

FADE IN

EXT-HELEN KELLER HIGH SCHOOL QUAD-DAY

We hear HIP-HOP BEATS BLASTING.

DIEGO OLIVARES, an atypical Latino teen about the age of 16, rolls his POWER WHEELCHAIR up to the crowd of students gathered in a circle at lunch.

The students from Keller High are mostly anglos. There are some ethnic students sprinkled around the circle though. But they are a rarity.

Diego tries to look through the gaps between the students. He bends his neck left and then right, but can't see what is going on.

HIP-HOP BEATS continue.

He drives to the other side of the circle of students where it's less clogged. He finds a big enough gap. He looks in.

We see a student that has a RED JUMPSUIT move like a robot.

Then we see another student wearing a BLACK JUMPSUIT, on a MATTED floor, twirling their legs like a windmill.

Then we see a blonde girl wearing a PURPLE JUMPSUIT hop into the frame. She hops around some more. Swings her arms. She dives for the floor.

With her palms hoisting her butt, she begins to flare and wail her legs around.

Diego's eyes grow huge and his brows raise.

INT. HELEN KELLER HIGH, HALLS-DAY

We HEAR a school bell. Students squeeze by Diego's wheelchair in the rush to get to class in time.

A student dares to dart in front of him. Diego's wheelchair CASTOR nips a student in his right shoe. He runs off into his classroom without giving an apology.

Diego passes A POSTER on the wall. He pays no attention to it. But then backs up and stops. He rolls up to it to get a better look.

The poster reads: Dance Club membership is now open! All

ethnicities and ages and abilities welcomed. In the gym tomorrow. See you there!

Diego backs up from the poster. His eyes are wide and his mouth is a slit. A student with a backpack zooms behind him. We HEAR the bell ring again.

DIEGO

(v.o.)

I better hurry up to class. I'm late.

EXT. STUCCO DUPLEX, DIEGOS HOUSE-NIGHT.

A flyover shows a small Stucco duplex squished between apartments and other stucco duplexes. Dirt lots. Car shells.

INT.DIEGO'S DINING ROOM-NIGHT

The dining room is small. Cozy. Its walls are decorated with FAMILY PHOTOS and its wood floors are embraced by RED RUGS.

The family dog TUCO sits licking his lips, sniffing the air, by ABUELO ROGELIO.

Abuelo Rogelio is a stout Mexican about the age of 70. He's the stern, silent type.

Diego stops his wheelchair near his Abuelo sitting on a CHAIR by the kitchen TABLE.

DIEGO

Hola grandpa.

Diego gives his Abuelo a hug. He pets Tuco. Diego rolls around the table and takes a spot in front of them.

Diego places his elbows on the table and rubs his hands together with anxiety. He lifts his chin in the air and flares his nostrils like Tuco.

DIEGO

It smells good mom.

Sonia Olivares, around 50, walks up next to Diego PLATE in hand. Her HOUSEKEEPING uniform was stained with red enchilada sauce. She places the plate of steamy enchiladas with YELLOW CHEESE and a side of YELLOW RICE on the table in front of him.

SONIA

What have I told you mi'jo?

Sonia cleans her hands on her uniform and places them on her hips. All mad like.

DIEGO

Sorry, mom. I forgot.

Diego moves his arms away from the top of the table and places them on his wheelchair's armrests.

Sonia goes and gets hers and Abuelo's plate. She places Abuelo's plate in front of him. Steam rises from it. She places her PLATE of FOOD in front of her favorite chair. She takes a seat.

SONIA

Finally.

(sighs)

Work was so hard today. Ay Dios Mio. We had to clean all of the first floors. And then the hotel manager told us to clean the second floor. He is crazy!

She shakes her head. Then begins to dig into her enchiladas.

SONIA

(con)

I'm telling you. I can never get a break. So how was your day at school today?

Diego shrugs his shoulders.

DIEGO

It was okay, I guess.

Diego combs the rice on his plate. Sonia notices his play with his food.

SONIA

What's wrong, mi'jo? Are your enchiladas too spicy?

Sonia stares intently at Diego.

DIEGO

No. They're good. Just how I like them. With extra sauce.

Sonia puts her fork down next to her plate.

SONIA
Then what's wrong?

DIEGO
I saw a dance performance today. At school. It was so cool mom.

Diego's face lights up.

DIEGO
(con)
I saw a poster for the Dance club at school too. They are accepting new members. I want to join them. I want to dance like how Abuelo used to.

Diego looks at a black and white picture on the wall of his grandpa dressed like a CHARRO.

DIEGO
(con)
But I know I can't dance.

Diego puts his head down.

SONIA
What do you mean you can't dance? You can do anything you want to do.

Sonia gets up. She pulls out her SMARTPHONE and searches for something.

We HEAR a CUMBIA blur out from her smartphone. She begins to sway her hips. She walks up to Diego, dancing the whole way. She offers her hand to him.

Diego flushes red.

DIEGO
What are you doing mom? Stop it. You're embarrassing yourself.

SONIA
Embarrassing who? Come on. Let us dance.

Sonia moves closer to Diego's wheelchair and reaches for his hand. She smiles at him, urging him to take it.

He reaches for her hand and pushes the JOYSTICK on his wheelchair in reverse mode.

Sonia grabs both of Diego's hands and intertwines their fingers together.

She starts moving their arms to the beat. Diego's shoulders shimmy. She then raises Diego's right arm and spins herself around his wheelchair.

Grandpa Rogelio observes them. He bobs his head with the beat. A small smile appears on his face.

Diego has a huge smile on his face.

SONIA

(con)

That's it! You got it. You see? Who said you couldn't dance?

INT.KELLER HIGH GYM-DAY

The next day Diego rolls into the gym. He sees a FOLD-UP TABLE with CLEAR PLASTIC CUPS with a GREEN highlighter fluid in them. A bunch of untouched CHOCOLATE CUPCAKES to the side of the cups. Sad WHITE NAPKINS and PAPER PLATES accompany them.

The gym is dead. On the floor of the gym are three students. The Dance Club.

Two girls sit with their legs extended in front of them. The only dude is on his belly.

They see Diego coming and whispering amongst each other.

DIEGO

Hi. Is this where the dance club meeting is?

Beverly Hill, a confident blonde girl the age of 16, stands up and goes up to Diego. She's cheery and wears a purple jumpsuit.

BEVERLY

Yeah. This is the place. Are you looking for someone?

DIEGO

No. No one in particular. I want to see if I can join the dance club.

Diego raises his right hand above his shoulder and sticks out his thumb behind him towards the hall.

DIEGO

(con)

I saw the flier in the hall.

The remaining dance club members exchange incredulous glances with each other.

Beverly sticks out her hand to Diego.

BEVERLY

Hi. I'm Beverly. Nice to meet you.

She turns around and waves over the rest of the dance club. They are slow to get up. Apprehensive. They eye Diego up and down.

BEVERLY

(con)

It's always exciting around here when we get new club members!

INT. KELLER HIGH LIBRARY-DAY

The next day the dance club meets in the Library. They are seated by a LARGE TABLE that is hidden behind endless shelves and shelves of OLD BIG BROWN BOOKS.

Students pass by folders in the nooks of their forearms.

Diego parks at the end of the table.

BEVERLY

So does anybody have any ideas for our next performance? The one at halftime of the football game?

Diego pauses for a moment. His eyes grow large. He swallows his spit.

He imagines the packed stands at the football game. People point at him. Some laugh at him. Kids jump up and down on the stands. He sees his exit to his left periscope.

He shakes it off.

Beverly looks around the table at the club members. They're quiet.

Taylor, an anglo student of about the age of 16, stares at Diego.

He wears a black jumpsuit.

TAILOR

How are we going to do anything with
him around?

Tailor crosses his arms. Scrunches his eyebrows.

STELA

Yea. What are we going to be able to
do now?

Stela is an African American girl around the age of 15. She
has long dreaded locks of hair and wears a red jumpsuit.

Diego looks down at his wheelchair.

BEVERLY

We'll figure something out. Something
that we can *all* do.

Tailor and Stela look at each other and twist their lips.
Then look at Diego.

TAILOR & STELA

(together)

I don't know.

DIEGO

It's ok. You don't have to worry about
it. I'll just go.

Diego backs up and starts for the elevators.

Beverly looks at Taylor and Stela like she wants to beat them
up.

BEVERLY

You guys!

Beverly gets up and runs to Diego.

Beverly catches up to Diego waiting for the elevator.

BEVERLY

(con)

Hey, hold up.

Diego turns around to face Beverly.

DIEGO

It's ok. I don't know what I was thinking. Joining the dance club. It was dumb.

BEVERLY

They don't have any experience with someone in a wheelchair. You have to give them time. It's new to them like it is to you. They'll come around.

A DING is heard and the elevator door opens.

DIEGO

Maybe.

BEVERLY

I have an uncle that's in a wheelchair. He came back like that from the war. He's the best basketball player I know. Come on. Let's go back to the table.

Beverly places her hand on his shoulder. Diego gives a half-smile and nods his head up and down.

DIEGO

Okay.

Beverly and Diego go back to the table.

TAYLOR

Hey Diego, we didn't mean anything bad by what we said.

STELA

Yeah.

DIEGO

It's ok. You have to get used to me being around. Like I have to get used to being around you guys.

Diego and Beverly exchange smiles.

BEVERLY

Where was I? Does anybody have any ideas?

DIEGO

I have something in mind. But I don't

know how you guys will feel about it.

BEVERLY

Let's hear it.

EXT.KELLER HIGH FOOTBALL FIELD-NIGHT

The stands are packed with students and parents. Children run around unattended.

Some cheer others take a bite of their HOTDOG. Parents wave at their kids in shoulder pads on the field. There's a long line at the concession stand.

Diego stares at the scoreboard. It's the two-minute warning.

The Dance club is under the stands getting prepped.

Beverly goes up to a wide-eyed Diego. He's staring at the field.

The crowd bounces up and down in the stands. POPCORN and CHIPS rain down on him from up above.

BEVERLY

Are you okay?

Diego turns his wheelchair around to look at her.

DIEGO

I'm nervous.

BEVERLY

It's ok to be nervous. We were all nervous the first time we danced in front of a crowd. You'll be fine.

The ref's whistle is HEAR. The football players retire to their locker rooms. The crowd settles down. Except for the concession stand. The line is longer.

The lights of the stadium dim.

The crowd goes QUIET. Just a crying baby or two is heard.

ANNOUNCER

(os)

And now ladies and gentlemen, please direct your attention to mid-field. Keller High proudly presents the dance club! A round of applause for them.

We hear the speakers CRACKLE On followed by light APPLAUSE.

We hear an old Ranchero Song from the 50's.

A spotlight CLICKS on. It shines on the right side of the 50-yard line. About yard 45.

In the spotlight, there's a standing horse. Not a real horse. But Stela is in a costume. She's running in place. Doing the running man.

Another spotlight is turned on. This one is to the left of the 50. Again, around the 45-yard line.

It's a bucking bull. More specifically, Taylor is on all fours bucking like a bull. Then he goes into spinning sweeps.

Then another spotlight shines just under midfield. It's Beverly.

She wears a FUZZY YELLOW GOAT OUTFIT. She prances around with her hands lifted to her mid-section and bent at the wrists.

We hear a low rumble of laughter.

The last spotlight turns on. It shines on Diego. He's on the 50-yard line dressed as a charro. Like Abuelo was dressed in the picture on his salas' wall.

He's stuck. He can't move. Then he sees his mom and Abuelo in the stands. He swallows his saliva. His Abuelo stands up and starts to whirl his right arm in the air.

Diego begins to spin a ROPE around and around like a charro above his head. He switches hands without losing a beat.

The crowd is into it. They CLAP to the tamborasos of the ranchero song.

Beverly hops in front of Diego. She does the breakdance move six-step.

He lassos her. Then Taylor bucks his way to Beverly. Diego lassos him. Then Stela moonwalks to where the others are.

Diego lassos them together. He pulls on the rope and they fall to the floor like dominoes.

Diego rolls up to his ganado and raises his right hand in victory.

The crowd goes crazy. They cheer and cheer and stomp and stomp.

Diego sees his mom and Abuelo. Sonia has her hands as if she prays. Abuelo Rogelio has a huge smile on his face.