

# **The Fabulous Fernandez Sisters**

**TREATMENT FOR ONE HOUR TV DRAMA**

**By**

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**October 23, 2014**

**First Draft**

## TREATMENT

At the busy field office of the 14th District belonging to Councilwoman Fernandez, MARTHA FERNANDEZ, 33, (Mexican-American, full figured, beautiful) is in a staff meeting where she is being informed about the rise in number of homeless people in her district. Her district has seen a lot of improvement, new metro, street beautification, rise in house prices, decrease in violence, but now there are homeless people living in the parks. Martha finishes her staff meeting and quickly meets with her two mystery guests before her assistant can ask who they are. They turn out to be Political and Image Consultants who tell her what she'll need to do if she wants any chance at running for Mayor of Los Angeles. In the middle of the meeting where she is told she needs to lose weight, get married, reduce her Mexican accent, make herself "accessible" to all Americans, and is asked whether she can get an endorsement by the Mayor, she gets a call on her cell. She answers and quickly transitions into Spanish. By the look on her face it's terrible news. Martha takes a deep breath and hangs up. She holds in her pain and cuts the meeting short. Martha thanks them for their advice and promises to contact them if she decides to run. Martha picks up her purse and makes for the door. On her way out she tells her assistant, "I have a family emergency. Cancel all my meetings for the next two days. I can't explain now." Martha makes a call on her cell.

CONNIE FERNANDEZ, 31, (Mexican-American, dark skin, sexy) is in Immigration Court in the middle of a deportation hearing in downtown Los Angeles. "My defendant is a mother of three U.S. born children and has proven to be an outstanding member of her community. You cannot send her back to Guatemala. In her hometown alone there has been a 70 percent increase in violence and murder due to the drug wars. It is also located next to the major highway considered a drug route to the U.S. Sending her back would be cruel and would put her at risk. In this folder are over ten letters from community leaders and members pleading for Marisa Gutierrez to remain in the country." Connie leaves the file with letters on the Judge's desk. The judge calls for a recess and Connie goes to her client. Connie pleads with her client MARISA GUTIERREZ, late 20s, "You can still file a claim against your estranged husband who beat you. You can qualify to remain in the country and obtain residency if you do." Marisa whispers back, "No, I can't. If I file to get residency and we fail and he gets deported too then my children will have no one left in this country to take care of them. If I do file and win and he gets deported he'll find a way to get back in the country and he'll kill me. I know him... This is the only way. I am their mother, they have to let me stay." Just then Connie's cell phone rings. On the screen it says "Martha". Connie is about to answer, but shakes her head and throws the phone in her brief case.

Martha gets out of a taxi at the airport. She makes another call on her cell.

MARY ELLEN HOUSTON, (Born Maria Elena Fernandez), 27, (Mexican-American, olive complexion, plain) well dressed, and JERRY HOUSTON, 33, (white), wait outside Truman Elementary School along with SEVERAL PARENTS who wait to pick up their children. KATIE PARKER, 30s, (white), a parent, comes up to Jerry holding a clip board and asks him to sign a petition so they can start a Charter school on the same campus as the Elementary school. She explains that due to the influx of immigrant children and other low performing students in the school the test scores have lowered and so has the funding which has eliminated most of the after school programs and arts program. They want to start a Charter School called Citizens of A New World where the higher achieving (white) students can break away and they can get better funding as a charter school. Jerry signs the petition. Mary Ellen is about to sign too, but Katie turns around and goes up to another white parent instead. Mary Ellen is left hanging, wondering why she wasn't asked. Just then her cell phone rings. She looks at her cell phone and sees "Martha" on the screen. She debates whether to pick up. She stares at her ringing phone. Her husband stares at her perplexed. "Pick up," he orders her. The school bell rings and she throws her cell phone into her designer purse instead.

Martha is at the gate at the airport about to board. She makes another call.

DREAM SEQUENCE - In a Mexican kitchen, CRISTAL FERNANDEZ, 30s, is busy cooking. On the kitchen table is a feast of the best Mexican food. Cristal takes off her apron. TINA FERNANDEZ (as a young girl of 10) walks into the kitchen. Her eyes widen with delight at all the delicious food and deserts. In Spanish Cristal tells Tina, "I left you all you need. I am ready to go now." Tina asks her, "Mama, where are you going?" "I have to go join your Abuelita, she's here for me." Cristal picks up a suitcase and makes for the door. Tina runs up to her and begs her not to go. Just then ABUELITA SANCHEZ, 50s, shows up at the door. Abuelita walks in and tells Tina, "Your mother has to come with me. It's her time. Don't worry, it's your turn now. We left you everything you need. Take care of the family." They walk out. Tina grabs Abuelita's hand to impede her from leaving with her mother. She pulls so hard on her hand and then it turns into a skeleton's hand. Abuelita's face turns into a skull and Abuelita is transformed into "la muerte" (death) and then turns to black dust. Tina screams. Her scream blends into a high-pitched cell phone ring and an alarm clock.

The adult TINA FERNANDEZ, 21, (Mexican-American, light complexion, very cute) wakes up from her nightmare. She is in her college dorm room with large science textbooks all over her and even on her face. She wakes up and sees her cell phone ringing and her alarm is blaring. She turns off her alarm and reaches for her cell phone on the table next to her bed. She looks at her screen and sees "Big Sis" on it. She is about to answer, but reconsiders and puts the phone down. Seconds later she jumps out of bed. "The exam!" Tina gets dressed in seconds and runs out of her dorm room. She runs to her classroom. The sign on the door reads, "NO LATE SEATING PERMITTED - MCAT EXAM IN PROGRESS". Tina sits down bummed out. After a few seconds she picks up

her cell phone and listens to her sisters message. “This is Martha... your sister...there was a car accident in San Angel. Our parents fell off the road into a ditch and... they are dead... Rudy was in the car with them, but he is alive! I’m on a plane to Mexico. I’ll call you when I get there and know more. We have a lot to figure out. Bye.”

Connie drives up to her parents two-bedroom house in the barrio. It is evening and the lights are off in the house and it’s getting dark. She walks up to the front porch and almost loses it. She shakes it off and rather than cry, waters the dying plants with a hose. She hears a commotion and looks up. A HOMELESS WOMAN, 60s, sits on the sidewalk in front of the house next door with several bags full of her belongings. BRADLEY, 30s, tall, natural good looks, and CHIP, 30s, a boy in a hairy man’s body, are next to the homeless woman asking her to leave. She doesn’t speak English and can’t understand them. Bradley grabs her things to encourage her to keep moving. She thinks she is being mugged and screams for help. Chip touches her shoulder to calm her down, but it only makes her scream louder. Connie comes to her rescue. She walks up to Bradley and snaps “Hey, tell your boyfriend to get his hand off of her or I’ll tear it off!” Brad and Chip look at one another and have an awkward moment not sure how to respond. Chip removes his hand and replies, “We’re not trying to hurt her, we just want her to move off our sidewalk and keep moving.” “Your sidewalk?” Connie doesn’t understand what they mean by that. Connie walks up to the homeless woman and asks her in Spanish if she is all right. The woman asks her if she’s seen her son. Connie lies and tells, “Yes, he just left. I think he went to the corner store.” The woman thanks her and walks away. Chip thanks Connie for helping them out. Connie asks, “So let me get this straight. You live here now?” They nod. Connie tells them, “That lady used to live in “your” house. Her son got killed in a drive-by in this spot. She lost it after that happened. I guess she lost her house too.” Bradley and Chip look at each other, another awkward moment. Bradley tells her, “He’s not my boyfriend...” Connie looks him up and down still upset at them. Bradley tries to smooth things over by saying, “...but thank you for your help...neighbor.” Connie stares at him, full of disgust and lust in her eyes, “I’m not your neighbor.” Mary Ellen drives up in her luxury car and interrupts their conversation. Connie walks over to her parents’ house and continues watering the plants.

Mary Ellen gets out of her car and walks up to Connie who sees her, but doesn’t say anything. Mary Ellen stops in front of her and says, “Well, aren’t you going to at least say ‘Hi’ and hug me?” Connie reminds her, “I’m not a hypocrite who insults people and then pretends everything is okay. I’m not like you.” Mary Ellen takes a deep breath and responds, “You’re right, I don’t hold grudges like you. I already forgave you for calling me a whore at the Christmas party.” “No, I called you a sell out, which is like a whore, but you sell your dignity not your crotch.” “Okay, then I guess that makes you the only whore in the family,” Mary Ellen replies with a smile. Connie gets up and walks up to her and gets in her face. “What I do with my lady parts is nobody’s business. You’re just jealous because I am single, sexy, successful and don’t have to drag around a bunch of kids and a husband who only does me “Missionary” style with the lights off.” Mary Ellen is about to

insult Connie when Tina's car pulls up into the driveway. Tina has picked up Martha, TIA (AUNT) SOFIA, 50s, (Mexican, Rubenesque and a gossip queen) and RUDY FERNANDEZ, JR., 13, (Mexican-American the spitting image of his father). Martha and Tia Sofia get out of the car and help Rudy out. He's had a long journey back home. He's exhausted and has bandages on his face. He looks like he lost a fight and can barely walk. Connie and Mary Ellen try to hug Rudy but it hurts too much for him to hug them back. The sisters try to awkwardly connect with Rudy, who seems traumatized by the events of the past few days. They escort him to his bedroom and allow him to rest while they figure things out.

The sisters get busy moving some things around and cleaning the cobwebs; they don't really want to talk. It's awkward and no one wants to take the lead. Tia Sofia tells the sisters to gather around the kitchen table. Tina looks at the kitchen table and thinks she sees a feast of Mexican food like in her dream. She shakes her head and the table is empty. She looks away disturbed. Tia Sofia talks about what a nice funeral it was. Mary Ellen and Tina can't believe Martha isn't bringing back their parent's bodies to bury them in the U.S. Martha tries to explain, but the three sisters jump in with comments in utter disbelief that she would not consult with them first. Martha yells, "By the time I got there the funeral was already planned and all our relatives were not going to allow me to bring them back to the U.S.!" "You cheated us out of a funeral!" Mary Ellen snaps at her. Martha defends herself, "I called you and told you where I was going. If you really wanted a funeral you could have gotten on a plane like I did!" Tia Sofia interjects, "Miren, (look) if it makes you feel any better, my brother wanted to die as a Mexican. His wishes were to be buried back in Mexico." The sisters all get quiet. Martha suggests they can plan a memorial for themselves and the relatives who couldn't go to Mexico. The sisters half-heartedly agree. "But I need all of you to help me with the memorial. I have too many things going on with all my duties at work. I can't do it all by myself. We can have it at my house." Tina offers to help with the catering. Connie offers to contact everyone. Mary Ellen doesn't offer to help and hopes nobody notices. Tia Sofia asks them, "So what's going to happen to Rudy?" They all look at each other not knowing what to say. Connie looks at everyone and declares, "Don't look at me. I work seventy-five hours a week, I can't even take care of a cactus plant or a cat." Tina pleads her case, "It's my senior year and I have too much homework and I can't handle another thing." Martha shakes her head, "I wish I could do it, but I'm never home." Aunt Sofia looks at Mary Ellen and asks her, "Don't you have a four bedroom house?" Mary Ellen doesn't want to respond. The three sisters and Aunt Sofia look at Mary Ellen. Mary Ellen shakes her head knowing where this is going, "Wait a minute, just because I have an extra bedroom—" Her sisters bombard her with reasons why she's the best person to take Rudy. She's a mother who has a regular schedule and can afford to care for him in an environment where Rudy will stay out of trouble. Mary Ellen calls her husband and breaks the news to him. By the sound of the conversation she has to make promises that she knows she'll have to keep. She grudgingly accepts to take Rudy to live with her.

Martha drives Rudy to Mary Ellen's house just outside the city limits. Martha reassures him that it's for the best. "You're going to like the room Mary Ellen set up for you. It even has a small TV." Rudy looks away unmoved. Martha arrives at Mary Ellen's house and is pleasantly surprised by her beautiful home. It's straight out of a Martha Stewart's catalogue. She makes small talk with JERRY HOUSTON, 33 (white), in police uniform arriving from work. He is pleasant, but doesn't do a good job of hiding the fact he is not happy that Rudy is moving in. He tells Rudy that he's welcomed in his home, but he has to live by his rules. Rudy goes to his room to sleep. Martha and Mary Ellen clash a bit about settling Rudy in. They debate whether to enlist him in the public school close by or bus him to the Arts Magnet middle school he was attending. Mary Ellen snipes that she took care of a kid on her own at 16 without any help from the family. She's pretty sure she can manage without Martha's input now.

The next day, in a conference call that Tina fails to connect on, the sisters struggle to manage their normal lives in the midst of planning the memorial. Tina was supposed to find a caterer, but they can't reach her. Mary Ellen tells them she has too many things going on with Rudy turning her life upside down and her three kids starting school. She feels that whatever they want to do is fine with her and she's already done enough by taking in Rudy. She is frazzled and apologetic as she hangs-up. Connie suggests they have a simple memorial with a small altar and pictures and keep it short. Martha tells her she is prepared to pay for a mariachi band to play their father's songs so they can all sing in the memorial. Connie warns her that if she turns it into a big thing with mariachis she's boycotting the event. "This isn't a fiesta, it's a memorial." Martha replies, "Yes, but I promised my father that I would do that." Annoyed, Connie snaps back, "Our father doesn't deserve it! You're not turning it into a mariachi show and don't you dare ask me to sing!" Martha concedes, "Okay, okay, I'll just play his favorite songs in the background. Hey, I'm late, I have to go!"

Martha runs into the Mayor's Office. She is brought in to meet the Chief of Staff. Martha apologizes for being late and states her case as to why she thinks she would make a great mayor. The Chief of Staff thinks he can get her the Mayor's support. The Mayor has been paying close attention to all the progress she's made with her District and how she's turned one of the most violent neighborhoods into an up and coming neighborhood that is attracting new businesses and wealthier home owners.

Tina, depressed and unmotivated, can barely get out of bed. Her mother shows up in her college dorm telling her "get up" and makes chorizo. Tina shakes her head and thinks she's just imagining her out of grief and stress. She gets up and looks around for her mother, can't find her. She throws cold water on her face to wake up. She turns on her cell phone and sees all the missed calls from her sisters. "Oh, no. I forgot... I want chorizo." Tina can actually smell the chorizo

Rudy gets off a bus and walks to Mary Ellen's house up the hill towards a gated community. He carries a large backpack. A police car with two WHITE POLICE OFFICERS pulls up and stops him. They ask him where he's going. He tells them "home." They ask him what he has in the backpack. Rudy looks at them and with attitude tells them, "What do you think? What do you think I have in my backpack besides books?" They ask to see his ID. "Why do I have to show you my ID? I'm not doing anything wrong." They insist. He shows them his school ID. "How come your school ID says Roosevelt in East L.A.?" He explains, "Cause I don't have a new ID for my new school around here..." They question him until he gets tired of it and asks, "Officers, what have I done wrong?" They look at him unable to respond and warn him to stay out of trouble and they take off.

Rudy takes a shower and cries in frustration, anger, and loneliness. Rudy comes out of the bathroom with his hair slicked back wearing a sleeveless white shirt. Mary Ellen tries to accept Rudy's "ghetto" ways but her bad feelings toward her father make her reject Rudy. Mary Ellen tells Rudy not to wear the Tres Rosas oil on his hair slicked back because it makes him look "different" around her neighborhood. Rudy tells her their father wore it on his hair and he thought it made him look classy. Mary Ellen hates it because it reminds her of her womanizing father. Jerry warns him, "If you wear it around here it's gonna make everyone think you're a cholo. Don't blame the police if they stop you thinking you're a criminal." Rudy informs him, "They already stopped me for being Mexican, I guess that automatically makes me a criminal in this white ass hood." Rudy gives Jerry a dirty look and goes to his room. Mary Ellen tells Jerry, "You shouldn't have said he looks like a "cholo". Jerry whispers, "Well he does. I'm sorry, but if he weren't your brother, I'd - -" "You'd what? Arrest him? Rudy is a good kid. You should tell your buddies at the precinct he's your brother-in-law so nobody harasses him." Jerry replies, "No one harassed him, he's just making that up." That night Rudy sneaks out of their house and catches many buses back to the barrio.

Rudy tries to break into his parents' house but he's too injured to climb into a window. He wants to live back home and just wants things to be the way they used to be. Bradley wakes up and hears noises coming from the Fernandez's house. He comes out of his house and tells Rudy to go away. Rudy ignores him. Bradley warns Rudy that he's going to call the police if he doesn't go away. Rudy tells him he lives there, but Bradley, who just moved in, doesn't know him because Rudy was out of the country when he moved in. Rudy is forced to leave. He wanders the streets until an old friend spots him sleeping on a bus bench. He invites him to stay at his house.

Rudy sleeps in his friend's house. He wakes up and hears laughing and then an argument breaks out. He steps out of his room and sees what looks like a drug deal going on. TWO CHOLO TYPES are exchanging money for drugs. TALL CHOLO hands over a wad of cash and the SHORT CHOLO hands him a bag full of baggies with cocaine. Seconds lat-

er POLICE OFFICERS kick the door open and the place gets raided. A POLICE OFFICER hand cuffs Rudy and he gets escorted into a police car. A CAMERA CREW captures his arrest on camera.

At the cafeteria in the courthouse in downtown L.A. Connie is eating and reading her case files. On the news is a story about a drug raid in Boyle Heights. Connie looks up.

At the field office for COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ, Martha is busy reading documents when her assistant closes the door behind her and turns on the TV. "You have to see this." The drug raid story plays and Rudy is being escorted into the police car. Martha's jaw drops. She grabs her purse and runs out.

The drug raid story in which Rudy is identified as Councilwoman Fernandez's brother is also seen by the Mayor's Chief-of-Staff while he is having lunch at a restaurant with televisions.

Martha arrives at Juvenile Hall to find Connie dealing with a mountain of paperwork to petition for Rudy's release. Martha tries to use her political connections to get Rudy out. DETECTIVE RAMOS, 30s, muscular with rugged good looks, is exiting when he sees Martha. He walks up to Martha, who doesn't recognize him at first, but he reminds her they both went to high school together and were in the speech team. Martha finally recognizes him and is happy to see him. Detective Ramos tells her he heard her little brother got snatched in the drug raid and wonders what's going on with him. Martha quickly explains the loss of her parents and Rudy's injuries and his state of mind. Detective Ramos tells Martha she needs to do whatever it takes to keep him out of the gangs or she's going to lose him. Rudy needs a family and if he doesn't find one with her he's going to find it with the gangs like he sees so many young kids who get caught up in the gang cycle doing. Martha thanks Detective Ramos for the heads up. He tells her he is going to help expedite things so the police can release him to her. Martha thanks him profusely. He asks her out to lunch next week so they can catch up and Martha accepts. Connie comes up to Martha and asks her why she didn't introduce him to her. Martha tells her sister, "He's not your type." Connie looks at her, "Like you know what my type is?" Martha replies, "Trust me, he's not your type. He talks back and won't put up with crap. He's not afraid of your fangs." Connie smiles, "I like that in a guy." Minutes later Detective Ramos returns with Rudy. Connie introduces herself to Detective Ramos, "Hi, I'm Connie, Martha's younger, single sister." Detective Ramos smiles at her, "Wow, all you Fernandez sisters are impressive." Martha says goodbye to Detective Ramos and hugs Rudy. Connie hugs Rudy and has to excuse herself to go attend a trial. Martha plans to drive Rudy back to Mary Ellen's, but he refuses to go back to Mary Ellen's house. "Hell no, I'm not going back. It's so boring and even if I don't cause trouble I'm gonna get arrested over there. Jerry thinks I'm a cholo and he doesn't like me living with them." Martha assures him, "Okay, got it. You can come home with me, but we have to figure out what's best for



you.” “Take me to my house so I can go to my old school,” he demands. “You can’t live by yourself. Someone has to look after you.” Rudy asserts, “I don’t need nobody. I can take care of myself.” Martha, who took Detective Ramos’ advice to heart, let’s Rudy stay with her, and they’ll figure things out after the memorial.

The next day Martha meets with the Mayor’s Chief of Staff who tells her that her life is too messy with the recent events of her parents’ death and her brother in the news. He advises her to wait it out until the next four years when she’s qualified and emotionally stable. Martha tells him she understands and leaves. In private she finally allows herself to cry and feel the loss of her parents.

Connie presents her final arguments to the judge in Immigration court. The judge decides to deport Connie’s client. She will be sent back to Guatemala immediately. Marisa breaks down crying. Her children, in the court scream out crying. They run to her side. She hugs them and the guards have to physically pull them off of her so they can take her and handcuff her. Connie hugs the children and uses her body to shield them from having to see their mother in handcuffs being taken away. Connie has seen this happen many times, but this one breaks her. At her fancy loft in downtown L.A., Connie sips wine and confesses to her best friend JESUS, 30s, ghetto-fabulous and gay, about how angry she is with her father for dying before she could become so successful that he would see he was wrong about her. “I always thought he was going to be around and that one day he would tell me he was sorry for being a jerk to me. He was going to tell me how proud he was of me.” She finally lets herself cry for the loss of her parents. Connie wishes she had a second chance to reconnect with her father to make things right. “As angry as I am, I really miss him and wish that he were back. Now that my parents are gone, I really feel like I don’t have a family anymore.” Jesus points out, “Of course you have a family. You are so lucky you still have your three sisters and your brother... Now, if you only put as much passion fighting for your family as you do fighting for undocumented immigrants, you wouldn’t feel like an orphan.” Connie asks him, “What do I do with all this anger I have for my father?” Jesus tells her, “Honey, if you want we can go see a medium I know who can connect with your father and just because he’s passed doesn’t mean you can’t tell him off.”

Tina visits LOLI, 25, (Mexican-American, chubby and cute) her cousin, at her salon in the barrio. “Tia Sofia told me you would give me a free make-over.” Loli tells her, “Yeah, my mom told me what happened and I wanted to do something nice to make you feel better. How are you doing? Tina confides in her that she must be in shock because she swears she saw her mother in her dorm. Loli tells her that she knows a “Curandera” who can confirm whether it’s true. Loli gives Tina a makeover and cuts her hair. Tina shares with Loli how much she misses living in the barrio. She’s been at the dorms for three years and doesn’t like it or the dorm food. She confesses that she doesn’t like pre-med. She thought she wanted to be a doctor, because doctors saved her life when she was a

preemie baby. She also wanted to make her parents proud by becoming a doctor. She recently lost her scholarship and missed a very important test to get into medical school and doesn't know what she's going to do now. She's been having troubles keeping up with all her schoolwork and her "insomnia" makes it impossible to wake up early for her statistics class. Loli tells her to do what makes her happy. She says, "At first I was all embarrassed telling my friends who went to college I stayed in the 'hood and that I went to cosmetology school instead, but I love it. I am my own boss and now I don't care what people think." Tina tells her she wishes she were as carefree as her because her sisters would be so disappointed in her if she dropped out of school. "My oldest sister Martha has an M.B.A. My second oldest sister Connie has a Law Degree - a J.D., my third oldest sister Mary Ellen has an M.A. and a teaching credential. If I don't graduate they'll think I'm just all B.S. They just wouldn't understand me. They are such go-getters like my dad was and I can't show them I'm confused. I feel so lost, I don't know what to do with my life." Loli jokes, "Then get knocked up. That will shut them up." Tina confesses, "I don't even have a boyfriend. Been so busy trying to keep up that I don't even go out." Loli brags, "After I finish with your make-over, girl, you'll have all kinds of guys after you... Let's go out some time."

At Truman Elementary Mary Ellen sees Katie pitching the charter school to white parents. Mary Ellen walks up to Katie and asks about the Charter School. Katie hesitates telling her about it. Mary Ellen tells her how her kids are high achieving and would probably benefit from going to the charter school. Katie smiles and lies about getting all the signatures she needed. She makes up the excuse that she is late and walks off. A little later Mary Ellen gets home with her kids and asks Jerry if the new charter school opened would he seriously consider sending their kids to it. "Of course, sounds like a great opportunity." Mary Ellen tells her that as a public school teacher, she would object to taking her kids out of public school. She worries her kids would grow up in a mostly white setting and will be sheltered from the real world. Jerry doesn't want his kids getting bad influences. Mary Ellen tells him that "diversity" and being around bilingual children can be a positive influence. Mary Ellen can't convince him and she realizes, "Wow, you're just as ignorant as my stubborn father." He reminds her, "I thought you didn't want our kids to grow up speaking Spanish?" Mary Ellen tells him she was wrong. She goes to her room, breaks down crying and allows herself to feel the loss of her parents.

At the memorial Martha busies herself making sure there is plenty of food. She stops and looks at several tequila bottles. Martha asks, "Who brought the tequila? I said I wanted no alcohol." Tia Sofia says, "Your Tios brought them as gifts. It's good tequila." An UNCLE interjects, "What kind of memorial would it be without tequila por favor (please). We gotta let the soul sing when it's in pain, que no Sofia?" Sofia agrees. Martha knows she can't win the argument with a drunk uncle so she continues making sure everyone is feeling welcomed. Tina attempts to talk to Rudy who doesn't want to talk to her about the

accident or how he's feeling. Tina apologizes to him for being absent in his life since she went off to live in the dorms. Rudy walks away, goes outside and puts on his headphones and ignores everyone. Her cousin Loli tells Tina that he's still in shock so give him time to open up. Connie walks up to Rudy and makes faces to get his attention. He takes off his headset and she surprises him with a gift card. "Here, so you can buy some more music to be miserable to." Rudy smiles. Connie cheers him up by saying, "At least you're alive." Mary Ellen pulls Connie to the side and points to Maravina, a woman she suspects was her father's mistress. Mary Ellen wants Connie to ask her to leave, but Martha overhears and tells them not create a scene. Tia Sofia tells them to get on with the eulogy because she needs to get home soon to watch her telenovela.

Martha coughs loudly to get everyone's attention and asks everyone to gather around the altar. On the altar are several pictures of Rodolfo Sr. and Cristal Fernandez. There is a wedding photo of them, Rodolfo as a Bracero, as a Mariachi, next to his big truck, a family photo with all the sisters, a photo of the sisters in pink Mariachi outfits playing their instruments, etc. She begins her eulogy, "My father Rodolfo Fernandez came to this country as a Bracero. He was a talented musician and singer who dreamt of having his daughters follow in his footsteps by being the most successful Girl Mariachi Band. He was an ambitious and hard working man who always wanted the best for his family. He was a loving father and the protector and head of our family who wanted to make sure all his daughters got an education and did well." As Martha attempts to give a respectful eulogy honoring her parents, Connie, who had tequila shots, interrupts her demanding she tell the truth about what a mean jerk their father really was. "You were his favorite; of course you thought he was a great father!" Connie confesses that she resented him for forcing them to be in the stupid Mariachi girl band called "The Fabulous Fernandez Sisters" and always telling her she would never amount to anything. Mary Ellen, who also drank a little too much tequila, confesses out loud that she hated him for kicking her out when she got knocked up. Mary Ellen calls her father a hypocrite and points her finger at Maravina and outs her as her father's "whore". Maravina tells her, "You don't know the truth," and leaves. Tina tells them to "Stop being bitter bitches and grow up!" Connie and Mary Ellen call her "a spoiled princess brat who acts just like a white girl." Martha pleads for her sisters to rise above this and be "Bigger". Mary Ellen tells her, "Yeah, you're always the sister who is "Big" - "You're so Big you're fat!" Martha is annoyed by her comment she yells back at Mary Ellen, "I may be fat, but you're the ugly sister. And I can lose weight! But you can't get a face transplant." Connie turns on Mary Ellen and says, "Our father probably had sex with a turtle and had you - cause our mother was beautiful and you must be adopted." Tina yells at them, "Stop acting stupid! You've had too much to drink. So what if our father was a jerk, he was still our father!" Tia Sofia and the relatives all agree this is better than a telenovela when the sisters' true feelings come out about each other and their father. It becomes utter chaos. Rudy yells at them to stop disrespecting his father and defends him, "You didn't get to see the good side, the father I got to know! All I wanted was to come home to my family, but that doesn't exist any-

more. I'd rather live with Aunt Sofia than get stuck with any of you!" Mary Ellen grabs her fancy purse and leaves in a huff. Connie takes off with her friend Jesus who offers to drive her home because she's too drunk and rowdy. Tina takes off with Loli.

Tina gets in Loli's car and tells her she doesn't want to go back to her dorm. She is so disturbed and emotionally wound up she needs a release. Tina wants to go dancing to forget. They go to a night club in downtown L.A. and live it up. Tina dances like a crazy woman and tries to let go of her pain. Tina has one too many drinks and is drunk on the dance floor. At the same club Connie, who is with Jesus at the bar, is confessing how angry she still is with her father because he wouldn't let them attend Mary Ellen's birth of her baby and Mary Ellen felt betrayed by them and she lost her sister. Just then Jesus asks, "Is that Tina? I didn't think she was even 21." Connie, who is now sober, watches TWO GUYS circle her drunk sister with sleazy intentions. Connie marches over to the dance floor to stop it. The two guys get closer to sandwich Tina as they dance. Tina gets dizzy and ends up vomiting on one of them. Connie yells at the guys, "That's what you get for being creeps! Get away from my sister. She's drunk! You have sex with her and it's called rape!" The Two creepy guys leave the scene. Connie asks Tina, "What are you doing here?" Tina looks away from her, "Leave me alone. I came here to get away from my family!" Connie tells her she should go sit down and stop drinking. Tina tells her, "Just leave me alone and stop telling me what to do. Just because you're older than me doesn't mean you know everything or anything about me!" Just then Loli comes to the dance floor with two drinks. Connie yells at Loli, "What are you doing leaving her alone when she's drunk? This is a meat market." Loli yells back with attitude, "Yeah, is that why you come here?!" They yell at each other and Tina makes a run for the bathroom. Tina ends up vomiting her guts out. She sits in the toilet stall with her head spinning. She sees a reflection that looks like her deceased mother hugging her. At first it's a comforting image, but then it freaks her out. She gets up and screams. Loli, who runs into the bathroom asks, "Tina? Are you all right?" Tina comes out of the toilet stall and confesses to Loli what she saw. "You don't think I'm crazy do you?" Loli looks at her, "You're just all peda (drunk), but you're not crazy." Loli advises they leave quickly before Connie comes in and tears her head off for leaving her alone on the dance floor.

Loli and Tina escape through an alley and Loli cleans up Tina and drives her to a mysterious place. "Where are you taking me?" Loli assures her, "Don't worry about it. I got your back prima (cousin). I know someone who will tell me if you're crazy or not." Loli drives to a scary alley. "Loli, this looks like the kinda place where people die of heroine overdoses." Loli responds, "Chillax, I got you." Loli does a special knock and makes the sound of an owl. "You need a secret code sound to get in? This better not be a rave you're taking me to because I still want to vomit." The door opens and DONA PASIENCIA, 70s, a curandera (shaman/healer) a tiny grey haired lady peeks her head out. Loli apologizes, "Dona Pasiencia, forgive me for coming so late, but you said to come anytime I had an emergency." Dona Pasiencia welcomes them into her tiny room full of altars and dried

herbs. Tina and Loli walk in and they sit on a chair surrounding a basin with water in it. Loli, “Dona Pasiencia you know why we are here. Tina needs your help. Tell her what she needs to know.” Dona Pasiencia takes Tina’s hand and dips it into the water. Tina pulls her hand away after a few seconds. Dona Pasiencia looks in the water and sees things invisible to Loli and Tina. Dona Pasiencia speaks in Spanish and confirms that her mother has not crossed into the light and is visiting her. “Your mother is telling me that you must help your brother. His secret is too heavy for him to bear. You must help him put the pieces of his soul back together or she won’t cross.” Tina finally allows herself to cry and feel the loss of her parents. “Yes, cry. It’s good to cry. Like they say, that’s just the ice melting around your heart.”

Martha comes home and Rudy’s not there. Martha mobilizes her sisters to find him. The three sisters search everywhere and gather at Martha’s house to strategize further. Tina goes to the bathroom and prays. She asks, “Where is Rudy? Rudy, where are you?” She walks out of the bathroom and hears “the basement”. She looks around and wonders who said that. She goes up to Martha and asks, “Did you say the basement?” Martha looks at her, “No, I didn’t say the basement. . . I already checked my basement, he’s not there.” Tina hears “basement” whispered again and looks around. She stops and eureka! “He’s in the basement of my parent’s house!” They all look at her not sure what to do. Tina orders them to follow her. They arrive at their parents’ house and head to the back where the basement entrance is located. “Are you sure he’s here?” Mary Ellen asks already exhausted. They try opening the basement door. Tina is about to walk in when the door slams on them. They get startled. “Rudy, are you in there?” Rudy doesn’t answer. One by one each sister begs him to come out. He finally answers them, “Go away! I don’t need nobody to care for me. I’m a man, I don’t need my sisters to tell me what to do. I already know what to do!” Rudy stubbornly refuses to come out and leave with his sisters. They all push on the door and try to force it open, but it’s blocked. They all pound their bodies on the door, but the door won’t open. Connie laughs and thinks it’s funny. Something about Rudy’s stubbornness reminds her of their father. One by one, the sisters all laugh as they recall memories of their parents. It’s cathartic and emotional, and Rudy is now listening to them like they’re all crazy. “Estan locas!” he shouts at them. “Of course we’re crazy; it’s required to be a part of this family!” Connie shouts back at him. “Just give up!” he orders them. Martha and her sisters sit on the floor and rest for a few minutes. Martha admits she had this crazy idea of running for mayor of Los Angeles. The sisters gasp in excitement. Martha shakes her head, “It ain’t happening. I’m not ready or ‘qualified’.” Her main concern now is taking care of Rudy. Connie, in an unexpected show of support, tells Martha she is more than qualified, and whoever said otherwise is an idiot. She will adopt Rudy and move back into their parent’s house to care for him and Martha must run for Mayor. Martha doesn’t have any more excuses. “Are you serious, you’ll all help me?” she asks her sisters. All the sisters agree. Martha agrees to run for Mayor, “I’ll run for Mayor, I don’t think I’ll win, but with your help I can do it.” Mary Ellen thinks they both know nothing about children and will need her advice. Connie tells

Mary Ellen that she is probably a very good mother because she had to do it alone. Connie tells Mary Ellen that she hated her father because he wouldn't let them attend the birth of her baby and that she's sorry she didn't have the courage to disobey their father's orders and be there. Martha also apologizes for not being there for her when she needed her sisters. Mary Ellen accepts their apology and they hug. Tina goes into the basement and confides in Rudy that she know understands what he's really going through and doesn't want him to bear the secret alone. She finally convinces him to come out of the basement. The sisters realize they each have something worthwhile to contribute to the raising the next generation of Fernandez men. Unified for the first time in the episode, all of the siblings have an impromptu memorial for their parents right there on the lawn of the house they grew up in. They realize that it was their father's "stubbornness" that made him not give up when he was deported back to Mexico five times to finally become a "legal resident" so they could live their American Dream. The girls break out into a song, "Amor Eterno" (Eternal Love), which they used to sing in their mariachi band. Bradley comes out of his house on his cell phone, "Can you please keep it down, I'm on an important call." Connie gets in his face, "Look hipster, if you don't like it loud, get your ass back to the Westside." He rolls his eyes at her so Connie sings louder.

END OF PILOT STORY