

CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN A CHICANO BARRIO

BY

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EXT. CHURCH PARISH GARDEN- DAY

FATHER JOSE LARA, a man in his mid fifties, wearing a full beard and a colorful poncho, is in handcuffs with a police escort. PAT HAYES, the police chief and DICK VALENTI, the city councilman watch as the police pick the lock of a building adjoining the parish. MICHAEL MONTERUSO is videotaping the whole scene.

MONTERUSO

This will all be sent to the Vatican.

FATHER LARA

You're not a member of this parish.

MONTERUSO

I'm president of Catholics for Decent Communities and this parish is an outrage to all Catholics.

FATHER LARA

Yeah, they do look outraged.

A small crowd SHOUTS at the police.

FATHER LARA TO CHIEF HAYES

By what authority have you violated my parish.

CHIEF HAYES

Bombs. A reliable source says you're hiding them in your church store.

A policeman dumps a large paper bag in front of Chief Hayes.

CHIEF HAYES

Open it.

The policeman cuts the bag open. Pinto beans spill out. Chief Hayes frowns.

CHIEF HAYES

Pinto beans?

FATHER LARA

Well, if you eat too many in the middle of the night they can be explosive.

Police dogs are led back to their kennels in the police wagons.

CHIEF HAYES

Joe, take them off.

A policeman removes Father Lara's handcuffs.

FATHER LARA

This is payback for my complaints to the Mayor and the press about police brutality and the curfew imposed on our people.

DICK VALENTI

What's your beef? You break the law, you take the heat. They violated the curfew and were doing drugs.

FATHER LARA

I see. Marijuana's a drug and if you run from the cops you can be shot. Is that it?

DICK VALENTI

I campaigned on law and order and I'm going to deliver on that promise.

FATHER LARA

Your law and order propoganda has inflamed racial tension.

DICK VALENTI

Police should be unhandcuffed in dealing with anyone who breaks the law.

FATHER LARA

Shooting at pot-heads isn't law and order. It's an abuse of power.

DICK VALENTI

Just stick to baptisms and weddings and keep your nose out of politics.

FATHER LARA

I want to free my people from an oppressive system that exploits their feelings of inferiority, their poverty, their cultural differences.

DICK VALENTI

I represent all of my constituents fairly. Brown, black, white, they're all the same to me.

FATHER LARA

You don't know anything about the needs and feelings of the Chicano

people. And why isn't there a curfew  
in your neighborhood?

DICK VALENTI  
You saying I'm a racist?

FATHER LARA  
You approach problems with clenched  
fists and in your face hostility.

Dick throws Father Lara against the fence.

DICK VALENTI  
I don't have to take this crap.

Chief Hayes pulls Dick away.

CHIEF HAYES  
Now, take it easy, Dick. There's no  
need for this. Are you alright,  
Father?

FATHER LARA  
I'm okay. I have no anger. Either we  
live together as brothers and  
sisters or we'll perish together as  
fools.

CHIEF HAYES  
We're done here. Let's go.

FATHER LARA  
Now that I've learned first hand  
who's representing us, I will  
organize a recall election for city  
councilman.

Parishioners continue to YELL at the police. RUFINITA ORTIZ,  
pastoral assistant, mid sixties, approaches.

RUFINITA  
Why do they do this to us, father?

FATHER LARA  
Valenti's pushing the cops to get  
tough on crime. Now, they're so  
paranoid they come in with dogs and  
shotguns pointed at you.

RUFINITA  
You'll be on the six o'clock news  
again tonight.

FATHER LARA

When you stand up against money and  
power you're going to be slammed.

Chief Hayes, Michael and Dick walk away together.

FATHER LARA

There they go, hear no evil, see no  
evil and evil.

EXT. LA RAZA PARK - DAY

Movie credits roll as a shoeshine boy walks through a  
Hispanic barrio park.

SHOESHINE BOY

Shoeshine, shoeshine, get your shoes  
shined. Two dollars.

JED GREGSON, mid thirties, dressed in a suit, carries a thin  
briefcase. Pachucos lounge around. Chicano graffiti adorns  
the walls. An ice cream wagon RINGS its bell. LENCHAL ORTIZ,  
a Chicano youth blocks Jed's path.

LENCHAL

Where you're going, ese?

The other Pachucos make derisive kissing SOUNDS.

JED

Through you if I have to.

Jed brushes by Lenchal. DENYS VIGIL STRUMS his guitar while  
ELOY ESPINOSA BLOWS "Don't Say Good Night" on his saxophone  
to a small gathering. The music ends.

JED TO DENYS

Nice. Sounds like the old fifties  
stuff.

Jed points to a hand painted sign.

JED

What's "Raza Para Los Obreros"?

DENYS

We're raising money to defend  
exploited Mexican field workers.

JED

If they accept the work, how can  
they be exploited,?

DENYS

More than three million of my

compadres are busting their nalgas  
in the fields for less than six  
grand a year. No adequate housing,  
no protection against pesticides.  
Nothing. And that's the government  
talking so you know it's much worse.

JED

And it's your job to protect them?

DENYS

It's not my job. It's my mission to  
defend those with too little power,  
and money from those who have too  
much.

JED

Money and power always prevail.

DENYS

The will of the people is powerful,  
too.

Jed drops a dollar into a big sombrero on the ground.

JED

I'm not political, but your music's  
okay.

DENYS

Everything in life is political. A  
Tuesday night bingo party is  
political.

JED

Okay, so from one politician to  
another, where's Our Lady of  
Guadalupe Church?

DENYS

Follow the ringing bells and you'll  
be there in time for the afternoon  
mass.

JED

Father Lara saying Mass?

DENYS

Just like he has for the last twenty  
five years.

JED

About the last time I went to Mass.

Denys points to Jed's suit.

DENYS

It's been a long time since we've seen threads like that in La Raza Park.

JED

I'm interviewing for a job there.

DENYS

You might want to reconsider. It's been a war zone here lately. The police are coming down hard on our chavos. Not a good time for white guys in pin striped suits to be hanging around.

JED

I need the job. I won't be easily discouraged.

DENYS

Hey, Mano I warned you.

LINDA BERTRAN, an Hispanic woman in her thirties, approaches. Denys sees her, nudges Eloy and begins PLAYING an upbeat Chicano song.

DENYS - SINGING

Ay Ya Ya Ya!

MARY CLAIRE, a ragged-looking small girl, with a big knapsack bag over her shoulder with Tommy, her small lion doll sticking out of her bag. She picks up a can and sticks it in her bag. Linda follows a few steps behind. A few youths wolf WHISTLE at Linda in appreciation. Mary Claire looks up and smiles.

DENYS NODDING TO LINDA

This song is dedicated to you.

Once again Mary Claire thinks it's for her. She smiles and softly tap dances to the music. Denys notices Mary Claire for the first time.

DENYS

Ladies and Gentlemen, the latest talent from Broadway right here in La Raza Park.

Mary Claire continues tap dancing. The music ends and the crowd APPLAUDS. People drop money in the sombrero. A young Pachuco comes over and grabs Mary Claire's baseball cap.

MARY CLAIRE  
Hey, that's my hat.

The young Pachuco starts teasing Mary Claire by pretending he's a bull fighter and getting out of the way just in time as she charges toward him. Jed grabs him by the collar.

JED  
You've been disqualified. Poor form.

YOUNG PACHUCO  
What the... Who are you?

Jed grabs the hat.

JED  
What does it matter. You're a pip squeak. Now beat it.

The pachuco throws him the finger and slinks off.

YOUNG PACHUCO  
Spin on this.

JED TO MARY CLAIRE  
You okay, kid?

Mary Claire pull out her small lion doll and puts her ear to his mouth.

MARY CLAIRE  
He says "Thanks Mister". And he wants to know who you are?

JED  
Jed Gregson. A transplanted Connecticut Yankee looking for a place to land.

Mary Claire offers Tommy's paw and Jed shakes it.

JED TO TOMMY  
And who's your friend here?

MARY CLAIRE  
I'm Mary Claire...blank

JED  
Mary Claire Blank? That's an unusual name.

MARY CLAIRE  
No! Not Mary Claire Blank. Just Mary Claire. The blank's for no last



name. You don't get no stinking last name until you're adopted.

Linda walks over.

LINDA

Where'd you learn to dance? You're very talented.

MARY CLAIRE

St. Catherine's School for God's Children. Fancy name for an orphanage.

Linda puts her hand on Mary Claire's shoulder. Mary Claire recoils and GRUNTS.

JED

Looks like we've got a runaway here.

LINDA

Oh, no! You're too young to be alone on the street.

MARY CLAIRE

Sister Benedict told me if you have character you don't have to be afraid. And I've got thirty seven cans.

JED

When you get hungry those cans won't taste very good.

LINDA

He's right. You need help.

MARY CLAIRE

You rich?

LINDA

Well, I have friends, my health and I love my work. I'm rich in many ways.

MARY CLAIRE

No, no. I just want to know if you've got any money.

LINDA

Not much.

MARY CLAIRE

Then you've got nothing.

JED

Are you sure you ran away from the orphanage?

MARY CLAIRE

I want to be adopted by someone who's got lots of stinking money.

JED

What happened to the character part?

LINDA

We can't leave her alone.

MARY CLAIRE

Don't worry about Mary Claire. I don't need nobody.

LINDA

We could ask Father Lara for help.

JED

I'll take her. I'm gonna' see him in a few minutes.

MARY CLAIRE

This Lara guy. He rich? Okay, I take it back. I'll be nice. Does he live in a big house?

LINDA

No. But he has influence with someone very important.

MARY CLAIRE

Cold hard cash is better.

INT. FATHER LARA'S GARDEN - DAY

Father Lara is milking a goat, sees Linda, Jed and Mary Claire, gets up and hugs Linda.

FATHER LARA

Good to see you. And who is this pretty young lady?

LINDA

Meet Mary Claire, a little girl with no last name and apparently no home. She won't tell me her age, but she did mention running away from St. Catherine's.

FATHER LARA

How recent?

MARY CLAIRE

The best time to sneak out is real early when everyone's zonked out.

FATHER LARA

Don't you think they'll be worrying about you?

MARY CLAIRE

Nah. I've run away lots of times.

FATHER LARA

I know Sister Benedict. I'll call and advise her of your whereabouts.

LINDA

Can I help?

FATHER LARA

Maybe. Give me a few moments. I'm interviewing some Ivy League guy who's submitted an application to teach at our little school. Must be delusional or desperate.

Father Lara notices Jed standing nearby.

FATHER LARA

Sorry, Sir, I never greeted you. Welcome to our Lady of San Guadalupe church.

JED

Thank you. I'm Jed Gregson, also known as Jed the delusional and desperate.

FATHER LARA (LAUGHING)

I can't win today. Let me call Sister Benedict and then we'll talk.

INT LARA'S OFFICE - DAY

We see Father Lara on the telephone, nodding his head. Mary Claire sits in front of him.

FATHER LARA

I see. I see.

Father Lara hangs up.

FATHER LARA

I've got a predicament. Sister Benedict has asked us if we can help. They feel you may be happier in a new school.

MARY CLAIRE

I know. I don't blame them. I've been around so long eating all their food and stuff and never getting picked by folks.

FATHER LARA

What do you mean?

MARY CLAIRE

When I was a baby I was sick and cried a lot. They showed me pictures. To tell the truth, I wasn't that pretty. Too much hair sticking out. I've got a double crown in the back.

Mary Claire leans over.

MARY CLAIRE

See? Nobody would want me. You can't blame them. And then I was always getting into trouble. The Sisters tried teaching me about Jesus and all. Lots of praying and stuff. I can't say they didn't try. They really did.

FATHER LARA

Do you miss your friends?

MARY CLAIRE

I miss Angie, my best friend.

FATHER LARA

What do you like about Angie?

MARY CLAIRE

She eats my broccoli leftovers.

FATHER LARA

Madre mia! What am I to do with you?

MARY CLAIRE

It's OK, Father. I've got a plan. I'm gonna be the best tapper in the world. Then I'll be rich and famous and I won't need anyone.

FATHER LARA  
In the meantime how about giving us  
a try here at Guadalupe?

MARY CLAIRE  
What's the deal?

FATHER LARA  
A foster family in the neighborhood,  
school everyday with the Sisters,  
and a big brother to look out for  
you.

MARY CLAIRE  
Are the Sisters as tough as St.  
Catherine's?

FATHER LARA  
Count on it.

MARY CLAIRE  
So it's room and board for school  
and homework? Is that it?

FATHER LARA  
And church on Sundays. Do we have a  
deal?

MARY CLAIRE  
Well.....

FATHER LARA  
You can still work on your dreams  
here. Stay true to who you are and  
what you believe in and you'll do  
okay.

MARY CLAIRE  
Okay. I'll try it for a little bit.  
Can I ask you something?

FATHER LARA  
Shoot.

Mary Claire WHISPERS into Father Lara's ear. They smile  
knowingly and shake hands.

FATHER LARA  
Send in Mr. Gregson and ask Linda to  
wait for a few minutes.

Mary Claire exits. Jed enters. Father Lara sits behind the  
desk in his office reviewing reports on Jed.

FATHER LARA

Let me see...a fight with a professor at the President's Annual faculty dinner. An affair with a married woman. Fraternizing with a female student who had to leave school. I don't know if this is a resume or a rap sheet.

Father Lara stands up and throws the report on his desk.

JED

I was praying, no pun intended, that you wouldn't be looking at all the details.

Father Lara paces in front of Jed.

FATHER LARA

We're a humble church and we're not offering much. But we do have our standards.

JED

Most of that stuff happened in my younger days. I can promise you my libido is firmly in check now.

FATHER LARA

Let's review your record. You start teaching at Yale. You lose that job (ahem) the dean's wife, and end up at a junior college. That lasts one year and now you're a tutor at a shopping center outlet. That lasts just three months. I've never seen a career move so quickly down the ladder of success. At this rate your next position will be playground supervisor at a day care center.

JED

Is there anything in that folder about my teaching ability?

FATHER LARA

Sure. I just don't know if you're going to be teaching them English or how to score with women.

JED

"All the perfume in Arabia will not sweeten this little hand." (beat) Shakespeare.

FATHER LARA

"The measure of a man's life is what he has done with it." (beat) Lara.

Jed offers a weak smile.

FATHER LARA

The kids here are mostly poor and have had tough lives. No soccer moms or lunches at the club here. These kids need heroes, role models, someone who has character and cares.

JED

I connect with kids, and I know how to teach.

FATHER LARA

They don't like lectures. They just watch to see what you're all about. That's the way they learn. We're desperate for an English teacher. Maybe just not this desperate.

JED

I'm a teacher, not a saint.

FATHER LARA

Maybe you should take another look at God's word and see what awaits the good people in the promised land.

JED

Sure, everyone wants to go to heaven, but nobody wants to die.

FATHER LARA

Haven't you ever heard "Lead me not into temptation"?

JED

Sure, but I can find the way myself. Look, I'm just asking you for a job that I know I can deliver on.

FATHER LARA

You're asking for a leap of faith without showing much to deserve it.

JED

I always thought churches were in the faith business.

A KNOCK on the door. Linda walks in with Mary Claire.

FATHER LARA

Linda, I'm sorry I've kept you waiting.

LINDA

Did you call the orphanage?

FATHER LARA

I did and we agreed to keep her here at Guadalupe.

LINDA

But you don't have boarding facilities here.

FATHER LARA

True. I need to find a volunteer to watch her, until we can find something more permanent.

JED

As a last resort and if it's only for one night she can stay at my place. I've got an extra bedroom.

FATHER LARA

You'll do that?

JED

I'm a bachelor, so I'm not promising much in the way of decor. As long as she doesn't rattle those cans, I can handle it for one day that is.

MARY CLAIRE

Do you smoke?

JED

One of my few non-vices.

MARY CLAIRE

I bet you've got one of those black velvet Elvis paintings, nude pictures on the walls, a fridge full of beer and not a clean glass in the house. Sister Benedict told me about guys like you.

JED

I resent this crude stereotype of bachelors. They are no nude pictures on the wall.



FATHER LARA

No. Mr. Gregson. That's a kind offer, but it would be inappropriate. I can call some people that helped in the past.

LINDA

No need. I have plenty of room.

FATHER LARA

This will give me time to get organized. Thank you, Linda.

LINDA

Grab your bag, girl. Are you hungry?

MARY CLAIRE

Nah. You play pool?

Linda and Mary exit.

FATHER LARA

Sit down. Your gesture of kindness has convinced me there's a good side to you after all. I would like to offer you the teaching position.

JED

Thank you. I accept.

FATHER LARA

With the following conditions. One, you have to also coach our football team.

JED

Football? I don't know squat about coaching football. I'm an English teacher.

FATHER LARA

You were an All Conference quarterback in college. That's experience enough.

JED

But school starts next week. There's no time to prepare.

FATHER LARA

Can't help it. My other coach quit yesterday. And we're already committed to a schedule.

JED

Quit! Why would he do that at the last minute?

FATHER LARA

Easy. Fear. It was his first coaching job and he... Don't look at me that way. I told you our kids were tough. If you show the slightest weakness, they'll devour you. I'm sure you can handle it. The life you've led shows you're a man who enjoys taking risks.

JED

Okay, okay, I'll do it.

FATHER LARA

There is one other small condition.

JED

When people say that, it's never small.

FATHER LARA

Keep an eye on Mary Claire. Right now she's vulnerable and liable to run away again. She need's a big brother.

JED

I'll be stretched to the limit.

FATHER LARA

It's only a few hours a day at lunch with her. Things like that. Besides it was the deal I made with her. She must like you. Maybe cause you don't coddle her.

JED

This is not a normal child. She's nine going on a New York thirty. She's blunt to the point of rudeness, demanding, difficult to control, and overall a pain in the... where I can't even tell you, or I'll be talking to you behind a confessional curtain later. Frankly, if you check with St. Catherine's, you'll find they aren't looking that hard.

FATHER LARA

She precocious, straightforward in her approach, knows what she wants and isn't afraid to go after it. All in all, a very interesting little girl.

JED  
Have you ever considered getting into politics, Father?

FATHER LARA  
I'll take that as a yes and see you tomorrow at 8:00 AM sharp.

JED  
I'm going to regret this nanny bit, soon, and for a long time.

They shake hands and Jed exits the office.

INT. LARA'S OFFICE - EVENING

BISHOP O'LEARY, a middle aged man with a beard enters. Father Lara greets him.

FATHER LARA  
This is a surprise. Our humble parish is honored. A glass of wine?

Father Lara pulls a wine bottle from his cabinet. Bishop O'Leary shakes his head.

BISHOP O'LEARY  
We go back a long ways, Jose, but this isn't social.

FATHER LARA  
Official?

Bishop O'Leary nods his head.

BISHOP O'LEARY  
Your "extended ministries" have come to the attention of higher authorities.

FATHER LARA  
The monsignor?

BISHOP  
Yes, and higher.

FATHER LARA  
Cardinal Razinski?

BISHOP O'LEARY  
Higher.

FATHER LARA  
My goodness. We're not talking  
about...

Father Lara points to the ceiling.

BISHOP O'LEARY  
Not that high. The Vatican has made  
some inquiries about your liturgical  
and pastoral adventures.

FATHER LARA  
The Vatican is thinking about our  
Church? This quiet humble little  
parish in a poor small Hispanic  
neighborhood?

BISHOP O'LEARY  
Poor? Yes. Little? Yeah. Quiet? No.  
And it isn't that humble, either.

FATHER LARA  
Are you ready for that glass of wine  
now?

BISHOP O'LEARY  
Don't patronize me, Jose. You need  
to hear what I have to say.

FATHER LARA  
I'm not a politician. Power and  
policy bore me. I do know there is  
something fundamental in man that  
yearns for the divine and I try to  
administer to that need with an open  
heart and mind.

BISHOP O'LEARY  
But there's got to be a limit. Some  
parishioners in nearby communities  
are actually videotaping your Masses  
and sending them to the Vatican.

FATHER LARA  
Hmm. I must remember to smile more  
often. If you've seen the videos  
you've noticed the joy and  
fellowship.

BISHOP O'LEARY

You've become a media darling.  
You're on TV more often than "I Love  
Lucy" reruns. A Mariachi band plays  
Mexican music in the sanctuary.  
Women administer Mass with you.  
Marrying gay men and lesbians. When  
you say, "you may now kiss the  
bride," you don't know who's going  
to step forward!

FATHER LARA

Everyone is an equal child in the  
eyes of God. Jesus Christ himself,  
and all his disciples, were  
considered to be rebels in their own  
days.

BISHOP O'LEARY

You're invoking platitudes to  
trivialize your critics.

FATHER LARA

Jesus went to the tables of the  
poor, the sinners, the prostitutes,  
all the people on the fringes of  
society, and welcomed them and broke  
bread with them.

BISHOP O'LEARY

Yes, but you've never met a cause  
you didn't like. When you supported  
the grape boycott, and even when you  
were arrested for civil disobedience  
I looked the other way. When do you  
have time for regular church  
functions?

FATHER LARA

The Church spends too much time on  
the sacramental and ceremonial  
functions without a moment for  
social issues. Praying is good for  
all of us, but prayer without action  
is hypocrisy.

BISHOP O'LEARY

There's even a rumor non-Catholics  
are participating in the Eucharist  
in your parish. I dismissed it out  
of hand. Even you wouldn't be that  
reckless.

Father Lara fidgets in silence while the Bishop looks for

affirmation.

BISHOP O'LEARY

I assured the Vatican that it was just wild speculation.

The Bishop looks at Father Lara expectantly.

BISHOP O'LEARY

Your silence is making me nervous.

FATHER LARA

We do have a few Protestants who regularly attend our services and take communion. We have never denied anyone into the house of God to pray and rejoice in his word.

BISHOP O'LEARY

You know this is a clear defiance of the legitimate authority vested in the Apostolic See of Rome!

FATHER LARA

What do I tell Mr. Kanzataras, a Greek Orthodox, who wants to be a part of our church and receive communion?

BISHOP O'LEARY

You tell him there's a Greek Orthodox Church just down the street.

FATHER LARA

So our church is an exclusive church and they have to qualify first. Not by the word of Jesus as spoken in the Bible, but by the word of man as defined by the Vatican. Evolving rules that change with the seasons.

BISHOP O'LEARY

This is outrageous. I'll take that wine now.

FATHER LARA

The glass is a little dirty. Let me clean it.

BISHOP O'LEARY

Never mind. A little dirt never hurt anyone.

The Bishop picks up the bottle, pours himself a glass, and drains it.

FATHER LARA

The Pope and the church hierarchy are insulated from the people. They spend too much time with the powerful and the wealthy. They need to meet with the poor, the desperate and the neglected and then tell us what the rules are. Then I'll have respect for their leadership.

The Bishop leaps up.

BISHOP O'LEARY

You know it's my basic responsibility to secure the peace and unity of the church. I will not allow that unity to be compromised!

FATHER LARA

You can't stop the renewal of the church. You can stop me, yes. But you can't ignore the will of the people. You can't hold back the spring.

BISHOP O'LEARY

Don't force my hand, Jose. If necessary, I'll transfer or suspend you for the good of the faithful.

Father Lara slowly rises and walks to the window and looks out. He turns with a sorrowful expression and SPEAKS softly.

FATHER LARA

I dedicated my life to Jesus Christ and the word of God. In the end, I will follow my conscience and the moral guidance of the Holy Spirit.

BISHOP O'LEARY

You're a good man, Jose. You will do the right thing. Now pass me the bottle.

The Bishop fills his glass to the top and downs it in one motion and then makes the sign of the cross.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

PEEWEE ARMIJO, a small kid with his football jersey hanging down to his knees, passes out tape to his friend BIG ESP a

big hunk of a man. Lenchal, with tattoos on his neck and arms cleans his fingernails with a knife while ANTONIO CORDOBA a lean athletic figure laces up his shoes. Jed walks to he center of the room.

PEEWEE

Okay guys, listen up.

ANTONIO

Here it is again guys, the glorious tradition of Guadalupe football speech.

LENCHAL

Nah, it's going to be the football is a lot like life crap.

JED

Actually, it's the, Let's have some fun playing football line. Let me level with you. I don't have any coaching experience, but I did play in college, so I know what it takes. Funny thing, the harder you work the more fun you'll have. So, if you're patient with me and give it your all, I think we'll do okay. Fair enough?

Lenchal CLAPS loudly.

LENCHAL

Let's hear it for the coach, you guys. Great speech, man. All this straight talk. You can see how impressed we are. I can hardly wait for the prayer before the games. With all this goodness Jesus himself may show up.

The team HOWLS.

LENCHAL

So maybe we ought to let you know where you stand.

The players look at each other nodding.

LENCHAL

We don't care about football, winning, and the rah rah school spirit bullshit. We're only here for the letter jacket, and the trips. And it doesn't hurt with the



chavalas, either if you know what I mean?

Lenchal winks to his buddies with a grin.

BIG ESP  
Better believe it, Ace.

Lenchal walks up face to face with Jed, playing with his knife.

LENCHAL  
One other thing you need to know.  
I'm the major chingon here.

JED  
Chingon?

LENCHAL  
Man, you ain't gonna make it here, ese. It means I'm the main man, the major cahoney, the big dog who everyone looks up to. The last coach had trouble remembering that. Don't make that same mistake, Ivy boy.

Jed pushes the knife away and gets in Lenchal's face.

JED  
Look, Junior, I've got more hair on my ass than you've got on your face. When you become a man, look me up.

Lenchal glares back at him. Jed turns to the other players.

JED  
Is that the way you all feel?

Peewee stands up.

PEEWEE  
I just want to play football.

JED  
Well, it doesn't look like you're the major cahoney if this little guy here don't hang with you.

LENCHAL  
Dwarfs don't count.

JED  
Anybody else want to play football the old fashioned way?

ANTONIO

No coach ever hangs around here very long, so we've learned to do things our own way.

JED TO LENCHAL

So, tell me, Honcho, how does it work?

LENCHAL

Teach us the plays and fill in the positions. But no busting our balls in practice. We take it nice and easy.

JED

Very cozy, but what do I get?

LENCHAL

We wear the black and gold every Saturday. And you never have to worry about no discipline stuff with me and the guys.

JED

No need to worry about something that doesn't exist.

LENCHAL

I told you he had the smarts.

Jed paces, stroking his chin, turns and faces Lenchal.

JED

I'll think about it.

PEEWEE

Don't do it, coach. We can be a good team.

JED

Sometimes you can't play every game by the book. Alright. Hit the field.

LENCHAL

Orale! Let's go, you guys.

Peewee, head down, shuffles off.

INT. JED'S OFFICE - DAY

Jed is at his desk reading Peter Pan to Mary Claire who is listening raptly.

JED IN A GIRL'S VOICE  
"Oh Peter, no wonder you were  
crying", she said, and got out of  
bed and ran to him.

Jed turns the page.

JED IN A BOY'S VOICE  
"I wasn't crying about mothers," he  
said rather indignantly. "I was  
crying because I can't get my shadow  
to stick on."

Mary Claire leans forward.

JED IN A GIRL'S VOICE  
"It has come off? Yes" Then Wendy  
saw the shadow on the floor looking  
so draggled, and she was frightfully  
sorry for Peter. How awful!" She  
said. "How exactly like a boy."

Mary Claire smiles and nods her head.

JED IN AN GIRL'S VOICE  
"It must be sewn on," she said.  
"What's sewn?" IN A BOYS VOICE I  
shall sew it on for you, my little  
man." IN AN exaggerated GIRLS VOICE.  
"And she sewed the shadow on Peter's  
foot."

MARY CLAIRE  
Just read the story and stick to the  
main points.

The telephone RINGS and Jed answers it.

JED  
It's Angie.

Mary Claire takes the phone.

MARY CLAIRE  
Hi Angie.

Mary Claire listens intently.

MARY CLAIRE  
It's okay, Angie. Just wear your  
best stuff on visitors day. You'll  
never get adopted with those beat up  
shoes. Remember how we practiced the  
look? The half smile, half sad look

you do so well. That'll get em every time.

Mary Claire DRUMS her fingers on the desk.

MARY CLAIRE

I know you've got big ears. Remember Sister Benedict told us "We've all got a cross to bear". Don't worry about it. Just give them "the look". Trust me on this one.

More TAPPING on the desk, louder this time.

MARY CLAIRE

Leave your worn out shoes to me. I'll think of something. I know, Angie, I miss you too.

Mary Claire hangs up the telephone.

JED

How's little Angie?

MARY CLAIRE

She worries me. She's almost eight and still no hope of getting adopted. I can't get her to follow the three Commandments.

JED

I'm not a big church goer, but I could have sworn there were ten.

MARY CLAIRE

No, the three Commandments of getting adopted, look cute, dress clean, and act shy. Parents like kids who are cute and clean. The shy part makes them want to take care of you.

JED

Okay.

MARY CLAIRE

One of these days she's going to get adopted by a nice family. She'll live in a big house with her own bedroom. And every night before she goes to bed she'll look out her window at the moon and stars in her warm pajamas.

Mary Claire wraps her arms around herself to show the warmth she feels.

MARY CLAIRE

A cool breeze will gently float in  
rustling the curtains.

Jed puts his book down studying Mary Claire.

MARY CLAIRE

And then her Mom will tuck her in  
her big plush bed and kiss her  
gently on the cheek. Then Angie will  
fall asleep with Binky her bear.

JED

Sounds lovely. But what about Mary  
Claire? She needs a home, too.

MARY CLAIRE

Nobody's gonna want Mary Claire?  
Besides, I don't need nobody.

JED

Everyone needs to have a dream. It's  
what keeps you going.

MARY CLAIRE

Oh, yeah! What's your dream?

JED

I've been writing this book. I'm  
hoping it's good. Right now I'm  
stuck.

MARY CLAIRE

Is that your special dream? To write  
a book.

JED

When the words are flowing and  
you're getting it just right, it's  
the best feeling in the world.

MARY CLAIRE

Kind of like when you hit your mark  
in a dance?

JED

Yeah. And you know that whoever  
reads it will experience it just  
like you want them to.

Brett looks away dreamily as he RECITES his words.

JED

It was a dark and stormy night and Mary Claire knew that this was the night where she finally had to make her life changing decision.

MARY CLAIRE

That's not your real dream. If you're going to dream you need to dream for something worthwhile. Sister Benedict once told me you can know a person by their dreams. Small dreams, small person, silly dream, silly person.

JED

Sister Benedict is very wise.

MARY CLAIRE

A dream has got to be with you all the time. Something that burns inside of you. You know what I mean?

JED

How about having a beautiful woman look at me as if I'm the only man in the world.

MARY CLAIRE

Haven't you heard, beauty is only skin deep.

JED

It's okay, I'm shallow.

MARY CLAIRE

I've got it. You're one of those beat up, low life scrounges and proud of it.

JED

"My candle burns at both ends, it will not last the night, but, ah, my foes, and, oh, my friends, it casts a lovely light." Edna St. Vincent Millay.

KNOCK on the door. Linda enter.

LINDA

Thanks for watching over her. I couldn't get off.

LINDA TO MARY CLAIRE

Are you ready to go to your dance rehearsal?

MARY CLAIRE TO JED  
One of these days you'll tell me your real dreams.

Linda and Mary Claire exit.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

The empty locker room suddenly explodes with dirty, sweaty players. They all huddle around Big Esp who carries a limp Peewee in his arms. JED He still out?

BIG ESP  
Yeah. He's got a big lump on his head, coach.

JED  
Move out. Give him some room to breathe.

BIG ESP  
You shouldn't have let him play. He's like a little chihuahua running around great danes.

JED  
I know, but he kept looking at me with those pleading eyes. And there were only a few minutes left.

BIG ESP  
He's coming around. Coach?

PEEWEE  
JED Peewee!

PEEWEE  
Did I get him?

JED  
You nailed him. He's still wondering what hit him. You stopped a sure touchdown.

BIG ESP  
Why'd you do it, Peewee? I told you to wait for the gang tackle. He must of weighed over 200 pounds.

PEEWEE  
Are you sure I got him?

JED

Yup. You should have seen the look on his face when he limped off the field.

Peewee tries to get up and GROANS.

BIG ESP

Stay down. You're hurt.

Ambulance personnel appear and put Peewee on a stretcher.

AMBULANCE MAN

Are you allergic to anything?

PEEWEE

Pain.

JED

Big Esp will go with you to the hospital. I'll be there in a bit. You'll be okay, kid. You're tough.

Peewee exits on the stretcher with Big Esp. Jed walks over to Lenchal.

JED

Where were you on that play? He ran to your side.

LENCHAL

The game was over. Why get hurt on the last play?

JED

And you're the tough guy, hey? I learned something from Peewee today. You can't do things half way. There are no short cuts.

Lenchal lets out a SNORT of contempt.

JED

I let Peewee down. I let the team down. From now on we're doing it the hard way. We're not quitting until we get it right. Tomorrow, practice starts at three, and we're adding an hour.

LENCHAL

Maybe you don't remember so good. We got a deal.



JED

That deal expired. Null and void.  
kaput, "terminado".

LENCHAL

Looks like you'll be playing the  
cheerleaders, cause that's all  
you've got. Oh, and let's not forget  
the runt.

JED

That runt made the tackle you ran  
away from. Everyone in the stands  
knew who the bigger man was.

LENCHAL

You must not of heard about the last  
coach. Just cause he was the coach  
he thought he was the man. I had to  
teach him his place. I can do it  
again. (Smiling) I like doing it.

Lenchal pulls out a switch blade and keeps flipping it open.

JED

There's isn't a big enough knife in  
the world that can make you a man.  
I'm a little hung over from last  
night and you've got the knife, so  
it'll be a fair fight. Show me what  
you've got, bad boy.

Jed gets in Lenchal's face. Lenchal flashes a big smile.

LENCHAL

I pick my own time and place as  
you'll soon learn.

JED

You make my mouth water. And while  
we're at it, let's have your jersey.

LENCHAL

What jersey?

JED

The one you're wearing. I want it.  
NOW!

Lenchal takes it off and flings it to the ground.

JED

The only people who can wear these  
jerseys are those that play with

Peewee's spirit. The rest of you can follow this one here.

LENCHAL  
Come on, guys. Throw it in his face.

ANTONIO  
No way, ese.

LENCHAL  
What you say?

ANTONIO  
I'm sticking with Peewee. He's got ganas. Ya gotta respect ganas.

A MURMUR of agreement from the other players.

LENCHAL  
The Jesus lover speaks. Playing quarterback's gone to your head. It's a risky position. Everyone's out to get ya. Know what I mean?

ANTONIO  
You know I got no fear of you. I busted you in sixth grade and I can do it again.

Lenchal throws him the finger.

LENCHAL  
Climb it, Tarzan.

Antonio throws two fingers back.

ANTONIO  
I call and raise you one.

LENCHAL  
Vamonos vatos.

Three more players yank their jerseys off and throw them across the room.

LENCHAL TO JED  
Watch your back, white boy.

Lenchal grabs Jed's clipboard and flings it across the room.

JED  
To those of you who stay I can only promise blood, sweat and tears. But we'll be a real football team.

INT. LEGION HALL - DAY

The dance hall is BUZZING. A row of tables filled with Mexican food lines the wall. Jed is with Peewee, Antonio and Big Esp. Linda walks over with REGINALD MANN, the Cherry Creek football coach, LANCE DOWNY and CHRIS COMBS, his football players and a couple of cheerleaders. Denys and the Cholos band are TUNING up to play.

LINDA TO REGINALD

Say hello to Jed and his boys. Jed is the new football coach for Guadalupe, and that's Peewee, Big Esp, and Antonio.

Jed and Reginald shake hands.

LINDA TO JED

And this is Reginald, the football coach for Cherry Creek, Lance, his quarterback, Chris and some of the cheerleaders. Sorry, I don't know all the names.

Jed waves at Lance and Chris.

LINDA TO JED

I've got to help set up the food. Jed, show Reginald around

JED

Gotcha.

REGINALD

I didn't know Guadalupe played football.

JED

We're in the Parochial league and don't get much publicity.

REGINALD

Less pressure that way. When you're in a Four A league and have a tradition of winning the state championship every year, things can get revved up.

JED

Yeah, I heard about your winning streak.

REGINALD

Our players wouldn't want it any other way. Isn't that right, Lance?

LANCE

Like you said, Coach. Winning is a Cherry Creek tradition.

PEEWEE - JOHN WAYNE ACCENT

Listen Pilgrim, when you recruit from all over the state, you can't help but win.

JED

You can do that?

REGINALD

We don't have to recruit very hard. The best players want to play here. Better chance for college scholarships later.

Denys and the Cholos began PLAYING "Cherry Pie" and the big hall is soon filled with people dancing.

REGINALD

You people sure know how to put on a good show.

JED

You people?

REGINALD

I mean the Mexicans. They're good at this sort of thing.

ANTONIO

Mexicans? We're Americans. Colorado, ese. We named the state.

REGINALD

I was trying to give you a compliment.

JED

Let it slide, Antonio.

REGINALD

How's your team doing?

JED

We're in what is politely referred to as a rebuilding year.

REGINALD

If you ever want to scrimmage us let me know.

JED  
I don't think we're ready yet.

REGINALD  
I meant my junior varsity team.

JED  
Actually, we have talent, but we haven't quite put the pieces together yet.

REGINALD  
Last week we beat Arvada 37-0 and they were runner-ups last year.

ANTONIO  
Come on, Coach. Let's have a crack at these guys.

REGINALD  
Are you a passing team or a running team?

JED  
Right now, we're working on just being a team.

REGINALD  
We'll make it a light scrimmage with no pads.

JED  
You got it wrong. My team is tough enough to play with anyone nose to nose. It's discipline and execution we're working on.

Linda waves. Jed and Reginald walk away together.

LANCE TO PEEWEE  
Tell me, little boy, what position do you play, nose tackle or fullback?

BIG ESP  
His specialty is stomping cocky quarterbacks.

Lance LAUGHS.

LANCE

I have yet to be tackled in the pocket.

CHRIS  
Anyone who tries has to go by me.

ANTONIO  
So you're big, what about speed?

PEEWEE  
He's so slow, when he gets up,  
there's a chalk outline of his body  
on the ground.

LANCE  
Hey, check that salsa lady over  
there. Nice stuff.

MAYA CORDOBA, Antonio's sister, stands near by.

LANCE  
Maybe I should amble over there and  
do a little press the flesh  
promotion. She might like it.

ANTONIO  
Don't count on it.

LANCE  
She's old enough to make her own  
decisions.

ANTONIO  
Trust me, glamor boy. You're not her  
type.

LANCE  
You're violating my civil rights.  
Could be a landmark case.

Maya sees her brother and walks over.

MAYA  
Hello, everyone. Hello, bro.

ANTONIO  
Meet the Cherry Creek mercy mission.  
It was us or the Ethiopian relief  
fund.

Lance extends his hand.

LANCE  
Lance Downy.

MAYA

Maya Cordoba. Thanks for supporting Father Lara.

LANCE

Coach insisted, and I can now say I have no regrets. Those are pretty earrings you're wearing. Hispanic?

PEEWEE

A few minutes ago we were wet back greasers. Now suddenly we're respectable Hispanics.

ANTONIO

He's got the silver tongue.

PEEWEE

With a silver spoon in his mouth to match.

LANCE

Want to get together sometime? Like maybe lunch at the club.

MAYA

The club?

LANCE

The St. Ives Country Club. We'll take my convertible.

MAYA

Let me guess. Candy apple red with a stereo and leather seats.

LANCE

Right on target. Maybe we've met before?

MAYA

Many times. Let's see. We'll have lunch by the pool or is it the garden?

LANCE

The garden.

MAYA

You'll order the porterhouse steak and I'll have a salad.

LANCE

You've got me all wrong. I'm a filet

mignon guy, tender and pink on the inside.

MAYA

Since your ego's probably not used to rejection, I'll let you off easy with a "call me when you grow up" brush off.

LANCE

You've shown you're not only beautiful, but smart. I'm impressed.

PEEWEE

Takes a licking, but keeps on ticking.

LANCE

I'm happy we've had this understanding. Now we can have a fresh honest start.

MAYA

For your hot Mexican dish of the day, I suggest Mrs. Garcia's tamales at table seven. Be careful it doesn't stain your stuffed, I mean starched shirt.

Maya exits.

PEEWEE

He went a cruising and got a bruising.

DENYS

For our next number we'd like to play a Colombia cumbia for you, Vuela Paloma.

Vuela Paloma REVERBERATES. Lance grabs one of the cheerleaders and they bounce to the Latin beat. The other Cherry Creek students clap in encouragement.

PEEWEE

Hey, they're trying to show us up.

Antonio WHISTLES toward Maya.

ANTONIO

Maya. Vamos.

Antonio and Maya twist and shake their bodies to the feverish up tempo percussion rhythm. OLES and hand CLAPPING



from the Chicano crowd CHEER them on. Lance and his partner soon quit, overwhelmed by the raucous noise. After a whirling dervish ending, Antonio and Maya lean on each other for support, LAUGHING and out of breath.

LANCE

Now if you could only play football that way.

PEEWEE

Football, basketball, baseball. You name the sport, goldie locks. We play them all.

LANCE

Play us and you'll find out what we can do on the field.

ANTONIO

He's got three great qualities. Good looking, charming, and modest.

PEEWEE

Yeah, he and his women have a lot in common. They love him and he loves himself too.

LANCE

What are the first three words in the Mexican national anthem?

Chris shakes his head smiling.

LANCE

Attention Wal-Mart shoppers."

ANTONIO

We're not Mexicans, caca face.

CHRIS

And what do you say to a greaser in a three-piece suit?

Lance GIGGLES.

LANCE

"Will the defendant please rise."

BIG ESP

Big whiny babies, can't even shit without their mama's wiping their ugly white asses.

PEEWEE

They were born on third base and think they hit a triple.

LANCE  
You can't allow them in the old melting pot. They'd melt it.

CHRIS  
Let's not forget their cultural contributions, chili and beans, the siesta and Montezuma's revenge.

All of the Chicano boys flip them the finger in perfect unison.

BIG ESP  
In your face, mother.

LANCE  
Next time I need a grease job for my car, we'll drive by here, run a stop light and save a few bucks.

Big Esp turns angry and starts toward Chris. Peewee jumps in and restrains him.

PEEWEE  
Not a good time, big guy. This is for Father Lara.

Chris, Lance and his teammates walk away CHORTLING. Jed enters.

JED  
You all look like you lost your best friend.

PEEWEE  
Much worse.

JED  
Their coach is leaving a date open for us if we want to play them. I told him it was unlikely.

ANTONIO  
Coach, if you want to get the team fired up, let us have a shot at those desgraciados.

JED  
I don't know what that means, but it doesn't sound good.

PEEWEE

Bunch of prima donnas. They look down at everyone, especially Chicanos. Even if we lose, we'll have fun busting them up.

ANTONIO

We can play them at their level. We've got something they don't have, ganas.

JED

Save your fire for Pueblo Catholic next week.

INT. LARA'S OFFICE - DAY

Father Lara, Jed & Linda are together as Mary Claire is ushered in.

MARY CLAIRE

Oh, my gosh! This must be serious. Everyone's here.

FATHER LARA

Actually, we've got wonderful news for you.

MARY CLAIRE

Wonderful news? For me?

FATHER LARA

A young couple saw you dance at the festival, learned you're an orphan and have come to meet you.

MARY CLAIRE

What's wrong with them?

FATHER LARA

Nothing.

MARY CLAIRE

Something's not right here.

FATHER LARA

What do you mean? Ann Bennington's a very elegant lady. She's wanted to have children her whole life and now she wants to meet you.

MARY CLAIRE

Ah! There's the rub. Can't have kids, heh?

FATHER LARA

So far, no. Why are you so suspicious? This is what you've always wanted.

MARY CLAIRE

Do they know about the trouble I've gotten into?

FATHER LARA

Trouble and sins are my specialty.

MARY CLAIRE

Tell them I'm not ready.

LINDA

What's a matter, Mary Claire? Are you scared?

MARY CLAIRE

Do you want me to leave?

LINDA

No. But this is best for you. You can be part of a real family.

MARY CLAIRE

They don't know me. Once they get to know me they won't want me.

Linda grabs Mary Claire's shoulders with both arms and TALKS softly to her with passion in her voice.

LINDA

Listen to me. I'm a psychologist. It's my job to know people. You're smart, funny, talented. You're fun to be around.

Mary Claire GRUNTS with her lips pursed and her eyes hooded in a defiant expression.

MARY CLAIRE

Who told you that?

LINDA

I did. I've gotten to know you. This family would be lucky to have you as a daughter. You would bring them nothing but happiness.

Linda's voice TRAILS off. Mary Claire breaks away from Linda's grip and backs away.

FATHER LARA

We just want you to meet them and see if you like them. Kind of like a first date.

MARY CLAIRE TO JED

You read me from that Shakespeare guy. You gotta be who you are, remember?

JED

"This above all, to thine own self be true. And it must follow as the night the day, thou can not then be false to any man."

MARY CLAIRE

There it is. You've got to be who you are.

LINDA

Give them a chance, Mary Claire.

MARY CLAIRE TO JED

Do you think I should?

JED

I can't tell you what to do. I don't have the right.

MARY CLAIRE

Does this mean you won't be reading me stories at lunch anymore?

Jed struggles for an answer and finally looks away. Mary Claire takes a long look at Jed and then shifts her gaze down to the floor.

LINDA

They're taking you to a fancy restaurant so don't look so sad.

MARY CLAIRE

Probably have broccoli on the menu.

LINDA

Let me take you shopping for a new dress for the special occasion.

MARY CLAIRE

Nah, you don't need to be spending no money on me.

LINDA

Wait outside for me. I'll be right there.

Mary Claire exits.

LINDA (TO JED)

She was looking to you for some support. I thought English teachers were in the language business.

JED

She doesn't need those folks. She's happy with the way things are.

LINDA

You mean you're happy with the way things are.

Linda storms off.

FATHER LARA

Well maybe there will finally be a happy endings for her after all.

JED

She won't fit into this "Dinner will be served at seven, Miss Bennington", atmosphere. She tells it like it is. That won't sit well with these prim and proper folks. They'll break her spirit and mold her into their own high pretentious standards.

FATHER LARA

That's funny. You sound a lot like this guy who who begged me to send her back to the orphanage just a few weeks ago.

JED

This isn't a good move. It happened way too fast.

INT. PACO'S POOL HALL - NIGHT

Jed walks in and surveys the pool hall as if he's looking for someone. Lenchal and gang come out of the shadows.

LENCHAL

Well, well, look what we have here. The white-is-right coach.

JED

There you are. Just back from the polo match, no doubt?

LENCHAL  
I was wondering if you'd have the guts to show up.

JED  
I didn't have the guts not to.

LENCHAL  
You know my boys here?

JED  
Sure. Larry, Curly and Moe.

LENCHAL  
You don't look so happy.

JED  
You said you wanted to settle a score with me alone. These gentlemen must be your attendants.

Lenchal pulls out a knife and points it at Jed.

LENCHAL  
Yeah. And they're going to be attending to breaking you into little pieces.

JED  
You mean cutting me into little pieces.

LENCHAL  
See, I don't play by no rules. You're a very stupid man. You know, poco loco in the coco.

Lenchal makes a fake thrust at Jed. Jed jumps back.

LENCHAL  
Did you hear that, you guys? That's the sound of his balls shrinking into his body. You don't look so good.

JED  
Actually, it's "you don't look well". I'm afraid your poor grammar's going to have a bad effect on your otherwise promising career.

LENCHAL

We're going to cut you up and hurt you bad.

JED

Wrong again. You mean 'We're going to cut you up and hurt you.' The last "bad" is redundant.

LENCHAL

Afraid of dying, ese?

JED

"Cowards die a thousand times before their death. The valiant shall never taste of death, but once."

LENCHAL

Puro pedo!

Lenchal crouches down and jabs at Jed. Jed sidesteps the thrust, grabs Lenchal's arm and twists it around his back. Jed then shoves Lenchal's face to the pool table. He pushes the arm up his back.

JED

DROP IT. DROP IT OR I'LL BREAK YOUR ARM.

One of the pachucos makes a lunge for Jed. But someone sticks his foot out and the pachuco goes sprawling to the floor. FEDERICO RODRIGUEZ, decked out in a black leather outfit, stands up, looking menacingly at the hoods. He walks over to Lenchal whose face is contorted against the green velvet.

RICO

Grenudo! You called him out, mano a mano. A man stands by his word.

Rico pulls out a big knife, twisting it in his hand from side to side. The pachuco attempts to stand up. Rico puts his boot on the pachucos back.

RICO

STAY DOWN!

Lenchal's words are MUFFLED as Jed keeps the pressure on.

LENCHAL

Why are you helping this guero? He's from the other side?

PACHUCO



I remember you. You're Rico. Got in trouble and did some time.

RICO  
You got no shame. Four of you jumping an old skinny guy.

JED  
I'm feeling much better with your encouragement.

RICO (TO LENCHAL)  
You talk tough, but you're all escamao inside.

Rico tosses his knife to Jed.

RICO  
These vermin won't be jumping in.

Lenchal finally drops the knife, his face a jumbled mass of red rage. Jed brings his knife up to Lenchal's face, hesitates a second and then throws it across the room. He then shoves Lenchal to the floor.

JED  
There's no gutter here, so the floor will have to do.

Lenchal and his pachuco gang walk out SPITTING expletives as they leave. Jed extends his hand to Rico.

JED  
Looks like I've got the first round. Jed Gregson.

Rico looks at Jed's hand, but ignores it.

RICO  
We aren't friends. I only stepped in out of disgust for them.

JED  
You don't even know me.

RICO  
Sure I do. You're white bread out slumming, or does it make you feel superior to come here?

JED  
Last time I checked it was a public place.

RICO

Stay on your own turf. Next time I might not jump in.

JED

This is my turf. I'm a teacher at Guadalupe High.

RICO

That's rich. A gringo in a Chicano barrio. It must be kind of degrading teaching poor low class Mexicans.

JED

The only kids I'm teaching are Americans with Spanish surnames. It's not degrading. In fact, I like it. Must be a real burden dragging that big boulder on your shoulder.

RICO

A couple of years ago at a club downtown some redneck insulted my girlfriend. When we tried to leave he blocked the door. He was bigger than me and he had his buddies with him, but I put him down. He stayed down for two weeks in a hospital.

The bartender puts a beer on the table.

RICO

A month later I'm in the slammer. Seems like all the good white folks there said I started the fight. I just got out after a two long years with Father Lara's help. I'm carrying a heavy load all right, but it's not on my shoulder, it's on my back.

JED

Everyone's got problems. It's the one guarantee we all get.

RICO

One last thing. I'm going back to Guadalupe. Condition of my parole. If we happen to run into each other, let's pretend we never met.

JED

You're already forgotten.

RICO  
I'll shake with you on that.

Jed takes Rico's extended hand and Rico's vice grip escalates into a struggle for dominance. After some GRUNTING and contorted facial expressions, they end with no clear winner. Jed exits.

INT. SCHOOL THEATER - DAY

A parish group is making posters with Father Lara, Rufinita, Linda, Denys, Mary Claire and Antonio. Jed enters and approaches Father Lara.

JED  
Another protest? How many is that this month? You might want to consider a protest rehab program.

FATHER LARA  
We're marching around La Raza park to draw attention to the police harassment of our kids there.

JED  
I can hardly wait for the parade for the homeless handicapped orphans of Bangladesh who were abused by their kindergarten teacher.

RUFINITA  
I've got the water stand ready.

LINDA  
I'll handle the bullhorn.

FATHER LARA  
Antonio, it's your job to keep our guys out of trouble. The police will be there in force.

ANTONIO  
Everything's cool, Father.

DENYS  
The guys are setting up for music.

LINDA  
The Crusade for Justice people are already there.

FATHER LARA  
Corky Gonzales?

DENYS

He's there now, on the podium.  
Channel Seven is covering his  
speech.

FATHER LARA

Rufi, see if it's on radio.

Rufinita turns on a nearby radio and works the dials. Soon  
you can hear Corky's VOICE.

CORKY (RADIO)

In 1965 I wrote a poem which defined  
the struggles against prejudice and  
neglect for me and all my Chicano  
brothers.

Father Lara turns up the volume until the words REVERBERATE  
throughout the theater.

CORKY (RADIO)

I am Joaquin. Lost in a world of  
confusion. Caught up in a whirl of a  
Gringo society. Confused by the  
rules. Scorned by attitude.  
Suppressed by manipulations. And  
destroyed by modern society.

Lara raises his hand and the parishioners turn to him.

FATHER LARA

It's time to go. Linda, lead the  
way. Remember, be respectful, but  
keep your heads high.

The parishioners file out of the theater. Father Lara turns  
to Jed.

FATHER LARA

Rico will be joining the football  
team. He's one of the best we've  
ever had and the kids idolize him.

JED

He's got an attitude problem. It  
will complicate things.

FATHER LARA

He's not that fond of you either.  
Also, I received a call from the Dean  
of Language Arts at Yale University.

JED

Yale? That seems like two lifetimes

ago.

FATHER LARA  
A Mr. Alphonse J. Butterfield.

JED  
Alfie? Dean of Language Arts? Good  
to see he made it.

FATHER LARA  
Wants you to come up to discuss a  
job opening.

JED  
Really?

FATHER LARA  
Let me know when you plan to go so I  
can cover for you.

JED  
It'll have to wait till the season's  
over.

FATHER LARA  
Going to the rally?

JED  
Remember me, the despicable Yankee  
from Connecticut? Don't think so.  
Besides with all this goodness I  
might break out into a rash.

FATHER LARA  
Sooner or later we all have to  
decide what we stand for. Until you  
make that commitment you'll never be  
whole.

JED  
Ha! This Corky guy gets in power.  
What changes? Nothing. Only now it's  
the browns beating up on the whites.  
Same story, different actors.

FATHER LARA  
You're wrong.

JED  
Doesn't matter who wins, it's just a  
trivial shift in power.

FATHER LARA  
I don't think you're capable of

learning anything from anyone.

JED

Well, my pappy once told me, "You've got to get a good focus on the appropriate variables. I never forgot that.

FATHER LARA

You hide your feelings behind your quotes. We never know the real Jed.

Mary Claire approaches.

FATHER LARA

Oh, yeah, you've got Mary Claire. No kids at the rally.

Jed nods. Father Lara exits.

MARY CLAIRE

Stuck with me, heh?

JED

No, no, no. We'll have some fun. Maybe the zoo or the Natural Museum?

MARY CLAIRE

How about the Cheetah club? We can visit Annabelle.

JED

How did you know that? No, that's out of the question. You trying to get me in trouble?

Mary Claire and Jed exit. The room is empty except for the sound of Corky's voice on the radio.

CORKY (RADIO)

I am Joaguin. The odds are great, but my spirit is strong, my faith unbreakable. My blood is pure. I am Aztec Prince and Christian Christ. I SHALL ENDURE. I WILL ENDURE.

INT. THEATER STAGE - DAY

Mary Claire waits her turn behind the theater curtain nervously stealing a peek as a girl taps to "Tap Music". She pulls at her sequined purple velvet blouse nervously. Jed stands next to her HUMMING. The Director sits in the front row watching.

MARY CLAIRE  
I can't look. Is she good?

JED  
Very nimble. Cute, too.

MARY CLAIRE  
I brought you instead of Linda cause  
I knew you wouldn't sugar coat  
everything.

JED  
So far, they're all good. Real good.

MARY CLAIRE  
Now, Linda would have tried to hide  
that from me.

JED (TEASING)  
The one out there now. Tough to  
beat. Very athletic.

MARY CLAIRE  
I should have brought Linda.

JED  
Get ready. You're next.

Mary Claire pulls out dilapidated tap shoes out of her dance bag.

JED  
What happened to the new tap shoes  
you were going to buy?

MARY CLAIRE  
No money.

JED  
Your can money. I saw it.

MARY CLAIRE  
Bought shoes for Angie. She needed  
them more. A family is taking her  
out today. You know, the old scope  
you out routine. I set it all up.

JED  
You set it up. Who do you know?

MARY CLAIRE  
The Benningtons.

JED

The Benningtons, but you were...

MARY CLAIRE  
I told them no.

JED  
They wanted you. It was your dream.  
Why did you do it?

MARY CLAIRE  
I promised Angie I would watch out  
for her.

JED  
What do you mean?

MARY CLAIRE  
Angie won't even talk to anyone  
except me. She's lonely and afraid.  
When she gets a family to love and  
take care of her then she'll be a  
real motor mouth.

JED  
Bennington's interested in Angie?

MARY CLAIRE  
This is their third visit. Sister  
Benedict said Mrs. Bennington has  
the Mommy bug. It's looking good.  
That's why I got the new shoes.  
Mothers like clean looking kids.

JED  
But what about Mary Claire?

MARY CLAIRE  
No one needs to worry about Mary  
Claire. I take care of myself.

The music stops.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)  
NUMBER SEVEN.

MARY CLAIRE  
Oh, my gosh! This is it. I've got to  
be perfect.

Mary Claire closes her eyes tightly and takes a deep breath.  
Jed grabs her by the shoulders.

JED  
There's an ancient Zen expression,



"You can't hit a target by aiming at it." Just let your spirit go and have some fun and you'll do okay.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)  
NUMBER SEVEN. WHERE ARE YOU?

MARY CLAIRE  
I'm playing a track from Mando & the Chilipeppers that Denys gave me.

JED  
What kind of music is it?

MARY CLAIRE  
Denys said he was the original Tex Mex music guy from way back.

DIRECTOR  
I haven't got all day.

Mary Claire walks out with studied confidence, a small CD in her hands.

DIRECTOR  
Give the CD to the stage manager and tell him which track you want.

Mary Claire sprints to the stage manager and hands him the CD.

MARY CLAIRE  
The first track "Swinging Baby" and play it loud.

Mary Claire runs back to the wings. As "Swinging Baby" PLAYS she goes sliding into center stage and begins tapping with a manic fury. The deep bass and lusty saxophone beat REVERBERATE throughout the theater. Her face is a picture of joy and confidence. She ends it by sliding toward the footlights with one arm raised as if to say "ole".

DIRECTOR  
We'll be in touch.

MARY CLAIRE  
You didn't ask me for my address or telephone number.

DIRECTOR  
It's your agent's job to leave that information.

MARY CLAIRE

I don't have an agent. But I can  
leave my name and number?

The Director nods.

MARY CLAIRE  
So when will I find out how I did?

DIRECTOR  
If there's any interest you'll get a  
call.

MARY CLAIRE  
And if there's no call, that means I  
didn't get the job?

DIRECTOR IRRITATED  
I'll do you a favor and spare you  
the wait. You didn't get the part.

MARY CLAIRE  
Why not? I'm the best dancer here. I  
know it's bad luck, but I peeked.

DIRECTOR  
Stage manager. Please escort this  
rude girl off the stage. NUMBER  
EIGHT.

Jed escorts a dejected Mary Claire off the stage. The stage  
manager trots after them with the CD.

STAGE MANAGER  
Don't be too hard on yourself. He's  
just an over the top ego case.

JED  
That was just a brush back fast  
ball. You dust yourself off and get  
ready for the next pitch.

MARY CLAIRE  
My blisters have burst. They're  
bleeding again.

JED  
Here's a towel. We'll wrap them.

Jed reaches down into Mary Claire's dance bag, pulls out a  
towel and wraps her feet. Mary Claire begins SOBBING softly.

MARY CLAIRE  
I'm not crying, only babies cry.

Mary Claire continues to WHIMPER.

JED  
It's okay to cry.

MARY CLAIRE  
I TOLD YOU I'M NOT CRYING.

Jed watches for a moment, than stomps onto the stage, pulls the plug on the CD player and faces the director.

JED  
Take off your dark glasses.

DIRECTOR  
What's going on here?

JED  
TAKE OFF YOUR GLASSES!

The Director takes off his glasses and calls to the Stage Manager.

DIRECTOR  
Get security. Don't just stand there, GET SECURITY

JED  
Take a good look at my face. Is there any doubt in your mind that I can wreck your ego infested body?

DIRECTOR  
If you don't leave now, you'll be removed by force.

JED  
From now on you'll call the kids by their names. They're not numbers. Got it?

DIRECTOR  
Nobody talks to me that way.

JED  
I'M TALKING TO YOU THAT WAY!

DIRECTOR  
I'm in charge here.

JED  
You're in charge of a little dinky play in a dumpy part of town that means nothing. That makes you a

nothing.

DIRECTOR  
I am the director. I judge. the  
seeker of truth. I am...

JED  
"... low life dog crud?".

The Director starts to stand up.

JED  
SIT DOWN!

The Director sits down.

JED  
Some people should never be given  
power. You're one of them. Start  
calling these kids by their names or  
I'll be back. Got the picture?

DIRECTOR  
Are you threatening me?

JED  
It's not a threat, it's a ten year  
guarantee.

Jed joins Mary Claire in the wings.

MARY CLAIRE  
Low life dog crud?

Jed LAUGHS.

MARY CLAIRE  
You're much better then any stinking  
agent.

INT. ZAPATA'S CANTINA - NIGHT

Jed and Linda are ushered toward a table.

JED  
So, is this an official date? You  
did ask me out.

LINDA  
No! This is not a date. Just a get-  
together. I want to talk about Mary  
Claire.

JED

Now I know the difference. On dates you hold hands, look longingly into each others eyes and whisper sweet nothings. On get-togethers, you talk boring business.

A Mariachi band is ready to play to a group of Mexican men wearing cowboy hats, boots and jeans with big metal belt buckles. One of the Mexicans, DOMINGO, is standing ready to sing. Linda waves to the singer.

LINDA

*Hola Domingo, como estas?*

DOMINGO

*Hola, Linda. Estoy celebrando el nacimiento de mi hijo.*

LINDA

*Que bien. Felicidades.*

JED

What's going on?

LINDA

They're celebrating the birth of his son.

DOMINGO TO THE WAITRESS

*Unas copas para mis amigos.*

The waitress is soon at Jed and Linda's table with two shots of Tequila, two Mexican beers and some cut limes. Domingo and his friends all look at them raising their own jiggers waiting for their acknowledgment.

LINDA

When he offers you a drink you join him in the toast. It's a Mexican tradition.

JED

Tequila gives me headaches.

LINDA

It would be an insult if you refused his offer.

Linda grabs a salt shaker and limes.

JED

What's with the salt and lime thing?

LINDA

Just follow what I do.

Everyone in unison drains the tequila shots, licks the salt from the back of their hand, sucks the lime and follows with a beer chaser. Jed struggles trying to keep up.

LINDA

Smile. You're supposed to be happy for him.

Jed fakes a weak smile.

LINDA

You call that a smile?

JED

How can you smile after you've gulped 200 proof tequila with salt and lime juice.

The waitress is soon at their table with two more tequila's.

JED

What'd he have, twins?

LINDA

This one you can sip.

The Mariachi music BEGINS with Domingo standing up SINGING with great emotion.

LINDA

Since we're both looking after Mary Claire, I think you ought to know I've asked Father Lara if she can stay with me all year.

JED

Sounds like the little girl's gotten next to you.

LINDA

A huh. On the surface she's a little rough, but as you get to know her, you realize it's just a facade she's developed as a defense mechanism. She's really a very bright, sensitive girl.

JED

She hasn't shared that part of her personality with me.

LINDA

I don't know, maybe she's bringing out some maternal instincts in me, but I find myself doing things to get her to like me. Taking her to special events, offering to buy her things she likes.

JED

Trust me, knowing her, you're on the right track.

LINDA

Actually, you're wrong. She won't accept anything from me. She says it's not my job. She's very independent. I'm not even sure she likes me.

JED

Really!

LINDA

Oddly enough, she likes you. She hasn't said so, but I can tell by the way she talks about you.

JED

I specifically remember having her take the blood silence oath last week, the little snitch.

LINDA

You don't take anything seriously, do you?

JED

There's a truism. If you want something badly, you'll probably lose it. If you don't care that much, one way or the other, you usually get it. You know, the one who loves the least controls the relationship kind of thing.

LINDA

I thought I was the psychologist around here. The irony is that we sometimes lose our insight when our own emotions are involved.

JED

To answer the real question, Mary Claire likes to be around me because it's fun. Last week we dropped in at

Paco's Pool Hall and played a couple of games. She loved it because it was unexpected and forbidden. But make no mistake, when it comes to choosing between adventure and a warm loving secure place, love will win out.

LINDA

You took her to Paco's Pool Hall? That's terrible.

JED

I know. She beat me three out of four.

LINDA

That was not a good move, Jed.

JED

Tell me about it. We were playing a dollar a game.

LINDA

Part of the reason I invited you here was to get to know you a little better. Mary Claire is very astute, wise even, so I was curious what she sees in you. Maybe you're showing a different side of yourself.

JED

Not likely. It's too much trouble having different sides of yourself.

LINDA

The other reason I've asked you here is that...for some reason this is difficult to ask. But will you help me with Mary Claire?

JED

What kind of help?

LINDA

Since the Benningtons have made a commitment to Angie, I've looked into the possibilities of adopting Mary Claire.

JED

This tequila is starting to affect my hearing.



LINDA

Single parents can adopt now.

JED

Are you sure you know what you're doing?

LINDA

Maybe. It's very simple. I just like having her around. She's so special.

JED

And you think I can help? This tequila must be getting to you, too.

LINDA

I know this is going to sound like I'm jealous, but she adores you. You who could care less. Me trying to do everything for her and she barely tolerates me. What's your secret?

JED

I'd have more success getting up there and singing with Domingo then trying to answer that question.

LINDA

Maybe you're more in sync with her. I'm just trying to get a feel for how I can connect with her.

JED

This is one of those things that even science hasn't been able to dissect. Why people like each other is a mystery. I don't think you can study up on it.

LINDA

You're cynical. No wonder you've never married.

JED

A little house in the suburbs with a white picket fence, hearing the patter of little feet. A beer with the guys and you've got to check in and get permission. The whole picture never appealed to me.

LINDA

Don't you know married men live longer then single men?

JED  
Maybe it only seems longer.

LINDA  
The last true romantic.

JED  
Women marry men thinking they can  
change them and they can't. Men  
marry women hoping they won't change  
and they do.

LINDA  
If you were in love you'd be willing  
to make that commitment. You don't  
feel it, so you don't understand it.

JED  
You know more about this than I do.

LINDA  
I've seen the way my father looks at  
my mother. It's unmistakable. I want  
someone to look at me like that  
someday.

JED  
You'd better make sure you're  
looking back the same way.

LINDA  
Now I know why you're always reading  
Peter Pan to Mary Claire. I  
especially like the part where he  
says, "I will never grow up. You  
cannot make me."

Jed shrugs.

JED  
Yeah,, but maybe I'll teach you how  
to ride on the wind's back and fly.

Linda rolls her eyes and SIGHS heavily.

JED  
"You just think happy thoughts, and  
they lift you into the air. It's  
easy."

Domingo begins dancing by himself to the Mariachi music,  
occasionally stopping to throw back another shot of Tequila.

JED

Are we allowed to dance on a get-together?

LINDA

Sorry. The rules are clear, only on dates.

JED (SMILING)

Now that's an interesting thought. You in my arms waltzing around the floor while people whisper what a lovely couple we make.

LINDA

Jed, let me be clear. You're not my type. You never were and you never will be.

JED

Careful now. People say that and first thing you know they fall in love.

LINDA

You know I'm dating Reggie.

JED

Oh yeah, Reggie, the humble one. Did you notice he never wears a hat? Can't find one big enough.

LINDA

That's funny. He said you were a nice guy. Of course, he did add you would never amount to anything.

JED

I've decided we're going to play them in football. It will have a unifying effect on the team.

LINDA

Whose ego is showing now?

JED

Rico's joined the team and we're getting better. Maybe even good enough to give them a good game. It would make our season.

LINDA

Time to go. I'll be picking up Mary Claire a little early tomorrow for a party at Eloy's home. Denys asked me

to invite you over.

JED  
Now would that be a get-together or  
a date?

LINDA  
Oh, it would definitely be a  
date.(beat)) With Denys. I hear he  
likes chocolates.

Linda waves to Domingo as she exits with a smile on her  
face. Jed GROANS as he spots the waitress approaching with  
another tequila shot.

JED  
Oh, no.

Once again all the Mexicans turn to him with their tequila  
shots raised, waiting. Jed wanly smiles as he reaches for  
the tequila jigger.

EXT. CHICANO ALLEY DAY

Antonio walks down a barrio alley. Chris is leaning against  
a fence. As Antonio approaches three more football players  
emerge from the shadows. Antonio tries to walk by them, but  
is blocked by Chris.

ANTONIO  
Move out of my way.

CHRIS  
Listen to the wet back.

ANTONIO  
You going to make pedo with me  
Chris, or are you going to need help  
from your friends.

CHRIS  
We haven't eaten all day and we're  
hungry for something greasy and  
brown.

ANTONIO  
No problem, put your hand out and  
I'll shit on it.

Two football players grab Antonio and Chris begins hitting  
him.

ANTONIO  
QUE SE VAYA A LA MADRE!

Chris kicks Antonio.

CHRIS

That one's for the insults to Lance.

Chris pulls back and wraps a cloth around his knuckles.

CHRIS

You were strutting when you had your beaners with you, but you're looking kind of pale now, if that's possible for a Mexican.

They release Antonio and he staggers against the graffiti brick wall, holding his side. Blood oozes from his lips. Chris LAUGHS.

CHRIS

You're a cockroach. An ugly brown low life.

ANTONIO

Pele el ojo, cabron. What goes around comes around.

CHRIS

I'll take you on alone. Show me what you got.

Antonio senses an opportunity and bolts from the group, sprinting down the alley. Chris and his friends chase after him, hurling INSULTS.

CHRIS

GREASER!

Antonio trips and falls to the ground. Chris and his friends surround him. Chris pulls a lead pipe from a near by dumpster.

CHRIS

Bend over and grab you're ankles. It's red ass time.

Lenchal and three of his friends come around the corner building, spot Antonio and run to him YELLING. Chris and his boys hesitate.

LENCHAL

Hold it right there, pinche cabrones.

Chris lifts his lead pipe threateningly.

CHRIS

You want a piece of me?

Lenchal pulls out a revolver and aims it at Chris.

LENCHAL

Yeah, right between your legs.

Chris and his friends freeze in terror. Antonio staggers to Lenchal.

ANTONIO

No, Lenchal. No, don't do it.

Antonio stands between Lenchal and Chris.

ANTONIO

It's not worth it, ese.

LENCHAL

That chingon had no mercy for you.

Chris and his gang begin backing up.

ANTONIO

It's not right in the eyes of God.  
Our time will come.

Lenchal hesitates. Antonio puts his hand on Lenchal's shoulder and shakes his head repeatedly.

LENCHAL TO CHRIS

BEAT FEET, MOCOSO PENDEJOS OR I'LL  
PUT ONE RIGHT UP YOUR TIGHT WHITE  
ASSHOLES.

Chris and his boys jog off looking over their shoulders.

LENCHAL (LAUGHING)

Hijole, look at those fregones run.

Antonio falls in deep pain to one knee, holding his side, his head hanging.

ANTONIO

You did the right thing, mi  
camarado.

LENCHAL

You let this Jesus stuff get to you.  
You should have let me put him down.  
Luis, go get your wheels. He needs  
help. Hurry.

ANTONIO

No, take me back to Our Lady of Guadalupe. I want the guys to see what happened.

Lenchal and his gang help Antonio to his feet and carry him to the parked low rider car. The car zooms off, rubber SQUEALING.

INT. LOCKER ROOM DAY

The Lobos football team is getting ready for football practice when Antonio straggles in, bloody and bruised with Lenchal holding him up. Jed and the team crowd around.

JED

You're hurt.

Antonio leans against the wall holding his side.

JED

What happened?

ANTONIO

The *hueros* did me in. That Chris guy.

JED

We'd better take you to the hospital.

Antonio shakes his head.

ANTONIO

I'm okay.

JED

Let's hear it.

ANTONIO

Lance has been bugging Maya for a date and wouldn't take no for an answer so one day I took the phone and ripped into him.

PEEWEE

God's gift to women takes a hit.

ANTONIO

He must of put Chris and his chingados on me. Good thing Lenchal showed up or I'd be road kill.

LENCAHL

I told the white putos we would molest their sisters and mothers, only they were too ugly.

PEEWEE  
Ah, the delicate repartee'.

ANTONIO  
They kept yelling they were top dog.

PEEWEE  
Top rat is more like it.

ANTONIO  
When I didn't back down they were all over me.

PEEWEE  
Whities show their true colors and it's yellow.

JED  
Peewee, we can do without the editorializing.

ANTONIO  
Why they make pedo with me?

JED  
Fear and hate. Fear is transitory, but hate has staying power.

ANTONIO  
Why do they hate us?

JED  
For the same reason you hate them. You're different. Until you both learn you're the same there will always be that mistrust. We should cancel the game.

ANTONIO  
No, It's between me and Chris.

JED  
They'll be no free ride on this one. They pay, full fare. That I promise.

RICO  
What you gonna do? Send a nasty letter to the Principal? Ask them to please not do it again? You're out of touch here. This ain't no Ivy



League.

JED  
Got a better way?

RICO  
Sure, I get that curly locks fag and  
do a complete make over on his face  
so even his mama won't want him  
back.

The players all vent their approval with LOUD expletives.

BIG ESP  
And fat-boy Chris is all mine.

CROWBAR  
We're wasting time talking. Let's  
get going.

JED  
Everyone calm down and listen to me.

RICO  
Look at Antonio's face and then tell  
us to cool it.

JED  
This is not the way to get respect.

BIG ESP  
The might of our fists in their  
faces is the only thing they'll  
respect.

Loud angry VOICES echo their agreement.

JED  
If that happens, there will be no  
game.

RICO  
What about blood for my bro here?

More angry loud CURSING.

JED  
Violence is never the answer.

RICO  
Even the Bible says "an eye for an  
eye"?

JED

"He that studies revenge keeps his own wound green which would otherwise heal and do well."

BIG ESP

We need an apology or something. We can't just turn the other cheek.

JED

Life is a series of choices. If you want to play Cherry Creek you've got to put bad feelings aside.

An angry MURMUR sweeps the locker room.

JED

And if you play them it will be in a way that reflects on your character and our school. They'll be no revenge from anyone on or off the football field.

RICO

If we let this slide they'll think we're a bunch of candy asses.

Stronger VOICES of approval.

JED

This game is not about revenge, or racial superiority. If you lose you'll line up, look them in the eye and shake their hands with respect. If we win, same thing.

PEEWEE

What about justice for Antonio?

More agitated NOISE from the youths.

JED

Leave it to me. Talk to each other and make a decision. We need to play it straight up or not at all. Those are the choices.

RICO

We don't need to talk. Just look at our faces and you'll know what we want.

JED

I need a count.

Rico stands in front of the room and raises a clenched fist.

RICO

This is my fist. All of you who want to make war with the guavachos bring your fist next to mine and show me your will.

All of the team presses in toward Rico with their fist raised high except Antonio.

JED

Those who want to show their power on the football field stand by me.

The locker room becomes deathly quiet, with no one moving. Then slowly Antonio limps and shuffles his way toward Jed and stands by him. Then Peewee crosses over and stands next to Antonio.

PEEWEE

He took the hit.

A few more players move over. And then the whole group crosses in mass next to Jed, leaving Rico alone.

CROWBAR

We're with you, guy.

The guys echo their consensus with LOUD encouragement.

BIG ESP

We're going to grind them up into little pieces.

CROWBAR

And we'll be smiling with Christian goodness the whole time.

JED LOOKING AT ANTONIO

We started united and we need to stay united.

Rico slowly ambles over to the group.

RICO

I'll shake on that.

Rico gives Jed a bone-crunching handshake.

RICO

I don't like it, but I will not abandon my compadres.

JED

Let's come together, and say a prayer. Antonio, you're the Captain. Lead us.

ANTONIO

Thank you God for the gift of being strong and able. We will play the game with respect for all without any cheap hits, trash talk or hot dogging. We will play hard but clean.

TEAM

Amen

JED

Win or lose, we will bring honor to Guadalupe.

PEEWEE

The sword is drawn. We slay the Hun.

The football team SHOUTS their approval.

INT. THEATER - DAY

Denys and the Cholos PLAY "Paloma Mensajera" to friends. Maya begins dancing with Crowbar. Jed walks in with Mary Claire. The crowd CLAPS. Lance enters. Rico gets up, but Antonio holds him back. The music ends. Lance approaches Antonio. The room gets very quiet, as all eyes follow Lance.

LANCE

I heard what happened. I'm the Captain so I'll take responsibility. The team has voted to publicly censure Chris and the guys responsible and suspend them for one game.

RICO

Hey, one game. Let's not go overboard here.

ANTONIO

You and your coach set the tone for this to happen.

RICO

This bullshit apology don't cut it.

The crowd loudly VOICES their agreement.

RICO

Let's see how much you got hanging  
between your legs mano a mano?

Jed looks at Denys. with his hand up as if to ask,

JED

You going to let this happen?

DENYS

Not for me to interfere. It's their  
call.

RICO

There isn't a guy here who doesn't  
want a piece of you so you can pick  
whoever you want.

Maya walks to the center of the room.

MAYA

He came here alone to apologize. If  
we hurt him now then we become the  
same as them.

RICO

Antonio, come get your sister. This  
is a man thing.

Antonio walks up to Rico.

ANTONIO

No. She's right. This is about  
honor. Our honor. No one touches  
him. (TO LANCE) You'd better get  
going.

Lance looks around the room, nods to Antonio and leaves the  
room. Antonio YELLS at him.

ANTONIO

AND THE ONLY CORDOBA YOU'RE EVER  
GOING TO HAVE CONTACT WITH IS ME ON  
THE FOOTBALL FIELD.

Maya hesitates and then scurries after Lance. The crowd  
relaxes. Denys walks over to Jed.

DENYS

You got my message.

JED

It sounded urgent.

DENYS

A cop shot one of our guys last night at La Raza Park.

JED

Cops don't shoot people without a reason.

DENYS

They were smoking dope and were out past some racist curfew. As usual when the heat showed up, like stupes, they ran. That's all the cops needed.

JED

Why would the police shoot them?

DENYS

White piggies looking for brown meat. What else?

JED

I don't get it.

DENYS

The new city councilman is a fascist. Father Lara is demanding a public hearing.

JED

Father's got spunk.

DENYY

There's more. The Bishop has gone public with his dissatisfaction with Father. It's in today's Catholic Register.

Denys throws him the newspaper. Jed READS it.

JED

"I do what I can to be supportive of pastoral judgments as they're made at the scene. I must, however, give the word when I think it's going beyond where we can support it as a community."

DENYY

Blah, blah, blah.

Denys grabs the paper and flings it across the floor.

JED  
What's the beef?

DENYS  
They want to boot his ass out and  
the rich Catholics are putting on  
the pressure.

JED  
What's the plan?

DENYS  
We're going to boycott one Mass this  
Sunday to support Father. That  
should get the Bishop's attention.

JED  
You're taking on the Roman Catholic  
church? You better get a grip.

DENYS  
*El pueblo unido jamas sera vencido.*

JED  
You're a revolutionary. Just like  
your songs.

DENYS  
I write songs that make people think  
and fight for the oppressed.

JED  
Songs about love sell better.

DENYS  
Songs that reveal truth last longer.

JED  
Truth is facts, not opinions.

DENYS  
Fact. The inner city schools - you  
know the ones with the dumb Chicanos  
- have the crappiest facilities, the  
worst teachers, and no money. Fact.  
Every year there's a 50% drop out  
rate. Fact. The white school board  
knows it and looks the other way.

JED  
Why would they do that?

DENYS  
Because they'd have to take money

from the rich schools whose parents are country club cronies. So they ignore us or give us phony lip service. What a joke.

JED

All of them? I don't buy it. They're not bad people.

DENYS

They rationalize it. It's the "I'm thrifty, you're stingy" syndrome. Raise the minimum wage for the poor two bits and the economy's going to hell. Drop the capital gains tax for the rich and all's well in the world.

JED

Anyone can run for the school board.

DENYS

Our people are poor and politically ignorant. As long as our kids keep dropping out they'll stay that way.

JED

Why'd you send for me?

DENYS

You're the football coach. High profile. A white guy. Sooner then later this shit's going to hit the fan. The people want to know where you stand.

JED

When we get to that point, ask me.

DENYS

What makes you tick? If you have an emotion you phone it in.

JED

I'm trying to salvage my career and you want me to charge through the barrio waving the Chicano flag. In case you haven't noticed, I'm a white guy from Connecticut.

DENYS

That's about where I figured you'd be. Nowhere.



JED  
Who gives you the right to be the  
big agitator?

DENYS  
I'm one of those drop out kids.

JED  
You should still write that love  
song.

DENYS  
Every revolutionary act is an act of  
love. So every song I write is a  
love song.

INT. CHURCH BASEMENT DAY

Father Lara, Rufinita and other helpers are lading out soup  
and bread for the homeless. Reginald and Linda enter.

LINDA  
Reggie would like to speak to you.

FATHER LARA  
Of course, Rufina, can you take  
over?

RUFINITA  
Sure, Father.

Father Lara, Reginald and Linda walk to a quiet corner.

FATHER LARA  
Our boys are looking forward to  
playing you this week.

REGINALD  
That's why I'm here. We need to  
start over with a clean slate. Your  
complaint to the school has put a  
negative cast on the game.

FATHER LARA  
I would be irresponsible not to  
register a complaint to your school  
about Antonio's beating.

REGINALD  
Beating? It was just a little  
pushing and shoving.

FATHER LARA  
Pushing and shoving? What do you

call a lynching, a neck adjustment?

REGINALD

These things are always exaggerated.  
You know that.

LINDA

I saw Antonio's face. It wasn't  
exaggerated.

REGINALD

We run a clean program and you're  
trying to throw dirt on it.

FATHER LARA

This isn't the first time your guys  
have come to our barrio looking for  
trouble.

REGINALD

I didn't come to argue, but to ask  
you to reconsider your complaint. It  
will be a black eye on their school  
records.

FATHER LARA

Be happy that Antonio refused to  
press criminal charges. It's the  
never rat code they have.

REGINALD

Is that your final word on the  
subject?

FATHER LARA

My final word is that they gang  
banged him, beat him, kicked him  
black and blue and did it as  
cowards, four against one.

REGINALD

Now hold it right there.

FATHER LARA

NO, YOU HOLD IT! Your kids think  
they can come around in their  
Beamers and kick a little brown ass.  
You know, rank and race have their  
privileges. Not this time.

Reginald's face reddens. He pushes a finger in Father Lara's  
face.

REGINALD

I know all about you and your radical politics.

LINDA  
Reggie, you're being disrespectful.

REGINALD  
Marrying homosexuals, having woman participate in the mass. He's an embarrassment to the Church.

LINDA  
He's got a burro and two goats, a billy and a nanny that he milks every day. It's not very dignified, but it's the closest thing to a scandal I can think of.

FATHER LARA  
Jesus said, Nobody come to me will I ever reject.

REGINALD  
Your bleeding heart attitude has corrupted your... what's that Mexican word for neighborhood? Oh yeah, barrio. Why don't they learn to speak English when they come to America?

FATHER LARA  
We didn't come to America. We were already here.

REGINALD  
There's going to be an English only law passed in this country soon.

LINDA  
Yeah, we can always rename our Western states.

Reginald stands up and SHOUTS at Father Lara.

REGINALD  
You don't have the right to reject 2,000 years of church tradition. We will stop you.

LINDA  
We have no fear of you. Go now and take your petty meanness with you.

Reginald walks a few paces, turns in a fury and SCREAMS at

Father Lara.

REGINALD

You're the biggest, most pathetic  
excuse for a man this side of Texas.

FATHER LARA

Second biggest.

Reginald exits.

LINDA

I'm sorry, Father. It's now clear to  
me. I never knew the man.

FATHER LARA

It just shows there's a giant bulls  
eye on my back for the rich and  
powerful.

LINDA

I will light a candle for you  
tonight, (beat) And Mary Claire.

FATHER LARA

Mary Claire?

LINDA

She's been very quiet lately.

INT. JED'S OFFICE - DAY

Jed is jotting notes at his table. Rico enters.

JED

Rico. Surprised to see you here.  
What's up?

RICO

There's a rumor going around that  
you're checking out after this game.

JED

There's always a little truth in  
every rumor.

RICO

The guys believe in you. You win  
their trust and then you hit the  
road.

JED

I've had a call from Yale. They want  
to take a look at me. If anything

were to happen the team would be the second people to know.

RICO

Second?

JED

After a little friend I have. Rico looks at Jed closely as if trying to figure it out. He turns to leave.

JED

Before you go, there's one thing I want to say.

Rico turns around.

JED

You've brought confidence to this team. You're a natural athlete.

RICO

It's the only way I can bust up people without getting in trouble.

JED

The guys look up to you. You're kind of a hero to them.

RICO

Heroes don't have parole meetings.

JED

This team could use your leadership. You're older, more mature and have the experience.

RICO

With my past, I don't think I have the right to preach. I don't like people telling me what to do. It's not my style.

JED

Leadership isn't about bossing people around. If people respect you, then in their eyes you're already a leader.

RICO

I'll give you everything I've got on the field. That's all I promise.

JED

Leadership by example is the best kind.

Rico exits. Father Lara enters.

FATHER LARA

Just want to let you know I may be a little late for the game. Bishop O'Leary's coming by. I wish you luck in the game.

JED

We need you in the stands. The guys will be looking for you.

FATHER LARA

I'll bring my favorite rosary.

JED

We'll need it.

FATHER LARA

For the record, you should know you've earned the kids respect. Mine too. There's a strength in you and they feel it. Mary Claire too. But strength isn't always enough. You also need a moral center, values that are deeply ingrained.

JED

Thank you,...I think.

Father Lara exits. Antonio enters.

ANTONIO

Just want you to know I'm ready for this game. I've prayed to Saint Francis of Assisi to give me courage.

JED

You're the captain and I know you will lead the way.

ANTONIO

Lance called me today saying he hoped the best team would win. His arrogance is only matched by his conceit.

JED

Just stay focused on the game.

ANTONIO

I told him I was going to bring him  
down to earth.

JED

And you will, hard. After each snap.

ANTONIO

There's going to be grit, sweat,  
blood and pain in every second of  
this game.

JED

Just make sure it's their blood and  
pain.

Antonio smiles and exits. Denys enters.

DENYS

The hour before a big gig is always  
the toughest. You know, we're behind  
you.

JED

Just don't stop playing the school  
fight song.

DENYS

Eloy even polished his saxophone, so  
I know the guys are up. JED Thanks.

DENYS

I thought you ought to know our  
people recruited me to run against  
Valenti in the recall election. It's  
my chance to do something for my  
people.

JED

If truth is justice, you'll win.  
Denys smiles, gives him the Chicano  
handshake and exits. Linda enters.

LINDA

Just a quick good luck to you.

JED

I heard it was traditional to be  
kissed by all the fair maiden in the  
land before a game.

LINDA

You heard wrong. It's after the game  
and only if you win.

JED

It's a promise I'm going to hold you too.

LINDA

Is that a promise or a threat?

JED

Are you afraid I'm going to kiss you or are you afraid I'm going to kiss you and you might like it?

Linda LAUGHS.

LINDA

Don't forget to show a little humility. We are the visiting team.

JED

"The meek shall inherit the earth". Six feet, that's all they get.

LINDA

Mary Claire's outside and wants to speak to you alone. I sense she's very fragile now and I don't know why. Just so you know.

Jed nods. Linda exits and Mary Claire enters.

JED

Hey, it's the little girl.

MARY CLAIRE

I got something for you.

Mary Claire hands Jed "Tommy" the lion doll.

MARY CLAIRE

He's your good luck charm. Keep him in your pocket.

JED

I wish he were full size and alive. I'd put him in our lineup. But you'd better keep him.

MARY CLAIRE

And I've been wondering about something else?

JED

Tell me all about it.



MARY CLAIRE

Well, I've just been wanting to ask someone a personal question.

JED

What the question?

MARY CLAIRE

Are you my friend? I mean that's the question I wanted to ask this person.

JED

And you're asking cause you don't know?

MARY CLAIRE

Sometimes I can't tell for sure.

JED

This person sounds dumb, insensitive, immature, self-centered and a real cold fish to boot.

MARY CLAIRE

He's not dumb.

JED

They're people like that out there.

MARY CLAIRE

Are you ever afraid?

Jed looks surprised. He gets up and pulls his shirt sleeve up and flexes his muscle.

JED

Feel that kid.

Mary Claire feels his muscle.

MARY CLAIRE

I mean really scared.

JED

Now look at my face and ask me if I'm scared.

Jed makes a ferocious face.

MARY CLAIRE

You're worried sick about the game.

JED  
Petrified.

MARY CLAIRE  
Tommy and I will be right behind you  
in the stands.

JED  
I'll be looking for you.

Mary Claire smiles and exits.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The Cherry Creek high school stadium is packed with a sea of red everywhere you look except for a small patch of gold on the visitors section. On the first play of the game Lance fakes a hand off to a running back drifts to the right and unleashes a long pass to his tight end who catches it with one hand racing to the end zone for a touchdown. The home town crowd explodes in CHEERS.

EXT. CHERRY CREEK TEAM BENCH AREA - DAY

Coach Reginald YELLS his satisfaction to his returning offensive team as they return to the bench.

REGINALD  
Way to go guys, way to go. Stick it  
to them. Never let up.

EXT. GUADALUPE TEAM BENCH AREA - DAY

Antonio returns to the sidelines, takes off his helmet and throws it to the ground.

ANTONIO  
That was my fault, Coach. I got  
sucked in on the fake run. It won't  
happen again.

JED  
Don't worry about it. We've just got  
to settle down and take it one play  
at a time.

Jed motions the players to him.

JED  
Look, by scoring this easily on the  
first play they think they've got a  
patsy, weak team. They're wrong.  
We're tough. You've proven that in  
the last two games we've won.

PEEWEE

We've got them just where we want them, right coach?

Jed smiles.

JED

Not exactly, but they will relax thinking it's going to be just as easy the rest of the way and that's just the edge we need to cause we're going to surprise them big time.

BIG ESP

They're not that tough on the line. Overrated.

JED

Good, all you need is to sack pretty boy one time and you'll hear their confidence leak out in a big sucking sound.

BIG ESP

Pretty boy might be needing some plastic surgery by the time I'm through with him.

JED

It's our turn on offense. Antonio I want you to bleed the clock on the ground, with just enough progress to keep them off the field.

PEEWEE

Three yards and a cloud of dust is my specialty, coach, just so you know.

JED

Okay, guys on the field.

EXT. PARISH GARDEN - DAY

Rufinita enters the garden. Father Lara is listening to the game on the radio.

RUFINITA

Bishop O'Leary is here. Shall I send him him?

FATHER LARA

Stall him for a few minutes. The Lobos are driving for a touchdown.

RUFINITA

What can I tell him without lying.

FATHER LARA

Tell him I'm praying and that's exactly what I'm doing for my boys.

Father Lara show the rosary in his hands. Rufinita smiles and exits.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Lance hands the ball off to his fullback who is met at the line of scrimmage and driven back five yards. Reginald sends in his punting unit as the offense jogs to the sideline.

REGINALD TO LANCE

This is embarrassing and unacceptable.

LANCE

I'll get them next time I'm out there.

REGINALD TO LANCE

I'm holding you to that promise.

Reginald stomps off.

INT. VISITORS LOCKER ROOM - DAY

The Guadalupe football team explodes into the room.

ANTONIO

All right, you guys. We're whipping their nalgas, big time.

BIG ESP

Chris. That big all American center. He's not that tough.

PEEWEE

Cool it, you guys. Let the coach speak.

JED

I don't know what the whooping and hollering is all about. First of all, it's only the end of the first half. Second, in case you haven't noticed, we're losing 7-zip.

ANTONIO

Come on, Coach. They were supposed

to stomp us into the dirt. Kick our butts up and down the field. It hasn't happened. We're holding our own.

JED

Sit down and listen. We can win this game.

The team starts SCREAMING and POUNDING the benches with their helmets.

JED

Here's the deal. On defense, Big Esp has been banging Chris big time and he's starting to slow down.

CROWBAR

He's eating his shorts, coach.

PEEWEE

If they got any closer it'd be a meaningful relationship.

JED

Well, let's make sure we have an affair with pretty boy Lance first.

BIG ESP

I'm getting close to nailing his skinny *prima donna* ass.

JED

They use their running game to set up their passing game. So don't get sucked in on those end runs. I want you so close to their receivers they'll be complaining about your bad breath. Any questions?

PEEWEE

We miss Rico. He gives us confidence.

JED

He screwed up. He knew he was supposed to check in with his parole officer. He didn't, so now he's cooling his heels.

ANTONIO

When are we going to try that trick play on offense we've been practicing? We need something to get

us going.

JED

Okay, let's move on to the offense. Trick plays don't win ball games. Not by themselves. If you want to move the ball, we've going to have to block better to give us a chance.

CROWBAR

We need to hammer the right side. They're not as strong there.

JED

True. Antonio, forget the Hail Mary's. Concentrate on the shorter pass routes where we have a better chance for completion. Let's hog the ball, eat up the clock and keep their offense off the field. It's our only chance.

BIG ESP

Make them eat dirt, with our cleats for dessert.

JED

Okay, okay. Two final things. One, I'm going to sub more in the second half. It's a gamble we've got to take to keep the first team fresh. I know you'll bust your fannies for Guadalupe. That's all I can ask.

PEEWEE

Does this mean I might play?

JED

Everyone gets a change to get bloodied. Only let's make sure it's their blood.

Team SCREAMS with their fists in the air.

JED (CONT'D)

Second point. When we score...

More YELLING.

JED

No going for the tie. We're hitting them for two. We'll run the reverse lateral play Antonio is so fond of, and shove that pigskin so far down

their throat they'll need a heimlich  
to recover.

More CHEERING.

JED  
Win or lose, nobody can say we  
didn't put our guts and hearts on  
the line.

Antonio steps forward.

JED  
You want to say something, Antonio?

ANTONIO  
Just a verse from Isaiah. "But they  
that wait upon the Lord shall renew  
their strength, they shall mount up  
with wings as eagles: they shall run  
and not be weary".

JED  
Perfect. Now let's put our hands  
together. Peewee, do the prayer.

The football team kneels.

PEEWEE  
Dear God, give us the speed of a  
gazelle, the strength of an elephant  
and the courage of a lion. Please  
don't let our players get so  
exhausted that they lose their edge,  
especially when there are subs who  
can give them the breather they so  
desperately need.

JED  
PEEWEE!

PEEWEE - HURRIEDLY  
Thank you God. Amen.

The locker door opens and Rico and Lenchal walk in.

RICO  
Somebody talking about me?

The whole team gathers around him, excited.

JED  
I don't believe it. You here legit?

RICO  
Legit. Father Lara pulled some strings. Turned out the Judge is an old Guadalupe grad.

Rico pulls Lenchal to the center of the room.

RICO  
I brought Lenchal, cause he's been showing his heart lately. And he's the best blocker on the team.

Everyone except Jed LAUGHS.

JED  
And what does Lenchal say?

Lenchal walks over to the bench, grabs Jed's clipboard, dusts it off and hands it to Jed.

LENCHAL  
You should take better care of your clipboard. It's got dings all over it. You being the major chingon here and all.

JED  
It's up to you guys. If you want him raise your hand.

Everyone raises their hands. Lenchal smiles.

ANTONIO  
Have we got a surprise for the gueros.

RICO  
A few words to the team, coach? J

ED  
Go ahead.

RICO  
When we're out there, remember one thing. They have no respect for us as a team or as a race. They think we're inferior 'cause we're brown. That we're weak 'cause we don't have money or power. That they're more American 'cause they speak English without an accent. Let's show them here and now they're wrong. Let's play them with a power so they'll never look down on us again. Let's



bust their pansy white ass cherries.

The Lobos CHEER with wild abandon.

JED

I can't improve on that. Get out on the field and show them your heart and give them a game they'll never forget.

TEAM

LOBOS!!

The team leaves the locker room quietly with their fists raised in the air.

INT. LOCKER ROOM-DAY

The Cherry Creek football team is scattered throughout the locker room, listening to the Coach.

REGINALD

I'm speechless. I don't know where to start. Somebody tell me what's going on?

Everyone looks down at the floor.

REGINALD

Seven points. Seven lousy points. This isn't an NFL team, guys. This is Guadalupe High School. They lost their first game to Sister of the Poor, 21-0. Someone please help me here. I mean it. Talk to me.

The locker room is deathly silent.

REGINALD

So maybe we were a little over confident. I didn't scout them. I'll take that hit. Maybe we underestimated them. You can pin that on me too. I'll accept it. But, guys, seven points in a half. We've never, ever been held to seven points in one half? Never. I need someone to tell me what's going on here. Lance, you're the leader of this team. Talk to me.

LANCE

They're putting enough pressure on me where I'm having to rush the

throw. And my timing's just off today.

REGINALD

Chris. You're the Parade All American, and you can't hold that big hunk of brown lard across from you. He didn't make all state, all county, all city, ALL BLOCK FOR CHRIST SAKES. Nobody's heard of him. And he's grinding you up like hamburger.

CHRIS

He's big, Coach and faster then he looks. And he's fired up.

REGINALD

You're giving me excuses. I don't wanna hear excuses. Loren, what you got?

LOREN BARES goes to the blackboard and draws some diagrams.

LOREN

We've studied their play patterns. On defense they overplay the option end plays. They get away with it because their big tackle is taking up a lot of space in the middle. Our up the middle, off tackle and slanting runs have been better. But not consistent enough to sustain a drive.

COACH

Their only score was that beautiful long pass play at the beginning of the game.

Some of the players pat Lance on the back.

REGINALD

They're stunting on defense and mixing up their plays. Give them some credit. We gotta mix up our offense more. Go to the short pass during crunch time. Lance, watch that big man on slant runs. Limit your passes to out of the pocket. That will give you time to pick your receivers. Got it?

LANCE

Got it.

REGINALD

One last thing. We won't lose this game. They don't have an offense. So, I'm not concerned about losing. I'm worried about how we look out there. Our reputation of winning big is on the line here. They're tired. We're still fresh.

LOREN

If you get tired, raise your hand. We've got plenty of bodies.

REGINALD

Let's stomp these pretenders into the ground. This is one time we won't worry about running up the score. Let's show them our character. Let's teach this vagabond Lobo team that they don't deserve to be on the same field as the mighty Panthers. Hell, half of them aren't even full blooded real Americans. Now get out there and eat them alive.

The team ROARS out of the locker room.

INT. PARISH GARDEN - DAY

Bishop O'Leary enters.

FATHER LARA

Come in. Come in.

Bishop O'Leary wanders toward a garden tree.

BISHOP O'LEARY

A Judas tree I see.

FATHER LARA

Yes. I remind my students that Judas chose to hang himself on that tree and that the color of the flowers turned red with shame forever after.

BISHOP O'LEARY

There's more to the legend that maybe even you don't know. After the hanging, the tree became a spindly tree and its fruit ceased to have any value. Come. Let's sit down. I'm

weary.

FATHER LARA

Is there something wrong? You look troubled.

BISHOP O'LEARY

You know it's my responsibility to ensure reasonable unity of faith and to keep us honest in our communion with the church of Rome. You continue to defy that unity.

FATHER LARA

You're suspending me.

BISHOP O'LEARY

I've often warned you, do not go where I cannot follow.

FATHER LARA

A priest without a parish is like a flower without color, without fragrance.

BISHOP O'LEARY

I tried to support you in your pastoral judgments, but you've gone beyond where we can support it as a community.

FATHER LARA

My mission is not the same as the Vatican's. My job is to listen to the cries of the people and respond to their pastoral needs.

BISHOP O'LEARY

You're defying the authority of our Holy Father.

FATHER LARA

The Pope is my Holy Father and he is ten times more holy than I, but he has a blind spot.

BISHOP O'LEARY

You will be replaced effective this Sunday.

FATHER LARA

The Church is still in the Middle Ages, screaming about the scandal of the latest fashions, movies, gay

people, but not one syllable about  
social or political issues.

Bishop O'Leary raises his arms to end the discussion.

BISHOP O'LEARY

While you are on suspension, you  
will continue to receive your salary  
and benefits.

FATHER LARA

I don't take a salary from my church  
now. I live day to day, trusting in  
the Lord as the birds do. Material  
things hold no power over me.

BISHOP O'LEARY

I'll read a statement of your  
suspension to your parishioners at  
Sunday's mass and introduce their  
new priest. You will stand by me to  
show our unity, I trust.

FATHER LARA

The church of San Guadalupe is not  
my church and it isn't the church of  
any priest. It's the church of Jesus  
and his people. You can't take  
something away from me that was  
never mine.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Lance hands off the ball to Rico who explodes up the middle  
for a first down. The stadium is eerily silent except for  
the sparse Guadalupe fans in the stands.

EXT. HUDDLE - DAY

ANTONIO

We've been running the ball the  
whole game and I think it's time we  
surprise them. A short pass to  
Crowbar with a lateral to Rico just  
before contact. On 3. Let's go.

The huddle breaks up and the Guadalupe players line up on  
the ball.

ANTONIO

Hut 5, hut 9, hut 3.

The ball is snapped, Antonio fades back and hits Crowbar on  
his numbers. Crowbar zigzags for ten yards and laterals to a

trailing Rico who scampers thirty yards for a touchdown. The tiny Guadalupe fans SCREAMS pierce the stadium. Denys's band PLAY the schools song. The Lobos team rushes back to their YELLING excited teammates on the sidelines.

JED

We're going for two. The x-20 right reverse end run. Lenchal, it's crucial you nail their end on that side.

LENCHAL

Do you want him to have two or three days in the hospital?

JED

Five seconds with him on the ground will be an eternity.

ANTONIO

Okay, guys the game comes down to this play. Crowbar reverse to Rico on the right side. Let's go.

PEEWEE - HURRIEDLY

No wait. You forgot to kiss your cross.

ANTONIO

Thanks, Peewee.

Antonio kisses the cross that Peewee hands him.

JED

Peewee, I'm putting you in to help Lenchal on the block. Hit him low at the ankles while Lenchal hits him high. I'm counting you you.

PEEWEE IN A TRANCE

Hit him low. Hit him low. Hit him low. Yes, yes!

The players return to the field and post up against an eleven man line. Lance gets the snap and laterals the ball to Crowbar who scoots to the left side handing off the ball to Rico who is running in the opposite direction. Lenchal lays a crunching block on Cripple Creek's defensive end just as Peewee hits him at his ankles as Rico scampers into the end zone untouched. The referees raise their hands signaling the extra points. The players from the sidelines rush toward the team and they celebrate on the field. Jed calls his team to him frantically.

JED

Look, there's still eleven seconds left so they still have a chance to score on the kick off return.

PEEWEE

Am I still in coach?

JED

Yes, run with Big Esp. He has a good nose for the ball.

Peewee nods and smiles at Big Esp. The Lobos kick off to the Panthers. Lance catches the ball, runs behind his blockers and finds a seam on the left side and sprints past several defenders. Big Esp clips Lance who spins trying to regain his balance. At that moment Peewee comes in and hits him at ankle level and Lance goes down. There is a big pile up of players on Lance and Peewee. The referees BLOW their whistles signaling the game over. As they un-pile, Peewee is at the bottom, not moving. Big Esp leans over him.

BIG ESP

Peewee, you okay?

Peewee MOANS. Big Esp looks at his teammates who have crowded around Peewee. They all look worried.

RICO

He's opening his eyes.

Peewee peers up at his teammates.

PEEWEE

Did I get him?

BIG ESP

Cleanest tackle I've ever seen.

Big Esp picks up Peewee and the team walk back to the cheering Lobo fans. Jed looks into the stands to find Mary Claire, who is waving back with Tommy her lion doll.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

The Lobos locker room is bare and quiet. The door kicks open and Big Esp carries Peewee with everyone following behind SCREAMING and SINGING the school song.

BIG ESP

You sure you okay, Peewee?

PEEWEE

For the hundredth time, I'm okay.

Put me down.

Jed comes in followed by a radio announcer. The team is HOWLING like a wolf.

JED  
How is he?

BIG ESP  
Somehow he's not hurt from that big pile up.

JED  
Okay, Denys, let it all hang out.

Denys and the Cholos begin SINGING La Bamba. Bedlam ensues, with the players bumping each other, LAUGHING and SCREAMING. Cheerleaders come in and dancing ensues. A radio crew approaches Jed.

RADIO ANNOUNCER  
Congratulations. This must be a special moment for you.

JED  
"...our ship has successfully navigated the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune."

RADIO ANNOUNCER  
To say this is an upset doesn't quite capture the magnitude of your win.

JED  
The kids' will to win was not to be denied. I could feel it going into the game.

RADIO ANNOUNCER  
How did it happen?

JED  
They never scouted us and we improved and jelled as a team. Finally, our guys just played the best they've ever played.

RADIO ANNOUNCER  
That two point play at the end. Where did that come from? I've never seen one quite like it.

JED



The guys kept improvising plays in practice and I liked that one so we put it in our play book.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

We noticed there wasn't the traditional handshake after the game. What's up?

JED

Ask them. We lined up after the game, but they turned their back on us. The point of the game was to reduce resentment between our communities.

The room becomes quiet as Lance walks into the locker room. He approaches Antonio.

LANCE

I didn't get a chance to congratulate you and your team. You deserved to win today.

ANTONIO

There's never any shame in losing. Today was our day.

Lance turns to leave, but Rico blocks his path.

RICO

By coming here, you've shown your character. We respect you for that. Since you're the captain we will respect your team, too.

ANTONIO

Una porra grande for Lance. A la una, a la dos, a la tres.

TEAM

PANTHERS! PANTHERS! ARRIBA LOS PANTHERS!

The team gathers around Lance shaking his hand with friendly chatter. Denys walks over.

DENYS

Father didn't make the game. He was with Bishop O'Leary.

Jed pulls back from the microphone, holding up his hand to conceal the conversation.

JED

Excuse me for a second. (to Denys)  
What's up?

DENYS

Father Lara said they'll be an  
important joint announcement  
tomorrow after Mass by the Bishop.  
Something's cooking and it doesn't  
smell good. I'm calling for a  
special community meeting tonight.

JED TO THE ANNOUNCER

We'd like to dedicate this game to  
Father Lara. He's the force that's  
kept Guadalupe High School and San  
Isidro together for so many years.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

Is he here? We'll put him on the  
air.

JED

He isn't here, but if he's  
listening, he needs to know that the  
people of San Isidro support his  
ministry and moral leadership.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

That's all for now from the locker  
room of the Guadalupe Lobos. Back to  
you, Johnny.

JED TO DENYS

How can this happen?

DENYS

The Pope and his cardinals live in  
another country. They don't  
understand Father Lara's ministry.

JED

Maybe it's time I learned to be  
political.

DENYS

Your baptism is tonight's meeting.

EXT. GUADALUPE CHURCH STEPS - DAY

Mary Claire is sitting on the front church steps with her  
hands on her chin. The church music FILTERS through the big  
front doors. Linda notices Mary Claire as she's entering the  
church, hesitates and then approaches her.

LINDA

The service is about to start. You coming?

MARY CLAIRE

Waiting for Jed.

LINDA

He might not be coming.

MARY CLAIRE

What do you mean?

LINDA

Oh, didn't you know? He's going to Yale for a job interview.

MARY CLAIRE

I don't believe you.

LINDA

I know you like Jed, but he's the kind of guy who's never going to settle down.

MARY CLAIRE

Why not?

LINDA

There are some people who are just born that way.

MARY CLAIRE

You've never liked him from the very beginning.

LINDA

I just don't want him to break your heart.

MARY CLAIRE

He's not anything like you think he is. You don't understand him.

LINDA

I've met plenty of Jeds in my life. The one thing you can count on is that they'll eventually let you down.

MARY CLAIRE

You've always been mean to him. I think you're just jealous.

LINDA  
Please, Mary Claire, I only want the  
best for you.

MARY CLAIRE  
I'm not talking to you anymore.

Mary Claire gets up and walks to the other side of the  
steps. Linda SIGHS, shrugs her shoulders and enters the  
church. Jed comes jogging up the sidewalk, out of breath,  
sees Mary Claire and approaches.

JED  
I know. I'm late.

MARY CLAIRE  
Mass has already started.

JED  
Something came up.

MARY CLAIRE  
I know.

Jed hesitates.

MARY CLAIRE  
You're going away.

JED  
Yeah, for a few days.

MARY CLAIRE  
To Connecticut. Yale.

Jed nods his head.

MARY CLAIRE  
They want you back.

Jed shrugs.

MARY CLAIRE  
It's what you always wanted. It's  
your home. It's where you belong.

JED  
It's just an interview. No offer has  
been made yet.

MARY CLAIRE  
Sister Benedict always said that  
home is where the heart is.

Jed shrugs looking sheepish.

MARY CLAIRE

You're not coming back, are you?

Jed looks down, shuffling his right foot.

JED

Who knows?

MARY CLAIRE

Wait, Tommy wants to say something.

Mary Claire puts Tommy to her ear. She listens intently and nods her head.

MARY CLAIRE

He says to take care of yourself and that it was great being your friend even if you are a lousy pool player.

JED

Tell him not to give up on me yet.

MARY CLAIRE

Maybe we'll see you around one of these days.

Mary Claire slowly trudges up the steps, turns and watches Jed makes his way out of the church grounds. She enters the church.

INT. GUADALUPE CHURCH - DAY

Father Lara has just finished mass. Bishop O'Leary and FATHER JAMES GREER are in attendance. Bishop O'Leary walks to the pulpit.

BISHOP O'LEARY

Because of Father Lara's outreach ministries for the poor, the sick, and the homeless, I admire him. Because of his dedication to his parishioners and the community of San Isidro I respect him. But because of his continued defiance to church law on such issues as woman's liturgical roles, inter-communion with non-Catholics and his ministry to gays, I am suspending and transferring him.

A MURMUR of discontent by the people.

BISHOP O'LEARY

Your new priest, Father James Greer, will reaffirm that marriage is a sacrament celebrated between a man and a woman and the Eucharist is a visible sign of communion that is reserved for the baptized. Therefore, those who are not corporately united to the Catholic Church may not be invited to the communion table.

The congregation WHISPERS among themselves.

BISHOP O'LEARY

Now a few words from Father Lara.

Father Lara steps up to the pulpit.

FATHER LARA

I look down at your faces and realize the affection I have in my heart for you. For every act of love I have given you, you have returned it a hundredfold.

Father Lara raises his hand and bows his head and steps back to control his emotions. Denys begins SINGING "Amor es Entregarse" and soon the whole congregation is HARMONIZING along with him. The music ends.

FATHER LARA

"The question is not whether we will die, but how we have lived." Remember to show love, and compassion to your fellow man as you meet life's challenges. Thank you.

DENYS

A word, Bishop O'Leary?

BISHOP O'LEARY

Certainly.

DENYS

Our community met last night to discuss the departure of Father Lara. By a vote of 534 to 7, we approved a Statement of Faith and an appeal which we would like to read now.

Bishop O'Leary slowly shakes his head.

BISHOP O'LEARY  
I'm afraid there will be no  
consideration for an appeal.

DENYS  
The Statement of Faith and appeal  
are for Father Lara.

The congregation stands collectively. Denys turns toward  
Father Lara.

DENYS  
We support your ministry of seeking  
harmony with all people to advance  
the reign of God. We hold to the  
following values: to be a  
collaborative church, and to utilize  
fully the richness of diversity  
which includes women, gays and  
peoples of all faiths.

Michael Monteruso steps forward.

MONTERUSO  
This is an outrage. This is  
blasphemy.

Denys continues, ignoring Michael.

DENYS  
We ask you to continue to raise your  
voice against injustice, prejudice,  
and abuse of the weak and the poor  
as you have in the past, just as  
Jesus would do.

MONTERUSO  
I am the father of twelve children.  
I don't want anyone teaching my  
children from a Catholic pulpit that  
homosexual sex is okay, that  
homosexual marriage is okay and that  
anyone can receive the blessed  
Eucharist.

BISHOP O'LEARY  
Father Lara cannot continue his  
ministry here this way and still be  
in honest communion with the church  
of Rome.

Father Lara raises his hand to speak.

FATHER LARA

There is a conflict within me  
between my conscience and tradition.  
I have followed the moral guidance  
of my conscience.

DENYS

We want you to stay. This is our  
church. And we believe in your  
ministry.

FATHER LARA

My ministry has forced the church to  
reflect if the success of this  
parish is a glimpse of the future.  
This sense of the faithful shown  
here may in a small way plant a seed  
that down the road will offer the  
church options in the future. Which  
road they will take remains to be  
seen, but I am hopeful.

LINDA

What about the Quinceanera, the 15th  
birthday church celebration for  
Rosita Velasquez and her family that  
was scheduled for today? Is she to  
be forgotten?

ELOY

And the lesbian wedding of Jennifer  
and Rose who traveled with their  
families from Ft. Lupton? Where will  
they go now?

DENYS

And all your people here who want  
you to be their pastor and who will  
not accept another.

BISHOP O'LEARY

You're leading your beloved father  
down a path to excommunication.

FATHER LARA

I don't believe in excommunication.  
I believe in including people.

BISHOP O'LEARY

By defying my authority you will be  
excommunicating yourself. You will  
be starting a new church that is not  
compatible with the Roman Catholic  
church.



DENYS

His ministry hasn't changed since his first Mass here twenty five years ago.

LINDA

The church should be more Catholic and less Roman.

ELOY

We will be a people, a community without a priest or church.

All the people look expectantly at Father Lara. Mary Claire runs from the crowd and hugs Father Lara. He looks down at her tenderly.

MARY CLAIRE

You have to stay true to who you are and what you believe in. Remember? You taught me that the first day I met you.

The church bells began to RING.

FATHER LARA

I was ordained to serve the people and by God I will. Rosarita, let's not keep your family waiting. I've got a full busy day ahead of me.

A mighty CHEER for Father Lara erupts. The people happily follow him out of the church.

MONTERUSO

We can rid ourselves of this menace to our good church. Pictures don't lie.

Bishop O'Leary suddenly notices Michael fiddling with his camera bag.

BISHOP O'LEARY

Father Lara is a good man, a big man in many ways. You are a little man, a vindictive, angry little man.

MONTERUSO

What? What? I don't know what to say.

BISHOP O'LEARY

How about "Curses, foiled again?"

Bishop O'Leary watches the people celebrate Father Lara's decision with a wry sad smile.

BISHOP O'LEARY

I will pray daily for Father Lara's return. We need his love for the faith, his energy and leadership. I will not give up on him, ever.

INT. JED'S OFFICE - DAY

Linda storms in distraught and out of breath.

LINDA

Have you seen Mary Claire?

JED

No, why?

LINDA

She's gone. Her bag of cans and Tommy are gone too. I was afraid this would happen.

JED

Did you ask the sisters?

LINDA

I've checked everywhere. And she left this.

Linda hands a note to Jed.

JED

"Tommy and me are going away. I will miss you, Jed, and Father Lara and everyone."

JED

What happened?

LINDA

Her best friend Angie doesn't need her anymore. She thinks you're going to Yale and Father Lara's in trouble.

JED

Her fragile world crumbling around her.

Jed hands the note back to Linda.

LINDA

She wanted us to object to her possible adoption with the Benningtons. When we didn't, she figured we didn't care for her. One more rejection. Her whole life has been nothing but a series of rejections. With her tough macho act, we forget that she's just a kid who's been alone her whole life.

JED

It's a good act that she played well.

LINDA

She's built a wall to block out the hurt. If she continues to be neglected, that wall will soon be so thick and high that no one will ever be able to get in.

JED

You can become a captive of your own insecurities. A friend told me that once.

LINDA

When I went to her room, I overheard her talking to "Tommy". It all came out there.

JED

What came out?

LINDA

Her dreams.

JED

I know all about her dreams. To be rich and famous.

LINDA

That's not her real dream. You're so absorbed in yourself, you can't see what's going on around you.

JED

Great. Now I can forget all my flaws. No use two people remembering the same thing.

LINDA

She was hoping you would adopt her. That was her dream. Why, is a

mystery. She looked to you for emotional support, but got nothing. There's nothing in you to give.

JED

You don't have to wear your emotions on your sleeve to feel.

LINDA

I understand. You just don't know how.

JED

Know how to what?

LINDA

To give something from within. You're empty inside, a shell. You don't even call her by her name. She's not "Kid" or "Little Girl." Her name is Mary Claire.

JED

I know her name.

LINDA

She's pulled away from you. You'll never reach her again until you show you care in a deep way.

JED

Is there a charge for this pocket book psychology?

LINDA

It's a truth you'll eventually have to deal with.

JED

I can handle it.

LINDA

Real men are willing to risk sharing who they are. But you never let anyone take a peek at the face behind the mask. I kept thinking there may be something good in you I was missing. Way down deep, hidden somewhere, a good, caring person. But no, you're just what you appear to be, selfish and shallow.

JED

I suppose this means there's no

chance of getting laid tonight.

LINDA  
You're disgusting.

Linda tosses Mary Claire's note to the ground and exits.

JED  
And they said it wouldn't last.

A wan, sad smile crosses Jed's face. He looks at the crumpled note, picks it up, reads it again, folds it and puts it in his pocket.

EXT. LA RAZA PARK - DAY

Denys and the Cholos band are PRACTICING a new song. Denys sees Jed approaching and with a WHISTLE and a finger across the throat signals a break in the rehearsal.

JED  
Another guts and glory, leading a Chicano charge through the barrio song?

DENYS  
No. This song is different. A love song, a song you said I couldn't do.

JED  
So maybe you can teach an old dog new tricks.

DENYS  
You're the old dog so I guess we'll find out.

Jed smiles and nods.

DENYS  
And the trick is you'd better let somebody love you before it's too late.

JED  
I'm working on it. By the way have you seen Mary Claire lately? She's been gone for all day now and we're getting worried.

ELOY  
And, it will be getting dark soon.

JED

Hold it. I thought I heard something. What?

ELOY JED  
Like d

RAGGING CAN. LISTEN.

The band freezes and listens intently.

DENYS  
It's getting louder.

JED  
It's her.

Mary Claire, totally absorbed in looking for cans in the bushes, shuffles toward them.

JED  
What a relief.

Eloy plays a MELODY on the saxophone. Mary Claire looks up, startled.

JED  
Now that face looks familiar, but I just can't place her.

MARY CLAIRE  
Oh, my gosh! You found me.

JED  
Nah, just hanging out with the guys here.

MARY CLAIRE  
I'm so ashamed.

JED  
I wrote the book on shame and you're not in it.

MARY CLAIRE  
I left a sad farewell note and here I am still hanging around. It's so tacky.

JED  
Tacky, yes. Shame, no.

MARY CLAIRE  
Please don't tell anyone you saw me. It's too embarrassing.

JED

It'll be our little secret.

Jed and Mary Claire walk off together.

MARY CLAIRE

So, what's new?

JED

Well, let's see now. Linda is going back to school to get a bigger fancier degree. You know, that psychology stuff.

MARY CLAIRE

She's got lots of material to practice on with us around.

JED

Denys is getting organized to run for city councilman.

MARY CLAIRE

I love barricades in the streets and Molotov cocktails.

JED

Father Lara is still milking his goat and saying mass to all who come. The Church says he has excommunicated himself, but no one in San Isidro cares.

MARY CLAIRE

I'm going to stay poor just so I can eat the green chile he cooks for the street people.

JED

Me? I've decided to stay here at Guadalupe. More fun than that stuffy Ivy League.

MARY CLAIRE

And let's not forget Paco's Pool Hall and the tamales that Rufinita makes for you.

JED

Seems like I'm forgetting someone. Who could it be? Let me think. It's on the tip of my tongue.

Jed counts his fingers as he MUMBLES names.

JED  
Oh, yeah, now I remember, you.

MARY CLAIRE  
Me! I'm okay. The street's fun. I like it, the adventure and all. Really.

JED  
You shared your dream with me once, remember? I was impressed because you knew exactly what you wanted and here I was much older and my dream wasn't nearly as good.

Mary Claire looks out into space remembering and nodding her head.

MARY CLAIRE  
You're just a late bloomer.

JED  
A home. A family. Loving parents to take care of you. A worthy dream. Mine's shallow by comparison.

MARY CLAIRE  
Shallow doesn't even come close.

JED  
And then, by magic, your dream started to come true. A good family, a caring family came along that wanted you. But you ran away.

MARY CLAIRE  
They were too good for me.

JED  
Now I get it.

MARY CLAIRE  
Sooner or later, they'd get to know the real me.

JED  
Oh, really?

MARY CLAIRE  
Trying to be the sweet little girl. Wearing fancy dresses, smiling all the time, saying cute things. Being phony. In time they'd get to know the real me and get rid of me.



JED

Uh, uh. I'm not buying it.

MARY CLAIRE

Okay, what about my bossiness?

JED

You've got a strong will.

MARY CLAIRE

My big mouth yapping all the time.

JED

You can learn to be quiet.

MARY CLAIRE

My wrinkled old clothes and beat up shoes.

JED

You can get nice clothes.

MARY CLAIRE

My nasty nature. Like the time I told you you had skinny, hairy legs.

JED

You can get nice clothes.

Mary Claire frowns.

JED

Look. Sometimes we try to fool ourselves into thinking we're something we're really not. Take me, for example, always bragging about how tough I am. The Rock of Gibraltar, the no compromise, free wheeling spirit, living life to the max. Wanting to kiss all the pretty girls and drink all the good beer in the world.

MARY CLAIRE

You're ahead of schedule with the beer.

JED

But then I met a lady who made me take an honest look at myself. And I found a kind of hollow guy who was chasing after all the wrong things. Things that don't really count in the end.

MARY CLAIRE

Hollow?

JED

To the bone. Afraid to make any emotional commitments. Never letting anyone get too close. I was really just the opposite of what I thought I was. I wasn't a rock. I wasn't even a pebble. I was more like a wisp of sand blowing in the wind. A wisp looking to land someplace.

MARY CLAIRE

Like Peter Pan looking for his shadow?

Jed nods.

JED

I looked into my mind to get things, but never into my heart to feel. Worse, I never told my friend the favor she had done for me.

MARY CLAIRE

You need to tell her. Who is it?

JED

Oh, don't you know? It's you.

MARY CLAIRE

Me?

JED

Uh huh! You're the one, and I like the feeling.

MARY CLAIRE

You do?

JED

The truth is, I've been feeling kind of lonely lately.

MARY CLAIRE

Lonely?

JED (VERY SOFTLY)

Very. Maybe you'll let me take care of you. And no more blank for a last name.

Mary Claire shakes her head. Jed reaches down and grabs her

shirt and pulls her to him with emotion.

JED  
You're not bad, kid. You're good.

Mary Claire's face tightens up like a bulldog. She balls her hands up into fists in front of her like she's ready to fight.

JED  
There's nothing worse than being alone and unloved. It makes you mean and ugly. I don't know how I know this, but I do.

Mary Claire's face is a jumble of emotions, sad, mad and confused at the same time.

JED  
Sometimes you have to take a chance and open up your heart.

Deny's melancholy ballad FLOATS through the air. Mary Claire looks at Jed sadly. She backs up slowly with her bag of cans dragging.

JED  
Come on, kid.

Mary Claire continues backing away from Jed.

JED  
I'll take a chance if you will.

Jed crouches down with his arms outstretched and emotionally CALLS to her as she turns to leave.

JED  
MARY CLAIRE!

Mary Claire looks back, hesitates and then runs into his arms WEEPING with cans flying everywhere. They hug long and tightly. Denys SINGS "Why Can it Be"? Denys PERFORMS his new love song with pure joy on his face. Mary Claire and Jed looking at each other in quiet happiness.

JED  
Everyone is going to be so happy to see you.

MARY CLAIRE  
Sister Benedict was right. She told me if I would just hang on tight, tight to my dream and never let go,

it would come true.

JED

This Sister Benedict ought to get into the consulting business.

MARY CLAIRE

I've got lots of work to do when we get home. I'm sure the kitchen's a mess.

JED

I distinctly remember I was down to my last clean glass.

MARY CLAIRE

When we can afford it, we really need to replace the ugly wallpaper in the dining room.

JED

I didn't even know there was wallpaper in the dining room.

MARY CLAIRE

You know, that Linda is really a nice lady.

JED

Uh huh!

MARY CLAIRE

Some lucky guy's gonna scoop her right up. She'd be a great catch, don't you think?

JED

It won't be me. She holds me in low regard. Low as in dirt.

MARY CLAIRE

Don't be so sure.

JED

The last time I saw her she told me I was selfish, shallow and other things I can't even repeat. And she wasn't smiling.

MARY CLAIRE

There's still hope. If she had said you were a nice guy and wanted to be your friend, then it'd be over.

JED

It's going to be great fun reading to you again.

MARY CLAIRE

Leave Linda to me. I'll think of something. We've got to move fast. Let's face it, you're no spring chicken.

JED

We can read Emily Dickinson. A great poet. "The frail duration of a flower is but an hour".

MARY CLAIRE

I think you ought to start slow. Let's be honest. You're all the things nice women hate in men, only more so.

JED

What's great about literature is that it's not only fun, but you can learn from it at a deep level.

MARY CLAIRE

There's this tiny small hope that you may still have a chance. The fact that you irritate her so easily has got to mean something.

JED

For the first time in a long time, I find myself wanting to get back to just me and that blank page.

MARY CLAIRE

You might want to take her to a music concert. She loves music. Soften her up, if you know what I mean. Heh! Heh!

Mary Claire jabs Jed in the arm knowingly with a wink.

JED

Tell me, Mary Claire, in all of our lunch time tutoring what's the most important thing you learned?

MARY CLAIRE

That you can't hide broccoli in a stinking glass of milk.

They exit together holding hands. The shoeshine boy walks through.

SHOESHINE BOY

Shoeshine, shoeshine, get your shoes  
shined. Two lousy dollars.

Denys & the Cholos SING "Quiero a Mi Tierra".