

THE HARD PASS

Written by

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TEASER

FADE IN:

TITLE CARD:

A REMOTE LOCATION IN ANAHUAC

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

There's a LOUD BOOM outside of the bedroom. A young girl of about six years old, TANJI, spryly awakens from her deep slumber at the sound of the noise.

Moonlight dances across her brown skin and her wild curly brown hair, a mess from sleeping. Her sluggish eyes quickly grow larger at the commotion outside her door.

The room is dark but there's a stream of light coming from under the door. Tanji grips the covers tightly as sounds of SCREAMING AND YELLING come from beyond the hall.

GUARD (O.S.)

Get him! Take him outside!

WOMAN (O.S.)

No! Please, don't take my husband!

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tanji runs to the crib and grabs her sleeping sister, SEJAI, a one-year-old toddler. The baby is awakened and starts to CRY. Tanji tries to calm the baby down and covers her mouth. She looks around the room for a place to hide. \*

INT. HALL - NIGHT

A guard, PRIVATE ALEMAN(20s), stands solid and stoic in the living room barking orders to his MEN. \*

PVT. ALEMAN \*

Take the wife too! Look through the house, arrest anyone you find!

Another GUARD roughly yanks MAMATA, Tanji's mother, an exotic and beautiful woman in her 30s. She defiantly kicks and screams as she's dragged by her long mahogany hair out of the house.

MAMATA

No! Leave us alone!

Pvt. Aleman walks toward the door of the room the girls are in. \*

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tanji HEARS the heavy footsteps TAP ON THE TILE and she quickly hides in the closet.

Pvt. Aleman turns the knob, opens the CREAKING door and flashes the light in the room. \*

He walks over to the bed and snatches the covers from the mattress. He hears a baby's cry coming from the closet.

Tanji tries to muffle the baby's crying with her small hand. Pvt. Aleman throws open the door and points his gun and flashlight at the children. \*

Tanji lets out a shrieking SCREAM and throws her hand up to shield her eyes from the blinding light.

TANJI  
Mama!

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. CAGE - NIGHT

A disheveled Mamata and her two terrified girls are shoved in an empty cage set in the center of a basement. The only thing inside the cage is a filthy old dog bed and a rusty pail that looks as if it were used as a toilet. Mamata struggles to contain her fear. \*

Pvt. Aleman slams and locks the door behind him. Tanji begins to cry. Mamata shoots the guard an evil look as she and the girls back away from the cage door. She sits Tanji on the floor and hands her the baby to hold. \*

Pvt. Aleman leaves them alone in the large room. \*

TANJI

Mama, where are we?

MAMATA

I don't know, baby. I don't know where we are but I need you to be a big girl, ok? Can you do that for mama? \*

TANJI

Yes, I can try.

MAMATA

Good baby, try really hard for me.

Mamata goes to the gate and examines the lock and hinges. She tries to look for a way to pick the lock.

MAMATA (CONT'D) \*

Do you see a screw or something small and sharp?

TANJI

No, Mama. It's too dark. \*

MAMATA

That's ok, baby.

TANJI

Where's Papa?

Mamata stops looking on the ground as a feeling of despair sweeps across her. She crawls over to Tanji and strokes her delicate curls from her face.

MAMATA

I don't know where he is, but we'll find him. Everything will be ok, baby!

TANJI

Ok, but I'm scared, Mama. What if the bad men hurt us?

Mamata bites her lip as she tries to hold back her tears from Tanji.

MAMATA

They might try, but we're stronger than they think. I'll figure out a way to get us out of here. But you're going to have to trust Mama and do exactly what I say. You remember what we talked about? You're a big girl now. You have to follow directions, so I can keep you safe. No questions just do what I say. Got it?

TANJI

Just do what you say.

MAMATA

And no questions.

TANJI

No questions.

MAMATA

Good girl.

Mamata kisses Tanji's forehead and hugs her tight. They sit still and silent, alone in a dark room with a single light beam shining in through a large window on the farthest wall. \*

INT. CAGE - DAY

Mamata lays cautiously on the dirty dog bed, curled next to her daughters in the cage. ARMED GUARDS burst into the room with a loud thud of the door as it hits the wall. \*

PVT. ALEMAN

Get up! Let's go! \*

Mamata jumps up anxiously at the sound of the noise. She clings closely to the girls as the guards approach the gate.

MAMATA

Where are you taking us?

Pvt. Aleman unlocks the cage and points at the children. \*

PVT. ALEMAN \*

You two, get the kids.

He grab the CRYING girls as Tanji kicks and screams in protest.

MAMATA

Don't touch my babies! Where are you taking us?

PV. ALEMAN

To see your husband!

Pvt. Aleman walks Mamata and the girls down a long, bricked and barely lit corridor. \*

EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

The light from the outside blinds them as they exit. Mamata shields her eyes as she walks. When her eyes adjust she sees that the corridor opens into a courtyard which is divided into sections.

On one side is a Chinese sand garden with strategically placed rocks. On the other side is a tennis court and disassembled ball machine. In the middle of the courtyard, is a line of ARMED MEN standing beside GENERAL TZO, a tall, formidable and brutish man in his 50s that could rival men half his age. \*

On the ground kneeling in front of them, is a scared and blindfolded MAN, beaten and bloodied.

Mamata's eyes grow wide and a smile breaks her stern expression at the sight of the husband positioned in the center of the courtyard. She has no time to process what is happening before she hears someone shout out loud. \*

MAN'S VOICE

Fire!!

MAMATA

Vincente!!!

The guards FIRE their guns at the kneeling man. Mamata lets out a ferocious shriek and tears away from Pvt. Aleman holding her. She runs toward the body of her husband, slumped on the ground. \*

Mamata cries over his corpse. She looks over her shoulder at the General.

MAMATA (CONT'D)  
Murderer! Devil!

Mamata cradles her husbands head and strokes his blood-stained cheek as her tears blind her. She leans down and gingerly kiss his forehead.

MAMATA (CONT'D)  
Don't worry. I'll save our girls.

Guards tear Mamata away from her husband. Her face is distorted in resistance and anger. The General walks up to them and grabs her face in a show of dominance. His voice is low and serpentine.

GENERAL  
Your husband received a quick death. Much swifter than he deserved. You can cry and fight and call me the devil but it's not going to bring him back or make things any easier for your girls.

Mamata jerks her face loose from the General's grip and steadies her voice to avoid showing her anger.

MAMATA  
My husband's dead now. You've taken everything from us. Let us go, please?

GENERAL  
Is the devil that kind? You did just call me the devil, correct?

Mamata remains stern and silent and the General searches her face for a sign of weakness. He releases a slow and calculated smile.

GENERAL (CONT'D)  
Even the devil was once an angel, I suppose. Return them to the cage!

Mamata shows a brief sign of relief as the guards walk her from the courtyard.

INT. CAGE - DAY

The guards escort an emotionally drained Mamata and the girls back to the cage. Her eyes are wearied and tired. She takes the baby from the guard and sits on the floor with Tanji.

She cradles Sejai on her breast and stares at the barren wall as tears roll down her face. Mamata snaps back to reality and wipes her face with her free hand.

MAMATA

Tanji.

Tanji doesn't move or say a word. \*

MAMATA (CONT'D)

Tanji, talk to Mama. Please.

TANJI

Papa.

Tanji begins to cry uncontrollably. Mamata lifts Tanji's head and gently kisses her cheek as tears fall down her face.

MAMATA

I know, I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

Their sorrow joins together as they sit on the filthy floor, crying in mournful unison.

INT. CAGE - NIGHT

The door opens and a guard walks through with a tray of food.

PV. ALEMAN

Courtesy of the General. Enjoy!

Pvt. Aleman opens the cage and places the tray on the floor, locks the cage and leaves the room. \*

Mamata hesitantly grabs the food and dips the spoon into the bowl. As she is about to feed Tanji, she hears a pubescent voice coming from a small framed, 12-year-old, caramel skinned COMRA. He anxiously whispers from the window. \* \*

COMRA

Don't eat the food! It's poison.

Comra skillfully uses a knife to cut a hole in the window screen and slides carefully down into the room. He runs over to the cage.



Mamata jumps up and races to the cage door. She holds up the lock for Comra. He uses a flashlight and key to unlock the cage.

MAMATA

Thank you!

Mamata grabs the girls and runs for the window. Comra climbs out first and helps Mamata to lift out the girls. She follows last.

EXT. BUILDING - NIGHT

Comra reaches into a nearby bush and pulls out a HIDDEN GUN. He hands it to Mamata. She looks at him skeptically but accepts it.

MAMATA

Thank you. What's your name?

COMRA

Comra. You have to hurry. The guard will be back to check on you.

Mamata hugs Comra and he stiffens at her touch, unaccustomed to affection. When Mamata realizes that he's uncomfortable she releases him.

MAMATA

Comra, I won't forget how you've helped us. Bless you!

Tanji walks up to Comra and then hugs him as well. He relaxes as Tanji embraces him. Mamata grabs Tanji's hand and gives a nod before she runs off with the girls. \*

Comra stands, left alone, and watches as he locks eyes with Tanji until they disappear around a building.

EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Mamata carries Sejai as she and Tanji run through the small, sleepy town. The moon is full and adds light to the poorly lit streets. A dog barks off in the distance. They cautiously hide behind cars and creep through alleys. \*

Mamata sees a stocky, modestly dressed PRIEST enter a church. She and Tanji race to the door before they are seen. Mamata knocks frantically until the priest responds. \*

PRIEST (O.S.)

Who is it? How can I help you?

MAMATA

I'm traveling with my two daughters  
and in need of shelter.

The priest opens the door. He briskly waves them in.

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

The small church is filled with short wooden pews and aging plaster statues of religious relics. Shadows from the many lit candles dance on the pale yellow walls in desperate need of repainting.

PRIEST

Please come, come.

The priest peeks around the door before closing it shut.

MAMATA

Thank you, Father.

PRIEST

I heard that you were taken by the  
General. It's been all over the  
news. All of your husband's cabinet  
has been executed. Your husband as  
well, I'm sorry to say. \*

Mamata's gaze falls from the priest as the memory of her  
husband's death darkens her demeanor. \*

MAMATA

I know, I was there. \*

PRIEST

Dear God! Did they release you?

MAMATA

No, a kind boy helped us to escape.  
They tried to poison us with food.  
What kind of evil would kill  
children?

PRIEST

The kind that doesn't stop until  
the job is done, I'm afraid.

TANJI

I'm scared, Mama.

Mamata bends down to speak to Tanji. She pushes a curl out of  
the child's eyes and gives Tanji a convincing smile.

MAMATA

It's ok, baby. I need to speak with the father for a moment. We're safe here. Take your sister and go lay on the bench, I'll be there in a minute. Ok?

Mamata hands Sejai to Tanji. She nods her head in obedience and walks to the nearest bench to lay down. Mamata turns toward the priest. \*

PRIEST

She's a brave child. I can't imagine what you all have been through.

Mamata lets out a long, exasperated breath and speaks softly so that Tanji doesn't hear the conversation.

MAMATA

I didn't have a plan, Father. I came to you to seek refuge but if the General is determined to see us dead, then my only option is to go north to Turtlisle to seek asylum. We can't hide here forever. Can you arrange passage for us?

PRIEST

Since the coup, thousands of Anahuacans have fled to the northern border. Turtlisle is closed.

MAMATA

Closed? What do you mean closed?

Mamata paces in frustration.

PRIEST

They're not letting anyone enter. They've demolished every port of entry. They don't want us anymore.

Mamata stops pacing and stares at the priest in disbelief.

MAMATA

They don't want us? Anahuacans helped build that damn country! Are you certain there's no other way through?

PRIEST

I heard that there's a caravan making passage to the north and crossing in secret. But, it's very dangerous since the roads and bridges are destroyed, especially to travel with children.

MAMATA

Father, I have no choice! I have to take my chances. We're certain to die here if we don't. Please, I beg you, help us to get out before it's too late!

Mamata walks to the statute of the Virgin Mary and looks intensely into her face.

MAMATA (CONT'D)

I've met mothers risking their lives to hide us since the coup. I've looked into their eyes and seen hope that despite what was happening to this country, helping us was a small but heroic way to serve a place they loved and still believed in. I don't know if I believe in this country anymore but I still believe in the people. The strong, proud, fearless people, devoted to doing what's right even when face to face with the devil himself.

The priest turns and walks to the crucifix, lights a candle and says a quick prayer.

PRIEST

I fear that whatever I decide will be a condemnation of death for you. That's a most unbearable feeling. You don't know what you're asking me to do.

Mamata rises from the prayer bench and walks toward the priest to stand next to him under the crucifix.

MAMATA

I'm asking you to give me a chance. If I were to die on my way there, at least I knew the risks and did all I could to survive.

(MORE)

## MAMATA (CONT'D)

My death would not be on your hands  
and no God would ever hold you  
responsible. Please?

The priest turns to face Mamata. He looks at the sleeping  
children as they rest peacefully on the pew.

## PRIEST

I'll make a call. I don't know what  
good it'll do but maybe my fate is  
just to lead you to the path and  
led God do the rest. I'll do  
everything in my power to help you.  
For now, you and the children can  
take the small room in the back. No  
one goes in there so you should be  
fine until I have news to report.

Mamata takes the priest's hands in hers.

## MAMATA

Thank you, Father, you may have  
just saved our lives.

## PRIEST

We all must walk in faith. I assure  
you that it won't be easy or  
comfortable and sneaking across is  
quite dangerous, but I pray for  
safe passage for you and your  
babies. May God guide your steps.

INT. SANCTUARY - STUDY - NIGHT

\*

The priest shows Mamata to the back room.

## PRIEST

You get settled in. I know that  
you're hungry. I'll make the call  
and bring you some food to eat.

## MAMATA

Thank you, Father. Say thank you to  
the priest, baby.

## TANJI

Thank you.

The priest bends over to face Tanji.

\*

## PRIEST

Do you like cake?

Tanji nods her head.

The priest stands back up to direct his attention to Mamata.

PRIEST (CONT'D)

We have some cake left over from our service meal today. These may be trying times but cake always seems to bring some rays of sunshine. I hope you don't mind me offering, dear.

MAMATA

No, not at all. With everything we've been through these last few days, months even, she deserves some sunshine.

PRIEST

Seems you can uses some yourself. I'll bring two slices, two slices of sunshine coming up!

The priest turns to leave and closes the door behind him. Mamata lays the baby on the small bed and takes a cautious look out the window.

TANJI

Mama?

Mamata turns to face Tanji.

MAMATA

Yes, love?

TANJI

Did Papa go to heaven?

Mamata pats her lap and holds out her arms. Tanji climbs onto Mamata's lap and lays her head on her mother's chest while Mamata gently strokes her wild curls. \*

MAMATA

Yes, baby. I'm sure that he's in heaven.

TANJI

Will I see him again?

MAMATA

One day.

Tanji frantically jumps down from Mamata's lap.

TANJI

No, I don't want to.

Mamata is bewildered as Tanji starts to cry.

MAMATA

On, no. Don't cry.

Mamata gently cups Tanji's face in her hands.

TANJI

I don't want to die.

MAMATA

I'm not going to let anything  
happen to you.

TANJI steps back, shaking her head in protest.

TANJI

But you said I'd see Papa, and Papa  
is dead. I don't want to die, too.

Mamata grabs Tanji in a tight embrace.

MAMATA

Don't you worry about dying. Papa  
can wait in heaven for a long time  
to see you. He's in no rush.

There's a soft knock at the door. They both look in the  
direction of the tap.

MAMATA (CONTD) (CONT'D)

Yes, come in.

The priest enters the room while carrying two plates.

PRIEST

I made the call. There's a group  
leaving in the morning before  
sunrise. Someone will be here at  
5:00 am to escort you. I brought  
you some sandwiches and cake.

Mamata graciously accepts the food.

MAMATA

Thank you, for everything, Father.

The priest gives a small smile and squeezes Mamata's shoulder  
in a reassuring gesture.

PRIEST

Well, get some rest. You have a long journey ahead of you. Good night.

MAMATA

Good night, Father.

Mamata closes the door. The father makes the sign of the cross and touches the door as he solemnly walks away.

INT. SANCTUARY - STUDY - CONTINUOUS

\*

Mamata is asleep with the girls. There's a gentle knock on the door. Mamata sits up on the bed, careful not to disturb them.

MAMATA

Come in!

PRIEST

Good morning, how did you sleep?

MAMATA

Fine, Father. As best as I could.

PRIEST

The gentleman is here. He says to tell you that he must leave in 10 minutes.

MAMATA

Thank you, please tell him that we'll be ready.

PRIEST

I've put some food in a bag for you and the girls. It isn't much but it, well, it's a little something.

MAMATA

Thank you, Father. I hope to one day be able to repay you for everything.

PRIEST

Your survival is payment enough. I'll tell the gentleman that you'll be out momentarily.



EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Mamata hugs the priest and puts the bag around her shoulder. She discreetly hands him the GUN given to her by Comra. \*

PRIEST  
What's this?

MAMATA  
The boy. The one that helped us escape. He gave it to me but I can't bring myself to use it. I know that it's crazy to give it away but I've seen enough bloodshed to last a lifetime.

PRIEST  
What if you need it?

MAMATA  
Just pray I won't.

Mamata squeezes the priest's hands and enters the car with the girls.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Tanji waves goodbye to the priest as they drive off with the GUIDE, a wiry man in his 30s. Tanji looks out of the window as the church disappears from view. \*

INT. CAR - DAY

Tanji hears the adults talking but can't make out the words over the music. She gets scared as she sees police lights flashing towards them but calms down when the car drives past them. \*

EXT. WOODS - DAY

The car pulls down a winding dirt road with tall trees lining both sides of the narrow dirt path. At the end of the road is an old van that puffs thick clouds of black smoke. Worn PASSENGERS load into it.

INT. CAR - DAY

Mamata turns around from the front seat to get Tanji's attention.

MAMATA

We're going to get in a van with some people for a little while and then we look for a new home.

TANJI

Can we have a house by the water? I want to swim everyday!

MAMATA

I promise, we can look for one when we get there!

\*

Tanji excitedly looks out of the window at the people as they climb into the van.

EXT. CAR - DAY

Mamata carries Sejai on her hip as she opens the door and takes Tanji by the hand. They walk anxiously to the van.

\*

INT. VAN - DAY

Mamata and the girls find a seat near the front next to BETO, a humble old in his 70s. He wears an old cowboy hat and his deep caramel skinned is wrinkled by the sun. He's seated next to KANDIS, a YOUNG headstrong pregnant WOMAN in her 20's, small in stature with a belly nearly as large as her frame.

\*

\*

Two passengers sit in the center, ELMER, a young malnourished man in his 20s and a petit, grey-haired woman, PATRICIA, in her 60s. Two teenaged sisters are huddled together in the rear of the van.

\*

\*

\*

\*

JIN, the driver, is a surly man in his 50's with a large beard and deep set eyes. He turns around to speak to the anxious passengers.

JIN

Ok, we'll go as far as we can but since they closed the border, we'll stop about a mile or two from the gate, cross a small river, and from there we'll walk on foot.

Jin points to Beto.

JIN (CONT'D)

Sir, do you think you'll be able to walk that distance?

\*

BETO  
 Yes, I can make the walk. I'm sure  
 of it.

Then Jin points to Kandis.

JIN  
 And you, Miss?

KANDIS  
 I'm ok, I can make it. No problem.

JIN  
 I had a lady on my last trip a  
 couple of months ago, she thought  
 she could make it too. She ended up  
 going into labor in the van and I  
 had to clean all that shit up. Keep  
 your legs closed 'til you cross. \*

Jin then claps his hands together and Kandis jumps at the sudden sound. He turns his attention to the rest of the passengers and yells out loud.

JIN (CONT'D)  
 Does anyone on here have any issues  
 that'll keep them from walking a  
 mile in the woods?

The passengers look at each other.

JIN (CONT'D)  
 No going once, going twice.  
 Alright, good, then let's go!

EXT. WOODS-DAY

The van enters the woods on an overgrown, gravel road. The passengers gently rock from side to side as they move with the swaying motion of the van.

INT. CAGE - DAY

Pvt. Aleman slams open the door. When he sees that the cage is empty and unlocked, he yells for the others. \*

PVT. ALEMAN  
 Escape! \*

Two other guards run in and inspect the room. Pvt. Aleman goes to the window and notices that the screen has been cut. \*

INT. OFFICE - DAY

The General signs papers at his desk in an office enshrined with a large painting of him carrying the Anahuacan flag. There's a knock at the door.

GENERAL

Enter.

Pvt. Aleman walks in nervously. The General speaks without looking up. \*

GENERAL (CONTD) (CONT'D)

Are they dead?

Pvt. Aleman stiffens at the question. \*

PVT. ALEMAN \*

They're missing, General.

The General looks up from his papers and is measured in his response.

GENERAL

Where could they have gone? Had they been properly secured?

PVT. ALEMAN \*

They were, sir! The screen was cut and the cage unlocked. The wife had nothing on her and the room was inspected and cleared before she was put in the cage. It appears that she had help.

The General rises from his chair and walks to Pvt. Aleman. He stands inches from his face. \*

GENERAL

Find them and all responsible for helping them. Bring them to me. Someone is going to face the firing squad and you don't want it to be you. Understand? \*

PVT. ALEMAN \*

Yes, General.

GENERAL

Leave.

Pvt. Aleman salutes and then turns to leave. The General swipes the papers off the desk. \*

INT. CAGE - NIGHT

The battered priest sits tied to a chair in the center of an empty room, blindfolded. Blood trickles down his cheek and his breath is labored from the beatings.

Guards stand at the door and salute the General as he walks in.

GENERAL

Remove his blindfold.

Pvt. Aleman removes the blindfold from the priest's eyes. The General motions for Pvt. Aleman to bring a seat for him. He places the chair in front of the priest and peers into him. \*

GENERAL (CONT'D) \*

Good evening, Father. Welcome to my home. I'm sorry that I wasn't able to give you the tour of the property. As you can see, I brought you here on official business. \*

PRIEST

Are you going to kill me?

GENERAL

Eh, I'm thinking about it. It really all depends.

PRIEST

Depends on what?

GENERAL

On whether or not I like your answers to my questions. You answer honestly though, you must always answer honestly. I won't tolerate lies.

PRIEST

I don't think I can help you, General.

GENERAL

You see, I haven't asked any questions and yet you already insult my intelligence by lying. A man of the cloth and you lie before God?

The priest spits out blood onto the floor.

PRIEST

You're no God.

The General holds up his cigar and Pvt. Aleman walks over to light it. He takes a long drag and releases a ring of smoke into the air. \*

GENERAL

Oh, I'll have you praying for my forgiveness though. Bring in the boy.

Pvt. Aleman hastily leaves the room to retrieve Comra. When he returns the General walks over to him and squeezes the boy's chin. \*

GENERAL (CONT'D)

Big day today!

The confused Comra looks at the priest as fear begins to overwhelm him. The General ignores the boy's protest and grabs his arm and walks him over to the priest.

GENERAL (CONT'D)

Do you know who this is?

The terrified boy stammers in response.

COMRA

No, General.

GENERAL

This is the priest who helped Mamata and her children. He took them into his church.

Comra looks at the General in confusion.

GENERAL (CONTD) (CONT'D)

If you're wondering why YOU are here, well, that's because I want you to confess your sins to the father.

COMRA

My sin?

GENERAL

Yes, when you sin, you must confess it for your forgiveness. He's here, amongst other reasons, to take your confession.

COMRA

I have nothing to confess, General.

GENERAL

Oh, but you do. You see, the father is guilty of helping Mamata but only of hiding her away, someone else helped her to escape this room first.

The General points to a small camera in the corner.

GENERAL (CONT'D)

You see that small camera in the corner there? It's always recording. I watched the tape after we discovered the empty room. And who should I find crawling through the window?

\*

The general embraces Comra and rubs the back of his head. The boy's eyes grow wide with fear.

GENERAL (CONT'D)

My own son, my flesh and blood.  
Betraying me!

The General pulls away from the boy and stares at him in expectation.

COMRA

Father, I didn't...

The general backhands Comra across his face. The boy stumbles back and uses his hand to brace against the wall.

\*

He feels his face where his father's hand leaves a red imprint. The General shoves Comra to the floor. He moves in closer and whispers him.

GENERAL

Don't lie to me!

A sobbing Comra shakes his head in objection. The General yells so furiously that spit flies onto his face.

GENERAL (CONT'D)

Confess!

Comra shakes with fear and cries under the weight of his father's anger. The General pushes him in front the priest.

GENERAL (CONT'D)

Say it!

COMRA  
I'm sorry, I'm sorry!

GENERAL  
For what?

COMRA  
I'm sorry I let them go!

The General bends over the priest, balancing his cigar between his lips.

GENERAL  
Father?

The General snaps his fingers and holds out his hand. Pvt. Aleman walks over and places a revolver in his palm. The General presses the gun to the priest's temple. Sweat pours down the priest's face as he eyes the gun from his periphery. \*

PRIEST  
Um, the heavenly Father forgives you. \*

The General removes the pistol from the priest's head, satisfied with his answer. \*

GENERAL  
And me?

PRIEST  
What?

GENERAL  
Your confession to me!

PRIEST  
I did nothing to confess and neither did your son. It is God's work to help the innocent. \*

The General hits the priest across the head with the butt of his gun.

GENERAL  
I say who's innocent! You will beg for my forgiveness.

The disoriented priest slowly shakes his head. His words are slow and labored.

PRIEST  
To suffer in the Lord is to reign in heaven.



GENERAL

You priests are always so quick to go to heaven. I will gladly help you with that.

PRIEST

I'm not afraid of death.

The general shoves the gun into the boy's hand and aims it at the priest's face as if giving instructions.

GENERAL

I never assumed you were but you wouldn't want your death to be on this boy's conscience, would you?

\*

COMRA

No, Father!

\*

PRIEST

You wouldn't?

GENERAL

I can do anything I want. You'll ask me for forgiveness. Think of me as God!

The boy attempts to lower the gun but the General maintains a tight grip on the boy's hand.

COMRA

No, please don't make me!

GENERAL

One!

COMRA

Please, no!

GENERAL

Two.

\*

COMRA

I can't! No, no, no.

\*

GENERAL

Three!

COMRA

Father!

PRIEST

Wait, I...

\*

GENERAL

Yes?

PRIEST

I'm sorry! Please, forgive me.

The General smiles at the boy and then at the priest. Just as the boy relaxes, the General's tone becomes serious. \*  
\*

GENERAL

No.

The General squeezes the trigger. Blood splatters onto the boy's face. He stands in complete shock. The General leans in and whispers in the boy's ear.

GENERAL (CONT'D)

You caused this, you'll live with it.

The General walks off towards the door and leaves Comra standing in front of the priest's dead body.

Pvt. Aleman meets the General at the door. \*

PV. ALEMAN

One of our spies says that he saw Mamata and the children leaving in a car with a known smuggler. They're believed to be headed for the border.

The General smiles and pats the guard's shoulder.

PVT. ALEMAN \*

Do you want me to send soldiers out to retrieve them, sir?

GENERAL

No need, they won't survive the trip.

The General walks down the hall laughing as smoke from his cigar trails behind him.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. VAN - DAY

The passengers bounce and sway with the turns of the van on the rocky road.

Tanji and Sejai sleep on their mother's lap. Sweat trickles down the girls' head and Mamata gently wipes it away.

No one says a word as the van's engine ROARS loudly over the Beto's snoring. The van comes to a SCREECHING halt.

KANDIS

Are we there, at the border?

JIN

No, we are about two hours out. There's a tree in the path. I need some help to lift it out of the way.

\*

ELMER

I can help!

BETO

I'll help too!

\*

JIN

Ok, the rest of you stay in the van. We'll be back on the road soon.

Kandis unstraps her seatbelt.

KANDIS

I need to get out. I have to relieve myself.

JIN

We're in the woods, ma'am.

KANDIS

I have to go badly. It won't be but a few minutes, I promise.

\*

JIN

Uh, ok, ok. Only a few minutes and don't go far. Take a stick with you in case of snakes.

KANDIS  
Thank you!

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Elmer helps Kandis out of the van. She grabs a stick from the ground and walks off into the trees.

The men walk to the front of the van and attempt to lift the tree.

INT. VAN - CONTINUOUS

Tanji awakens and looks around the van.

TANJI  
Are we at the border, Mama?

MAMATA  
No, love. Not yet. They're just  
fixing something and then we'll be  
on our way.

EXT. WOODS - MOMENTS LATER

\*

Kandis walks through the woods and finds a large tree. She reaches under her dress and pulls down her panties and squats.

She hears a RUSTLING in the bushes that startles her. Kandis picks up the stick and points it in the direction of the noise.

KANDIS  
Shoo, shoo!

The RUSTLING gets louder. Kandis doesn't know where the sound is coming from. She looks anxiously in every direction. She hurriedly stands and pulls up her panties.

The branches rattle above her head, getting her attention. She lets out a DEAFENING SCREAM.

\*

\*

INT. VAN - CONTINUOUS

\*

The passengers become alert at the sound.

EXT. WOODS - CONTINUOUS \*

Kandis' body is pulled up the tree, leaving behind a POOL OF BLOOD. \*

INT. VAN - CONTINUOUS \*

Everyone on the van moves to the window to search for the source of the noise.

TANJI  
What's that, Mama?

MAMATA  
Birds, just birds.

Jin opens the van door. \*

JIN  
Stay here, don't anyone get off!

Jin reaches for his gun in the glove compartment. He signals to Elmer to follow him.

JIN (CONT'D)  
You, come with me.

EXT. WOODS - CONTINUOUS \*

The two men run off into the woods in Kandis' direction.

INT. VAN - CONTINUOUS \*

The passengers in the van become nervous at the commotion and Sejai starts to CRY. Mamata rocks her. She hands Tanji a piece of bread to eat to calm her nerves.

EXT. WOODS - CONTINUOUS \*

Jin and Elmer discover the pool of blood and begin to investigate the area when they hear rustling in the bushes. Jin instinctively shoots in the direction of the noise. \*

JIN  
Get back to the van. Run!

The two men charge towards the van, looking frequently over their shoulders.

A large, four-legged wolf-like BEAST covered in long thin metallic strands jumps down from a tree. The force of its weight shakes the ground below. \*

The beast charges in pursuit of Jin and Elmer. Jin yells out to Beto. \*

JIN (CONT'D)  
Start the engine. Hurry!

INT. VAN - CONTINUOUS \*

Beto rushes into the driver seat and flips the key to start the ignition. He quickly reaches over to open the passenger door.

EXT. WOODS - CONTINUOUS \*

Elmer trips over an exposed log and falls down, hitting his head.

The BEAST leaps onto his back and rips into his flesh with mechanical precision. Blood pours out of the open wound and exposes Elmer's spine. The beast flings Elmer's limp body into the brush.

Jin, terrified, looks back at Elmer's mangled body but keeps running towards the van.

INT. VAN - CONTINUOUS \*

The confused passengers start to panic as they watch Jin running from the woods.

Jin jumps in the van and slams the door.

JIN  
Drive!

Beto punches the gas and drives off down the dirt road leaving behind a trail of dust and rocks. Jin looks in the side view mirror as Elmer's body is dragged away.

Mamata gazes out of the window and straps the children in the seat belt.

MAMATA  
What was that? What happened to them?

JIN

I don't know! Please sit back and put on your seat belt.

MAMATA

We can't just leave them out there!

JIN

The hell we can!

BETO

There's a fork up ahead. Which way do I go?

JIN

Stay to the left and be careful, it's up the mountain from there. The road is narrow and there's a long drop on the side.

BETO

I can't do it, you'll have to drive. I'm afraid of heights.

JIN

Are you fucking kidding me? Alright, stop and switch seats with me.

MAMATA

If it's so dangerous, why are we stopping?

BETO

Look lady, we don't have any choice! Just stay calm and I'll try to get you out of here as fast as I can.

Mamata sits back in the seat. Jin and Beto get out of the van and swap places.

They hear a loud NOISE as they jump in the van. Jin puts the gear in drive just as a THUMP hits the van ceiling. The passengers SCREAM.

MAMATA

What is that?

Mamata looks up. She searches frantically for the gun inside her bag.

MAMATA (CONT'D)

Where's the damn gun? Shit!

A feeling of dread overcomes her when she realizes that the gun is gone.

Mamata runs her hands through her hair in frustration.

Jin yells over his shoulders to the passengers.

JIN  
Hold on everybody!

Jin swerves the van alongside the cliff. A large BEAST falls off the roof and catches a window.

It snaps its jaws at the passenger sitting in the seat. The passengers SCREAM and move to the opposite side of the van.

Mamata yells to Beto. She throws out her hand to him shaking it in urgency.

MAMATA  
Give me your cane!

Beto gives Mamata his cane. She jabs it at the BEAST with extreme force, trying to knock it off. She connects with its head and it falls off of the van and over the cliff into a sea of trees.

Mamata looks out of the window for a view of where the beast had fallen.

MAMATA (CONTD) (CONT'D)  
How much further?

JIN  
Umm, about 40 miles maybe. But that isn't the problem.

MAMATA  
Problem?

JIN  
We still have to cross the river and it's over a mile walk to pass the border. The van can't drive it, and there's no other way around it.

MAMATA  
Oh my God! Did you know about those, those things?

JIN  
Lady, I've been making this drive for over five years.

(MORE)



JIN (CONT'D)

I've never seen one of those things  
before in my life!

The passengers begin to complain in despair, chattering over  
one another.

WOMAN

What are we going to do? I can't  
walk a mile with those things out  
there. I won't make it!

BETO

I don't think I can outrun those  
animals either. There must be  
another way. A passable road  
somewhere.

JIN

If there were, don't you think I  
would have mentioned it? They're  
gone, they're all destroyed!

PATRICIA

This can't be happening. I didn't  
escape Anahuac just to die in the  
Pass!

MAMATA

Stay calm, no one's going to die.  
We'll make it through!

PATRICIA

Really? Two are already dead, two!  
Do you have a weapon? Do any of  
you? The way I look at it, if we  
don't figure out something, we're  
all going to join them pretty soon.

MAMATA

Please, ma'am, you're scaring the  
children.

PATRICIA

I'm sorry, may God protect your  
children. \*

MAMATA

May he protect us all.

The van comes to a stop at the bank of a river. Jin turns in  
his seat to face the passengers.

JIN

We're here. Ok, We have a small raft to cross the river. Only take what you need, leave anything that'll slow you down.

\*

MAMATA

I saw that you had a gun. Do you have any more?

JIN

Just the one, but I'm a pretty good shot.

Mamata looks around the van.

MAMATA

Is there anything in the van we can use as a weapon?

JIN

I have a crowbar under one of the seats, other than that, the gun and this old man's cane.

Mamata reaches under the seat and returns with the crowbar.

MAMATA

They'll have to do.

Mamata looks at the girls, trying to hold back her fear.

MAMATA (CONTD) (CONT'D)

Ok, baby. We're going to go on a little boat ride across the river and then a short walk. I'll need for you to hold my hand. Don't let go. When I say run, I want you to run as fast as you can. Like you're in a race with your friends. Ok?

Tanji nods her head.

TANJI (CONT'D)

Yes, Mama.

JIN

Are you all ready?

The passengers agree, looking uncertain.

MAMATA

Yes, I'm ready.

EXT. WOODS - CONTINUOUS

\*

The group cautiously exits the van and follows Jin to the makeshift raft hidden in overgrown bushes. The men push the raft into the water.

The women and Tanji climb on as the Jin and Beto push it in further. Jin uses an oar to guide it down the river.

The birds gathered in the trees above the river squawk loudly at the group's presence. The passengers huddle together, careful not to tip the raft.

\*

\*

JIN

We're headed to that bank over there.

Jin points to a small dock across the river.

JIN (CONTD) (CONT'D)

And then from there we'll climb that hill and walk for about a mile. It's rocky so be careful not to trip. I can't guarantee I'll be around to help if you fall. Move as fast as you can and don't look back for anything or anyone. From here on out you're on your own.

\*

Mamata gasps in disbelief.

MAMATA

Are you serious? What about us women and children? You'd just leave us to die?

\*

Jin stops rowing in irritation.

JIN

Look lady, things change. I was told to drive and deliver, not run my ass off from killer animals. I'm not paid enough to be a hero. I'm getting out of these woods and since I'm the only one that knows the way, you'd be wise to follow me. But, don't expect anything more than that.

Mamata sits back and clutches her children to her.

He continues to row the raft to shore. The group steps onto the ground. They hear RUSTLING in the woods and they look in the direction of the noise. The driver screams to the group.

JIN (CONT'D)

Run!

Jin bolts, leading the harried group up the hill.

Mamata carries Sejai on her hip as she grips Tanji's hand tightly. They climb the small rocky hill.

The BEAST chases after them. Tanji tries to look back. Mamata yells above the noise of the screaming people.

MAMATA

Keep running, don't look back!

Tanji sees Beto trip and the beast pounces on him. She lets out a SCREAM and squeezes her eyes shut tightly. \*

MAMATA (CONT'D)

Straight ahead, baby!

Another BEAST charges toward them from their right. Jin fires his gun and misses.

The BEAST gets closer to the group and it has its eyes locked on the driver. He motions for the group to keep straight.

JIN

Head for the fence!

Jin trips over a fallen branch. He shoots his pistol as he tries to get up but stumbles back to the ground just as the BEAST jumps on top of him.

The gun flies out of his hand and lands near Mamata. She stops in her tracks and contemplates whether to grab the gun and help Jin or keep running. \*

She lets go of Tanji's hand and reaches for the gun. Just as she does, the beast charges for her. She grabs the gun and FIRES a shot and hits the beast. It manages to grab her leg as she attempts to run away.

She falls down with a thump. The gun and a SCREAMING Sejai FLY out of her arms. \*

The BEAST slashes across her chest with its claws. Tanji's frozen in fear but sees the fallen gun near her feet. She picks it up and nervously squeezes the trigger.

The kickback THROWS her to the ground. \*

The beast is hit in the eye and falls down in a mechanical motion. Mamata, bloodied and scarred, reaches for Tanji.

MAMATA

Hand me the gun baby, just let go.  
It's ok. You got it! You saved us!

Mamata staggers as she gets up from the ground. She takes the gun from Tanji and helps her to her feet. When she hears the Sejai shrieking, she painfully runs to the child and struggles to pick her up. She sees that she's injured.

She gingerly presses the baby to her, careful not to hurt either of their wounds.

MAMATA (CONT'D)

It's ok baby, we're getting out of here.

She carefully puts the gun in her waistband and grabs Tanji's hand.

She runs as best as she can. She looks around and realizes that they're in the woods alone and the sun is setting. The woods are eerily silent.

MAMATA (CONT'D)

Where'd they all go?

Tanji buries her face in Mamata's coat.

MAMATA (CONT'D)

Come on baby, we have to keep moving!

EXT. WOODS - DUSK

Mamata notices that Tanji is slowing down.

MAMATA

We're almost there.

Mamata winces from the pain but she keeps running.

TANJI

I'm tired, Mama.

MAMATA

I know, baby.

Mamata reaches down and lifts Tanji onto her back.

MAMATA (CONT'D)

Hold onto me real tight. Wrap your legs around me. Don't let go!

Mamata manages to find the energy to run while carrying the two children. She runs into Patricia. She's resting on a rock, injured.

MAMATA (CONT'D)

Can you move?

PATRICIA

No, I can't go any further. It got me.

Patricia moves her hand from her stomach and reveals a DEEP SLASH across her abdomen.

PATRICIA (CONTD) (CONT'D)

I, I knew I wouldn't make it. It got us all.

MAMATA

I'll try to find help.

Patricia makes a small laugh.

PATRICIA

Help? There is none. Get your children to safety. We can't all die in these wood. Go! Hurry before they come back.

\*

Mamata feels torn but she nods at Patricia and runs off toward the gate.

The sun is setting and she can hear leaves CRUNCHING behind her. She sees the gate and begins to run faster.

The BEAST is behind her and it is charging and gaining speed. Mamata heads towards a missing space in the gate.

The BEAST leaps just as she runs through the space but bounces off an invisible barrier.

A car swerves to avoid hitting her as she bursts through the gate.

The BEAST stands on the other side of the gate, watching and pacing. It then turns and disappears into the trees.

The driver of the car exits and runs to Mamata and the children.

The gargantuan TURTLE ISLE MAN braces Mamata with his strong hairy arms. His plaid sleeves are rolled to his elbows and hug his muscular biceps.

\*

TURLISLE MAN

Oh my God! Where did you come from?  
You look like you need a hospital.

Mamata sees the man's mouth moving but all she hears is a  
RINGING NOISE.

Her vision becomes dim and she collapses in his arms.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

MAMATA'S POV - STATIONARY

\*

The room is blurry and there is a loud rhythmic beeping. Mamata's vision slowly clears to a brightly lit room with white linens.

She looks around, confused. A NURSE, an attractive woman in her 20s, walks over to check her vitals.

\*

\*

MAMATA

Where am I? Where are my children?

NURSE

Be careful. You don't want to pull out your IV. Just lay back down and I'll get someone to tell you about your children.

The nurse pats Mamata's hand and leaves the room.

Mamata looks at the IV needle in her arm and the machines next to her bed.

AGENT JAX, an athletically built man in his 30s, knocks on the door and walks in without waiting for a response. He wears a classic black suite and sports a conservative haircut.

\*

\*

AGENT JAX

Good morning, ma'am. I'm Agent Jax.

Mamata sits up to get a better look at the man standing in front of her.

MAMATA

Where are my children?

AGENT JAX

Your children are safe, ma'am. When you were brought here, the nurses couldn't find any identification on you. Can I have your name and nationality, please?

MAMATA

My name?



AGENT JAX

Yes ma'am, and nationality.

Mamata pauses and scrutinizes the man's suit before responding.

MAMATA

Um, Ana, my name is Ana Da Cossa.  
I'm Anahuacan. Now, can I please  
see my children?

AGENT JAX

Do you know where you are, Ana?

MAMATA

Turtlisle. Why won't you answer me?  
I want my children.

AGENT JAX

Your youngest child suffered  
injuries and required surgery. I've  
been told she's here in the  
pediatric wing recovering.

MAMATA

What? I have to see her! And where  
is my other daughter? Is she here,  
too? Was she hurt?

AGENT JAX

We've moved the eldest to a safe  
location, a center for immigrant  
children. Which brings me to my  
next question.

MAMATA

No! No more questions, not until I  
see my children and know that they  
are safe!

AGENT JAX

Ma'am, I assure you, your children  
are safe. Are you aware that the  
border has been closed since the  
military coup led by General Tzo  
against the Anahuacan government?

Mamata struggles to get out of the bed, ignoring the agent's question.

AGENT JAX (CONT'D)

Ms. Da Cossa, you're in no  
condition to go anywhere.

(MORE)

AGENT JAX (CONT'D)

I suggest that you lay back down,  
answer my questions, and then  
you'll see your children.

The agent gently holds Mamata's arm as she continues to struggle.

MAMATA

All I care about are my children.  
My babies needs me.

Mamata searches the agent's eyes for reassurance.

MAMATA (CONTD) (CONT'D)

I can't be here.

AGENT JAX

Were you aware of the new policy  
for immigrants?

Mamata braces on the end of the bed and looks at Agent Jax with curiosity.

MAMATA

No, what new policy?

AGENT JAX

The Mechanical Deterrent  
Initiative. The animals that you  
encountered in the woods. They're a  
safeguard to deter migrants from  
crossing the border.

\*  
\*

MAMATA

You put them there? Those animals  
killed seven people! My daughter  
lays in a hospital bed injured by  
those things and your government  
created them?

\*

AGENT JAX

Yes, we did, but fortunately for  
you, survivors are granted  
permanent residency.

Mamata balls her fists in a fit of anger.

MAMATA

And I'm expected to be thankful? Is  
this a game for you people?

(MORE)

MAMATA (CONT'D)

We're nothing more than  
entertainment for you and God  
willing, should we survive your  
sport, we're gifted with residency?  
You have no regard for life!

AGENT JAX

It's not like that. That isn't the  
purpose.

MAMATA

Then explain it to me! Tell me what  
is the purpose of my child having  
to endure surgery or why a pregnant  
woman lays in the woods ripped  
apart! What legitimate reason can  
you give that makes any moral  
sense?

\*

AGENT JAX

I understand your frustration.

The agent stands and walks to the door.

MAMATA

My frustration, that's all you  
understand?

Mamata reluctantly lays back down on the bed.

MAMATA (CONTD) (CONT'D)

I wish to see my children,  
immediately.

AGENT JAX

I'll see when that can be arranged.  
When you're released by your  
doctor, an agent will pick you up  
and bring you to our office. There,  
you can sign your residency  
documents and begin your new life.  
Welcome to Turtlisle.

Mamata sucks her teeth and diverts her eyes in anger.

The agent opens the door and walks out of the room, leaving  
Mamata staring out the window at a dewy sky.

Her eyes well with tears and she begins to silently cry.

INT. PICU WARD - NIGHT

The nurse pushes Mamata in a wheelchair down the antiseptic pediatric hall. They stop in front of the baby's room. Mamata up looks at the nurse with concern.

NURSE

There are a lot of machines. Don't be alarmed, they're only to monitor her. She's doing very well.

They enter the barely lit room. Mamata slowly rises from her wheelchair and carefully walks to the child's crib. She gently caresses Sejai's forehead.

MAMATA

What's wrong with her?

NURSE

The doctor will explain it to you.

Mamata graciously smiles at the nurse.

MAMATA

Thank you.

Mamata leans down to kiss the child on her cheek.

She HEARS someone enter the room and she jumps up and wipes her eyes. She extends her good arm to shake the hand of the DOCTOR. He's a handsome back man in his 40's. His skin is smooth as milk chocolate and his smile, gloriously white.

\*  
\*

MAMATA (CONT'D)

Hello.

DR. ROGERS

Hello, I'm Dr. Rogers. You must be her mother. You have one strong fighter here! She did excellently during surgery.

\*

MAMATA

Yes, she's very strong.

Mamata gently touches the baby's cast.

MAMATA (CONT'D)

Thank you for helping her. How will she...

\*

Mamata clears a throat and wipes away a tear.

MAMATA (CONT'D)  
Will she have permanent damage? \*

DR. ROGERS \*

She suffered a spinal injury. We were able to repair the vertebrae, however, we don't know the full impact just yet.

MAMATA  
Is she, is she paralyzed?

DR. ROGERS \*

No, she isn't paralyzed, but she may have some limitations in her leg function. We won't know for sure until she's out of her cast. \*

But I believe with physical therapy and time, she should be fine.

Mamata releases a sigh.

The doctor looks behind him and walks in the direction of the door to close it quietly. He moves to assist Mamata into a chair.

DR. ROGERS (CONT'D) \*

Please, take a seat. Rest, you've had a long journey.

He moves a stool to sit next to her. Mamata looks at the doctor suspiciously.

DR. ROGERS (CONT'D) \*

You have no idea how you've encouraged me, the nation really.

MAMATA  
I don't understand.

DR. ROGERS \*

No, of course not. You've been in and out of consciousness for the past few days. My apologies. Let me explain. After the coup, you're aware of the influx of immigrants that left your nation, right?

MAMATA

No, I'm afraid not. I was in hiding with my family for months. We didn't keep up with current events. Or at least, I didn't. I tried to... \*

Mamata pauses and looks at her child in the crib and the machines connected to her.

A tear falls from her eye, she quickly wipes it away.

MAMATA (CONT'D)

I tried to keep them safe.

The doctor reaches out to touch her shoulder.

DR. ROGERS

You have.

\*

Mamata scoffs to herself and wipes her eyes.

\*

DR. ROGERS (CONT'D)

Because of the run on the border, the government decided to close all of the points of entry, to turn everyone away but that didn't work. People would just go around them and enter wherever they could. So the President demolished all of the bridges and roads. That did it. It stopped the mass migration immediately.

\*

MAMATA

I believe it. I saw the bridges. But about the animals? If the demolition worked, then why make those, things?

DR. ROGERS

They came next. We have Senator Randolph to thank for that.

\*

MAMATA

What would posses anyone to think those things a good idea?

DR. ROGERS

You're trying to understand the mind of a sadistic racists. Do yourself a favor and stay sane. You'll drive yourself crazy and do more harm than good trying to figure him out. All you have to know is that he's the reason you almost didn't make it out.

\*

\*

MAMATA

The agent said that people who made it get automatic residency.

DR. ROGERS

\*

Yeah, that was the only way the policy would pass, a caveat to placate the opposition. The Senator wanted animal-like machine deterrents or MDs in the Pass as an added measure to ensure that no one come through ever again. But we protested against it, around the clock. We put pressure on our representatives NOT to sign it into law.

MAMATA

It is incredible that you had to fight to convince your government not to kill innocent people!

DR. ROGERS

\*

It wasn't easy. They all went back and forth on it until they came to a compromise. They would allow the bill to pass only if it included an exemption that anyone who made it through the barrier was given automatic residency. The bill was signed into law three months ago. We don't know when it actually started. We haven't had anyone to come through the Pass, until you.

Mamata leans forward in disbelief.

MAMATA

I'm the only one?

DR. ROGERS

\*

Yes, you and your children. The moment you walked out, you give us hope.

MAMATA

How is that even possible? I survived, a woman, with two small children and no one else? That's impossible!

DR. ROGERS

\*

You're the miracle and yet you don't believe that it's true? I wouldn't lie. I have no reason to.

MAMATA

Wait, wait, go back. You said this has only been going on for a few months though. How many have tried to cross?

DR. ROGERS

We don't know. Since there's no government oversight, we'll probably never know exactly, just anecdotal reports from survivors.

\*

MAMATA

But if there aren't any, then you'll never know.

DR. ROGERS

Exactly. We believe that this was in the works long before it actually was proposed. To have these things up and running in a matter of weeks like that, shows that he had them stashed somewhere, waiting for the right opportunity. One of which, we believe, was the coup in Anahuaca by Gen. Tzo. The MD plan would only be approved if there was a national crisis in Anahuac. Otherwise there was no justification for the policy change.

\*

MAMATA

You think my government had something to do with those things in the woods?

DR. ROGERS

Yes, and my government had something to do with the military coup to overthrow your President.

\*

Mamata looks away as tears begin to form in her eyes.

DR. ROGERS (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to upset you.

\*

Mamata wipes away her tears.

MAMATA

No, it's fine. It's just, you know, a lot to process.

(MORE)



MAMATA (CONT'D)

So, does that mean that no one in Anahuac knows that I'm alive?

DR. ROGERS

Well, I don't know about that. Come here, let me show you something.

\*

The doctor walks over to the window and motions for Mamata to join him. He discreetly parts the window blinds.

Mamata gets up to follow. She looks out of the window. Below is a crowd of PEOPLE with signs and TELEVISION CREWS.

MAMATA

Who are all of these people?

DR. ROGERS

I told you, you gave us hope. They came to support you. There are a few racists idiots out there who have nothing better to do than show the world that they're assholes, but the nation is very curious to find out about the woman who successively battled the beasts and made it out alive with her children, no less. You're a national miracle.

\*

Mamata quickly closes the blinds and moves away from the window.

MAMATA

I, I can't be seen!

DR. ROGERS

The attention might be intimidating at first, but it's good for the cause. You can be the face of the resistance. Your story can convince Congress to dissolve the policy. No one else has to die in the Hard Pass anymore!

\*

MAMATA

No! I can't be on television. No one can know who I am.

Mamata walks over to the child's crib to make sure she didn't wake her. She lowers her voice.

MAMATA (CONT'D)

If what you say is true and your government is working with General Tzo, then neither must know who I am. My life and my children's lives are still in danger.

The doctor walks to Mamata and turns her to face him. He looks at her with curiosity.

DR. ROGERS

Who are you? Really? \*

MAMATA

It is best you don't know. For your own safety. Just please, trust me. I can't be seen on camera. I can't be mentioned in the papers. I have to disappear.

DR. ROGERS

What you're asking is virtually impossible. The whole nation knows that you exist. You can't disappear. \*

MAMATA

They may know that we exist but they don't know who we are. I have to keep it that way. Is there some way that you can help me to leave here with my kids undetected? I can just slip away. This is a large country. I'll go somewhere remote.

DR. ROGERS

But you'll be living illegally, in the shadows. Why walk away from the opportunity to have legal status for you and your daughters? \*

MAMATA

We'll be dead before I even sign the papers! I know this is hard for you to understand but there are people who want me dead. If your government is in cahoots with them then I wouldn't even be afforded a death certificate. They'll make me disappear out of the public eye as if a "Pass survivor" were just some mistake or worse yet, a fake story.

(MORE)

## MAMATA (CONT'D)

Your cause will be discredited and they'll still get what they want in the end. I know what I must mean to you, but if you really care about immigrants and our survival, then you'll help me.

The doctor takes Mamata's hand and looks her in her eyes.

DR. ROGERS

Ok, I'll help you.

\*

Mamata hugs the doctor and winces in pain.

DR. ROGERS (CONT'D)

Now, let's get you back to bed. You can't run anywhere in your condition.

\*

INT. GOVERNMENT HALL - DAY

SENATOR RANDOLPH, a stocky Caucasian man in his 60s, walks briskly down the hall in his Brooks Brothers tailored suit, with his government pin on proud display. He's approached by SENATOR DIXON, an aging Caucasian man in his 70s.

\*

\*

\*

SEN. RANDOLPH

Good morning, John! How you doing?

SEN. DIXON

Not good, looks like we got a problem on the border.

\*

Sen. Randolph's smile turns into a serious expression as he pulls Sen. Dixon into an empty side hall.

SEN. RANDOLPH

I'm handling it.

\*

SEN. DIXON

You're handling it? You promised the MDs were guaranteed to work, but they don't. Now we have a fucking survivor that can talk to the press.

\*

SEN. RANDOLPH

Calm the fuck down.

Se. Randolph looks around to ensure that nobody heard him.

SEN. RANDOLPH (CONT'D)

Lower your goddamn voice before someone hears you. There is no survivor. It's fake, all of it. Just some story the opp is feeding the media to discredit the program. The MDs work as promised and as far as this shit storm you're getting scared of, I'm handling it.

\*

SEN. DIXON

You really think I'm that stupid? Even if all this is fake, it's too late to control the narrative! It's been all over the news.

\*

\*

SEN. RANDOLPH

Let me worry about that. My program, my problem!

SEN. DIXON

And what do I tell the party, my constituents? They watch the news too. They'll have questions and I need to give them answers.

\*

SEN. RANDOLPH

You're getting ahead of yourself.

SEN. DIXON

How?

\*

SEN. RANDOLPH

Gears are already turning. In the meantime, keep your mouth shut and stay away from reporters. I'll take care of the media.

SEN. JOHN DIXON

Whatever you have to do, do it quick. I backed that fucking bill during an election year. If this thing goes south, my ass is out and I won't go down by myself. You understand me?

Sen. Randolph adjusts the senator's lapel. His tone, calm.

\*

SEN. RANDOLPH

Don't make threats you can't back up. I assure you, my bite is more vicious than my bark.

Sen. Dixon knocks Sen. Randolph's hand away from him.

SEN. JOHN DIXON  
So you're trying to match threats  
now?

SEN. RANDOLPH  
Threat? No, consider it a courtesy  
warning. Now I suggest you get to  
wherever the hell you're supposed  
to be and let me do my job.

A GOVERNMENT WORKER approaches the men. Sen. Randolph turns his attention to her and greets her with a warm smile. They begin a conversation and walk off together.

Sen. Dixon looks on at the two in disgust as they walk away. \*

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Agent Jax knocks on Mamata's door as she's packing a bag on her hospital bed.

MAMATA  
Come in!

Agent Jax peeps into the room.

AGENT JAX  
Good morning, Ms. Da Cossa. I have  
a surprise for you.

Agent Jax opens the door wider and Tanji runs into the room.

TANJI  
Mama!

Mamata bends down to embrace Tanji in a long and emotional hug. She kisses Tanji and admires her dress.

MAMATA  
You look like a princess! I missed  
you so much, baby. Did they treat  
you well at the center? \*

TANJI  
Yes, they gave me this dress and I  
ate ice cream!

MAMATA  
That's... that's great. Guess what?

TANJI  
What?

Mamata looks up at Agent Jax.

MAMATA

Can you please ask the nurse for my  
release papers?

AGENT JAX

Sure, I'll be back in a minute.

Agent Jax walks out of the room and closes the door behind him. Mamata waits until the door is closed and she speaks at a low volume.

MAMATA

We're going to a nice home.  
Somewhere far away. Just you, me,  
and Sejai. But you can't say  
anything to anyone. \*

Mamata puts her finger to her mouth. Tanji whispers into Mamata's ear. \*

TANJI

Ok, Mama. It's our secret!

Mamata hugs Tanji as Agent Jax enters.

AGENT JAX

Ms. Da Cossa...

Agent Jax hands Mamata the discharge forms.

AGENT JAX (CONT'D)

There's a slight change of plans.  
Because of the demonstrations and  
media outside, my superiors are  
sending a blacked out car and  
driver to escort you to a secure  
facility. I'll meet you there with  
your residency paperwork.

Mamata stands and places her bag around her good shoulder.

MAMATA

And my baby?

AGENT JAX

We'll have an agent bring her to  
you once she's released from the  
hospital.

MAMATA

Well, I can't leave without saying  
goodbye.

AGENT JAX

That's fine, take your time. The car won't arrive until an hour from now. I'll come and get you when the car's here.

\*

MAMATA

Thank you!

INT. HOSPITAL HALL - DAY

Mamata and Tanji walk down the hall to the elevator. Tanji pushes the button and they enter the elevator.

INT. HOSPITAL ELEVATOR - DAY

Mamata watches Agent Jax as the door closes on them.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. PICU WARD - DAY

Mamata and Tanji meet the doctor at Sejai's room. He briskly brings them into the room and shuts the door.

DR. ROGERS  
Here, put this on.

\*

He hands Mamata a jacket, scarf and hat.

DR. ROGERS (CONT'D)  
What does your daughter have on under the dress? Never mind, have her put on these pants. Here's a hat for her too.

\*

He hands her more clothes and then places a large empty bag in the crib. He begins to disconnect the machine from Sejai.

MAMATA  
What are you doing?

DR. ROGERS  
The only way that I can get you out of here undetected is to have you blend in. The media have reports of a woman with a little girl and a baby. So I have to disguise you both. And the baby, well, she goes in the bag.

\*

Mamata stops the doctor's hands from picking up the baby.

MAMATA  
The bag?

DR. ROGERS  
The only way to get her out at all is to pretend she's not even with us. Trust me. She'll be fine. It's only until we get her out of view of the reporters. How long did the agent give you until you're supposed to leave?

\*

Mamata reluctantly answers.

MAMATA  
About an hour?



DR. ROGERS

So we have to hurry! Once they discover you're not here, they'll go out looking for you. We want to get as far as possible, as fast as possible. Can I please put the baby in the bag now?

\*

Mamata skeptically nods her head in approval.

The doctor gently picks up the sleeping baby and places her in the bag. He lifts it and places the bagged baby in Mamata's arms. She starts to whimper in her sleep.

MAMATA

Doctor, she's waking up. She'll need to nurse or she'll cry.

\*

DR. ROGERS (CONTD)

We don't have time for that! Let's go.

\*

The doctor cracks open the door and looks at the empty nurse's station. He takes Tanji's hand.

\*

Mamata sways the baby and shushes her to soothe her whimpering.

DR. ROGERS (CONT'D)

Stay behind me. Walk along the wall and move quickly.

\*

INT. HOSPITAL - HALL - DAY

They walk out of the room and down a stairwell. The baby starts to cry but Mamata whips out her breast and holds the opening of the bag to her chest for the baby to nurse.

INT. HOSPITAL - GARAGE - DAY

When they reach the basement level they run to a parked S.U.V. The doctor motions to the back of the vehicle.

DR. ROGERS

Get in the back and keep your head down as we go out. I'll let you know when it's safe to sit up.

\*

The doctor drives toward the exit of the garage.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

There's a large crowd assembled with picket signs. Media vans and REPORTERS line the entrance of the building. The doctor drives slowly as he makes his way through the crowd. \*

He uses his hand to wave people out of the way. He drives past the demonstrators and onto the road.

INT. CAR - DAY

They drive along a busy access road with business lining both sides.

DR. ROGERS \*

You can sit up now. We're away from the hospital.

Mamata sits up and looks behind the car at the hospital getting smaller from view. She reaches down and lifts the baby out of the bag.

She's careful not to disturb the baby's cast.

MAMATA

Is this safe for her? I hope I'm making the right decision.

DR. ROGERS \*

She'll be fine, as for the decision to leave... Well, you know I would rather you stay and tell everyone your story, but, it's not my choice to make. \*

MAMATA

I know, but I can't take the risk. I've already lost enough. I made a promise and I intend to keep it.

The doctor looks again at Mamata's reflection in the rear view mirror.

DR. ROGERS \*

I understand.

EXT. COTTAGE - DAY

The doctor pulls up to the small cottage and stops the car.

INT. CAR - DAY

Dr. Rogers turns around and smiles at Tanji and then gently pats Mamata's shoulder. \*

DR. ROGERS \*

We're here. It's not much but you should be good.

Mamata looks out of the window at the small house. She gazes around at the area and notices that there are no houses nearby.

MAMATA

Any neighbors?

EXT. COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS \*

The doctor gets out of the car and opens the door for Mamata.

DR. ROGERS \*

None that would notice or care. I promise, you're safe here. It's a safe house I set up when I started with the resistance. I haven't had a need to use it, but wanted it in place, just in case.

Mamata gets the girls out of the car and follows the doctor to the door of the cottage.

INT. COTTAGE - DAY

He unlocks it and walks in first. The living room is modest and barely lit. The doctor opens the curtains and pats the sofa. Dust billows out of the cushion.

DR. ROGERS \*

Well, what do you think? It'll do?

MAMATA

It'll do just fine, thank you so much.

DR. ROGERS \*

There's electricity, water, food in the fridge, oh, and before I forget, here...

The doctor hands Mamata a cell phone.

MAMATA

I can't find the words to thank you  
enough, for everything!

The doctor waves off her gratitude.

DR. ROGERS

I'll be back in about a week to  
check on Sejai. Make sure that  
she's healing properly. Until then,  
try to stay out of view and don't  
go anywhere until things die down.  
Any questions before I go?

\*

Mamata hugs the doctor in a tight embrace, then releases him  
and wipes her tears away.

MAMATA

No, we'll be fine here.

Mamata motions towards the children.

MAMATA (CONT'D)

You've been more than generous. I  
can't find the words to properly  
thank you.

\*

DR. ROGERS

There's no need. Call me night or  
day if you need me, no matter what.  
Promise me!

\*

Mamata nods her head in agreement.

MAMATA

Promise.

Mamata watches out of the window as the doctor drives away.  
She looks at the cell in her hand.

TANJI (O.S.)

Look Mama, there's a lake!

Mamata releases a long held sigh of relief. She kisses Sejai  
and holds the baby up to look out of the window.

MAMATA

We're home, baby!

EXT. COTTAGE - DAY

\*

Dr. Rogers walks to the car and makes a phone call. He speaks cryptically and at a low volume to the person on the other end.

DR. ROGERS

\*

She's at the house, kids too. Yes,  
I'll keep an eye on them.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

The General sits at his desk and listens on the phone as it RINGS in his ear.

SEN. RANDOLPH (O.S.)

General, to what do I owe the  
pleasure of your phone call?

GENERAL

I hear that you have a problem at  
the border.

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Sen. Randolph dismisses his ASSISTANT by pointing to the door.

SEN. RANDOLPH

And what problem would that be,  
General?

\*

GENERAL (O.S.)

You think we don't get the news in  
Anahuac. Who is it?

SEN. RANDOLPH

No one of any interest to you. Just  
a woman and her children.

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The General leans forward with interest.

GENERAL

What's her name?

SEN. RANDOLPH (O.S.)

Don't worry, she's...

GENERAL

The president's wife and children.  
Is this what I get for working with  
you, empty promises? You said the  
MDs were guaranteed!

\*

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Sen. Randolph leans into his desk, irritated.

SEN. RANDOLPH

Don't get indignant with me. If  
that woman is in fact Vincente's  
wife then it's your own fault for  
losing her. And as for my MDs,  
that's my problem to fix. The wife  
is yours.

GENERAL (O.S.)

Where is she now?

SEN. RANDOLPH

We don't even know if she's who you  
claim she is.

There's a knock at the door, the ASSISTANT peeps his head in.  
He shows the senator a message.

The senator holds up his hand to accept it. Sen. Randolph  
silently reads the note and chuckles to himself.

\*

GENERAL (O.S.)

What's funny about this situation?

SEN. RANDOLPH

Well, it just got funnier. Your  
ninja wife and children just  
disappeared from the hospital while  
waiting for one of my men to pick  
them up.

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The General bangs his fist on the table.

\*

GENERAL

She must've had help.

SEN. RANDOLPH (O.S.)

Help or not, to escape twice and  
survive machines able to rip a man  
in half? That requires skill.

(MORE)

SEN. RANDOLPH (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I might have to find her just to  
offer her a job.

GENERAL

You people, you think everything is  
a joke.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Sen. Randolph turns on a monitor with a live feed of the  
General's office. \*  
\*

SEN. RANDOLPH

No General, we just know where to  
prioritize our resources. I'll call  
you back once I have more  
information on your phantom woman.

The senator hangs up the phone and focuses his attention on  
the monitor of the General pacing his office and yelling at  
his guard.

TITLE CARD:

ANAHAUC, 15 YEARS LATER

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Tanji, now in her early 20s, athletic build, brown-skinned  
and wild curly mane pulled into a tight bun, runs through the  
woods being chased by two MDs. They shoot LASERS at her as \*  
she weaves between the trees.

One MD pulls ahead of the other just as she jumps over a  
small canyon to escape them. A laser hits a tree near her  
head as she dodges their aim.

INT. CAR - DAY

JOSUE, a thin framed man in his mid 20s, and a computer \*  
specialist for the Anahuacan government, impatiently sits in  
the van with MIKE, his driver (early 20s), short and stocky. \*  
He looks out of the window into the woods.

JOSUE

Why can't we just go? You're a  
driver, right? What's the problem  
with you taking me?

Mike is stretched out with a newspaper over his eyes.

MIKE

I drive to the Hard Pass.

He lifts the newspaper and looks at Josue.

MIKE (CONT'D)

I don't drive through the Hard  
Pass.

\*

Mike places the newspaper back over his eyes.

JOSUE

And this guide is good?

MIKE

The best.

JOSUE

So he'll keep me safe? Make sure I  
make it through, I mean.

Mike lifts the paper from his eyes again, looks at Josue and  
LAUGHS.

MIKE

You don't know shit do you? Don't  
worry. You'll get there safe.

Josue looks again out of the window.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Tanji drives expeditiously through the woods in her jeep,  
jumping fallen logs maneuvering expertly on the narrowly  
paved road.

An MD speeds along her driver side door trying to catch hold  
of the frame.

INT. JEEP - DAY

It leaps onto the doorframe and Tanji pulls out a handgun and  
shoots the MD in its head.

The MD maintains its grip and tries to bite her arm but she  
moves to avoid it's sharp teeth.

Tanji swerves the jeep into the direction of a tree branch.  
The MD loses its grip and falls to the ground.



Tanji looks over her shoulder at the MD as it regains its balance and charges toward the jeep. She grabs a high-powered assault rifle from the floor of the passenger side, turns around and shoots the MD in the head. It falls over to the ground. \*

INT. CAR - DAY

The men hear a gunshot coming from the woods. Mike jumps and the newspaper falls to his lap.

Josue is startled at the SOUND of the gunshot. He rolls down the window and leans out to view the woods. \*

JOSUE  
What was that?

Mike sits up in his seat and puts his shades on his eyes.

MIKE  
Your ride, get ready!

Mike exits the van and opens the side door for Josue.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Tanji speeds down the path that exists the woods. She stops in front of the van, puts the jeep in park and exits it. Tanji walks up to the two men, gives Josue a quick look-over, grabs his bag and puts it in the back of the Jeep.

JOSUE  
You're my driver?

Mike leans back against the van and draws a cigarette. Tanji walks up to the man and removes the scarf covering her face and hat.

TANJI  
Josue, right?

Tanji points to the driver.

TANJI (CONT'D) \*  
He's your driver, I'm your guide.

Josue looks at her confused.

JOSUE  
What's the difference?

TANJI  
He drives vans, I keep people  
alive. No offense, Mike!

Mike takes a drag on his cigarette and lets out a small  
chuckle.

MIKE  
None taken. I'm not crazy enough to  
take the job.

JOSUE  
But you're a girl!

Tanji expertly takes a knife and presses it between Josue's  
legs.

TANJI  
If you weren't a priority, I'd make  
you one too.

MIKE  
Rule number one, don't piss off the  
guide paid to keep you safe, she  
may begin to feel the money isn't  
worth it.

JOSUE  
And rule two?

Tanji puts her knife back in its shaft.

TANJI  
Do what I tell you, when I tell  
you, and you'll make it out alive.

Tanji walks back to the jeep and gets in.

JOSUE  
Is there a third rule I should know  
about?

Josue walks toward the passenger side.

TANJI  
If you follow rule one, I won't  
kill you, follow rule two, the MDs  
won't kill you. What more do you  
need to know?

JOSUE  
Your name?

Tanji pulls down her shades and peers at Josue over the rim.

TANJI  
Tanji, now let's go!

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW