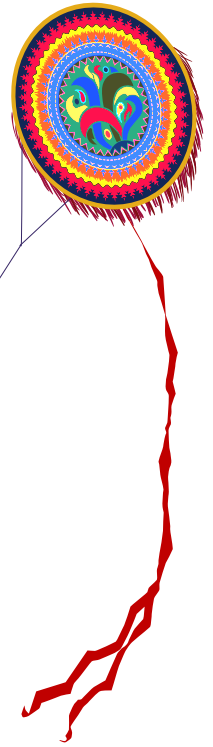


The Little Kite

screenplay



THE LITTLE KITE

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Note: The indigenous characters in this film speak a combination of Spanish and regional Mayan languages.

This film features two Mayan languages common in Guatemala, K'iche' and Kaqchikel.

The root of these Mayan languages is ancient, older than any modern language including Latin. The main characters in the film usually speak Spanish to people they don't know well, or to those that are clearly not Maya. In many cases the language they chose to speak reveals a special subtext or social statement. When and why they switch between languages give us insight into how the characters perceive and interact in their world.

Since the arrival of the Spanish in 1524, the Maya has endured aggressive campaigns to extinguish their culture and language. Maintaining their unique Mayan identity is a responsibility mainly born by Mayan women, who proudly maintain their traditional language, crafts and clothing. However, modern pressures, social, economic and political, are currently on the brink of extinguishing traditions that date back three millennium.

JFR

THE LITTLE KITE

EXT AERIAL SHOT - CORN FIELDS ON A MOUNTAIN-SIDE - NIGHT

CAMERA GLIDES above a serene HILLSIDE OF CORN, glistening in the MOONLIGHT. Arranged in small plots and in precise rows, the lush corn plants sway with the breeze.

EXT. A SMALL HOUSE IN THE MOUNTAINS OF GUATEMALA - NIGHT

A one-room, hand-made adobe house, surrounded by the corn fields. A SINGLE LIGHTBULB illuminates a small porch. A FIGURE is hunched over, working on something.

CLOSER - It is a Mayan woman, VERONICA (29). She is working on a SMALL LOOM that is stretched tightly between her torso and a wooden post. She wears the richly-patterned traditional Mayan clothes (*traje*) for her region - all hand-made - a highly decorated blouse (*huipil*), striped skirt (*corte*) and large woven belt (*faja*).

VERY CLOSE ON THE WEAVING, THE CAMERA LINGERS on the intricate shapes and symbols being constructed one thread at a time. She COUNTS INDIVIDUAL THREADS WITH HER FINGERNAIL, pushing a FLAT WOODEN TOOL over and under threads, according to an unseen pattern. Even under the dimness of the lightbulb, we see the vivid colors and complex motifs. She works carefully, in a rhythm meditative and absorbing.

THE LIGHT FLICKERS. Veronica looks up, she gives the lightbulb a stern look. She has a classic Mayan face, and a determined & clear eye. The bulb flickers again.

NOW THE LIGHT GOES DARK. In the moonlight, Veronica unhooks herself from the loom, retrieves her MOBILE PHONE from her belt and uses it as a FLASHLIGHT.

INT. VERONICA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A YOUNG GIRL, TOMASA (8) is asleep on the floor. She doesn't wake as her mother walks by her. Veronica retrieves a half-burnt CANDLE and a LIGHTER from a BASKET.

EXT. THE PORCH OF VERONICA'S HOUSE

THE CANDLE'S FLAME flickers in the slight breeze.

THE WEAVING - the flat tool is snaking its way again through the threads. The candlelight is so dim she can hardly see.

With her fingernails, she carefully pulls colored threads from under the textile, looping them in place to build a pattern. Her movements are deliberate and precise. Finally she pulls a thick flat stick (the beater) forcefully towards herself several times, firmly setting the tread into the textile with several rapid THUDS. Then she starts the process all over again.

INT. VERONICA'S HOUSE - THE NEXT MORNING

SUNLIGHT fills the room. Tomasa is still ASLEEP. A HEN has wandered into the room, pecking at something on the floor by her face.

We hear the "PAT-PAT-PAT" sound of tortillas being made.

EXT. VERONICA'S PORCH - MORNING

VERONICA'S HAND'S are making fresh TORTILLAS, which are a dark blue color. She finishes patting one into a round disk and places it on a flat grill (*comal*).

A toddler, SOPHIE (2), Tomasa's sister, is holding a HALF-EATEN TORTILLA and looking for something to hit with a STICK.

VERONICA
(in the Mayan language K'iche')
Tomasa - get up!

INT. VERONICA'S HOUSE - MORNING

Tomasa opens her eyes, sees the hen, and pushes it away.

TOMASA
(also in K'iche')
Beans?

VERONICA (O.C.)
No time, there are apples.

EXT. VERONICA'S CORN FIELD (MILPA) - 15 MINUTES LATER

Tomasa is standing among the thick rows of corn, finishing up a tortilla. She looks at her mother.

VERONICA is working the soil. The baby is attached to her back, wrapped in a shawl. Veronica feels her daughter's gaze, and looks at her.

VERONICA

(Spanish)

Go on, hurry... you have to go to school soon.

Tomasa sets her jaw.

TOMASA

I am still hungry...

VERONICA

I can make you another tortilla - but get started. You can take an apple with you.

Tomasa starts picking up TREE TRIMMINGS. She carries them to the path at the end of the corn row. Veronica watches her slow movements, exasperated by her lack of effort.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PATHWAYS - MORNING

Tomasa walks on a path through the crops & trees of the mountainside. She is carrying a BAG WITH BOOKS, eating an APPLE. In the valley below, we see a DISTANT MOUNTAIN TOWN.

EXT. VERONICA'S HOUSE - PORCH - DAY

Veronica is back to working on her *huipil*, and now in the daylight we can see how spectacular the work is, an elaborate mixture of deep purple, rose, turquoise and indigo, woven in complex geometric patterns. It is no longer on the loom, but is being sewn to a matching panel to make a full garment. SHE IS EMBROIDERING A LARGE "SUN" SYMBOL around the neck.

EXT. A TREE NEAR THE HOUSE - SEVERAL HOURS LATER.

Veronica is working the finishing touches to her *huipil*.

EXT. TOMASA'S SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

Tomasa is leaving school, she chatters with TWO FRIENDS. She looks ahead, and STOPS. And SMILES.

VERONICA, carrying Sophie, is proudly holding up her FINISHED WEAVING, vivid in the sunlight. Sophie smiles as she waves at her sister.

INT. BUS - A SHORT TIME LATER

The small family is sitting on one seat in a crowded "Chicken Bus." Tomasa is holding Sophie and Veronica is doing the final work tying off threads on the *huipil*.

TOMASA

(Spanish)

How much money will you get?

VERONICA

I hope two thousand and eight hundred quetzals. But I will take two thousand and two hundred ...Or two thousand...

TOMASA

So much money...

VERONICA

Not after we pay what we owe, but enough will be left over to go to Santiago to see Grandfather.

Tomasa doesn't like thinking about her sick Grandfather.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Look -- I must go to the bank. I can't take Sophia. I am trusting you to take care of the her while I am in there. Okay?

TOMASA

Okay.

VERONICA

You can do it? I don't have to worry? It is market day, there will be many, many people.

Tomasa NODS, determinedly.

EXT. BUS STOP OUTSIDE CHICHICASTENANGO - AFTERNOON

Veronica and her girls get off the bus. The ancient Mayan town of Chichicastenango is on the hill above them.

VERONICA

(Spanish)

...you have to remember - Don't put the *huipil* on the ground, keep it on your head if you need both hands with her...

EXT. THE HILL UP TOWARDS TOWN - FIVE MINUTES LATER

They walk up a steep hill, the brightly-colored cemetery is behind them. Veronica is still instructing...

VERONICA

...and you can't let her out of her site. She is really fast and strong-headed...

EXT. A ROAD TOWARDS THE PLAZA - CHICHICASTENANGO - AFTERNOON

The road is clogged with people. Veronica continues...

VERONICA

Look for the tourists. Only the tourists are buying work like this. The American's are best, or the pale Europeans. You know the price?

TOMASA

Two thousand and eight hundred quetzals.

VERONICA

Don't let them cheat you. If they have dollars...

She pulls her phone out of her belt, pokes at it.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Two thousand and eight hundred quetzals... at seven and a half... Three hundred and seventy three dollars -- just say three hundred and fifty dollars. That will be okay. How many dollars?

TOMASA

Three hundred and fifty dollars!

VERONICA

For more than four months work, and the cost of the silk. It is a correct price.

EXT. BANK - CHICHICASTENANGO - AFTERNOON

Veronica kneels in front of Tomasa, to look eye to eye.

VERONICA

(Spanish)

I'll be finished as soon as I can. I will meet you by the steps of the church, where they sell the flowers.

Tomasa nods.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Where will I meet you?

TOMASA

By the flower sellers...

VERONICA

...the steps of Santo Tomas, not the other one.

Tomasa nods...

TOMASA

Don't worry about it.

VERONICA

What is the price for the tourists?

TOMASA

Two thousand & eight hundred quetzals. Three hundred and fifty dollars. I will ask for more. Don't worry, it will sell quickly.

Veronica unloads Sophie off her back and helps Tomasa load her on her back. Sophie is not too happy about the change, and squirms in protest.

VERONICA

(to the baby)

Go with your sister, you can't come with me!

Finally the little girl settles. Veronica takes the new *huiple* from her shoulder and gives it to Tomasa.

TOMASA

I won't get it dirty. I know how to sell it.

VERONICA

Oh, an expert salesgirl? How?

TOMASA

I will say an English word, loudly, (English) "BEAU-TI-FUL!"

VERONICA
 (Spanish)
 And what does that mean?

TOMASA
 "Beautiful!" (Spanish) *Hermosa!*

Veronica is proud, she KISSES HER forehead.

TOMASA (CONT'D)
 Don't worry mother, I will sell it.
 And we will have the money. We will
 see Grandfather. Our kisses will
 make him better.

Tomasa believes what she says, Veronica smiles at her confidence.

EXT. BANK OFFICE - DAY

Veronica hesitates outside the bank, then enters.

EXT. CHICHICASTENANGO MARKET - DAY

The glorious colors of the new *huipil* FILLS THE SCREEN. At the top of the textile, Tomasa's EYES APPEAR - looking over the crowd. She CRIES OUT,

TOMASA
 (in bad English)
 ...BEAU-TI-FUL!

TOMASA'S VIEW - The market is flooded with mostly INDIGENOUS PEOPLE, sprinkled with occasional groups of TOURISTS. No one seems to be paying any attention to Tomasa. On her back, Sophie watches the crowd.

INT. BANK OFFICE - DAY

VERONICA is seated uncomfortably in a chair in an office. She tries to appear calm, her hands folded in her lap. A MALE BANKER sits behind a desk, looking at a stack of paperwork. Veronica glances at a CLOCK on the wall, it says 3:46. She takes a breath. Finally the Banker looks up.

BANKER
 (in educated Spanish)
 Your crop is optimal?

VERONICA
(hesitating)
I don't understand...

BANKER
Your crop, is it HEALTHY? The corn?

VERONICA
Yes.

BANKER
Wilt or brown spots?

VERONICA
No.

BANKER
Will you need fungicide?

VERONICA
No.

BANKER
Will you need money for fertilizer
next month?

VERONICA
We only use natural fertilizer.

The Banker looks at her, disapprovingly.

BANKER
...Lower yield you know...

VERONICA
Last year we did well... It is all
written in the papers.

He LOOKS at the paperwork - and is not impressed.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
Besides the corn, we have beans and
squash and the apple trees, all having
a good season. You can come and look.
The apples are ready to sell.

He looks at the paper again.

BANKER
Two months ago your husband said he would
not be late for any more payments.

Veronica's expression changes. She says nothing.

BANKER (CONT'D)
Do you remember?

VERONICA
Yes.

BANKER
Yet you ARE late. Two months late.
Where is he anyway? Why is he not
here?

VERONICA
He went to Mexico for business, he
and his brother, they buy trucks to
bring back and sell.

BANKER
There are enough trucks in
Guatemala. He should use that money
to keep his promises. You know if
you cannot pay, the court will give
your land to the bank. We explained
this to your husband.

VERONICA
Money is coming in soon.

EXT. MARKET - CHICHICASTENANGO - AFTERNOON

A SMALL GROUP OF FOREIGN TOURISTS is clustered around Tomasa
and Sophia, who is staring at them skeptically.

TOURIST ONE
(English)
It is nice. You could have a purse
made out of it Stephanie...

TOURIST TWO
I don't know, what would I wear it
with?

TOURIST THREE
(to Tomasa)
"Quantos Quetzales?"

TOMASA
(Spanish)
Two thousand eight hundred
Quetzales.

TOURIST THREE
(translating - English)
...Twenty eight hundred Quetzals.

TOURIST ONE
That sounds like a lot.

Tourist Two punches at her IPHONE.

TOURIST TWO
That's almost four hundred dollars.

The Tourists all LAUGH.

TOURIST THREE
(wagging her finger at the girl)
Tresceintos Quetzals.

Tomasa frowns and shakes her head.

TOURIST THREE (CONT'D)
I offered her 40 dollars.

TOURIST ONE
Look how perfect the stitches are,
it looks TOO good.

TOURIST TWO
It's probably made on a machine.

TOURIST THREE
It's probably made in China.

They LAUGH again.

TOURIST ONE
Good try, little girl. She's a
scammer isn't she?

TOURIST THREE
They teach her to do that.

Tourist Two wants a photo.

TOURIST TWO
Get in there guys. Hold it up
little girl... Hold it up...
Arriba!

The Tourists move in for a photo.

TOURIST THREE
Make sure you can see the baby...

Tourist Two SNAPS A PHOTO. Then another, then another.

TOURIST TWO

I can't see the baby, Joanie --
make her show the baby. Show the
baby little girl, *la nina*. Lift it
up. LIFT IT UP.

Tourists Three PUSHES SOPHIE more into view.

TOURIST THREE

Perfect!

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF THE MARKET - A FEW MINUTES LATER - DAY

Veronica is PUSHING HER WAY THROUGH THE CROWD. The streets
are packed with people in every direction.

She finds a CURB to STEP UP ON and looks towards the church.

THE CHURCH - She sees Tomasa near the church steps, still
trying to sell the *huipil*. The Tourists have left.

EXT. STEPS OF SANTO TOMAS CHURCH - DAY

THE CHURCH STEPS - Tomasa is again hiding her face behind the
textile, SHOUTING through it as before.

TOMASA

(in English)

BEAUTI-FUL!

Veronica pulls the *huipil* down to reveal her daughter's face.
Tomasa BEAMS as she sees her mother.

TOMASA (CONT'D)

Mama!

The Baby sees her mother and reaches out to her - Veronica
kisses both of her daughters and takes the baby from Tomasa.

VERONICA

(Spanish)

You have to LOOK AT PEOPLE to sell
anything. You can't just hide your
face and shout.

TOMASA

One Tourist offered me sixty
dollars. They took photos.

Veronica tries to hide her anger as she secures the baby.

VERONICA

What price did you tell them?

TOMASA

Two thousand, eight hundred
Quetzales, like you said. They
laughed at me.

Her mother stoically stands and adjusts the baby on her back.
She takes the *huipil* from Tomasa.

TOMASA (CONT'D)

Maybe you are asking for too much
money?

VERONICA

I started this over four months ago
and worked on it everyday. Did you
not see me? Your Grandmother sells
her *huipils* for three thousand
quetzales, and she has many orders
in ADVANCE.

Veronica stops herself -- what is the point venting at her
daughter? She NOTICES THE SMOKE FROM THE CHURCH STEPS ALTAR
curling up into the air.

INT. MARKET STALL - RELIGIOUS GOODS - DAY

Veronica quickly grabs what she needs from the stall, a
CLUTCH OF SMALL CANDLES, a SMALL BUNCH OF FLOWERS, some
CHARCOAL BITS and a SMALL BRICK OF INCENSE.

EXT. THE TOP OF THE CHURCH STEPS - DAY

CLOSE, A HANDMADE INCENSE CENSER. It is a simple TIN CAN
PUNCHED WITH HOLES with a wire handle. Veronica's hands place
SCRAPS OF NEWSPAPER AND CHARCOAL inside. She LIGHTS THE PAPER
and FANS THE FLAME with her hand.

Tomasa and Sophia watch her closely. The small area is
crowded with other WORSHIPERS.

THE CENSER - The CHARCOAL IS BURNING and Veronica BLOWS THE
FLAME OUT. The CHARCOAL GLOWS RED. She places pieces of
INCENSE on it, and the SMOKE MULTIPLIES. MUSIC STARTS (*a
variation on Chopin's Nocturne No. 1 in B flat minor*).

Veronica LIFTS THE CENSER by the wire handle and SWINGS IT
BACK AND FORTH. She closes her eyes and PRAYS. The children
watch her. Sophia's eyes follow the SMOKE AS IT RISES INTO
THE AIR.

VERONICA

(K'iche')

Please pray girls - Pray for the
recovery of Grandfather. Pray Daddy
returns soon.

Tomasa KNEELS and closes her eyes.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Pray we sell this *huipil*.

THE SMOKE rises higher and higher, up towards the tower of
the church.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

The Mother and Girls ENTER THE DARK AND MYSTERIOUS CHURCH,
which is aglow with HUNDREDS OF CANDLES. WORSHIPERS dot the
church, gathered at SMALL ALTARS. We feel the weight of
hundreds of years of prayers floating throughout the space.

VERONICA KNEELS AT A SMALL ALTAR - an ancient stone on the
floor, covered with the wax of countless candles. The
children sit on the opposite side from her. She places the
flowers she bought on the altar and methodically LIGHTS THE
CANDLES. Tomasa's eyes wander to watch other INDIGENOUS WOMEN
doing identical things at other small altars throughout the
church. Veronica prays.

VERONICA

(K'iche')

For the health and healing of my
father, I pray... For the safety
and return of my husband, I pray...
For a buyer for my weaving, I
pray...

Veronica glances at her daughter.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

For the obedience of my daughter,
Tomasa, I pray...

On hearing that, Tomasa's EYES DART BACK to her mother.

EXT. SERIES OF SHOTS - CHICHICASTENANGO MARKET - AFTERNOON

As Veronica continues to work the Market, trying to sell the
huipil. Her daughters wait nearby, watching the crowd.
Nothing is working. The family moves on.

EXT. MUNICIPAL BUILDING - GALVEZ TEXTILE STALL - AFTERNOON

The sun is very low now. Veronica is still offering the *huipil* to the thinning crowds. She notices the low sun. Tomasa is sitting on a step nearby. She sees a man (MR. GALVEZ) coming towards them, eyeing the *huipil*. She TUGS on her mother's skirt as he approaches.

GALVEZ

(Spanish)

Señora, good afternoon. That is a lovely *huipil*. New?

VERONICA

(she knows what is coming)

Good afternoon Mr. Galvez.

GALVEZ

Is it all silk?

VERONICA

Yes.

He takes it in his hands and looks at it with the eye of an expert. He turns it over and studies the stitching on the back. Then looks carefully at the fine work on the front.

GALVEZ

I always need a quality piece like this in my store.

He motions behind him, to a STALL on the street where dozens of *huipiles* and other textiles hang.

VERONICA

I'd rather sell it myself.

(lying to him)

I am in no hurry to sell.

Tomasa is watching the exchange closely. Mr. Galvez takes a WAD OF BILLS from his pocket.

GALVEZ

I can pay you 1100 Quetzales right now.

He starts counting the bills. Veronica eyes the money.

VERONICA

It is worth three times that. It is the work of over four months.

GALVEZ

It is only worth what a buyer will pay. Do you see how many *huipiles* I have to sell? So many.

Veronica looks at his shop, bulging with textiles. Tomasa watches them both.

GALVEZ (CONT'D)

There are not so many tourists this year, and our people don't have money for high-quality *huipiles*. They have a machine now that makes wonderful work like this in less than one day. Real weaving! It looks perfect! Not like that cheap Chinese screen printing -- real weaving! But by machine. Smart!

He looks at her, she's crumbling. She looks at the wad of money.

GALVEZ (CONT'D)

My wife bought two of them - can you imagine? Made by machines! But she likes them! I have the best but she would rather I sell them and have the money!

(laughs)

The tourists want the hand-made ones, of course, but they don't know quality. They buy colors they like.

TOMASA

(butting in)

My mother will sell it for three thousand. Her work is the best.

Mr. Galvez is not used to being addressed by a young girl.

GALVEZ

If you can get three thousand, take it quickly little girl! Then send the buyer to me. I'll buy you a kilo of candy after!

He LAUGHS AGAIN. Tomasa stares at his fat, ugly mouth.

INT. LOCAL BUS ON A COUNTRY ROAD - DUSK

Tomasa looks out of the window as they leave town.

EXT. HILL ROAD TOWARDS VERONICA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The FAMILY trudges up the hill, Veronica carrying the sleeping baby and her bag. They move out of the way of a passing PICKUP TRUCK heading down the hill.

TOMASA

(Spanish)

When is Daddy coming home?

VERONICA

(exhausted)

Soon. I don't know really.

TOMASA

And he is with Uncle Martin?

VERONICA

Yes.

TOMASA

And he is buying us a pickup truck?

VERONICA

He says, yes.

TOMASA

And we won't have to walk up this hill any more?

VERONICA

Maybe.

INT. VERONICA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Veronica is TENDING A FIRE on which a POT OF BEANS is cooking. Tomasa is FORMING TORTILLAS from BLUE MASA (corn dough). But the girl's tortillas are lumpy and misshapen. Veronica comes to her, taking her bad tortillas and patting them expertly into thin, round perfection.

VERONICA

(in K'iche)

You have to find patience, the *masa* wants to be a beautiful tortilla, but she needs time to become that way. See how happy she is?

Tomasa watches as her mother's hands work like lightning, patting the tortilla thinner and thinner.

TOMASA

Isabella's mother has a machine
that makes it flat, she pushes a
handle like this...

Tomasa mimes pressing the handle of a tortilla press.

VERONICA

A mother's hands puts love into the
food. A machine cannot love, so no
love goes into the tortilla.

Tomasa is skeptical.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Everything has it's own time.
Faster does not make it better.
Work makes contentment. God only
gives us so many days, there is no
reason to rush through them.

Tomasa looks at the floor, her mother doesn't stop.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Every task has it's own beauty if
you choose to see it that way.
Watch.

Veronica grabs another lump of *masa*. She rolls it into a
small ball, then pats it expertly into a flat tortilla, she
makes a RHYTHMIC PATTING SOUND as she does it.

INT. VERONICA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

It's late and Tomasa is ASLEEP on a MAT on the floor. She is
awoken by the PING of a TEXT MESSAGE on her MOTHER'S PHONE.
She sees her Mother's worried face as she reads, illuminated
by the LIGHT OF THE SCREEN. Veronica LAYS DOWN and tries to
sleep, but can't. She RISES and goes outside.

EXT. THE YARD OF THE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

In the moonlight Veronica reads the text again. We SEE THE
SCREEN - in Spanish it says: "Father asks for you. When will
you come?" She doesn't attempt to answer. At the DOOR OF THE
HOUSE, Tomasa is standing watching her Mother.

CUT TO:

EXT. VERONICA'S MILPA - THE NEXT MORNING

The blade of an OLD HOE slices into the ground of the family *milpa*, the hereditary plot of farmland the family has tilled for generations. We are in the midst of neat ROWS OF CORN, and Veronica's hoe is working the land, turning organic material into the soil. Tomasa works steadily next to her Mother. The sleeping baby is wrapped on the Mother's back. CHICKENS SCRATCH at the newly turned-over soil. Soon the baby gets NOISY and wants to eat. Veronica stops work and sits to BREASTFEED Sophia.

TOMASA

(Spanish)

What was that text message last night? Daddy? Is Daddy coming?

VERONICA

Your Grandmother sent the text. Grandfather is still sick.

TOMASA

What did you say to her?

VERONICA

Nothing. I can't yet. I need to buy phone credits.

TOMASA

Why didn't you buy it yesterday?

VERONICA

(irritated)

Because we didn't SELL anything.

TOMASA

Maybe you should have sold it to that man.

Now Veronica is angry.

VERONICA

Did you hear his price? There would not be enough to pay the bank or go to Santiago to see Grandfather. Your father will send money soon.

Tomasa sits and worries.

TOMASA

What if something happens to Grandfather?

VERONICA
 (changing the subject)
 It's late, you need to get to
 school. Go on...

Tomasa gets up reluctantly and heads to the house.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
 Come home quickly after. I need
 your help with the apples and I
 need to go back to town. Don't be
 late. And you have Grandfather's
 weaving to do. Now is the time to
 work hard.

Tomasa walks on, not acknowledging.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
 (in K'iche')
 TOMASA, DID YOU HEAR ME?

Tomasa nods, and keeps walking.

EXT. PATH THROUGH THE MILPAS - DAY

Tomasa walks alone carrying her SCHOOL THINGS.

INT. SCHOOL - HOURS LATER - DAY

We see Tomasa in school, at her DESK, WRITING. A BELL SOUNDS.

TEACHER
 (Spanish)
 Don't forget your mathematics
 homework...

Tomasa and the OTHER CHILDREN pack up their things.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Tomasa is walking with her friend, AKNA (8) and several OTHER
 GIRLS.

AKNA
 (Spanish)
 Come to my house, let's play...

TOMASA
 I can't, I have to go home and do
 stupid weaving.

AKNA
That is boring.

TOMASA
Don't you have to weave?

AKNA
No.

TOMASA
Does your mother?

AKNA
No, she just buys it.

TOMASA
What about your *huipil*?

AKNA
My grandmother made it.

EXT. THE MILPA - THE APPLE TREE - AFTERNOON

A RIPE APPLE is hanging on a branch, and TOMASA'S SMALL HAND reaches out and pulls it off the tree. She drops it gently in a BASKET. She takes a moment to survey the *milpa* from the height of the ladder. It is serene.

EXT. PORCH - VERONICA'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

CLOSE - WEAIVING - Veronica's hands are finishing weaving a small, ornamental textile (called a *Tzute*). Her baby is curled in a lump on her back, asleep in her shawl. Tomasa sets down the basket of apples next to her mother.

VERONICA
(Spanish)
Almost finished - This will sell.

Tomasa TAKES AN APPLE from the basket and BITES into it, sitting down by her mother. Veronica is CUTTING the *tzute* from the threads of the loom.

TOMASA
Then we can go see Grandfather?

VERONICA
If I sell the *huipil* today also.

She finishes her weaving. She unties the LOOM from the post and rolls it up.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

I can finish tying the threads on
the bus.

They look at it.

TOMASA

It is so pretty.

VERONICA

You can do this someday.

Tomasa doubts it.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Now I have to go. Work on
Grandfather's belt while I am gone.
You will never learn weaving if you
don't do it everyday.

She produces a SMALL BACKSTRAP LOOM, with a small NARROW
WEAVING on it. It is the BEGINNINGS OF A BELT (*Cinta*), red
with black stripes. She attaches it to the post and prepares
it. Tomasa gives it a woeful look.

TOMASA

(strongly)

I CAN'T DO IT.

VERONICA

Yes you can, come here...

Tomasa reluctantly complies, and Veronica arranges her and
PLACES THE STRAP AROUND HER.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Just start -- that is the hardest
part, starting again after you have
stopped something.

Tomasa just sits there.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Come on...

The girl starts weaving clumsily.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Be patient, find a rhythm. You are
working with only two thread
colors, that is easy.

Tomasa looks at her mother who stands and BALANCES THE BASKET
OF APPLES ON HER HEAD.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

(K'iche')

How will you teach YOUR daughter to
weave if you don't learn?

Tomasa watches Veronica LEAVE. She looks at the loom and SIGHS. Once her mother is out of sight, she DISCONNECTS HERSELF from the strap of the loom. She picks up the APPLE she was eating and TAKES A BITE.

EXT. CHICHICASTENANGO HILL STREET - DAY

We see Veronica WALKING UP A HILL TO TOWN. She has her *huipil* and new *tzute* folded on her head, and on top of that the basket of apples.

EXT. CHICHICASTENANGO MARKET, CHURCH - DAY

Veronica sits on the steps, the BASKET OF APPLES on her lap. She is holding up her new *tzute* for people to see and has her *huipil* draped over shoulder. It's not a market day, and the crowd is light. A LOCAL WOMAN stops and BUYS A FEW APPLES.

As she sells the apples, she looks towards the stall where Mr. Galvez works. He is there, sees her and waves "hello." She nods back.

EXT. MARKET LOCATIONS - CHICHICASTENANGO - DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS as Veronica walks around, the basket on her head, trying to make a sale. She stops a GERMAN TOURIST COUPLE, and shows them the new *tzute*.

GERMAN WOMAN

(in German)

It is so beautiful...

The woman TAKES A PHOTO and moves on.

EXT. MARKET - STREET CORNER - LATE AFTERNOON

She sells a few more apples. She looks at the SUN, it is getting late. She goes to a nearby FRUIT VENDOR and sells the remainder of her apples.

EXT. GALVEZ TEXTILE STALL - LATE AFTERNOON

She goes to the stall and shows Galvez her new *tzute*. He silently looks at it, without enthusiasm. This time there are no compliments.

GALVEZ
(Spanish)
...only one panel?

VERONICA
It is very high quality, Tourists
like the smaller size.

Galvez hands it back to her. Veronica studies his face.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
Four hundred...

GALVEZ
(LAUGHS)
I would be lucky to sell it for
three hundred!

VERONICA
Four hundred.

GALVEZ
One hundred and fifty. I cannot pay
any more. And let's be honest with
one another, this is rushed work.

She doesn't say anything. He takes a LARGE WAD OF BILLS from his pocket and counts out 150 Quetzales (\$20). She hesitates, her eyes aching, then HANDS HIM THE TEXTILE and TAKES THE MONEY.

GALVEZ (CONT'D)
That *huipil*?

Veronica takes the *huipil* off her head and shows it to him.

GALVEZ (CONT'D)
I'll give you a thousand.

VERONICA
You offered me eleven hundred
yesterday!

GALVEZ
Prices fluctuate!

She turns and WALKS AWAY.

After a few steps - Veronica turns back to look, and sees Mr. Galvez proudly SHOWING HER *TZUTE* to his EMPLOYEE. He's delighted with his new bargain.

INT. SMALL STORE - CHICHICASTENANGO - AFTERNOON

Veronica buys a PHONE CREDIT from a SHOPKEEPER stationed behind protective bars.

INT. BUS - AFTERNOON

Veronica is TEXTING on the darkened bus.

THE SCREEN (in Spanish) - *"My phone is now working, how is father?"*

She sits, waiting for an answer, as the bus bounces along on the rough road. She watches the phone, Finally, a "PING."

THE SCREEN - *"Come right away. Father wants you."* She replies, *"I am trying to get money, my husband is in Mexico."* She pushes "send." Then she sends a new text to her husband. *"Urgent, please send money. My father is dying. Call me!"*

She sits on the dark bus and waits.

EXT. THE HILL TO THE HOUSE - DUSK

Veronica is walking up the hill, lit only by MOONLIGHT, the folded *huipil* and empty apple basket on her head. She stops to check her PHONE. No message.

EXT. VERONICA'S PORCH - DUSK

Tomasa's Belt lies on the ground where Tomasa left it. Veronica picks it up. She is not happy.

VERONICA

TOMASA!

Tomasa's PEEKS OUT from around the door.

INT. VERONICA'S HOUSE - EVENING

Sophia is on a blanket near the fire, She is eating a TAMALE. Veronica is unhappily inspecting Tomasa's unfinished WEAVING. Tomasa is sitting in the corner Veronica is upset. She turns to Tomasa, shakes the belt at her.

VERONICA

(Spanish)

Tell me, would you take off your ear and throw it away? Here, I will give you a knife, you can take it off now.

TOMASA

What do you mean?

Veronica picks up the KITCHEN KNIFE, and holds the handle out to Tomasa.

VERONICA

How about your fingers? Maybe you have too many? Go ahead, cut some off, toss them in the fire.

TOMASA

Mother, you have become crazy!

VERONICA

YOU ARE MAYA. Weaving is part of you. You can't throw it away any more than you can throw away a part of your body.

She holds up Tomasa's UNFINISHED BELT.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

You were supposed to finish this for Grandfather's birthday LAST MONTH. This is work any hard-working girl could do in a few days. You started this two months ago!

TOMASA

I know...

Veronica grabs at the *huipil* she is wearing.

VERONICA

What does this say?

Tomasa looks at her, she's heard this speech before.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

What does it say? Answer me!

TOMASA

Pride.

VERONICA

(K'iche)

It tells them they CAN'T DESTROY
US. They tried to destroy all of us
- for hundreds of years. We were
here before them, we will be here
after them.

Tomasa stares at her silently, carefully choosing her words.

TOMASA

They think we are nothing.

VERONICA

You think you have no power, but
what you MAKE, BRINGS you power.
The act of creation is the ultimate
power. The tiny spider can weave a
giant web, making threads from her
own body. She feeds herself and
her family with the web. She
doesn't need anyone else.

TOMASA

(Spanish)

I can't do it. It is too hard!

VERONICA

OF COURSE IT IS HARD! Everything
GOOD is HARD. But we still do it.

Veronica tries to calm herself. Tomasa's head is bowed, but her eyes are full of rebellion.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Go to sleep now. You are getting up
early.

INT. VERONICA'S HOUSE - LATE NIGHT

It's the MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT and Veronica has not slept. She watches over her sleeping children. The HEARTH contains the DIM GLOW of the last embers.

THE WALL - a FRAMED PHOTO of a younger Veronica and her father in a field hangs there. He is smiling, leaning on an old hoe. A younger Veronica is leaning her head on his shoulder.

MUSIC STARTS: "Spiegel Im Spiegel" (by Arvo Pärt) arranged for wooden flute and harp - (this will be established as the "grandfather/ancestor" theme later).

Veronica takes the PHOTO OFF THE WALL and holds it, standing in the doorway. The MOONLIGHT falls on the photo as she traces her father's face with the tip of her finger. Her eyes go towards the FENCE, and beyond it, the tips of the CORN PLANTS, shimmering in the breeze. There is the DIM GLOW OF COMING DAWN in the sky.

EXT. THE MILPA IN MOONLIGHT - NIGHT

MUSIC CONTINUES as Veronica walks through the rows of corn in slow motion. She closes her eyes, and extends her hands - letting her fingers brush the corn stalks as she walks through them.

EXT. VALLEY OVERLOOK - PRE-DAWN

Veronica arrives at a clearing on the far edge of the *milpa*, with the valley stretching out below. The glow of the dawn is clear behind the distant hills. She wraps her shawl tight around her shoulders, and waits for the light.

INT. VERONICA'S HOUSE - MORNING

A slash of morning light illuminates the sleeping Tomasa. Her mother's HAND SHAKES HER AWAKE.

VERONICA
(Spanish)
GET UP.

EXT. THE PORCH OF VERONICA'S HOUSE - MORNING

CLOSE - Tomasa's tiny fingers are fumbling with the weaving of the BELT.

HER FACE - twisted in frustration.

INT. VERONICA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Veronica is digging through an old CHEST, looking at several OLD HUIPILES stored there. Some seem very old. Her eyes are filled with emotion as she places them inside a SHOPPING BAG. She picks up and looks at an ANCIENT & ORNATE HUIPIL, IN PURPLE, ORANGE AND RED. She glances out of the doorway and sees Tomasa struggling with the weaving.

EXT. THE PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Veronica comes and kneels by her daughter. She untangles the mess Tomasa has made. Wordlessly, she guides the child's hands, patiently teaching her again how to weave the belt. Tomasa tries by herself, slowly, she starts to build the belt, thread by thread.

VERONICA
(Spanish)
There.

TOMASA
I told you I can't DO IT.

Veronica picks up the BROAD FLAT WEAVING TOOL.

VERONICA
Put out your fingers, pointing
towards the sky.

Tomasa does, confused, and before she can move them, Veronica WACKS HER FINGERTIPS WITH THE STICK. TOMASA YELPS.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
(K'iche)
My mother did that to me and her
mother did that to her and on
before that. Remember how it feels
- the sting. The pain wakes up the
magic in your fingers.

Tomasa doesn't buy it.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
(Spanish)
I have to remove the weeds. You
KEEP WEAVING until it is time to go
to school. Turn off your brain -
think with your fingers. Maybe they
are awake now.

Veronica heads for the family *milpa* with her HOE. Sophia wanders out of the house and sits, watching her sister. The toddler looks at her, as if to say. "I am making sure you work." Tomasa glares at her and goes back to the weaving.

EXT. VERONICA'S MILPA - DAY

Veronica is on her knees, pulling weeds.

EXT. THE PORCH & YARD - CONTINUOUS

Tomasa continues to weave, and seems to be working more methodically. She even seems mildly confident. Sophia lays down and watches her work, scooting closer and closer until she is UNDER THE WEAVING and LOOKING UP through the threads at her sister. She smiles at her sister. Tomasa grimaces, and struggles to concentrate on what she is doing.

Suddenly, SOPHIA LOOKS AWAY. Something has CAUGHT HER ATTENTION... she scrambles to her feet.

SOPHIA'S VIEW - SOMETHING BLACK FLUTTERS in the frame, near the edge of the house.

Sophia's sudden movement STARTLES Tomasa, and that has made the weaving go wrong. She tries to re-count and recover. Threads get mixed up and the mess grows bigger and bigger.

THE CORNER OF THE HOUSE - Sophia is toddling to the edge of the house, looking for the BLACK FLUTTERING THING.

TOMASA - The weaving now has gone completely off the rails. The more she tries to fix it, the worse it becomes.

SUDDENLY, ENRAGED, TOMASA STANDS AND RIPS THE LOOM OFF THE POST - SHE pulls the strap off her, SMASHES THE WEAVING UP, BREAKING SOME OF THE STICKS SHE THROWS IT INTO THE DIRT and glares at it, breathless.

SHE SEES SOPHIA STARING AT HER - The two year old knows something VERY BAD has happened. Sophia toddles to the weaving on the ground, PICKS IT UP and HANDS IT TO HER SISTER.

STILL ANGRY, Tomasa takes the weaving from her and THROWS IT AS HARD AS SHE CAN - it lands across the yard against the fence. A HEN wanders over to PECK AT IT.

SOPHIA looks at her sister as if she just murdered someone. She toddles over to where the hen is pecking at the weaving, shoos it away, picks it up and returns it to her sister.

Tomasa BURSTS INTO TEARS. She grabs the ruined weaving and runs in the house.

INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Tomasa gathers her school things quickly, wraps them up in her shawl along with the lump of weaving.

EXT. THE MILPA - DAY

Veronica stops her weeding to notice Tomasa leading Sophia down the path by the *milpa*. Tomasa stops at the end of the row and pushes her sister towards her mother.

Upset, the baby toddles towards her mother, and embraces her. Veronica caresses her as she watches her older daughter hurry down the path on the way to school.

EXT. THE PATH TO SCHOOL - DAY

CAMERA FOLLOWS TOMASA as she hurries down the path. She is distracted by SOMETHING FLUTTERING OVERHEAD. It is a LARGE BLACK BUTTERFLY, heading the opposite way. Tomasa stops and looks at it. The BUTTERFLY PAUSES, loops around and HOVERS OVER THE LITTLE GIRL for a moment. They CONNECT IN SOME WAY, INSECT AND HUMAN - before the BUTTERFLY TURNS and CONTINUES the way it was going. Tomasa watches it go.

EXT. THE MILPA - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Veronica continues PULLING WEEDS. A few meters away, Sophia is trying to PULL WEEDS ALSO. She becomes distracted by a BUG and tries to catch it.

Sophia is distracted from her distraction by SOMETHING IN THE AIR. It is the BLACK BUTTERFLY. It SETTLES ON A PLANT near Veronica. The baby LAUGHS at it. VERONICA LOOKS AND SEES THE BUTTERFLY.

VERONICA LOOKS AS IF SHE HAS SEEN DEATH ITSELF. She RECOILS and GRABS THE BABY, PULLING HER CLOSE TO HERSELF. She stares at the Butterfly and it seems to be watching her. MUSIC STARTS, eventually removing the fear and replacing it with something softer.

CLOSE ON THE BUTTERFLY - as it watches Veronica.

INT. TOMASA'S SCHOOL - DAY

Tomasa is WRITING IN HER NOTEBOOK. A SHADOW covers her, someone has BLOCKED THE LIGHT.

THE TEACHER - sees someone standing in the doorway.

TEACHER

Tomasa's mother... May I help you?

Tomasa LOOKS...

VERONICA IS IN THE DOORWAY. She has the Baby on her back and TWO FULL BAGS. Her face is lifeless.

EXT. A ROAD NEAR THE SCHOOL - DAY

VERONICA WALKS QUICKLY and Tomasa tries to keep up. They are silent. Suddenly Veronica stops, and sets down the bags. She kneels in front of Tomasa.

VERONICA

(in K'iche)

Your Grandfather has died. We have to go to Santiago. I don't know how long we will be there. I can't reach your father. I need your help. You are a big girl now.

Tomasa's eyes are full. Some kind of horrible emotion is building behind them, it looks more like GUILT than GRIEF.

EXT. THE MAIN ROAD - DAY

A BUS ARRIVES. Veronica boards with her children.

EXT. CHICHCASTENANGO - THE HILL NEAR THE CEMETERY - DAY

Veronica walks up the same hill as before, carrying the bags with the girls in tow.

EXT. THE STEPS OF THE CHURCH - DAY

Tomasa kneels, THICK INCENSE SMOKE swirls around her.

We see Veronica from Tomasa's angle. She is swinging her homemade CENSER from which flows a thick cloud of smoke. Sophia watches the smoke rise. Veronica KNEELS and starts to WEEP, silently.

TOMASA - Watches her mother. Her face shows her burden.

INT. THE CHURCH - DAY

Veronica is kneeling in front of an altar on the floor of the dark church. She lights several candles as the girls watch her. She gives one for Tomasa to light.

EXT. GALVEZ TEXTILE STALL - DAY

Galvez turns and looks. He sees Veronica standing before him. Tomasa watches him intently.

VERONICA
(Spanish)
I have work to sell.

She opens a bag to reveal her stack of VERY OLD HUIPILES. On top is the ancient one in red, orange and purple. She hands them to Galvez one by one. He puts on a PAIR OF GLASSES and looks at them. Tomasa recognizes the ancient one on top.

TOMASA
(to her mother in K'iche)
DON'T SELL THAT! That was your
Great Grandmother's...

VERONICA
Be QUIET Tomasa...

Galvez looks at the old one. .

GALVEZ
(Spanish)
San Juan Cotzal?

VERONICA
My mother's mother's family...

Galvez slowly goes over the textiles. Finally he picks up the new *huipil*.

GALVEZ
For this, nine hundred.

VERONICA
You said eleven hundred before!

GALVEZ
One thousand. No more.

Veronica glares at him.

GALVEZ (CONT'D)
And for the rest, seven hundred
each.

VERONICA
That is not a fair price.
(she picks up the ancient one)
(MORE)

VERONICA (CONT'D)

If you could EVEN find a weaver today that could do this work, which you COULD NOT, it would cost five thousand.

Tomasa watches, in horror.

GALVEZ

Look - it is worn, here, and here.

VERONICA

That is absurd! It is an antique! My great grandmother made it for her wedding!

Galvez gestures towards the church.

GALVEZ

There is a place on the steps, go sell it yourself! I pay for this space and pay for a worker and am here every day in the store.

Veronica simmers in anger.

VERONICA

This is the heritage of my family, my mother and her mother's mother's mother.

Galvez shrugs.

GALVEZ

It happens every day. People have to live.

Veronica stares at the pile of textiles.

VERONICA

How much. For all of them?

Galvez calculates.

GALVEZ

One thousand, and two, three, four at seven hundred...

VERONICA

NINE hundred - at least!

GALVEZ

...SEVEN hundred... That's two thousand and eight hundred...

(MORE)

GALVEZ (CONT'D)

plus the one thousand; so three
thousand eight hundred.

He takes out a WAD OF MONEY and counts out the BILLS. He holds them out to her.

TOMASA

No, Mama...

Tomasa locks her eyes on her mother - willing her to NOT take the money. But she does. Veronica takes it quickly, puts it in her belt.

THE HUIPILES are FOLDED UP and CARRIED back to Galvez's shop. Tomasa watches the great grandmother's ancient *huipil* wrapped up with the others, and carried away. Veronica and Tomasa watch them go. Tomasa's eyes fill with tears.

Veronica pulls herself together, picks up her bags, takes Tomasa's hand and turns and WALKS AWAY. This time she doesn't look back.

EXT. THE BANK - CHICHICASTENANGO - DAY

Veronica and the children ENTER.

INT. THE BANK - CHICHICASTENANGO - CONTINUOUS

Veronica is paying at the window. She counts out the bills.

EXT. STREETS OF CHICHICASTENANGO - DAY

HIGH ANGLE - The shadows are deep as the family makes its way through the streets. The baby is asleep on her mother's back.

TOMASA

Mama, what will happen to
Grandmother's *huipiles*?

VERONICA

Someone will make a bag or
something out of them.

TOMASA

Can't we go get them back?

VERONICA

THEY ARE GONE! I gave the money to
the bank! And the rest is for the
bus tickets. We must go to your
Grandfather.

Veronica takes a few more steps and stops. She drops her bags and COVERS HER FACE WITH BOTH HANDS. At first she thinks she is going to hold it together, then it all crumbles. She SOBS DEEPLY, then gasps for air, as if she is suffocating.

TOMASA STARES AT HER, AFRAID. When the fear passes, she reaches a hand out, and touches her mother's arm.

Veronica slowly stops sobbing. She takes a breath. She wipes her eyes, picks up her bags, and WALKS ON.

INT. REGIONAL BUS - DAY

They board a bus. It is full of people and cargo. Veronica wedges her girls and bags a space into the back.

EXT. THE MOUNTAINS OF K'ICHE - DUSK

The BUS CLIMBS through the mountain roads.

INT. REGIONAL BUS - NIGHT

Tomasa and Sophia are ASLEEP. Veronica is awake, watching them. She reaches into a bag and produces the small FRAMED PHOTO of her with her father. She looks at it.

EXT. BUS DEPOT - ANTIGUA, GUATEMALA - NIGHT

A busy depot. The FAMILY EXITS the bus with their bags.

ANOTHER PART OF THE DEPOT - The family is waiting. Another SMALLER BUS arrives. Veronica asks the driver,

VERONICA
Santiago Sacatepéquez?

He nods.

EXT. ROAD TO SANTIAGO SACATEPÉQUEZ - NIGHT

The bus on a road in the moonlight, lined with tall trees.

EXT. MAIN PLAZA - SANTIAGO SACATEPÉQUEZ - NIGHT

The bus stops near the CHURCH and PEOPLE EXIT, including Veronica and her children. The BUS LEAVES, and they GATHER THEIR THINGS and START WALKING.

EXT. STREETS OF SANTIAGO - NIGHT

SERIES OF SHOTS - The family walks through the dark streets. This town is different than Chichicastenango, the buildings are not as old. Several Tuk-Tuks (scooter-like taxis) pass them.

EXT. THE GRANDMOTHER'S STREET - NIGHT

The Family WALKS up a quiet street, the houses behind walls.

THE DOOR - Veronica stops and KNOCKS on a DOOR made of battered CORRUGATED STEEL. VOICES are HEARD behind it. Nothing happens. She KNOCKS AGAIN. Finally, the LATCH is undone and it opens a little to reveal a STERN-FACED GIRL (YOSALIN) of about 13. She eyes them.

YOSALIN
(in Spanish)
What do you want?

VERONICA
I am Don Ixjotop's daughter.

YOSALIN
He died.

VERONICA
I know.

The girl is emotionless. Her eyes slide to Tomasa, with a dull malice.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
Yosalin? I am your Aunt Veronica.
Your mother's sister. You are so
big now!

Yosalin grimaces.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
(to Tomasa)
This is your cousin Yosalin. Tomasa
- do you remember her?

TOMASA
No...

VERONICA
You were a baby. You girls used to
play together that summer I stayed
here. You don't remember?

TOMASA

Hello...

YOSALIN

I remember her.

Yosalin is dressed in new "city" clothes, not the traditional clothes that Veronica and Tomasa wear. Losing patience, Veronica PUSHES OPEN THE DOOR AND ENTERS INTO THE COURTYARD.

EXT. GRANDMOTHERS' HOUSE COURTYARD - NIGHT

THE HOUSE - There are a number of PEOPLE there, surrounding a VIBRANT BUT ELDERLY WOMAN, TOMASA'S GRANDMOTHER. She turns and sees Veronica and Tomasa, and RUSHES TOWARDS THEM.

Veronica does the same and THEY EMBRACE. TOMASA STANDS CLOSE, and her Grandmother reaches out and PULLS HER TIGHT.

GRANDMOTHER

(softly, in Kagchikel)

He is happy now my love, he is no longer in pain.

VERONICA

I should have been here.

Grandmother kisses Veronica, and KNEELS to HUG TOMASA.

GRANDMOTHER

(in Spanish)

What a beautiful young woman you have become, thank you for coming.

Tomasa sees Yosalin watching her, her eyes empty.

VERONICA

You remember Aunt Claudia?

CLAUDIA is early thirties with a foolish smile, dressed in city clothes. She steps to Yosalin, and touches her shoulder.

CLAUDIA

Hello Tomasa, you are all grown up.

TOMASA

Hello.

GRANDMOTHER

(to Tomasa)

Oh, you look like your mother when she was your age.

Yosalin watches, coolly. This is too much attention for a distant cousin in stupid old clothes.

VERONICA
(to Grandmother, desperately)
Where is father?

GRANDMOTHER
At the Mortuary.

Tomasa can't talk, she just looks at her Grandmother, remembering her face and the sound of her voice.

EXT. STREETS OF SANTIAGO - NIGHT

It's later and Veronica is making her way alone down a mostly-deserted street. She carries a BAG. A Tuk-Tuk passes, then circles back to see if she needs a ride, she waves him off.

EXT. MORTUARY - NIGHT

VERONICA knocks on the door. It is answered by a FEMALE ATTENDANT and she ENTERS.

VERONICA
(Spanish)
Thank you.

INT. MORTUARY - NIGHT

Veronica enters a simple room. A WOODEN COFFIN sits alone in the room, surrounded by CANDLES. Under a GLASS PANE in the lid of the coffin is the BODY OF HER FATHER. Veronica approaches the coffin hesitantly. She hovers over the glass, staring at HER FATHER.

EXT. VIEW OF SANTIAGO - DAWN

The sun is rising on the town of Santiago, beyond, in a broad valley, is a network of small family farm plots.

INT. MORTUARY - DAWN

Veronica is replacing the used candles with new ones. She lights the new candles from the flames of the old ones.

EXT. STREETS OF SANTIAGO - DAWN

Veronica is walking back to her mother's house.

INT. GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE - DAWN

Tomasa and Sophia are asleep in a bed. Veronica KISSES THEM.

CLOSE ON A BOX, and Veronica's hands open it to reveal a HAND-WOVEN HUIPIL in the local Santiago Sacatepéquez geometric pattern of red, orange, yellow, blue and green. It is the same pattern her mother wears.

A MIRROR - She looks at herself wearing the Santiago *huipil*. She puts her Chichicastenango *huipil* in the box.

She picks up the baby and wraps her up on her back.

VERONICA
(Spanish - to Tomasa)
Wake up...

Tomasa opens her eyes and sees her mother in the unfamiliar *huipil*. She reaches out and touches it.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
This was mine before you were born.

TOMASA
You look like a different person.

Together, they look at the *huipil* in the mirror.

TOMASA (CONT'D)
Mother, why doesn't your sister wear traditional clothes? And Yosalin?

Veronica's expression changes.

VERONICA
She believes it is easier for her. Or better... or something.

Tomasa doesn't understand.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
In the city - people treat you differently if you wear traditional clothes. That is why she won't speak our language as well. She wants to hide who she is.

But in the look on her mother's face, Tomasa sees it is a serious matter.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

She chooses to forget many, many things that should not be forgotten.

EXT. SANTIAGO CATHOLIC CHURCH - EARLY MORNING

Veronica, Tomasa & the Baby on the steps to the church.

INT. THE SIDE CHAPEL - DAY

Veronica PRAYS at a SIDE CHAPEL, decorated with a GROUP OF SAINTS. Veronica stares at the altar. Tomasa is huddled in the corner, holding Sophia in her lap, looking at the statues of Saints. To Tomasa, the Saints seem to be staring at her in judgement, especially Santiago, the Patron Saint of the town. He sits on a horse, staring straight at her. He seems angry.

SEVERAL NUNS enter the church. Tomasa scrunches down AVOIDING THEIR GAZE, certain that they see the evil she has done. She whispers to Sophia:

TOMASA

(Spanish)

The nuns know I broke the weaving in anger. Then Grandfather died. I didn't mean to do it.

EXT. SANTIAGO MARKET - DAY

Veronica and her children move through the market, which is small compared to Chichicastenango's market. Sophia is on her mother's back, looking at the dogs that wander nearby.

VERONICA

(to Tomasa - Spanish)

We have many people coming to the house tonight. You need to finish Grandfather's belt. He would have wanted it to be buried with him.

Tomasa doesn't reply, but looks straight ahead.

EXT. GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE - COURTYARD - DAY

A HEN - Chased by a toddling Sophia.

INT. GRANDMOTHER'S KITCHEN- DAY

Veronica and her mother are preparing a large quantity of food. Tomasa is lingering nearby, attempting to help.

VERONICA
(to Tomasa - Spanish)
What are you doing? I told you to
work on Grandfather's belt.

TOMASA
I want to help. I can cut things.

VERONICA
The funeral is tomorrow!

Grandmother is watching the exchange.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
Work hard - for once!

GRANDMOTHER
(to Tomasa)
Get your weaving Tomasa, I will
help you.

EXT. GRANDMOTHER'S PORCH - DAY

Tomasa hands the bundle of WEAVING to Grandmother.

GRANDMOTHER
I'll help you set it up.

Grandmother takes her bundle and unties it. Tomasa drops her head and closes her eyes. Grandmother sees the wad of destroyed WEAVING inside.

GRANDMOTHER (CONT'D)
What happened?

Tomasa does not look up.

GRANDMOTHER (CONT'D)
Who could have done this?

Tomasa still can't look at her. Grandmother then understands Tomasa herself, did the damage.

GRANDMOTHER (CONT'D)
(softly)
Don't worry, we can fix it.

CLOSE ON THE WEAVING - Grandmother's hands start to repair the damage. Her hands move calmly, expertly.

INT. THE KITCHEN - DAY

Veronica stops working and goes to the window. She calls out,

VERONICA
Sophia! Where are you baby?

SOPHIA IN THE COURTYARD - She toddling after another HEN. She looks towards her mother and points at the chicken.

SOPHIA
(K'iche')
CHICKEN!

Veronica smiles, waves - her eye catches something else,

HER POV - Tomasa and Grandmother on the porch, the WEAVING is now attached to a POST, and Tomasa has the BACK-STRAP on.

EXT. GRANDMOTHER'S PORCH - DAY

THE WEAVING - Grandmother is still helping Tomasa sort out the mess. A SHADOW falls over the weaving.

VERONICA
(Spanish)
What did you do?

Grandmother & Tomasa look up at Veronica's ANGRY FACE.

GRANDMOTHER
It will be fine.

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A MORTUARY PICKUP TRUCK has stopped and SEVERAL MEN are unloading the GRANDFATHER'S COFFIN. Claudia and Yosalin are standing by, watching.

INT. GRANDMOTHER'S YARD - CONTINUOUS

Claudia OPENS THE GATE and ENTERS INTO THE YARD. She lets the men CARRYING THE COFFIN in behind her.

Veronica WATCHES THE COFFIN ENTER. Grandmother rises and stands beside her. Veronica puts her arm around her.

Tomasa watches, still attached to the loom.

INT. CENTRAL ROOM - GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE - LATER THAT NIGHT

CLOSE, ON THE COFFIN is the PHOTO Veronica brought from Chichicastenango, of HER WITH HER FATHER. There are CANDLES everywhere. There is MUSIC and the SOUND OF MANY PEOPLE.

BY THE WALL - Tomasa is sitting on the floor against the wall, out of the way. She watches the people at the coffin.

THE COFFIN - An ELDERLY COUPLE are leaning against it, gazing at the Grandfather. The Man is talking in soft tones.

MAN AT COFFIN

(in K'aqchikel)

Remember when that big sow escaped,
and we chased it all over the town?

Veronica enters, with a EMPTY GLASS and a PITCHER OF WATER. She places the glass on the coffin and carefully, fills it with water from the pitcher.

An OLDER MAN ENTERS (MR. MÉRIDA). He carries a beautiful ROUND KITE about a meter wide. He greets Grandmother warmly.

GRANDMOTHER

(Spanish - to Veronica)

You remember, Mister Mérida. Your father's best friend. Mr. Mérida is a master kite builder.

MR. MÉRIDA

Veronica, Your father was my best friend.

VERONICA

Hello Mr. Mérida. This is my daughter, Tomasa.

GRANDMOTHER

Look what he brought!

Mr. Mérida DISPLAYS HIS KITE. It is as beautiful as any *huipil*. A thousand Tiny pieces of colored paper have been cut and pasted into an intricate and interlocking pattern of geometric shapes. The colors echo the Santiago *hupiles*. Featured in the middle, is a TISSUE-PAPER PORTRAIT OF THE GRANDFATHER.

VERONICA

It looks like him! Doesn't it Tomasa?

Tomasa nods. Mérida kneels to talk to Tomasa.

MR. MÉRIDA

Hello Tomasa! Your Grandfather told me so many things about you.

Tomasa beams. Mérida excuses himself and approaches the coffin - he places the kite next to it. He takes a SMALL BOTTLE OF RUM and a GLASS from his pocket.

Tomasa settles back AGAINST THE WALL, where she was before. She watches him. MÉRIDA NOW HAS HIS GLASS FULL, raising it as a toast to Tomasa's Grandfather.

Tomasa also notices her Aunt Claudia and Cousin Yosalin are talking to a WOMAN. They are wearing NEW OUTFITS in black. Claudia strokes Yosalin's hair as if she is a precious pet.

Tomasa's eyes scan the room. People are EATING and DRINKING. Tomasa notices her Grandmother putting all of her energy into her guests. She is going from person to person, smiling at one, getting another to laugh, hugging another.

Tomasa catches the eye of her mother, who is busy with the food. Her Mother gives her a LOOK, and Tomasa gathers the meaning. She RISES to leave.

EXT. GRANDMOTHER'S PORCH - NIGHT

Tomasa is back to working on her weaving.

THE DOOR TO THE HOUSE - The candlelight is flickering inside, MUSIC PLAYS. Another TWO PEOPLE ARRIVE.

Tomasa goes back to her weaving, she works slowly, with some confusion.

THE DOOR - Yosalin is now standing in the doorway, in shadow.

TOMASA as she works, it is going a little more easily now. Then, a SHADOW covers her weaving. It is Yosalin.

YOSALIN

(Spanish)

What are you doing?

Tomasa keeps her head down, trying to concentrate.

TOMASA

It is a belt. (Hesitating) For Grandfather.

YOSALIN

Too late.

TOMASA

It is to be buried with him.

YOSALIN

Did you mess it up or something? It looks really ugly.

Tomasa does not reply. Yosalin eyes her.

YOSALIN (CONT'D)

Why are you wearing old Indian clothes to a party? My mother said it was important to wear nice clothes.

TOMASA

This is my best *huipil*.

YOSALIN

It is EMBARRASSING.

TOMASA

No it is not, it is BEAUTIFUL. Mother made it!

YOSALIN

Why MAKE SOMETHING when you can buy it in a store? It's a lot faster. And better of course. Unless you are poor.

Unexpectedly, GRANDMOTHER SWOOPS IN. She has HEARD enough.

GRANDMOTHER

Yosalin!

Yosalin JUMPS.

GRANDMOTHER (CONT'D)

Isn't Tomasa's *huipil* is SO BEAUTIFUL? In the Chichicastenango style. Her mother made it for her. Do you understand the story it tells? This embroidery at the neck? This is the sun. And these diamonds also, the sun's journey through the Universe, and these shapes, up and down? The beautiful mountains and valleys of K'iche'. Everything has a meaning.

She has Tomasa SMILING. Yosalin's fun is spoiled.

GRANDMOTHER (CONT'D)

(to Yosalin)

Yosalin. Why don't you wear YOUR traditional clothes? I made you a beautiful *huipil*. Your mother too.

YOSALIN

Mother does not like to dress like an Indian.

Grandmother's eyes flash.

GRANDMOTHER

You are MAYA, not "Indian." That is what "they" call us. You should be proud to be Maya.

Yosalin has a reply, but thinks better of it.

GRANDMOTHER (CONT'D)

Yosalin, go inside. I will talk to you and your mother about this later.

She does. Grandmother kneels next to Tomasa.

GRANDMOTHER (CONT'D)

You don't have to finish this tonight. It's okay.

TOMASA

(a bit panicked)

But I HAVE to.

GRANDMOTHER

Tonight is your time to say goodbye to your Grandfather.

INT. MAIN ROOM - GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Veronica and Tomasa approach the coffin. Veronica looks in at her father, breathes deeply, and tries not to break down in tears. Tomasa can't even bear to look.

INT. A ROOM IN GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Tomasa is in bed and a sleeping Sophia is near her. She can hear the distant SOUNDS OF THE PARTY.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DREAM - A FOREST - DAY

LOOKING UP AT THE TREES - GLIDING THROUGH THE FOREST.

Tomasa is looking up as she walks through the forest - she is HOLDING SOMEONE'S HAND.

HER GRANDFATHER IS HOLDING HER HAND, he is younger and full of life.

TOMASA

Where are they?

GRANDFATHER

They are watching us, they are always watching us. They are sacred, and don't want to be seen.

TOMASA

I want to see one...

GRANDFATHER

If you do see one, it means something wonderful will happen to you.

He stops, sits on a FALLEN TREE.

GRANDFATHER (CONT'D)

Sometimes it is best just to stop and wait, and be quiet. Very quiet.

TOMASA

I will be.

She sits on the ground, leans back and rests her head on the log. They both look at the tree-tops, the only SOUND is the soft flutter of the wind in the trees.

TOMASA (CONT'D)

What does it look like?

GRANDFATHER

The sacred Quetzal is the most beautiful bird in the world.

He KNEELS ON THE GROUND, and clearing some dirt, starts to DRAW THE BIRD IN THE EARTH with his finger.

GRANDFATHER (CONT'D)

Green and blue and red, it wears a little crown on his head, like a king. He is famous for his long, long beautiful tail.

(MORE)

GRANDFATHER (CONT'D)

He makes a sound like a little dog,
"huell-whu... huell-whu."

SUDDENLY, we hear the REAL SOUND OF THE BIRD, "HUELL-WHU."

GRANDFATHER (CONT'D)

DID YOU HEAR THAT?

TOMASA

What?

GRANDFATHER

The Quetzal, I thought I heard it.

TOMASA

It is here?

GRANDFATHER

Be still, be quiet.

HE LAYS NEXT TO HER, his eyes on the trees.

GRANDFATHER (CONT'D)

Wait.... Be still...

Tomasa looks, WE SEE her view of the trees, moving slightly in the breeze. SOMETHING WITH BRIGHT COLORS FLUTTERS HIGH UP.

GRANDFATHER (CONT'D)

"Huell-whu..."

TOMASA

I saw...

He gestures for her to be quiet.

GRANDFATHER

Wait... Wait...

WE HEAR ANOTHER VOICE.

SUDDENLY CUT TO:

INT. A ROOM IN GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

THE SOUND WAKES TOMASA UP. She HEARS her GRANDMOTHER'S VOICE from the kitchen.

GRANDMOTHER'S VOICE

(Kaqchikel)

How dare you come to your father's
funeral without your traditional
clothes!

INT. GRANDMOTHER'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Grandmother is tearing into Claudia and Yosalin. Yosalin doesn't understand a word, but stares blankly.

GRANDMOTHER

You disgrace him and your family!
You are Maya! Have you forgotten
what happened to your Uncle and his
parents? How they were killed -
They never abandoned who they were.

Yosalin looks at towards at the door. It is Tomasa looking in. She glares at her.

EXT. STREET NEAR THE GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE - DAWN

A OLD WOMAN carries something under her arm to Grandmother's house. CLOSE, we see TWO OLD SANTIAGO-STYLE HUPILES. The woman knocks on the gate.

INT. - GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE, MAIN ROOM - MORNING

Grandmother is supervising the dressing of Claudia and Yosalin in traditional clothes, including elaborate ceremonial head-dressings. The textiles are beautiful, but old and worn. Yosalin is seething. Tomasa and Veronica are sitting, waiting, also dressed ceremonially. Yosalin's eyes dart to Tomasa, who mutters,

YOSALIN

(Spanish)

I will get you.

HARD CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS OF SANTIAGO - EARLY MORNING

THE COFFIN - Now in the bed of the MORTUARY PICKUP. We hear BAND MUSIC, a bit out of tune. There are a number of COINS PLACED ON THE COFFIN.

THE FUNERAL PROCESSION is slowly making its way towards the Cemetery. Shots reveal:

- The PRIEST WALKING. An ALTAR BOY SWINGS A CENSER, releasing INCENSE SMOKE.

- THE GRANDMOTHER is walking slowly. She is dressed in her finest *huipil*, with appropriate traditional HAIR-DRESSING (*cinta*). She is carrying FLOWERS.

- The Daughters, VERONICA (WITH THE BABY) and CLAUDIA walk, with TOMASA and YOSALIN following behind. Claudia and Yosalin look stiff and unhappy in their traditional clothes. Little Sophia is on her mother's back, watching everything. Veronica carries the PHOTO OF HER AND HER FATHER. Claudia carries ANOTHER PHOTO of the Grandfather.

- MR. MÉRIDA is wearing a worn suit, he carries the kite he made, holding it so everyone can see it.

- A SMALL BAND plays as they walk.

A LARGE GROUP OF PEOPLE FOLLOW, old and young. The older women are all dressed in traditional Santiago clothes. The men and younger people are not. Many carry FLOWERS.

TOMASA - we see the procession from her point of view. She looks back at the coffin. Some of the COINS SLIP OFF. She watches the INCENSE DRIFT OUT OF THE CENSER and up into the morning air. She watches the other mourners, her Grandmother and Mr. Mérida, and finally her mother's devastated face as they make their way through the small town.

EXT. SANTIAGO STREETS NEAR CEMETERY - DAY

HIGH ANGLE as the procession winds its way towards the Cemetery.

EXT. SANTIAGO CEMETERY - 20 MINUTES LATER - DAY

VIEW LOOKING UP FROM THE BOTTOM OF AN OPEN GRAVE - We see a part of the COFFIN suspended on 2 BOARDS and the SKY BEYOND. THE BAND MUSIC STOPS. It is SILENT. Then, in the open space, we see TOMASA'S HEAD APPEAR, stealing a look into the bottom of the grave.

THE PRIEST - He is looking to make sure everything is ready.

WIDE SHOT - The entire procession is gathered around the grave. We see flowers everywhere, and four LARGE CIRIO CANDLES lit and set at the four corners of the grave.

Everything is SILENT, except for the sound of SMALL BELLS.

NEARBY ON THE HILL - The BELL SOUND comes from an ICE CREAM VENDOR with a SMALL CART that is moving into position to grab future customers as the funeral finishes. The BELLS STOP RINGING as he settles.

THE PRIEST - Takes a breath, and starts the service in Spanish.

TOMASA - WATCHES the others: Grandmother, Veronica, Mérida, Claudia & Yosalin... each is in their own world and their own thoughts as the words of the liturgy float over the scene.

JUMP AHEAD TO:

EXT. SANTIAGO CEMETERY - SEVERAL MINUTES LATER

The ANGLE UP FROM THE GRAVE AGAIN, as the boards are being slid out and the COFFIN SLOWLY LOWERED. We see Tomasa's face again, with others, including Mérida, Claudia and Yosalin.

ANGLE FROM ABOVE - as the COFFIN HITS BOTTOM and the ROPES ARE PULLED FREE. DIRT IS TOSSED ON TOP OF THE COFFIN.

THE PEOPLE - MANY ARE TOSSING DIRT IN ON TOP OF THE COFFIN. Tomasa can't bear to. Veronica takes a BOTTLE OF WATER, and ceremonially pours it into the grave.

The Priest NODS TO THE BAND -- and it STARTS PLAYING AGAIN.

MR. MÉRIDA IS WATCHING TOMASA. The girl seems to have the weight of the world on her shoulders.

INT. GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

CLOSE - A CANDLE IS BEING LIT. Veronica steps back, and kneels next to Tomasa, who is holding Sophia.

AN ELABORATE HOME ALTAR - it is ablaze with CANDLES and bunches of FLOWERS. The PHOTO of Veronica with her father is place prominently, as well as OTHER PHOTOS OF THE GRANDFATHER at all stages of his life and with different family members. Mérida's KITE is featured as well. There is a BOTTLE OF WATER and a GLASS.

VERONICA

(K'iche)

Candles must be lit for nine days,
and we must pray everyday.

TOMASA

I will pray.

VERONICA

If you see a candle getting low,
share the flame with a new one,
before it goes out.

They pray together, as Sophia crawls around. She tries to touch the flowers and Tomasa pulls her back.

TOMASA

When will we go home?

VERONICA

I don't know. Grandmother needs us.
Todos Santos is coming, it is very
important in Santiago. We will
spend the day with Grandfather.

TOMASA

How?

VERONICA

At the grave, it is the day of the
Giant Kites. The kites help the
spirits to come back to their
families. Grandfather's spirit will
come back to visit us.

EXT. GRANDMOTHER'S PORCH - DAY

She is at the far end of the porch, with her LOOM, WEAVING. She is focused completely on what she is doing, putting all of her energy into her hands.

Tomasa appears with her WEAVING BUNDLE. She ties her loom to the post and sits down to start weaving.

After awhile, Veronica appears as well. She sets up her loom on the next post, and starts weaving. The THREE GENERATIONS WEAVE TOGETHER. Veronica notices the moment and its meaning.

GRANDMOTHER

(Spanish)

How is your weaving in Chichi?

VERONICA

I weave every day.

GRANDMOTHER

Selling well?

Tomasa looks at her mother, worried.

VERONICA
It could be better.

GRANDMOTHER
What did you make?

VERONICA
A Tzute, in Chichicastanango style,
and a copy of my wedding *huipil*.

GRANDMOTHER
They sold?

VERONICA
(hesitating)
...Yes.

GRANDMOTHER
How much did the *huipil* get?

VERONICA
Not much.

GRANDMOTHER
Less than 3000?

Tomasa watches her mother sink.

GRANDMOTHER (CONT'D)
LESS than 2000?

VERONICA
Yes.

The Grandmother's eyes flair. She snorts her displeasure.
Then she composes herself.

GRANDMOTHER
What did you do wrong?

VERONICA
Nothing... I spent many months on
it.

TOMASA
It was perfect! It was beautiful!

Veronica HUSHES her daughter.

GRANDMOTHER
(gesturing to her weaving)
This is already sold! Then I have
to make one for Mrs. Kantun for her
daughter-in-law in San Juan style.
(MORE)

GRANDMOTHER (CONT'D)

You know, the yellow and purple stripes...

VERONICA

The market is not good in Chichi. The women only buy the cheap copies. And the tourists are fewer. You are lucky.

GRANDMOTHER

I'm not lucky, I am good. Good work deserves a good price.

Grandmother thinks.

GRANDMOTHER (CONT'D)

You know, you should make a copy of my grandmother's old huipil. You know, the old beautiful one in orange, red and purple. You can send it to Antigua with someone when they travel. I'll sell it here for you.

Tomasa has stopped breathing.

EXT. FLASHBACK - CHICHICASTENANGO MARKET - DAY

SLOW MOTION - The ancient *huipil* she is referring to, in orange, red and purple, taken by Mr. Galvez, the merchant. He carries it away. Tomasa looks at her mother, and sees the look in her eyes.

EXT. GRANDMOTHER'S PORCH - DAY

BACK TO THE PRESENT. TOMASA LOOKS AT HER MOTHER who calmly says.

VERONICA

Mother...

GRANDMOTHER

(going back to her weaving)

Yes?

Tomasa fears the worst.

VERONICA

I, I can't do that.

GRANDMOTHER

Why?

VERONICA

(after a long BEAT)

I don't think I can copy it, it is too difficult. I am not good enough.

GRANDMOTHER

(back to her weaving)

Oh, then make something that won't embarrass you.

Veronica looks to Tomasa - gives her a "it's okay" look.

VERONICA

Momma, I saw a Black Butterfly, when I was working in the *milpa*. That's when I knew Father was gone.

GRANDMOTHER

He was saying goodbye. He wanted to see you before he went on his journey.

Tomasa silently watches them, but says nothing.

VERONICA

I always heard about the Black Butterfly, but I didn't know if it was real.

TOMASA

I saw it too! On the road.

VERONICA

Really?

GRANDMOTHER

Yes. More things are real than we can ever understand.

INT. GRANDMOTHER'S KITCHEN - THAT NIGHT

Veronica is making tortillas. Grandmother, Claudia and Yosalin are eating.

VERONICA

(Spanish)

Mother, how is the *Milpa*?

GRANDMOTHER

Your father got sick. And I didn't go because I had to take care of him. And weave. I can't do everything.

VERONICA

No crop this summer? No corn?

GRANDMOTHER

No. Is it so important? He saved money for me.

VERONICA

It's almost time to plant the fall crops.

Veronica places a fresh STACK OF TORTILLAS on the table. Claudia reaches for one.

CLAUDIA

Doesn't your daughter want to eat?

EXT. GRANDMOTHER'S PORCH - DAY

CLOSE - A PLASTIC STOOL is being carried out to the porch. Veronica puts it down and places a PLATE OF FOOD on top of it.

VERONICA

(K'iche)

You need to eat.

Tomasa looks up from her weaving. Her belt has progressed.

TOMASA

Okay momma.

Veronica looks at the weaving, which is quite long now.

TOMASA (CONT'D)

(whispering)

Mamma, what about your great grandmother's huipil?

VERONICA

Grandmother is never going to know. It's best. Never mention it. Never. Keep it inside you and I.

Tomasa agrees, but her eyes are doused in pain.

INT. ALTAR IN GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

CLOSE - A CANDLE has burnt itself almost out.

VERONICA - is on her knees, praying.

On a SMALL COT near the altar, the GRANDMOTHER IS SLEEPING. Veronica COVERS HER up with a BLANKET.

EXT. GRANDMOTHER'S PORCH - NIGHT

Still attached to her loom, Tomasa is CURLED UP ON THE PORCH ASLEEP.

Veronica detaches the loom, PICKS UP HER DAUGHTER and takes her to bed.

INT. ALTAR IN GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Veronica LIGHTS A NEW CANDLE, which replaces the spent one. She kneels and resumes PRAYING.

INT. COURTYARD - GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Veronica is searching through a storage area by the light of her phone. She finds an OLD HOE (*Azada*).

EXT. GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE - THE GATE - PRE-DAWN

The sun is just starting to lighten up the eastern sky. Veronica appears, she carries the HOE on her shoulder and a BOTTLE OF WATER. She is wearing her modest Chichicastenango "work" *huipil*. She closes the gate behind her. MUSIC STARTS, the same theme from earlier in her *milpa* back home.

EXT. ROAD DOWN TO THE VALLEY - DAWN

Veronica walks down a steep hill that leads to the valley. There are several OTHER FARMERS making their way down the hill. She passes a tree-lined SIDE PASSAGE off the road. It absorbs all of her attention as she passes.

EXT. THE FAMILY MILPA - DAWN

Veronica stands, looking over the family Milpa. It is DISUSED AND OVERGROWN WITH WEEDS AND DRIED-OUT CORN STALKS. She is almost in tears, the state of the field is another kind of death in the family to her. There is a small GARDEN SHED with a BENCH outside of it. She sits and looks at the field. She produces a small round FILE from her belt, and starts expertly SHARPENING the EDGE of her hoe.

MINUTES LATER - THE EARTH - as Veronica's hoe slices the ground. She works with a grim determination.

AN HOUR LATER - The sun is up, Veronica sits on the bench and has a drink of water.

AFTER ANOTHER HOUR - Veronica is stacking up the overgrowth she has cleared into a pile by the road. She HEARS a voice,

FARMER WOMAN
(Spanish)
No one works this land anymore...

Veronica looks up and sees a robust FARMER WOMAN standing on the road.

FARMER WOMAN (CONT'D)
...I don't know why. It is a waste.

VERONICA
It belongs to my father.

FARMER WOMAN
Why doesn't he work it? It is a waste. Why doesn't he lease it to my family if he doesn't want it? I watched it sit barren all summer. So many families wish they had good land like this to work, not to grow weeds.

Veronica doesn't answer. The Farmer Woman observes the overgrown weeds, and sighs.

FARMER WOMAN (CONT'D)
Foolish.

Veronica doesn't have the energy to respond.

EXT. GARDEN SHED - AN HOUR LATER

Veronica is resting, taking another drink. She looks over the work she has done. A portion of the field is pristine - ready for planting.

MR. MÉRIDA
(Spanish)
Impressive! Can I hire you to work MY land?

She looks and sees Mr Mérida standing nearby.

VERONICA
(referring to the field)
It is a disaster, no one has touched it since the spring.

Mérida approaches her.

MR. MÉRIDA

Not really. It's always good for land to have a season to rest. You will have a good fall.

VERONICA

My father taught me how to farm here. I like to grow things, my mother doesn't.

MR. MÉRIDA

It is about time to plant beans.

VERONICA

I have to go home. My husband will be coming home... and Tomasa has school.

Talking about it upsets her..

MR. MÉRIDA

How are we going to prepare this *milpa*, if you keep talking?

He takes his hoe and starts to CHOP UP a clump of weeds. Veronica watches, then stands and goes back to work.

INT. GRANDMOTHER'S PORCH - DAY

Grandmother is TYING OFF THE FRINGES on Tomasa's completed belt. She hands it to Tomasa to admire. The girl is beaming.

GRANDMOTHER

(Spanish)

You did a good job.

TOMASA

Is it finished?

GRANDMOTHER

Don't you think it needs some embroidery? To make it special? What would honor your Grandfather?

Tomasa thinks.

TOMASA

I had a dream - It was about when Grandfather took me to look for the Quetzal bird. In the forest.

That seems significant to the Grandmother.

GRANDMOTHER
When did you have this dream?

TOMASA
Last night.

GRANDMOTHER
What did Grandfather look like?

TOMASA
...Happy.

INT. GRANDMOTHER'S KITCHEN - DAY

Tomasa is DRAWING a QUETZAL BIRD on a PIECE OF PAPER. It looks similar to the drawing her Grandfather made in the dirt in her dream.

TOMASA
It must be blue and green and red,
and have a very, very long tail, in
two parts. And a crown.

Grandmother is watching her draw, as she cooks. She is holding Sophia.

TOMASA (CONT'D)
Do you have blue and green and red
thread?

GRANDMOTHER
(smiling)
Of course...

TOMASA
Grandmother, did you ever see a
quetzal bird?

GRANDMOTHER
No, but many years ago your
Grandfather took me to look also.
They say if you see one, it is a
blessing, and good luck.

EXT. THE HILL ROAD UP TOWARDS TOWN - AFTERNOON

Veronica walks up the hill alone with her hoe. Other Farmers are making their way up the hill. One WOMAN is RIDING ON A BURRO led by her HUSBAND. They pass her.

Veronica sees the SIDE PASSAGE she looked at so carefully in the morning.

JUMP CUT TO:

EXT. THE SIDE PASSAGE - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

FLASHBACK - A YOUNG VERONICA, maybe fourteen years old and a YOUNG MAN (about 16) are MOSTLY HIDDEN BEHIND THE FOLIAGE. Young Veronica is wearing a Santiago *huipil*. THEY EMBRACE. The YOUNG MAN LIGHTLY KISSES HER NECK, the girl closes her eyes, and her head drifts back.

QUICK CUT TO:

EXT. THE HILL ROAD UP TOWARDS TOWN - AFTERNOON

THE PRESENT - Veronica turns, sets her jaw and keeps walking up the hill.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF GRANDFATHER'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Veronica returns to the house.

INT. GRANDMOTHER'S KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON

Grandmother is EMBROIDERING a QUETZAL ON THE BELT, with Tomasa watching. Her hands move swiftly.

Veronica APPEARS.

VERONICA

(Spanish)

Oh! Look. Is that your belt?

TOMASA

She is adding a Quetzal bird - Grandfather loved them.

VERONICA

Oh, yes, I see.

TOMASA

I drew it...

GRANDMOTHER

(to Veronica)

How is the *milpa*?

VERONICA

Better. But I didn't expect it to be is such a state.

GRANDMOTHER

I can't do it, and you father was sick for a long time.

VERONICA

You should have leased it.

Grandmother gives her a look.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Where is Claudia and Yosalin?

GRANDMOTHER

They went shopping in Antigua.

VERONICA

(sarcastic)

Oh, I thought they would come help me with the *milpa*.

Grandmother LAUGHS. Eventually, Veronica too. Tomasa and Sophia watch them, they have not seen laughing in a long time.

EXT. COURTYARD GATE - LATE AFTERNOON

Claudia and Yosalin ENTER. They have shopping bags with them. Yosalin HEARS the LAUGHING coming from the kitchen.

YOSALIN

(Spanish)

What is so funny?

INT. GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE - ALTAR - NIGHT

TOMASA'S BELT - It is finished and DISPLAYED ON THE ALTAR. The embroidery is impressive.

TOMASA - Praying. She keeps glancing at the belt she made.

EXT. STREET - MORNING

CLOSE - THE STREET - A MAN'S FEET ARE WALKING - Behind him a SMALL BABY PIG FOLLOWS, on a lead. CAMERA TILTS UP to reveal the man's face, it is Mr. Mérida.

EXT. GRANDMOTHER'S GATE - MORNING

Mérida's HAND KNOCKS at the gate. After a moment, a SMALL WINDOW in the gate OPENS. Veronica peers out.

VERONICA

Oh, Mr. Mérida, good day. I was just leaving. I am buying seeds today.

She looks down, SEES THE PIGLET.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Oh!

MR. MÉRIDA

A present for your daughters...

INT. GRANDMOTHER'S COURTYARD - MORNING

THE PIGLET is DRINKING MILK from a SMALL BOTTLE WITH A NIPPLE, fed by Tomasa who is delighted. Sophia is trying to TOUCH the piglet, but is nervous.

A PAIR OF FEET come and stand next to Tomasa. She looks up.

TOMASA

Look what Mr. Merida brought me!

IT IS YOSALIN looking down at the piglet, SCOWLING.

YOSALIN

It looks dirty.

Veronica looks at the piglet. Grandmother joins her.

MR. MÉRIDA

A neighbor has several orphan piglets. The mother died. You have to feed it with this bottle for awhile.

Yosalin looks at the Mérida, then at the pig, then at Tomasa. She SNORTS.

YOSALIN

You should call him "Tamale" - because that is what he will be.

Tomasa gives her a look.

EXT. GRANDFATHER'S MILPA - DAY

The Piglet is rooting around in the soft dirt. Sophia is holding onto the lead attached to the piglet. It pulls her this way and that.

Veronica is PLANTING SEEDS in rows she has staked-out. Tomasa is helping.

VERONICA

Keep an eye on her...

The pig PULLS THE LEAD so hard that it JERKS SOPHIA and she TUMBLES OVER into the dirt. Tomasa gets up and goes over, helps her up, and gives her the lead back. Sophia toddles along, happily PULLING THE PIGLET behind her.

EXT. SANTIAGO PLAZA IN FRONT OF THE CHURCH - DAY

Veronica and her daughters are walking home. Sophia is on Veronica's back. A MARKET LADY stops Tomasa. She inquires about what she assumes is a BABY in her SHAWL on her back.

MARKET LADY

(Kaqchikel)

Can I see your baby?

Tomasa doesn't understand her. The woman reaches out and LOOKS INTO HER BUNDLE.

INSIDE THE BUNDLE - The PIGLET looks up at the woman. It SNORTS. The woman SCREAMS.

VERONICA

(Kaqchikel)

She doesn't speak Kaqchikel.

The woman just looks at her as if she is crazy, then leaves. Veronica smiles at Tomasa. Sophia LAUGHS.

Veronica's gaze drifts to the CHURCH.

JUMP CUT TO:

EXT. CHURCH - FLASHBACK - YEARS AGO - DAY

FLASHBACK - VERONICA'S WEDDING AT THE CHURCH. FAMILIES are gathered at the door. YOUNG VERONICA and her YOUNG HUSBAND exit the church to the CHEERS of the guests.

EXT. SANTIAGO PLAZA IN FRONT OF THE CHURCH - DAY

- Veronica's face.

- THE CHURCH as it is now. The doors are closed.

- Tomasa - watching her mother.

TOMASA
(K'iche)
What?

Veronica is still looking, then finally - her eyes drift back to Tomasa. She places her hand on Tomasa's head.

VERONICA
Nothing.

They LEAVE.

EXT. GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The house is quiet.

INT. ROOM WITH ALTAR - CONTINUOUS

CANDLES on the altar. No one is there. We notice the GRANDFATHER'S PORTRAIT on Mérida's kite, and Tomasa's BELT.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tomasa, Veronica and Sophia are all SLEEPING.

INT. COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

A PAIR OF FEET walk silently across the courtyard. They arrive at a small makeshift PIG PEN that has recently been built. HANDS PRY OPEN A HOLE in the corner.

THE PIGLET is sleeping. Something WAKES IT UP.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Overhead, looking down at Tomasa, Veronica and Sophia still asleep. A SCREAM COMES FROM OUTSIDE. Veronica awakens.

INT. ROOM WITH ALTAR - CONTINUOUS

GRANDMOTHER
(Kaqchikel)
MY ALTAR!

Tomasa and Veronica rush into the room. Claudia and Yosalin arrive also. They all look:

THE ALTAR IS WRECKED. Flowers, candles, photos are all scattered.

MÉRIDA'S KITE is on the floor and PARTIALLY RIPPED.

THE PIGLET is standing on TOMAS'S BELT.

GRANDMOTHER (CONT'D)
(Kaqchikel)
MY CANDLES! They must stay lit...

VERONICA
These two candles are still lit -
don't worry.

Tomasa SWOOPS UP THE PIGLET and holds it tight.

TOMASA
(Spanish)
He didn't mean it - he is just a baby.

GRANDMOTHER
Why didn't you MAKE SURE? What if
he knocked all the candles out?

Tomasa is about to cry.

VERONICA
The pen was solid, I checked myself.

Veronica starts picking up the mess. Claudia joins her.

GRANDMOTHER
(Kaqchikel)
My dear husband. Forgive me. I
should have been here. Dear God.

Tomasa picks up her belt. She looks at it.

TOMASA
(Spanish)
How did he get my belt? It was way
up at the top.

SHE LOOKS AT YOSALIN, who stares back at her coldly. She is the only one that is not upset.

EXT. THE COURTYARD - THE PEN - A FEW MINUTES LATER

THE HOLE in the pen is fixed and reinforced.

Tomasa is TYING THE PIGLET'S LEAD TO A SOLID POST. She gives him an old TORTILLA.

TOMASA
(Spanish)
I know you didn't do it.

Tomasa LOOKS back at the doorway. Yosalin is there, looking at her with a cold half-smile.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Veronica and the girls are going somewhere. Veronica carries the baby and Mérida's RIPPED KITE, and Tomasa PULLS THE PIGLET BEHIND her on the lead.

EXT. MÉRIDA'S HOUSE - DAY

They stop at a gate and KNOCK. The DOOR OPENS - it is Mérida.

MR. MÉRIDA
(Spanish)
Oh, hello.
(sees the kite)
Something wrong?

INT. MERIDA'S WORKSHOP - DAY

Mérida looks carefully at his damaged kite, assessing it.

TOMASA
Can you fix it?

MR. MÉRIDA
Oh yes, no problem.

He gathers items, PAPER, SCISSORS, GLUE. He starts to work on it. The girls watch, including little Sophia. Mérida skillfully REMOVES THE DAMAGED SECTION, CUTS NEW PAPER, and deftly GLUES IT INTO PLACE as he talks.

MR. MÉRIDA (CONT'D)
So the pig did this?

VERONICA
Yes.

TOMASA
NO.

MR. MÉRIDA
Which?

VERONICA
Tomasa thinks her cousin did it.

MR. MÉRIDA
(to the pig)
Did you do it pig?

The Piglet is tied up in a corner, sniffing things.

MR. MÉRIDA (CONT'D)
What did you name him anyway?

TOMASA
Uh, "Tamale" - Maybe...

VERONICA
Mama wanted you to take him back.
But I talked her out of it. The
girls love him already.

Mérida watches how closely Tomasa follows his work.

MR. MÉRIDA
Would you like to help me?

TOMASA
Yes.

MR. MÉRIDA
(pointing to a piece)
Can you cut a piece like that?

He gives her PAPER and SCISSORS. She cuts it carefully.
Mérida gives her some glue to attach it.

MR. MÉRIDA (CONT'D)
Good...

Veronica watches her daughter work.

INT. GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE - PORCH - DAY

Grandmother is WEAVING. She looks as she HEARS the GATE OPEN. It is Veronica, Sophia... and the Piglet... which doesn't please Grandmother.

GRANDMOTHER
(Spanish)
You brought it BACK?

VERONICA
Mr. Mérida said he couldn't take it
back. Don't worry...

Grandmother eyes the pig. The pig looks at her and SNORTS.

Veronica takes the Piglet to its pen, and TIES IT securely. She gets some WIRE & STICKS and starts REINFORCING the pen. She looks back at her mother, who frowns.

GRANDMOTHER
Where is Tomasa?

VERONICA
Mr. Mérida took her to see the
giant kites being made.

EXT. SANTIAGO STREET - DAY

CAMERA FOLLOWS Mr. Mérida and Tomasa as they are WALKING THROUGH A BUSY STREET, there are STRAY DOGS, TUK-TUKS, and PEDESTRIANS to weave through.

INT. KITE-MAKING SPACE - DAY

Mr. Mérida and Tomasa enter a space where SEVERAL YOUNG MEN are working. The LEADER OF THE TEAM approaches Mérida and shakes his hand.

LEADER
(Spanish)
Mr. Mérida, The master of the
kites! How are you?

MR. MÉRIDA
I am well. I came to bring a friend
from K'iche' who has never seen the
giant kites. She is the
Granddaughter of my good friend.

LEADER

(To Tomasa)

You have never seen the giant kites? This is only part of what we are making, we have already been working since the spring.

The men are BUILDING a COMPLICATED CIRCLE PATTERN on the floor - SMALL PIECES OF COLORED PAPER GLUED TO A WHITE PAPER BACKING. The circle is about 6 meters wide.

TOMASA

It is big.

LEADER

This is only one piece, there are eight of these that will go into the kite. The entire kite will be fifteen meters tall. Bigger than the tallest building in Santiago!

SERIES OF SHOTS

Tomasa and Mr. Mérida are watching them make the kite:

- A DESIGNER draws on the PLAN.
- A MAKER cuts the SMALL PIECES OF COLORED PAPER.
- Another MAKER GLUES them to a PAPER BACKING.

As they watch, Tomasa gathers up small bits of leftover SNIPPETS OF COLORED PAPER. She slips them into her belt.

TOMASA

It looks like Grandmother's *huipil*.

MR. MÉRIDA

Hmmm...

TOMASA

See the mountain shapes, and the diamonds. And the colors, red and pink and yellow and blue and green...

MR. MÉRIDA

Well.

TOMASA

I guess the men get their ideas from the women.

MR. MÉRIDA
The men get their OWN ideas.

TOMASA
It looks a lot like Grandmother's
huipil to me.

Mr. Mérida looks at her.

MR. MÉRIDA
I'm sure your mother expects you
home soon.

EXT. A SMALL STREET IN SANTIAGO - DAY

Mérida and Tomasa are walking, and Tomasa is chattering at him. Mérida notices something ahead of him.

HIS VIEW - Grandmother is walking towards them. She wears a sour expression. They meet.

GRANDMOTHER
(Kaqchikel)
Your piglet is still too small to eat.

MR. MÉRIDA
For now.

Tomasa doesn't understand them. But she is starrng at Grandmother's *huipil*. She points at it and looks at Mérida,

TOMASA
(Spanish)
See?

CLOSE on the pattern of the *huipil*.

GRANDMOTHER
Tomasa, come with me, I need your
help.

EXT. SANTIAGO MARKET - DAY

CLOSE, A HAND CHOOSES A SQUASH - It is Grandmother's hand, she is SHOPPING. She SNIFFS the part where the vine attached, and approves. She PAYS FOR TWO and hands them to Tomasa, who is like her human shopping cart. Tomasa packs them into her shawl.

TOMASA

(Spanish)

Will Grandfather see my kite on All Saints Day?

GRANDMOTHER

WHAT kite?

Grandmother is now looking at a CALABAZA (green pumpkin).

TOMASA

If we HAD a kite, if... maybe... If I made a kite. I learned how.

Grandmother stops shopping and looks at her. Tomasa pulls the SNIPPETS OF COLORED PAPER from her belt to show her.

GRANDMOTHER

Girls don't make kites.

Tomasa seems a bit trampled.

GRANDMOTHER (CONT'D)

Some things don't change.

(seeing her face)

You can fly Mr. Merida's kite. I mean, girls don't usually FLY kites either, but... I guess it is okay. You don't have a brother after all.

She moves on, to pick over a pile of CAULIFLOWERS. After a respectable pause, Tomasa persists,

TOMASA

I want to MAKE a kite. For Grandfather.

Grandmother looks at her.

TOMASA (CONT'D)

I NEED to.

GRANDMOTHER

Girls don't make kites. You have to improve your weaving.

She is interrupted by the FARMER WOMAN who talked to Veronica at the milpa.

FARMER WOMAN

Mrs. Ixjotop. Good day. Do you own a milpa in the valley, the one that is sitting empty?

GRANDMOTHER

Yes.

EXT. SANTIAGO STREET - THE TRIANGLE - DAY

Tomasa follows her Grandmother. She is carrying all the market purchases, now a HEAVY BUNDLE on her back.

EXT. GRANDMOTHER'S COURTYARD - DAY

THE PIGLET - Sophia has it on a lead, being pulled by it.

VERONICA - Is WEAVING.

CLAUDIA - is reading a GOSSIP MAGAZINE.

EXT. GRANDMOTHER'S CHICKEN COOP - DAY

CHICKENS, being chased out of the coop by a BROOM.

Tomasa and Yosalin, moving out of the way as the CHICKENS SCOOT OUT THE DOOR. Grandmother is the one using the broom. She hands it to Yosalin.

GRANDMOTHER

(Spanish)

Girls - clean out all this dirty straw and put clean straw in.

Yosalin looks like she is about to throw up.

EXT. THE COURTYARD - DAY

Grandmother is walking across the courtyard, near Claudia.

GRANDMOTHER

(Kaqchikel)

Has your daughter ever WORKED in her life?

CLAUDIA looks up, STARTLED. VERONICA, listening in, SMILES.

EXT. GRANDMOTHER'S CHICKEN COOP - DAY

Tomasa is pushing DIRTY STRAW onto a SHOVEL with the BROOM. She drops it in a big PLASTIC BUCKET.

TOMASA
 (Spanish)
 I'm not doing all the work.

YOSALIN
 You know there is poop in there.

TOMASA
 Chickens poop.

YOSALIN
 I'm not touching poop. That is
 Indian work.

TOMASA
 You ARE an "Indian!" You are just
 like me!

YOSALIN
 I am not! My father is white!

Tomasa glares at her.

TOMASA
 He just SAYS he is.

YOSALIN
 At least my father did not run away
 from me, like yours did.

That hurts. Tomasa starts SWEEPING AGAIN, vigorously. A LUMP
 OF FILTHY STRAW flies onto Yosalin's NEW SHOES. She SHRIEKS.

TOMASA
 (to herself)
 He's coming back! And bringing us a
 truck...

EXT. GRANDMOTHER'S COURTYARD - DAY

CLOSE - A HEN scratching at the dirt.

Tomasa carries a FULL BUCKET OF DIRTY STRAW across the
 courtyard. Veronica watches her. Tomasa looks towards
 Yosalin, who is sitting by her mother, looking at her PHONE.
 Claudia nudges her daughter to help.

EXT. THE BACK OF GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

Tomasa approaches a COMPOST PIT, followed by Yosalin. Tomasa
 EMPTIES THE BUCKET INTO THE PIT while Yosalin scrunches up
 her face.

TOMASA

Look. I'll clean up the dirty straw,
you bring the clean straw.

EXT. GRANDMOTHER'S COURTYARD - A LITTLE LATER - DAY

Tomasa carries another BUCKET OF DIRTY STRAW ONE WAY, while
Yosalin carries an BUNDLE OF FRESH STRAW the OTHER WAY.

Veronica, Claudia and Grandmother observe the partnership.

EXT. GRANDMOTHER'S COURTYARD - THAT NIGHT

The PIGLET is asleep, tied securely.

THE PEN - It is severely over-reinforced with WIRE.

INT. THE ALTAR ROOM - NIGHT

The CANDLES on the altar are burning bright. Mérida's
repaired KITE is back in its place, as is TOMASA'S BELT. A
SMALL COT has been placed near the altar to stand guard.
GRANDMOTHER IS ASLEEP on it. VERONICA IS ASLEEP NEARBY, on a
MAT on the floor, in support of her mother.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. GRANDMOTHER'S COURTYARD - EARLY MORNING

A ROOSTER CROWS.

THE PIG PEN - The PIGLET is sniffing at the edge of the pen.

INT. GRANDMOTHER'S ALTAR ROOM - CONTINUOUS - EARLY MORNING

GRANDMOTHER SUDDENLY SITS UP - AWAKING from a dead sleep. She
TURNS AND LOOKS AT HER HUSBAND'S PORTRAIT on the kite on the
altar. Her eyes are LOCKED ON HIS IMAGE.

Veronica OPENS HER EYES to see what her mother is up to.

EXT. SANTIAGO STREET - EARLY MORNING

Grandmother is RAPIDLY WALKING towards some urgent
destination. She drags Tomasa behind her. Following a way
behind, is Veronica with Sophia on her back.

EXT. MÉRIDA'S HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

THE GATE OPENS and Mr. Mérida appears. He sees Grandmother, Tomasa, Veronica and the baby.

MR. MÉRIDA
(Kaqchikel)
Mrs. Ixjotop? Good day. I am just going to my *milpa*...

GRANDMOTHER
Good day. My granddaughter has to make a kite for All-Saints Day.

TOMASA
(Spanish)
What is she saying?

Veronica "shushes" her.

GRANDMOTHER
(Kaqchikel)
Will you help her?

MR. MÉRIDA
(Spanish)
You know girls don't make kites.

GRANDMOTHER
Why?

Mérida thinks.

MR. MÉRIDA
Because it is not appropriate.

GRANDMOTHER
Why?

MR. MÉRIDA
Well, making a kite is hard.

GRANDMOTHER
Have you ever woven a *huipil*?

EXT. SANTIAGO STREET - MORNING

The women are walking back. Tomasa is holding the hand of her dejected Grandmother.

TOMASA

(Spanish)

I can make the kite myself I
watched the men do it.

GRANDMOTHER

It is hard.

TOMASA

As hard as weaving?

GRANDMOTHER

But you can't really weave either!

They walk a little further.

GRANDMOTHER (CONT'D)

And yes, weaving is harder. All a
kite needs is paper, string, glue
and a few sticks!

INT. GRANDMOTHER'S ALTAR ROOM - DAY

Grandmother sits on a chair, STARING INTENTLY AT HER
HUSBAND'S IMAGE ON THE ALTAR.

DOORWAY - Veronica, Claudia, Tomasa and Yosalin are WATCHING
HER, silently. Grandmother is STARING, STARING... then,

GRANDMOTHER

Yes, that's it...

EXT MÉRIDA'S MILPA - DAY

Mr. Mérida is WORKING HARD in his *milpa* -- digging with a
SHOVEL. His eye catches something in the road.

THE ROAD - Grandmother is walking quickly down the road. She
carries a HUGE MACHETE. Tomasa hurries behind her. Neither
look Mérida's way.

HIS VIEW - He sees them stop at some bushes on the road.
Grandmother starts VIOLENTLY HACKING AT THE BUSHES WITH THE
MACHETE, cutting off a bunch of BRANCHES.

Mr. Mérida, leans on his shovel, watching.

Grandmother and Tomasa start stoically walking back on the
road. Both Grandmother and Tomasa are burdened with large
BUNCHES OF STICKS.

MR. MÉRIDA
 (to Grandmother, in Spanish)
 WHAT are you DOING?

Grandmother REACTS, SURPRISED that he was watching them.

GRANDMOTHER
 (shouting back)
 Good Day! We are making a kite!

Mérida is irritated.

MR. MÉRIDA
 You can't use those, they are too
 heavy, you have to use bamboo.

GRANDMOTHER
 No bamboo around here.

MR. MÉRIDA
 Of course! That's why we travel to
 the coast to get it in June.

Grandmother and Tomasa keep walking.

GRANDMOTHER
 We will be fine! Don't bother!

Mérida is even more irritated. They continue down the road.

MR. MÉRIDA
 IT WON'T WORK!

Grandmother WAVES as she continues.

EXT. GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE - COURTYARD - DAY

KNOCKING. Grandmother OPENS THE GATE. It is Mr. Mérida with a
 irritated expression.

MR. MÉRIDA
 You can't make a kite with any old
 sticks, not one that flies anyway.

GRANDMOTHER
 Yes we can...

MR. MÉRIDA
 No you CAN'T.

Grandmother looks at him. She has won.

INT. MÉRIDA'S WORKSHOP - DAY

Mr. Mérida is sitting at his WORK TABLE. He is staring at Tomasa, sitting opposite him. He is not happy.

MR. MÉRIDA

I told you. Girls are NOT supposed to make kites.

Tomasa sits, silently and politely.

MR. MÉRIDA (CONT'D)

...Or women. Or old ladies.

He takes a breath. When he has calmed down a bit, he says,

TOMASA

I want to make a kite with a Quetzal Bird. For my Grandfather.

Mérida considers, but he lost this skirmish long ago.

MR. MÉRIDA

What will you do for me?

Tomasa thinks.

TOMASA

I can weave something for you.

MR. MÉRIDA

Hmmm. I have seen your weaving...

TOMASA

I am a good farmer.

Mérida thinks about it.

MR. MÉRIDA

One hour for one hour. Every hour I work on this kite, you help me in my *milpa*.

Tomasa NODS in agreement.

MR. MÉRIDA (CONT'D)

I hope you are strong. You look a little skinny to me.

EXT. GRANDFATHER'S MILPA - DAY

Veronica is WATERING THE PLANTED SEEDS with WATER from a BUCKET. She hears a SHOUT and LOOKS.

THE ROAD - Tomasa is JUMPING UP AND DOWN,

TOMASA
I AM GOING TO MAKE A KITE!

INT. MERIDA'S WORKSHOP - SERIES OF SHOTS- DAY & NIGHT

Mérida and Tomasa in an extended SERIES OF SHOTS over several days, building the kite:

- DRAWING the design
- Creating the BACKING out of WHITE PAPER.
- LAYING THE DESIGN OUT on the white paper
- GATHERING COLORED PAPER.

EXT. MÉRIDA'S MILPA - SERIES OF SHOTS - DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS as Tomasa works in Mérida's *milpa*.

- Tomasa HARVESTS BEANS.
- She helps him REMOVE WEEDS.
- He shows her how to PRUNE A FRUIT TREE.
- She SHARPENS A SHOVEL with a FILE. Mérida supervises from an old CHAIR. He seems tired.

INT. MÉRIDA'S WORKSHOP - THE NEXT DAY

Mr. Mérida and Tomasa are putting the FINAL TOUCHES ON THE KITE -- THREADING STRING AROUND THE OUTSIDE OF THE FRAME and GLUING THE PAPER KITE TO IT. Tomasa is APPLYING THE GLUE, Mr. Mérida CAREFULLY FOLDING THE PAPER ONTO THE GLUED SURFACE.

It's finished, Mr. Mérida sits on a nearby chair. He's very tired. Tomasa looks carefully at the kite, in the middle is a majestic QUETZAL BIRD. SHE SEEMS SAD, almost to the point of tears.

MR. MÉRIDA
(Spanish)
What is wrong? You don't like it?

TOMASA
No, it is good.

MR. MÉRIDA

What then?

TOMASA

I hope Grandfather understands, I didn't mean to. I loved him.

MR. MÉRIDA

What are you talking about?

TOMASA

I could not weave, I could not do it, Momma was angry, and I hated it. So I TORE it and tried to RUIN IT so I didn't have to weave again. I hate weaving because everyone is better than me, and I will NEVER be good. Then GRANDFATHER DIED. Because of what I did...

Tomasa COVERS HER FACE. Mérida thinks.

MR. MÉRIDA

When did this happen?

TOMASA

Before I went to school.

MR. MÉRIDA

That Friday? Before I saw you?

Tomasa nods.

MR. MÉRIDA (CONT'D)

Your Grandfather died in the night, very late Thursday night. Before the sun came up. I was with him and your grandmother.

Tomasa doesn't understand.

MR. MÉRIDA (CONT'D)

He died while you were asleep -- What happened with your weaving didn't mean anything. God wanted him to come home. It wasn't you, my child!

TOMASA LOOKS AT HIM, we can almost see the weight lifting from her small shoulders.

EXT. GRANDMOTHER'S COURTYARD - NIGHT

A BIG PARTY - Mérida and the entire family are gathered. There is a lot of FOOD. SEVERAL NEIGHBORS are there as well. Everyone is celebrating TOMASA'S BEAUTIFUL KITE. Even Claudia praises Tomasa's work. Yosalin watches it all glumly from a distance, holding her PHONE. Mr. Mérida sits in a chair, watching. He seems weak.

INT. GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Tomasa crawls in bed. Sophia is already asleep. Tomasa looks at the wall, where her BEAUTIFUL KITE HANGS. It looks stunning in a shaft of moonlight.

EXT. GRANDMOTHER'S COURTYARD - THE NEXT MORNING

CLOSE - A CORN GRINDING STONE - "BLACK" CORN is being ground by Veronica.

HER HANDS - We see her patting the BLACK MASA into the shape of a tortilla and putting it on the COMAL (griddle).

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Sophia and Tomasa are asleep. The SOUND of "PAT-PAT-PAT" WAKES UP Tomasa.

Tomasa curls up under the blanket, closes her eyes and lets the "PAT-PAT" SOUND wrap around her. She opens her eyes again and looks up to where her BEAUTIFUL KITE is hung on the wall.

Except IT IS NOT THERE - the KITE IS MISSING.

Tomasa's REACTION is something like terror.

INT. THE KITCHEN - EARLY MORNING

Tomasa's rushes into the kitchen, to her mother at the stove.

TOMASA

(K'iche')

My Kite! Grandfather's kite! Where
is it?

VERONICA

What do you mean?

INT. BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Veronica rushes in the bedroom, she looks at the wall where the kite was. Tomasa follows her. They look everywhere. Nothing.

INT. - GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE - SERIES - EARLY MORNING

They look in,

- THE KITCHEN
- THE MAIN ROOM WITH THE ALTAR
- THE STOREROOM
- THE CHICKEN COOP

INT. CLAUDIA & YOSALIN'S ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Claudia and Yosalin are asleep. We HEAR the DOOR OPEN. Claudia opens one eye.

Veronica is standing at the end of her bed.

VERONICA
(Spanish)
WHERE IS THE KITE?

EXT. THE STREET OUTSIDE GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE - MORNING

Tomasa is now searching the area outside of the house. She is looking everywhere. Eventually her eyes catch a piece of BAMBOO sticking out from under a pile of JUNK.

THE PILE OF JUNK - Tomasa removes several layers, REVEALING the remains of her CRUMPLED AND MUTILATED KITE. The kite's DELICATE PAPER CONSTRUCTION IS RIPPED AND SHREDDED. The sticks have been DELIBERATELY BROKEN into pieces. She looks back towards the house, and SEES HER HEARTBROKEN MOTHER, watching her.

INT. - GRANDMOTHER'S COURTYARD - SERIES - MORNING

Tomasa stomps into the courtyard carrying her mangled kite. Claudia and Yosalin are watching her. Tomasa gives Yosalin a look - she KNOWS it was her. Yosalin stares coldly at Tomasa. Is that pride in her eyes? Satisfaction?

TOMASA

Mr. Merida will help me fix it. It will be better than before.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE THE GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE - DAY

The GRANDMOTHER has returned from the market with a BAG OF PRODUCE. She is talking with the FARMER WOMAN, the one that spoke to her at the market.

Tomasa RUNS FROM THE HOUSE and UP THE STREET, carrying the remains of her DESTROYED KITE in her shawl on her back. She is obviously upset. The women watch. Veronica comes into the street to look also. Then she notices the Farmer Woman with her mother.

EXT. STREETS NEAR GRANDMOTHER'S - DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS - Tomasa is RUNNING FURIOUSLY through the streets, DODGING TUK-TUKS, PEDESTRIANS, DOGS - until she ARRIVES ON Mr. Mérida's street.

EXT. MÉRIDA'S HOUSE - DAY

Tomasa comes to the gate and BANGS furiously on the DOOR. Nothing. She bangs again. She looks through a HOLE IN THE GATE.

TOMASA'S VIEW - Through the hole. She sees A LARGE WOMAN SHE DOESN'T KNOW pattering around, slowly walking to the gate.

She TRIES to be patient. She looks again. The Woman is closer, but now moving even SLOWER.

Tomasa takes a breath, swallowing her frustration. Then, finally, the DOOR OPENS. The Woman looks crossly at her.

TOMASA

(in K'iche')

Good morning - Is Mr. Mérida here?

The woman doesn't speak K'iche', she SHAKES HER HEAD.

WOMAN SHE DOESN'T KNOW

(in Spanish)

What?

TOMASA

(Spanish)

Is Mr. Mérida here?

WOMAN SHE DOESN'T KNOW
He is in the Hospital. I am his niece.

TOMASA
The Hospital?

The woman tries to shut the door, Tomasa HOLDS IT OPEN. This irritates the Woman more.

TOMASA (CONT'D)
Where is the hospital? I have to talk to him.

WOMAN SHE DOESN'T KNOW
He is sick, he doesn't need a girl bothering him.

TOMASA
Where is it?

WOMAN SHE DOESN'T KNOW
(motioning)
Up there, on the hill, that way...
(Kaqchikel)
Rude K'iche'!

And she SLAMS THE GATE SHUT, before Tomasa can say anything else. Tomasa is stunned for a moment, then takes off RUNNING UP THE HILL.

EXT. STREETS ON HILL - DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS - Tomasa CONTINUES TO RUN, searching for a Hospital. She stops several PEDESTRIANS and asks them directions.

OLD WOMAN PEDESTRIAN - Tomasa asks her where the Hospital is. She points back the other way. Tomasa RUNS the way she says.

MAN PEDESTRIAN - Tomasa asks where the Hospital is. He tells her to go LEFT, then LEFT. Tomasa RUNS the way he says.

OLD MAN PEDESTRIAN - Gives her even more complicated directions.

OLD MAN PEDESTRIAN
(Spanish)
You go that way, then left, then straight, then up a hill.

Tomasa RUNS the way he said.

She comes to a small road going up a steep hill. It is REALLY STEEP. She RUNS UP IT. When she finally reaches the top, IT IS A DEAD END.

She is more than frustrated, she starts walking down the hill, and stops, exhausted. She KICKS A METAL FENCE. She KICKS it again, HARD.

A HOUSE GATE OPENS - A BOY opens it and looks at her like she is an alien.

TOMASA
(Spanish)
Where is the Hospital?!

BOY
Are you sick?

TOMASA
NO!

BOY
I think it is that way...

He points.

Tomasa EXITS and the BOY WATCHES HER GO.

EXT. SANTIAGO HOSPITAL - DAY

Tomasa hurries INSIDE.

INT. SANTIAGO HOSPITAL - RECEPTION - DAY

Tomasa runs up to a RECEPTIONIST at a desk.

TOMASA
(Spanish)
Is Mr. Mérida here?

RECEPTIONIST
Who?

TOMASA
Mr. Mérida. The Kite-Maker.

The Receptionist LOOKS IN A BOOK. She looks at Tomasa.

RECEPTIONIST
He's upstairs. Are you a relative?

TOMASA

No.

RECEPTIONIST

Where is your mother?

TOMASA

At my Grandmother's House, with the baby.

RECEPTIONIST

Where do you live?

TOMASA

(thinking - should she
tell the truth?)

Chichicastenango.

RECEPTIONIST

Sorry, only relatives are allowed.
And you are too small anyway. The old
man is very sick and needs rest.

TOMASA

It is really important.

RECEPTIONIST

No.

TOMASA

He helped me make this kite, LOOK!

She thrusts the REMNANTS OF THE KITE at her, expecting her to be outraged. The Receptionist ignores her.

Tomasa goes BACK OUT THE DOOR and sits on the steps. She thinks. She glances back in towards the Receptionist several times, who is doing paper-work.

Tomasa studies the CRUMPLED KITE in her lap. She touches the complex pattern of colors. A part of the QUETZAL BIRD is still visible. She looks inside again, just in time to see the Receptionist LEAVE THE LOBBY through a door.

Tomasa sees her opportunity, SHE JUMPS UP, RUNS BACK INTO THE LOBBY and UP THE STAIRS.

INT. HOSPITAL - 2ND FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Tomasa is walking down the hallway, trying to look like she belongs there.

TOMASA'S VIEW - None of the rooms contains Mr. Mérida.

Finally at the LAST DOOR, she sees Mr. Mérida sleeping in a HOSPITAL BED. He looks tired and weak. She looks quietly at him, then a HAND CLAMPS on her SHOULDER.

It's the RECEPTIONIST - she's caught!

EXT. GRANDMOTHER'S PORCH - DAY

The Grandmother is WEAVING. Tomasa quietly enters the gate, still carrying her ruined KITE. She sits by Grandmother. Neither speaks. Tomasa looks at the broken kite on her lap.

TOMASA
(Spanish)
Yosalin broke it. On purpose.

GRANDMOTHER
She says she didn't.

TOMASA
(K'iche)
She is a lying toad.

The Grandmother LAUGHS.

GRANDMOTHER
(Spanish)
Don't worry -- You mother has been shouting at your Aunt for the last hour. I had to separate them like when they were children.

CLOSE - TOMASA as she IMAGINES THE SCENE...

INT. GRANDMOTHER'S PORCH - DAYDREAM - DAY

CLOSE-HANDHELD-BLURRY - Veronica IS BEATING THE CRAP OUT OF CLAUDIA, CURSING IN K'ICHE'. There is HAIR-PULLING & SLAPPING.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRANDMOTHER'S PORCH - BACK TO REALITY - DAY

GRANDMOTHER
No, it wasn't like that...

EXT. GRANDMOTHER'S PORCH - ANOTHER FLASHBACK - DAY

THE "REAL" FLASHBACK - Veronica and Claudia are sitting across the room from each other, giving each other cold hard looks (The Evil Eye).

EXT. GRANDMOTHER'S PORCH - BACK TO REALITY (AGAIN) - DAY

BACK TO SCENE - Veronica appears at the door, livid.

VERONICA
WHERE WERE YOU?

TOMASA
I went to get Mr. Mérida to show him what happened. But he is sick, he is in the hospital.

VERONICA
We were so worried!

TOMASA
He is in the hospital. What if he dies like Grandfather?

Grandmother gives Veronica a LOOK... "Go Easy" it says.

Veronica sits next to Tomasa, pulls her towards her. Tomasa has surrendered. Veronica kisses her.

GRANDMOTHER
Why don't you make another one?
You have all day and tonight.

Tomasa looks at her.

EXT. THE MUNICIPAL SCHOOL - DAY

Veronica (with Sophia) walks Tomasa to the Kite-Making Place. THE RUINED KITE PIECES are wrapped in her shawl. They stop outside the door. It's obvious Tomasa wants to go in alone, she straightens up, pulling her confidence together.

VERONICA
(Spanish)
So this is where they are putting the giant kite together?

TOMASA
Yes.

VERONICA
I'll be back to get you when it
gets dark.

TOMASA
Okay.

VERONICA
I don't want you walking home alone.

Tomasa NODS.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
Are you sure it is okay for you to
be here? Should I go talk to them?

TOMASA
(confidently)
It is fine.

Tomasa prepares to go in. Veronica is proud of her.

INT. THE MUNICIPAL SCHOOL - DAY

It's a huge COVERED COURTYARD. The KITE-MAKING TEAM is hard at work on what is now a MASSIVE PAPER KITE spread out across the floor. Tomasa seems tiny as she walks along the edge of the huge kite. She watches the men, who don't pay attention to her. She silently SITS by the edge of the kite. Eventually the TEAM LEADER sees her and nods. He goes back to work for awhile, Then, noticing Tomasa's sad look, asks,

TEAM LEADER
(Spanish)
Where is Mr. Mérida?

TOMASA
He is sick. He is in the hospital.

TEAM LEADER
Oh, sorry.

He goes back to work. Then,

TEAM LEADER (CONT'D)
Is something wrong?

TOMASA
My kite is broken.

She pulls what is left of the BROKEN KITE out of her bag to show him.

TEAM LEADER
What happened!?

TOMASA
I found it this way. Someone did
it.

The Kite Designer comes over to look at the ruined kite. The other Kite Makers are looking too. Some are gathering around.

TOMASA (CONT'D)
I'm going to make a new one.

INT. THE MUNICIPAL SCHOOL - AN HOUR LATER

Tomasa is on the floor, drawing on a CIRCLE OF WHITE PAPER, the basis of her new kite. She is surrounded by scraps of colored paper, scissors, a bottle of glue, sticks, string and other supplies donated to her by the kite makers.

A YOUNG KITE MAKER remarks to a co-worker,

YOUNG KITE MAKER
He's wasting time - I told him
girls should not make kites...

The Kite Designer brings Tomasa some more scraps of COLORED PAPER, GLUE AND WHITE BACKING.

TEAM LEADER
We can't help you today, there is
only 14 hours until the festival.
We have to finish our kite.

TOMASA
I can do it myself.

EXT. THE STREET NEAR THE KITE-MAKING PLACE - NIGHT

Veronica WALKS IN THE DARK towards the school, she has her Baby on her back, as always. We hear a PING and she stops to read a text,

THE SCREEN: *"I don't know when I will be back. I am working in Mexico. I am busy."*

INT. THE MUNICIPAL SCHOOL - NIGHT

Veronica steps in the door. She watches her little daughter, working hard on her kite with the men.

She watches, her for awhile, emotion fills her eyes. Eventually Tomasa SEES HER MOTHER, she smiles happily and waves.

EXT. THE DARK STREETS OF SANTIAGO - NIGHT

It is dark but the streets are full of activity. The family walks along the street busy with Tuk-Tuks, motorbikes and pedestrians. Tomasa is almost dancing along, she is so happy.

EXT. A DARKER STREET - NIGHT

They turn on a small, quiet street and walk along. After a ways, Veronica stops. Her face is deep in SHADOW. A small SLASH OF STREET LIGHT illuminates Tomasa as she looks up at her quiet mother. Her mother does not look back.

VERONICA

(in K'iche)

I got a message from your father...

TOMASA

(excited)

When is he coming? Will he see my kite fly?

VERONICA

He's not... He can't come now.

TOMASA

Is he still in Mexico?

VERONICA

(pausing before)

...Yes.

Tomasa thinks this over, and takes it at face value. Veronica finally looks at her. She doesn't want anything to spoil her happiness.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

How is your new kite?

TOMASA

Not finished. It is not as fancy as the one Mr. Mérida and I made, but I love this one too.

VERONICA

Grandfather will love it too. Because you made this one all by yourself. He loved you.

TOMASA
I know Momma.

Tomasa smiles. She feels her mother's mood.

TOMASA (CONT'D)
Don't worry about Father, Momma. He
is getting money for us.

Veronica reaches out and touches Tomasa's hair.

VERONICA
Let's get home so you can finish
your kite.

EXT/INT- THE GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

THE PORCH - Tomasa is steadily WORKING ON HER KITE, she is pasting more pieces of COLORED PAPER on the WHITE PAPER BACKING. The design is crude and child-like, a simple version of the kite she made with Mr. Mérida. The PIGLET is laying nearby, his lead tied to a post.

Her Mother APPEARS at the DOOR.

VERONICA
(in K'iche')
How is it going?

TOMASA
Good...

VERONICA
How is "Tamale?"

TOMASA
He is helping.

VERONICA
Can I help you?

TOMASA
No.

VERONICA
I can cut the papers, and you can
put them where you want...

TOMASA
(firmly)
No.

VERONICA
 (inspecting the kite)
 Be careful, keep all the paper
 triangles the same size.

TOMASA
 Mamma. I'll fix it.

Tomasa PULLS UP the two paper pieces that are too large and TRIMS THEM WITH SCISSORS. Veronica watches her daughter work.

As Veronica goes back in the house, Tomasa's eyes catch her Cousin, Yosalin, watching her like a snake from inside the house. Tomasa's eyes narrow. She POINTS THE SHARP SCISSORS at her as a threat.

TOMASA (CONT'D)
 (under her breath - Spanish)
 If ANYTHING happens to this kite...

Yosalin quickly looks at her phone.

INT GRANDMOTHER'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Veronica and Claudia are helping Grandmother with kitchen work. They work silently. Then Grandmother blurts out.

GRANDMOTHER
 I sold the *Milpa*.

This shocks the sisters.

VERONICA
 What? To who? That woman?

CLAUDIA
 That was valuable, what about me?

GRANDMOTHER
 If I had a son, I would have given it
 to him. You two don't even live here.

VERONICA
 But that *milpa* has fed our family
 for many generations.

GRANDMOTHER
 God did not favor me with a son.
 Neither of you have sons. These
 things happen. You have your lives.
 The land was mine to do as I wish.

INT. GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE - ALTAR - LATER - NIGHT

THE ALTAR - the CANDLES are still burning and GRANDMOTHER IS ASLEEP on the cot. Veronica is sitting in a chair, holding a sleeping Sophia. She watches her mother, then the PHOTO of herself & her father in the *milpa*.

EXT. GRANDMOTHER'S PORCH - NIGHT

Tomasa is ASLEEP ON HER KITE, pieces of paper are scattered everywhere. Various BAMBOO STICKS are spread on the ground. The PAPER PART OF THE KITE IS DONE.

Veronica picks up the sleeping Tomasa. She studies the kite, which is a crude imitation of the first kite. A large QUETZAL BIRD dominates the design.

EXT. STREETS OF SANTIAGO - DAWN

SERIES OF SHOTS - It is the morning of *Dia de Todos Santos* (All Saints Day) and the Kite Festival. PEOPLE ARE WALKING, loaded up with FLOWERS and FOOD and other things they are taking to the Cemetery. The streets are lined with temporary shops and restaurants to capitalize on the huge crowd.

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE - DAWN

As a GROUP OF PEOPLE move past the house.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE - DAWN THE NEXT DAY

The Grandmother, Veronica, Tomasa and Sophia get ready to leave. Their BAGS are LOADED DOWN WITH MATERIALS to decorate the grave (Food containers, blankets, flowers, bags of pine needles, small brooms, a bottle of liquor, glasses, water). Tomasa has her kite in her hands.

A BEDROOM - Claudia and Yosalin are still in bed. Grandmother STICKS HER HEAD in the door.

GRANDMOTHER
(Spanish)
We are leaving!

CLAUDIA
We will be there soon enough.

GRANDMOTHER

Okay, don't go back to sleep!

EXT. STREETS OF SANTIAGO - CONTINUOUS

TRAVELING SHOT with the CAMERA FOLLOWING BEHIND THE FAMILY as they walk on the busy street on the way to the Cemetery. They walk solemnly through the carnival atmosphere.

EXT. THE GATE TO THE CEMETERY - MORNING

The FAMILY ENTERS THE GATE TO THE CEMETERY.

EXT. CEMETERY - MAIN WALKWAY - TOMBS - CONTINUOUS

TOMASA'S VIEW as she enters the cemetery, and walks with her family down the row of tombs. There are HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE EVERYWHERE, many sitting on the top of tombs.

WE SEE THE GIANT KITES, several as large as THREE-STORY BUILDINGS. There are FAMILIES GROOMING THE GRAVES, cleaning and sweeping them, spreading pine needles, placing bunches of the traditional GOLD MARIGOLDS (*Cempasuchitl*).

The Gigantic kites are being raised up to hang on poles. We see all of this unfold though Tomasa's eyes. Suddenly she notices:

THE KITE MAKING TEAM - They are setting up their FINISHED GIGANTIC KITE. They RAISE THE KITE UP, a huge undertaking involving a DOZEN MEN and a SYSTEM OF ROPES AND PULLEYS. Finally the kite HANGS ON A TALL POLE to display to the crowd.

EXT. THE GRANDFATHER'S GRAVESITE - MORNING

The family is working on the Grandfather's grave:

- Scattering pine needles.
- Placing the flowers on the grave.
- Attaching the flowers to the wooden cross.

Finally CLAUDIA AND YOSALIN ARRIVE, and the Grandmother puts them to work. Tomasa pulls her grandmother aside,

TOMASA

(Spanish)

Grandmother, my kite -- it is not finished.

GRANDMOTHER

Yes, you finish it...

Tomasa SITS and pulls out her KITE. She starts to work on TYING THE SMALL STICKS TOGETHER to complete the frame. But her inexperience is no match for the task. The more she tries, THE MORE MESSED-UP THINGS GET. It is like the belt-weaving disaster all over again.

Veronica has been watching her daughter, and her heart is sinking as everything is falling apart for her. Tomasa is almost in tears. Veronica approaches her.

VERONICA

I will get help.

Tomasa watches her mother look in the crowd for a man that can help. She asks a YOUNG MAN to help, he shakes his head. She goes to another man, then another and another. They all decline. She is not giving up, she returns to Tomasa.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Pack it up, I know who can help.

Veronica unwraps Sophia from her shawl and hands her to the Grandmother.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

(Kaqchikel)

I'll be back.

Veronica and Tomasa QUICKLY HEAD OFF through the crowd towards the gate.

EXT. GATE TO THE CEMETERY - DAY

Veronica and Tomasa PUSH AGAINST THE FLOW OF PEOPLE going to the cemetery.

EXT. HOSPITAL STREET - DAY

Veronica and Tomasa round a corner and LOOK. There is the Hospital ahead of them.

INT. HOSPITAL RECEPTION - DAY

Her mother greets the same RECEPTIONIST as before.

VERONICA
(Spanish)
We are here to see Mr. Mérida.

The Receptionist RECOGNIZES Tomasa and scowls.

RECEPTIONIST
Are you his family? Only his family
can see him. She is not his family.

VERONICA
(rapidly)
Of course we are! Ask him! You
don't think he wants to see his
daughter in law and granddaughter
before...

Tomasa REACTS at her mother, she has never seen her lie
before.

RECEPTIONIST
(referring to Tomasa)
But SHE said she wasn't...

VERONICA
(exploding)
She is only 8 years old! And she
speaks only a little Spanish! Do
you speak K'iche'?

Veronica lets fly a barrage of K'iche' the woman doesn't
understand.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
(in K'iche')
What kind of stupid woman are you
that would deny an old man the
chance to kiss his Granddaughter?
Old crow! Witch! Degenerate!

This amazes Tomasa.

INT. HOSPITAL - 2ND FLOOR - DAY

Tomasa is leading her mother down the hallway. She points to
the room where the Mérida is. Her mother gestures for her to
stay in the hall, and ENTERS.

INT. HOSPITAL - HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

TOMASA'S VIEW - From the doorway, Tomasa watches her mother softly APPROACH MÉRIDA. He is in bed and seems immobile. The old man insists on GETTING UP, and Veronica HELPS HIM TO A NEARBY CHAIR. She talks to him. Finally, she LOOKS AT TOMASA and GESTURES FOR HER TO COME IN.

TOMASA'S VIEW as she walks in the room to see Mr. Mérida. He SMILES AT HER. He seems weak.

MR. MÉRIDA
(Spanish)
Let me see your new kite.

Tomasa produces her bag and the old man TAKES THE KITE OUT. He unfolds the paper and looks at the CHILDISH DESIGN. His hand traces the outline of the lopsided Quetzal Bird.

MR. MÉRIDA (CONT'D)
Well, this is pretty nice. Not bad...!

Tomasa beams.

MR. MÉRIDA (CONT'D)
Look how smart this Quetzal is - He is ready to fly to the clouds. He will certainly help the kite fly. Let's get this ready, help me child. Here are the sticks, do you have the glue? String?

Tomasa helps the old man, she hands him the MATERIALS. He puts the materials on top of the bed.

MR. MÉRIDA (CONT'D)
This will be our work table.

VERONICA - She settles against the wall and watches.

CLOSE ON THE OLD MAN'S HANDS as they expertly tie the sticks together with the string, then tie the string around the outside of the sticks and start gluing the paper kite to it. Then he sets the kite's flying strings and connects them to the ball of twine.

EXT. STREET NEAR THE HOSPITAL - DAY

TOMASA'S KITE SOARS INTO FRAME as it follows her RUNNING DOWN THE STREET. Veronica watches, proudly. The GRANDFATHER'S BELT is attached to the kite as a tail.

INT. THE CEMETERY - AFTERNOON

Tomasa and her mother pick their way through the crowd heading back to the Grandfather's grave. The festival is now in full swing.

Some YOUNG MEN are trying to FLY A BIGGER KITE. Some of the men HOLD THE KITE, while others RUN WITH THE ROPE, weaving in and out of the graves as they run. Their KITE SMASHES INTO THE GROUND. They try again and eventually get the KITE UP IN THE AIR.

EXT. GRANDFATHER'S GRAVE - DAY

Veronica and Tomasa ARRIVE AT THE GRAVE. THE GRAVE IS NOW DECORATED WITH FLOWERS, AND PINE NEEDLES. PLATES WITH FOOD and a GLASS WITH LIQUOR sit on the grave.

Tomasa shows everyone HER FINISHED KITE. She is so happy she does a LITTLE DANCE twirling in circles, holding the kite above her head. Claudia nudges Yosalin, to make sure she acknowledges Tomasa as well.

TOMASA

(Spanish)

I want to fly Grandfather's kite now!

Tomasa and Veronica LEAVE to find a place to fly the kite.

EXT. THE CEMETERY - CONTINUOUS

Tomasa and Veronica wind through the crowds and the GIANT KITES, looking for a flying place.

EXT. HOSPITAL ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS

On the ROOF OF THE HOSPITAL, Mr. Mérida is being helped to a CHAIR by a NURSE. From there, he has a VIEW OF THE CEMETERY in the distance and the KITES FLYING IN THE SKY. He settles down and looks through an old pair of BINOCULARS.

EXT. THE CEMETERY (FLYING PLACE) - CONTINUOUS

Veronica is on a small hill, THE KITE IN HER HANDS held high.

TOMASA WITH THE STRING, she's ready to run. She takes a deep breath.

TOMASA

GO!!!

Veronica THROWS THE KITE INTO THE AIR. Tomasa takes off and RUNS FAST, PULLING THE STRING.

The kite WOBBLER and SOARS, then DIPS. It seems to steady, going up, then erratically CRASHES TO THE GROUND.

THE KITE LOOKS OKAY. They try again.

Tomasa gets ready, Veronica HOLDS THE KITE UP. Again Tomasa RUNS WITH THE STRING - this time the KITE SHOOTS STRAIGHT UP, STRUGGLES, then CRASHES DOWN.

They try AGAIN, and AGAIN,

And AGAIN... Failure, each time.

EXT. GRANDFATHER'S GRAVE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

The family is gathered near the grave, they are eating, drinking and talking. Tomasa is holding her BATTERED KITE glumly. Her eyes watch the other kites in the air.

VERONICA - She is WRITING something on a SMALL PIECE OF PAPER. She ROLLS IT IN A TIGHT SCROLL and WRAPS A STRING around it.

She moves to sit by Tomasa. She takes the KITE'S TAIL (The BELT Tomasa made) and TIES THE ROLLED PAPER TO THE TAIL.

TOMASA

(K'iche)

What did you write?

VERONICA

Something I want to tell your Grandfather.

(she looks at her)

When it flies, he will know.

TOMASA

But it can't fly.

VERONICA

Yes it can.

EXT. THE CEMETERY (FLYING PLACE) - DAY

Tomasa and Veronica assume the same pre-flight positions.

VERONICA

Are you ready?

TOMASA

Yes.

VERONICA

Think of Grandfather...

Tomasa CLOSES HER EYES.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

The WIND... I feel it!

TOMASA

Okay... GO!

Tomasa TAKES OFF as Veronica lets go.

The KITE LIFTS, then falters, LIFTS AGAIN, falters and then catches a STRONG GUST AND FLIES UPWARD.

Tomasa SHRIEKS and lets out the string, THE KITE FLIES HIGHER AND HIGHER.

VERONICA - She watches, and covers her mouth in shock. She looks at her daughter.

TOMASA - ecstatic, she looks at her mother joyfully.

THE KITE - HIGHER AND HIGHER IT GOES.

EXT. THE ROOF OF THE HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS

Mr. Mérida sees TOMASA'S KITE soaring through his BINOCULARS. He YELLS.

MÉRIDA'S VIEW - the BINOCULARS - Tomasa's kite is the smallest one in the air. It SOARS ENERGETICALLY.

EXT. THE CEMETERY (FLYING PLACE) - CONTINUOUS

Tomasa HOLDS THE STRING, looking up at the kite.

GRANDMOTHER - Watching the kite with tears in her eyes. She is holding Sophia who watches too.

CLAUDIA watches. YOSALIN TOO - she even smiles a bit.

VERONICA - as she watches everything. The moment washes over her.

THE LITTLE KITE IN THE AIR - Proudly flying, the larger kites around it. CAMERA PANS away from the kite towards a group of TREES next to the Cemetery.

TOMASA - she beams as she watches her kite, holding the string.

EXT. TREE-TOPS BY THE CEMETERY - DAY

ON A TREE BRANCH SITS A RARE QUETZAL BIRD, in his vibrant red, green and blue and his distinctive long, twin tails. HE IS WATCHING THE KITES. We see him from BEHIND, the kites and people in the cemetery beyond.

THE BIRD'S EYES - as he watches the kites. Does he notice the Quetzal on Tomasa's kite? Probably not.

THE LITTLE KITE - flying strong.

WIDE - THE CEMETERY as the festival continues. Then, after a moment, BIRD FLIES AWAY.