

Code You

By Nora Montañez Patterson

Characters

Marlen: 25, Female-identifying/Non-white.

Danny/Registered Nurse: 20's-30's Gender Queer or Non-Binary/Non-white.

Juan/ Physical Therapist: 20's-30's/Male-identifying/Non-white.

Jesenia/ Anesthesia Physicians: 20's-30's/Female-identifying/Non-white.

Jessica/Physician Specialist: 20's-30's/Female-identifying/Non-white.

Time: 2020

Projections/Sounds:

The projections are used to highlight a scene played from the television. The sound design is used to inform the complexity of scenes colliding.

Act 1: Scene 1

(Lights abruptly come up on an apartment door swung widely open. Marlen stands in the doorway carrying her backpack, a bag of groceries and a clump of mail. She wears pajama bottoms and a hoodie. She looks like she has had a rough night. She sets the items on her kitchen counter. She observes her space. A deep sigh. She walks towards her window.)

Marlen

(Sucks her teeth)

(Marlen grabs her phone and dials.)

Marlen

I still see you. I'm at the window. (She waves)

Hi, yup that's me, watching you.

Mami, I'm fine. Te prometo. I'm gonna make myself some tea and watch some Netflix or something. Yes! I'll eat first. Mami, you gave me a huge bag of things. I'm sure I'm not gonna starve. Go home. I'll call you in the morning. Oh my god, Mami?!!!

(She looks out her window.)

Let me talk to Papi.

Papi, tell Mami that I'm fine. I got this! Ok. Now, go home.

Ok. I love you both. I'll call if I need anything, yes. (She waves)

Love you. Bye.

(She watches them leave. She looks back at her apartment. She's alone. She turns on the television. The Netflix screen is projected on the wall of her apartment. She flips through it. In the distance we hear a faint beeping sounds and conversations. Marlen goes to her phone and checks to see if the sound is coming from it.)

Marlen

Hello?

(She keeps hearing the faint sounds. She opens her front door and listens down the hall. The sound fades. She goes through the clump of mail and begins to rip up several mundane advisements. She comes across a thicker envelop and opens it.)

Marlen

Holy Shit!!! Holy Shit.

(She does a little dance. She grabs her phone and takes a picture of it.)

Marlen

Oh my god! (To the check) You and I are going straight to the bank tomorrow morning but for now you will live on display.

(Marlen pins the check on refrigerator.)

Marlen

Eeekkkkkk!!!

(She flips through her phone we then hear her apartment buzzer ring.)

Marlen

(Tentatively)

Hello?!

Bite Squad Person

Hey, this Bite Squad. Your food is here.

(No response.)

Marlen

I-I didn't order any food.

Bite Squad Person

This is Apartment 13?!

Marlen

Ya...

Bite Squad Person

Cool! I'll just leave it here for you.

Marlen

Ok, but...but I didn't-

(We hear city sounds on the speaker.)

Marlen

Hello?

(No response.)

Marlen

Hello?!

(No response. Marlen considers for a moment then opens her front door to find the bag of food waiting for her. She looks up and down the hallway. She grabs the bag and washes her hands before she grabs her phone and dials.)

Marlen

Ma! Ma, you just sent me home with a bag full of food. You didn't have to order me more. Well...you must of...cuz' they just dropped it off. Really?!
Well, someone did cuz' the Bite Squad guy was just here.
Are you sure?

(She looking at the receipt)

Well, if you didn't then who did?
No, it's my address and everything.
That's odd.

No, of course, I'm gonna eat it. It's free.
Yes, I know. Ok, oh Mami gues what? I got my check. The check for writing the magazine article. I know! I took a picture of it. Yes, I'm putting in the bank tomorrow. Ok! I love you too. Yes, Ma I'll call you early in the morning. Goodnight. Love you. Bye!

(She hangs up. Marlen goes to the kitchen and comes back with a can of Lysol Wipes. She opens up the bag of food and begins wipe down the containers and displays the food in front of her. She flips on the television, which is then projected on the walls of her apartment. She eats like she hasn't eaten in days. She flips through Netflix trying to decide what to watch. Marlen cuddles up on the couch with a blanket and finally lands on Chicago Med. Slowly we watch Marlen teeter from watching the show to falling asleep. The television continues to play.. The scene is of hospital staff fully dressed in PPE clothing discussing their day in the Covid ICU. We hear a ventilator, the distant sound of an ECMO therapy machine and vital signs monitor sing together.)

Physician Specialist:
(To patient)

Good Morning! Just making our rounds this morning. I hope you had a restful night.

Registered Nurse
What are her oxygen levels?

Physician Specialist:
94%. Nice job for day 6. Lung function?

Registered Nurse
Better than yesterday. (To patient) Ohhhhh...those lungs are working hard. Nice job!

Physician Specialist:
Good. My hope is we process well after today's prone cycle. What we do know is that it's working.

(The sounds of the machines play a playful dancing beat together.)

Registered Nurse
Then follow up by slowly weaning off from benzodiazepine.

Physician Specialist:
Good. That will give us a sense of how tolerates the reduced level of sedation, if there is any room to maneuver at all almost a week on the machinery.

Registered Nurse
(To patient)
Honey, you feel comfortable. It's a beautiful sunny day out. Do you here the birds chirping outside your window? The respirator therapist will be coming in soon. We'll continue to monitor you throughout the day. Ok?! Okay.

(Lights come up Marlen tossing around on the couch. We hear a ringing of the door buzzer which mixes to the dancing beat of the hospital machines. Marlen abruptly wakes up. She pauses Netflix. She tentatively goes to her buzzer.)

Marlen
Hello?

(No response.)

Marlen
Look, I'm sorry I started eating the sushi. I can pay for it if you want?

(Silence.)

Marlen
Hello?

(There is a knock on the door. She peeks through her peephole. She opens her front door.)

Jesenia
Hey!!!!

Danny
Amor!

Jessica
Hey, Grllll!

All
(To the sight of her)
Damn!

(Marlen stands silent and half awake.)

Danny
Honey, we've been calling you all night?

Jessica
Where's your phone?

Jesenia
What are you doing in your
sweatpants?

Marlen
What are you doing here?!

Danny
What do you mean? You called us.

Marlen
I did?

Jesenia
Where is your phone?!

Jessica
You must have butt dialed
or something?

Danny
Are you drunk?

Marlen
Drunk? No.

Jesenia
Well, soon you will be cuz' we brought Margaritas!!!

Danny
Tia Rita is here!

Jesenia
Yo, should we blend it or over ice?

Jessica
Which one gets more Tequila?

Jesenia
Whichever one I get my hands on.

(They laugh)

Jessica
Grrlll...let us in. This hallway is cold as hell.

(Jessica, Danny and Jesenia try to slip through the door)

Marlen
Wait!!!

Danny
What?

Marlen
You can't be here.

Danny
Why?
(Gasping)
Do you have someone here?

Jesenia
Is it Juan?
(Gasping)
Sushi!

(Jesenia bolts towards the to-go sushi.)

Marlen
No. There's no one here.

Jessica
Well, that sucks.

(They all let themselves into the apartment.)

Marlen
(Covering her mouth)
You can't be here.

Jesenia
(Picking at the sushi)
Why not?

Marlen
It's COVID.

(Silence. Then a burst of laughter.)

Danny
That's hilarious!

Jesenia
She must be buzzin?

Jessica
Why are you covering your mouth?

Marlen
It's COVID.

Jessica
What's Cogid?

Marlen
No, Covid...The pandemic, the disease that has taken over our world
and killed thousands of people.

(She grabs the Lysol wipes and begins to aggressively wipe down the door handles.)

There's no vaccine yet but once there is I'm sure everyone will get it
but until now we need to protect ourselves.

Ya'll...ya'll aren't even wearing masks.
Oh my god, I don't have a mask on.

(Marlen goes searching for a mask.)

Jesenia
(Gasping)

Yes! Let's do masks.

Danny

Yes, please.

Marlen

No, masks for your mouth to block being sprayed and not spread the virus.

Danny

Amor, are you high? Or is this some kinda Bird Box shit you're talking about?

Marlen

(While searching)

Bird Box?!

Jesenia

Remember when the Bird Box Challenge was a thing on TikTock?

Jessica

That was like five years ago.

Jesenia

Ya, where people would put on masks and then do things like mow a lawn or drive a car or something.

(Jesenia pops a sushi roll into her mouth)

Jessica

Those were blindfolds not masks.

Jesenia

But it was still a thing...I tried it once while eating dinner. It was much easier than I thought.

Marlen

Ugh! Why can't I find a mask?

(They watch Marlen.)

Danny

Ok, love you're freaking out for nothing.

Marlen
No, listen. I was sitting here just eating my free sushi-

Jesenia
(Spitting out the sushi from her mouth)
Ewwww/

Marlen
/and watching a COVID episode on Chicago Med. Look?

(Marlen un-pauses the television. The scene is of an active nurse unit mid-day.)

Anesthesian Physician
Ok, everyone it's 11am.

Nurse#2
Already?!

Anesthesia Physician
I don't know about you but I've been standing for 4 hours straight.

Nurse#2
Is it time?

Anesthesia Physician
Yup, time for our stress bustin' dance party.

Marlen
Ok, wait. This isn't it.

Nurse#1
Let's do...The Cupid Shuffle!

(The Cupid Shuffle by Cupid plays on the screen. The nurses begin to line dance.)

Danny
Oh my god, what year was this made?

Marlen
Let me go back a bit.

Jesenia
No, leave it. I love the Cupid Shuffle.

Jessica
"To the left. To the left."

Jesenia
"To the left. To the left"

Jessica/Jesenia
"Now walk it by yourself"
"Now walk it by yourself."

(Danny turns off the television.)

Danny
Well that was cute!

Jesenia
Hey!

Marlen
The COVID scene was earlier.

Jesenia
So this covid-

Marlen
COVID.

Jesenia
That's what I said. Isn't that's like a dog breed?

Jessica
That's right!

Danny
That's a corgi.

Marlen
It's not corgi. It CoVid. Vvvvv...

Jesenia
Well, whatever it's called, it doesn't matter because it's a made up disease.

Danny
Honey, you must have been "show dreaming"

Jessica
Ya...show dreaming.

Danny

One time, I was watching Ms. Ratched and I feel asleep and then I dreamt someone was giving me a lobotomy but it was just my cat licking my eyelids.

Jesenia

DAMN!

Danny

I get it!

Marlen

Ya, Ok. I guess.

(Marlen rubs the inside of her elbow)

Danny

What's going on?

Marlen

Nothing. I think I slept on arm cuz it's all tingly.

So, you're seriously telling me you have no idea what COVID is?

Danny

Cotex. Cupid. Cow flu. Whatever it's called, it's not now. What is now it's auntie Rita Time. Let's just chill and decompress.

Jesenia

YES!!! So much needed.

Marlen

Ok! (Beat) Do you hear that?

(They listen)

Jessica

You talking?

Marlen

No. Shushhhhhh!!!

(Marlen walks around her apartment trying to find the sound. They all watch her with concern.)

It's a beeping sound.

(They listen.)

Danny
Mar-

Marlen
Damn it! It's gone.

Jesenia
I think we all need some self-care, right now.

Danny
Good idea. Mira, Mar you sound like-not you-right now.
Why don't you go and get out of those sweatpants and put on something cute or something?

Jesenia
YES! Put on a flowy tunic like that yellow cute one.

Jessica
Ohhhhh...you look so good in that.

Danny
Yes, get all-cute, let that hair down and have a drink with us.

Marlen
Ya, ok.

(Marlen exits to her bedroom.)

Danny
(Whispering)
I don't know about you all but I think she's on something and it's good.

Jessica
Right?!

Danny
It's like she's not even here.

Jesenia
Maybe she's still asleep?

(A stare.)

Jesenia
What?! You know when you wake up and you still feel asleep and you move around the world like "Holy crap, am I dreaming or is this real" and then you see someone and your have a

conversation like words come out but you don't know what the mean...you know... like that.

Danny
Let's make some drinks, ya'll.

(Danny, Jesenia and Jessica move towards the kitchen. Marlen finds her phone on her bed. She speaks into it.)

Marlen
Siri, look up COVID-19.

Siri (V/O)
Did you mean the Colon?

Marlen
Siri, look up CO-VI-D 19.

Siri
Did you mean Culprit nineteenth?

Marlen
No! Siri, look up President Donald Trump.

Siri
Donald Trump is a reality T.V tycoon-

Marlen
(Rubbing her arm)
Siri! Look up President-Don

Siri
Looking up President of the United States. The 45th president of the United States is Hilary Clinton.

Marlen
What?!

Siri
Hilary Rodham Clinton is an American politician and the first female president of the United States of America.

(Marlen burst into the living room)

Marlen
Ohmygod, Hilary Clinton is president?

(Silence)

Danny
...yeah...

Marlen
Holy shit!

Jessica
Holy shit is right?!

Jesenia
Stop! Nobody wake her up, she could have a seizure.

Marlen
I'm not asleep.

Danny
Are you sure?

Marlen
Yes! Are you kidding me?! This is great! When did this happen? Hilary Clinton is president. Holy shit! I should get my pussycat hat out. Are we still wearing those? I can't believe it. Suck it, Donald Trump!

(Marlen exits into her bedroom. Jesenia, Jessica and Danny stare at each other.)

Danny
Did she just say "Donald Trump"?

Jesenia
Ya! Maybe he was in her dream?

Danny
Grllll...that's a nightmare.

Jessica
Maybe the sushi was bad?

Jesenia
Oh god!

Jessica
(Whispering)
Do you think she's having a crisis or something?

Danny
I told you! I'm gonna go and check on her.

Jesenia
I'm her best friend; I'll go and check on her.

(Danny pulls Jesenia back.)

Danny
(Whispering)
No! You think she's sleepwalking. What does that say?

Jesenia
(Whispering)
Yo, it's a condition.

Danny
I'll go.

Jessica
What are you gonna say? "You sound crazy".

Danny
Yes!

Jessica
(Whispering)
No!

Jesenia
Oh hell no.

Danny
No! What am I an ass-

(Marlen reappears dressed in a colorful outfit. Her hair is flowing and looks amazing.)

Danny
HEYYYYYYY...looks who's back!!!

Jesenia
Wow!

Jessica
You look hot!

Marlen
Look at this! This was in the back of my closet. I had no idea it was there. It looks good, right?!

Danny
No, grrrrlll what looks good is that hair. What is that?

Jesenia
That's like fuckable hair.

Jessica
You look good, Amiga.

Marlen
Ohhhh, thanks! Ok, so...what are we doing tonight?

Danny
Let's go clubbin'!

Jessica
Getting drunk!

Jesenia
Masks!

(Danny and Jessica stare at Jesenia)

Jesenia
Like...masks for your face. We were just talking about it. Right?!

Danny
(Gasp) I got it! What if we make some calls...

Jessica
YES!!!

Danny
Call some people up...

Jessica
...I'm down

Danny
You don't even know what I was gonna say?

Jessica
I don't need to know. I'm down!

Marlen
Ok...and do what?

Danny
...have-a-house party!

Jessica
I'm down!!!

Danny
We know.

Marlen
Here?!

Danny
Yes!

Marlen
Like right now?

Danny
Ya!

Marlen
Why?!

Danny
Why not! You look good. I look good. Jessica can get drunk with...well, anybody. Jesenia, can do her masks.

Jesenia
Yes!!!...

Marlen
Okay but my apartment-

Danny
-ya, it smells like death, I know.

Marlen
It smells like death?!

Jesenia
A little, but we'll hook it up. We got you.

Marlen
Ok.

Danny
Dale! First, I'm calling Juan.

Jesenia
OHMYGOD.

Marlen
Wait, what?!

Jessica
Fuck ya!

Danny
Honey, we see how you both look at each other.

Jessica
Ya, it's really hot.

Jesenia
All that sexual tension.

Jessica
You can see it.

Marlen
You can?

Danny
Sweetheart, we can see it, feel it, and smell it. Plus, you told me your still into him so now you take the lead. You don't need to wait for him to make the move. You are fierce and anyone would kill to be with you.

Jesenia
I would!

Jessica
Same.

Marlen
Ohhhhh, thanks familia.

(A group agreement. A Silence)

Danny
I'm calling him.

Jessica
Do it!

Marlen
No, wait... I'll do it.

Danny
YES!!! Get yours.

Jesenia
Dale!

(They all gather around Marlen and listen in.)

Jesenia
It's ringing.

Danny
That's what phones do.

Jessica
(Shush)

Marlen
Juan? Hey, it's Marlen. What's up! (*Good Lord*) I mean, how's it going?
Good! I'm good. You know...here and there. I know it's been a sec.
Me? Oh, I've been...around. Not like around, around just-around. Ok!

Danny
(Whispering)
Invite him.

(Marlen turns away from them. They follow.)

Marlen
So, listen I'm throwing a little gathering at my place
tonight. Right?! Cuz' why not, right?! There's no dictator of a president
and we're not a joke around the world. Or maybe we still are? (Danny
nudges Marlen) OW!!! Ya, just "how" wonderful, right?! So, if you're
free tonight you should come by. Mhhhhmmmm...
Ya, I'd like to see you, too.
Oh, ummmm....ya, James. Absolutley, bring him along.

Jesenia
He's mine!

Jessica
What's wrong with you?

Marlen
You remember my address? Oh, good memory.

Jesenia
He knows her address!

Marlen
Ok! Well, see you in a few. Chao! I mean-(Ugh)
...he hung up.

Danny
OHHHHHH... This is gonna be LIT.

Jesenia
Oye, which one's James?

Danny
I'm calling Sam.

Jessica
Who am I suppose to
hang out with?

(Jesenia, Danny and Jessica exit into the bedroom and continue their conversation. Marlen picks up her phone from the ground and finds the remote control. She contemplates for a second then turns the television one. She lowers the volume as she unpauses the scene. The series is projected on the wall.)

Anesthesia Physician
Hello hun, the physical therapist will be here soon.
I heard your lungs are working very hard. That's a good sign.

You're making great progress.

Did you hear the music out there today? The Cupid Shuffle playing.

How could you not? It's pretty catch, right?!

You like music? I'm sure you do. You look like a dancer. Maybe you can join us in our daily stress busting dance break next time. I'm sure you can use some stress reliving, huh?

(Anesthesia Physician peeks their head into the room.)

Registered Nurse
Mary, we need you in room 235.

Anesthesia Physician
Yup! Coming.

Registered Nurse
You ok?

Anesthesia Physician
Ya...makes me miss my kid. (A deep inhale)

Jesenia (OS)
Mar, where's your makeup?

Danny (OS)
You have any concealer. My bags are a mess.

Registered Nurse
I hear you.

Jessica (OS)
Mar, can I look through your closet? Mar!!!

Anesthesia Physician
We got this!

(To patient) We'll check in with you mid-day.

(The lights dim all around Marlen. The steady beeping coming from ICU machines transitions. She turns off the television.)

(FADE OUT)

Act 1: Scene #2

(Marlen's Apartment. The ambience of a casual apartment party with Lo-Fi music playing in the background. Danny, Jesenia and Jessica dance together with drinks in their hands. Juan and Marlen stand and watch.)

Juan
Hey!

Marlen
Hey! You need a refill?

Juan
No, I'm all-good. Your place looks nice.

Danny
(Still dancing)
Thank you.

Marlen
They said, they were gonna hook me up and so they did.

Jesenia
It's all about the ambience.

Juan
Impressive!

(To Marlen) Hey, I'm glad you called.

Marlen
Me too.

Juan
I was surprised to hear from you.

Marlen
Ya?!

Juan
I mean, I haven't hear from you in several weeks. I thought-I had done something-

Marlen
Nooooo...not at all.

Juan
I mean you could tell me if/ I was an idiot-

Marlen
/Wait. You called?!

Juan
Ya. (Beat)
But it's cool. I mean, I know you're busy and all.

(A small smile)

Marlen
Ya! Sorry. I've been with my parents.

Juan
Ohh...you don't have to/ apologize

Marlen
Also, my phone's/been acting weird.

Juan
/Oh, that sucks.

Marlen
No, it's cool.

Juan (cont.)
Did it enter into the other dimension?

Marlen
Dimension?

Juan
Ya, the upgrade dimension...cuz, you know...phone companies create it so that you /have to upgrade.

Marlen
Oh, ya/upgrade.

Juan
You know?!

Marlen
Right!

Juan
I mean that's what I heard any how...

(Beat)

So, what have you been up to the last few weeks?

Marlen
Nothing much. Just chillin'.

Juan
Cool.

Marlen
Watching a lot of Netflix.

Juan
Right!!! Netflix is on fire!

Marlen
I know. It's like a new show every week.

Juan
It's crazy.

Marlen
What are you watching?

Juan
What do you watch?

(A sweet laugh)

Juan
You go first.

Marlen
Ummmm...I've just been watching re-runs...like I love
Orange Is The New Black.

Juan
Those women are fierce.

Marlen
They kinda have to be cuz they're in prison and all.

Juan
Truth!

Marlen
I watched Bridgerton just to see what the hype was all about but I just
ended up wasting my time for one good episode.

Danny
(While dancing)
Oh my god, that one was so hot.

Jessica
They were everywhere.

Juan
Who was everywhere?!

Jesenia
-I need another drink.

Danny
Shots!!!

Jessica
Yes, shots!

Jesenia
(To Marlen and Juan)
You wanna a shot?

Marlen
I'm good for now.

Juan
Ya, I'm all-good.

Jesenia
Dale!

(Jessica, Danny and Jesenia walk into the kitchen.)

Marlen
So, how about you? What are you watching now?

Juan
Me...oh, ummm...I really like the one with...the one with the woman
with the curly red hair.

Marlen
Ummm...

Juan
She's like a bathroom...

(Silence)

Juan
...and there's this song that repeats...over and over...

Marlen
(A small laugh)
Oh my god, I...I have no idea.

Juan
Damn...the song goes...(doo doo, doo doo...)

(They laugh)

Juan
I am the worst at recounting things. It's at the tip of my tongue.

Marlen
I'm sorry, I'm laughing. It's so frustrating.

Juan
Yes!!! I'm gonna be laying there at 2 am and/

Marlen
/And then it like "Oh, ya".

Juan
Well...I'll make sure to call you then.

(They laugh)

Marlen
I hope so.

(Silence)

Marlen
You know what I've been really into lately.

Juan
What?!

Marlen
Chicago Med!

Juan
Really?! Isn't there like a Chicago Med, a Fire, a PD...

Marlen
Yes! One day, I was crazy sick and so I started watching it and then I couldn't stop.

Marlen (Cont.)

I don't know maybe it was seeing those doctors running around taking care of people what made feel at ease. I just kept bingeing.

Juan

-Another version of Netflix and chill, right?!

(Beat)

Sorry, that was-

Marlen

-No, I get it. It's funny.

(Jesenia, Jessica and Danny take a selfie. They do a shot.)

Juan

So, Chicago Med, huh?!

Marlen

Ya...

Juan

Cool!

Marlen

Earlier I was watching an episode about umm...

Juan

Before we took over your apartment?

(Danny changes the music to something more upbeat, (Trap music maybe.))

Marlen

(Laughing)

No, I'm glad I was interrupted.

Juan

What was it about?! The show?

Marlen

Ohhhh right! It was about...ummmm...COVID-19

Juan

Really?!

Marlen

Ya! You heard of it?

Juan

No but it sounds intense.

Marlen

It no joke! It was all about this like blood related virus that affects the entire world and people had to quarantine to avoid spreading it.

Juan

Damn!

Marlen

I know.

Juan

Shit! Can you imagine that? That sounds crazy.

Marlen

Right?! I mean people had to start wearing masks because someone could spread the virus through droplets released when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks.

(Danny begins to overhear their conversation.)

Juan

It sounds like some Sci-Fi shit right there.

Marlen

I know. So, if you got it, it attacked your lungs and some people had to be intubated.

Juan

What's that intu-

Marlen

-Intubated? Oh, it's when they put a breathing tube down your throat and into your lungs to help you breath because some people's lungs began to shut down.

Juan

Shit!

Marlen

It's like being on life support.

Juan
Damn!

Danny
(Interrupted)
Mar-come dance with us

Marlen
I know right?! So millions of
people start dying because
of the virus.

Jessica
Mar!!!

Marlen
It was a global crisis so of course people start freaking out and buying
up all the milk, eggs, paper towels, hoarding it or selling it online.

Juan
Wait, what?!

Marlen
Ya, then hospitals begin to get flooded with patients and so there were
no hospital beds and hospital staffs begin to get overwhelmed-
And the thing is that it can all be avoided but our damn facist
president convinces millions of people that it's "fake news" and start
calling it the "Chinese Flu" and putting the blame on the Asian
community.

Juan
Hillary?

Marlen
Ohhh no...it...it was another President.

Danny
Mar!!!

Juan
And this was all in one episode?

Marlen
Good show runners, I guess.

Juan
-For real?!

Marlen
You can find it on Netflix.

(Marlen clicks the television on. Netflix is projected on the wall.)

Danny
(Interjecting)
Mar...what ya doing?

(Marlen clicks on the Chicago Med icon. It begins to load.)

Juan
Marlen, is about to show me an episode on Chicago Med some crazy
disease.

(Danny slightly grabs the remote control and turns off the television. Projections
fade.)

Danny
Ohhhh! Adorable! (To Marlen) Can I speak to you?
(To Danny) I have something in my eyeball and...
and I need Mar to help me get it.

Juan
Oh, god ya...

Danny
Be right back.

(Danny leads Marlen into the bedroom. We hear the muffled sounds of dance
music.)

Danny
Honey, you are flat lining out there?

Marlen
Why would you say that?

Danny
Say what?

Marlen
Flat lining.

Danny
Grrlll, I'ma shake you.

(Jessica and Jesenia enter the bedroom.)

Jesenia
I remember James, now. I was just stocking him on Insta.

(Looking for her phone.)

Jesenia
Damn it, where's my phone.

Danny
You left Juan.

Jesenia
I thought you needed us. I didn't wanna miss anything.

Danny
Juan's out there alone.

Jessica
He's a big boy. Plus, we wanted to check in on Mar.

Marlen
Thanks but I'm fine.

Danny
See! She's ok. Now go out there and talk to Juan before he leaves.

Jesenia
I'll kill him if he leaves.

(Silence)

Jessica
Well that was a bit much.

Jesenia
Anyways, I thought your "crew" was coming?

Danny
They're on their way.

Jesenia
Well...they've been on their way for an hour. (Looking for her phone on her) Damn it, where's my phone?!

Danny
Beauty takes time. Ok, ya'll I got this. Hook us up with more shots or something.

Jesenia
Fine.

Jessica
Did you check the couch?

Jesenia
The couuuuccchhhhhh!!!

(Jesenia and Jessica exit.)

Danny
Hey, what's wrong? You sound like a conspiracy theorist out there.

Marlen
(Gasp) Nooooo!
Oh, my god. I don't know. I can't shake this groggy feeling. Have you ever taken Nyquil and you feel like you just had an out of body experience?
You know...that feeling?!

Danny
Kinda.

Marlen
Well it feels like I'm dreaming but not dreaming. I've been watching way too much Chicago Med. Damn, those show runners.

Danny
You said it; it's a show.

Marlen
Ohmygod! I don't know what's wrong with me. I need to sleep it off.

Danny
Do you need something to help you relax?

Marlen
Like what?

Danny
A little "cookies and cream"?

Marlen
The ice cream?

Danny
No. "Cookies and Cream" (Mimes smoking a joint)

Marlen
Oh God, No! Are you forcing drugs on me right now?

Danny
Did you just say, force?

Marlen
I'm freaking out right now/

Danny
-I know/ I'm trying to help.

Marlen
/and you're suggesting drugs?

Danny
-Mar

Marlen
and I'm now hosting a party and/

Danny
/Mar-

Marlen
Juan is here and I definitely don't sound cute at all/

Danny
/Marlen!!!

Marlen
/even though I look the best I have looked in a whole year.

(Danny shakes the shit out of Marlen.)

Danny
¡Para ya!

Marlen
Oooowwww!!! What the hell!

Danny
Holy shit, you were shook.

Marlen
DANNY!

Danny
I'm sorry! You would have done the same for me. Look at you; you are Joan Crawfording the fuck out. Listen to me. I'm here with you. Take a deep breath in! Ok. Breathe! Just fill your lungs with air and breath slowly.

(Marlen breathes then lets out a huge coughs)

Danny
Nice, those lungs are working hard.

Marlen
What?!

Danny
Ok! Now, hon, we can tell everyone to go home. Ok! We can order some ramen, curl up on the couch and watch Bridgerton and make fun of it together or re-watch episode 6 of the first season.
I mean, goddamn!

Marlen
That was the only good episode.

Danny
Am I right?! But really, where the hell are the Latines?

Marlen
Damn, those show runners.

(They laugh)

Danny
Mar, are you ok?

Marlen
I'm ok.

Danny
You sure? You know we got you.

Marlen

Yes! I know.

Danny

Good! Now go out there and fake embarrass flirt with him.

Marlen

What?

Danny

Fake embarrass flirt.

Marlen

But that negates the other.

Danny

Just fake giggle, touch his arm then look away. Fake embarrass flirt!

(Danny pushes Marlen out the bedroom and into the living room.)

Marlen

Hey!!!

Jesenia

My phone was in the couch, ya'll-

Juan

-Russian Doll!

Marlen

What?!

Juan

The show. It's Russian Doll.

We looked up "red curly haired actress on Netflix" and she came up.
Russian Doll!

Marlen

Cool!

Danny

Ok, is it time for shots?

Jessica

Yes!!!

Jesenia
Don't forget the salt.

(Juan receives a text)

Juan
Oh, hold up. James is down stairs. I'm gonna let him in, ok. Don't go anywhere.

Marlen
I can't! Cuz, I live here.

Juan
(A small laugh)
Right!
(Juan exits)

Marlen
Oh, good god! I'm so bad at this.

Danny
Here...let's have a little tequila and loosen up a bit.

Jesenia
What happened? You all were all into each other several months ago.

Marlen
I know. I-I just-
-it was just moving too fast.

Jessica
Didn't you meet his parents or something?

Danny
No, she didn't show up remember.

Jessica
Oh, right.

Marlen
Oh god!

Danny
Things change and it's ok. If you didn't want to rush it then you did what you had to do, Amiga. You can start all over tonight. Blank slate!

Jessica
Then why did you invite him?

Marlen
-Because I regret it! I want to make it better.

(Danny raises a shot of tequila in the air)

Danny
To “making it better”. Salut!

Everyone
Salut!

(The faint beeping sounds begins to emerge)

Marlen
(Beat) There it is again! You hear it?

(They listen)

Jessica
Let's put some music on.

Jesenia
I got you.

(Jesenia flips through her phone.)

Danny
I love you, familia.

Jessica
I love you too.

Danny
Thanks for keeping me in check.

(“The Cupid Shuffle” plays out.)

Danny
AHHHHHHH!!! This song.

Jesenia
I know, right!

Danny
That's songs been stuck in my head like on loop.

Jesenia
Mine too.

(They start to dance. They sing the words and celebrate like it was their last.)

Together
"Down, down, do your dance, do your dance"
"Down, down, do your dance, do your dance"
"Down, down, do your dance, do your dance"
"Down, down, do your dance, do your dance"

Danny
Wait! Do you hear that?

Jessica
What?!

Danny
Lower the volume!

(Jesenia lowers the music.)

Marlen
You hear it to?!

(We hear a the distant sounds of music and chanting. Danny opens the door. The music is heard down the hallway.)

O.S
Slay! Slay! Slay! Slay!!!

Jesenia
I hear it too.

Danny
Ohmygod! They're here! Ahhhh...I'm coming

(Jesenia, Jessica and Danny out the door. The cacophony of music and chanting decrescendos.)

Marlen
Wait! I need my phone.

(Juan appears at the front door.)

Marlen

Hey!

Juan

Hey! Sorry, I went down to get James and then there were others who snuck into the lobby and said they were with Danny. Then they started chanting for Danny to “come out and slay” so now there’s a party in the lobby.

Marlen

And nobody slays better than Danny.

Juan

I like him. Or is it them? They told me but I kinda forgot.

Marlen

No, you’re right. It’s both.

Juan

Right!

(Juan goes towards to bottle of tequila.)

Juan

So, you had your dose?

Marlen

A dose?

(Juan points to the poured shots)

Juan

Ya! A dose of Patron.

Marlen

A little. You wanna “dose”?

Juan

Just as long as you join me.

(Marlen pours two shots. They clink shot glasses)

Marlen

Salut!

Juan

Salut!

(They drink. We hear muffled singing out on the streets.)

Juan

Sounds like they moved the party outside.

Marlen

It seems like it.

Juan

You wanna join them?

Marlen
(A shrug)

In a few.

Marlen
Hey, I've been meaning-

Juan
I miss you.

Marlen
You do?

Juan
Ya!

Marlen
I'm sorry I ghosted you.

Juan
I was my fault.

Marlen
Then I ghosted your family.

Juan
(Light)
Try explaining that word to your family.

Marlen
Oh god!!!

(Danny peeks their head in the apartment.)

Danny
LOVES!!! We are moving this party to the Vapor Room. We got the
hook up to get in VIP.
Shit! I left you with all of this mess. We'll help.

(Danny goes to the window and tries to open it.)

Danny
Jess-

Juan
IT's ok. I got her.

Danny
You hear that, Mar? He's got you.

Marlen
Yup, I heard him.

Danny
Just checking!
So, you coming?

Marlen
Ya, we'll be coming soon.

Danny
(Laughs)
Mmmhmm...Episode 6!

(Danny exits)

Danny
(O.S)
LOVVEEE YOUUUUU!!!!

Juan
Episode 6?

Marlen
Danny likes to speak in episodes sometimes. It's a thing!

Juan
Oh, gotchu!
After we clean, we can walk together.

Marlen
I'd like that.

(Juan grabs a trash bag and start tossing empty bottles into the trash.)

Juan

Hey! Wanna listen to some music while we clean?

Marlen

Sure. You know, my brother and I use to play this game when we were kids, where we would time ourselves using music. So, we would play a song and we would have to finish a task before the song ended.

Juan

Like what kind of songs?

Marlen

Ya know, like Britney Spears or ummmm...like "Boom, Boom Pow".

Juan

"Boom, Boom, Pow...Gotta get that."
"Gotta get that".

Marlen

Ugh! My brother would play that song over and over.

Juan

...Samuel, right?

Marlen

Ya, good memory. (Beat) I miss him.

Juan

I'm sure he misses you. Sooooo...should we?

Marlen

Should we, what?!

Juan

Time ourselves?

Marlen

You know I have a lot of practice.

(Juan flips through his phone.)

Juan

Ok, so what if I win?

Marlen
Well...the winner...buys the first round of drinks at the Vapor Room.

Juan
Okay!

Marlen
Okay, then!

(Juan turns on music)

Juan
Ready. Set. Go!

Marlen
(Laughing)
Wait! I wasn't ready yet.

Juan
Puez'!

(Marlen begins picking up the trash. Juan grabs Marlen by the waist and playfully blocks her from reaching empty bottles.)

Marlen
That's cheating!

Juan
I am the youngest of five.

Marlen
(Laughing)
Makes total sense.

(Juan tries to shoot a chip bag into the trash and misses.)

Marlen
Weak!

Juan
I was nervous. I can shoot better when nobody's watching.

Marlen
That's not the purpose of the game.

(Marlen tries to shoot bottle caps into the trash and lands it.)

Marlen
Whooooo!!! Nothing but net!

Juan
Well I got served!

Marlen
(Doing a C-Walk)
Ya! Ya! Ya, you did! And what? And what?!

Juan
OOHHHHHH...she just did a C-walk?! Yes, she did!

Marlen
I'm putting you in check.

Juan
Well...it's about time.

(A long heated silence. The tension is palpable. We don't know whether they are about to rip each other apart or wrestle each other. The sound of a heartbeat re-mixes with the rhythm of the music. They go to each other with a ravenously kiss. It's messy. They bump into the wall and kiss.)

Juan
Owww!

Marlen
What's that was too hard?

Juan
No, I liked it.

(They toss all of the items on the coffee table and kiss. Marlen lays down on the coffee table.)

Marlen
Nope.

Juan
Ok!

(They lay on the ground. It's uncomfortable but they kiss.)

Juan
The movies make it look more comfortable.

Marlen
Ya, not working for me, either.

(Marlen takes Juan over to the couch. Marlen tosses Juan into it. Juan takes his phone out of his back pocket and turns off the music.)

Juan
Really...quick... (Sets his phone down.)

(Looking at her.) You are so beautiful.

Marlen
Shhhhhhhhh....

Juan
Got it!

(Marlen playfully jumps on him and accidentally turns on the television. The paused Chicago Med scene is projected on the wall.)

Juan
Ohhhh...you're television...

Marlen
Shhhhhh...

(Marlen kisses Juan sweetly. Marlen takes off an article of clothing. Juan repositions himself on top of Marlen. The television unpauses. Chicago Med continues to tell a story.)

Physical Therapist
Hey, honey its Beth. We're going to do our stretches today ok.

(Juan looks towards the television.)

Juan
Wait. I think we're leaning on the remote.

Marlen
It's ok!

Juan
Is this the episode you were talking about?

(Marlen stares at him.)

Juan
I'll stop now.

Physical Therapist
Can you squeeze my hand?

(Juan kisses her neck.)

Physical Therapist
That's ok. We're going to rotate those wrists. Ok!

(While kissing Marlen slowly raises her arm up and down then around and around. Marlen and Juan stop kissing and looks up at her wrist. They stop kissing)

Juan
Did I hurt you?

Marlen
No.

Juan
Ohhhh...

(They both look up at her wrist)

Marlen
Charlie horse.

Physical Therapist
Let's work that out. There you go.

(Marlen shakes it off then continue kissing. The sound of a heartbeat and the rhythm of the monitor and the episode continue to create a dancing beat. Juan pulls her wrist close to his lips and kisses it.)

Juan
Nice job!

Marlen
(Giggling)
Thanks?!

Physical Therapist
Nice job!

Marlen

Ummm...

(Juan kisses Marlen around her shoulders and arms. She casually begins to watch the show.)

Physical Therapist

Now, let's move towards those legs, eh.

Marlen

I think we should maybe turn-

Juan

It's ok.

(Juan moves towards Marlen's legs.)

Physical Therapist

There we go.

Marlen

Where you going?

Juan

I'm being sensual.

Physical Therapist/Juan

Let's get to those toes.

Marlen

Wait. My feet are very ticklish.

What?! Is this your thing?

Physical Therapist/Juan

I know you can do it. Try it.

Marlen

Try what?

Physical Therapist/Juan

Everyday you get better and better.

Marlen

Huh?!

(The Juan/Physical Therapist lifts her leg up into the air.)

Juan/Physical Therapist
Nice job!

Marlen
(Laughing)
You just said that?!

Juan/Physical Therapist
Pretty soon you'll be standing on your own.

(The Juan (as Physical Therapist) begins to rotate her leg up and down from the knee.)

Marlen
On my own? What are you talking about?

(Danny (as Registered Nurse) walks into the apartment fully dressed in PPE. Marlen's apartment has fully transformed into the hospital room from the television show with monitor beeping sounds.

Registered Nurse
Hey, honey. We're back.

Marlen
Danny! Oh my god, Danny. I'm so glad you're here.

Registered Nurse
It's ok. We got you, hon.

Marlen
Listen to me. I don't know what's happening.

Registered Nurse
How's she doing?

Physical Therapist
She's doing great. Aren't you, hon?

Marlen
(Realizing)
Why are you dressed like that?

Registered Nurse
That's good. Good! Good!

(Marlen stands up, lucid but confused. Registered Nurse walks past her towards Physical Therapist who continues with physical therapy. Marlen watches the action: Registered Nurse and Physical Therapist attending to her body.)

Registered Nurse
(To patient)

Big day today, huh?

Physical Therapist

She's almost ready.

Registered Nurse

The page went out so they should be here soon. I just need to check those vitals.

(Registered Nurse attends to monitors and charting her information. Marlen watches.)

Registered Nurse

No matter how many times we do this...I get all-

Physical Therapist

Nobody said it was going to be easy.

Registered Nurse

That the type of COVID care you get here at Mercy Hospital.

(Anesthesia Physician and Physician Specialist walk in dressed in PPE.)

Marlen

COVID?!

Anesthesia Physician

We're all here. Are we ready?

Marlen

Ready for what?

Physician Specialist

I'm ready whenever you are.

Marlen

What are you getting ready for?

Registered Nurse
Everyone in position?

Marlen
Why won't you answer me?

Physical Therapist
Ready!

Registered Nurse
On the count of three.

Marlen
What happens at three?

Registered Nurse
One!

Marlen
What happens at three?

Registered Nurse
Two!

Marlen
WHAT HAPPENS AT THREE!

Marlen
Three!

(A pale flash. A hard silence. A horrendous realization frozen in time. She stares out into the audience sedated and somewhat paralyzed. She has no control over her body. We hear a cacophony of sounds with faint memories of Marlen's story pre-Covid projected on the screen, like a life flashing before our eyes all ending with the present time. A harrowing silence. The melodic ringing of FaceTime on Marlen's phone breaks the silence. She answers.)

Marlen
Mami! Mami, I-I-yes, it's me. Ma, can you come and get me, please? I need you here. I miss you. I know you just left but I-I want to go back home with you. It could be like old times. We could play a game or...or..watch a movies. We can watch something funny. I don't care what...just something. I'll even watch *Grease* with you and you can sing all the songs and I promise not to roll my eyes. I'll even sing with you. Just...just...come back. Ok?! Thanks. Ma...is Papi there?

Papi! Papi, I'm sorry I made you leave. Listen...remember when you taught me how to ride a bike. And you took me to a park with the big hill and you held on to me until you didn't and then I rode down the hill until I freaked out and then I crashed into a trashcan and fell off. I was mad at you for months. (She laughs then cries)

I'm sorry I did that. I'm sorry I stopped talking to you.

(Beat)

Ok! Ok...I'll see you soon. I love you, Daddy. Ok! Bye.

(She hangs up. The lights return to its original form.)

Amplified Voice (VO)
Code Blue. Code Blue East 1. Code Blue

(Everyone rush out of the room leaving Marlen alone.)

Marlen
Wait?! Where are you going? Hello?!

(The lights project a soft breath sound. Juan reappears as himself. A soft smile.)

Marlen
Are you real?

Juan
I'm real.

(Silence.)

Marlen
Am I dreaming?

Juan
I'm here with you!

Marlen
Where?

Juan
Dance with me!

Marlen
There's no music.

(Silence)

Marlen
Juan?

Juan
"Stars shining right above you."

(Juan stretches his hand out to Marlen. Marlen can't move.)

Juan
"Night breezes seem to whisper I love you.

(Juan goes to her. They sway together.)

Juan
Birds singing in the sycamore tree
Dream a little dream of me."

(A warm light engulfs them both. Marlen looks out onto the audience.)

Marlen
Who are they?

Juan
I don't know. They're here for you.

Marlen
All of them?!

Juan
Yes!

Marlen
They're beautiful.

Juan
Like you.

(A beaming smile.)

Marlen
Thank you.

(Juan watches her as she walks towards the audience with awe.)

Juan
“Dream a little dream of me.
Dream a little dream of me.”

(Juan exits.)

Marlen
Dream-a little dream-of-me.”

(Marlen exits into the audience. Blackout.)

END OF PLAY