

GETTING TO WHITE

"It Starts with a Burrito"

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Episode # 1

ACT ONE

INT. VALDEZ KITCHEN - DAY

J.J. VALDEZ, 13, wears chinos, blue button down and striped tie. He reads a newspaper and sips from a small espresso cup.

In walks LYDIA VALDEZ, 15, jock-chick, wearing an Addidas track suit carrying a large athletic duffle bag.

LYDIA
(eying J.J.)
Oh dude, you look like a little man.

J.J.
The Prescott requires a uniform.

We pull back to reveal GLORIA VALDEZ, 40s, dressed in a housekeeping uniform, preparing breakfast and food.

GLORIA
Don't make fun of your brother.
What are you wearing under that jacket?

Lydia reveals a modest T-shirt.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
Thank you.

Gloria hands Lydia and J.J. their respective brown lunch sacks.

In ambles, JERÓNIMO JOSE VALDEZ, 40s, jovial, dark and plump. Impeccably dressed in work shirt, pants, and boots.

He picks up J.J.'s espresso cup.

JERÓNIMO
You shouldn't be playing with toys anymore.

J.J.
It's an espresso. You want one?

Jerónimo grabs a massive thermos Gloria hands him.

JERÓNIMO
I got my, Sanka.

GLORIA
(to Lydia and J.J.)
Brush your teeth so we can go.

J.J. Stands up and puts on a blue blazer. He's stands next to his dad - preppy freshmen next to maintenance man.

J.J. and Lydia leave the room.

JERÓNIMO
I'll take J.J. to school.

GLORIA
That's OK. I got it.

JERÓNIMO
I need to have a little talk with him. Toughen him up for his first day. He doesn't know the real world.

Jerónimo holds up the espresso cup.

GLORIA
He's fine, Jero. He doesn't need your talk.

JERÓNIMO
When I came to this country nobody, not even my dad showed me the way. Let me help him make sense of that new fancy school.

GLORIA
The counselor said they take care of all of the scholarship kids.

JERÓNIMO
Have I ever let you down?

GLORIA
Let's see?

JERÓNIMO
When it mattered.

Gloria kisses Jerónimo on the cheek.

GLORIA
OK. But make sure he takes his burrito and doesn't forget his backpack.

JERÓNIMO
(saluting)
Si mi comandante.

INT. MAINTENANCE VAN - DAY

Jerónimo drives. He and J.J. sit in a thick SILENCE. RANCHERA MUSIC plays in the background. J.J. tunes the radio and we hear the opening to NPR's MORNING EDITION.

Jerónimo turns it down.

JERÓNIMO
You know we're all so proud that
you got this scholarship.

J.J.
I feel honored.

JERÓNIMO
Of course, you're the smartest
person I know.

J.J.
Thanks. Are you nervous?

JERÓNIMO
Me, of course not. It's your first
day.

J.J.
It's OK to be nervous. As a
scholarship diversity student,
adjusting can be challenging.

JERÓNIMO
Don't worry about that, we're as
American as cherry pie.

J.J.
Apple pie.

JERÓNIMO
Exactly.

EXT. THE PRESCOTT SCHOOL/INT. MAINTENANCE VAN - DAY

The maintenance van pulls up past gates onto a bucolic campus and parking lot. Jerónimo white knuckles the steering wheel.

STUDENTS and PARENTS emerge from LAND ROVERS, PORSCHEs, and minivans.

JERÓNIMO

(nervous)

Is there a parent meeting?

J.J. looks around.

J.J.

I don't think so.

JERÓNIMO

Rich kids afraid to walk themselves to class.

J.J.

Helicopter parents.

JERÓNIMO

Helicopter? Um, well, remember, first kid picks a fight, you punch him as hard as you can. This way...

J.J.

(shocked)

--Dad. This is the Prescott, not prison.

JERÓNIMO

You have to be tough. Don't let anyone pick...

J.J.

--Dad, I think there are far better strategies to adjusting to this school culture than fighting.

JERÓNIMO

That's not how I remember school.

J.J.

It's different here.

JERÓNIMO

Well, just show them how smart you are.

J.J.

Thanks. A lively academic discourse is what I'm looking forward to.

JERÓNIMO

(suspicious)

Intercourse?

J.J.

Conversation, not intercourse.

J.J. opens the door unable to make eye contact with his father. Embarrassed, like he's hiding something.

J.J. (CONT'D)

OK pop. Tim's sister is giving me a ride home.

JERÓNIMO

Be tough *mijo*. A Valdez never backs down.

J.J. turns back to his dad and smiles.

J.J.

Thanks, pop.

J.J. closes the van door and runs towards the school.

Jerónimo notices J.J.'s brown sack lunch on the seat. Jerónimo rolls down his window, holds up the paper sack.

JERÓNIMO

Mijo. Mijo. Your burrito.

Jerónimo parks the van and gets out.

EXT. ROTHCHILD AUDITORIUM - DAY

Jerónimo approaches the auditorium and reads a huge sign plastered in front: Welcome New Students and Parents.

MR. MARTINEZ, 20s, dark brown Latino dressed in Brooks Brother Ivy style approaches Jerónimo. He appears to be in a hurry.

MR. MARTINEZ

Oh, thank god you're here.

JERÓNIMO

Oh, is there a parent orientation?

MR. MARTINEZ

Orientation. No, nothing like that.

JERÓNIMO

But I.

MR. MARTINEZ

The A.C. in the Rothchild Auditorium isn't working, and it's going to be a hot day.

JERÓNIMO

The AC?

MR. MARTINEZ

You're not here to fix the AC?

JERÓNIMO

My son is a student.

MR. MARTINEZ

(blushing)

Oh.

Embarrassed, Mr. Martinez looks at his watch.

MR. MARTINEZ (CONT'D)

Just check in. They'll help you find his class in the front office.

Jerónimo looks around. Notices PARENTS and their CHILDREN walking to class. It dawns on him, he wasn't invited.

He looks down at his work uniform and walks back towards the parking lot.

He sees a DAD with his YOUNG SON walk towards the auditorium. The two do a smiling high-five as they approach the entrance.

INT. MAINTENANCE VAN - DAY

Jerónimo closes the door and digs inside J.J.'s lunch sack. He pulls out the foil-wrapped burrito, unwraps it and takes a bite.

INT. MR. MARINTEZ CLASSROOM - DAY

Rows of seats crowded with STUDENTS and PARENTS. J.J. sits in the front. Mr. Martinez sits on the top of his desk, like a professor does in movies.

MR. MARTINEZ

(with passion)

This year we'll be in Paris, Africa, 1950s America, and a modern day high school.

J.J. eats this up.

MR. MARTINEZ (CONT'D)
We'll be writers, kings, lovers,
and priests. This is the beauty of
literature. We can be anything and
go anywhere.

Mr. Martinez looks at the clock.

MR. MARTINEZ (CONT'D)
Alright, thanks for the parents
that came today. Don't forget, I'm
hosting a parent coffee next week
for parent volunteers for the
student newspaper. Students, I'll
expect this same lovely behavior
when your parents aren't around.

The PARENTS LAUGH. Parents and students walk out.

J.J. walks with his friend TIM JUDD and his father HARRISON,
40s, board shorts, t-shirt, trucker hat and flip flops.

TIM
(to Harrison)
Alright dad, see you.

HARRISON
Have a good one son. Proud of you.

Harrison and Tim hug. J.J. watches enviously.

Harrison leaves. Tim turns to J.J.

TIM
Cafeteria?

J.J.
It's not lunch.

TIM
I need to load up on some protein.

J.J.
Seriously, we don't need a hall
pass.

TIM
Hall pass, we're not in prison.

J.J.
I didn't bring any money.

Tim holds up his ID.

TIM

My dad's got this.

INT. VALDEZ GARAGE BARBER SHOP - DAY

The family runs a barber shop in here.

On one side - a washing machine, dryer, Costco food boxes. On the other side - barber chairs, mirrors, and cabinets.

ABRAHAM (Abe) VALDEZ, 30, lean, hip hair, tight jeans, and a Hamilton T-shirt holds up a ladder.

Jerónimo stands on the ladder examining a light fixture in the ceiling.

ABE

Dude, let me take J.J. to school?
He won't be embarrassed of me.

Gloria, in her hotel housekeeping uniform, walks in.

GLORIA

What a day? So how did it go?

JERÓNIMO

I'm thinking I need to rewire the rafters so we can put in one more light.

GLORIA

(suspicious)
What happened?

JERÓNIMO

Nothing. These are just ideas.

Jerónimo walks down the ladder and into:

INT. VALDEZ KITCHEN - DAY

Jerónimo washes his hands, Gloria tails Jerónimo. Abe digs for a beer in the fridge.

GLORIA

The last time "nothing happened" we got remote controlled sprinklers.

JERÓNIMO

There's a drought you know.

ABE

Yeah, and I got a tune up.

GLORIA

How did your man-to-man talk go?

ABE

(looking to Gloria)

My car is due for an oil change.

JERÓNIMO

I should really fix that trash
disposer.

GLORIA

What happened?

JERÓNIMO

An orange fell in there, and the
whole thing...

GLORIA

--at school.

ABE

I'll take him to school. He'll brag
to his friends about me.

GLORIA

The high school dropout.

ABE

I got a GED, and I know this world.

Abe leaves the room. Jerónimo stops moving to look at Gloria.

JERÓNIMO

He forgot his burrito this morning
so I...

GLORIA

(catastrophe)

--you sent our child to school
without his burrito?

JERÓNIMO

That's not it.

GLORIA

It gets worse?

JERÓNIMO

No.

GLORIA

I can't believe you?

JERÓNIMO

That's not it. There was some kind of parent thing, and he didn't tell us.

GLORIA

Maybe he forgot.

JERÓNIMO

When does that kid forget anything?

GLORIA

Then you better let him have it. He has to learn to respect the *familia*.

JERÓNIMO

I got this, Gloria.

GLORIA

I knew I should have taken him.

Gloria leaves the room.

INT. VALDEZ DINING ROOM - DAY

Jerónimo, Gloria, and J.J. sit at the table holding hands.

In rushes Lydia, ice bag wrapped around her shoulder. She sits and joins hands.

LYDIA

Practice ran late.

GLORIA

You know how important dinner is.

JERÓNIMO

(into the air)

Dear father, we thank you for this meal.

Abe sits on a step stool at the end of the table. He reaches for a tortilla. Gloria slaps Abe's hand away from the tortillas.

ABE

You should ask God for an extra chair for uncle Abe.

JERÓNIMO

And we thank you for letting Uncle Abe live with us, temporarily. Amen

EVERYONE

Amen.

Lydia grabs a tortilla that she stuffs in her mouth.

Gloria motions Jerónimo to talk to J.J.

JERÓNIMO

So, J.J. how was school?

J.J.

Great. I have this awesome teacher,
Mr. Martinez.

JERÓNIMO

Lot's of great intercourse?

Everyone stares at Jerónimo.

J.J.

Discourse, dad.

LYDIA

That place sounds sick.

JERÓNIMO

Did you know, you forgot your lunch
in the van?

J.J.

Not a problem, the cafeteria had
kale salad and sushi. And freshly
squeezed orange juice.

LYDIA

They serve sushi?

J.J.

And an espresso bar with a rare
Italian blend and fresh biscottis.
Could I borrow \$15?

JERÓNIMO

I went to look for you to bring you the
burrito.

J.J.

I'm sorry, dad.

J.J. looks around at everyone at the table, ready to make the
big reveal and come clean. All eyes are on him.

JERÓNIMO

It's OK *mijo*. You can tell me.

J.J. takes in a deep breath. Here it goes.

J.J.

Burritos have too many carbs.

J.J. looks at his parents disapproval and turns to Lydia.

J.J. (CONT'D)

Right?

Lydia stuffs her mouth with a tortilla.

LYDIA

I'm carb loading.

JERÓNIMO

--I noticed that all the students were there with their parents.

J.J.

I'm sorry dad, it turns out that parents can shadow students on the first day of class. But there wasn't an official orientation.

JERÓNIMO

I know we're just working people, and I was wearing my uniform.

J.J.

Oh no, that's not it, dad.

ABE

I can take you to your parent events if going with the janitor over here is embarrassing.

JERÓNIMO

I'm a maintenance lead!

J.J.

The shadow day is an unwritten tradition since 1935. There was no invitation. No one told me. I found out there's also an annual ski trip that everyone goes to in January.

GLORIA

You know your dad gets sick in the snow.

J.J.

I know. There's a parent coffee for the volunteers for the student paper. Come to that.

JERÓNIMO

Oh.

J.J.

I really want to write for the paper

J.J. (CONT'D)

And mom. How's about if instead of a burrito, we make it a bowl.

Gloria looks to Jerónimo and smiles. She's satisfied.

GLORIA

Sure thing, *mijo*. My coworker Hilda had to do that for her diabetes.

J.J.

So you'll come dad?

JERÓNIMO

(nervous)

Sure.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWOINT. OXNARD COLLEGE - MAINTENANCE OFFICE - DAY

Jerónimo walks in to the office and approaches BOB RULE, 50s, sits at a desk. He looks up at Jerónimo.

BOB
Everything cool?

JERÓNIMO
Yeah.

BOB
You get the quotes on the security system?

JERÓNIMO
Yup.

Jerónimo doesn't move.

BOB
I'm kind of busy.

JERÓNIMO
Oh yeah, um, I wanted to know if could take a few hours next Tuesday.

BOB
Again? The CFO is breathing down my neck to get that system up.

JERÓNIMO
There's an event at my son's school.

BOB
Didn't you just take him to the first day?

JERÓNIMO
Yeah, but this is a coffee.

BOB
We got plenty of coffee here.

JERÓNIMO
No, it's coffee with the teacher and parents.

BOB
Sounds like a party to me.

JERÓNIMO
Can I?

BOB
Fine, but make up the hours on
Saturday.

JERÓNIMO
Sure.

BOB
Jerónimo walks out.

INT. VALDEZ GARAGE BARBER SHOP - DAY

Jerónimo combs his hair, Abe watches.

ABE
Do you have a shirt that's not from
the 90s?

JERÓNIMO
I just bought this.

ABE
At least you're ready for a 90s
party.

JERÓNIMO
I'm going to be fine.

ABE
Tell them about your brother who
was a dancer in New York. Let them
know you have some cosmopolitan in
your life.

JERÓNIMO
Yes, my brother is a barber.

ABE
That's cold.

Abe walks out, Jerónimo smiles at himself in the mirror.

INT. ROTHCHILD AUDITORIUM - DAY

Jerónimo serves himself coffee. Harrison, again in board
shorts, tank top, and trucker hat approaches.

HARRISON

(to Jerónimo)

Dude, I don't think the AC is working. Could you take a look?

Jerónimo turns around to show his name tag.

JERÓNIMO

My son goes here.

HARRISON

(embarrassed)

Of course. Just messin' with you *compadre*. What's his name?

JERÓNIMO

J.J. Valdez.

HARRISON

Ah, sweet. We're like family. He's boys with my son Tim. Bring it in for a hug.

Harrison shakes Jerónimo's hand and pulls him in for a man hug. Jerónimo awkwardly accepts the embrace.

Harrison and Jerónimo walk towards two other dad's ETHAN, 50s, and WHITFIELD, African-American, 60s. They all shake hands.

Ethan frowns after tasting his coffee.

ETHAN

You'd think for 40 grand a year we'd get a Kona blend or something.

JERÓNIMO

I like Sanka.

Everyone turns to Jerónimo in SILENCE, then erupt in LAUGHTER. Jerónimo is the only one not laughing.

HARRISON

Jerónimo, you're such a prankster.

WHITFIELD

So Ethan, how's the Tesla been? I'm thinking of buying one for Jenny's sweet 16.

ETHAN

Love it.

HARRISON

I got Liz a Land Rover. Safer.

WHITFIELD

So, Jerónimo, what are you getting around in these days?

JERÓNIMO

Huh?

ETHAN

Your *coche*.

JERÓNIMO

Oh, yes, I well, I drive a company car mostly.

WHITFIELD

(pointing at Jerónimo)

Now that's my man.

Ethan looks at Jerónimo.

ETHAN

Anybody know a good housekeeper? Mine was just deported.

JERÓNIMO

My wife...

ETHAN

-- she knows a good one?

Jerónimo nods.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Does she speak English?

JERÓNIMO

Berry good. Very.

ETHAN

You'll have to get me her number.

JERÓNIMO

I'm going to get some more sugar.

ETHAN

This coffee needs all the help it can get.

Jerónimo walks towards the coffee table and puts his coffee down. He wipes sweat from his brow, looks around for J.J. but doesn't spot him. Jerónimo walks out of the building.

EXT. ROTHCHILD AUDITORIUM - DAY

J.J. walks towards the auditorium with Mr. Martinez.

J.J.
I'm so dad glad you can help my dad
fit in.

MR. MARTINEZ
I'm happy I can help.

J.J.
He just needs help with the little
things.

Mr. Martinez puts his hand on J.J.'s shoulder.

MR. MARTINEZ
(friendly)
It's not your fault he's working
class.

J.J.'s not sure he likes that.

MR. MARTINEZ (CONT'D)
You're one of us now, J.J.

J.J. sees his dad emerge from the auditorium.

MR. MARTINEZ (CONT'D)
(looking at Jerónimo)
I hope this guy fixed the AC.

J.J.
That's my dad.

MR. MARTINEZ
Oh, I thought...

Jerónimo doesn't see J.J. or Mr. Martinez and rushes away.

--J.J. follows after Jerónimo. Mr. Martinez walks into the auditorium.

J.J.
Dad. Dad!

INT./EXT. MAINTENANCE VAN - DAY

Jerónimo fumbles for his keys as he tries to open the door.

J.J.

Dad. Where are you going? I want you to meet Mr. Martinez.

JERÓNIMO

Oh, *mijo*. I thought maybe you'd gone to class.

J.J.

Why are you leaving?

JERÓNIMO

Emergency at the office.

Jerónimo gets in the van, rolls down the window.

J.J.

You're never on-call.

JERÓNIMO

Promotion. OK *mijo*, have a great day.

The maintenance van pulls away.

J.J. looks on with a sad face as the van turns the corner.

INT. VALDEZ KITCHEN - DAY

Jerónimo drops an orange peel down the sink and flicks on the TRASH DISPOSER. He smiles in approval as it RUMBLES.

J.J. walks in with a backpack hanging from his shoulder.

J.J.

So did you take care of the emergency at work?

JERÓNIMO

Huh?

J.J.

The call you got during the dad's coffee?

JERÓNIMO

Oh, yeah. We fixed it.

J.J.

What was it?

JERÓNIMO

A stucked bathroom. Really nasty.

J.J.

So you think you can come back to school? Mr. Martinez would love to meet you.

JERÓNIMO

The next few weeks are going to be really busy at work. We're installing a new security system.

J.J.

I told Mr. Martinez you were coming today. This doesn't look good for me.

JERÓNIMO

I'm sorry.

J.J.

I really want to write for the paper.

JERÓNIMO

Maybe your mom should go?

J.J.

Dad. Mom doesn't get my writing for the paper like you do. I want you to go.

JERÓNIMO

I know.

J.J.

So will you come chat with him?

JERÓNIMO

OK. Sure

INT. MAINTENANCE OFFICE - DAY

Jerónimo enters and Bob is filling out paperwork.

BOB

What is it now? A tea social for your kid's school?

JERÓNIMO

I have a really bad stomach ache.

BOB

Too many burritos. What did I tell you?

JERÓNIMO

Yeah.

BOB

Alright. But I'll need you to finish this work order and stay late tomorrow.

Bob hands him a work order.

JERÓNIMO

OK.

BOB

Have you thought of maybe having it as a bowl? I mean your burrito.

JERÓNIMO

I'll see what Gloria says.

Jerónimo walks out.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Mr. Martinez writes on the dry erase board, "The Best Way to know if you can trust someone is to trust them."

Jerónimo walks in dressed in his work uniform.

JERÓNIMO

Who wrote that?

MR. MARTINEZ

Ernest Hemingway.

JERÓNIMO

He wouldn't last a minute in my neighborhood.

Mr. Marintez forces a smile.

MR. MARTINEZ

Jerónimo? Come in.

Jerónimo gives Martinez a vigorous handshake.

JERÓNIMO

So great to meet you. I'm sorry to be late. It was hard to get out of work.

MR. MARTINEZ

Not a problem.

JERÓNIMO

So...

MR. MARTINEZ

I think your son would love for me to help you understand what things are like at the Prescott School.

JERÓNIMO

(in Spanish)

It's so wonderful to have a Latino teacher for my son. I think this can make a big difference for him. Sometimes I feel like he is very insecure...

Mr. Martinez frowns.

MR. MARTINEZ

My Spanish is really bad.

JERÓNIMO

You're not Latino?

MR. MARTINEZ

Yes, but I never learned Spanish.

JERÓNIMO

(disapproving)

You don't speak Spanish?

MR. MARTINEZ

My French and Latin are exceptional.

JERÓNIMO

Oh.

MR. MARTINEZ

Is that a problem?

Mr. Martinez motions for Jerónimo to sit. Jerónimo struggles to squeeze into a student desk.

JERÓNIMO

(lying)

Of course not.

(beat)

Listen. I came because I wanted to know how best to support my son's education and help him fit in.

MR. MARTINEZ

This school can be tough for a scholarship family.

JERÓNIMO

I can get him to study harder.

MR. MARTINEZ

He's a very hard worker.

JERÓNIMO

Is he getting picked on? I can put on the gloves and work on him. I know he's a little soft.

MR. MARTINEZ

(aghast)

No. I'd never condone violence. You see. Hmm. Many of his fellow pupils spent the summer in Paris, or Madrid. They've been to the Prado, the Louvre. You need to understand...

JERÓNIMO

--We spent two weeks in my village in Mexico.

MR. MARTINEZ

Yes. But. Let's see. When I was here, I can remember...

JERÓNIMO

--you were a student here?

MR. MARTINEZ

Yes.

JERÓNIMO

(judging)

Then why are you just a teacher?

MR. MARTINEZ

I love being a teacher.

JERÓNIMO

But why not a lawyer or a doctor?

MR. MARTINEZ

My mother is a doctor and my father is a lawyer.

JERÓNIMO

(disapproving)

But a teacher?

MR. MARTINEZ

(snarky)

Why are you a janitor?

JERÓNIMO

I'm not a janitor. I'm a facilities maintenance manager lead.

MR. MARTINEZ

I teach English.

JERÓNIMO

I speak fine English.

MR. MARTINEZ

Wow, I study the language and I'm not finding the right words. How can I say this?

JERÓNIMO

I hear you clear and loud.

MR. MARTINEZ

Loud and clear.

JERÓNIMO

That's what I said.

Jerónimo wiggles out of the student desk and backs away towards the door.

MR. MARTINEZ

Wait a minute.

JERÓNIMO

You wait a minute. I told my son to stand up to people like you. I might not be a fancy English professor, but people know when they have a problem, I fix it.

Jerónimo turns to walk towards the door.

MR. MARTINEZ

This is a classic case of a misunderstanding...

Mr. Martinez puts his hand on Jerónimo's shoulder in a friendly manner.

MR. MARTINEZ (CONT'D)

--come back, let's discuss this...

--but in Jerónimo's neighborhood this is a hostile gesture. Jerónimo turns around quickly and Mr. Martinez loses his balance falling and hitting his head on a desk.

Mr. Martinez holds his forehead in a daze on the floor.

J.J. walks in grinning from ear to ear.

J.J.

Hey dad, it's great you're here.
Mr. Martinez probably went to grab some coffee.

Mr. Martinez stands up. J.J. sees a fallen over desk. It dawns on him what's happened.

J.J. (CONT'D)

Dad!

Tim and other STUDENTS shuffle in.

MR. MARTINEZ

Alright everybody. We'll start the meeting for the student paper in a minute, I have to go to the bathroom.

Mr. Martinez rushes out of the room. Jerónimo looks around, scared.

JERÓNIMO

I'll see you at home, J.J.

Jerónimo walks out.

TIM

That's your dad?

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREEINT. VALDEZ GARAGE BARBER SHOP - DAY

A PATRON sits down on a chair and Abe drapes a barber's gown over him. J.J. sits in the second barber's chair.

ABE

When your dad was dating your mom I saw him beat down a few dudes.

J.J.

Why does he turn to violence?
That's so ghetto!

ABE

I saw him punch this guy and just wail on him. I mean, it was something out of...

Gloria walks into the barbershop.

GLORIA

--J.J., what did I tell you about bothering your *tio*.

J.J.

I'm helping out.

J.J. gets up and starts sweeping.

ABE

Just telling 'em about how daddy had to fight off all your boyfriends.

Gloria smiles bashfully.

GLORIA

Your father was so romantic.

INT. VALDEZ KITCHEN - DAY

Jerónimo struggles to take down the ceiling fan.

Gloria walks in and looks up at the dust and mess.

GLORIA

Really, Jerónimo? You just installed that a month ago.

JERÓNIMO

I need to move it over about an inch to align it with the table. It's off and it's been bothering me.

Gloria walks up and moves the table one inch.

GLORIA

How's that?

Jerónimo steps down from the stool and looks at the table and then at the ceiling fan.

JERÓNIMO

Why did you have to do that?

Jerónimo measures the distance from the table top up to the ceiling fan.

JERÓNIMO (CONT'D)

But it's still too low.

GLORIA

You need to talk to your brother. He's telling J.J. about your fighting days.

JERÓNIMO

I didn't hit the teacher.

GLORIA

What teacher?

Jerónimo rushes towards the garage door.

JERÓNIMO

I better talk to Abe.

GLORIA

What teacher?

INT. VALDEZ GARAGE BARBER SHOP - DAY

Jerónimo walks in and sees J.J. sweeping hair. Abe shadow boxes Jerónimo.

ABE

There's the Golden Gloves champ.

JERÓNIMO

Mijo. We need to talk.

Jerónimo walks J.J. towards the washing machine.

JERÓNIMO (CONT'D)

Son, I promise you, I didn't hit Mr. Martinez.

J.J.

I think you embarrassed him more than anything.

JERÓNIMO

As I was leaving, he tried to grab my shoulder and when I turned around, he fell over.

ABE

I've seen you "fell" a few dudes.

JERÓNIMO

That's the truth, J.J.

J.J.

He's agreed to not tell the headmaster if you just appologize.

JERÓNIMO

I didn't hit him. I'm not sorry.

J.J.

Dad, this kind of stuff doesn't happen in these schools. They don't even know how to deal with it.

JERÓNIMO

I thought I could help fit into that school.

J.J.

I want you to fit in.

JERÓNIMO

Me?

Gloria walks up to Jerónimo and J.J. with a basket of clothes that she puts down on the washing machine.

J.J.

We should just be happy he's not pressing charges.

GLORIA

(shocked)

Jero, what did you do?

JERÓNIMO

I was just trying to talk to him.

ABE

Most guys your dad "talked" to never seemed to walk right after their chats.

Jerónimo glares at Abe.

GLORIA

Jerónimo, you can't act like this at the Prescott.

JERÓNIMO

But I didn't hit him. He grabbed my shoulder and slipped when I turned around.

J.J.

What did you say to him?

JERÓNIMO

Nothing. Maybe I said being a teacher wasn't a good thing for you.

J.J.

Ah, dad.

JERÓNIMO

He called me a janitor!

GLORIA

I'm going to invite him to dinner. J.J. can't start school like this.

JERÓNIMO

I don't want him in my house.

GLORIA

We need to show him that J.J. comes from a good family.

J.J.

Can we dad?

ABE

Don't worry. I'll be there. I know how to handle guys like this.

JERÓNIMO

Yeah, you let people beat you up.

GLORIA
I'll call him and tell him you'll
appologize.

INT. VALDEZ DINING ROOM - DAY

Mr. Martinez smiles as Gloria clears the table.

MR. MARTINEZ
I usually don't eat that many
carbs, but very good.

Gloria forces a smile.

Jerónimo, Gloria, Lydia, J.J, dressed to the nines at the
table. Abe wears a suit.

ABE
So were you able to find our place
OK?

MR. MARTINEZ
My father owned a few rental
properties in this neighborhood.
I'm very familiar.

ABE
Properties?

MR. MARTINEZ
The tenants were such pleasant
people.

Abe forces a smile.

MR. MARTINEZ (CONT'D)
J.J. says you're a retired dancer
from New York, Abe.

JERÓNIMO
He's now running a barbering
business in the garage.

MR. MARTINEZ
As long as they do it behind closed
doors, I'm fine with it.

Abe does a double-take.

ABE
Do what?

GLORIA

(in Spanish)

It's so great to have a teacher,
like **you** with J.J. at school. He
needs good examples.

MR. MARTINEZ

I'm sorry. I thought Jerónimo told
you.

Gloria looks to Jerónimo.

JERÓNIMO

He only speaks French.

GLORIA

(judging)

You don't speak Spanish?

JERÓNIMO

What Gloria was saying is that it's
great for J.J. to have a role
models like you at Prescott.

MR. MARTINEZ

Role **model**.

JERÓNIMO

That's what I said.

MR. MARTINEZ

A school like the Prescott can be
very challenging for families like
yours.

JERÓNIMO

There you go again. What is like
us?

Gloria jumps in.

GLORIA

My husband just wanted to say he
was sorry about the
misunderstanding.

JERÓNIMO

Yes. For the misunderstanding in
the classroom.

MR. MARTINEZ

We really could use more teachers
like J.J.

GLORIA

Yes, but, we know J.J. doesn't want to be a teacher.

J.J.

Yes. I don't know what I'd like to do when I grow up.

MR. MARTINEZ

It's never too early to be thinking about your future.

GLORIA

Yes. Like being a doctor or lawyer or businessman.

MR. MARTINEZ

Mrs. Valdez. I know that for people like you that seems like a great choice, but take it from me being a doctor or lawyer isn't everything.

GLORIA

What are people like us?

MR. MARTINEZ

Wait, this isn't what I'm saying.

Jerónimo's face is now beat red.

GLORIA

What are you saying?

MR. MARTINEZ

Working class immigrants.

GLORIA

(aghast)

No one ever called us that to our face.

J.J.

Mr. Martinez, my parent's don't see themselves as working class immigrants.

JERÓNIMO

We're Americans. Mexican-Americans. But we're Americans.

MR. MARTINEZ

I thought I was here to get an apology

ABE

Dude, I think you missed the class on cultural sensitivity.

MR. MARTINEZ

Excuse me?

ABE

I'll be literal. You're a dick.

J.J.

Uncle Abe. I don't think that's what we're here for.

ABE

I don't need to kiss his ass.

J.J.

Mr. Martinez. My dad just wanted to apologize for the misunderstanding.

MR. MARTINEZ

Your father dismissed teaching as something below him.

J.J.

Maybe we don't have to talk about my career today.

MR. MARTINEZ

I'm just trying to steer you and your family in the right direction.

J.J.

Yes.

MR. MARTINEZ

You don't have to resort to violence like your father.

Jerónimo, Gloria, and Abe stare down at their plates.

JERÓNIMO

Yes, maybe you can help us understand this world.

J.J. looks at his dad. Doesn't like what he sees.

J.J.

I think we can end dinner now. I believe my dad. He didn't hit you.

(MORE)

J.J. (CONT'D)

But if you want to tell the headmaster that's up to you.

MR. MARTINEZ

Wait, let's talk this over.

GLORIA

I think you should leave.

MR. MARTINEZ

Go?

GLORIA

Please.

Mr. Martinez stares around the table.

MR. MARTINEZ

As expected.

Gloria SLAMS her hand on the table startling Mr. Martinez. He stands holding his hands up in a defensive stance.

GLORIA

Thank you for this lovely visit.

MR. MARTINEZ

Fine.

Mr. Martinez walks out and J.J. shows him to the door. Jerónimo stares at Gloria.

JERÓNIMO

I thought you were going to hit him.

GLORIA

Like a working class immigrant?
Never.

EXT. VALDEZ HOUSE - DAY

J.J. follows Mr. Martinez to his car.

J.J.

Thanks for coming.

MR. MARTINEZ

I don't think that's what you were hoping for.

J.J.

I'm sorry.

MR. MARTINEZ

It's clear your parents care about you, but they can't help you with school.

J.J.

Are you telling the headmaster?

MR. MARTINEZ

I'm not trying to ruin your life J.J. You'll have it hard enough with parents like that. Goodbye
J.J.

J.J. waves Mr. Martinez goodbye.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jerónimo fumbles with the television and cable box wires.
J.J. walks in and watches his dad work.

J.J.

Want some help?

JERÓNIMO

I hate how these cables look. I'm thinking of getting them all in the same color.

J.J.

Maybe some zip ties?

JERÓNIMO

Now you're thinking. I have some black ones in the garage.

Jerónimo sits up and looks at his son.

JERÓNIMO (CONT'D)

I'm sorry the dinner didn't work out, *mijo*.

J.J.

I just want you and mom to feel a part of my school experience.

JERÓNIMO

There's a lot of things I don't get.

J.J.

Maybe I should go to public school?

JERÓNIMO

And back down.

J.J.

A Valdez never backs down.

JERÓNIMO

That's right, miijo, maybe I need to learn some things.

J.J.

We both do.

JERÓNIMO

We'll figure it out together. You can become anything you want. Doctor, lawyer, teacher. I'll always be proud.

J.J.

Thanks, as long as I don't end up like Mr. Martinez.

Jerónimo smiles.

END OF ACT THREE

TAG

EXT. MAINTENANCE VAN/PRESCOTT SCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY

Jerónimo holds up a brown paper sack.

JERÓNIMO

One burrito bowl.

Jerónimo takes out chop sticks from his jacket pocket.

JERÓNIMO (CONT'D)

Chopsticks.

J.J. takes the brown paper sack and chopsticks.

J.J.

Thanks dad. See you tonight.

J.J. runs off and greets his friend TIM.

HONK. Jerónimo turns around to spot Harrison who waves.
Jerónimo walks over and initiates a bro hug.

END OF SHOW