

"HOMESCHOOLER"
TV Pilot Script

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FADE IN:

TEASER

INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM - NIGHT

SAVANNAH UPSKILL (Spanish 16-year-old) lies scared and alone, exhausted from giving birth. She stares at the ceiling. She cries.

A baby blue "It's a Boy" teddy bear lies on the bed.

9th-grade textbooks and notebooks sit on a table by the bed.

She wipes her tears and picks up a 9th-grade math textbook off her lap. It's open. She reads, struggling to focus.

Someone knocks at the closed door. Savannah sits up quickly and darts her eyes at it. Moving so quick pains her. She stares at the door, smiling anxiously.

The door opens, and a NURSE enters. Savannah's smile fades.

NURSE

Just checking on you, Miss Upskill.
Can I get you anything?

SAVANNAH

Is my baby okay?

NURSE

Of course he is.

SAVANNAH

Has anyone showed up for me? Anyone
from my family? My parents?

NURSE

No.

SAVANNAH

Any of my friends, or anyone from
school?

NURSE

No, sorry.

SAVANNAH

(smiling; perky)

What about Fred? Fred Knightley. He's
my baby's father.

The nurse sighs quietly.

NURSE

Not yet.

Numb, Savannah stares off across the room. She goes back to reading her textbook, zoned out; not truly reading.

NURSE (CONT'D)

What are you studying?

Savannah sobs uncontrollably.

SAVANNAH

I'm going to be alone.

NURSE

No, sweetheart. You have your son.

Her comment soothes Savannah's crying.

SAVANNAH

(determined)

I'm going to work. Really hard.
Really hard. And I'm going to teach
Antonio -- my son -- life lessons and
be there for him too. I promise.

The nurse frowns.

NURSE

What about school?

Savannah holds the textbook out and drops it on the floor.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

INT. NESTLE LUXURY CLEANING - OFFICE - DAY

APPEARS ON SCREEN: 14 YEARS LATER

Downright organized.

Savannah, the motivated 30-year-old owner, talks on her desk phone. She multitasks, frenziedly writing checks.

SAVANNAH

Yes, sir. We will have your estate cleaned by noon... Thank you. Goodbye.

She hangs up. The time on her watch is "9:20".

She dials a number on the desk phone.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)

Diego, please inform your crew to clean the Oat estate...

(listens)

Yes, that Oat estate. It's a big one. Do a good job. Thank you.

She hangs up. Her cellphone rings.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)

Hello? Savannah Upskill speaking.

She listens, then sighs.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)

(angry)

What did Antonio do now?

(listens)

I'm sorry, but I can't make it there today. Can we schedule a day?

(listens)

Yes, ma'am. I know I've scheduled before.

(listens)

Many times before.

She listens, getting frustrated.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)

And rescheduled. Many times, yes. But I have so much work for my crews today, and I --

(MORE)

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)

(listens)

Suspend him?! He's been in trouble before, but he's never done anything that led to suspension.

(listens)

I can't --

(listens)

Okay.

She rips open her planner and zips through the pages.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)

I will be there at, let's see...

(listens)

Now?

(listens)

I will be there.

She slams her planner close.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)

Damages? What damages?!

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - OFFICE - DAY

The students coming and going wear uniforms. Savannah races in, with her pocketbook, and rushes to the SECRETARY.

SAVANNAH

(fast)

Hola. Savannah Upskill. Mother of Antonio Upskill. Meeting with principal.

The secretary dials the principal.

SECRETARY

Mrs. Savannah Upskill --

SAVANNAH

Miss.

(proudly)

Miss Upskill.

SECRETARY

Miss Savannah Upskill is here for a meeting with you.

Savannah sees a big stack of "free" college brochures on the desk. Very interested, she takes some.

SECRETARY (CONT'D)
Miss Upskill, the principal's on a
call. Do you have time to wait?

Savannah smiles while shaking her head "no".

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

ANTONIO UPSKILL (secluded, delinquent 14-year-old) slouches
in his chair, already looking away from where his mom will
sit. He wears street clothes instead of an uniform.

The secretary leads Savannah in.

PRINCIPAL RAYBURN
Hello, Miss Upskill. Pleasure.

SAVANNAH
(in Spanish; angry)
Not a pleasure for you, Antonio.

Antonio grins.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)
(to Principal Rayburn)
Hola.

They shake hands.

PRINCIPAL SANDIE RAYBURN
Please, sit.

Savannah bends to sit down, but first leans in to Antonio.

SAVANNAH
(in Spanish; infuriated)
Look away from me all you want. You
better not have caused a lot of
damage I have to pay for. And where's
your uniform?

She sits down. She checks her watch.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)
(to Principal Rayburn)
I have to get back to my office...

ANTONIO
Like always.

Savannah grinds her teeth, irritated.

SAVANNAH
...But, this is more important...

ANTONIO

Since when?

Savannah grinds her teeth harder.

SAVANNAH

...So, what happened, Principal?

PRINCIPAL RAYBURN

He got into a fight.

SAVANNAH

What?!

PRINCIPAL RAYBURN

He said the other boy started it, and he, Antonio, was defending himself.

ANTONIO

He did, and I was!

SAVANNAH

(to Antonio; in Spanish)
Quiet.

PRINCIPAL RAYBURN

And there was damage to classroom equipment, furniture, and to the windows.

SAVANNAH

Windows? How many?

PRINCIPAL RAYBURN

Four.

SAVANNAH

Those windows are pretty cheap, right?

PRINCIPAL RAYBURN

No.

SAVANNAH

Semi-cheap?

PRINCIPAL RAYBURN

No.

SAVANNAH

Is there any way he can work off the damages?

ANTONIO

Not all problems can be worked away.

Savannah looks aside, visually hurt by his insult.

PRINCIPAL RAYBURN

I'm sorry, Miss Upskill, but he, or you, will have to pay. If I choose to suspend him, he can't come back to school until the payment is paid.

Savannah shakes her head and mumbles under her breath. She takes a checkbook and pen out of her pocketbook.

SAVANNAH

Please, Principal Rayburn, don't suspend my son.

Her plea soothes Antonio's anger a bit.

PRINCIPAL RAYBURN

Why not? A lot of damage was done.

SAVANNAH

Because I don't want his high school record red with suspensions. He has college to look forward to, and financial aid. Suspending him and hindering his chance at college and a scholarship would be the real damage.

Still looking away and angry, Antonio listens.

PRINCIPAL RAYBURN

I can appreciate your concern for your son's future, but he has a lot of curriculum to complete and grades to severely pull up if he wants to get in a good position for college, and financial aid. He's a freshman, so there is time, but it's going to take a lot of work.

Savannah reflects on the hard truth.

SAVANNAH

How are his grades?

Principal Rayburn's look gives away her answer. Savannah nods, disappointed.

Savannah looks at Antonio, her anger replaced by sorrow and concern. He still looks away. Savannah clicks her pen to write a check.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)

How much?

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - PARKING LOT - DAY

People enter and exit the lot. Antonio hops in his mom's vehicle. He hangs his arm out the window.

Savannah calmly walks to the driver seat. Antonio eyeballs her. She gets in. Antonio continues eyeballing her, expecting something to happen.

Savannah pushes the button that rolls up her window.

SAVANNAH

Put your arm in the window.

Antonio looks away, but he doesn't move his arm. Savannah waits for him to do what she told him.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)

Antonio.

ANTONIO

You just want to roll up the window so you can yell.

SAVANNAH

That's going to happen anyway. I'm just doing you a courtesy so none of your friends, their parents, and teachers hear me.

ANTONIO

(attitude)

Pssh!

Someone walks by his window. He sees. He removes his arm and covers his ears. Savannah rolls the window up.

SAVANNAH

How dare?! How dare you?! How dare you, Antonio?! I have to get calls at my job from your school and miss out on money to take care of you and buy you things! Are you loco?! Really?!

OUTSIDE VEHICLE: Her yelling penetrates the windows.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)

Why are you fighting?!

ANTONIO

Self-defense.

SAVANNAH

And was it self-defense against the windows?! Four windows?!

ANTONIO

My bad.

SAVANNAH

Well, it isn't your good!

Her cellphone rings, and she answers.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)

What, Diego?! I'm yelling at Antonio.
(listens)

Yes, the windows are rolled up!
(listens)

What do you mean we're going to lose the Oat account? Didn't the crew do a good job? Are they finished?
(listens)

They got there when? What took them so long?!
(listens)

They went to the wrong address?!
(listens)

Do we have any crews nearby who can help?
(freaking out)

Oh no. Oh no. Diego, if I lose this account...
(to Antonio)

If I lose this account.

Antonio snickers.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)

(into phone)

I'm on my way!

EXT. MANISON (OAT ESTATE) - DAY

"Nestle Luxury Cleaning" workers (10 men and women) frantically move unwanted furniture from the huge house into trucks. It's a gated house with a giant, green lawn.

Savannah parks by her cleaning vans. She jumps out. She snatches off her heels and drops them in the seat.

ANTONIO

(smiling; hopeful)

Mom, let's just go home and have a game night.

SAVANNAH
Game night? We haven't had one of
those in like, six years.

ANTONIO
(frowning; gloomy)
I know.

SAVANNAH
I have to go.

Barefoot, she dashes to her workers. Antonio stays in the vehicle. He frowns in disgust at the cleaning vans.

A worker hands Savannah workboots, gloves, and a hardhat. She gears up. A worker hands her a clipboard with paper. She scans it. She checks her watch: "11:10"

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)
We'll get it done.

She runs to Antonio.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)
You and me aren't done, but I have to
finish this. It's the only thing
important right now.

Antonio angrily opens his door and jumps out. He slams it.

ANTONIO
The only thing important?! Did you
even ask why I was fighting the
bully?!

SAVANNAH
(sarcastically)
Self-defense.

ANTONIO
Because I have learning difficulties!

SAVANNAH
What?

ANTONIO
Are you deaf? I said, it's BECAUSE I
HAVE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES!!!

The yelling gets the attention of the workers.

Antonio, livid, clenches his fists tightly.

SAVANNAH
Difficulties? Antonio, wh-what do you mean? What learning difficulties?

ANTONIO
A lot! Easily distracted! The tests are too hard! I don't understand the work! And no one helps me, not even YOU!

Savannah stands there, unable to speak.

SAVANNAH
Baby, why didn't you tell anyone? The teachers? The principal? Me?

ANTONIO
And have people look at me like I'm dumb? The way you're doing right now?!

SAVANNAH
I'm not. I-I just don't know what to say.

ANTONIO
I'M NOT DUMB!!!

He looks at the workers. Some stare. Some work.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
I'll prove it!
(in Mandarin)
If I'm dumb, how come I can speak Mandarin with ease?!

SAVANNAH
Is that Chinese?

ANTONIO
Yes! Emily taught me in sixth grade!

Savannah is flabbergasted.

SAVANNAH
Antonio --

A worker taps her. He points at his watch.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)
Antonio, I have to...

She motions her hands toward the house.

ANTONIO
Go work!
(in Mandarin)
You're never home!

SAVANNAH
What, Antonio?

ANTONIO
You're never home, mom!
(in Mandarin)
YOU'RE NEVER HOME!!!

INT. SAVANNAH'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Downright organized like Savannah's office. She carries a cooked meal and dessert on a tray from the kitchen.

INT. SAVANNAH'S HOUSE - ANTONIO'S ROOM - NIGHT

Not messy, but it could use some cleaning. It's an art supply depot. The walls are covered in talented pencil and graphic designed art, all autographed by Antonio.

Someone knocks on the closed door. They wait a few seconds, then opens it. Savannah enters with the tray, smiling.

A boardgame is tucked under her arm.

She looks around, still smiling.

SAVANNAH
Peace?

Antonio isn't there.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Savannah speeds in her vehicle, frowning.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Savannah drives, surveying the sidewalks for Antonio. She sees an event going on at the high school.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - VISITORS PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Savannah found a space. She dials Antonio on her cellphone. He doesn't answer.

INT. EMILY'S HOUSE - EMILY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Half of the room is neat and looks like an attorney's office. A lot of law books. The other half belongs to an athletic/sportsy 17-year-old. A lot of awards and trophies.

EMILY SMILES (Antonio's smart, shy 14-year-old girlfriend) sits with Antonio on her bed. She reads a law book. Antonio angrily draws in a sketchbook.

Concerned, Emily peeps at him every few seconds.

SARAH SMILES (17) runs in, sweaty. She picks up a basketball. She dives on her bed and tosses the ball up and down. Emily is uncomfortable with her sister present.

EMILY

(in Mandarin)

What are you drawing, Antonio?

Antonio doesn't look up from his drawing.

ANTONIO

(in Mandarin)

Something I title, "Not Alone, but Alone".

EMILY

(in Mandarin)

Sounds interesting. What's it about?

ANTONIO

(in Mandarin)

This boy, he has people around him, right?

(MORE)

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
But he feels like he's alone. "Not
Alone, but Alone".

Sarah curiously listens to them, still tossing her ball.

Emily smiles astonishedly at the drawing.

EMILY
(in Mandarin)
Why are you drawing it?

Antonio frowns and balls his fist, grasping his pencil.

ANTONIO
(in Mandarin)
My mom.

Emily gets quiet.

EMILY
(in Mandarin)
Um, do you want to talk about it?

ANTONIO
(in Mandarin)
Yeah.

EMILY
(in Mandarin)
Really?

Antonio nods.

EMILY (CONT'D)
(in Mandarin; grinning)
Really, really?

Antonio nods.

EMILY (CONT'D)
(in Mandarin)
I don't mean to seem like I don't
believe you. It's just... You've
never confided in me before, you
know, deeply. And I've never pushed
you to.

Sarah continues to eavesdrop, tossing the ball.

EMILY (CONT'D)
(in Mandarin; shy)
If that's what you really want...

She blushes. Antonio looks at her. He's teary. Seeing his tears causes her to tear up.

ANTONIO
(in Mandarin)
I can't talk to my mom. I gave her
chance after chance to reach out, but
nope... So, I'll talk to you, Emily.

EMILY
(in Mandarin)
Anytime you want.

SARAH
Hey! What are you two talking about?

Emily gleams excitedly and hugs Antonio.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - GYM - NIGHT

A PTA Meeting for teachers and parents wraps up. Everyone socializes and enjoys snacks and juice.

Savannah tries Antonio on her phone, but it goes to voicemail. She shoves the phone in her pocketbook.

SAVANNAH
(in Spanish; heated)
All kinds of punishment for you!

MR. EDWARD BOOKMAN (nice, cool, late 30s teacher) hands her juice and a plate of cookies. She hesitantly takes it, unsure who he is.

MR. BOOKMAN
They're refreshments. For the
parents. But the teachers are eating
and drinking everything.

SAVANNAH
Some of the teachers are parents.

MR. BOOKMAN
Correct. I saw you were on your phone
the whole meeting, and it seemed
major. So, I brought you some food.
Hope it helps.

SAVANNAH
(still hesitant)
Okay. Thanks. Who are you?

MR. BOOKMAN

Edward. Mr. Edward Bookman. Eleventh-grade math teacher.

SAVANNAH

Ouch. That was my toughest subject in school.

MR. BOOKMAN

Math is rough for a lot of students. What's your name?

SAVANNAH

Savannah Upskill. Antonio Upskill's mother.

They shake hands.

MR. BOOKMAN

Upskill. That name sounds familiar...
(thinks)
Oh! The student who broke...

SAVANNAH

My heart, and my wallet.

She smiles, sarcastic. Mr. Bookman laughs.

MR. BOOKMAN

I was going to say, broke the windows.

SAVANNAH

You know about it. Is that because you know Antonio?

MR. BOOKMAN

No. I heard about it.

Savannah becomes overwhelmed and tears up.

MR. BOOKMAN (CONT'D)

You're crying. Are you okay?

Savannah wipes her tears away and like a light switch, she flips off her sadness.

SAVANNAH

I'm not crying. I'm enjoying my juice and cookies.

Like she was never sad, she happily eats and drinks.

MR. BOOKMAN
You don't have to do that, Miss or
Mrs. Upskill.

SAVANNAH
Do what? It's "Miss" by the way.

MR. BOOKMAN
You were just crying.

SAVANNAH
The juice in my cup must have
splashed on my eyes.

Mr. Bookman laughs.

MR. BOOKMAN
Like I said, you don't have to do
that.

He looks around.

MR. BOOKMAN (CONT'D)
If you're going through something --

SAVANNAH
I'm not.

MR. BOOKMAN
If you're not going through something
and you want to talk, we can talk in
the hallway.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALL - NIGHT

Savannah and Mr. Bookman stand in the empty hallway. She has
already told him everything:

SAVANNAH
(midspeech)
I don't know what to do... So, yeah.

She takes a seat on the floor and exhales all her stress.
Mr. Bookman ponders what she's told him.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)
What do you think about it?

Mr. Bookman ponders more. He takes a seat beside her.

MR. BOOKMAN
Homeschool.

SAVANNAH
What-school?

MR. BOOKMAN
Homeschool. School at home.

SAVANNAH
I know what it is. Me homeschool? I
didn't even finish high school.

MR. BOOKMAN
Did you get your GED?

SAVANNAH
(smiling proudly)
Yes.

MR. BOOKMAN
In the state of North Carolina, if
you have your high school diploma or
GED, you can teach your kid at home.

Savannah thinks about it.

SAVANNAH
Homeschool? Where would I start?

MR. BOOKMAN
I can email you some info.

Savannah thinks about it some more. She opens her pocketbook
and pulls out the college brochures from the school office.

SAVANNAH
If it gives Antonio a chance at
college and fixes my horrible, broken
relationship with him, I'll be his
teacher.

INT. SAVANNAH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The lock unlocks. The door slowly opens a crack. Someone
sticks a cellphone through and takes a pic, then pulls it
back.

Antonio cautiously creeps in and quietly closes the door --
Savannah blows past, startling him.

Knowing she's gonna yell, he beats her to the punch:

ANTONIO
I know, I know! Stop yelling at me!

Savannah, carrying a plate of food, scurries down the hall, neverminding him. He is terrified and confused out his mind.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
Aren't you gonna punish me?

SAVANNAH (O.S.)
I'm too busy right now!

EXT. SAVANNAH'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - DAY

Antonio, in street clothes, exits. He carries his sketchbook and backpack. He sees Savannah's vehicle in the driveway.

INT. SAVANNAH'S HOUSE - SAVANNAH'S ROOM - DAY

Antonio knocks, waits a second, then enters. He looks at the empty, made-up bed.

INT. SAVANNAH'S HOUSE - HALL - DAY

Antonio knocks on the shut door.

SAVANNAH (O.S.)
Yeah?

Hearing her respond surprises him.

ANTONIO
It's morning.

SAVANNAH (O.S.)
I know.

ANTONIO
(puzzled)
You're not going to work?

SAVANNAH (O.S.)
Where? Oh, work. Yea-yeah -- I don't know -- go catch your bus.

Antonio starts to respond, but he's too confused.

ANTONIO
(to himself; angry)
Whatever.

INT. SAVANNAH'S HOUSE - CRAFTS ROOM - DAY

The room is garnished by craft supplies and stunning, professionally done crafts (homemade). Very organized, like everything that's Savannah's.

No sleep, Savannah sits hunched over a 2-in-1 touchscreen laptop/tablet at a large table, frenziedly tying away.

Whatever's on the table isn't seen.

She yawns and shakes off sleep. She glances at her watch, then continues tying. She glances again, then types. She glances, then types.

SAVANNAH
(irritated)
Aaah!

She grabs her phone off the table and dials. She places it on her shoulder and continues tying.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)
Hola, Diego.
(listens)
No, I'm not in the hospital.
(listens)
I'm not out of the country.
(listens)
I'm not arrested! I'm home.
(listens)
I don't think I'll be in today.
(listens)
Yeah, yeah, I'm sure. I'm not coming
in today.

She stops tying and rubs her forehead, stressed out.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)
I don't know. Aaah! What time is it?

She checks her watch.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)
(listens)
I know about the workloads, but I...

She looks at the table. Printed papers are organized in big stacks and color-coded with highlightings and sticky notes.

With the stacks is the baby blue "It's a Boy" teddy bear; still in good condition. Savannah touches it and smiles.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)
 (determined)
 I'm not coming. You know how to run
 it, Diego. If you need my help, call
 me, but I'm not coming in.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - OFFICE - DAY

Emily enters and heads for the secretary.

SAVANNAH (O.S.)
 Emily.

Emily sees Savannah sitting in the visitor seats. Savannah
 smiles suspiciously. The seats line a glass wall.

EMILY
 (confused)
 Miss Upskill?

SAVANNAH
 Take a seat.

Emily hesitates, then sits.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)
 How are you?

EMILY
 I'm well, Miss Upskill.

Savannah takes her 2-in-1 laptop/tablet and a stylus pen
 from her pocketbook.

EMILY (CONT'D)
 (nervously)
 What is that for?

SAVANNAH
 Nothing. I just have some questions
 to ask you.

EMILY
 Questions? What type of questions?

SAVANNAH
 Questions about Antonio.

EMILY
 (alarmed)
 Antonio!

She quickly turns and looks through the glass. She checks
 the faces of the students passing in the hall.

SAVANNAH

This won't take long. How many friends does my son have?

EMILY

Only me.

SAVANNAH

You're his only friend?

EMILY

Yes. He could have friends, but...

Savannah writes on the tablet. Emily stares at the stylus.

SAVANNAH

But what?

Emily continues to look at the stylus pen, feeling uneasy. She moves uncomfortably in her seat.

EMILY

But he stays to himself. Secluded. Closed off. He's like, a turtle, if the turtle stayed in his shell all the time.

Savannah jots fast. Emily peeps at what she writes, but Savannah leans back.

EMILY (CONT'D)

He just began opening up to me.

Savannah stops writing and looks at her.

SAVANNAH

When?

Emily looks through the glass, searching the faces.

EMILY

(timidly)

Last night.

SAVANNAH

(upset)

When he snuck out?

EMILY

I didn't know he snuck out.

Savannah's angry subsides.

SAVANNAH

What did he open up about?

Emily looks through the glass.

EMILY

I would rather not say, Miss Upskill -- respectfully -- because for the three years we have been friends and the one year we have been a couple, he has never opened up to me. I like it, and I don't want to do anything that will cause him to stop talking to me like that.

She jumps up.

EMILY (CONT'D)

I have to go. I don't want Antonio to see us talking and think he can't trust coming to me.

SAVANNAH

Because he doesn't trust me and he'll feel betrayed by you.

Emily doesn't reply.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)

Sit down, sweetheart. Calm down. I only have a couple more questions. Antonio won't find out.

Emily thinks about it. She looks through the glass at the students passing by. She sits. She wipes away some tears.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)

I won't say why, but this is for his good.

(pause)

Do you know what subject he has trouble with?

EMILY

Math, and Science.

SAVANNAH

(shocked)

Just like me.

EMILY

And History.

Savannah writes it down.

SAVANNAH

You taught him Mandarin?

Emily lights up with a smile.

EMILY
 (in Mandarin)
 Yes.
 (in English)
 That means, "Yes".

Savannah high fives her.

EMILY (CONT'D)
 Is that all the questions?

Savannah twirls her hand, trying to figure out how to present her question the right way.

SAVANNAH
 (cautiously)
 The work. He gets it?

EMILY
 I don't have any classes with him. I think he gets the work. He turns it in, so he has to receive it.

SAVANNAH
 No. That's not what I meant. Nevermind. Thank you, Emily.

Emily looks through the glass at the students.

EMILY
 (fearfully)
 Miss Upskill...

SAVANNAH
 I won't tell him. Do the same?

Emily nods, smiling and relieved.

EXT. SAVANNAH'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - DAY

A delivery person delivers a big box.

INT. SAVANNAH'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

Antonio jogs through -- he hits the brakes. He sees Savannah sitting at the table. She watches him.

The big box is on the table, cut open.

ANTONIO
(puzzled)
Why you sitting here?

Savannah tries to contain her happiness.

SAVANNAH
Hola.

She smiles big.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)
Sit down, Antonio.

ANTONIO
All right? Let me get some snacks.

SAVANNAH
Sit down, Antonio.

ANTONIO
Aaah.

He flops down in the chair all the way across from her.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
(sarcastically)
What are we doing?

Savannah's smile gets wider.

SAVANNAH
Funny you asked, son.

She reaches in the box and pulls out homeschool curriculum.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)
For weeks, I've been --

ANTONIO
Acting crazy. Controlling, as always,
plus crazy.

SAVANNAH
(smiling)
You're not going to ruin this.
(frowning; dead serious)
And watch your mouth.

Antonio smirks.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)
For weeks, I've been working on
something here at home. This is it.

She playfully drums on the curriculum.

ANTONIO
What is it?

Savannah takes a deep breath and exhales.

SAVANNAH
(smiling)
Homeschool!

Antonio stares dumbfoundedly. Savannah waits for a better reaction. He keeps staring. He blasts out laughing.

ANTONIO
Back up, back up, back up. Did you
say hospital?

SAVANNAH
Homeschool.

ANTONIO
Hotel?

SAVANNAH
Homeschool.

ANTONIO
Home Depot?

SAVANNAH
(firm; irritated)
Stop.

ANTONIO
Really, what did you say?

SAVANNAH
I said, I'm going to homeschool you.

ANTONIO
Pssh. Whatever. You teach me?

SAVANNAH
Absolutely.

ANTONIO
(amused)
Teach me? You didn't even finish high
school. How can you teach someone
something you don't know?

SAVANNAH
I received my GED.
(MORE)

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)

The material is pretty rough, but in my preparation, I've studied long and hard. If we come across something I can't teach, I will learn it, then teach it.

ANTONIO

Even if it's Math or Science? Those the ones I stink in.

SAVANNAH

I know --

Antonio shoots her a sharp look.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)

(rebounding)

I know you must have some subjects you struggle in. We all do, or did, or do.

ANTONIO

If you say so.

SAVANNAH

So, I meet the requirements to be your teacher.

(in Spanish)

Teacher.

Her face beams. Antonio laughs, mockingly. He gets up.

ANTONIO

Can I go get my snacks?

SAVANNAH

Don't believe me? Look around.

Antonio stands there, nonchalantly looking around the room. His expression becomes serious when he sees school supplies placed neatly on the cabinets.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)

It's not much, but it will be. I'm going to decorate. You'll love it.

Antonio circles the room, looking at the supplies. Savannah sees it's a lot to take in, so she goes into the kitchen. She returns with snacks and sits it on the table.

ANTONIO

What about school?

SAVANNAH
I already took you out.

ANTONIO
(angered)
What?! You did what?!

SAVANNAH
I took care of everything. You just
have to show up, try hard, and do
well.
(jokingly)
No more getting up early for the bus.
You'll just be getting up early.
(smiles)

ANTONIO
(irritated)
What about Emily?

SAVANNAH
You can see her after school. Get
together any books that belong to the
school and I'll return them. Oh! I
printed a schedule.

She happily scurries to the big box and grabs a paper out.
She returns to Antonio and hands him it.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)
Class is five days a week. A trip
every Friday after school. Like a
treat for the week. Each day starts
at 6:45 and ends at 4:00. That time
includes chores.

ANTONIO
(frustrated)
You always do this.

SAVANNAH
Do what?

ANTONIO
(furious)
Controlling!

SAVANNAH
What are you talking about?

ANTONIO
You're doing this so you can be in
control. First of my life, now this!

SAVANNAH

That's not why I'm doing this --

Antonio rips the schedule and hands it to her, then bails out the room. His room door slams.

Savannah sits down. She lays the ripped paper on the table.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. EMILY'S HOUSE - EMILY'S ROOM - DAY

Emily strenuously does homework on her bed. A few law books lie with her textbooks for extra study.

She gets a text alert on her cellphone. She quickly finishes a question on her work, then checks it for accuracy. She scoops up her phone and reads the message.

ANTONIO
(text message)
Hey Em. Really need 2 talk. Busy???

Emily lights up. She mouths what she's going to reply.

EMILY
(text message)
Hi!!! Always have time 4 u.

She texts a smiley with heart-shaped eyes.

EMILY (CONT'D)
(text message)
Wats on your mind?

ANTONIO
(text message)
MY MOM IS GOIN TO HOMESCHOOL
ME!!!!!!!!!!

EMILY
(speaking)
Homeschool?!

ANTONIO
(text message)
She already took me outta school.
WHY!!!!!!!!!! AAAH!!!!!!!!!!

Emily thinks what to write. She texts a shocked smiley.

EMILY
(text message)
Wat??? Im sorry. So so sorry!

She texts a crying smiley.

ANTONIO
(text message)
CRAZY!!!!!!!!!!

He texts an angry smiley.

EMILY
 (speaking; pitying)
 Awww.

She mouths what to reply. She shakes her head "no".

EMILY (CONT'D)
 (speaking)
 That makes no sense. Think, Em,
 think. You know all about the law,
 but you can't text in the clutch.

ANTONIO
 (text message)
 U there????????????

Emily screeches.

EMILY
 (speaking)
 Hurry, hurry, hurry! Text him
 something!

She thinks quickly.

EMILY (CONT'D)
 (text message)
 At least when u fall asleep in class,
 u'll b in your bed.

She hides her face with her hand. She gets two text alerts.
 She screeches. She hesitates a sec, then reads the texts.

She received a group of laughing smileys.

ANTONIO
 (text message)
 Thanks. U always know wat 2 say.

Emily cheeses big, blushing. She texts a blushing smiley.

EMILY
 (text message)
 U going thru with the homeschool?

ANTONIO
 (text message)
 Nope!

EMILY
 (text message)
 Wat r u gonna do???

She texts a bunch of puzzled smileys. She doesn't get a
 reply. She retexts the puzzled smileys.

ANTONIO
 (text message)
 Ruin homeschool.

He texts an angry smiley and a bomb emoticon.

INT. SAVANNAH'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

APPEARS ON SCREEN: **CLASS DAY #1**

Savannah sits at the far end of the table. She's dressed in a suit and heels.

The curriculum, school supplies, a homework agenda, and her 2-in-1 laptop/tablet are neatly set up on the table.

It's quiet. She takes a deep breath and exhales.

She anxiously checks her watch: "6:45"

SAVANNAH
 (smiling)
 Time for school!

INT. SAVANNAH'S HOUSE - ANTONIO'S ROOM - DAY

Antonio lays under a big blanket. Half awake, he checks the time on his alarm clock: "7:00"

Someone knocks on the closed door. He closes his eyes and grins. Savannah enters.

SAVANNAH
 (playfully)
 Hola. First day, Antonio.

Antonio plays sleep.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)
 (less playful)
 Antonio.

He still plays sleep.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)
 (firm)
 Antonio.

He plays sleep. She walks to him and checks if he's sleep. She touches his face. He jumps, opening his eyes.

ANTONIO
 Your hands are cold!

SAVANNAH
Class started, and you're late.

ANTONIO
So what? Write me up.

SAVANNAH
Up.

Antonio closes his eyes and plays sleep.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)
(in Spanish; irritated)
Boy.

He doesn't move. She slings the blanket off of him. He's wrapped in a sheet like a cocoon. She tugs it, but he's wrapped too tight.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)
ANTONIO!

She tugs the sheet a few times, but it won't budge.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)
(in Spanish)
Get out from this sheet now! We're wasting time!

ANTONIO
(in Mandarin)
You're wasting time!

SAVANNAH
What?!

ANTONIO
How's it feel when I yell at you in another language?!

SAVANNAH
(in Spanish)
I'm the mother!

ANTONIO
(in Mandarin)
So?!

SAVANNAH
(in Spanish)
Get out of this bed!

ANTONIO
(in Mandarin)
No, I won't!

She tugs the sheet. It won't budge.

SAVANNAH
(in Spanish)
Get up! Get up! Get up!

ANTONIO
(in Mandarin)
Go away!

SAVANNAH
(in Spanish)
Get up! Get up! GET UP!

ANTONIO
Go away, I'm not leaving the bed!

Savannah tugs on the sheet like wild, loosening it.

SAVANNAH
(in Spanish)
You have school! You're getting up!

Antonio fake snores loud. Savannah, furious, pulls one big time on the sheet and gets it off. She holds it up, victorious. She smiles.

ANTONIO
It's so warm under these sheets.

She sees he's wrapped in another sheet. She gives up and throws the sheet she holds. She snatches the alarm clock.

SAVANNAH
Tomorrow --

ANTONIO
It'll be the same thing.

SAVANNAH
6 AM.

She sets the alarm to "6:00".

ANTONIO
What happened to 6:45?

SAVANNAH
Class is at 6:45. You get up at six for a bath and breakfast. I let you sleep to 6:45 this morning because I was trying to be nice your first day. But, no more Miss Nice Teacher!

She puts the clock back and stomps out, slamming the door. She fusses loud in Spanish. Antonio grins.

INT. SAVANNAH'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

APPEARS ON SCREEN: **CLASS DAY #2**

No one is present. A chair is missing.

INT. SAVANNAH'S HOUSE - ANTONIO'S ROOM - DAY

It's "5:59".

Antonio is sleep; really. The big blanket covers him.

The clock changes to "6:00", and the alarm blasts. Antonio's eyes burst open.

SAVANNAH (O.S.)

6:00.

He sees his mom, dressed for class, sitting in a dining room chair next to the bed.

ANTONIO

(sarcastic)

Can you take this blanket off?

Savannah gets up and pulls the blanket off. He's wrapped in sheets. He grins.

SAVANNAH

(unamused)

You're late again.

Antonio closes his eyes. Savannah grins, mischievous.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)

(into megaphone)

Antonio Soleado Upskill. Get up.

Antonio's eyes sling open, and he jumps, startled. Savannah holds up a megaphone.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)

(into megaphone; in Spanish)

Get up! Get up! Get up! Get up! Get up! Get up!

Antonio wobbles frantically, trapped in the sheets.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)
 (into megaphone; in Spanish)
 Get up! Get up! Get up! Get up! Get
 up! Get up!

ANTONIO
 MOM!!!!

SAVANNAH
 (into megaphone; in Spanish)
 Ding! Ding! Ding! Ding! Ding! Ding!
 Ding! Ding! That's the class bell!

ANTONIO
 OKAY!!!!

SAVANNAH
 (into megaphone; in Spanish)
 Ding! Ding! Ding! Ding! Ding!

ANTONIO
 I'LL GO TO CLASS!!!!

INT. SAVANNAH'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

Savannah brings the chair back in and takes her seat.
 Antonio, furious, stomps in. He drops down hard in the chair
 farthest from her. He glares at her.

Savannah fingers through the curriculum on the table.
 Antonio hops up and heads to the kitchen.

SAVANNAH
 Where are you going, Antonio?

Antonio returns with arms full of snacks. He places them in
 front of him and sits. Savannah stares perplexedly at him.
 He opens the snacks and stuffs his face.

ANTONIO
 (mouth full)
 I didn't have breakfast.

SAVANNAH
 Stop talking with your mouth full. If
 you get up on time, you'll have time
 to eat breakfast.

Antonio ignores her and continues stuffing his face.

Savannah looks through the curriculum. Antonio chews loud.
 She tries to ignore it. He continues chomping.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)

Antonio!

He stops. He jumps up, mouth full, and runs to the kitchen. He comes back with more snacks. Savannah eyeballs him all the way to his seat. He stuffs his face.

Savannah grabs a pen and grasps it tightly so she won't yell at him. Antonio hops up and goes for the kitchen.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)

Antonio, don't go in that kitchen.

He blows past her to the kitchen. He comes back with snacks. He sits and eats loudly.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)

If you go back in that kitchen one more --

Antonio jumps up and runs to the kitchen. Savannah springs from her seat and grabs him. He breaks free and goes in the kitchen. He comes back with more snacks.

Savannah slams the pen on the table and storms out. Antonio sits down and eats. He grins.

INT. SAVANNAH'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

APPEARS ON SCREEN: **CLASS DAY #3**

Wall clock: "6:45"

Half asleep, Antonio pulls on a cabinet, but it's locked with a chain and lock. He pulls again. He looks at the other cabinets. They're all chained.

ANTONIO

MOM!!!

INT. SAVANNAH'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

Savannah sits in her chair, waiting and dressed ready for class. Antonio rushes in from the kitchen.

ANTONIO

(angry)

What happened to the cabinets?

SAVANNAH

I locked them.

ANTONIO

I'm hungry!

Savannah hands him a paper schedule.

SAVANNAH

Take a look at your schedule. You get breaks. You can eat in an hour.

He leaves her holding the paper and flops in his seat. He puts his head down.

ANTONIO

If I can't eat, I'll sleep.

Savannah leaves into the hall. After a little bit, she returns, barefoot. She carries a portable stereo and wireless stereo headphones.

She puts the headphones on. She maxes the volume and pushes "Play". A fast Spanish song blasts loud! Antonio jumps up.

Savannah circles the room, smiling and dancing to the beat.

Antonio doesn't know what's going on. He goes for the stereo, covering his ears. Savannah plays "Keep Away" with the stereo. When he gets too close, she holds it out, and the noise drives him back.

INT. SAVANNAH'S HOUSE - ANTONIO'S ROOM - DAY

APPEARS ON SCREEN: **CLASS DAY #4**

Alarm clock: "5:30"

Savannah quietly opens the door and sneaks in. The megaphone hangs on her neck. She carefully pulls the dining room chair in. She looks at the bed. It's empty!

INT. SAVANNAH'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

Savannah, furious, slams the chair down at the table.

EXT. EMILY'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - DAY

ANTONIO

(texting Emily)

Im at da door.

He wipes his tired eyes. He holds his sketchbook and a stuffed pencil pouch. Emily opens the door, fully woke and ready for school. They hug.

Antonio powers down his phone. Emily notices.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
I don't want my mom calling me.

Emily nods. They head inside.

INT. EMILY'S HOUSE - EMILY'S ROOM - DAY

Antonio sits down on Emily's bed. Emily wakes her sister, Sarah. Sarah brushes her off and rolls over. Sarah tries again. Sarah wraps herself in the sheet and sleeps.

Emily sits beside Antonio. He watches Sarah wrapped tight in her sheet and smiles. Emily sees him smiling and smiles.

EMILY
What are you smiling about?

ANTONIO
Nothing.

He wipes his tired face. Emily lays her head on his shoulder.

EMILY
How are you doing?

ANTONIO
Tired. It's like I've been at war with my mom over this homeschool thing the last three days, and it's been rough. But, she'll break soon.

The doorbell rings. Emily goes to answer it.

EMILY (O.S.)
Antonio!

INT. EMILY'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

Antonio, carrying his sketchbook and pouch, hurries in -- he brakes. He sees his mom, boiling hot, across the table.

Emily, scared, looks at Antonio. He shamefully walks to her, avoiding looking at his mom. Savannah burns a hole in him with her eyes. Antonio and Emily avoid looking at her.

SAVANNAH
(in Spanish)
You're just going to keep pushing me, huh, Antonio?

ANTONIO
Mom --

SAVANNAH
No!

ANTONIO
Will you let me --

SAVANNAH
No!

She glares at him. Emily sees how ashamed he is.

EMILY
(in Mandarin)
Antonio, are you okay?

ANTONIO
(in Mandarin)
I never seen her this angry.

SAVANNAH
English or Spanish!

Antonio and Emily shut up. Emily shyly steps toward her.

EMILY
Miss Upskill, Antonio was only --

SAVANNAH
Emily, don't.

Emily retreats to Antonio.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)
Antonio, you are no longer allowed
over here until --

ANTONIO
What?!

EMILY
(timidly)
What?

SAVANNAH
You are no longer allowed over here
until you start taking homeschool
serious.

ANTONIO
Fine. She can come over my house.

SAVANNAH

Nope.

ANTONIO

Really? You wanna embarrass me like this in front of Emily?

SAVANNAH

You heard me. Make your choice.

Antonio balls his fists, infuriated.

ANTONIO

I won't be homeschooled by you!

He runs out -- Savannah grabs his arm, but he pulls away and rushes out the room. The front door slams.

EMILY

Miss Upskill, if you ban Antonio from my house, we won't have much time together. That with him not being at school anymore, I think it'll really hinder our relationship. And as I told you in the office, he just started opening up to me, so...

SAVANNAH

Emily, I understand high school love. You're so sweet and from what I know, you've been the best to him. I wouldn't hurt you in any way. However, I'm doing this. Period. You'll see Antonio if he becomes serious about school.

EMILY

But if he stops opening up to me --

SAVANNAH

Emily.

EMILY

He's my boyfriend.

SAVANNAH

He's my boy.

Emily backs down. She nods and hangs her head. Savannah exits. Emily wipes her tears. She breathes heavy and rapid. She looks up, enraged.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. SAVANNAH'S HOUSE - HALL - DAY

APPEARS ON SCREEN: **CLASS DAY #5**

Savannah exits her crafts room, dressed ready for class. She carries a teacher's planner and her 2-in-1 laptop/tablet.

She checks her watch: "5:00"

INT. SAVANNAH'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

Savannah walks in and kicks something. The portable stereo lies broken at her feet.

The room is trashed. The curriculum (ripped up), school supplies, megaphone, chains, locks (cut), and headphones are trashed and thrown everywhere. The chairs are turned over.

Savannah's baby blue "It's a Boy" teddy bear lies discarded on the floor. She quickly picks it up and cradles it.

SAVANNAH

ANTONIO!

Antonio, angry, mopes in. Savannah looks at him and covers her mouth with her hand in disbelief.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)

Why would you do this?

ANTONIO

Because I've been trying to make you stop this. The homeschool!

SAVANNAH

This was for you. So you could have help. You said you had learning difficulties.

ANTONIO

Yeah, you don't have to worry about that. I'm dropping out.

Savannah gasps and tightens her grip on the teddy bear.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

You dropped out.

SAVANNAH

I don't want you to turn out like me.

ANTONIO
(cruelly)
I don't either.

Savannah cries. She sobs profusely. He looks away, not able to watch her cry. He sighs.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
(remorseful)
Mom --

She cries louder.

SAVANNAH
This was for your good.

Antonio, getting frustrated again, tries to be emphatic and sympathetic.

ANTONIO
How is it for my good when you started it to control me more?

SAVANNAH
Not true.

ANTONIO
Then why?

SAVANNAH
I did it to be close to you for the first time since you were a young boy.

ANTONIO
(surprised)
What? Why didn't you tell me that before?

SAVANNAH
Like you would have believed me.

Antonio hangs his head, guilty.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)
It's no mystery I haven't been there for you. Working to provide... I don't want to lose out on you. With this homeschool, I get four years.

She cries. Antonio processes everything. He picks up a chair and sets it beside his mom. Ashamed, he hesitantly touches her and sits her down. He sits on the floor.

He looks at her weep. She looks away, ashamed. He cries, but he bites his lip so he won't cry out.

ANTONIO

I'm sorry.

Savannah sees his tears. She wipes them away.

SAVANNAH

I'm sorry. I sprung it on you. That part was controlling. I should've talked with you about it.

ANTONIO

(amusingly)

That wouldn't have got us anywhere.

Savannah laughs. He smiles. They sit quiet. Savannah looks around at the mess. She thinks.

SAVANNAH

I have a deal for us.

ANTONIO

(skeptical)

What's the details?

SAVANNAH

If you focus and do this homeschool, you'll be set up well for financial aid and college when the time comes.

ANTONIO

Not with my grades.

SAVANNAH

We'll get there.

ANTONIO

Maybe.

SAVANNAH

And, I'll be home. That's got to sweeten the deal.

ANTONIO

Little.

They laugh.

SAVANNAH

And at the end of this school year, I'll buy you a bundle of art supplies.

ANTONIO

Deal!

SAVANNAH

It won't be easy. At all.

ANTONIO

(jokingly)

Scary.

SAVANNAH

Still a deal?

He nods. He gets up and hugs her. She smiles. She exhales.

ANTONIO

Do we have to start today?

SAVANNAH

Nope.

ANTONIO

Cause I ripped the books and you don't have anything to teach?

SAVANNAH

And because today, you're going to clean up this mess.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - 11TH GRADE MATH CLASS - DAY

Mr. Bookman grades classwork. Savannah knocks on the door.

MR. BOOKMAN

(smiling)

Miss Upskill, hey.

SAVANNAH

Hola.

She enters. She sees difficult math questions on the board.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)

I walked into the wrong room.

MR. BOOKMAN

That's right, you said at the PTA meeting you had trouble with math.

SAVANNAH

Big trouble. Were you busy?

MR. BOOKMAN
Just grading papers. What are you
doing here? Oh, Antonio; your son.

SAVANNAH
Yes.

MR. BOOKMAN
(fearfully)
Oh, no. Not for more trouble?

SAVANNAH
No. I had to return his textbooks.

MR. BOOKMAN
Oh. Is he switching schools?

SAVANNAH
Yes.

MR. BOOKMAN
What's the name of the school?

SAVANNAH
It doesn't have one.

Her answer stomps him.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)
It's homeschool.

Mr. Bookman smiles big and claps.

MR. BOOKMAN
Wow. You did it.

SAVANNAH
(blushing)
Can I sit?

MR. BOOKMAN
Of course. Take my seat.

SAVANNAH
Thanks, but this desk is fine.

She sits in a student's desk in the front row.

MR. BOOKMAN
So, how's homeschooling?

SAVANNAH
War.

Mr. Bookman laughs.

MR. BOOKMAN
It gets easier... and harder.

SAVANNAH
I know. I've read the curriculum.

MR. BOOKMAN
If you need help learning the stuff
you'll teach, let me know.

SAVANNAH
Expect my phone call.

They laugh.

MR. BOOKMAN
Things will get better.

Savannah looks at the clear sky outside.

SAVANNAH
They are better.

EXT. SAVANNAH'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - DAY

A delivery person delivers a big box.

THE END

FADE OUT.