

MARGARITA

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FADE IN:

INT. SMALL COLORADO GYM - DAY

PANTING. Weights CLATTER. GRUNTS from strenuous workouts.

BEEP. BEEP. BEEPBEEP--

SOMEONE RUNS on a TREADMILL as the speed increases.

It begins to sound less like running. More like GALLOPING.

MARGARITA [22], face as red as her fluffy hair, pants loudly.

She GALLOPS faster and faster, continually increasing her speed. She's in the **zone**.

And people are beginning to notice.

She sweats through her HORSE graphic-tee and biker shorts that give her a picturesque camel toe.

LAUGHTER.

She sees an annoying FIT COUPLE watching her.

She loses focus, tripping. **BOOM**. All heads turn.

Margarita is face down. Her body slides off the treadmill belt, hitting the ground with another THUD.

She sits up, wiping the blood off her knees. She takes a deep breath, saddling back up on to the treadmill. Then, she gallops once more.

SUPERIMPOSE: TITLE.

EXT. SMALL TOWN STREETS - MOMENTS LATER

A plush HORSE HEAD is mounted to a PURPLE BICYCLE.

This is CHEESEBURGER.

Margarita rides her bike through the streets. She SINGS LOUDLY, a song she has written by herself, about herself.

MARGARITA

Fast...she's fast...the fastest
girl in the world...she's good and
she's great and she's fast...

She shuts her eyes, beginning to coast down the hill.

At the last second she opens her eyes, dodging a GRUFF MAN on the sidewalk. (She totally clears it though.)

GRUFF MAN
Use the bike lane--Jesus!

Margarita doesn't hear him. She's entirely in HER OWN WORLD.

EXT. SMALL TOWN STREETS - **MARGARITA'S WORLD**

A HEAVENLY CHOIR breaks into song. It's both ethereal and epic (like her).

CHOIR
Fast...she's fast...the fastest
girl in the world...she's good and
she's great and she's fast...

In **MARGARITA'S WORLD**, SOUNDS are AMPLIFIED. COLORS are bright.

Margarita can also choose when GRAVITY turns on and off. Like right now. She turns it off.

The leaves begin to LIFT off the ground as she rides.

Soon, Margarita and her bike begin to FLOAT as well. Her bike bobs up and down, mimicking the look of RIDING A HORSE.

She hangs on tight as the wind blows her hair. She's free. Her bike touches back down to earth again.

INT. CHEMOTHERAPY ROOM - DAY

Peppermint pink walls with flowery paintings hung about.

The rhythmic BEEPS of machines. Fluid drips through IVs.

SANDY [50's] curly brown hair with a face full of freckles, sits in a chair receiving chemo.

She holds the attention of the other middle-aged CHEMOSABES.

It's like a book club, but less books and more barf trays.

She's in the middle of telling an animated story. She's one of the few who still has hair (and life) left in her.

SANDY
...So he just lifts me up and
deadman carries-- no, he fireman
carries-- what's the word?
(MORE)

SANDY (CONT'D)

I don't know what it is, you know where they throw you over their shoulder- you know, you know...

Some women laugh as she acts it out.

SANDY (CONT'D)

Anyways, he has me over his shoulder because I am so drunk off tequila shots and whatever else they served us that night... He's carrying me, and I manage to convince him we should sleep out on the trampoline... because it...I don't know, sounded like a better idea I guess? So we slept out on the trampoline.

DEBBIE, [30's] also still has hair, chimes in.

DEBBIE

And how was it?

SANDY

Goddamn *freezing*.

The ladies BUST UP with laughter. Sandy's stories always lighten the mood. KIM calls out from across the room.

KIM

You're gonna have to bring him with you one of these days.

SANDY

He died. Actually.

BANG.

The front door is THROWN open.

Enter: the TORNADO that is MARGARITA. Hair stuck to her forehead with sweat, blood dripping down her knees.

MARGARITA

(too loudly)

Hey ladies how's it going.

Margarita walks straight towards Sandy.

SANDY

Hands--

Margarita stops abruptly.

MARGARITA

Ahhh...

She gives herself an "I'm-so-stupid" clonk on the head. She walks to the sink and begins washing her hands.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)

So I was practicing my gallop--

SANDY

--I can't hear you.

MARGARITA

(loudly)

So I was practicing--

SANDY

--Practicing what?

MARGARITA

My galloping. I was on the treadmill and

SANDY

Volume.

MARGARITA

(yelling quieter)

I was on the treadmill going super fast which was good but I think my shoelace got caught in the thingy, I tripped and I fell and then blah!

She points to her knees, laughing.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)

But yeah, it was cool, just got right back up. Right back up again and kept going.

Margarita walks up to one of the paintings on the wall. It's a Thomas Kincaid style over-the-top flower-y garden painting.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)

Hey...this is new.

She taps the painting, running her fingers on it.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)

I liked the beach painting better. This one doesn't fit right.

DEBBIE

My mother painted that, Margarita.

MARGARITA

I don't like it. I liked the beach painting more. It had more bumpy parts on it. Hey Mom, after this can we get taquitos?

She scratches at her crotch. Sandy motions at her to stop.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)

So taquitos or no?

She trots over to Sandy.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)

Can you braid my hair?

Margarita sits on the floor in front of her. Debbie leans over, talking to Margarita like she's five.

DEBBIE

Do you know how to french braid your hair, Margarita?

Margarita glares at her. Annoyed at the tone.

MARGARITA

No?

DEBBIE

I can do it for you if you want.

Debbie smiles. Margarita stares at her blankly.

MARGARITA

No thanks.

Margarita sits down in front of Sandy. Sandy begins to braid her hair.

As we begin to CIRCLE around her HEAD, we **MATCH CUT: from the CHEMO ROOM TO:**

INT. LOS AMIGOS - NIGHT

Continue CIRCLING around Margarita's (now finished) braid to REVEAL: neon pink and blue lights reflecting on her face.

Sandy and Margarita sit in a booth at a hole-in-the-wall MEXICAN RESTAURANT.

Margarita chews with her mouth open. Her gaze focused forward on the dingy KARAOKE STAGE in front of her.

She shoves the rest of her taquito in her mouth. Sour cream drips down her chin. She wipes it with the back of her hand, dragging it through her hair.

Sandy works on a plate of enchiladas next to her.

KARAOKE M.C.

Give another hand for Mike. Up next
we have our very own Miss Margarita
singing-

Margarita stands abruptly, knocking her plate with a RATTLE. Sandy catches it. Margarita marches straight for the stage.

She grabs the mic, her mouth directly up against it.

MARGARITA

Hello everybody my name is
Margarita and tonight I will be
singing American Pie by the late
great Don McLean for your
enjoyment. Thank you. HIT IT.

She points to the M.C. who knows his cue. She looks back out to restaurant of patrons anxiously.

She looks at Sandy, giving her a discreet thumbs up.

The KARAOKE TRACK CRACKLES in.

Margarita closes her eyes, exhaling loudly into the mic.

From the booth, Sandy takes a deep breath. Here we go.

Margarita sings too loud and a beat too late. She white knuckles the mic. Her other hand stimming.

As the chorus comes in, She takes the microphone off the stand and begins to strut the stage **f e e l i n g** it more.

A WAITER delivers tequila shots to the table directly in front of her. The DRUNK PATRONS laugh and cheer loudly.

Margarita stops singing, watching them.

The table in front of her continues to laugh loudly, not noticing the singing has stopped altogether.

THWUMP.

Margarita BONKS a GIRL sitting at the table on the back of the head with the microphone. The GIRL spins around.

GIRL
What the hell?!

Margarita throws her hands up.

MARGARITA
I'm singing right now! You're being
rude. What, you don't think you're
being rude right now? Cuz I think
you are.

Sandy drops her face into her hands. Shit.

INT. MARGARITA'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Margarita, fresh out of the shower, wears a horse t-shirt and
sweats.

She interpretive dances as she watches the TV. (Her dance
moves includes contemporary, hip-hop, and ninja movements.)

A HORSE DOCUMENTARY plays on the tv. Margarita talks along
with it, almost word for word.

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>NARRATOR Once the foal comes out, the mare will chew on the membranes and placenta to prevent the foal from suffocating and lick the newborn foal to help blood circulation.</p> | <p>MARGARITA ...mare will chew on the membranes and placenta...foal from suffocating...foal to help blood circulation</p> |
|---|---|

Sandy groans. She's laying behind Margarita with a trash can
on the floor next to her.

SANDY
Margs, let's watch something
different.

MARGARITA
No I wanna watch this.

SANDY
It's making me nauseous.

MARGARITA
You said the chemo makes you
nauseous.

A HORSE NEIGHS in anguish.

SANDY

Jesus.

MARGARITA

Shhh...

Sandy shuts her eyes, trying to talk over the show.

SANDY

Have you heard back from the grocery store, yet?

MARGARITA

Ummmmmm, no. I never applied.

SANDY

Margarita. Look at me.

Margarita turns.

MARGARITA

I hate working. I don't wanna have to wear hard pants and smile at people for money.

SANDY

Yeah, me too, but we have to do it. You have to. It's part of being an adult. Give me the remote.

Margarita swings the remote away from her, turning it into her own form of KICKBOXING. She punches at the air.

MARGARITA

HOO-HA! HOO. HOO. BACK UP. CAN'T TAKE NOTHIN FROM ME--

SANDY

I'm *serious*--

Another anguished HORSE NEIGH. Sandy grimaces. Margarita spins, KICKING out her foot.

MARGARITA

HOO-HA! HI-YA!

SANDY

MARGARITA.

The horse GIVES BIRTH.

SANDY (CONT'D)

Will you change the CHANNEL-

MARGARITA
Why are you being so MEAN!!?

Margarita chucks the remote.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)
UGHHHHH!

She storms towards the door. Sandy sighs in defeat. She calls out to her over her shoulder.

SANDY
Only thirty minutes.

MARGARITA
(angry yet respectful)
OK-AAY.

The front door SLAMS shut. The NARRATION continues on the TV.

NARRATOR
And just shortly after birth...the
young horse is able to run.

Sandy picks up the remote, turning off the TV.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS - NIGHT

Margarita rides her bike out of town.

She SINGS angrily off key, panting between words.

MARGARITA
Fasstttt....she's fastttt...
fastest girl in the world....

Each STREET LAMP she passes under LIGHTS UP in perfect time with her. The lamps glow an unnaturally bright PINK.

(Because that's the color Margarita wants them to be right now.)

Margarita passes the dark windows of the closed shops that line the main street.

The PINK GLOW of the STREET LAMPS outline her fluffy-haired silhouette.

--SCREEEECH.

Margarita skids to a stop abruptly.

She stands in front of the only window lit on the street.

A DANCE STUDIO.

The large, front facing window illuminates her face.

Awkward, twiggy bodies move about from inside the studio. Margarita steps closer.

INT. DANCE STUDIO - NIGHT

IN SLOW MOTION:

Tween girls (ages 13-15-ish) GALLOP around.

Each girl has her own horse head attached to a wooden stick between her legs. (AKA: a HOBBYHORSE.)

They mimic equestrian movements as they gallop back and forth across the studio. It's strangely graceful.

COACH, [60's] military-like stoicism, observes them from the front.

He calls out commands to them as they move in synchronism across the floor.

Margarita leans in further, her nose now pressed up against the glass. Suddenly, COACH spots her. Caught.

Margarita mounts her bike as fast as she can (which is not fast) and takes off back down the street.

INT. MARGARITA'S HOME - NIGHT

Margarita stops at the gravel path leading to her porch.

MARGARITA
(like it's a horse.)
Woahhh...

She drops CHEESEBURGER in the front yard.

She steps onto the porch. Through the window, she can see Sandy sitting at the kitchen table, running her hands through her hair absentmindedly. Margarita watches her for a bit.

INT. MARGARITA'S HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

The front door SLAMS shut. Shoes hit the shoe closet with a THUMP. THUMP. Sandy looks up as Margarita enters the kitchen.

MARGARITA

I'm sorry.

SANDY

I know.

BEAT.

SANDY (CONT'D)

I'm serious, Margs. I want you to start looking into jobs again.

MARGARITA

No thanks.

Margarita opens the fridge.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)

Where's the Coke Zer-

SANDY

-Side door.

MARGARITA

Nice.

She cracks one open. Chugs it. Burps.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)

Are you mad at me? I don't want to get a job. People are always mean to me.

She sits down at the table, taking another swig.

SANDY

You shouldn't drink those so late at night. I'm sure there's a ton of caffeine in it.

MARGARITA

Nope. It's *zero*. There's zero things in it. That's why it's Coke Zero. Why are you mad at me?

SANDY

I didn't say I was mad at you.

MARGARITA

I can just tell.

Margarita stands up and starts playing with Sandy's hair.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)
You should get bangs.

She holds a chunk of hair to shape bangs around her face.

SANDY
No. My face looks fat with bangs.

MARGARITA
Dye it blue then.

SANDY
(laughing)
That would be something.

Margarita tries to braid her hair. She's unsuccessful.

MARGARITA
Darn.

She takes another swig of coke.

SANDY
You need to get a job. I'm not
asking you, I'm telling you.
Holding a job helps you--

MARGARITA
(burping)
AAAAaaWWwman.

SANDY
...be independent, self-sufficient--

MARGARITA
Yeahyeahyeah.

SANDY
--It will really help me out too.

MARGARITA
Don't guilt trip me, woman.

SANDY
I'm not guilt tripping you.

MARGARITA
I can work at the stables.

SANDY
No. Come on. We've talked about
this. That guy's gonna file a
restraining order against you if
you keep jumping his fence.

(MORE)

SANDY (CONT'D)

Plus, you didn't even like the horseback riding lessons when we tried them.

MARGARITA

Yeah, but that was different.

SANDY

How was that different?

MARGARITA

I didn't like all the rules. And the helmet was too tight and the lady kept yelling at me when I tried to make it gallop like the fricking wind.

Sandy drops her head in her hands, giving up.

SANDY

Kay. Well...when you find a better and *safer* way to ride a horse you let me know.

MARGARITA

I--

SANDY

That doesn't involve trespassing.

Margarita shuts her mouth.

SANDY (CONT'D)

Besides, Rachele's daughter got kicked in the face by a horse and now she has to wear that retainer with the fake teeth.

Margarita snorts.

MARGARITA

Oh yeah.

SANDY

It's just because I care about you. You remember what it was like after Dad's funeral.

MARGARITA

Yeah. Lots of leftovers.

SANDY

I mean, yes. But I'm saying when we had to figure out resetting the breakers...or when we couldn't find the number to the plumber we always used when the bathroom sink got plugged.

MARGARITA

Oh yeah...And when I went to get the last drumstick from the freezer in the garage but he had eaten the last one and left the empty box.

Sandy snorts.

SANDY

Right. Kinda like that.

Margarita looks down. A large chunk of Sandy's hair fell out in her fingers. She stares at it, thinking for a moment.

She gently places it back on Sandy's head.

MARGARITA

Yeah. That makes sense, I guess.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Margarita brushes her teeth. Sandy sits on the toilet reading a magazine. Margarita spits. A large glob lands in her hair.

MARGARITA

Really?!

INT. MARGARITA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

HORSE POSTERS. HORSE CALENDARS. HORSE PLUSHES.

Margarita gets into bed, maneuvering around each horse. Sandy stands at the door.

SANDY

All good?

MARGARITA

Yep.

SANDY

Alright. Good night.

She flips off the light.

MARGARITA
Mom?

SANDY
What.

MARGARITA
What if I just ride a pretend
horse?

Sandy sighs.

SANDY
You already do that with
Cheeseburger, right? That's why we
got her.

MARGARITA
Okay, yeah...So if I ride a pretend
horse, then that's okay? Like
you're okay with that then?

SANDY
(sighing)
Yeah. That's fine.

MARGARITA
Cool. Okay. That's it then.
Goodnight.

SANDY
Goodnight.

Sandy shuts the door.

MARGARITA
(shouting)
I LOVE YOU!

Sandy SHOUTS back through the door.

SANDY
I LOVE YOU MORE!

Margarita giggles. She rolls on her back, looking up at the ceiling.

Car headlights bounce LIGHT BEAMS across her walls, illuminating the HORSE POSTERS. As the lights move across the posters, they begin to flicker like an old FILM PROJECTOR.

The HORSES on the posters COME TO LIFE, GALLOPING across the posters. Margarita watches as a BROWN HORSE GALLOPS out of the frame.

The blank poster is suddenly taken over by a YOUNG GIRL GALLOPING across the poster on a TOY HORSE STICK-THINGY. It looks just like the ones she saw those girls riding.

EXT. DANCE STUDIO - DAY

The next day, Margarita stops outside the DANCE STUDIO, straddling her bike as she watches through the window.

She takes a deep breath, mustering all her courage as she grabs the door handle and YANKS. BANG.

The door hits the frame. She tries again. BANG. Every girl in the studio turns to look at her. Margarita, reads the sign above the door. "**PUSH**"

INT. DANCE STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Margarita enters. The LOUD MUSIC FLOODS her ears. She stands awkwardly in the back of the studio.

COACH calls out over the music from the front of the room.

COACH
Can I help you?

MARGARITA
(yelling back)
Uh...Can I...?

Coach lowers the volume, his face stoic as he speaks.

COACH
Can you what?

Margarita points to the girls.

MARGARITA
I don't know...?

COACH
I don't think you can if you don't know.

The girls laugh. Ass-kissers.

MARGARITA
Can I please do this horse class thingy *JESUSCHRIST*.

A couple GASPS from the girls.

COACH

There you go. That wasn't hard, was it? No swearing next time.

He turns back to the class.

COACH (CONT'D)

LADIES. Did I tell you to stop? I have no problem taking away our matching bracelets if we aren't here to work.

He turns the music back to full volume as the girls go back to their synchronized stretching. He walks around them.

COACH (CONT'D)

Madison, hair back-- I've told you.

He pulls a scrunchie off his wrist and begins to yank her hair into a bun. MADISON tries to keep a straight face.

Coach looks at Margarita. She's yet to move.

COACH (CONT'D)

You wanna join then you gotta join. Come on!

MARGARITA

I don't...I don't know it!

COACH

Well then learn it.

Margarita looks over at PINKY [13] unspoken leader of tween cult. She's touching her toes. Margarita tries to copy her.

She creeps her fingers down her shins, her face twisting in pain. PINKY looks over with a smirk.

PINKY

Woah...your legs are like...so hairy. Jean Marie look at her legs.

JEAN MARIE

Woahhhh.

Margarita looks down. She's never noticed her leg hair.

COACH

Ladies! Get your horses.

The girls stand, running to the back of the room like little soldiers. Their HOBBYHORSES hang on racks on the back wall.

Margarita follows. She grabs a hobbyhorse off the rack.

JEAN MARIE
That's *my* horse!

MARGARITA
Oh sorrysorry.

Jean Marie yanks the horse from her hand. All the horses are gone. The girls stare at her.

PINKY
(stirring the pot)
Did she just try to steal your horse?

MARGARITA
Ohmygod no I didn't--

JEAN MARIE
She *totally* just did.

MARGARITA
No I didn't you LIAR.

Margarita STOMPS her foot. Jean Marie GASPS.

PINKY
You're supposed to bring your own horse, *sweetie*.

Margarita reaches her boiling point. She storms for the door. Coach shouts at her over the music.

COACH
Where are you going?

MARGARITA
I'm getting a *HORSE*.

BEAT.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)
(under her breath)
Losers.

She SLAMS the door shut behind her.

Through the glass window she struggles to mount her bike. She half-rides half-waddles away down the sidewalk.

The girls JITTER with gossip. Coach CLAPS.

COACH

Show's over. Line up for across the floor. Let's go. NOW.

The girls form a line at the back of the room. Coach watches Margarita pedal away through the window.

INT. MARGARITA'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

Margarita storms straight past Sandy standing in the bathroom. Both pay no attention to each other.

Margarita stomps out of the house with SCISSORS and a BROOM in hand.

EXT. FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

25 Margarita YANKS at Cheeseburger's head, enraged. She saws ~~at~~ it with scissors. Finally, the head RIPS off.

Margarita wraps duct tape around the broom handle and head.

INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

SLAM. THWUMP. THWUMP.

Margarita enters, holding the (now) hobbyhorse version of **Cheeseburger**. She rounds the corner towards the bathroom. She stops short.

SANDY

What did you do to Cheeseburger?

MARGARITA

What the hell are you doing!?

Sandy stands in front of the mirror, a whole side of her head is BALD. A RAZOR BUZZES in her hand.

Sandy looks back at herself in the mirror.

SANDY

What? You don't like it?

MARGARITA

No. I don't. I hate it.

SANDY

It will look fine once it's even.

She brings the RAZOR back up. Margarita drops Cheeseburger, charging forward as she tries to block the razor.

MARGARITA

STOP IT--

SANDY

MARGARITA. DO NOT--YOU'RE GONNA GET HURT.

MARGARITA

STOP SHAVING IT. STOP!

SANDY

WHY? Why--stop, you're gonna hurt yourself-**STOP IT**--

MARGARITA

You look ugly! You look ugly! I HATE it!!

SANDY

STOP. It's off, it's off!

Sandy turns off the razor. BEAT.

SANDY (CONT'D)

You really think I look ugly?

Margarita is breathing hard, shaking.

MARGARITA

I don't like you without hair.

Sandy looks at herself in the mirror.

SANDY

(breaking)

Yeah, well I don't either.

Margarita reaches out and touches the shaved part of her head. Margarita starts to cry. So does Sandy.

MARGARITA

Why did you shave it off?

SANDY

It was coming out anyways. You remember last time when I did chemo...it just ended up making a mess the longer I tried to ignore it.

Margarita nods. Sandy looks from Margarita to her reflection.

BEAT.

Sandy giggles a little. Margarita looks up at her.

MARGARITA
Why are you laughing.

Sandy runs her hand through the last bit of her hair.

SANDY
Should I keep it like this?

MARGARITA
No.

SANDY
Why not? I can still braid it.

She laughs again, harder. Margarita smirks.

MARGARITA
Ew.

SANDY
It's chic.

MARGARITA
That lady at chemo can teach you
how to french braid it.

SANDY
Oh god.

MARGARITA
You look like one of those ugly
dogs that win the ugly dog contest.

Sandy bursts into a belly laugh.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)
Can I try?

Sandy sits down on the toilet, facing the mirror. She holds up the razor. Margarita places her hand on it.

BZZZZ.

Margarita flinches at first, then carefully takes it from her. She gently runs the razor over her mom's head.

SANDY
That's good. Yeah, just like that.
You can press down a little more.
It doesn't hurt. See? Not so bad.

Margarita swipes another large patch off.

SANDY (CONT'D)
Good. You're doing really good.

MARGARITA
It's kinda cool.

SANDY
Yeah?

MARGARITA
Yeah. Not so bad.

SANDY
Yeah.

BEAT.

MARGARITA
(quietly)
I can get a job.

Sandy looks at her in the mirror. Margarita nods at her.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)
I will.

She looks back down, continuing to shave.

SANDY
Okay.

INT. MARGARITA'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The same HORSE DOCUMENTARY plays on the TV.

Sandy, now entirely BALD, is asleep on the couch. We begin to
snake through the living room, towards the BATHROOM.

Some light leaks through the crack in the shut door.
Margarita HUMS from inside as the sound of the RAZOR BUZZES.

EXT. THE BEST HALLOWEEN STORE - LATE AFTERNOON

Margarita stands outside a pop-up HALLOWEEN STORE. A large
BANNER hangs above the door.

"BEST HALLOWEEN STORE...NOW OPEN!!!"

A **"NOW HIRING"** sign hangs directly below it.

Margarita wears a turtleneck underneath a denim dress with striped leggings. Her hair is pulled back in a headband. She clutches a piece of paper in her hand.

Sandy, now wearing a scarf around her head, gives Margarita a reassuring "thumbs up" from the minivan. Margarita gives her a "**rock on**" sign. Sandy motions to smile. Margarita forces a nervous smile.

INT. THE BEST HALLOWEEN STORE - CONTINUOUS

Every aisle is overflowing with HALLOWEEN PARAPHERNALIA. From somewhere down an aisle, she can hear a MAN'S VOICE giving instructions. She turns down an aisle to follow it.

She passes an ANIMATRONIC GHOUL. IT LIGHTS UP, giving a ROBOTIC CACKLE.

Margarita JUMPS. She points at it, laughing. She looks around to see if anyone else saw. Nope.

She continues on down the aisle, running her fingers romantically over the cheap decor.

She spots HANK, a small Indian man in a vest, walking quickly towards the back. Margarita runs after him.

MARGARITA

Excuse me. Excuse me. Excuse--

His walkie RINGS.

HANK

(to the walkie)

Yeah, I'm on my way back now.

MARGARITA

EXCUSE ME.

Hank turns around, startled.

HANK

Uh...Can I help you?

MARGARITA

(playing casual)

Oh hey...I was wondering if maybeIcouldworkhere if you would let me?

HANK

What?

She holds up her resume to him. He looks at it, then back to her, taking it.

HANK (CONT'D)
I...Sorry--did you email me an application?

MARGARITA
No.

BEAT.

HANK
Well, we request applicants fill out an online application off our website before coming in. After reviewing it we can set up an interview from there.

His walkie RINGS again.

HANK (CONT'D)
(to the walkie)
Yeah, sorry I'm on my way.

He hands back her resume and turns to go.

HANK (CONT'D)
Just email me.

Margarita follows after him, trotting to keep up.

MARGARITA
Yeah, well, the thing is that I'm already here...so I figured we could just interview now.

Hank tries to shake her off, walking faster.

HANK
Well, I don't normally...that's not how I--Sorry, what's your name?

MARGARITA
Margarita.

HANK
Margarita?

MARGARITA
Yeah, like the drink. My mom and dad named me after it because they were super drunk on margaritas the night they conceived me.

HANK

Oh...wow.

MARGARITA

I know, huh?

Hank looks back down at her resume, awkwardly.

HANK

Um, I really have to--

MARGARITA (O.S.)

--Wait! Look at this!

Hank looks back up to see Margarita running back down the aisle. She heads straight for a MOTHER and SON shopping.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)

Wait, wait! Did you guys see this one? Look.

Hank watches her as she pretends to "casually" stroll past the ANIMATRONIC GHOUL. It LIGHTS UP and CACKLES. She JUMPS. He listens as she talks excitedly at them.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)

AH! See? Isn't that great!? You could put it by your door and it could scare trick-or-treaters. I think I'm gonna buy one for my house. Look at its eyes! Did you see the eyes?

The Mother, LISA, laughs as her son DANNY excitedly pleads.

DANNY

Can we get it!?

Hank raises his walkie talkie, eyes still on Margarita.

HANK

Give me two minutes, Felix.

He approaches Margarita and the shoppers. Margarita is walking past the ghoul yet again. It LIGHTS UP. She JUMPS, again.

MARGARITA

AH! It's so funny, right?

Danny is cracking up and playing along with her. He walks in front of the ghoul now, making it LIGHT UP and laughing.

LISA
Okay, okay. You sold us.

DANNY
YESSS!

MARGARITA
YESSS!

Margarita lifts up the ghoul as it continues to MOVE and CACKLE in her arms.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)
Here, I got it.

She looks over at Hank.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)
Where's the register?

Hank points to the front of the store.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)
Thanks.

She turns to walk, then turns back.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)
Oh! Do you guys sell wigs?

HANK
Aisle four.

MARGARITA
Thanks.

She walks towards the front of the store with Danny and Lisa in tow. Lisa turns around to Hank.

LISA
Give this girl a raise.

She gives him a wink, then follows after Margarita to the register. Hank jogs after them.

HANK
Um, Margarita?

INT. MARGARITA'S HOME - LATER

Margarita bursts in through the front door.

MARGARITA
I DID IT! I-DID-IT-I-DID-IT BABY!

Sandy half-runs from the bedroom. Her scarf slips back slightly, revealing more of her bald head.

SANDY
What?! You got it?

MARGARITA
I'm a working woman! I got a job!
He hired me! Oh my god...I'm
awesome. I'm so awesome.

SANDY
Honey, that's amazing! When do you
start?

Margarita victory dances.

MARGARITA
I dunno!

SANDY
Do you need to do training?

MARGARITA
I dunno!

SANDY
Did he tell you what you would be
doing?

MARGARITA
Yeah! I'm working there! PFFT.

Margarita pumps her fists. She grabs the remote, turning on the same HORSE DOCUMENTARY. She begins talking along with it.

Sandy thinks for a moment.

SANDY
(over the TV)
Hey...Honey, I need to run an
errand. Are you planning to stay
here for a bit?

MARGARITA
(still dancing and fist
pumping)
YEAH!

SANDY
You wanna get some dinner tonight?

MARGARITA
HECK yeah I do. Celebration dinner
in honor of ME.

SANDY
Yeah. We could do Sizzlers?

MARGARITA
SIZZLERS! APPS! OHmygod woman you
are a *GENIUS*.

SANDY
Okay, okay. You wanna meet there?
At Sizzlers?

MARGARITA
YEAH!

Sandy grabs her keys and purse.

SANDY
I have to...go get my prescription
first and I can meet you
there...And just get whatever the
combo app plate thing is we get--

MARGARITA
--Combo-*NATION*.

SANDY
Right, Combo-nation. I'll be quick,
I just gotta--

MARGARITA
--Okay!

SANDY
You have your phone?

Margarita holds up a beat-up iPhone.

MARGARITA
Have my phone!

SANDY
It's on?

MARGARITA
Probably!

SANDY
And then I'll meet you there--

MARGARITA

Bye!

Sandy ties a scarf around her head.

SANDY

Okay. I'll see you there. Six-ish?

MARGARITA

SIX-ISH. SEE. YOU. THERE.

She does a different dance move with every word.

SANDY

Don't be late.

MARGARITA

WON'T. BE. LATE.

More dance moves. Sandy is halfway out the door.

SANDY

Love you!

MARGARITA

LOVE YOU MORE!

The front door SHUTS. Margarita looks over her shoulder. She turns off the TV, running to check that the coast is clear.

She watches Sandy back out of the driveway and disappears down the street.

Margarita quickly grabs CHEESEBURGER from the coat closet. She digs deeper into the closet, pulling out a shopping bag.

She pulls the contents out, tossing the bag aside. She holds up a pair of shorts. Perfect.

INT. THE BEST HALLOWEEN STORE - LATER

Hank stands on a ladder. He reaches up high to adjust a "50% OFF" sign that hangs over the top shelf.

SANDY (O.S.)

Excuse me, I was wondering if I could talk with the manager?

Hank looks down to see Sandy. His eyes dart to the scarf wrapped around her head. He looks back to her.

HANK

I'm the manager. Hank.

He holds his hand out to shake hers. She doesn't shake.

SANDY

Um, it's okay...Actually, my daughter was just in here. Her name is Margarita.

HANK

(smiling)

Margarita, yes. Your daughter is quite the saleswoman.

Sandy gives a polite laugh.

SANDY

Yes. She, um...I think you need to know she is a very capable young woman.

HANK

(genuinely)

Yes. That's why I hired her.

Hank begins to move down the aisle, continuing to hang up masks as Sandy walks beside him.

SANDY

Yes. And she's very smart. She has a college degree. In English.

HANK

That's wonderful.

SANDY

Yes. I wanted to say that, um, just make sure you're clear with directions.

HANK

Definitely.

SANDY

And she doesn't always pick up on sarcasm.

HANK

Me too. Makes no sense to me half the time.

Sandy fakes another polite laugh.

SANDY

Mhm. If she ever talks back...it's not that she's being disrespectful.

(MORE)

SANDY (CONT'D)

She just speaks her mind and tells the truth, which can come off a bit, uh, blunt sometimes.

HANK

Good. Honesty's important.

SANDY

I don't think you're quite understanding--

Hank turns to look at her directly.

HANK

Ma'am, I have no doubt your daughter is a hard worker. You have no reason to worry.

SANDY

(defensively)
I'm not worried.

BEAT.

HANK

Of course not. Is there anything else I could help you with?

Sandy stares at him.

SANDY

No. That's all.

HANK

Okay. You let me know if you have any other questions or concerns. Have a good day, Ma'am.

He turns and walks away. Sandy adjusts her scarf self-consciously. She walks towards the exit as someone else calls out to her.

FELIX

Have a good day!

She turns around to see FELIX, [late 20's, cognitively disabled] wearing a store vest. He smiles widely at her.

SANDY

Thank you.

Sandy exits the store.

EXT. DANCE STUDIO - LATE AFTERNOON

Margarita SPRINTS down the street, holding Cheeseburger in her hand. She slows to a stop in front of the Dance Studio. She takes a deep breath.

She YANKS the door. It CLATTERS. She pushes.

INT. DANCE STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

The group of girls stand in a huddle chatting loudly.

Margarita places Cheeseburger on the rack holding the rest of the HOBBYHORSES. It rolls off, hitting the floor with a loud CRACK. All the girls spin around to look at her.

MARGARITA

It's fine! I'm fine! All good.

She reaches up to place Cheeseburger on the highest rack. She unzips her large coat, revealing her outfit underneath.

Margarita tosses her coat towards her bag. From beneath the long coat, she reveals a pair of SHORT-SHORTS. Her legs are covered in BAND-AIDS and scabs.

She yanks a wedgie out of her butt, revealing the words "*Bootylicious*" on the back.

The girls stare in silence. Margarita walks towards them. They back away.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)

So what are your guys' names?

SILENCE. She points to one of the girls.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)

What's your name?

Pinky looks at the girls, laughing.

PINKY

My name is Pinky. It's not my **real** name but Coach gave me a nickname because I have pink streaks in my hair, see?

She points to her cheap PINK CLIP-INS.

MARGARITA

Those are awesome. Are they real?

PINKY
 (Confidently)
 Yeah.

MARGARITA
 Oh...they look
 like...they're...not.

Margarita reaches out to touch them. Pinky swats her.

PINKY
 Don't touch them!

MARGARITA
 Oh. Okay. Sorry.

BEAT.

PINKY
 Yeah...Coach only gave me a
 nickname though. Everyone else just
 goes by their real names.

Pinky points down the line at the girls.

PINKY (CONT'D)
 That's Madison, that's Jean Marie,
 Sarah M., Sarah B., Melissa, Nikki,
 and Krissy. Normally Madeline is
 here but she threw up at Best Buy
 yesterday so I don't think she's
 coming.

Margarita nods, awkwardly smiling and waving at each of them.

MARGARITA
 Okay coolcool...Well I'm Margarita.

JEAN MARIE
 Wait...*Margarita*?

MARGARITA
 Yeah. My mom and dad named me after
 the drink...you know...
 margaritas...because they were
 drinking them the night they
 conceived me.

PINKY
 Pfffttt! Oh my *god*--

JEAN-MARIE
 Ewww!

Pinky puts her hand over her mouth dramatically.

PINKY (CONT'D)

Oh my *frigging* god that's sooo embarrassing.

She looks around, amping up the other girls who eat this up. One of the girls, MADISON, chimes in from the group.

MADISON

...Oh my god...Margarita...What happened to your legs?

MARGARITA

Oh...I just...mmm...I fell down...like a couple of times. On the treadmill. I work out at the gym. Do you guys go to the gym?

PINKY

Ohhhh...I thought you just didn't know how to shave your legs.

MARGARITA

(laughing)

What? No...that's so fr-frigging embarrassing.

SARAH M.

My mom doesn't let me shave my legs!

Pinky rolls her eyes.

PINKY

Yeah, we *know* Sarah M.

Margarita joins in with the laughing now.

MARGARITA

That's funny.

SARAH M.

Why is that funny?

BEAT. All the girls stop laughing and look at her.

MARGARITA

Oh. Uh...I don't know.

The front door opens. HEAVY BOOTS THUD across the floor. In less than a second, every girl has turned to face the mirror in two straight lines. Coach wears a handy man's jumpsuit. It's covered in dirt and grease stains.

COACH

LADIES. Don't waste my time. I let you come in early to stretch, so I wanna see you *stretching* not chit-chatting.

He spots Margarita.

COACH (CONT'D)

Welcome back, Red.

Pinky glares at her. Margarita smiles, giving a small wave.

MARGARITA

Hi.

PINKY

Coach--

COACH

Quiet.

Pinky shuts her mouth.

COACH (CONT'D)

You got a horse today?

MARGARITA

Yep.

Coach nods. Good. He looks around, counting.

COACH

Where's Madeline?

PINKY/SARAH M./KELSEY

She threw up at Best Buy!

Coach writes this down.

An ELECTRONIC CHIME. The melody of AMERICAN PIE.

Margarita frantically digs in her pocket, pulling out her phone.

COACH

Phones off.

MARGARITA

Sorrysorry--

COACH

Off. Don't let me hear it again.

He motions to Margarita. She shuts it off.

COACH (CONT'D)
Come here, Red.

Margarita walks over, yanking her shorts out of her ass. She's only a couple inches shorter than him.

MARGARITA
I like your outfit.

Coach doesn't respond. He puts a CD into the outdated speaker system.

COACH
Warm ups, ladies.

MUSIC BURSTS through the SPEAKERS. The girls stretch in synchronism. Margarita flinches at the LOUD MUSIC.

Coach talks over the music, but not loud enough for the rest of the girls to hear.

COACH (CONT'D)
What are you doing here, Red?

MARGARITA
I want to...be in this class...?

COACH
I don't know what you're trying to do here. If this is some sort of joke--

MARGARITA
It's not a joke. Why would it be--

He puts his hand up.

COACH
I'm not finished speaking.

She stops. BEAT.

COACH (CONT'D)
I don't accept anyone who wastes my time. I don't know if you think it's funny trying to take this class with these girls, but it's not.

MARGARITA
Why would it be funny?

COACH

Most people think a room full of
"gymnastics rejects" and "dance
team wannabes" is something to make
fun of.

MARGARITA

(genuinely)

No. That sounds kinda sad,
actually.

Coach can't read her. He looks to the girls, then back to
her.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)

I wanna be in this class. I really
like horses and I'm not allowed to
ride them so I wanted to do this.
Or whatever.

Coach stares. BEAT.

COACH

(What the hell)

Fair enough.

He produces a sign up sheet from his coffee-stained folder.
NINE names are scratched on the paper. The #10 spot is blank.

COACH (CONT'D)

How old are you?

MARGARITA

Twenty-two.

Coach twists his mouth, thinking.

COACH

Eighteen.

MARGARITA

Huh?

COACH

You're eighteen.

MARGARITA

No...I'm twenty-two--

COACH

--You're eighteen. When you're in
this class, you're eighteen. Got
it?

Margarita laughs. Coach doesn't. She stops.

COACH (CONT'D)
 Competition age-categories cut off
 at eighteen. So you're eighteen.
 Got it?

MARGARITA
 Uh. Okay. Got it.

He hands her a pen with the sign up sheet. She scratches her name on the last line. He looks at it.

COACH
 Margarita?

MARGARITA
 Yeah.

He shuts the folder, shoving it back into his bag.

COACH
 It's \$25 a week or \$100 at the end
 of the month cash or check. You pay
 up front now or end of this week.
 We practice Monday through Thursday
 from four to seven. I don't accept
 tardiness. Since you're not a minor
 I don't need a guardian signature
 but I *do* expect you to compete on
 my team at the sectionals
 competition next month. We haven't
 been able to compete in two years
 because we couldn't fill out the
 full ten which disqualified us from
 making it to regionals. It's been
 devastating for them. By signing
 this you agree to be our tenth and
 you **will** compete. Got it?

Margarita zoned out halfway through.

MARGARITA
 Uhhh...oh. Okay. Okay, yeah.

COACH
 Good.

He turns off the music. The girls stop stretching.

COACH (CONT'D)
 Ladies. Thanks to Red here...we are
 officially competing at sectionals
 this year.

The girls SCREAM and GASP in disbelief. This is a HUGE deal.

COACH (CONT'D)

We've got work to do. Across the floor. Let's go.

The girls run to the back of the room, grabbing their horses off the racks. Margarita reaches over them to get hers.

The girls line up at opposite diagonals of the room. Margarita follows along.

JEAN MARIE

No cutting!

MARGARITA

Oh. My bad, sorrysorry.

She shuffles to the back of the line. Coach places a wooden crate in the middle of the room.

COACH

(clapping)

5...6...5678.

One after the other, alternating from opposite sides, the girls trot on their horses and HURDLE over the box.

IN SLOW MOTION:

Margarita focuses on every detail of these girls.

Their MOUTHS FILLED with BRACES.

Their TINY FEET LEAPING over the box with ease.

Their GANGLY FRAMES that barely fill out their SWEAT PANTS.

Margarita studies them so intently that she doesn't realize it's now her turn in line. Coach calls her to attention.

COACH (CONT'D)

RED! Come on. Jump!

Margarita mounts Cheeseburger, taking a couple small gallops forward. She stops short.

MARGARITA

Hang on...I'm gonna try again.

She trots backwards. Takes a breath, gearing up again--

MELISSA

Hurry up!

Margarita wheels around.

MARGARITA
I *am* ohmygod shut up!!

She turns back, frowning her brow. She runs straight at the box. She jumps too early, her feet hit the box. It SLIDES. **BOOM.** She lands flat on her ass.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)
MOTHERTRUCKER.

The girls GASP.

COACH
Walk it off, Red. Try it again.

Margarita dusts off her stinging hands. She slowly gets up. Cheeseburger's head hangs loosely off the pole. Margarita limps to the back of the line. One of the scabs on her legs has opened back up.

She smears the blood off with her hands, then wipes it on her sweatpants. She tries to re-tape Cheeseburger. Pinky leans into her ear.

PINKY
Some advice...probably buy a *real* hobbyhorse next time.

MARGARITA
Yeah okay I will--hop off dude.

She turns back around, taking a deep breath. She RUNS at the WOODEN CRATE as we-- **MATCH CUT TO:**

EXT. SPAGHETTI WESTERN - 1960'S

A WOODEN CRATE labelled "DYNAMITE" EXPLODES. The splinters of wood go EVERYWHERE as a HUNKY COWBOY rides into view.

VOICE (O.S.)
Did you need a box?

INT. SIZZLERS - EVENING

A WAITRESS appears in front of the TV SET that hangs on the wall. Sandy sits alone in the booth. An untouched plate of appetizers in front of her.

SANDY
No. Thank you. Just the check.

EXT. STABLES - NIGHT

Margarita dramatically runs down a tall hill with overgrown grass. Cheeseburger hangs out of her bag. She GROANS LOUDLY as she stumbles and runs.

MARGARITA
UGHHHHHHHHHAHHHHHH!

She stops at the large wooden fence that surrounds the stables. She CHUCKS CHEESEBURGER, crumbling to the ground in a full-blown meltdown.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)
You stupid. Idiot. I hate you! I HATE
YOU.

She bangs her fists in the dirt, over and over.

HMPHH.

She looks up to see a LARGE BROWN HORSE staring at her. She can see her reflection in its big glassy eyes.

HORSE exhales. His warm breath is visible in the air. Margarita watches it disappear into the sky. She exhales hard. Some of her breath is visible too. She calms.

Margarita slowly stands, walking towards him.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)
I'm okay...I'm fine. It's okay, I'm
good now.

She slowly extends her hand out to HORSE. It sniffs her palm, then gently leans into her. She brings her head up to its muzzle, closing her eyes.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)
Thank you.

She pulls away, giving him a **rock on**.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)
See? I'm okay.

The horse speaks to her in SUBTITLES.

HORSE
(subtitles)
I believe in you.

Margarita smiles a little.

MARGARITA

At least someone does.

HORSE trots along the perimeter of the fence. He stops for a moment. He looks down, then back at her before turning and heading to the stables. Margarita walks to where he stopped.

Pushed up against the fence is a LARGE WOODEN CRATE.

EXT. STABLES - LATER

Margarita, sweaty and out of breath, focuses her eyes ahead.

She GALLOPS--

WHAM. Hits the box.

GALLOPS. WHAM. Again. WHAM. Again. WHAM.

She hits the ground, flopping onto her back. She exhales, beyond frustrated. In the distance, a NEIGH from the stables.

MARGARITA

I can do it.

She gets back up, dusting herself off. She starts to hum to herself. (Tune from her song: **FASTEST GIRL IN THE WORLD.**)

She mounts Cheeseburger.

ZOOM IN ON: Margarita's face.

ZOOM IN ON: Horse's face.

ZOOM IN ON: Cheeseburger's face.

She runs, LAUNCHING herself up. As she leaps-- her world shifts TO **SLOW MOTION**. The CHOIR comes in with the CHORUS.

CHOIR

SHE'S GOOD AND SHE'S GREAT AND
SHE'S FAST!

THUD.

She lands it. In complete disbelief, Margarita looks back at the box. She does a VICTORY LAP, THROWING HER HANDS UP.

INT. MARGARITA'S HOME - PORCH - NIGHT

Margarita appears from the darkness.

Her coat and leggings are back on. She sees Sandy on the porch.

MARGARITA
Hey, you're in Dad's rocking chair--

SANDY
--Where were you.

Margarita runs up the porch steps, heading for the front door.

MARGARITA
I was just riding around.

Sandy stands, following after her. Margarita doesn't hold the screen door for her. It SLAMS shut in her face.

INT. MARGARITA'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

Margarita heads for the kitchen, her back still to Sandy.

SANDY
This *whole* time you were riding
around?

Margarita opens the fridge, looking for food.

MARGARITA
Yeah...I was...just riding around
and I wasn't hungry...so I didn't
go to Sizzlers.

SANDY
Yeah *I know* you didn't go to
Sizzlers. I waited for you for
almost two hours. Why didn't you
answer your phone?

MARGARITA
Oh. I think it died.

She buries her face into the fridge.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)
Did you bring me home any apps?

SANDY
Oh...I thought you weren't hungry.

MARGARITA

Well I wasn't then but now I am.
Did you even bring me home
anything? Or did you eat the whole
combo-nation.

Margarita tries to joke. Sandy isn't having it. Sandy pushes past her, beginning to dig through the fridge. She pulls out a large Tupperware of lasagna.

SANDY

Oh, now you're hungry? Here, let me
make you some food. Please, allow
me, *your sick mother*, to serve you.
How selfish of me...to not bring
you home food...How awful...

She SLAMS a plate onto the counter. She rips off a sticky note from the Tupperware that reads

"The Rigoli's are praying for you".

She scoops a wad of cold lasagna out with her bare hands, CHUCKS it on to the plate in a messy heap.

SANDY (CONT'D)

Bon appetite!

Margarita stares at it.

MARGARITA

(quietly)
It's cold.

BEAT.

SANDY

You know how to use the microwave.

Margarita looks at her apprehensively. She lifts the plate, carrying it to the microwave. She can feel Sandy's eyes on her.

She hits some buttons. The microwave BEEPS.

She tries again. It BEEPS back. She tries again. It BEEPS back. BEEP BEEP. BEEP BEEP. BEEP--

Sandy SLAMS her hand on the kitchen table.

SANDY (CONT'D)

You enter the time, *then* the power
level, *then* start. I've told you
this. It's time. Power. Start.

(MORE)

SANDY (CONT'D)

Time.Power.Start. What are you going to do when I'm not here to help you!? Starve? Come on, Margarita you have to *try*.

Sandy walks over, doing it for her.

BEEP. BEEP. BEEP. WHRRRRRR

She stares at Margarita. Margarita stares back. The MICROWAVE WHIRS.

Margarita turns around, grabbing her bag off the table.

SANDY (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

MARGARITA

To my room.

SANDY

Oh, we're not done.

MARGARITA

Yeah, well I know when you're like this you're just gonna be a demon to me so--

SANDY

MARGARITA.

MARGARITA

I didn't even DO ANYTHING.

SANDY

EXACTLY. You didn't do anything and that's the *problem*. How am I supposed to know you're okay when you don't tell me where you are?! How can I trust you?

MARGARITA

I'm an ADULT.

SANDY

But you're still my *daughter*. I do *everything* I can to give you a good life and you *still* defy everything I ask of you.

MARGARITA

I got a job for you!

SANDY

It shouldn't be for me! It should be for you. It's part of growing up. You should have a job because that's what PEOPLE DO.

She stops. Margarita has tears running down her face. Sandy covers her face with her hands.

SANDY (CONT'D)

(frustrated.)

UGHHH.

Sandy sits down at the table.

SANDY (CONT'D)

Go to your room.

Margarita's hands shake as she digs through her tote. She pulls out a plastic bag, dropping it on the table.

MARGARITA

I got you a present.

Margarita storms out of the kitchen. A moment later, her bedroom door SLAMS shut.

BEAT.

Sandy looks up. She pulls the bag towards her, taking out what's inside. A BLUE BOBBED WIG.

BEEEEEP. The microwave dings.

INT. CAR - NEXT DAY

Sandy wears the BLUE WIG. Margarita sits in the passenger seat, angrily eating an Eggo waffle.

Sandy pulls up to the curb outside the Halloween store. Hank is wiping down one of the windows outside.

Margarita unbuckles, opening the car door. She starts to get out of the car as Sandy calls out to her with a big smile.

SANDY

Have a good day--

MARGARITA

Yep. Having a *good day* being an ADULT at my stupid job that I don't even WANT.

She slams the door.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)

Hey, Hank.

Sandy watches from the car as she strides into the store. Hank turns to look at Sandy. She smiles, giving him a wave.

INT. HALLOWEEN STORE - CONTINUOUS

Margarita stands with her arms folded. She looks around the store. Felix approaches her.

FELIX

Hello. How can I help you today?

MARGARITA

I work here now.

FELIX

Really? Cool. I'm Felix.

MARGARITA

Alright.

Hank enters the store from outside.

HANK

Hey, Margarita.

MARGARITA

Hey.

FELIX

Hey.

MARGARITA

Hey.

HANK

Hey...so...first we'll get you in on the inventory.

FELIX

Inventory!

MARGARITA

Cool.

FELIX

It's very cool.

HANK
Cool. Okay then.

MARGARITA
By the way, I don't really think
this is a stupid job. I just needed
to make a point to my Mom. I
fricking love Halloween.

Hank nods. BEAT.

HANK
Fair enough. Well then, let's get
to it.

INT. HALLOWEEN STORE - AISLES - CONTINUOUS

Hank walks with Felix and Margarita in tow.

HANK
We organize costumes by barcode
numbers. Each shift, we'll give you
the barcode numbers to sort and
organize the inventory. But lucky
for you...we have a secret weapon.
Right, Felix?

FELIX
What weapon?

HANK
You know...00625?

Felix suddenly stops. He thinks.

FELIX
00625...625...OH! That's King of
the Jungle costume!

Hank checks his spreadsheet.

HANK
And...aaaand...*HE'S RIGHT!*

FELIX
HECK YEAH I AM!

The two high five.

MARGARITA

Coolcoolcool. So, speaking of numbers and pay, um, I just had a quick question about my pay...like...if I could get paid by cash...you know...and if I could be paid before the first of the month? Just let me know if that works.

FELIX

Wait...we have a choice?

HANK

Not really. But...I'll see what I can do.

FELIX

Can I get a raise?

HANK

No.

FELIX

Worth a shot.

HANK

Alright, let's keep moving.

The two follow along with Hank as they make their way to the back.

INT. THE BACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The room is OVERFLOWING with boxes upon boxes of Halloween garb.

HANK

You notice we're running low on any costume, accessory, prop, whatever, you come out here and find the corresponding number on the box. Actually, can one of you grab that box? We can bring it in.

Felix puts his finger on his nose. Margarita just stands there.

MARGARITA

Oh. Does that mean me? Is that a rule?

Margarita lifts the box.

HANK
Lift with the legs. It's heavy.

MARGARITA
No it's not. Where to?

HANK
Aisle four. Felix go with her and help re-shelve.

FELIX
Roger.

Hank begins to break down boxes as Margarita and Felix make their way back into the store.

MARGARITA
I thought his name was Hank.

INT. HALLOWEEN STORE - CONTINUOUS

WHAM. Margarita drops the box on the ground with no regard for what's inside.

MARGARITA
Wanna see a trick?

FELIX
Sure.

MARGARITA
Check it.

Margarita backs up, then begins to GALLOP towards the box. She launches herself over the box and--

INT. DANCE STUDIO - LATER

LANDS IT. Just barely. But she lands it. She looks back over her shoulder at the rest of the class. Coach gives her a nod.

COACH
That's what I'm talking about, Red.

Margarita smirks. She gets back in line with the rest of the girls. Madeline taps her on the shoulder.

MADELINE
That was really good.

MARGARITA
Thanks.

She turns back around to face the front. She smiles to herself. *Nailed. It.*

In an epic sort of CRESCENDO, the girls LEAP over the crate, one right after the other in time to the music.

INT. DANCE STUDIO - LATER

Coach choreographs the FINALE ROUTINE. Pinky continues to intentionally stand in front of Margarita's way, blocking her view of the mirror.

INT. MARGARITA'S HOME - NIGHT

Margarita practices the choreography in front of the TV. Sandy reads a book on the couch.

SANDY

Those are new moves.

Margarita turns around quickly.

MARGARITA

Uh. No they're not.

She turns back to the Horse documentary.

EXT. SMALL TOWN STREETS - ANOTHER DAY

Margarita SPRINTS down the sidewalk, shoving her Halloween store vest into her bag. She pulls down her pants, revealing her short shorts underneath. A couple onlookers stare.

INT. DANCE STUDIO - ANOTHER DAY

Pinky steps in front of Margarita again, blocking her. Margarita, fed up, lifts Pinky out of her way.

PINKY

HEY!

COACH

Red..?

MARGARITA

She started it.

COACH

Can you show me that lift again?

INT. HALLOWEEN STORE - INVENTORY WAREHOUSE

Felix spots Margarita as she lifts massive BOXES in the warehouse, cheering her on like a coach.

Hank does a double take as he walks past the window.

INT. MARGARITA'S HOME

Margarita practices shaving her legs. She concentrates hard.

INT. DANCE STUDIO

The girls practice their routine for the hundredth time. Each sweating and out of breath. Margarita sets Pinky down in the final lift. Coach gives a motion to do it again. They groan.

INT. HALLOWEEN STORE - LATER

Margarita sneaks in through the back door. She puts her work vest back on. Felix enters the warehouse. He looks confused.

FELIX

Margarita? I thought...you were off
at 2:00?

Margarita tries to fix her sweaty hair.

MARGARITA

I am. I was. Just...don't say
anything...pretend like I've been
here.

FELIX

I don't lie.

MARGARITA

It's not a lie.

FELIX

It's not the truth.

MARGARITA

Fine.

FELIX

So it's a lie.

MARGARITA

Please?

Felix throws his hands up.

FELIX
Not my problem.

He walks past her towards one of the back shelves.

Margarita sprints back through the store and out the front door just as...

EXT. HALLOWEEN STORE - CONTINUOUS

Sandy pulls the minivan up to the curb. Margarita opens the door, trying to act casual.

MARGARITA
Hey.

SANDY
Hey. Why are you so sweaty?

MARGARITA
Why are *you* so sweaty?

Sandy rolls her eyes.

INT. CHEMOTHERAPY ROOM - NEXT MORNING

Margarita strides into the chemo room, Sandy follows close behind, wearing the BLUE WIG.

MARGARITA
Hey ladies, how's it going.

She's greeted by the usuals.

KIM
Love the hair, Sandy.

Sandy gives the blue wig a dramatic SHAKE.

SANDY
Right? All Margs' idea.

MARGARITA
Yeah. I knew it would look awesome.

Sandy takes a seat in her usual spot. A different woman sits beside her. Sandy leans over to her.

SANDY

Hi. Sandy, Progesterone positive
Her 2 negative.

The woman, ROSE [late 40's], gives her a smile back.

ROSE

Rose...um, primary peritoneal
carcinoma.

SANDY

That's ovarian, right?

ROSE

Yep. Yours is...breast?

SANDY

Breast. Yeah. Ridiculous, right? We
get these female parts that end up
trying to kill us.

Rose gives a melancholy laugh.

ROSE

Right.

Margarita looks from the beach painting to Rose. She points
at the painting, then back to Rose.

MARGARITA

You're...not...Where's the other
lady?

A NURSE enters to hook Sandy up to her port.

ROSE

Do you recommend a port?

SANDY

Yeah. This is my third time so my
veins are destroyed at this point.

ROSE

Oh my god. I'm so sorry--

Sandy shrugs.

SANDY

Still here.

Rose nods, looking away quickly. A couple tears escape.

MARGARITA

Where's...the other...

DR. PACEK, [30's] no makeup, wise beyond her years, enters the room. She's Sandy's main oncologist. A younger PA, RAYNA [20's] accompanies her.

DR. PACEK

Hey Margs! Haven't seen you in a while now.

MARGARITA

I know, right? Last time I think I saw you was when your fiancé had just broken up with you.

Dr. Pacek snorts.

DR. PACEK

Great memory.

She walks over to Sandy. Rayna follows, taking notes.

DR. PACEK (CONT'D)

Sandy, this is Rayna. She's in undergrad over at UCA. She'll be shadowing me today.

SANDY

(whispering loudly)
You got the best one.

Sandy winks.

DR. PACEK

Sandy is a longtime patient of mine as well as a pathological liar.

Sandy laughs. Dr. Pacek squats down next to her

DR. PACEK (CONT'D)

How we doing today, Sandy?

SANDY

Still here.

DR. PACEK

Lucky you.

SANDY

The luckiest.

Rayna hands Dr. Pacek her files. She flips through them.

DR. PACEK

I wanted to see if we could get you in for a scan Friday instead of next week. Would that work?

SANDY

Yeah, that should be fine. Is everything okay?

DR. PACEK

Yeah, I just had my Friday cancel, so I figured I'd run over here and see if you'd be up for it.

Margarita calls out loudly from across the room.

MARGARITA

Mom?

SANDY

Let me just...check my schedule here...

Sandy digs through her purse. She pulls out a crumpled receipt. Her "schedule."

SANDY (CONT'D)

Well...I guess I could pencil you in...

DR. PACEK

Two PM?

MARGARITA

Mom?

SANDY

I guess I can do that...

MARGARITA

MOM?!

SANDY

Margs-- Two seconds.

DR. PACEK

Alright. Miss Sandy. I'll see you at two o'clock Friday then.

Rayna writes this down.

SANDY

I'll see you then, then.

DR. PACEK
See you then, then.

Dr. Pacek stands to go. Rayna follows behind her.

DR. PACEK (CONT'D)
Good to see you again, Margarita.

MARGARITA
Yeah. You too Dr. Pacek...and...
What's your name?

RAYNA
Oh, I'm Rayna.

MARGARITA
Okay. Bye guys!

Dr. Pacek gives her a "**rock on**" sign. Margarita smiles. She remembered. Margarita throws back the sign.

She watches them go, the door shutting behind them. Margarita squints over at Rose.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)
Mom?

SANDY
What.

MARGARITA
Where's Debbie?

She points at Rose. A couple of the women look up. Finally, Kim speaks.

KIM
She...Sandy, um, Debbie passed away
Monday night.

The air leaves the room. Sandy looks around, stunned.

SANDY
Oh. Wow. She was...so--

KIM
Thirty-four. So young.

Sandy sits back in her seat. No one speaks.

Margarita looks back at the PAINTING. She traces her fingers over the petals of one of the flowers.

MARGARITA

Well that's not frigging fair.

Sandy shakes her head. Rose shakes her head, answering.

ROSE

No. It's not.

Margarita walks over to Sandy and starts digging in her purse. She pulls out a small COMPACT.

She sits down in front of Sandy, holding up the mirror to angle it at the back of her head.

MARGARITA

Okay. You can teach me.

SANDY

What?

MARGARITA

The french braid thing. You can teach me now.

BEAT.

Sandy begins to section out Margarita's hair into pieces to braid. The room is SILENT.

INT. DANCE STUDIO - FRIDAY

Coach CLAPS to get their attention. He stands at the back of the room, messing with an old projector he's wheeled out on a cart.

Margarita enters through the front door, shedding her store vest. She talks quickly as she crosses the room to hang up CHEESEBURGER.

MARGARITA

Sorry I'm late, I tripped on the sidewalk and had to do a couple deep breaths--

COACH

Doesn't matter. Take a seat.

The girls sit on the floor. Coach flips off the light and draws the curtains over the front windows.

He turns on a PROJECTOR from the back of the room. It WHIRS to life, projecting a beam of light onto the front wall.

Grainy HOME VIDEO FOOTAGE of the Nordic countryside appears on the wall of the dance studio. The girls "ooh" and "ahh" at the sites.

Long sprawling grass fields and clear blue skies.

A LANKY MAN, [30's] with thick-framed glasses and a goofy smile, walks into the frame. The girls REACT LOUDLY. It's clear they all know him.

The LANKY MAN stretches his arms out wide in front of the tall grass fields. Then, the footage CUTS to:

A COLLEGE-SIZED GYM ARENA filled with people. Set up along the floor are different poles at varying heights. Coach speaks over the footage from the back of the room.

The footage CUTS again to a girl with DYED RED HAIR and a THICK Finnish accent. She excitedly talks to the camera. (This is REAL footage)

FINNISH GIRL

Um, the best thing to me about hobbyhorsing is, the community-- especially the community. Also, the limitless imagination you can use. Only the sky's the limit, I think.

From off camera a VOICE, presumed to be MR. MAYHEW'S.

MR. MAYHEW

And what is your message to those people who think this is strange?

FINNISH GIRL

Just be...open, open-minded.

The interviews are intercut with images of GIRLS LEAPING over the poles at the HOBBYHORSEING TOURNAMENT.

The CAMERA PANS over to a (much younger) COACH. The girls all SQUEAL at the sight of him.

MR. MAYHEW

You hear that, babe? Open-minded.

YOUNG COACH laughs and nods. He shoos the camera away, back towards the tournament.

Margarita turns over her shoulder to look at Coach.

Coach stands, leaning against the wall. She catches a hint of a smile on his normally stoic expression.

The images of girls GALLOPING, LEAPING, and DANCING seem to blur together and reflect in Margarita's eyes. The WHIRRING of the machine turns into...

INT. MRI ROOM - CONTINUOUS

...The WHIRRING of an MRI MACHINE.

Rayna preps Sandy, who lays on the table in a gown.

RAYNA

...And if there's any issue, you feel a bit claustrophobic, let me know.

SANDY

Of course. Not my first rodeo.

RAYNA

Right, right.

SANDY

What made you decide to study medicine?

RAYNA

A lot of reasons. I guess I just want to make a difference. Cliche answer, I know. I just mean, like, if I'm going to be spending every day at a job for the next thirty-something years of my life...might as well make it count for something. Make it meaningful, I guess.

Sandy nods.

SANDY

Your parents must be proud of you.

RAYNA

God, I hope so. I think they will be after I've paid off all the debt.

They both laugh. The DOOR opens. Dr. Pacek strides in.

DR. PACEK

Alright, we ready to rumble?

SANDY

Let's do it.

DR. PACEK
See ya in a bit.

She hits the button as the TABLE begins to slide into the opening of the MRI Machine. Sandy shuts her eyes.

INT. DOCTORS OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Pacek clicks the light on the X-Ray Boards. Sandy's face is illuminated by the bright light.

Her eyes study the scans. Dr. Pacek begins to talk, but there's no sound. Sandy's eyes remain fixed on the board.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAYS - LATER

Sandy down the long hallway. She stops suddenly. Thinking. Then, she turns on her heel and walks back in the opposite direction.

INT. CHEMOTHERAPY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sandy enters the chemo room. She clears her throat to get everyone's attention.

She turns to the LARGE BRASS BELL hanging by the door. The plaque next to it reads.

"Ring this bell three times well, its toll to clearly say, my treatment is done, this course is run and I am on my way!"

Her warped reflection on the bell looks back at her.

CLANG! CLANG! CLANG!

She rings the bell LOUDLY. Many of the women in the chemo room react excitedly. They clap and cheer for her.

Sandy takes a deep, dramatic bow.

She goes over to Kim to give her a hug.

EXT. SMALL TOWN STREETS - EVENING

Margarita waves goodbye to each of the girls as they get into their associated minivans. Moms excitedly greet their daughters post-practice.

Coach locks up the dance studio.

MARGARITA
Goodnight, Coach.

He turns over his shoulder.

COACH
Goodnight, Red.

He heads over to his beat-up pickup truck. He looks back.

COACH (CONT'D)
You got a ride?

MARGARITA
Yeah. No. I mean, I'm walking home.
I just wanna make sure I say bye to
everyone first.

Coach nods. He looks at his truck.

COACH
You want a ride?

MARGARITA
No.

BEAT.

COACH
Well, okay then.

He opens his car door.

MARGARITA
Wait.

He stops.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)
I had an idea. For what our
costumes could be. For the Finale
routine.

Coach shuts the door. He walks back over towards her.

COACH
Alright. Shoot.

Margarita points at him.

MARGARITA
You. Your jumpsuit. It looks
awesome. I think we should all wear
them. We'd look awesome.

COACH

Very funny.

MARGARITA

I'm serious. It's cool. And we can all have different colors and stuff.

COACH

Yeah?

MARGARITA

Yeah. Plus, we won't have to worry about our stomachs showing when we do our jumps or our shorts getting wedgied.

Coach thinks. She's not wrong.

COACH

Hmm.

MARGARITA

I don't know. Just a thought. Whatever.

Margarita shrugs.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)

Kay. Bye, Coach.

She turns to go.

COACH

Wait, Red.

She looks back at him.

COACH (CONT'D)

Thank you.

MARGARITA

Yeah, I mean. It's whatever.

COACH

No. I mean...thank you. For joining our team. You've been a great addition.

MARGARITA

Okay. Can I go now?

COACH

Yeah. Get out of here.

MARGARITA
Okay then. Bye, Coach.

COACH
Goodnight, Red.

She turns, and begins to GALLOP down the sidewalk. He shakes his head. Then, turns back to his truck.

INT. MARGARITA'S HOME - EVENING

Margarita SLAMS the front door behind her.

MARGARITA
I'm HOO-OOME!

SANDY (O.S.)
In the kitchen!

Margarita kicks off her shoes into the closet. She pulls her store vest out of her bag and puts it on. She hangs Cheeseburger up on the rack.

INT. KITCHEN

Sandy stands over the stove, cooking some chicken. SAM COOKE plays over the speakers. She hums along to the music.

SANDY
How was work?

MARGARITA
Um, work was...fine.

She watches as Sandy reaches behind her, grabbing a half-drunk glass of wine off the counter. She finishes it.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)
Excuse me ma'am...what do you think you're doing?

Sandy smiles.

SANDY
What? It's a Friday. Why not?

Sandy pours another glass.

MARGARITA
But you can't drink.

Sandy takes a long swig. She winks.

SANDY

Just did.

Margarita walks to her. She sniffs the glass.

MARGARITA

Is it real?

SANDY

What do you mean? Of course it is.

Sandy takes another sip. Margarita watches suspiciously.

MARGARITA

You said you can't drink when
you're...you can't drink when you
have cancer...I thought?

SANDY

I mean, technically, people can do
whatever they want when they have
cancer. It's not until they find
out that they *have* cancer and start
treatment that they stop.

MARGARITA

What the heck are you even saying.

SANDY

I'm saying I can't drink when I'm
doing chemo. Because it makes me
sick.

BEAT.

SANDY (CONT'D)

...But I'm not doing chemo anymore.

Margarita furrows her brow.

MARGARITA

What? What do you mean?

SANDY

I mean I'm not doing chemo anymore.

Sandy gives her a smile. She shrugs.

MARGARITA

Wait...WHAT?!

SANDY

Shhh--

MARGARITA
Are you frigging KIDDING ME RIGHT
NOW?!

SANDY
(laughing)
I am not kidding you right now.

MARGARITA
REALLY, REALLY?

SANDY
Really, really.

MARGARITA
OH MY GOD!! MOM!

Margarita throws her arms around Sandy, squeezing her too tightly.

SANDY
Ow, OW! Careful!

MARGARITA
I LOVE YOU SO MUCH! SO MUCH! OH MY
GOOOOOOOD! MOM WHAT THE HECK!!!

Sandy shuts her eyes. Taking it in. Margarita pulls away abruptly.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)
Ohmygod *MO-OM*.

SANDY
(mimicking)
Ohmygod *wha-at?*

MARGARITA
We have to have our party! We have
to PARTY!!

SANDY
Oh...no. We don't need to--

MARGARITA
But we did it the last two times!!
We have our "Eff You Cancer Party!"
It's a tradition! We have to! We
gotta go to Los Amigos!

SANDY
But I made chicken--

MARGARITA
 --FRICK THE CHICKEN!

INT. LOS AMIGOS - THAT NIGHT

Margarita and Sandy wear paper crowns with "F@*CK YOU
 CANCER!!" scribbled in sharpie on them.

Margarita chows down on her taquitos while Sandy picks at her
 enchiladas. The waiter brings her another glass of wine.

LATER: Margarita and Sandy sing "**American Pie**" on stage.

BOTH
 So bye, bye Miss American
 Pie...maybe later someday later and
 something later...laterlaterlater-

They're both messing up the words, making each other laugh.
 Margarita points to Sandy.

MARGARITA
 She doesn't have her cancer
 anymore!

The whole bar CHEERS. Margarita is JUMPING up and down, so
 thrilled to have people cheering for them. Margarita wraps
 her arms around Sandy as they continue to sing.

EXT. THE BEST HALLOWEEN STORE - NEXT DAY

Margarita unbuckles from the passenger seat in her work
 uniform, shoving down a waffle. Sandy wears sunglasses.

MARGARITA
 (mouth full)
 And then everyone was like WHOOOOO
 and they were cheering and then you
 were like hey I can drink
 margaritas and white wine cuz I
 don't have cancer!

SANDY
 Because I'm not on the chemo--

MARGARITA
 --Right yeah! And then everyone was
 cheering for us. That was so fun.
 They cheered SO loud.

Margarita burps.

SANDY

Gross.

MARGARITA

You're gross.

Margarita gets out of the car.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)

Best day EVERRRRR!

Her happiness is contagious. Sandy can't help but smile.

SANDY

Okay, get in there! I don't want you to be late! Go, go.

MARGARITA

Okay... I love you! I love you so much WHOOOOO!

Sandy HONKS her horn as Margarita screams and laughs.

INT. THE BEST HALLOWEEN STORE - CONTINUOUS

Margarita runs down an aisle. She throws off her uniform quickly, shoving her clothes into her tote bag. Felix rounds the corner, spotting her. Margarita starts to say something, but he throws up his hands.

FELIX

Not my problem.

INT. DANCE STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

COACH finishes fastening a matching bracelet onto Margarita's wrist. She looks at it, then turns around. The rest of the girls wear them. She smiles.

LATER: We track with Margarita as the girls weave in and out, galloping around each other. Pinky gallops slightly out of line as she passes Margarita. She shoulders her. HARD.

Margarita turns around to look at her just as Coach yells at Margarita to focus.

The girls continue to rehearse their choreography.

INT. THE BEST HALLOWEEN STORE - CONTINUOUS

The BELL on the front door CLANGS as Sandy enters. She approaches Felix. He's concentrating on untangling Mardi Gras beads from one of the bins.

SANDY

Hi Felix. Is Margarita in the back?

FELIX

Ohhhh boy.

He drops the tangle of beads and shuffles quickly down an aisle. Sandy looks confused. She follows after him.

SANDY

Felix? Everything okay?

FELIX

I don't lie. So I can't lie.

He ducks quickly down an aisle. She follows.

SANDY

Okay..? What's wrong?

He turns around to look at her.

FELIX

I'm gonna tell you where she is.
But you're not gonna be happy.

INT. DANCE STUDIO - AFTERNOON

Coach takes measurements of each of the girls. He studies the number as he holds the measuring tape around Margarita's waist. Suddenly, the front door BURSTS OPEN.

SANDY (O.S.)

MARGARITA.

Margarita whirls around to see SANDY standing at the back of the studio. Coach abruptly drops the measuring tape.

COACH

Can I help yo--

Sandy stomps straight towards Margarita. The girls part like the Red Sea. She grabs Margarita by the wrist.

SANDY

What the hell--

MARGARITA

--Mom--

SANDY

I stopped by the store. Felix told me you've been leaving work early for MONTHS--

MARGARITA

NO! Wait MOM!

SANDY

--What is this?!

MARGARITA

I can explain!! It was a surprise! I was gonna surprise you and compete in the competition--

SANDY

--What?!

MARGARITA

The hobbyhorse competition! And I was gonna win a trophy and prove to you how good I was at it!!

Sandy looks around at the girls, then to Coach.

SANDY

Who the hell are you?

MARGARITA

That's Coach, Mom.

Sandy glares down Coach.

SANDY

Margarita. Go wait outside.

MARGARITA

NO--Mom. Mom, *please*. Pleasepleaseplease--

COACH

It's okay, Red. Just step outside for a moment.

MARGARITA

(begging, frantic)

No please. Mom please. I wanna stay and I wanna compete. I have to compete. They need me. I paid the money to compete--

SANDY
--You gave him *MONEY*?

Sandy shakes her head furiously.

SANDY (CONT'D)
OUT. NOW. Right now.

Margarita begins to cry. She exits the dance studio.

THROUGH THE WINDOW: She sits down on the curb, dropping her head in her hands. Her MUFFLED SOBS carry into the studio.

Sandy marches up to Coach.

SANDY (CONT'D)
You have about five seconds to explain what the hell is going on here.

COACH
We're just practicing for our hobbyhorsing competition. I was unaware she wasn't telling you about this. I apologize for the confusion.

SANDY
Unbelievable. This is--she's twenty-two. This is not...

COACH
Your daughter is a great addition to our team. I'd love for you to stay and watch. I think you'd be quite impressed with her--

SANDY
--No. Stop. Don't do that. I don't need another man pretending to see the potential in my "special needs" daughter.

Both the Sarah's gasp. Madison covers her mouth.

JEAN-MARIE
You're not supposed to say that anymore.

Sandy tries to control herself.

SANDY

I know you *think* you're helping these girls...But I hope you can confidently determine whether you're doing this for them, or for yourself. Because I'm so sick of people who go around treating others like they're some sort of charity case.

COACH

I don't mean for it to come off that way.

SANDY

No one *means* to come off that way. But at the end of the day when you go home and pat yourself on the back for a job well done...these girls go home to a world where they're not "celebrated" for their differences.

Her voice breaks a little.

SANDY (CONT'D)

They get laughed at. And made fun of...And bullied so badly that you can't even begin to wrap your head around how kids can be so cruel. Because there's nothing this world loves more than to persecute someone who believes that they're special.

Coach looks down, then back to her. He nods.

COACH

Thank you for correcting me. I really appreciate it.

Sandy glares at him. She looks back to the window at Margarita. She sighs, rubbing her eyes.

SANDY

Okay. Well. She's not coming back here.

Coach looks disappointed. He nods.

COACH

Okay.

Sandy gives him a final look, then exits.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Margarita is slapping the dashboard repeatedly as she cries. Sandy tries to keep her temper in check.

SANDY

You lied to me. How *dare* you lie to me? WE. DON'T. LIE.

MARGARITA

I didn't lie! I asked you if I could ride a fake horse and you said yes!! Remember?! You said I could!!! I wanted to show you I could do something by myself. You NEVER LET ME. How am I supposed to make you proud of me if you won't even let me DO ANYTHING!!

SANDY

Margarita, God...I was proud of you. You had a job--

MARGARITA

--I don't want a job!!!

SANDY

--No one does! That's life! That's part of growing up. That's what being an adult is--

MARGARITA

You always say I need to be responsible and I was trying to be and you won't even LET ME! You don't let me do **anything** I love. You never want me to be happy!

SANDY

All I EVER do is try to make you happy. MY WHOLE LIFE revolves around making sure you're happy.

MARGARITA

But you won't let me ride horses or do hobby-horsing with my friends!

SANDY

Those girls are not your friends.

MARGARITA

(yelling)
Yes they are!

(MORE)

MARGARITA (CONT'D)

You're just jealous because you don't want me to have friends because YOU don't have any friends and you're all alone since Dad died! You only want me to be at home with you all day so you can keep me to yourself but people actually LIKE ME and you know it!

Sandy turns down the dark road sharply. She shakes her head.

SANDY

I **do** know that. But you need to understand that you're gonna get older and things are gonna get harder...And people leave you when things get hard. And then you only have yourself and your family--if you're lucky.

The car makes another SHARP turn down the road.

SANDY (CONT'D)

And when you look back at the end of your life...I just don't want you to regret--

Sandy shakes this off. She collects herself.

SANDY (CONT'D)

I just want to know you're gonna be okay. Despite everything...that you're gonna be okay.

Sandy pulls off to the side of the road. She throws the car into park, and bursts into sobs.

Margarita looks at her Mom in horror. She's never seen her like this. She reaches out to rub her shoulder.

MARGARITA

Mom. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. It's gonna be okay. I'm sorry.

We hold on the two for a long time.

EXT. HALLOWEEN STORE - A MONTH LATER

DEAD LEAVES blow across the sidewalk.

Hank hangs up a LARGE SIGN on the front of the store that reads: "AFTER HALLOWEEN SALE! EVERYTHING MUST GO!"

INT. HALLOWEEN STORE - CONTINUOUS

The shelves are bare. DISCOUNT SIGNS are taped everywhere. Felix holds a dustpan as Margarita sweeps into it.

FELIX

Maybe after this we can go to my house and I can show you my guitar.

MARGARITA

Maybe.

The front door of the store opens. Pinky, Sarah M., Jean Marie, and Madeline enter. Margarita drops the broom in shock. She runs over to them.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)

Oh my gosh! You guys, Pinky, Jean Marie-hey guys!

Pinky whispers to the girls.

PINKY

Go, go, go!

The girls run down an aisle. Margarita chases after them.

MARGARITA

Guys! Guys, hey! What are you--

She rounds the corner of the aisle, just missing them.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)

(laughing)

I totally saw you guys!

She runs to the next aisle. They're not there. Next aisle. Just missed them. Next aisle--

She JUMPS OUT in front of them, making the animatronic ghoul CACKLE and LIGHT UP.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)

GOTCHA!

Pinky turns around with a fake smile.

PINKY

Oh my god...Margarita! We didn't even see you!

MARGARITA

What are you guys doing here?

JEAN MARIE

Oh, we were just...looking for stuff for the competition. Like, glitter and false eyelashes and stuff.

MARGARITA

Did you guys already try CVS? They sell makeup there I'm pretty sure. My Mom got her makeup done there once and she looked awesome.

Felix appears behind them with the broom.

FELIX

Hey, we aren't done sweeping--

He sees the girls. He wiggles his glasses.

FELIX (CONT'D)

Well *helloooo* ladies.

Pinky looks offended, folding her arms. The girls copy her.

MARGARITA

Felix! These are my friends from hobbyhorse. That's Pinky, that's Jean Marie, that's Sarah M., Madeline--

PINKY

--Margarita. You quit hobbyhorse.

MARGARITA

Well...I mean I had to because my Mom...I mean, actually...I meant to tell you guys that I was gonna try and come back.

PINKY

I don't think that's such a good idea. Coach was pretty mad about you quitting...we had to re-choreograph *everything*.

SARAH M.

Yeah. He had to practically *beg* the PlushPony Council to let us compete with an odd number.

MARGARITA

Well, you won't have to do that because I'm going to be there.

Pinky raises her eyebrows.

SARAH M.

Since when?

MARGARITA

Well, I never said I wasn't.

PINKY

Yeah...except you haven't been to practice, and you don't know any of the new choreo...soooo...

MARGARITA

I can learn it...I've gotten a lot faster with learning.

FELIX

I'm pretty fast at learning too, actually.

Pinky turns around. She talks to him like a three year old.

PINKY

Wow...that's so cool...I love your shoes.

He's wearing sneakers with superheroes on the side.

FELIX

Thanks! I love superheroes. My favorite is Ultra the Multi-Alien. He was blasted by four ray-guns so he's like four different people in one.

The girls stare. Pinky looks back to Margarita.

PINKY

Well I'm really glad you found people your own age to hang out with...you know, other than your Mom.

Hank listens from an aisle away. He rounds the corner.

HANK

Margarita. I need you to start boxing up the props. We need to have them shipped out by one.

MARGARITA

No, I was--

HANK

Now, please.

He looks from the girls back to Margarita.

PINKY

Don't worry. We were just going.

SARAH B.

Yeah, my Mom's outside. We gotta get to practice.

Hank nods at them. He raises his eyebrows at Margarita, then turns and walks away. Pinky adds a final jab.

PINKY

Also...we're not your friends. So maybe don't go around telling people that next time.

She turns away, motioning for the girls to follow.

Margarita stands, shell-shocked. Madeline quickly breaks off from the group, running up to Margarita. She talks under her breath.

MADELINE

Um, if you really were gonna try and compete...we still know the old finale routine...it's way better than the new one we had to learn. No one else can do the lifts since you left--

Pinky calls out to her.

PINKY

MADELINE! Let's go.

Madeline gives a look to Margarita, then runs to catch up with them. Margarita watches the girls exit the store and climb into the minivan.

FELIX

No offense, but your friends seem like they suck balls.

INT. LOS AMIGOS - NIGHT

Someone is singing a somewhat drunk version of TAKE ME HOME COUNTRY ROADS by John Denver. Margarita and Sandy sit in their usual booths.

SANDY

How are the taquitos tonight?

MARGARITA

It's hard to taste them with my eardrums being assaulted right now.

Sandy snorts.

SANDY

Would ice cream help?

MARGARITA

I mean it would *help* maybe.

Sandy nods. She flags down a WAITER.

SANDY

Hi. Can we get a hot fudge sundae?
Two spoons. Thank you.

The WAITER walks off. Margarita looks excited. They never get dessert. Sandy shifts a little.

SANDY (CONT'D)

Hey...so Uncle Patrick is going to be staying with us at the end of this week.

MARGARITA

What? Why?

The SONG comes to an end as the SINGER on stage takes a bow. The M.C. comes back over the mic.

KARAOKE M.C.

Let's give a hand for Kit,
everyone!

Some SCATTERED APPLAUSE. Sandy talks over the M.C.

SANDY

He's going to be coming down...you know...he wants to see me. See both of us.

KARAOKE M.C.

I've been told to remind everyone that our "Macho-Sized" Margaritas are now being served at happy hour prices...

MARGARITA

Last time Uncle Patrick came over
was when Dad died.

SANDY

That's not true.

MARGARITA

It is true. He came over and you
wouldn't tell me why he was here
and then you told me Dad was in his
accident. Remember?

SANDY

He...came other times.

The WAITER appears with their ice cream. Margarita grabs one
of the spoons protruding from the bowl. She takes a bite.

MARGARITA

(mouth full)

Why is he coming?

SANDY

To visit--

Margarita grabs her head.

MARGARITA

AH! Brain freeze. AHH owowow! OWW!

KARAOKE M.C.

Alright, let's get another singer
up here, shall we?

Margarita looks at Sandy. She rubs her head.

MARGARITA

Why are you acting funny?

SANDY

I'm not acting funny, I just think
we can talk about this at home.

MARGARITA

Talk about what? What's happening?

SANDY

Nothing is happening.

MARGARITA

Don't lie to me. We don't lie.

SANDY
We can talk at home.

MARGARITA
No...That means something bad. Tell me. Now.

SANDY
Margs--

MARGARITA
TELL ME NOW.

SANDY
I stopped treatment--

MARGARITA
--I know that.

SANDY
Not because I was better. Because, it just...it wasn't responding-- Come on. Let's get the check let's talk at home--

KARAOKE M.C.
--UP NEXT, we have one of our favorite performers singing her classic "American Pie"...

MARGARITA
You lied.

Sandy tries to signal for the M.C. to stop.

KARAOKE M.C.
...Ladies and gentleman help me in welcoming up Miss Margarita to the stage.

SANDY
No, no Margarita--

KARAOKE M.C.
--Come on up here, Margarita!

Margarita, eyes still locked on Sandy, stands. She throws her spoon down on the table. Some of the ice cream flicks onto Sandy's face.

Margarita approaches the stage, grabbing the mic.

AMERICAN PIE BLARES through the speakers. Margarita begins to sing. Her voice is caught in her throat. She stares at Sandy.

MARGARITA

A long, long time ago...I can still
remember...

She stops singing. Sandy motions for her to come back to the booth.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)

And I knew if I had my chance
That I could make those people
dance...And maybe they'd be happy
for a while--

Margarita blinks as a tear falls down her cheek.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)

I can't remember if I cried...
When I read about his widowed
bride... But something touched me
deep inside. The day. The music
died.

She barely gets the last word out. The rest of the PATRONS
SING ALONG to the CHORUS.

Margarita stands motionless, staring at Sandy. Sandy looks
back, wiping tears from her own cheeks.

DRUNK BAR GO-ERS

And them good ole boys were
drinking whiskey and rye...Singin'
this'll be the day that I
die...This'll be the day that I
die.

EXT. SMALL TOWN STREETS - NIGHT

MARGARITA'S WORLD: Margarita RUNS down the sidewalk. Her
breath is visible in the cold air.

The STREET LAMPS FLICKER and STROBE. It's disorienting.

Margarita RUNS FASTER and FASTER. She dodges a BIKER.

MARGARITA

Use the bike lane!! Jesus!

She continues to run. As she runs, she passes POSTERS, SIGNS,
and MURALS on the sides of different buildings. Each one
depicting images from her past.

One POSTER depicts an audience, pointing and laughing.

Another shows a single RED FLOWER growing amongst a bed of WHITE FLOWERS.

Another depicts a CAR ACCIDENT. An ad for an auto-body shop.

Another shows a MOTHER holding her DAUGHTER.

She RUNS. And runs. And runs.

EXT. STABLES - CONTINUOUS

Margarita sprints down the hill leading to the stables. She lands in the grass, flopping onto her back. She tries to catch her breath. To get control. She shuts her eyes.

COACH

...Red?

Margarita opens her eyes. Coach is standing over her. He's wearing his jumpsuit. He holds a toolbox in his hand.

Margarita sits up.

MARGARITA

What are you doing here?

Coach motions over his shoulder.

COACH

Fixing the fence. Apparently some hooligan keeps jumping it.

He raises an eyebrow at her.

COACH (CONT'D)

What are you doing here?

MARGARITA

Having a mental breakdown.

COACH

Can I join?

EXT. STABLES - LATER

Margarita and Coach stand side by side in the tall grass. They take turns tossing small rocks at a metal can that sits on a tree branch. Margarita grunts as she tosses. Miss.

MARGARITA

When did your husband die?

She tosses. Miss. Coach looks down at the rock in his hand.

COACH

Last summer. Two days before his
sixtieth birthday.

He tosses. Miss.

MARGARITA

That sucks.

COACH

It does. It really, *really* sucks.

MARGARITA

Do you miss him?

COACH

More than anything in this entire
world.

They gather up more rocks. After a while--

COACH (CONT'D)

He cared a lot about those girls.
Almost annoyingly too much. He knew
what it meant to be a part of
something. So...I couldn't let
those girls...I wanted them to keep
going. To have something. In his
legacy.

Margarita tosses. HIT. The CAN CLINKS. They both celebrate.

MARGARITA

YESS!

COACH (CONT'D)

OHH HO HO!

COACH (CONT'D)

Why isn't it falling? How did that--

MARGARITA

--My Dad nailed it up to the branch
so we wouldn't have to climb back
up and re-set it when we hit it.

BEAT.

COACH

Oh.

Coach sits down in the grass. Margarita continues to toss.

Coach picks up a piece of grass. He blows on it. It WHISTLES. Margarita stops, turning to look at him.

MARGARITA
How'd you do that?

Coach waves her to sit down. She sits beside him, dropping her rocks. He picks her a piece of grass, handing it to her.

COACH
Now hold it between your thumbs.

He takes her hands, folding them around the grass.

COACH (CONT'D)
...And you hold it firmly.

He brings his blade back up to his mouth.

COACH (CONT'D)
And blow.

His WHISTLES. She tries. A lot of spit comes out.

MARGARITA
It's not working.

COACH
Keep trying.

She keeps trying.

COACH (CONT'D)
You're a giant among men, Red.

She looks at him.

MARGARITA
Okay...?

She goes back to trying.

COACH
Not too many people make it through
life without the world making them
small.

Margarita looks at him. This is pure gibberish.

COACH (CONT'D)
You're not afraid to be yourself.

MARGARITA
Why would I be afraid to be myself?

COACH

Most people are. They try so hard to be someone they think they're "supposed to be."

MARGARITA

That sounds exhausting.

COACH

It is.

PHVVVWW! The BLADE WHISTLES.

MARGARITA

I DID IT!

COACH

You got it!

MARGARITA

I have so much spit on my hands.

She wipes her hands on her pants.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)

Do you hate me now that I can't compete at the competition?

Coach laughs. He shakes his head.

COACH

Not at all. I think it's impossible for anyone to hate you.

MARGARITA

No. My old coworker Susan at the thrift-store told me she hated me once.

COACH

I may be wrong here, but it sounds to me like Susan had some personal issues.

MARGARITA

Oh totally. She used to tell everyone that Bono was her godfather.

She stands to her feet, looking down at him.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)

Bye, Coach.

COACH

Bye, Red.

Margarita waddles back up the hill, leaving him to sit in the grass alone.

INT. MARGARITA'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Margarita opens the front door. Sandy is asleep on the couch. The soft GLOW of the TV illuminates her face.

Margarita gently lays down beside her. Sandy stirs, rolling over to open her arms. Margarita wriggles in, resting her head on Sandy's neck. Sandy murmurs.

SANDY

I love you.

MARGARITA

I love you more.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

SANDY

Me too.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING - WEEKS LATER

UNCLE PATRICK, Sandy's uptight but tries-not-to-be brother makes breakfast while simultaneously scrubbing the cabinets.

Sandy sits at the kitchen table. Margarita enters.

PATRICK

Good morning Margs, how did you sleep?

He talks to her like she's five.

MARGARITA

Hi Uncle Patrick.

She sits next to Sandy at the table.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)

Mom, I was thinking today we could go see a movie.

PATRICK

No Margs, We have the hospice worker coming at noon for your Mom's infusions.

Toast POPS UP from the toaster. Patrick grabs it and begins to layer scrambled eggs on top of it.

MARGARITA

Mom, do you wanna go to the movies with me?

PATRICK

She needs to rest, Margarita. Remember, she doesn't have the same energy that she used to.

Margarita rolls her eyes. Sandy crosses her eyes, sticking out her tongue at Patrick's back. Margarita laughs. As Patrick turns back around, Sandy drops the face.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

So what are your plans for the day, Margs?

MARGARITA

I dunno. Probably just gonna hang out here.

PATRICK

Cool, cool...maybe we can watch that horse documentary you were telling me about.

Margarita rolls her eyes.

MARGARITA

Yeah...that would be cool.

INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Patrick SNORES loudly on the couch as the HORSE DOC plays on TV. Margarita tip toes from the couch into Sandy's bedroom.

She creaks the door open to see Sandy awake, reading.

MARGARITA

Hey Mom, how's it going.

SANDY

How good do I look?

MARGARITA
You look sexy.

SANDY
I know.

Sandy adjusts herself to sit up more.

SANDY (CONT'D)
Will you give me a bath?

MARGARITA
A bath?

SANDY
It sounds so nice.

MARGARITA
Okay.

INT. SANDY'S BATHROOM - TUB

Margarita washes Sandy's frail body. She gently rubs a sponge up and down her back. She washes Sandy's short hair. Sandy closes her eyes.

Margarita helps shave her armpits.

SANDY
Since when do you shave?

MARGARITA
It's not that hard. You just never
let me try it on my own.

Sandy thinks about this, watching her.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - EVENING

Patrick SNORES in the guest bedroom. Soft giggles come from the other room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATE NIGHT

Sandy wears her blue wig. She's putting eyeshadow on Margarita's eyelids. Her hands shake.

SANDY

(whispering)

You gotta hold still...And then,
you always wanna make sure to just
do the top eyeliner, no
bottom...you'll look like a
raccoon.

Margarita looks at herself in the mirror.

MARGARITA

Hmm. Cool. I like it. I look really
awesome. Do you wanna get tattoos?

Sandy laughs.

SANDY

Absolutely not. I've been poked by
a needle enough times in my life.

Margarita walks into the kitchen. She re-appears with a
sharpie.

MARGARITA

Okay. Fake ones then.

Margarita sticks her foot up towards Sandy's face.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)

You can pick whatever you want and
draw it on my ankle. And then we'll
switch and I'll do one on your
ankle and we can surprise each
other.

INT. GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Sandy shows Margarita the breaker in the back. A sharpie-
drawn horse on her wrist.

SANDY

It looks confusing but it's not.
I'll label everything. Go get me
the label maker let's do it right
now.

MARGARITA

No, I got it.

SANDY

No, you're gonna forget. Come on,
it will take five minutes don't be
lazy.

Margarita GROANS, sulking into the house.

EXT. TRAMPOLINE - NIGHT

Margarita and Sandy lay on the old trampoline in the back, bundled in blankets. They look up at the stars. A BREEZE RUSTLES some leaves off the branches above them.

MARGARITA
Just like this?

SANDY
Yep. He laid there, and I laid here. We were so drunk.

They laugh. **BEAT.**

MARGARITA
Mom...I'm gonna go tomorrow. I'm not gonna give up. Okay?

SANDY
Go where?

MARGARITA
I'm gonna go compete in the hobbyhorse competition.

BEAT.

SANDY
Do it.

MARGARITA
Really?

SANDY
Yes.

MARGARITA
You won't be mad at me?

SANDY
I just want you to be happy.

MARGARITA
I am happy. Right now I'm the happiest I've ever been in my whole life.

Sandy shuts her eyes.

SANDY

Me too.

BEAT.

MARGARITA

Are you scared?

SANDY

Of what?

MARGARITA

Dying?

SANDY

Not of dying. I'm scared of leaving you behind.

MARGARITA

Don't be.

SANDY

I just want you to be okay.

MARGARITA

Of course I'll be okay. I'll be okay because you were my Mom. How could anyone in the world not be okay if you raised them? That's like...impossible.

Sandy's eyes are still shut. She smiles.

SANDY

Well then I'm not afraid of anything anymore.

Margarita watches her. She watches her chest rise and fall with every breath.

SANDY (CONT'D)

I'll be there tomorrow.

MARGARITA

What?

SANDY

At the competition. I'll be there.

Margarita beams. She rolls over on her back to look up at the sky. She begins to drift off.

EXT. TRAMPOLINE - SUNRISE

Margarita rolls over, her nose pink from the cold. The sun is beginning to peek over the horizon.

All is QUIET. Margarita closes her eyes again, putting her head against Sandy's.

She pulls away. Sandy's face is cold. She puts a hand on her cheek, checking. She begins to trace her fingers along the smile lines of Sandy's mouth. She rubs her hand across her bald head.

She lays her head on Sandy's chest. SILENCE. From high above the trampoline, the two figures, lay side by side.

INT. GUEST ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Patrick SNORES LOUDLY. Margarita walks up to the bed.

MARGARITA
Hey, Uncle Pat.

He JOLTS awake, yanking up the covers.

PATRICK
Jesus...Margarita...is everything
okay? Where's Sandy?

MARGARITA
Everything's fine. She's out on the
trampoline.

He sits straight up, leaping out of bed.

PATRICK
What?!

He yanks a sweatshirt on, still in his boxers. He RUNS through the house. Margarita follows after him.

MARGARITA
It's okay...she died in her sleep,
just like she wanted to. Hey, I
gotta go to my competition...do you
think you could give me a ride?

Patrick runs out the backdoor. She calls after him.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)
Why are you running? She's already
dead.

SILENCE. Then, his HYSTERICAL SCREAMS come from outside.

EXT. BACKYARD - MORNING

Margarita leans against the back porch. She watches EMT workers rush out of the ambulance with medical bags.

Patrick helps them on to the trampoline. An EMT wraps Margarita in a blanket.

Margarita notices a BUTTERFLY fly past her. She watches it disappear into the sky. She gives it a smile, knowingly.

MARGARITA

Uncle Patrick! Look! Did you see that butterfly?

He ignores her. Still in a panic.

The EMT and PARAMEDICS pull Sandy's body off the trampoline and onto the stretcher, covering her up.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)

Wait! She needs her wig.

An EMT responder turns around.

EMT RESPONDER

Excuse me?

MARGARITA

Her wig.

Margarita points to the BLUE WIG, still lying on the trampoline. The RESPONDER looks, then calls out to her coworkers.

EMT RESPONDER

Hey guys...She uh...Can you get her wig?

A couple of them give a "what the hell?" look. One of the responders reaches through the net, grabbing the wig.

EMT RESPONDER 2

Got it.

The Responder turns back to her.

EMT RESPONDER

They got it.

MARGARITA

Thanks.

Another RESPONDER approaches Margarita.

RESPONDER 3

Come with me please.

MARGARITA

No, I can't. I have a competition I need to go to.

RESPONDER 3

We...uh...need family present.

MARGARITA

My Uncle Patrick can go. Do you need both of us?

Responder 3 hesitates. He looks at the Responder 2, who shrugs.

RESPONDER 3

I mean...that's...fine.

MARGARITA

Okay cool. I'm gonna go to the competition then. Do you think one of you guys can give me a ride?

The responder is dumbstruck. Suddenly--

HONK.

HONK.HONK.HONK.HOOOOOONK

Responder 2 rounds the side yard.

RESPONDER 2

Hey...Margret...they're saying your ride is here.

Margarita, confused, makes her way to the front yard.

EXT. FRONT YARD - DAY

Hank's car is stopped behind the ambulance. He calls out.

HANK

Come on, cowgirl! You're late.

MARGARITA

What?

HANK

Your Mom...she called me last night. She said you needed a ride to some horse riding thing today.

Margarita looks in disbelief. Felix waves from the backseat.

HANK (CONT'D)

He wanted to come.

FELIX

I love horses.

HANK

(shrugging)
He loves horses.

Hank leans forward to open the passenger door.

HANK (CONT'D)

Shall we?

INT. HOBBY HORSE COMPETITION - DRESSING ROOMS - EVENING

PINKY'S MOM, [classic stage mom], powders Pinky's face.

Other moms help their daughters get into costume and curl their hair. The room is alive with nervous energy.

No one notices Margarita enter through the back door. She sits at an empty vanity, looking at herself. Her hair is a mess, her face bare.

BERNADETTE, [14] chubby with a terribly short bob. She has the biggest smile of anyone there.

MARGARITA

Hey...do you have any lipstick I could borrow.

BERNADETTE turns, excited that someone is talking to her.

BERNADETTE

Uh doy. I have like...one hundred lipsticks.

Bernadette begins dumping lipsticks out of her horse bag.

MARGARITA

Your bag is awesome.

BERNADETTE

Thanks. I like your hair.

Margarita runs her hand over it.

MARGARITA

You do?

BERNADETTE

Yeah. I think red hair is the coolest hair of any of the colors. I'm Bernadette.

MARGARITA

I'm Margarita.

BERNADETTE

Wait...your name is Margarita?

Margarita slumps a little, ready for the jokes.

MARGARITA

Yeah.

BERNADETTE

That's so freaking cool!

Bernadette hands her an orange-colored lipstick.

BERNADETTE (CONT'D)

Do this one. It matches your hair. It's gonna look so pretty on you.

Margarita puts it on her lips. She smacks her lips together, looking at herself in the mirror.

BERNADETTE (CONT'D)

Oh my god...I knew it would look amazing. Do you want some blush?

MARGARITA

Okay...yeah sure.

Bernadette spreads bright pink blush on her cheeks.

The VOICE of the STAGE MANAGER CALLS over the PA SYSTEM.

STAGE MANAGER (O.C.)

All competitors from Trabuco, Colorado you're on deck. Take your places backstage.

Margarita stands abruptly, knocking some of the makeup off the vanity.

MARGARITA

FRICK. Where's backstage?!

She yanks her wrinkled costume out of her tote bag.
Bernadette shrugs at her.

Margarita is stripping out of her clothes and stepping into her costume.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)
FRICK ME!!!

She half-hops, half-runs out of the room as many of the Girls and Stage Moms watch.

INT. HALLWAY OF THE ARENA - CONTINUOUS

LOUD SOUNDS. GYM SMELLS. GIRLS and STAGEHANDS crowd the dark hallways, pushing past each other.

Margarita practically slams into a tiny blonde. She stumbles towards some curtains that block off backstage from the arena. She's finishing zipping up her jumpsuit.

INT. BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

She holds back tears as she paces around. Her hands keep flying up to her hair, trying to braid it.

A STAGE MANAGER, flamboyant and stressed, approaches her.

STAGE MANAGER
Are you with the team from Trabuco?

MARGARITA
Yes. My name is Margarita spelled just like the drink.

He scans his list.

STAGE MANAGER
I'm not seeing your name...you said Marguerite?

MARGARITA
It's Margarita, oh my hell!

Margarita aggressively ties a scrunchie around her shitty braid.

STAGE MANAGER
Alright, I'm gonna need you to calm down for me, hun.

MARGARITA

Do you know where Coach is?

STAGE MANAGER

Which Coach?

MARGARITA

My Coach...I think he's supposed to be back here..?

STAGE MANAGER

Honey, it's not my job to keep track of everyones' coaches.

Margarita sits down, putting her head between her knees.

Suddenly, a pair of large hands gently place themselves on the back of her shoulders.

COACH

Need a horse?

Margarita looks up to see Coach. He's wearing his jumpsuit. He pulls Cheeseburger out from a golf club bag full of hobbyhorses.

Cheeseburger has a blue bow in her mane, no longer held together by duct tape, but glued together seamlessly.

COACH (CONT'D)

Why are you crying?

MARGARITA

I can't braid my hair. I can't do it. I can't do it.

COACH

Turn around.

Margarita shows her wonky braid.

COACH (CONT'D)

What are you talking about, Red? That's a braid right there.

MARGARITA

Yeah but I messed it up. It's all bumpy on the top and I missed a whole piece of frigging hair right here.

She shows him a long strand left out from the braid.

COACH

You said you can't braid it. But
I'm looking at it right now, and
it's a braid. That's all you need.

Margarita, nods. She wipes her nose on her sleeve. Margarita smiles, easing up.

MARGARITA

Are you gonna let me compete?

COACH

Why wouldn't I? You're here, aren't
you?

HOBBYHORSE MC (O.S.)

--Ladies and gentleman...please
welcome the team from Trabuco,
Colorado...

Some CHEERING. Coach gives Margarita a pat on the back.

COACH

Knock em dead, Red.

MARGARITA

How do I know when to go out? Are
they already out there?

Coach has disappeared back in the backstage chaos.

Margarita takes a deep breath, then PARTS THE CURTAINS. The
BRIGHT SPOTLIGHTS blind her for a moment. Her eyes adjust.

INT. STAGE - CONTINUOUS

All the girls on her team turn to look at her in shock.
Madeline smiles, giving Margarita a discreet thumbs up.

CLOSE UP: on a sharpie-drawn BUTTERFLY on Margarita's ankle.

Margarita awkwardly walks up to the HOBBYHORSE MC, a "MISS
AMERICA" host of a man with fake teeth and hair plugs.

HOBBYHORSE MC

Oh...and it looks like one of our
competitors is making her own
entrance!

Margarita taps him. He tries ignore her, laughing awkwardly.
She battles to grab the mic.

HOBBYHORSE MC (CONT'D)

Okay, okay...she demands to be heard, ladies and gentleman here is...

Margarita grabs the mic from his hands, speaking too close and too loud into the microphone.

MARGARITA

Ladies and gentleman my name is Margarita I will be racing today to...in honor of my Mom, Sandy, who died about two hours ago on my trampoline in my backyard. I'd like to thank Hank and Felix for taking me here, my new friend Bernadette for her lipstick, Coach for fixing Cheeseburger but most of all I'd like to thank my Mom for teaching me to not be afraid of anything-
HIT IT!

The JUDGES are stunned. Audience members GASP. Coach smirks. He gives the thumbs up to the sound booth.

AMERICAN PIE BLASTS through the arena. Coach gives her a rock on. She throws him a "rock on" back.

She takes her stance at the center of the stage with the rest of the girls. Margarita picks up Cheeseburger slowly and gracefully. The rest of the girls follow as they all begin to INTERPRETIVE DANCE.

As the SONG amps up to the first CHORUS, the girls begin to TROT around the ring. Then, one after another begin to LEAP over the obstacles to the music.

Margarita gallops towards the obstacle. She leaps and--

Her shoes catch on the pole. She face plants. HARD.

Margarita sits up. She looks up at some of the girls who stand in shock.

Suddenly, she hears a CLACK next to her. Pinky has dropped her hobbyhorse, and gotten on the ground next to Margarita. She does a couple of interpretive dance moves from the floor, giving Margarita a nod.

Suddenly, Madeline drops to the ground, doing the same. Then the Sarah's. Melissa does a somersault. Soon enough, every girl is on the ground with Margarita.

They all stand, getting back into their choreography. Margarita lifts Pinky. They each continue on in the routine.

As the girls continue on and gear up for their next "Trick" involving LEAPS over the obstacles, Margarita looks out to the audience.

She sees Hank and Felix smiling at her. Sitting in the very back row, is SANDY. She appears how she did at the start (pre-cancer.) A big smile. Her hair is curly. She smiles at Margarita, and throws up a "ROCK ON" sign.

Margarita throws one back. She turns to look at the obstacle. As she gallops forward, she reaches the obstacle. She LAUNCHES herself up. SUDDENLY:

MARGARITA'S WORLD: Her feet LIFT off the floor. She's now floating above the hurdle, then the JUDGES, the AUDIENCE, the ARENA.

PUSH IN: on her face as she continues to float high above the crowd. She takes a deep breath in, closing her eyes. Smiling.

Finally, she opens her eyes. Ready.

FADE OUT.