

Doctor's Orders

by

Wendy Natividad

EXT. IRENE'S NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

In the Pacific Northwestern bedroom community of Willowcrest, DR. IRENE REYNOSO (38) -- who carries a curvy physique crowned by jet black hair cropped short in a pixie cut -- jogs past row after row of colonial style homes with lush green lawns. Before driving into the city for her hospital shift, she starts each work day with cardio and solitude. On this particular morning, she sets her pace in step with an upbeat chart topper, which plays through her iPod Nano.

IRENE (V.O.)

Surgery is a complex, delicate matter. The mechanics of surgery are intricate to be sure. For me, I've managed to develop a mastery of the mechanics through muscle memory. Tissue fascia and blood vessels can all generally be navigated once you get accustomed to the terrain.

Irene's path of travel approaches her own colonial style home. Out of the corner of her eye, she catches glimpse of a burly man in a white short-sleeved button-up shirt and khaki slacks across the street. Irene turns back to wave good morning to her presumed neighbor but finds no one in sight when she does. Shrugging off the disappearing act, she jogs into her yard and gives the mailbox a light tap as she passes it, fully maintaining her pace until she reaches her front door.

CUT TO:

INT. IRENE'S HOME - DAY

After getting her blood flowing with her morning jog, Irene enters and briefly gives herself permission to relax. She then plucks two apples from the fruit bowl on her kitchen island. She takes them over to the living room altar -- a simple arrangement consisting of traditional Catholic ornaments such as a crucifix, a rosary, a prayer booklet, and a figurine of Mother Mary. She places one apple next to the portrait of her father -- the latest addition to the altar -- as an ofrenda to him. Irene takes a crisp bite out of the other apple, and as she chews, she meditates on the portrait.

IRENE (V.O.)

The tricky part I find about the human body is having to deal with the humans that are attached to the body. But you can't detach human from body to make the job easier. One without the other results in death. That's the opposite of a surgeon's goal. And when it comes down to holding a child's life in your hands, the stakes are even greater.

CUT TO:

INT. LILIANA'S HOME - DAY

Irene is seated on the floor in the corner of the living room with her eight school-aged nieces and nephews, including MIRABEL (7) and JESSE (9). They're all gathered around the board game, Operation.

Donning black from head-to-toe, family matriarch LILIANA REYNOSO (60) bustles back and forth, setting out food, and welcoming guests into her modest, aging house in the heart of the city. Everyone is dressed in dark, muted tones.

Jesse jabs at the Bread Basket piece which prompts an immediate buzzer.

MIRABEL

Aww, Tía Irene! Jesse's no good at this.

JESSE

You bumped into me!

MIRABEL

Did not!

JESSE

Yeah you did!

IRENE

Okay, okay, hold on. Mirabel, don't talk about your kuya like that. Jesse, tweezers please.

Jesse hands over the tweezers to Irene.

IRENE

Observe.

Irene demonstrates her steady hand and carefully removes the Bread Basket piece from the board.

IRENE (CONT'D)

See? No need to rush. Just take your time.

LILIANA (O.S.)

Irene! Sheila and Grace are here!

SHEILA SANTOS (37) -- stocky build, black button-up shirt, gray slacks -- and her wife GRACE CHEN (34) -- petite frame, houndstooth coat, white blouse, long tan skirt -- walk into the living room. Irene gets up to welcome them.

IRENE

(to kids)

Slow and steady, all right?

(to Sheila and Grace)

Oh my gosh, thank you so much for coming over.

Irene walks over to them and they all exchange hugs. Mirabel snaps up the tweezers, quickly removes the Broken Heart piece without any buzzer from the board, and sticks out her tongue at Jesse.

GRACE

Of course. Your family is practically our family.

SHEILA

How're you holding up?

IRENE

I wish I could see Dad again. It's just... I feel so...

GRACE

I'm so sorry, Irene. I can only imagine how tough these past 40 days have been without him.

SHEILA

It's okay. You're grieving. You don't have to say another word.

GRACE

Whatever we can do, just let us know.

IRENE

Thank you. Both of you. It means a lot.

Liliana begins to corral all the adults onto sofas and into seats.

LILIANA

(to Irene, Sheila, and Grace)

C'mon, girls. We pray now, and then we'll eat.

SHEILA

(to Irene)

Had to dig my old rosary out of a shoebox I buried away in storage. Didn't think I'd ever use it again, let alone send Tío Javier off to heaven with it.

IRENE

He wasn't much of a churchgoer, but I'm sure Dad would have appreciated the sentiment. This is more for Mom anyway, you know?

The group at large begins praying the rosary. Sheila and Grace take a seat on a sofa and clasp their hands together around Sheila's rosary. Irene finds an empty dining chair and sits in silence.

LILIANA/GUESTS

(in unison)

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom
come; thy will be done on earth as
it is in heaven...

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. STONERIDGE MEMORIAL MEDICAL CTR - HALLWAY - DAY

Irene absentmindedly types up case notes into a patient's chart at a mobile workstation. A blur of white and khaki strolls past her in the direction of a restricted section and rounds a corner. Warily, she wraps up her case note and follows after the wayward visitor.

IRENE

Hello? Excuse me, this area is
limited to hospital personnel--

Irene rounds the corner into a set of locked double doors and finds no one in sight.

NURSE (O.S.)

Dr. Reynoso?

IRENE

(perplexed)

Yes?

NURSE

Dr. Whitman was looking for you.
He wanted to see if you could
speak with the McGee family in
room 403.

IRENE

Yes... Of course.

CUT TO:

INT. STONERIDGE MEMORIAL MEDICAL CTR - PATIENT ROOM - DAY

MURRAY MCGEE (7) lays sound asleep in his hospital bed. His father JAMES MCGEE (29) -- donning a well-worn, oil-stained mechanic's uniform -- paces back and forth along the bedside. Irene walks in.

JAMES

(agitated)

Nurse, how much longer 'til the
doc arrives?

Irene pauses, then shuts the door firmly behind her as she steps in.

IRENE
I *am* the doctor.

JAMES
Where's Dr. Whitman?

James eyes Irene skeptically.

JAMES (CONT'D)
I know you people are always
running late everywhere you go,
but 3:00 pm is 3:00 pm.

IRENE
Surgeons, do you mean? Dr. Whitman
is preoccupied at the moment. And
the human body is a sophisticated
machine. A heart transplant isn't
as simple as an oil change.
Sometimes things take a little
longer than expected.

JAMES
I woulda figured a blood
transfusion is a more
apples-to-apples comparison to an
oil change, but I'm no fuckin'
doc, right? The fuck do I know?
I'm just a grease monkey with a
son who's dying.

IRENE
Mr. McGee, I believe Dr. Whitman
has previously apprised you of...
of...

Irene blanks on Murray's name. She tries to casually scan
the room for an indication of it.

JAMES
Murray! My son's name is Murray!

IRENE
... Ah, yes. Dr. Whitman has
apprised you of Murray's stable
condition. Everything is on track
to excise Murray's brain tumor.

(MORE)

IRENE (CONT'D)

Rest assured that our expert surgical team doesn't anticipate any compli--

JAMES

Hold up, Doctor...

IRENE

Reynoso.

JAMES

... Reynoso. You got any kids, Dr. Reynoso?

IRENE

No. I don't.

JAMES

Then you don't know in the slightest the kinda hell I've been going through.

James walks out of the room and slams the door behind him. Irene sighs in exasperation at the sight of the closed door.

MURRAY (O.S.)

(groggy)

Sorry my dad was grumpy, Doctor. My mom says it's 'cause he's a sumbish.

IRENE

A "sumbish," huh? That's no way to talk about your paternal grandmother. But I suppose I could understand why your mother might.

MURRAY

Huh?

Irene walks over to Murray's bedside.

IRENE

Don't you worry your head about it. You just worry about resting up for surgery.

MURRAY

Dr. Ray-so, I'm thirsty.

IRENE

It's Reynoso. Here, I'll pour you
a cup of water.

Murray shakes his head no.

IRENE

No? No water?

Murray shakes his head no.

IRENE

You want a juice, huh?

Murray shakes his head yes.

IRENE

One juice comin' up.

Irene spots an unopened juice box on a nearby tray,
punctures it with the flexible straw, and hands it to
Murray. Murray sips a long draw from the juice box.

MURRAY

Dr. Ray-so, am I gonna die?

Irene frown-pouts.

MURRAY (CONT'D)

Am I gonna die like Dad says?

IRENE

(beat)

It's a possibility. But the
doctors and I are going to do all
we can to prevent that.

Murray stares at Irene as he sips another long draw from the
juice box.

MURRAY

My grandma's dead.

IRENE

I'm sorry to hear that, Murray.

MURRAY

They said she went away. Am I gonna visit Grandma?

IRENE

No, Murray. As long as your surgery goes well, you won't be joining Grandma.

MURRAY

I miss Grandma.

IRENE

I'm sorry, Murray. I... know it's tough when someone you love very much is gone.

(beat)

My dad died not long ago. I miss him very much.

Irene becomes distant for a moment. Murray sips from the juice box.

MURRAY

Was your dad a sumbish?

IRENE

(smirking)

Sometimes. Only whenever the Seahawks'd lose a game.

MURRAY

My dad's a Redskins fan.

IRENE

Of course he is.

Irene steps away from Murray to check his vital signs monitor, straighten odds and ends around the room, draw the curtain open -- although there isn't much more daylight to let in thanks to the overcast sky.

IRENE

All the doctors are confident your surgery will go well. I'll be right there with you the whole time, okay? Just like we talked

(MORE)

IRENE (CONT'D)

about before with your family.
We'll have to keep you awake
because we need to talk to you
throughout. I'm going to ask you
some questions to make sure we're
not poking at important sensory
functions. You can think of it as
a quiz. Like at school!
I mean, I liked quizzes at school,
but maybe you're not as much of a
fan. In any case, even though
you're going to be awake, we're
going to make sure you're nice and
comfortable.

Irene looks back at Murray and sees that he's fallen back
asleep. Irene sets his juice box on the tray, tucks him in,
and gives him a gentle pat on the shoulder.

CUT TO:

INT. IRENE'S HOME - NIGHT

Irene unwinds for the evening with a glass of red wine and
her TV tuned to Jeopardy.

IRENE

What is Bay of Pigs?

CONTESTANT

What is Gulf of Tonkin, Alex.

ALEX TREBEK

Correct!

IRENE

Pfft. I knew it was one or the
other.

Irene takes a sip of wine.

JAVIER (O.S.)

Mija, you missed that one? These
debacles happened under two
completely different
administrations.

Wearing a white button-up shirt and khaki pants, Irene's father JAVIER REYNOSO (63) has suddenly appeared on the couch next to her. He sits calmly and looks at his daughter with a smile. Dismayed, Irene spits out her wine.

IRENE

Dad!?

JAVIER

You could pour me a glass too once in a while. I know you're a doctor, but that ol' fashioned apple-a-day crap won't do me much good now.

Javier nods toward the altar. Flustered, Irene's attention darts from the altar, to Javier, to the wine she spit out onto her white carpet.

IRENE

Dad! I... What are you... ? Ugh, this merlot is going to set in. I just had the place shampooed last week.

JAVIER

I come to you in a vision and the first thing you're worried about is staining the carpet?

IRENE

What!? Dad! Just, hold on. Just let me grab a towel.

Irene looks down at the carpet for an instant, then looks back up to see that Javier is gone.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. SHEILA'S HOME/STONERIDGE MMC - DAY - INTERCUT

Mounted on the wall as the focal point in Sheila and Grace's dining room, a wooden shelf serves as an altar. It's adorned with an assortment of coins, crystals, oils, and incense. Grace lights a stick of Nag Champa on the altar, then sits at the dining table and shuffles her deck of tarot cards. Sheila has Irene on speakerphone and sips at her morning cup of tea.

Cell phone in hand, Irene takes a lap around the hospital rose garden where staff, patients, and visitors all mill about. Distractedly, she bumps into a visitor as she passes them.

IRENE
 (to visitor)
 Sorry, sorry.
 (to Sheila)
 So you really don't think I'm
 crazy? I feel like I'm losing it.

SHEILA
 Of course you're not crazy! You've
 been under a lot of stress for the
 past... forever. And on top of all
 that, you've felt like you
 should've saved him somehow. So
 now he's haunting you.

GRACE
 Not haunting! Visiting.

Grace begins to draw a spread of tarot cards.

IRENE
 Look, I know it's just all in my
 head. But he really seemed like he
 was sitting right there with me.

GRACE
 He was there with you. He still
 is.

SHEILA
 You're guilt-ridden. Needlessly, I
 might add. There's nothing you
 could've done about his congestive
 heart failure. And Grace is right.
 You have a very strong bond with
 your dad. It's no wonder he's ha--

Midway through a card pull, Grace gives Sheila a scolding eye.

SHEILA (CONT'D)
 --visiting you.

GRACE

Irene, didn't you mention that your dad's mom was a baba... baba... ?

IRENE

Babaylan?

SHEILA

That's right! Your lola came from a long line of healers who, like, concocted herbal remedies and talked to ancestors and all that precolonial mystic stuff. It must run in the family!

IRENE

Dammit, Sheila. I'm a doctor. Not a witch.

SHEILA

Was there really that much of a difference back in the day? You know, when our great-greats were running around in loincloths and shit? Do you not perform seemingly miraculous acts on the daily? I, on the other hand, have days when I can hardly get my toaster to function.

IRENE

It's called science, Sheila. Not magic. And I'll buy you a new toaster. I owe you and Grace a housewarming gift anyway.

GRACE

Forget the toaster! We need a bigger rice cooker!

SHEILA

But the carbs, babe. The carbs!

GRACE

So we'll add a couple more hikes

(MORE)

GRACE (CONT'D)

to our schedule. No big deal. It's been too long since we took a trip to Coal Creek Falls.

SHEILA

(to Grace)

You know who could use a trip? Irene.

(to Irene)

It's been a minute since you took a vacation.

IRENE

Uh, now's not a good time.

SHEILA

When is it ever a good time?

IRENE

The children here need me. Besides, I told you I had a nice visit to Houston.

SHEILA

Two years ago! For a doctor conference!

IRENE

I went to the Space Center.

SHEILA

What're you, in grade school? That's not a vacation! That's a field trip!

IRENE

I'll admit, taking some time off does sound nice, but--

SHEILA

Uh, hello? I think your benefits package includes a little something called "bereavement leave." Take that shit and go book a flight to Cancún or something.

IRENE

Okay, we're getting off topic here. What does this all have to do with seeing my dead dad in the middle of the living room!?

Passersby in the rose garden glance sideways at Irene and shuffle past her in a hurry.

SHEILA

Everything! It has everything to do with it! Yeah, sure your patients need a doctor. But that's why there are other doctors, Irene! Your family only has one of you. Just like they only had one of Tío Javier. So you gotta start taking some time for yourself to take care of yourself.

IRENE

I will say, technically my family's got duplicate baby brothers, them being twins and all. So if one goes, we've got a backup. Unless Frank and Manny board a plane together and it goes down in a fiery crash.

SHEILA

Wow! Now who's getting off topic? I know you're grieving, but that's all sorts of morbid right there.

GRACE

What I think Sheila was trying to get at is that maybe this is your cosmic reminder to spend some more time with your family. You know, stop and smell the roses once in a while.

SHEILA

Thank you! You get me.

Sheila leans in to give Grace a big kiss of appreciation.

Irene consults her wristwatch for the time.

IRENE

I'll settle for a glass of rosé instead. Look, I'm visiting my mom after my shift today, all right? How's that for family time?

Sheila and Grace exchange pitying glances.

SHEILA

Okay, tell Tía Lily we said hello.

IRENE

I will. Talk to you later.

Irene hustles back into the hospital, oblivious to the abundance of roses around her.

Grace pulls another card to reveal Temperance inverted. She shows the card to Sheila. They both wordlessly express sympathy for Irene.

CUT TO:

INT. LILY'S DINER - NIGHT

The diner is closed for the evening, inhabited now only by Liliana and Irene who are in the kitchen. Liliana chops up large slabs of meat to be barbecued. Bits of guts occasionally splatter onto her apron. Still dressed in her scrubs and lab coat, Irene snacks on chips and salsa.

IRENE

Mom, why didn't you get one of the guys to prep this catering order? You should be taking the night off.

LILIANA

What, you think because you graduated summa cum laude, you have all the answers? If you want something done right, you have to take care of it yourself.

IRENE

I'm just saying you can work smarter, not harder.

LILIANA

Mija, you know the trouble with too much brains is that sometimes it's too much thinking. Me? I'm all guts. That's why I'm the butcher and your dad was the brains. But if only I had brains like your dad or like you, then I'd be rich. I'd have opened a whole bunch of restaurants. I'd have given each of you kids a restaurant to own.

IRENE

And to run? No thanks, Mom. Brain surgery's easier.

LILIANA

Bah! All the Mendozas got into their family business! Three generations of Mendozas at their restaurant. You know Anthony Bourdain went to their restaurant?

IRENE

To use the restroom, Mom. Chris Mendoza told me Bourdain just needed to use the restroom before he went shopping next door.

LILIANA

Whatever! I can hardly get a five-star Yelp review! They are all just four's.

IRENE

Okay, Mom. You need to take a break from the internet.

LILIANA

And you need to find a husband to give you children.

IRENE

You mean to give you grandchildren. Isn't eight enough like they say on TV?

LILIANA

It's like I have an incomplete set. You always cried to me when you were little about collecting all those Happy Meal toys. You know what I'm talking about.

IRENE

It's not The Muppets without Miss Piggy, Mom.

LILIANA

See? And when you finally have your own little piggy, then I'll be happy.

Liliana continues chopping away. Irene dips another chip in salsa. She looks out the window at the makeshift rotisserie spit staked into the ground behind the diner.

IRENE

Mom, I thought I told you to get rid of that thing. You're gonna get written up. Or even worse, shut down. What're you gonna do if you get shut down? Dad's gone, Mom.

Liliana's disposition tenses up in a flash.

LILIANA

I know Dad's gone! You think because I don't have a biology degree like you that I don't know my husband is dead!

Liliana slams her butcher's knife into the slab of meat before her.

LILIANA (CONT'D)

Of course I know! I spent my whole life with him ever since grade school! Every second that passes without him, I know that he's gone! But I don't let that stop me from taking care of things.

Liliana yanks the knife out of the slab and starts chopping again. Tears are silently streaming down Irene's cheeks.

LILIANA (CONT'D)

Now are you just going to stand there? Or are you going to help me prep this order for tomorrow?

Liliana looks up to see the kitchen double doors swinging and Irene gone.

CUT TO:

INT. IRENE'S LEXUS SEDAN - NIGHT

The city lights streak by as Irene speeds off with the sight of Lily's Diner shrinking in her rear view mirror. Her face is puffy from crying. Her shoulders heave with the deep breaths she takes to try calming herself.

JAVIER (O.S.)

Where are you going? Slow down, mija. Why are you in such a hurry?

Javier has appeared in Irene's front passenger seat, donning the same white shirt and slacks as before.

IRENE

(eyes fixed on road)

Now now, Dad.

JAVIER

If not now, when?

IRENE

I've got a big procedure tomorrow. I need to rest up.

JAVIER

You left your poor mother back there. You know how the arthritis in her hands acts up when--

IRENE

Dad, please!

(flustered huff)

What am I even doing yelling at nobody in my car? You're not real! You're not here!

JAVIER

Irene Teresita Reynoso. You are not yelling at nobody. You are yelling at *me* -- your dead dad. Didn't Sister O'Rourke teach you in catechism to honor your mother and father?

IRENE

(shrinking)

Yes. She did.

JAVIER

Well, right now, you're oh-for-two.

IRENE

Well, right now, you're not real.

JAVIER

Does it feel real?

IRENE

(beat)

Yes.

JAVIER

And your mom -- she's real, yes?

IRENE

(beat)

Yes.

JAVIER

Yeah! Real pissed I bet about how you just walked out on her like that! Good thing I'm not around to hear it.

Irene pulls into her driveway.

IRENE

Look, Dad. I'm sorry. It's just--

JAVIER (O.S.)

I'm not the one you should be apologizing to.

Irene looks over and finds her passenger seat empty. Dejectedly, she gets out of the car and walks into the house.

CUT TO:

INT. STONERIDGE MEMORIAL MEDICAL CTR - OPERATING ROOM - DAY

In the middle of the operating room, Murray lies on a gurney. A low hanging partition is draped around the top of his head to separate his exposed brain from the rest of his body. He is groggy but conscious while doctors and nurses work slowly and steadily to remove his tumor bit by bit. Irene sits next to Murray with a small display screen facing him. The screen shows a simple cartoon drawing of a cat.

IRENE

Okay, Murray. Do you see a cat or a dog?

MURRAY

Cat.

IRENE

Very good.

Irene looks up and nods at a doctor on the other side of the partition. He nods back and continues working.

IRENE

Now, I'm going to play you a song, okay? And then you tell me what you hear.

A simple piano rendition of "Mary Had a Little Lamb" plays from the screen.

IRENE

Was that Old MacDonald or Mary Had a Little Lamb?

MURRAY

(beat)

Old MacDonald.

IRENE

Good try, Murray. That's okay. You're doing great.

Irene looks up at a doctor and shakes her head side to side. The doctor acknowledges and adjusts.

IRENE

Next, I'm going to show you a person, and you tell me what color his shirt is, okay?

The screen shows a simple cartoon drawing of a man in a blue shirt.

IRENE

Is the man's shirt green? Or blue?

MURRAY

White.

Irene furrows a worried brow and looks up at a doctor.

IRENE

Okay. Let's try another quiz question.

MURRAY

It's white.

IRENE

Oh, Murray. It's okay. You don't have to--

JAVIER (O.S.)

All these years, I never had a chance to see you hard at work.

Javier gently lays his hand on Irene's shoulder. Irene looks up at her father dressed in white.

IRENE

Dad?

JAVIER

Now that I have, I can finally say firsthand what I've known all along -- you do a damn good job.

Irene responds at a hushed volume to avoid the attention of her colleagues.

IRENE

What, this? This is nothing.

(to Murray)

Er... No offense.

(to Javier)

This? This is just... I'm not on
slice-and-dice duty today, Dad.

I'm just--

JAVIER

--saving a child's life, mija. I
know everyone in this room is.
Everyone makes a vital difference,
including you.

IRENE

Dad?

JAVIER

Yes, Irene?

IRENE

I miss you.

JAVIER

I know, mija. I miss you, too.
That's why I came to say one final
goodbye.

IRENE

What? No, don't go. Once I'm all
done with this, then--

JAVIER

It's my time, mija. Tell your
brothers and sisters how much I
love them.

IRENE

No, wait!

JAVIER

Tell your mother I love her.

IRENE

(pleading)

Dad, please...

JAVIER

Will you do that, mija? Will you tell everyone in the family for me?

IRENE

Dad, I...

Javier walks around to the other side of Murray's gurney. He leans over and whispers into Murray's ear. Murray nods faintly. Javier straightens upright and turns to Irene.

JAVIER

I love you, mija.

He turns around and begins to walk out. Irene jumps out of her seat.

IRENE

Wait!

DR. WHITMAN

Everything all right, Dr. Reynoso?

IRENE

Ah... yes. Everything's fine.

Irene sits back down.

IRENE

Murray? What did Dad say?

MURRAY

Dad said--

Murray's eyes roll back into his head. He goes into shock.

IRENE

Murray!?

Right as a nurse enters the operating room, Javier exits. Irene's attention darts back and forth between the swinging doors of the operating room and the flurry of doctors at the crown of Murray's skull.

DR. WHITMAN

Dr. Reynoso! We need you!

Irene is momentarily stunned as the room seems to move in slow motion around her.

DR. WHITMAN

Dr. Reynoso?!

(beat)

Irene!

Irene shakes off her paralysis. She springs into action amidst the frenzy of monitors sounding off with critical alerts, surgical instruments clattering on metal trays, and doctors barking urgent commands.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. STONERIDGE MEMORIAL MEDICAL CTR - PATIENT ROOM - DAY

The room is quiet. The window curtains are pulled shut. The hospital bed is empty.

The door opens. A gurney is wheeled in by a couple of patient care technicians. Murray lays on the gurney fast asleep. The technicians gently transfer him back into his hospital bed. After the technicians ensure that he is safe and sound, they exit the room.

The room is still and peaceful. Irene enters and walks over to Murray's bedside. Murray's eyes flutter open and he looks up at Irene.

IRENE

Hi, Murray. How are you feeling?

MURRAY

Dr. Ray-so?

IRENE

Yes, Murray?

MURRAY

Dad said "I'm proud of you,
yee-haw."

Irene tilts her head to the side, puzzled for a moment by Murray's first post-op words, followed by a slight smile as a realization dawns on her.

JAMES (O.S.)

Murray?

James walks in and hurries over to the other side of Murray's bed, opposite Irene.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Dr. Reynoso. I would've been here sooner, but things took longer at the shop today than I thought they would.

MURRAY

Dad.

JAMES

There's my little guy.

MURRAY

Dr. Ray-so looked at my brain.

JAMES

Yeah, Murray. She sure did. She made you all better.

MURRAY

Can we get a cat now?

JAMES

Let's ask your mom about that one.

MURRAY

Okey-dokey.

JAMES

(clears throat)

Dr. Reynoso. I want to apologize. For blowing up at you the other day. I was under a lot of stress and--

IRENE

Apology accepted, Mr. McGee. I'm just happy to have done what I can do to help your son.

JAMES

Thank you. Just... thank you.

(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)

(beat)

I know you said you're not a mom,
but for all these kids who come
through here, you are their
doctor. They're some lucky kids.
Especially my Murray.

IRENE

Well, I'm just as lucky to have
each of their lives in mine.

Irene and James both look at Murray tenderly.

CUT TO:

INT. IRENE'S HOME - NIGHT

Irene unwinds for the evening with a glass of red wine and
her TV tuned to Jeopardy.

ALEX TREBEK

This is the smallest bone in the
human body.

Irene takes a sip of wine.

MIRABEL (O.S.)

The stapes!

Mirabel jumps onto the couch next to Irene. Jesse plops onto
the floor in front of them.

JESSE

It's Jeopardy. You're supposed to
say, "What is the stapes."

Jesse sticks out his tongue at Mirabel.

CONTESTANT

What is the stapes, Alex.

ALEX TREBEK

Correct!

IRENE

Nice job, Mirabel!

The living room bustles with the whole family's praise for Mirabel, although some of her cousins respond with eye rolls or sullen pouts.

JESSE

Tía Irene, we get to put on a movie after this, right?

IRENE

Of course, Jesse. I got two fresh DVDs from Netflix in the mail today: Race to Witch Mountain and Lilo & Stitch.

LILIANA

Oh, Race to Witch Mountain. I know it has that one actor... The guapo one. What's his name?

GRACE

Dwayne Johnson?

LILIANA

Oh, yes! The Rocks! Kids, let's all watch The Rocks, hah?

SHEILA

I think I speak for both Grace and myself when I say our vote goes to Tia Carrere in Lilo & Stitch.

Grace signals her agreement.

IRENE

How about we ask the *kids* which kids' movie we'll all watch tonight?

The kids all clamor with their votes for movie night.

On the living room altar, Javier's smiling portrait looks out at his family -- accompanied by a burning stick of Nag Champa from Sheila and Grace, a crayon-drawn card from Mirabel with the Broken Heart piece from Operation scotch-taped in the middle, and a glass of merlot poured by Irene.

FADE OUT.