

Julian climbs in his car.

She continues to smoke as she steps back into the house.

He backs his car out of the driveway and drives away and out of the suburban America sprawl that he lives in.

EXT. AMERICAN SOUTHWEST - DAY - MONTAGE

Julian's sedan drives out of the city.

The further he travels, the further the environment changes; gradually going from lush forests to rolling grasslands, to dry deserts where the sun begins to set on his day of traveling.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Julian fills up at a corporate gas station, near a strip mall off the highway.

He waits patiently as the gas pump finishes disposing into his gas tank. Large parking lots surround him, like moats around castles that are actually corporate chain stores.

EXT. BORDER - DAY

On the U.S. side of the border, Julian waits in line for his turn to drive through. Another strip mall can be seen nearby.

LATER:

Julian crosses through the border gates. Before he knows it, he's in Mexico. The look and design of the area is instantly different.

He looks out the window, passing various business and parks, mostly built out of concrete and metal. Rich textures and cluttered arrangements contrast the minimalistic and car centric landscapes of the U.S. that he was just in.

EXT. MEXICAN HIGHWAY - DUSK

Julian rides down a one lane road through a dark and empty desert. You can only see the headlights of other vehicles and the last ounce of residual daylight that glows above it all.

Julian's car slows down and turns off the highway, proceeding down a dirt road, past a rusting billboard.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - NIGHT

Julian's car drives slowly down a rocky dirt road. The ground RUMBLES loudly beneath it as bits of stone and dirt fly everywhere, really testing the car's suspension.

EXT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

An inky blackness surrounds the tiny concrete house. All that can be seen is the front porch, lit by a single bare bulb and the front doorway which is closed off by only a screen door.

Julian's sedan pulls up.

He steps out and stretches.

The SOUNDS OF DISHES BEING WASHED AND CLANKED about can be heard coming from inside.

Julian steps up to the porch and to the screen door. He takes a deep breath for moment. He then KNOCKS.

RUSTLING is heard as someone approaches the front door.

OLIVIA (O.S.)
...Who is it?!

He smiles at hearing her voice.

JULIAN
Um, it's me!

OLIVIA (O.S.)
German?

JULIAN
Who?--No!

You can see someone approaching through the grate in the screen door. The screen door opens to reveal a small short haired older woman in sweat pants and an oversized shirt, OLIVIA. She looks up at him and winces, trying to recognize him.

OLIVIA
Who are you?

JULIAN
(big smile)
Julian!

Her eyes nearly bulge out.

OLIVIA
Julian?!

JULIAN
Abue!

She SLAMS the screen door shut. The main door SLAMS shut after. Julian stands there, confused. This isn't what he expected.

JULIAN
...Good to see you too...

OLIVIA (O.S.)
(yelling through the door)
I'm not going back with you so
don't ask!

JULIAN
I am not here to do that!

OLIVIA(O.S.)
Like hell you're not! **Tell your
mother I'm not going.**

JULIAN
She didn't come!

OLIVIA (O.S.)
So she sent you?!

JULIAN
I came on my own!

OLIVIA
I don't believe you!

JULIAN
I'm not here to take you away,
abue!

OLIVIA (O.S.)
Then why are you here?!

He steps back.

JULIAN
You said I should come!

OLIVIA (O.S.)
I asked you to let me know first!

JULIAN
(realizing)
...You did say that...

OLIVIA
Why are you here, Julian?!

He thinks for a hard minute.

JULIAN
Answers...

He sulks for a moment and shakes the car keys in his hand.

With no further response from her, he turns around and steps back toward the car.

She unlocks and opens the main door.

He turns back to her as she talks through the screen door.

OLIVIA
To what?

JULIAN
I'm not sure, yet.

She looks at him shocked.

OLIVIA
...You drove a whole day's worth.
What the **chingados** do you mean
you're not sure, yet?

JULIAN
...It's complicated...

They stare at each other for a moment, waiting for someone to make the next move.

Relenting, she opens the screen door.

He steps through the doorway, meeting her face to face.

OLIVIA
(reluctant)
Give me a hug, cabron.

They hug.

INT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Julian steps in through the front doorway that leads directly into the kitchen area.

OLIVIA
How was the drive?

JULIAN
Long.

OLIVIA
No shit...

JULIAN
I'm surprised I still knew how to find it. I haven't been here since I was about 10.

OLIVIA
Wow. Really?

JULIAN
Yes...

Olivia sits him down at a dinette table, still feeling salty.

OLIVIA
Well... Welcome I guess.

JULIAN
I should've called. I'm sorry to surprise you. I appreciate you letting me in.

OLIVIA
You *should've* called...
(Realizing)
I'm sure you're hungry.

She pulls out pans of leftovers from the fridge. She lights the stove with a match and sets them on it.

OLIVIA
**You're shorter than I remember and
 skinnier.**

She stops to get a good look at him. She studies his face closely. It's interrupted by the sound of a car engine.

A car pulls up outside. She glances out. She looks back and forth between Julian and it a few times.

JULIAN
 Is someone here?

OLIVIA
 My friend.

PETRA, a loud jolly woman with a few gold teeth proudly installed here and there, bursts into the room holding groceries.

PETRA
**So many trailers on the highway
 today! Who's car is that?**
 (Noticing Julian)
Hola. Who's this?

OLIVIA
**This is my grandson, Julian.
 Catrina's son.**

He stands to shake her hand.

PETRA
Oh, good evening. Petra.

JULIAN
It's nice to meet you.

She tightens her grip.

PETRA
**You're not here to take Olivia
 back are you?**

She's somewhat joking, but not really, still gripping his hand.

JULIAN
 No.

She glances over at Olivia. Olivia shakes here head no, confirming. Petra lets go.

PETRA
Great...
 (MORE)

PETRA (CONT'D)
**So here are your groceries. I'll
 be seeing you...**

OLIVIA
 Ok. Bye.

PETRA
 Ok... Bye.

Petra hurries out. Olivia shuts the door behind her.

Olivia serves Julian his plate. It's a steaming mix of diced beef smothered in red sauce with a side of fried rice.

JULIAN
 Oh wow. Thank you.

OLIVIA
 Coffee, beer, or Coke?

JULIAN
 Water?

She rolls her eyes and gives him a coke anyway.

JULIAN
 Sorry, I said water.

She sits across from him and lights a cigarette.

OLIVIA
 I heard you.

She watches him eat while she smokes similar to how Catrina does; he notices.

The food scalds his mouth, but he's so hungry. He eats quickly.

OLIVIA
 How long are you staying?

JULIAN
 (between hot bites)
 I don't know.

OLIVIA
 Look, I don't mind you staying, **of
 course. But you're from over
 there. You probably don't remember
 what it's like here.** There's no
 internet, no bars or restaurants
 or stores in this town. Not many
 people live here anymore.

(MORE)

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
The nearest city is an hour away.
No one your age is here, except
maybe your cousin, German. **And
German is an idiot.** I hope you're
OK with that.

He nods quietly.

She takes a drag.

JULIAN
I guess that's why my mom and tios
left...

She gives him a side eye.

OLIVIA
...So what happened? Tell me.

JULIAN
(clears throat)
Well... my mom and I got into
another fight and perhaps I loaded
up a suitcase and drove down here.

She understands more than he's aware.

OLIVIA
(flicking ash into a tray)
Uh-huh...

JULIAN
I've been living at home since I
graduated. She doesn't seem to
like that as far as I can tell.
She's always been mean. I guess
I'm just now coming to terms with
it. And I guess I'm wondering why.

Olivia listens, but has to look away.

OLIVIA
I don't see a lot of your mother
in you... **For what it's worth.**

He smiles, flattered. He finishes his plate.

OLIVIA
Bring your bags in. You can sleep
in here.

She points to the living room.

INT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Julian re-enters the house with his bags, he moves to the living room space to find Olivia setting up a dusty old sofa bed.

He sets his bag down and explores the room which is full of items and furniture from the last 60 years.

JULIAN

The house is smaller than I remember.

OLIVIA

Hey, I raised six kids and their father in this house. **It's more than enough for just you and me.**

He finds a framed picture of his mom as a happy, giggly teenager on the wall. He pulls it down and looks at it with wonder.

JULIAN

Is this my mom?

OLIVIA

That is. She's about 15 years old in that.

He soaks it in. Huh... He then puts it back.

He turns back to the makeshift bed.

OLIVIA

Well... Goodnight!

JULIAN

Goodnight.

She shuffles off to her bedroom.

INT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE - DAY

Morning light fires in through the window. Julian is sound asleep, wrapped up in his blankets.

Breakfast is heard SIZZLING in the next room.

EXT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A GUITARIST, old and possibly drunk, STRUMS his guitar as he tries to remember the chords to a song while he passes Julian's

outside window from the roadside.

He pauses right next to the window and takes a deep breath. He BELTS the first operatic line of a song.

GUITARIST
FLOOOOORRRRRRRR!!!!

INT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Julian explodes out of his bed, onto the floor.

GUITARIST (O.S.)
DE PAPEEEEEEEELLLLLLL!!!!

The Guitarist's song fades away as he continues his walk.

Olivia's head pokes in.

OLIVIA
Come eat! Why are you on the
 floor?

He struggles to free himself from the tangled blankets as she dips back out.

OLIVIA
It'll get cold!

KITCHEN LATER:

Julian works on a plate of scrambled eggs and beans. He drinks a cup of coffee and shouts to Olivia who is in the other room.

JULIAN
 I don't remember the last time I
 had breakfast. Thank you...
 (trying not to be rude)
 Is this... instant coffee?

OLIVIA
Is there another kind?

He take another sip.

JULIAN
 ...I think I might drive back home
 tonight.

She comes in wearing jeans and boots, ready to go out.

OLIVIA
 So soon?

JULIAN
I didn't mean for this to be an
inconvenience. I feel like it
might've been a mistake to come.

She looks at him, closely.

OLIVIA
You did surprise me by showing up
in the middle of the night... But,
you're not a burden...

JULIAN
Really?

Julian's eye brows raise for a moment.

OLIVIA
**Not at all. Get ready... We're
going to the ranch.**

EXT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE - DAY

Julian steps out and looks over the horizon spread in front of the house. He's seeing it for the first time in good light. It's... It's... It's nothing. A vast open arrangement of absolute nothing. A few small rotting houses, very far apart that dot the landscape, outlined by barbed wire fences. All of it on barren dirt roads and dirt lots. Gray sierras loom miles away, filed between the level ground and infinite sky. He might as well be floating on driftwood in the middle of the Atlantic. This is Chihuahua.

JULIAN
(overwhelmed)
Alright...

He slips on a pair of pretentious dark sunglasses.

Olivia locks up the house behind him.

She guides him to the side of the house where her 70's pick-up is parked.

JULIAN
You weren't joking. Where did
everybody go?

OLIVIA
Who?

JULIAN
Your neighbors.

OLIVIA
Oh, they went anywhere else. That
or they died!

JULIAN
So why are you still here?

She rolls her eyes, dismissing his question.

OLIVIA
Get in the truck.

They load up.

INT./EXT. OLIVIA'S TRUCK - DAY

Olivia drives as Julian sits close to her. He looks out and around.

OLIVIA
This town used to be so many
families. But it's all farm lands
here. And I guess there are other
options now...
(she looks over to him)
Move over, people are going to
think we're dating.

She GIGGLES. He slides over.

JULIAN
Yeah, what people?
(searching around them)
I used to play with some kids that
lived around here, didn't I? I
don't see their house.

OLIVIA
Yes. It's right there.

She points at the ruins of a house as they drive past it.

JULIAN
Oh damn.

The truck continues bopping along.

EXT. RANCH - DAY

Olivia drives the pick up through a barbed wire gate and into a flat and arid lot. It's a rustic ranch with not much on it. She and Julian unload.

A Mexican version of a hillbilly cowboy in a dusty baseball cap, GERMAN (pronounced "Herr-mahn," about Julian's age) steps out of a cattle pen and joins them. He's heavyset, but he moves quick.

GERMAN
What's up!

Olivia fixates on a cow that's laying down in a nearby pen.

OLIVIA
What's wrong with that cow?

German turns to look, the cow is looking sickly.

GERMAN
(like it's good news)
Oh... It swallowed a wire.

OLIVIA
Chingado German... This is your
cousin Julian. **Do you remember
him?**

GERMAN
I don't think so. Hi.

They shake hands.

JULIAN
Hi.

OLIVIA
He's visiting for the... day?
**Thought he should come check out
the luscious lands that we own
before he leaves.**

GERMAN
Ha! Luscious... You want a big
tour?

All the points of interest are within eyesight. German takes two steps toward the dry cattle Pen.

GERMAN
**So these are the cattle. They're
pretty dumb as you can tell by the
one who ate a wire.**

He takes a step toward the dry empty fields.

GERMAN
**These are the crop fields, which
 uh can't grow crops.**

He points toward a dilapidated ranch house.

GERMAN
**That's the little house where I
 drink and avoid my wife... And
 then back there is the
 reservoir... aaaand that's it.*/***

JULIAN
 Interesting... Nice.

GERMAN
You bored yet?

OLIVIA
**How could he be bored? He just got
 here. What were you up to?**

German waves a big ear tagger for cattle.

GERMAN
Tagging.

OLIVIA
 (to Julian)
Want to learn how to rope?

JULIAN
 What is that?

Olivia shoves him toward the cattle pen.

EXT. RANCH - CATTLE PEN - DAY

Julian and German stand inside. Olivia stands on the fence.

Cattle roam on the opposite end of the pen, scared to get too close to them.

German wrangles a stiff rope while Julian watches.

GERMAN
You used to stay here as a kid?

JULIAN
 I did. Mostly summers and
 sometimes more.

A thought invades German's thick head.

GERMAN

Yeah! I remember you now! You would ask us to roll you inside a tractor tire, then you would throw up and cry for your mama. But I don't think she ever came.

Olivia locks on to Julian, watching his reaction.

JULIAN

I don't remember.

He remembers.

OLIVIA

Show him already!

GERMAN

OK! Have you never ranched before?

JULIAN

Only on the Sims.

GERMAN

What is that?

JULIAN

I've never ranched before.

GERMAN

Here.

German adjusts a second rope and hands it to Julian.

German makes his rope loop spin in a perfect circle.

Julian attempts to do the same. He can't do more than make it whip. WHIP. WHIP. WHIP.

GERMAN

Don't spin your arm. **Just your wrist.**

OLIVIA

Just the wrist!

JULIAN

The what?

German spins the loop higher so Julian can see his wrist action. Julian tries. He gets a circle going, but it's more of a sloppy oval.

GERMAN

Watch, wey.

German smoothly flies his rope around the neck of a drooling calf and jerks it back, tightening the rope instantly.

He holds tight as the calf yanks back. He straddles its neck and staples a tag to its ear.

He lets go and points out a different calf to Julian.

GERMAN
That one is yours.

Julian is completely unsure of himself. He spins the rope as best as he can and focuses on his assigned calf.

OLIVIA
With gusto!

Julian tosses the loop and lands it, instead, around the horns of a full grown cow.

GERMAN
No!

He JERKS the rope.

The cow JERKS back harder.

Julian's sunglasses take off as he flies forward and EATS it, face first! HARD.

OLIVIA
Not like that!

Julian lays on the ground shocked about what just happened.

GERMAN
(laughing)
**Did you see that?! Wow! He just
flew and then boom! On his face!
That's crazy! Like first he's up
and then he's down! K.O.!**

Julian looks up at German, insulted.

OLIVIA
(laughing)
**Are you alright?! That was bad!
You're not the smartest of my
grand sons, are you?**

Olivia helps Julian back on his feet. Julian yanks himself away from Olivia.

JULIAN
Fuck this!

Banged and bruised and now pissed, Julian stomps out of the pen.

OLIVIA
Where are you going?

He continues walking out of the ranch.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

Julian sulks with every step, kicking dirt and rocks along the way.

Olivia drives her pick-up toward him, from behind. It slows to stop next to him. She screams out the open window.

OLIVIA
Get your ass in here!

He pauses, but reluctantly climbs in.

OLIVIA
What's wrong? Why are you so sensitive?

JULIAN
That was... embarrassing.

OLIVIA
Hey! **At least you looped something!**

JULIAN
My mom warned me that I wouldn't be able to handle it down here.

OLIVIA
Pff... What does she know? We were just joking, you know. **Roping isn't easy.**

She reaches over and puts her hand on top of his.

He stares at their layered hands for a moment. Something is programming inside of him.

OLIVIA
I am so happy that you came, even if it's short. Are you still leaving? Maybe we can kill and cook that stupid cow that swallowed a wire before you go... You're still welcome to stay.

He looks away, deciding something in his head for a moment then looks back.

JULIAN
...Is it okay if I do for a while?

OLIVIA
Of course!

JULIAN
...That would be nice.

She kisses him on the head, excitedly, then puts the truck in gear.

OLIVIA
Thank goodness, because slaughtering that cow would've been so much work! I don't know why I suggested it! **...Very good. You're still going to learn how to rope like a cowboy, cabron!**

She CACKLES as they ride off.

INT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE - DAY

Julian hangs his clothes up in a makeshift wardrobe. A knock comes from the front door.

OLIVIA (O.S.)
Get that for me, please!

He goes to the kitchen.

KITCHEN:

Julian opens the front door. It's Petra.

JULIAN
Hi.

PETRA
Hi!

He lets her in. She enters slowly, as if an alarm could go off if she were discovered.

OLIVIA (O.S.)
Who is it?!

PETRA
It's me!

Olivia comes out of her bedroom.

OLIVIA
What's going on?

PETRA
Nothing much. I'm, uh, going back to town. Do you need me to pick anything up?

OLIVIA
No. No, we're doing good. Thank you, Petra.

PETRA
Well, do you need help doing anything? That gate post needs to be redone still.

OLIVIA
No, thank you. I have Julian to help me for now. You don't need to come around to help for a while.

Petra looks defeated.

PETRA
Oh. Ok, well goodbye.

Olivia shuts the door behind her, then moves to the window to watch her walk away from between the curtains.

JULIAN
Is everything OK?

Olivia spins around to him, as if she got caught.

OLIVIA
Yes! Everything is good.

He watches her as she steps to the other room.

INT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE - DAY

Julian digs through his stuff and pulls out a book.

He takes it to an old sofa chair and sits down to soak it in.

He opens the page and...

OLIVIA
Julian! Get up! Time to work!

She tosses a cowboy hat at him.

OLIVIA
Put that on!

JULIAN
I don't really wear hats.

She goes to him and forces the hat on his head.

OLIVIA
**It used to be your grandfather's!
Let's go!**

EXT. RANCH - DAY - MONTAGE

1. Julian herds cattle, running around them, panting heavily. He needs the exercise.
2. Julian loads feeders with bales of hay. German helps him.
3. Julian shovels cattle poop. The smells make him sick.
4. Julian brushes and feeds horses.
5. Julian attempts to shoe a horse. German tries to show him.

EXT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE - DAY - MONTAGE

1. Julian sweeps the porch only to have wind blow the dirt back.
2. Julian swaps out a light bulb for Olivia, nearly falling off a chair.

EXT. OLIVIA'S SHED - DUSK

Julian finds Olivia in sharpening a butcher's knife. Chickens peck the floor below them. He takes off his cowboy hat and fans himself.

OLIVIA
Are you having fun yet?

JULIAN
Kill me.

She laughs.

OLIVIA
**You like chicken stew? I'm making
it for dinner.**

JULIAN
Did you go to the store?

OLIVIA
What store?

JULIAN
The store... to get the chicken.

She scoffs.

OLIVIA
**Never in my life have I ever
bought chicken from a store!**

He's blind to the obvious.

She scoops up a chicken from the ground and caresses it for a moment. Then without warning, she brings the blade down on its neck.

The headless body flaps on the floor.

JULIAN
Oh fuck!

She picks up the body and tosses it at him like a basketball. Blood squirts all over.

OLIVIA
Time to eat!

JULIAN
Are you fucking crazy?!

Julian runs out, leaving Olivia to giggle to herself. She calls out to him.

OLIVIA
It's okay. Look! It stopped moving!

JULIAN
No!

She laughs even more.

EXT. CREEK BRIDGE - DAY

Julian and German walk toward a suspension bridge, past a sign that reads "No jumping on bridge."

GERMAN
Olivia said you just graduated
college?

JULIAN
Yes.

GERMAN
Very nice.

JULIAN
I went to Bard.

GERMAN
I thought you went to college?

JULIAN
It's a college in New England.

GERMAN
New England? There is a *another*
England?

Julian let's it go. They continue on to the bridge. It bounces
as they walk.

Julian braces himself, not expecting so much movement.

GERMAN
You're not married?

JULIAN
No. Not yet.

GERMAN
You're old, you better hurry.

JULIAN
I'm not even thirty yet.

GERMAN
That's old.

JULIAN
Aren't we the same age? You feel
old?

GERMAN
I do! I have back problems! It
hurts so bad. It's good!

JULIAN
It's good?

GERMAN
 Yes! The more hurt I get, the less
 I can do. The less I can do, the
 less my wife can yell at me for
 being lazy. It's good!

They both pause to think for a moment. They speak at the same
 time:

GERMAN
 (overlapped with next)
So maybe don't get married.

JULIAN
 (overlapped with previous)
 So maybe I shouldn't get
 married... right.

GERMAN
 Your father and mother were
 married?

JULIAN
 No.

GERMAN
 Do I know your father? Where is
 he?

JULIAN
 I don't think you met him. He left
 back to Cuba after I was born. I
 don't know him well, myself.

GERMAN
I see. I see.

Julian thinks about that for a moment.

They continue. German notices how uncomfortable Julian is on
 this shaky bridge. He shakes and makes the bridge sway.

Julian grips the wires.

JULIAN
 Hey hey! It said no jumping back
 there!

GERMAN
**I'm not jumping! Look, it's like a
 ride!**

JULIAN
I don't like rides!

GERMAN
So you're not going to the fair?

JULIAN
The fair?

SMASH CUT:

INT. GERMAN'S TRUCK - DAY

Everyone sits wedged in the cabin of the vehicle. Julian, Olivia, German; along with his wife, and ANA, (German's wife).

ANA
You're going too fast.

GERMAN
I'm going the limit, don't start.

ANA
Yes, but the semi's.

GERMAN
**Which semi's? The semi's coming
 down the mountains?**

The mountains can be seen looming miles away.

ANA
Dammit! I'm just saying!

Olivia scrunches her face, not bothering to hide her distaste for having to listen to this.

GERMAN
Do you want to drive?!

ANA
No!

GERMAN
Well then!

JULIAN
 Oh sure. The married life looks
 great from here.

Olivia snickers. So does German.

Ana stays silent.

EXT. RODEO CARNIVAL PARKING LOT - DAY

The group unloads from German's truck one by one, desperately stretching to regain their flexibility.

OLIVIA
Get in line!

Olivia speeds ahead of them.

JULIAN
Wait up! Why is she in a hurry?

GERMAN
(foreboding)
Oh... You will see.

ANA
(rubbing butt)
**Buy a new truck, German. My
buttcrack is gone.**

GERMAN
**Who's going to buy it for me? Are
you going to buy it for me?**

ANA
Why should I?

The couple continues arguing as the group moves toward the entrance.

EXT. RODEO RING - DAY

An announcer BLARES through giant overpowered speakers as a big band plays loudly on the stage above a ring of dirt where cowboys lasso bucking bovines for sport.

Julian and company sit in the very front drinking. Olivia claps emphatically.

Julian clocks her over-excitement.

JULIAN
Don't you think that we're too
close?

GERMAN
You never been to a **rodeo** with
your abuela have you?

OLIVIA
**Come on you bastards let's do
 this!**

A cowboy and a steer are released.

Olivia watches, judging every move, every technique.

The cowboy's rope misses the beast.

OLIVIA
 Pff... **These idiots.**

Ana joins them with food. Olivia is disappointed with the nachos that she's handed.

ANA
They were out of corndogs.

She hands Julian a loaded bag of "Tostilocos" (a bag of chips covered with corn, beans, onions, mayo, hot sauce, lime, jicama, and chamoy).

JULIAN
What is this?

ANA
Tostilocos.

Julian takes a bite with caution, suspicious that it will kill him, rightfully so.

Another cowboy and beast are released. This one misses too.

OLIVIA
Pendejo!

GERMAN
 Did you know she used to do this?

OLIVIA
 I was damn good too.

IMAGE INSERT: A grainy old photo of Olivia on riding on a horse in a rodeo.

GERMAN
 Yes, but that was a long, long,
 long, long, long, long time ago.

OLIVIA
I can still beat you up, German.

ANA
Do it, Olivia.

Another particularly angry CHARRO has his turn. He misses just like the others.

OLIVIA
Dammit! Why are you even here! Go home amateur!

This charro heard her. He locks eyes with her from across the ring.

She tosses a nacho chip in his direction.

He yells inaudible obscenities.

She stands and cups her ear.

OLIVIA
What's that? You don't know a damn thing?

Julian watches her, highly entertained.

German swats at her, trying to get her to sit down.

GERMAN
Dammit Olivia! Every time!

GERMAN
Where is Petra? She's the one who supervises you.

OLIVIA
 (snapping back)
 She couldn't come.

JULIAN
 (encouraging)
 You're out of control.

OLIVIA
 Wait till I have another beer.

LATER:

The end of the competition is announced.

The offended cowboy and his some of his cohorts cross the ring.

OLIVIA
Here he comes!

The cowboy and friends walk in front of our group.

Our group BOOS and flips him off.

CHARRO

Shut up!

OLIVIA

Learn to compete son of a bitch!

The cowboy THROWS his water bottle at them.

Our group tosses their food back, except for Ana who shields the kids.

The crowd falls over laughing.

INT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Julian blows chunks into the toilet. Olivia, stands by with salt water.

INT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Julian lays in his sofa bed. Olivia places a wet towel over his forehead. He's ill, but content.

OLIVIA

Did you have fun?

JULIAN

I wasn't prepared. No more tostilocos for me?

OLIVIA

But you had fun!

He can't help but smile.

JULIAN

I may never leave.

She snickers as she rises to turn off the lights.

OLIVIA

Goodnight!

JULIAN

Night! Love you!

OLIVIA

I love you too!

He turns over and closes his eyes.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Olivia runs through a list of shopping items that she needs. Julian has a hard time keeping up behind her.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Julian pushes a cart down the aisles as Olivia shops.

She picks up a can of fruit cocktail off the shelf.

OLIVIA
Do you like these?

Julian takes a different can down.

JULIAN
Sure. But look they have an organic brand.

Olivia looks at the price.

OLIVIA
It's the same shit! This is cheaper!

JULIAN
I'll buy them.

She snatches his organic can and tosses it in the cart.

OLIVIA
I'll buy them! **Dammit, Julian, you're going to put me on the streets before you leave.**

JULIAN
You don't have to buy them!

OLIVIA
I'm buying them!

They continue.

EXT. CHAPEL - DAY

Julian pulls Olivia's truck in front of a decaying chapel. He looks over to Olivia, in the passenger seat.

JULIAN
Wanna go in?

She looks at him, questioning.

OLIVIA
Um, OK?

He pulls into the parking area.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Olivia and Julian are sitting in a pew, bored, flipping through cheap bibles. No one else is there.

JULIAN
Umm... So what're we supposed to do?

OLIVIA
Why do you ask me?

JULIAN
I thought you'd like to visit your church. You used to drag me to go to church every Sunday!

She goes deep in thought

OLIVIA
That was... then.

Something smells off to Julian.

JULIAN
(accusing)
Interesting.

OLIVIA
(rising guilt)
It's complicated...

She looks away, hiding her discomfort.

JULIAN
Well... That's good news. I fucking hate this place.

She slaps at him.

OLIVIA
Watch your tongue!

They toss the bibles and rise quickly.

EXT. RANCH - CATTLE PEN - DAY

Julian swings the rope a bit, concentrating. This time he has only a calf in the pen with him. German works on his truck on the other side of the fence.

He tosses it.

It misses...

He still sucks.

INT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Julian clicks the dial of a dusty old tube TV. It's channel after channel of static. He turns the dial all the way around before just giving up.

Olivia pokes in.

JULIAN

I think all the channels became digital.

OLIVIA

I didn't even know that TV worked.

He clicks it off and flops his body on his bed.

JULIAN

I should've brought more books.

She thinks for a second.

OLIVIA

I have a box of 40-ounce beers.

He turns to her.

INT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - QUICK MONTAGE

VARIOUS SHOTS:

1. A couple packs of beers are taken out of the fridge.
2. Forties are taken out of the cabinets.
3. Limes are cut.
4. Shot glasses are snagged.

EXT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

An old school RANCHERA SONG comes through on Julian's phone, full of heavy orchestration and blaring trumpets.

Deeply romantic LYRICS float in. Olivia knows every word. She CROONS them with sleepy inebriated passion.

Julian watches her closely.

Something enters her mind, forcing her to pause.

JULIAN
You must miss my **abuelo**.

Her eyebrows twist, almost shocked at the idea.

OLIVIA
**Your abuelo was a rat bastard...
may he rest in peace.**

Julian stops himself from jumping on that with a response.

JULIAN
I'll avoid opening that can of worms.

OLIVIA
Your **abuelo** was fine... But, you remember how he was.

JULIAN
Not really...

She continues singing.

Julian takes a swig from his drink. He catches something out of the corner of his eye, something far out and in the darkness. He leans forward to study it for a moment to make sure he's really seeing it.

In the blackened distance are some illuminated orbs that bounces up and down and across the landscape.

JULIAN
What the hell is that?

Olivia looks up from her singing.

OLIVIA
Oh. **The orbs.**

JULIAN
What are **orbs**?

OLIVIA

No one knows. They say they might be UFO's or some magic trick. **Your great grandmother said they were lost spirits looking for their homes...**

Something occurs to her. She rises and silently dips into the house.

Julian watches the orbs closely.

PUSH IN on the orbs. They're eerie and ghostly as they float freely up and down across the landscape. They give off a low glow that illuminates the shrubbery below them lightly. Julian is fascinated, almost hypnotized.

BANG!

Julian jumps out of his chair and ducks on the ground!

The orbs fade out.

He looks up to see Olivia standing in the doorway, pointing a smoking shot gun in the direction of the orbs.

JULIAN

What was that for?!

OLIVIA

To scare them!

JULIAN

For what?!

OLIVIA

One of those might be your grandfather!

GERMAN (O.S.)

Who's shooting?!

German and Ana walk in through the gate, carrying 24 packs of beer, joining them on the porch.

ANA

Did the war begin?

OLIVIA

You didn't bring me the kids?

They pull up some chairs.

ANA
**They wanted to stay at their
 little friend's house.**

GERMAN
**They think you're going to eat
 them.**

OLIVIA
Who? Me?!

ANA
**Shut up, gordo! He told them that,
 not me!**

GERMAN
It's true though, isn't it Olivia?

OLIVIA
You are so mean! Kids love me!

JULIAN
**You're still holding the shot gun,
 abue.**

Olivia puts the gun down and picks up a beer.

OLIVIA
 (taking a seat)
 I had all these fireworks I was
 saving for them.

JULIAN
 I'll make use of those fireworks!

OLIVIA
 Go get them.

Julian darts in the house.

EXT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A newly formed camp fire illuminates them from nearby. MUSIC continues to play from the phone. Ana lights a sparkler and uses it to light a bottle rocket. The rocket shoots into the air.

Julian and German light a few of their own.

Olivia watches them from the porch, drinking and enjoying the show.

Julian lights a few fireworks that spin across the ground and send sparks in every direction. He sends them toward German and Ana. Ana SCREAMS joyfully.

German grabs her by the wrist and they dance in the sparks that bounce at their feet. Julian sends a few more spinners their way.

Olivia watches German and Ana dance. She's reminded of something. Her joy seems to dim.

Before she can get too sad, Julian runs up to her. He hands her a roman candle.

OLIVIA
No! Not me!

JULIAN
(lighting it)
Hang on to it!

OLIVIA
No! It's too much!

JULIAN
Don't let go!

POP! POP! POP! The tube blows fireballs out of the opposite end.

The balls fly toward German and Ana who run away SQUEALING. Olivia laughs as she aims it toward them.

OLIVIA
Come here so I can eat you!

The fire balls run out, leaving her with an empty tube.

JULIAN
(taking a drink)
How was that?

OLIVIA
Give me another one.

JULIAN
Sure thing!

He goes to fetch another.

INT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

In her unlit bedroom, Olivia sleeps diagonal on her bed, fully clothed, over the sheets.

CUT TO:

Julian sleeps in his own sofa bed, also diagonal, also fully clothed, also over the sheets.

A light clicks on in the kitchen. Julian rustles, squints his eyes open.

From his position he can see the edge of the kitchen table. Olivia sits at it, smoking a cigarette, quietly contemplating.

He rolls over and goes back to sleep.

EXT. OLIVIA'S SHED - DAY

Julian rakes the chicken coop's floor.

Olivia sits on a stool nearby, watching. Something is on her mind. Something that's pulling her mood down.

He clocks it. He sneezes.

JULIAN

I should be using a face mask.

OLIVIA

Would you be ok with Petra coming to have dinner with us?

JULIAN

The neighbor? Why wouldn't I?

OLIVIA

Only if it doesn't bother you.

JULIAN

It's your house. Invite the world if you want.

OLIVIA

Great!

She exits swiftly. He watches her curiously as she runs off.

EXT. OLIVIA'S SHED - DUSK

The sun sets as Julian finishes cleaning up, now wearing a bandana over his face.

He watches from the doorway as Olivia and Petra walk across the yard to greet each other in big romantic hugs and kisses.

Their hugs last a long moment. Maybe more than long.

He continues watching them, realizing what he's seeing.

INT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Olivia and Petra have prepared a spread; red and green enchiladas, chiles rellenos, reduas. It's a small feast done in the regional Chihuahuan styles.

Julian and the two women eat in silence, though there's a secret comfort in Petra and Olivia's quiet demeanors.

JULIAN

This is so much food.

He watches them as they trade happy glances back and forth.

There's clearly something they're hiding. Julian knows. Petra glances at him as he looks at them. She quickly corrects her behavior, cutting off a smile and retracting her hand.

Julian clears his throat.

JULIAN

Ladies... I'm no idiot.

The women tense up, caught off guard.

OLIVIA

(deflecting)

What? What do you mean?

JULIAN

I'm not sure what you suspect from my end, but believe me when I tell you that I do not care.

The women process this in silence. They're relieved but a slight shame remains.

OLIVIA

Care about what?

PETRA

(owning up)

Olivia...

OLIVIA

I need a cigarette.

PETRA

You don't feel grossed out?

JULIAN

Of course not. So long as you're happy...

OLIVIA

You do not mind?

JULIAN

(lecturing)

You've been closed off in this town for a long time. The world is different.

Petra looks to Olivia.

Olivia is touched by his reaction. She stands up straighter, feeling a higher worth.

Julian is oblivious to how important this is to them. He keeps eating.

OLIVIA

Thank you, Julian... People here don't normally understand.

Julian smiles and nods, reassuring them.

Petra and Olivia look at each other with big eyes.

OLIVIA

I... I don't know what I'd do without her.

PETRA

(lovingly)

Shut up.

Olivia reaches for Petra's hand.

Julian looks closely at their joined hands. But something feels wrong. His smile fades for a second. AN IMAGE FLASHBACK OF HER HAND ON HIS IN THE TRUCK EARLIER FILLS THE SCREEN. Something negative inside of him is strangely rising.

OLIVIA

(to Julian)

I still wasn't sure if I could trust you until now.

JULIAN

(snapping out of it)

Until now?!

Olivia giggles.

OLIVIA
(giddy)
Feliz feliz feliz

JULIAN
(to Petra)
Where are you from?

PETRA
Me? I'm from here. I was born a town over.

JULIAN
How long have you known my abuela?

PETRA
How long, Olivia?

Olivia shakes her head, exaggerating that it's been forever. She waves her palm facedown, low, indicated that they were young children when they met.

PETRA
That's too much math.

JULIAN
I see... How long have you guys been together?

Petra and Olivia glance at each other. That's another question that's hard to answer.

PETRA
I lost count of the years.

OLIVIA
Me too.

JULIAN
What do you guys do together?

OLIVIA
(waving him away)
Julian, so many questions!

JULIAN
I'm just curious. I don't want too many details, don't worry.

PETRA
What do we do, Olivia? We gossip! We make food! We garden!

OLIVIA
What garden! We don't garden!

PETRA
We're trying to garden!... What else? We play games... Oh! We can play dompe with Julian now!

OLIVIA
Oh yes! Get the cards!

Julian watches Petra get up and fetch a deck of cards from a drawer.

JULIAN
 What is dompe?

PETRA
A game! We'll teach you!

Petra deals the cards. Between her and Olivia, they teach him how to play, step by step.

INT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE - DAY

Julian and Olivia are in the middle of debating something.

JULIAN
 Fine! I'll call her! Jesus!

OLIVIA
I don't blame you for not wanting to! But just do it.

JULIAN
 Fine!... but I won't be nice.

Julian nears the phone, but doesn't have the will-power to pick up the receiver.

OLIVIA
 Be the biggest son of a bitch you want to be. Just let her know you're OK.

JULIAN
 (dialing)
 Right, she's probably shaking with anticipation.

He waits for the other line to pick up as Olivia walks out of the house.

He watches her through the window as she comes around and joins Petra who is digging up a small tree.

CATRINA (V.O.)
 (Picking up)
Hello?
 (Julian hesitates.)
Hello!?

JULIAN
 Hey. It's me.

CATRINA (V.O.)
 Julian?

JULIAN
 Correct.

There's a pause.

CATRINA (V.O.)
 What do you need?

JULIAN
 Abue wants me to tell you that I got here in one piece.

CATRINA (V.O.)
 She told me.

JULIAN
 I figured.

There's a long pause as they wait each other out. They're too stubborn to say much, let alone something to build a bridge.

CATRINA (V.O.)
 Is that it?

JULIAN
 Basically.

CATRINA (V.O.)
 (condescending)
 Are you having fun?

JULIAN
 (snapping back)
 I *am* actually.

CATRINA
 Right.
 (MORE)

CATRINA (CONT'D)
And I bet you're giving her the
same hell that you give me?

Julian watches Olivia try to boss Petra around. Petra just
shakes her head and mocks her back. It's cute.

JULIAN
(focused on Olivia)
She's a lot like you. In ways you
wouldn't expect... Except for the
gay part.

CATRINA (V.O.)
Gay part?

JULIAN
Yeah. The...
(realizes)
Oh... Um...

Julian screams on the inside. He fucked up.

CATRINA (V.O.)
So it's true.

JULIAN
You knew?

CATRINA (V.O.)
No... But rumors travel.

JULIAN
Right. Well they seem happy. And I
am happy for them.

CATRINA (V.O.)
What they're doing is against the
church...

JULIAN
When was the last time you went to
church?

CATRINA (V.O.)
You like to think *I'm* bad, but she
was a monster to me. She's so much
better now, because she thinks
she's progressed or something.

JULIAN
I think she was overcompensating.

CATRINA (V.O.)
 ...Whatever, that girlfriend of hers must be the reason she won't come back... Anything can happen with that you know. **What a mess...**

He squints his eyes shut.

JULIAN
 You're both making me insane.

CATRINA (V.O.)
Still... You remember what I said? Come back with her. Or don't bother coming at all.

JULIAN
 (mocking)
 It was wonderful talking with you, mother.

He hangs up.

He goes back to staring out the window at the happy couple and thinks about what Catrina just said.

INT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE - DAY

Julian walks in and lets himself fall on his sofa bed, lazily. He pulls out his book.

Out of the corner of his eye, he notices a couple new picture frames on a nearby shelf.

He stands to get a closer look.

They're of Olivia and Petra, at different stages in their relationship. Them at a wedding, them at the ranch, them in the city...

Pushed behind these photos are those of the family, including baby pictures of Julian and his mom. He rearranges them so they're all seen.

INT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE - DAY

Julian walks in to see Olivia and Petra lying close to one another, reading tabloid magazines, pointing to celebrities.

PETRA
Another billionaire is caught cheating.

OLIVIA
Tsh... Who cares...

PETRA
My grandfather used to tell us stories about how they used to round up the land barons during the revolution and shoot them in a firing squad.

OLIVIA
Mmm... People have no balls anymore.

Julian clears his throat.

JULIAN
German and I are going into town for the fair since it's the last day. **Do you two want to come?**

Olivia looks to Petra.

PETRA
I can't go, **I have to wait for the gas delivery.**

She turns back to her magazine.

OLIVIA
Oh no, mijo. Have fun.

JULIAN
You sure? I think I saw a bigger roller coaster the last time.

OLIVIA
No, thank you.
(to Petra, pointing at the magazine)
That nose is not normal.

Petra pushes her nose up recreating a mutilated nose.

PETRA
Like this?

Olivia flips a page and the women carry on.

Julian leaves, disappointed.

EXT. RODEO RING - NIGHT

SLOW PUSH-IN ON: Julian is sitting far back in the stands, beer in hand, alone. Something is on his mind.

German is nearby, drinking with SOME FRIENDS in a far off corner.

A spotlight points at a RODEO CLOWN in the ring before them. He makes a fool of himself in an act where he tries on different outrageous outfits and seeks the audience's approval.

The audience boos outfit after outfit, until the clown gives up in an overdramatic tantrum.

Julian watches it, but his mind is clearly elsewhere.

INT. GERMAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

German enters holding 2 large bags of kettle corn popcorn from the fair. Julian follows him in.

GERMAN
We're home!

JULIAN
Barely!

His youngest, KIMBERLY (6), waves from down the hall. He tosses a popcorn bag to her. She catches it. Ana calls out from the kitchen.

ANA (O.S.)
You said you'd be home an hour ago! Come eat!

GERMAN
I don't remember saying that!

German leads Julian into the kitchen.

KITCHEN:

German sits as Ana comes around and serves him a plate. He hands her the other bag of popcorn.

ANA
Ugh... You smell like cigarettes and beer.

GERMAN
I smell like a man, right Julian?

JULIAN
 (taking a seat)
 No comment.

German pinches her butt, she slaps it away, like she probably always does, used to his immaturity.

ANA
Like a vagabond.

German makes condescending faces behind her back, showing off to Julian.

JULIAN
 She's going to make you live in that ranch house one day.

GERMAN
Like she hasn't already.

She comes around and serves Julian a plate of tacos dorados.

JULIAN
Thank you! It smells good!

She snaps at JASON (10) and Kimberly who obediently come to take their seats.

ANA
 (barely able to pronounce their names)
This is Kimberly and this is Jason.

Julian takes a moment to make sure he heard those names right.

The kids wave timid hellos at Julian.

JULIAN
Hello.

KIMBERLY
He is my uncle?

GERMAN
 Talk to him in English!

ANA
You never taught them!

GERMAN
 Oh ya.

German pops open a beer.

Julian pulls out his phone.

JULIAN
Move in close.

He snaps a couple pictures of the kids.

He takes one or two of Ana and German who are caught off guard.

ANA
How do you like it here?

JULIAN
It's not bad.

ANA
Are you bored yet?

JULIAN
Why does everyone ask me that?

GERMAN
He's bored.

JULIAN
Are there any libraries around here?

German shakes his head, no.

GERMAN
You'd have to go into town.

JULIAN
They should build one.

GERMAN
Who?

JULIAN
The city government, usually.

Ana scoffs.

ANA
Pff! Those guys are useless.

GERMAN
What do you do over there?

JULIAN
What do you mean?

GERMAN
For fun.

JULIAN
Depends... We go to the movies,
bar hop, karaoke, restaurants,
concerts. We read books, of
course, and comics.

GERMAN
Comic books? **Like cartoons?**

JULIAN
Sort of.

ANA
Adults still like cartoons there?

JULIAN
That depends on what you mean by
adult...

GERMAN
This is why you haven't married!

Julian chuckles.

Ana slaps at German.

ANA
Leave him alone, gordo.

JULIAN
My generation takes a bit longer
to mature, that's for sure. **But
then what is an adult in the end,
really?**

ANA
**"Responsibilities and sacrifices!"
my mom would say.**

GERMAN
How long does it take to be adult
over there?

JULIAN
Pff... **Maybe 50? 60 years?** Just
kidding. I really don't know.

Ana looks at German.

ANA
I guess we must be very far ahead.

Julian thinks for a moment, getting lost in his ideas.

GERMAN
I don't feel like an adult.

ANA
Don't worry, you're not.

JULIAN
 (lost in his thoughts)
 Westernized privilege and
 influence, modern cost of living,
 the pressures of social media,
 wage inequality, the absolute
 chaos of real estate... Star
 Wars...

The rest of the table lost him.

KIMBERLY
What is he saying?

Julian notices their confused reactions. He shrinks.

German grins at Julian, reassuring him.

They continue eating.

GERMAN
**Imagine that... We could've been
 young for 20 more years.**

ANA
**Yeah you bastard, you'd leave me
 so quickly if we didn't have kids.**

German scans her up and down, taking her into account, all in
 fun. He nods.

She rolls her eyes and fights the urge to laugh.

ANA
 (to Julian)
You see this?!

JULIAN
 How are you still together?

GERMAN
 I don't know!

She punches him in the shoulder. He WAILS. The kids laugh.

INT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE - DAY

Petra repots a plant over the sink calmly.

BEDROOM:

Olivia is organizing some items in her armoire. Julian flips through a newspaper, in a chair nearby.

OLIVIA
How did dinner with German go?

JULIAN
Good.

OLIVIA
They argued no doubt.

JULIAN
(pulls out phone)
Here.

Julian hands her her reading glasses and shows her his pictures from the dinner on his phone.

OLIVIA
Ha! Look at this.

He swipes through them as she reacts to each.

He reaches the last one.

OLIVIA
What else do you have?

JULIAN
Only pictures from back home.

OLIVIA
Let's see.

Julian pulls up some more pictures of family members in the U.S.

OLIVIA
Who are those boys?

JULIAN
Those are Tio Rodrigo's kids. The oldest ones.

OLIVIA
They're huge!

JULIAN
They grew a lot.

OLIVIA
No I mean from the sides! They're really fat!

JULIAN
I've seen Rodrigo give them chicken nuggets for breakfast, so...

He swipes through some more pictures soaking each one in.

OLIVIA
I never get to see any of them anymore... Is that the new house?

JULIAN
You could see them everyday if you wanted to.

Olivia twists her eyebrows at him and stares for a moment. He stares back. It's a small stand off.

JULIAN
Just a thought.

OLIVIA
And do what over there? Watch novelas all day? **I don't think so.**

PETRA (O.S.)
Olivia!

OLIVIA
Coming!

She leaves Julian alone with his phone and moves into the kitchen.

KITCHEN:

Julian enters.

Petra gathers a few large bags and the newly repotted plant. She points to a little bench in the corner.

PETRA
Olivia, is this the bench that I could borrow?

OLIVIA
Yes.

She picks up the bench, her arms are now full.

OLIVIA
Let me help you!

Julian moves in on an opportunity.

JULIAN
No, I'll help you.

PETRA
(declining)
It's okay!

JULIAN
(declaring)
I said I'll help you.

OLIVIA
Thank you, Julian.

Julian takes the bench and a bag. He and Petra head out.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

Julian and Petra walk out of Olivia's yard and walk toward Petra's house.

JULIAN
How far do you live?

PETRA
Up here. Maybe 2 blocks. You've probably passed by it.

JULIAN
Have you lived there long?

PETRA
In that house? Pretty long. Maybe 30 years?

JULIAN
Who do you live with?

PETRA
No one. I stay with your grandmother a lot.

They continue walking.

JULIAN
You make her happy.

She smiles at him, appreciative. He smiles back, but turns the smile off quickly when she looks away.

PETRA
She makes me happy.

JULIAN
...We need her too, you know? My family.

PETRA
Of course you do. I can see that.

JULIAN
Okay. Just, you know. It's not easy to not have her with us.

She looks at him, challenging, as they continue to walk side by side.

PETRA
She's not here against her will.

She walks ahead and leads him into her yard.

EXT. PETRA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

They walk onto the concrete porch. A small garden adorns the front.

Petra takes the potted plant and the bench from Julian and sets them down in the garden.

She unlocks the door. They enter with the bags.

PETRA
Come in.

INT. PETRA'S HOUSE - DAY

Julian looks around a heavily decorated tiny house with old and barely functional furniture. Everything is worn to hell, but well taken care of.

PETRA
I have coke or coffee.

JULIAN
Neither, thank you.

She straightens the place up a little. Julian looks into an old wooden cabinet with a vintage wedding topper.

JULIAN
You were married?

PETRA
Unfortunately.

JULIAN
Where is he?

PETRA
God knows... We divorced forever ago.

JULIAN
Children?

PETRA
One boy.

She hands him a coke to his reminder.

JULIAN
Oh thank you. Where does he live?

PETRA
He lives in heaven, I imagine... I hope.

He should've known.

JULIAN
I'm sorry.

PETRA
It's okay. It was a long time ago. Trucking accident. It happens a lot.

Petra goes to put the bags away.

EXT. PETRA'S HOUSE - DAY

Julian, sipping on his Coke, watches Petra sitting on the bench, hunched over her garden, using rusted farming tools to plant some seeds. A small shovel in one hand.

She notices his gaze.

PETRA
What're you looking at?

JULIAN
 Nothing, sorry...

PETRA

How do I look? Sad? This is what life does to you. It screws you up and down. Then in the end you're in your crappy front yard trying to plant a crappy garden, because...

(searching for words)

because why the hell not?

She turns to him and smirks.

PETRA

This is the nice part of it though. Just so you know.

JULIAN

That terrible?

PETRA

No. It's not. I'm exaggerating. Before I got with your grandmother, I was here alone all day, every day. Almost rotting. And I accepted it...

She looks off deep in thought, remembering.

Julian feels a slight pity for her. It shows.

PETRA

Then one day your grandmother lifted my skirt and that was that.

Julian SHIVERS in slow motion, collapsing a little.

You can see why she needed the bench as she has a hard time standing back up.

PETRA

You know what I'm saying! You have to be patient. Enjoy the ride. Or whatever cliché you can think of. I'm not the wise one here...

Julian looks off.

EXT. RANCH - DAY

Julian and German ride horses through the dirt road, casually. Julian is deep in thought.

German is fiddling with his smart phone. He doesn't see a tree branch before him. Before he knows it, he TUMBLES off the horse.

GERMAN
Goddamn it!

Julian's mind is so far gone, he hasn't noticed.

GERMAN
Wey!

Julian looks back.

JULIAN
Oh damn!

Julian turns the horse around toward German.

INT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE - MORNING

It's early morning. Julian rocks in a chair, sipping coffee. He seems down as he fiddles with a wildflower, spinning it by the stem between his fingers.

Olivia and Petra step out, holding coffee too. They take their seats a few feet away from Julian.

OLIVIA
What's up, Julian? Are you bored?

He rolls his eyes, sick of this question.

PETRA
**I never noticed that you can see
the school from here?**

They look up to see a dusty old building far in the distance.

OLIVIA
**Well, of course. All of the trees
died. So now you can see to the
ocean.**

PETRA
**They taught us how to make sausage
in that school.**

JULIAN
Sausages?

PETRA

Yes, it was the only school and it was a school for agriculture. They taught us about sausage. They taught us how to build a chicken coop. How to birth a cow. Everything... Olivia didn't study there.

OLIVIA

No, I studied in the U.S. before I came back and got married, like a dummy... You know Julian has a...
 (trying to remember)
A um... An MSN?

JULIAN

I have an MFA. A masters.

OLIVIA

That thing! He worked hard for it.

PETRA

What is that?

OLIVIA

Um...

She turns to Julian for the answer.

JULIAN

It's a degree.

OLIVIA

Yes!

PETRA

What does it mean? What did you specialize in?

JULIAN

I specialized in literature.

Olivia is impressed. She raises her eyebrows. She pats Julian on the arm. Petra is still confused.

PETRA

Can you make a lot of money with that degree?

JULIAN

Not... necessarily...

Annoyed at the thought, Julian flicks the wildflower away.

OLIVIA
 (waving her off)
No more, Petra!

PETRA
I was just curious.

Julian isn't amused in the slightest.

He stands, suddenly.

JULIAN
 I'm going into town.

He pulls his keys out and steps to his car.

He SLAMS his car door, already turning the engine over.

The women watch as he backs up and pulls away.

EXT. INTERNET CAFE - ESTABLISHING - DAY

Painted advertisements on the wall of the building promote all the silly basic things you can do with the internet; "Email! Facebook! Instagram!"

INT. INTERNET CAFE - DAY

Julian sits at an outdated computer, surrounded by other outdated computers and mostly teenagers. He's on a video call with Catrina.

JULIAN
 And she's always there. She's
 always in the way. She never goes
 home...

THROUGH HER VIDEO FEED: Catrina is crunching numbers into a calculator that's off-frame. She is barely paying attention.

CATRINA
 And you called *me* about this?

Julian winces, looking closely at her video feed. He's noticing something.

JULIAN
 Is that a new purse?... Is that
 Chanel?

She reaches for the purse that's behind her and yanks it down.

JULIAN
 If you're so hard up for funds,
 then why are you still shopping
 like it isn't an issue?

CATRINA
 (not offering)
 What else can I help you with
 Julian?

He huffs.

JULIAN
 ...nothing I guess...

She continues working.

Julian rests his chin in his hand and looks away,
 contemplating.

JULIAN
 ...You know, if you cut abue
 off... She wouldn't have a
 choice... She'd have to go.

Catrina stops what she's doing. She thinks.

CATRINA
 I did think of that before...

JULIAN
 It's an idea...

CATRINA
 When are you coming home?

Julian pauses, surprised by the question.

JULIAN
 Do you want me to come home?

CATRINA
 ...Call me when you're ready to
 come back. Maybe we can talk...

JULIAN
 (a little shaken)
 Uh, alright. Sounds good.

CATRINA
 Bye.

JULIAN
 Bye.

The window closes on the screen. Julian stares at the empty screen for a moment. A smile flashes on to his face for a split second.

EXT. TOWN PLAZA - DAY

A group of senior citizens are gathered at a small plaza. They take turns dancing with one another to BOLERO MUSIC. Among the crowd is Olivia dancing formally with an older gentlemen.

EXT. WESTERN UNION - ESTABLISHING - DAY

Olivia walks into the store front.

INT. WESTERN UNION - CONTINUOUS

Olivia walks in. The CAJERO (Cashier) sees her and turns on a smile.

CAJERO
Señora Olivia! Is it Thursday? The week is flying by.

OLIVIA
How are you?

CAJERO
Great! And you?

OLIVIA
I'm great thank you!

CAJERO
I'll get that transfer for you.

The cajero pokes around his computer while Olivia waits patiently.

CAJERO
One second.

The cajero isn't seeing what he's looking for. He disappears to the back.

A middle aged woman, GLORIA, steps up to the window next to her. They lock eyes.

Gloria subdues a shocked reaction.

GLORIA
Oh! Olivia!

OLIVIA
Hi Gloria!

Olivia leans in to greet her with a customary kiss on the cheek exchange, but Gloria pulls back. Olivia is left abandoned in mid air with pursed lips.

GLORIA
How've you been?

Olivia resets herself, realizing this is now a showdown. She's ready.

OLIVIA
Good. You?

GLORIA
Great! How's Petra?

OLIVIA
Petra?

GLORIA
She's living with you, no?

OLIVIA
 (Calling her out)
Where in the world did you hear that?

Gloria pushes out a polite giggle.

GLORIA
Oh, I don't even remember.

OLIVIA
No. She doesn't live with me. So, no. No gossip for you to distribute from me.

Gloria firms up. She finishes her transaction.

GLORIA
Well... It was good seeing you. Have a good one.

Gloria heads toward the door.

OLIVIA
Hey Gloria!

Gloria looks back.

OLIVIA
**Send my regards to your mother.
 Tell her I miss her... I miss her
 very very much.**

Gloria's face freezes with the shock of her thoughts. She darts out the door.

Satisfied, Olivia turns back to the window where the cajero has returned.

CAJERO
**I'm sorry Doña Olivia, we don't
 seem to be carrying a money
 transfer for you today.**

OLIVIA
Are you sure?

CAJERO
**I checked three times and called
 the office where they're usually
 sent from. Nothing. Maybe they
 forgot to send it?**

OLIVIA
She never forgets.

Olivia gathers her stuff and walks out.

EXT. RANCH - CATTLE PEN - DAY

Julian swirls the dirty water in a giant bucket then quickly tips it over.

He tips it back, then twist the knob of a spigot. He then takes the hoes and refills the giant bucket.

The cattle wait on standby.

EXT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE - DAY

Julian stomps his work boots up to the front door, knocking the mud off of them.

INT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Julian enters. He's surprised to find Olivia slumped over the sink looking through the window, a burning cigarette between two fingers.

Not wanting to bother her, he takes a few steps, but then realizes she might be upset.

JULIAN
What's up?
 (no response)
 Abue?

OLIVIA
 Your mother didn't send the money transfer today...

Julian pauses, realizing Catrina went forward with his idea.

JULIAN
 Did you call her?

OLIVIA
 I did. Dan answered. He said your mother isn't sending money any more. **She's cutting me off.**

His blood drains a little as he realizes what has happened.

JULIAN
 So, uh... What happens now?

OLIVIA
 I don't know. I may be able to keep this house, but I don't know about the lands... **The pension can't cover both.**

Olivia shuffles some dirty dishes in the sink, angrily.

Julian thinks for a moment.

JULIAN
 Well... I mean... The worst case scenario is that you'd just have to come live with us.

OLIVIA
Oh god...

She grumbles beneath her breath. She tosses her cigarette in the sink.

Julian continues toward the hallway, guilt written all over his face... He glances back to watch her before disappearing into the other room.

EXT. RANCH - NIGHT

A campfire CRACKLES in the dead of night. The guitarist from earlier plays a few soft notes for German and Julian, who sip on bottles of beer.

Julian is quiet, deep in thought, gazing into the fire.

GERMAN
What're you thinking.

Julian looks up at him.

JULIAN
...Olivia is possibly going to have to move back with us. My mom isn't going to support her anymore.

GERMAN
Is she mad?

JULIAN
She's not jumping for joy...

GERMAN
That does not make you happy?

JULIAN
I don't know... Am I? It's complicated...

GERMAN
Everything is complicated these days...

German suddenly realizes the direness of his situation. He perks up.

GERMAN
Wait! What is happening to the land?

JULIAN
No idea.

GERMAN
...They're going to have to sell it, wey!

JULIAN
Probably.

GERMAN
What am I supposed to do if that happens?

Julian doesn't have an answer for him, he sips his beer. He watches German who looks visibly stressed.

INT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

BATHROOM:

Julian stands a bit buzzed.

He slaps himself gently a couple times, trying to sober up.

He steps out.

KITCHEN:

Olivia drinks coffee as she watches Petra sift through a pile of dried pinto beans on the table. They're having a quiet conversation.

Julian takes a seat at a chair.

OLIVIA
How would that work?

PETRA
We'll make it work. It'll be nice.

Olivia thinks for a moment.

JULIAN
 What're you guys talking about?

OLIVIA
 Petra wants me to move in with her.

He nearly rolls his eyes. Of course she does.

JULIAN
 Wouldn't that make more people gossip about you two?

OLIVIA
 How much more could they gossip about us?!

PETRA
You'd be surprised.

Olivia thinks about it all, working her emotions up. She shakes her head.

OLIVIA
 This is all her's too, you know?
 We've had these lands in the
 family for over a hundred years!
**Since before Villa and his armies
 marched through it.**

Petra nods as Julian watches curiously.

OLIVIA
 (this takes some effort)
 I have made mistakes in the past.
**I know it... I've admitted it and
 I apologized! Believe me!**

PETRA
Yes.

OLIVIA
**So why is she still punishing me?
 What did I do to deserve this
 much?**

PETRA
People are complicated, Olivia.

OLIVIA
No. They're not. She's selfish.
 That's what she is.

JULIAN
 There is a lot to unpack here...

Olivia taps her nails for a moment while considering something.

OLIVIA
I'm calling her.

Julian watches tensely as Olivia moves toward the phone.

Olivia PUNCHES the numbers hard on the phone with her finger. She wait's for a moment before someone picks up.

OLIVIA
 (on phone)
Catrina! How dare you-- Oh. Hello,
 Dan... Can you get her please?
 Thank you.
 (she waits a moment)
Catrina?... CATRINA! How dare you!
 (MORE)

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
**After everything that I have done
 for you!** What is your problem?!
 What would ever poses you to do
 this?!

Julian clenches his fist.

OLIVIA
 (to phone)
 ...Bullshit, **I know what you're
 spending your money on these days,
 Catrina! Rumors travel!**
 (listens to her talk)
 ...Spit it out!

Olivia's face relaxes from what Catrina is telling her. She continues to listen, but she turns to Julian.

OLIVIA
 (locked on to Julian)
**I don't believe you... Are you
 telling me the truth, Catrina?...
 I'll call you back.**

Quietly, gently, she hangs up the phone, a new rage building.

She pulls herself toward the sink, away from the others. She takes a few breaths, ready to burst.

Petra looks to Julian for a clue.

He doesn't offer her one.

PETRA
What is happening?

OLIVIA
 This was your idea?

PETRA
What happened?

Julian is sobering, but still has to fight to spit out his words.

JULIAN
 Whoa, wait a minute. I wasn't--

OLIVIA
 You told her to do it?!

JULIAN
 Wait.

OLIVIA
 Why would you align with your
 mother? Of all people, your
 mother?

Her voice builds, firm and intense. She turns to look at him
 from behind the stinging wetness of her face.

JULIAN
 I'm sorry, abue. I didn't mean
 to--

OLIVIA
I let myself trust you...

She breathes in and changes her composure, sucking up the
 emotion for what she's about to do next.

OLIVIA
Two can play this game. Do you
 even know why your mother is so
 terrible to us?

PETRA
**Ok, love. Calm down. Save this for
 later when everyone isn't upset.**

OLIVIA
No! He should know.

OLIVIA
 Your mother was 16 when she came
 home one day right through that
 door, crying, worried to death!

PETRA
 Olivia!

OLIVIA
 She stood right where you are and
 told me she was pregnant. She
 wanted so badly to get rid of
 it... rid of you, Julian... Being
 a good Catholic like I was back
 then, I didn't let her! Who knows
 what I would've done today. Thank
 god she wasn't successful, because
 here you are.

(condescending)

How wonderful...

(continuing)

She's been bitter since! She
 blames me! But she blames you just
 as much!

(MORE)

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

She might not know she does, but she does... So you were right. She doesn't want you. She never wanted you... **That's who you got to help you, Julian. My daughter. Your mother.**

Julian stumbles back.

Petra looks around, shocked, not knowing what to do.

PETRA

Okay. Everyone needs to calm down.

Olivia turns back toward the sink.

Petra turns back toward Julian, but he's now gone.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - NIGHT

Julian stumbles his way down the rocky road, lit by dim street lights. He pants uncontrollably. An anxiety attack is building.

He catches his breath near a junk yard lot filled with wrecked and beat down cars.

He picks a large rock up and with a big swing, he sends the rock through one of the car's windows..

The glass shatters everywhere. He stares at it as he catches his breath.

EXT. RANCH - RESERVOIR - NIGHT

Julian lays at the bank. Water is heard LAPPING near him.

Julian's phone illuminates his face as he gazes into it, listening as it finishes playing the [RANCHERA SONG](#) Olivia sang to earlier.

The song ends. He starts it over.

EXT. RANCH - RESERVOIR - SKY TRANSITION - NIGHT/DAY

The light above Julian lightens and turns to day.

The sun's pre-glow gently floods the town.

Julian is still laying at the bank of the water, spinning another small wildflower in his fingers.

He stops spinning it. With his other hand he takes the flower between his fingers and crushes it.

EXT. RANCH - DAY

Julian sulks by a fence still processing his own concerns as German looks over the cattle grazing in a field.

A cow has a LOUD poop.

Julian covers his nose and mouth. German just wafts the smell away, clearly conditioned.

GERMAN
Almost makes me want to stop
eating **carne...** Almost.

Julian looks at German with a manic quality.

JULIAN
(provoking)
Why do you keep this job if it
disgusts you so much?

GERMAN
I like this job... **Why are you
mad?**

JULIAN
You don't have to be a rancher if
you don't want to.

German raises his chin.

GERMAN
And if I do want to? You don't
have to be a puto, **but there you
are.**

JULIAN
This is all... archaic.

GERMAN
I don't know what that means, but
you are wrong! **Besides, you can't
even rope a calf.**

JULIAN
Don't fuck with me because you're
stuck here.

Julian begins to walk away.

In a flash, German whips his rope out, tosses the loop, catches it around Julian's ankle.

German pulls, sending Julian down to kiss the floor.

German snickers, meaning it as a light joke, but quickly realizes Julian isn't playing around.

Julian stands and rushes toward German, swinging at him, but missing.

German hits Julian with a falcon SMACK, sending Julian spinning.

GERMAN
Ok, now calm down.

Julian stands back up quickly and runs toward German's truck and climbs inside.

GERMAN
Hey! That's mine!

JULIAN
No shit!

Julian drives out of the ranch. German chases after him on foot, unsuccessfully.

EXT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE - DAY

Petra is watering the plants in front of the house with a hose. Julian skids German's truck to a slippery stop in front of her. Julian gets out and approaches, full of purpose.

PETRA
Oh god, where have you been?

JULIAN
Where is she?

PETRA
Inside. Are you okay?

JULIAN
Get out.

PETRA
Get out? I'm already outside.

JULIAN
Get out of our lives!

PETRA
Julian.

JULIAN
 Go!

PETRA
Firstly, you can't tell me what to do little man. Calm down.

JULIAN
 Petra! Get away from us! You are alone for a reason! Just go be alone!

Julian immediately regrets saying that.

Petra SCOFFS and stares at him for a moment. She calmly drops the hose.

PETRA
This I don't need...

She saunters her way toward the gate.

PETRA
 (without looking at him)
I thought you were one of the good ones.

A ping of guilt hits Julian.

Olivia runs out into the porch.

OLIVIA
Why are you guys yelling? Where have you been?!

JULIAN
 Petra is leaving.

Olivia sees Petra walking a half block away.

OLIVIA
 (calling out)
 Petra!
 (Petra doesn't turn back.)
What did you say to her?

She steps off the porch the gate to get a better view.

JULIAN
 I told her to go home.

OLIVIA
Why?

JULIAN
Because!

She stops and turns back to him. She studies him up and down. The angry Olivia we saw before has had enough time to cool off.

OLIVIA
Look. I shouldn't have told you all that. Not the way I did.

Julian looks away.

OLIVIA
But you're being a horrid person right now! And you know, now I can see it. Now I can now see your mother in you!...
(admitting)
And in me too, for that matter. But you're smarter than us. You can't twist my arm and expect me to still love you the same way. **That's not how it works!** A lot of things haven't been fair to you... **It's true.** But it's time to grow up and do what you can with what god has given you, Julian. Even if it's not much!

With that, Julian watches as Olivia shakes her head and walks out of the front yard and in Petra's direction.

INT. PETRA'S HOUSE - DAY

Olivia enters without knocking to find Petra slumped on her old couch.

She sits close beside her quietly. Petra is too embarrassed to look back at her.

Olivia wraps an arm around her and puts her head on her shoulder, reassuring her.

Petra rests her hand on Olivia's arm.

They sit there like this without saying anything.

EXT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE - DAY

Julian wanders around the house to the backside. He kneels against a flat white painted wall, illuminated by direct sunlight, and sits against it. He looks as if he's floating in milk.

INT./EXT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE - DAY - FLASHBACK

YOUNG JULIAN, 2-4 years old, stands in the doorway, his wrist held tight by a YOUNG OLIVIA, their faces shadowed and unrecognizable.

An out of focus YOUNG CATRINA, 20-25, argues with Young Olivia as she makes her way to her early 90's era car. Young Olivia is calling her back, pointing at Young Julian.

Young Catrina climbs in her car as Young Olivia gives her a dismissing wave, disappointed in her departure. She picks Julian up and holds him tightly, kissing him on the head.

Young Catrina's car drives away.

Young Olivia closes the front door, covering the camera frame with darkness.

EXT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE - BACK SIDE - CONTINUOUS

Julian stares down at his shoes.

A dust storm builds.

EXT. RANCH - RESERVOIR - DAY

Julian stands at the bank again, right up against the water.

He watches the tiny waves lap at the tips of his shoes.

The tiny waves stop. The water becomes still.

He can see himself in the water.

INT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE - DAY

Petra and Olivia sit at the table, holding poker cards. They're playing a silent game of "dompe".

Petra lays a card down, picks another up.

Olivia does the same. She then lays her cards down, face up.

OLIVIA

Dompe.

The front door CREAKS open. Julian steps in slowly.

Olivia clocks him. The two glance at each other for a moment.

Olivia gathers up all the cards and redistributes them for a new game. This time with a third hand for Julian.

She kicks a chair open for him to sit.

Julian stares for a moment before accepting.

He sits down gently.

Petra keeps her eyes low as they all lift their cards and see what they have.

SUPERCUT: Close on cards getting set, played, and shuffled as the card game progresses to the end.

LATER:

Julian pulls a card. Nothing.

Petra pulls a card.

PETRA

Dompe.

Olivia studies her hand. She twists and bites her lips, but she has nothing.

She knocks and folds.

Julian studies his cards closely, the situation is depressing. He has no choice but to force himself to knock on the table.

OLIVIA

She wins.

Petra gathers the cards as Julian gazes blankly at the table. He's overwhelmed and trying not to show it. Olivia sees him.

She comes around and wraps around him in a choke-hold style hug.

Julian knows that he has lost more than just the card game. His eyes water, but he won't let the tears through. Olivia kisses him on the head. A tear or two run down his cheek.

EXT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Olivia and Julian lean on the fence of the property, looking out as the late afternoon sun creates long shadows across the landscape. They're already in a conversation.

JULIAN

Mom told me to take you back with me or that I wouldn't be able to live with her anymore.

OLIVIA

That's my daughter...

JULIAN

I refused. I didn't mean to keep that from you. Sorry. In the end I wanted you to come back for my own reasons.

OLIVIA

I see.

JULIAN

(glancing back at the house)
Is Petra doing alright?

OLIVIA

She's not mad at you. She's been through worse...

(Thinking for a moment)

Your mom's been through a lot too... **We like to complain about her a lot, but** I have to remind myself that she's human too. Where would you be right now if you had to raise a child at 16 years old?

JULIAN

...I probably wouldn't have studied...

OLIVIA

You wouldn't have done a lot more than that. You wouldn't have a normal life.

JULIAN

I guess we might've kept that from her, inadvertently.

OLIVIA

And yet she does love us still.

(MORE)

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

None of your uncles or aunts support me here, you know. She's the only one who sends money. Even if she doesn't like it. She still does it.

JULIAN

I wanted you to come live with us so I could feel what it's like to have family for once. To not feel like a burden. Maybe I could figure life out after that...

Olivia looks at him. She twists her lips as she considers something.

She inhales and exhales deeply.

OLIVIA

You shouldn't be alone. No one should...
(Sighs into a new decision)
I'll go back with you. I'll do it.

Julian looks at her, surprised.

JULIAN

Are you serious?

OLIVIA

(analyzing)
I've lived my life here. I've had my fun. I could arrange something with Petra. She can visit us. Your mother would have to deal with it. I can make it work.

JULIAN

Abue...

OLIVIA

I'll just need some time to pack things up and sell a few things, but I can do it... **My mistakes have caught up with me. It's time I pay.**

Julian looks at her, studying her as she calculates a few things in her head, counting on her fingers.

Julian grins.

JULIAN

You're not going.

OLIVIA
Yes I am.

JULIAN
No. You're not.

OLIVIA
You can't tell me what to do!

JULIAN
I am *very* aware of that. You're content here, abue. You have everything that you need and you love it. You can't give that up.

OLIVIA
But you need me.

JULIAN
I think I need an exorcism is what I need... I've let this whole thing get the best of me. I can't keep hurting people the way I got hurt--the way they got hurt, whatever the phrase is... We've all suffered more than enough.

OLIVIA
Oh, Julian...

JULIAN
Chingado chingado.

Olivia huffs. They look back out onto the landscape.

OLIVIA
...What a mess...

JULIAN
Seriously.

They continue gazing out.

EXT. RANCH - CATTLE PEN - DAY

Julian walks toward the cattle pen where he finds German putting hay bales in troughs and cutting the wires.

Julian peers over the fence.

JULIAN
Hey.

GERMAN
(glancing)
Hey.

Julian motions toward his truck that he stole.

German sees it and nods back, dismissing the beef between the two of them.

Julian climbs over and lifts a bale of hay. German hands him wire cutters.

Julian and German continue working accordingly.

From the other end of the pen, the gate swings open. A cow wanders out.

GERMAN
Chingada madre!

German grabs his rope and runs over to close the gate. Julian follows him.

German begins to spin the rope.

He suddenly stops spinning and turns to Julian. He offers him the rope.

Julian takes the rope. Sure, why the hell not?

He spins it, focusing on his target, but caring less than before.

With a toss, the loop flies through the air and lands... on the ground below the cow.

Julian slumps and stretches a smile back at German.

GERMAN
Pull it!

Julian snaps back and pulls as he's told. The loop tightens up around the cow's ankles. It's caught!

German helps pull the rope back until they're able to maneuver it back into the pen.

Julian closes the gate successfully. They laugh.

GERMAN
There's more than one way...

Julian coils the rope.

German hangs out, staring at the floor, kicking rocks lightly.

JULIAN
She's not coming with me.

GERMAN
(lights up)
**No?! Thank god! So nothing is
changing?**

JULIAN
Nothing is changing.

GERMAN
Good. Good. Good...

JULIAN
I got carried away.

German's eyes widen; that's an understatement.

GERMAN
She didn't want to go?

JULIAN
I didn't want her to.

GERMAN
(surprised)
Ah... **And now what?**

Julian shrugs.

JULIAN
And now...
(realizes)
I guess I should return home.

GERMAN
Why go? You're happy here!

Julian smiles.

JULIAN
I think I have to go deal with
things... You know?

German rolls it all over in his head for a beat. Something occurs to him.

GERMAN
...I used to, ehm, get into big
fights with Ana.

JULIAN
You *used to*?

GERMAN
They were worse than now!... I think her and me were **how do you say disappointed?**

JULIAN
Disappointed.

GERMAN
Yes. That. We weren't happy with how life was. Like we were stuck... Then one fight, Ana said that I could go if I really wanted to. **I could leave her and the kids...**

JULIAN
...And you stayed.

GERMAN
No! I packed my shit! I was gone!

Julian stifles a laugh.

GERMAN
I said, I'll see you later! Bye! I got in my **little truck** and I was ready! **But I didn't hit the gas. I just stayed there with the engine on... And I thought... Where the hell am I gonna go? Where?** This is what I have. This is what there is. **It's not that pretty. It's not a fun life. But it's home. It's my life.**

JULIAN
(impressed)
You gave in.

GERMAN
Anyway. Ana took me back and everything was better... Now we just fight because it's fun... **No pos si, wey...**

Julian laughs.

They walk toward the exit of the pen.

JULIAN
Am I still a Puto?

GERMAN

Yes of course. **But who isn't?**
 (pointing at different cows)
 That's a puto. That's a puto. This
 one too. Puto. Puto. Puto.

German keeps going as they exit the pen and walk toward the truck.

INT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE - DAY

Julian has all his possessions neatly folded and laid out on the sofa-bed, now just a sofa. He packs them away.

He packs his books and pulls aside a children's book.

Olivia and Petra enter through the kitchen carrying groceries.

Olivia sees Julian's bags in the living room. Her heart sinks.

OLIVIA

Where are you going?

Julian forces a smile and nods.

JULIAN

It's time.

Still holding grocery bags, Olivia sits on the couch. He moves some clothes and sits next to her. The two stare glumly at the floor. She reaches for his hand.

OLIVIA

**I'm going to miss you. I love you
 so much, cabron.**

JULIAN

I know... And I love you too.

She turns her head toward the kitchen and YELLS.

OLIVIA

Petra!
 (Julian jumps)
**Make some burritos for Julian to
 take!**

Petra pokes into the room.

PETRA

You're leaving?

JULIAN

Yes.

She pulls out a 10 pound big brick of Menonite cheese from a grocery bag.

PETRA
Do you want to take a cheese with you?

JULIAN
(confused)
No thank you.

Olivia turns back to him and wipes his dry face.

OLIVIA
Did you at least have fun?

JULIAN
I did.

OLIVIA
Your help with everything was nice. Thank you for that.

JULIAN
Any time...

She looks into him, studying him.

OLIVIA
You're too young to be this miserable.

He smiles at her gently.

EXT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE - DAY

Julian teaches Kimberly and Jason to read through an English copy of Hansel and Gretel on the porch. The kids sound out words as he reads it to them.

German loads Julian's car while Olivia places a plate of thin burritos neatly wrapped in foil and a stack of napkins in the driver's seat.

Julian hands them the book. They flip through it while he joins Olivia by his car.

JULIAN
What am I supposed to do with so many napkins?

OLIVIA
**In case you get dirty or you have
 to blow your nose or wipe your
 ass.**

German tosses a stiff looped rope in the trunk, before joining them on the driver's side.

GERMAN
 Maybe you can sell them at the border.

Julian reaches to German for a hug. They hold the hug for a moment, patting each other on the backs.

The pats get stronger and stronger until they're just hitting each other. SMACK SMACK SMACK!

OLIVIA
Ya! That's enough!

The two pull away.

GERMAN
 Goodbye, puto.

JULIAN
Adios, wey.

He turns to Petra and reaches out his hand. She, instead, embraces him for a hug.

PETRA
Thank you for letting me have her.

Julian thinks about how to process that for a moment.

JULIAN
**She was always yours... Take care
 of her... and yourself.**

She kisses him on the cheek before walking with German back toward the porch.

Julian turns to Olivia who stares at him, while leaning on the car door.

OLIVIA
 Are you going to miss this?

JULIAN
 Sure I am.

OLIVIA
No you're not... You think that
I'm here only because of Petra.
You don't understand it, but this
is my paradise.

A GUST of wind blows hard. Dirt flies into her eyes. She spits
and fans the air.

JULIAN
A beautiful paradise.

OLIVIA
Jerk.

He dusts her off and leans in for a hug. She hugs him back,
still spitting dirt.

JULIAN
I'll miss you really bad.

OLIVIA
I'll miss you too. You're going to
come back?

JULIAN
You can come visit me too, you
know.

OLIVIA
(not a question)
You're going to come back.

JULIAN
I will... I will...

CUT TO:

Julian's sedan pulls away in a cloud of dirt as Petra, German,
and Olivia watch him drive away.

INT. JULIAN'S SEDAN - DAY

Julian drives his car across the light monochromatic landscape,
contemplating.

Farmlands and deserts blur by until they become rolling hills
of grass then eventually the area he lives near.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE - DAY

Olivia slides a tape into an old cassette boom box and presses the play button.

She turns around and pulls Petra to her.

An old Spanish BALLAD begins to play. It's sweet and slow tempo. The two begin to sway together, waltzing to the beat.

Petra lays her cheek on Olivia's head.

INT. GAS STATION - DAY

Back in the U.S., Julian lays out a few sodas on the cashier's counter. As the they get rung up, Julian notices a few magazines on a rack. One of them is called Cowboys & Rodeos Magazine. Action shots of professional rodeo riders are on the cover.

He picks the magazine out and leafs through it. Interested, he hands it to the cashier.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Julian sits in his car, munching on a burrito from Olivia and Petra as he reads the articles in the magazine he just bought.

Near the last page he finds an ad that says
"WANTED: WRITERS TO WRITE ABOUT RIDERS: JOIN THE COWBOYS &
RODEOS MAGAZINE TEAM! COMPETITIVE WAGES! CONTACT US AT
INFO@COWBOYSRODEOSMAGAZINE.COM"

Julian pulls his smartphone out and types the email address into a new message.

EXT. TERRY'S APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

Julian pulls his bags out of his parked car and walks into a maze of an apartment complex.

He steps up to Terry's apartment door. Terry opens it.

TERRY

Yo!

Terry helps Julian with his baggage.

INT. TERRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Terry leads Julian through his bare bones apartment, into the bedroom, helping carry his luggage.

Terry puts Julian's bag on the bed.

TERRY

Mike says you can have your job back. He said you were too good of a sandwich artist to let go.

JULIAN

(assuring)

I appreciate that. Hopefully I'm not there much longer. Are you positive that this isn't an inconvenience?

TERRY

Ah, no man. My brother got laid off from his warehouse job so he had to move back in with my dad. So this room is all yours. Sucks for him though. Anyway, Vinny is tending tonight.

JULIAN

I'll have to meet you there. I have to go pick up a few things.

TERRY

Cool.

Julian unpacks.

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

Julian exits his car, which is parked on the curb.

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - NIGHT

The front door is unlocked. Julian enters slowly. It seems like no one is home. He moves stealthily toward his room.

INT. JULIAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Julian packs things hastily.

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - NIGHT

Julian drags two duffle bags from the hallway toward the front door.

Catrina watches from the kitchen smoking a cigarette.

CATRINA

Julian.

He jumps, caught off guard. She moves to the dining room, but no further.

CATRINA

Hey.

They stare at each other from across the open floorplan for a pregnant moment.

He turns around and continues toward the door.

CATRINA

Wait. Come sit.

JULIAN

No thanks.

CATRINA

(yelling)

I said sit down!

Her sudden yell stops him in his tracks. He listens, but doesn't move closer.

CATRINA

I talked to your abue.

Julian takes a moment. He shrugs.

JULIAN

And?

CATRINA

Don't be like that...

(following is like thick stubborn tar in her mouth)

Listen... We all make mistakes you know, when we're young... We get... desperate over dumb things, because we're stupid and too young... Maybe not you. Maybe you're perfect... I did.

He listens. Not sure of how much she knows.

CATRINA

It's not the stupid things you do that makes you who you are... No matter what happened or what will happen or, you know, what can happen... I do love you. More than you can understand.

They stay glued to technically separate rooms, both holding guard over their territories. His eyes fixate on the doorknob, waiting to escape this.

CATRINA

I'm sorry. I am.

He flicks tears from his eyes and looks straight at her.

He takes a good look at her, soaking in her image. His expression loosens as he sees her as someone else now, something closer to her own person.

JULIAN

It's alright mom. It's okay. Thank you... You're okay. Really... I love you too.

She releases a small sob, but catches it, holding tightly to her composure.

JULIAN

I'm staying at Terry's for a while. So...

CATRINA

Ok. I understand. But you know, we're here.

JULIAN

Great.

Julian opens the door, but suddenly pauses, remembering.

JULIAN

Is abue still cut off, financially? Please don't do that to her.

CATRINA

I sent money yesterday.

JULIAN

That's good! Perfect... Maybe we can get dinner or something

She wipes her wet eyes with her thumb carefully.

CATRINA
Please, yes.

He nods. She nods. He steps out of the house.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME - CONTINUOUS

Julian shuts the door behind him. He lets out a prolonged exhale.

Dan's car pulls up into the driveway.

Julian carries his things to his car, walking across the lawn.

Dan, exits his own car. The two pause and look at each other.

JULIAN
Hey...

DAN
Hey.

With that, they continue walking, each toward their own destinations.

EXT. PUB - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

Busy night.

INT. PUB - NIGHT

Julian sits next to Terry as they nurse a pair of beers. The place is more crowded than we last saw it. They're surrounded by patrons.

A PING comes through on Julian's phone. He checks it to find a response to his email from *Cowboys & Rodeos Magazine*. The beginning of it starts out with "*Can we schedule a time to talk next week?*"

Julian types out a response as Vinny approaches.

VINNY
Welcome back!

Julian hits send on his phone and smiles at Vinny.

JULIAN
Hey man!

Without Julian noticing, Vinny waves to Julian's crush from before, Nadia, over to them.

She's a little sloshy as she focuses on getting over to the bar without falling.

She pats Julian's shoulder, to his genuine surprise.

JULIAN
Oh... Hi.

NADIA
Hey.

JULIAN
Hi.

She forces a smile.

NADIA
So. Listen... Some people let me know that I was harsh last time and I do remember seeing you at school. You were friends with what's-his-name...

JULIAN
(glancing at Vinny)
Ok.

NADIA
Buy me a beer or something. Let's talk.

JULIAN
Uh...

Julian smiles at this. He glances back at Vinny and Terry.

He studies her for a moment, quietly as she waits for an answer to come sooner than later.

NADIA
What's up?

JULIAN
That's nice of you. You seem great, you honestly do. But I'm good for now. Maybe another time?

He smiles kindly and turns back toward Vinny.

NADIA
(confused)
Um... Ok...

She pulls away and gives Vinny a stern look.

TERRY

Ha!

VINNY

I fucked that up for you again,
didn't I?

JULIAN

It was a good attempt.

Terry keeps staring in her direction.

JULIAN

(to Terry)

You can go talk to her if you
want.

TERRY

Say less!

Terry is gone in a flash, leaving Julian with Vinny.

VINNY

I haven't seen you in a minute.
Where you been?

JULIAN

I've been in Mexico.

VINNY

Oh cool! Vacationing?

There's a long pause.

JULIAN

(thinking of the right
answer)

I was um... I was visiting family.

Vinny smiles. Julian smiles back, politely.

VINNY

Nice, dude!

Julian takes a sip.

A patron calls for Vinny from the other end of the bar. Vinny excuses himself.

PUSH IN SLOWLY: Julian sits alone as what remains of his polite smile fades away slowly. He takes a sip of his drink and swallows it down. He then stares off at nothing in particular, deep in thought once more as his face fills the frame.

112.

FADE OUT.