

**NO RUNNING**

FADE IN:

INT. ROSE'S SMALL HOME- NIGHT

A room curtained in blackness is broken by a pinpoint of light which pulls the eye to a corner of the room. ROSE ESQUIREL, 14, HISPANIC, dark, moon face under a mane of wiry hair.

Heavy brows furrow over dark, slightly bulged eyes. Black downy hair traces her upper lip.

Rose's shoulders hunch over a binder. Her face twists with each stroke of the pen. Her energy creates a dance between the rickety table and the thin cracked linoleum. LOUD CLICKS.

The following is in SPANISH with ENGLISH SUBTITLES:

MAMA/NACHA

Rose, you'll wake Papa. No more homework.

Rose's crooked teeth jut out slightly as she cranks out her last thought. A smile to the paper. Light Out.

DAWN

Rose stirs a pot on the small stove. Still dark but enough light to show shabby furniture, chipped paint, cramped space.

ESPERANZA, 10, corn silk black hair sits at the table followed by her sister, a mirror image, ELENA, 8.

Rose sets out bowls of hot cereal. As they eat she braids their silky hair. She goes to a small mirror, above it a crucifix. She looks up, crosses herself.

With a deep breath she fights her wild hair. Armed with hair spray, gel, bands, colored barrettes, bobby pins.

Elena and Esperanza, root for their sister. Finally, red-faced Rose gets her braid, high at the top of her crown. A huge puff of bangs remain combative.

Rose positions Bobby pins precariously riding the waves of her bangs, ready to launch. Sprays heavily, turns to the girls. They clap.

ESPERANZA In SPANISH with ENGLISH subtitles

ESPERANZA

Rose, you gotta do something with your hair--

CONTINUED:

ROSE  
English, Esperanza.

ESPERANZA  
(slight accent)  
If you cut it, those girls might  
leave you alone.

ROSE  
A hair cut won't fix that. We  
should hurry. Rinse your bowls.

The girls go behind the curtain that separates bedroom from main living area. Another curtain separates parents' bedroom. Rose puts lunch bags into three backpacks.

Rose exchanges heavy sweat shirt for bulky hot pink sweater. Struggles as she pulls up high waisted jeans over heavy torso.

The girls exit.

INT. ANTHONY KEENE'S APARTMENT- 7:00 A.M

ANTHONY KEENE, JANITOR OF MOON VALLEY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL, (MVJHS) 45ish, good-looking, long dark hair. Small, orderly apartment. Anthony reads. Reaches for coffee, sleeve rides up reveal muscles covered with tatoos.

On the table, exact order, his watch, band straight, wallet, keys, fanned, brown bag, thermos. Toast stacked each corner nests the other.

INT. MVJHS TEACHERS' WORKROOM- 8:30

People use the photocopier, read mail, talk. LILY MILLS, 35, sandy blonde hair, youthful, pretty, takes an envelope from her slot. She reads it.

LILY  
Shit, are they kidding?

A large woman enters the office, MRS. BURKE, CAROL, 55, the principal. Lily stops her, shows her the letter.

CAROL  
No, they aren't. There are going to be lay off's and if you don't get a bilingual special credential--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILY  
I have seniority.

CAROL  
Suddenly irrelevant. The focus is the ELL, ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER, and you have not been trained to work with those students so sayeth the Lords of education Lords.

LILY  
This political bullshit. This school is ninety nine percent upper middle class spoiled white kids.

CAROL  
You're telling me? It's a reality Lily, like it or not.

Lily wads the letter, stuffs it in her bag. Exits.

EXT. M/JHS HALLWAY- CONTINUOUS

Rose stands outside Lily's classroom door, reading.

LILY  
Good morning Rose. What can I do for you?

ROSE  
(shyly, quietly)  
I couldn't finish my vocabulary homework. Can I use the dictionary, just for two words?

Lily balances her heavy bags, papers, keys, opens the door with great effort, kicks it to stay open as she flies in, calls back

LILY  
Comi ng?

INSIDE

Lily drops her load on her desk. Unwads the letter. Rose stands by the bookshelves, motionless. Lily finally looks up.

LILY (CONT' D)  
(irritated)  
What are you waiting-- (softens) go ahead, Rose take a dictionary. You don't have to ask.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lily puts down the letter, watches the shy girl. Takes out a thermos, pours coffee. Rose works. Lily walks close to her but gives Rose space.

LILY  
You look a little tired. Feel okay?

Rose nods her head.

LILY (CONT' D)  
I see you walking in the morning  
and after school. Where do you  
live?

ROSE  
(hesitantly)  
GLENVALE.

Lily stops the cup to her mouth.

LILY  
GlenVale. You walk all the way--  
what time do you leave for school?

ROSE  
We leave at six, six thirty  
sometimes. We also ride the bus,  
most of the time.

LILY  
We?

ROSE  
My sisters. They go to MOON VALLEY  
ELEMENTARY.

LILY  
So, you don't live in this  
district.

Rose nervous, she stares at her paper. Lily careful not to crowd her, walks a little closer.

LILY  
Does your father work at the  
GLENVALE WINERY?

ROSE  
Yes, and construction jobs  
sometimes..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lily watches Rose squirm under her gaze, quickly she goes to her desk.

LILY

You must live at the winery. I know they have some housing for workers.

ROSE

Ms. Mills, please don't tell. I wouldn't be able to come here. I'm learning so much. I love your class, the writing.

LILY

It's okay. Really. Better hurry, the bell's going to ring soon.

INT. GIRLS' BATHROOM- MID MORNING

The CLONES, three girls ZOE, THE ORIGINAL, KARINA, KAYLA, long dyed blond hair, tight clothes, makeup. They primp. Rose exits a stall. Slowly moves to farthest sink. Washes hands.

Rose starts to exit. ZOE blocks her. Hands on hips.

ZOE

You need a shave Rose, my father couldn't grow that 'stache. Speaking of unwanted hair, is there something living in there?

Zoe gingerly touches the stiff clump of bangs, dislodges a bobby pin, falls into her hand. Zoe drops it; washes her hand, exaggerates. Bell RINGS. Zoe throws wet towel at Rose's feet.

They exit. Rose tries to push her bangs flat, fights tears.

EXT. COURTYARD- LUNCH

Large area with lunch tables, benches, concrete risers. Trees encircle. Student activities. Occasional bursts of VOICES POPS over the collective thrum. Rose goes to the far corner.

Rose goes to a tree. From her backpack she takes a plastic bowl of red sauced food, writing pad, pens.

Rose struggles to sit. Rolls of fat struggle against the fabric, creates waves on her thighs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Breathes heavily, grasps ankles, forces them below thighs. Awkwardly balances the bowl on one of the waves. Eats.

Anthony cleans in the area. Creates neat piles of bottles, cans, paper. The CLONES arrive. KARINA moves toward Rose. Points to the bowl.

KARINA

Oh my God, what is that shit?

Rose does not respond, tries to retreat, pulls legs tighter to her body, stares at her writing.

ZOE

Whatever it is, it makes Rose fat.

Anthony moves closer to the group sweeps, picks up trash. Zoe moves closer to Rose.

ZOE (CONT' D)

Is that homework for English?

Rose lowers her head.

KAYLA

Bitch, did you hear her?

Rose pulls ankles closer to her body, bowl teeters. One last attempt catapults the bowl and its contents across her lap, onto Zoe's pristine white tennis shoes.

The red sauce, tomato and meat, ooze off the shoes.

ZOE

What the--You stupid, stupid bitch.

Anthony rushes over with a spray bottle and rag. Picks the bowl off, sprays Zoe's shoes. Karina and Kayla yell to some boys, who join the group.

KARINA

Uuugguhhh, gross, leave her alone.

Anthony continues.

ZOE

Don't touch me.

The boys laugh. ISSAC, tall, thin, skin tight pants, baseball hat shoved high off his forehead. Boy clones with him

ISSAC

What's goin' on?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ZOE

Look at my fucking shoes.

Anthony makes a furious swipe. Rose, struggles to unwind herself. Goes to Zoe, holds dripping bowl.

ROSE

I'm so, so sorry. Can I clean or  
can I buy new shoes--

Karina, Kayla, Issac laugh.

KAYLA

Are you nuts? Those shoes cost more  
than your padre makes in a month.

ANTHONY

Look. Your shoes are as good as  
new.

The shoes are wet, no red.

ZOE

Yeah, like I have the same  
standards as a janitor. They're  
ruined. You're not getting away  
with this. Neither of you. I got to  
go to the bathroom

The group leaves. Red drips down Rose's pants.

ANTHONY

Here, let me take that.

Anthony takes the bowl, wipes it out. Gets another rag,  
starts to spray Rose's legs, she jumps.

ANTHONY

This is toxic free cleaner, really  
it's okay. Spray the stains, and  
wipe them with this.

Rose takes the items, hands tremble. She begins to clean  
herself up. Anthony with another bottle cleans her binder and  
backpack. Wipes her writing pad, reads. Rose notices.

ANTHONY

You're good.

Rose reaches for pad, embarrassed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROSE

Thank you.

ANTHONY

I see you walking in the morning  
with your sisters.

Rose nods.

ANTHONY (CONT' D)

You live at the winery, yeah?

Nods.

ANTHONY (CONT' D)

Wow, that's quite a hike. Umm, I'm  
Anth, Mr. Keener.

ROSE

I know.

ANTHONY

Yeah, sure, all the times you have  
to hear it over the loudspeaker.  
Maybe if the boys would quit  
locking each other in the bathroom  
I wouldn't be so famous.

Rose begins to smile. PAUSE. Anthony leans to Rose.

ANTHONY

And you are?

ROSE

Rose.

ANTHONY

Beautiful nom de plume.

Rose cocks her head, confused.

ANTHONY

Name of the pen, writer's name.  
You're a writer.

Rose starts to smile, puts her hand to her mouth. Anthony  
hands her cleaned belongings. Stands back, flashes thumb's  
up.

ANTHONY

Okay, we better get moving, bell is  
about to ring.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROSE

Thank you--Mr. Keener.

ANTHONY

You're welcome, Rose.

Rose walks a few feet.

ANTHONY (CONT' D)

Hey--

She turns

ANTHONY (CONT' D)

I hope you let me read more of your story.

Rose beams.

INT. TEACHERS' LOUNGE- CONTINUOUS

A dressed-up BOILER ROOM Drab walls, no windows. Loud floral plastic table cloths compensate. Mismatched furniture, faded, under stuffed sofa. Lily, alone, writes. ANNE enters, holds crumpled paper.

ANNE

Did you get one of these love notes?

Lily folds her arms, nods.

LILY

How do people who live in this country illegally have so much clout?

Anne gets a cup of coffee, sips it, throws it down the sink. Sits.

ANNE

The District is overriding seniority. This certificate is all that matters now. Because I don't speak Spanish in an English speaking country, I? I need to get trained?

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CONTINUED:

LILY

Well you are lacking because a tiny fragment of our school population is here illegally and can't speak English. And even though you have been very effective with this population, some moron in Sacramento has come up with this bogus hoop, and presto changeo you, we, are deficient enough to fire if not immersed in this useless training.

ANNE

How about immersing the Spanish speakers in English?

LILY

Too practical. And mean. I wonder if the tax payers know how much this is going to cost.

ANNE

Speaking of cost. Do you know we aren't getting any reimbursement for food or transportation? That we have to create lesson plans, have homework. We get paid for ten months of work. They are getting a free month of labor out of us.

LILY

Yeah but the politicians are lining their pockets with contributions and rich white folks stuff away more money by paying their illegal nannies and gardeners slave wages.

ANNE

Wow, I can't believe you are saying this.

LILY

Why?

ANNE

Because you're only slightly left of CHE GUEVERA. I been meaning to ask, do you say this stuff to Ewan who I believe is part Mexican.

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