

The Untaming

written by

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## CHARACTERS

**BIANCA PEREZ:** 31 years old, Mexican-American, campaigning for District 15 State Representative of Oregon. Wherever she goes, Bianca walks tall, often sporting a crisp blue pantsuit. She is a confident, smiling woman of color that enthralls whoever sees her. She commands any room she walks in with a poise born from years in professional spheres. What began as a need to check herself so as not to appear angry in the eyes of white men and women that stuffed her classes and workplaces culminated in the confidence of her abilities, no matter the audience. She is almost always the smartest and most capable person in a given room.

**SANDRINE RIVERA:** 57 years old, Mexican-American mother to Bianca. Sandrine hobbles behind Bianca, the mother who could have been like her daughter had her bad knee not permanently stooped her over. She is quick to order her daughter into obedience, a habit from her years raising her only daughter as a single mother. Bianca is her everything, and she treats her as both the prize of her life and the only safe haven she has should the floor come out beneath her, paving the way for her daughter's success with half the bricks made of hope and the other half of desperation.

**MARIANA PEREZ:** 32 years old, African-American, campaign manager for "Bianca Williams for District 15." Mariana uses the weight of both the financial and cultural wellbeing of herself and her family as inertia to power her forward. Having lived in a country inimical to her heritage, she's learned to survive on one part spite and two parts celebration of little victories. Having been friends with Bianca since high school, Mariana has been able to formulate a winning campaign strategy to enact real change in their community.

**KATHERINA JENSEN:** 25 years old, White, long-time friend of Bianca and small business owner. She walks, dresses, and interacts with almost everyone as if her existence is an apology for itself, stepping as lightly as possible in clothes that cover nearly every inch of skin. Her walls founded on anxiety open up only when alone with Bianca or Mariana, and thicken especially when talking to men. If the wind blustered enough on a given day, it might pick her up entirely and drop her in Tacoma.

**JACKSON GREEN:** 35 years old, White, long-term partner of Bianca. A hair taller than his girlfriend Bianca, his rolled up sleeves on his button up shirt reveal the hands eager to get into the dirty work, a man who could command a room if Bianca wasn't one step in front of him commanding attention. His practicality borders into condoning the status quo at times, which he has been grateful that Bianca and others have pointed out to him. Willing to change, but not thrilled about having been wrong in the first place.

**BENJIRO SUGIYAMA:** 28 years old, Asian-American, computer programmer and fiancé to Mariana. The youngest of the "Bianca Williams for District 15" crew, his broad shoulders make him look shorter than he is (though he is shorter than everyone else). His countenance almost never darkens, able to wiggle out the humor out of even the murkiest of situations. Realism is his motto: only that which makes sense will win out. Risks are for gamblers, and Ben has never been a gambler.

**PETER JENSEN:** 35 years old, White, unemployed husband of Kat.

He fills any chair he sits in and when he rests one arm on his dining room table he acts like it's nothing more than an arm rest, and at his size it could act solely as such. He's never been in a situation he couldn't talk his way out of or into depending on what he wanted, which has made him accustomed to getting exactly what he wants from whomever he wants. In his experience, there is no such thing as a strong person because there is no one stronger than him, in body, mind, or willpower. He only concedes when playing "the long game."

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE - BIANCA PEREZ CAMPAIGN OFFICE - EVENING

*MARIANA WILLIAMS shuffles through some papers on her desk stage right. She brushes the wrinkles out of her jacket and turns to a large whiteboard with a long list titled "How to Win the Margins." Above it, a countdown board hangs over the office: "7 Days Until Primary Voting." An interview between Bianca and a REPORTER is heard over the speakers.*

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)

Representative Lohman has served Hillsboro for almost ten years now. He has an impressive resume serving the Latino community and has consistently run on a campaign for better schools. Why should voters consider you, a newcomer straight from your degree at Columbia, rather than a tried-and-true incumbent?

BIANCA (V.O.)

During this primary, voters get to decide who they want to represent them. For District 15 Democrats, that choice has been made for them since Representative Lohman has run unopposed almost every election cycle. This year, voters actually get to decide what their representative looks like, and it's time District 15's representative looks like District 15.

*Enter BIANCA PEREZ and SANDRINE RIVERA stage left from a door marked "Office of Bianca Perez."*

MARIANA

Bianca, you don't even need a campaign manager. I don't know why I'm here.

BIANCA

What do you mean?

MARIANA

With interviews like that, you're not going to need campaign events. "It's time District 15's representative looks like District 15." Killer line.

SANDRINE

She's only saying what I've been telling her the past thirty years of her life.

BIANCA

Are you gonna turn me in for plagiarism, mom?

SANDRINE

The best artists steal, mijita. Do what you want with it once you've stolen it, but if you hear something you like, it's yours now.

*Enter JACKSON GREEN stage left.*

JACKSON

The lady from The Oregonian says she'll have the interview in my email in two days, and once I give the okay she'll have it to the press the day after.

BIANCA

Will that be enough time for swing voters to read it and decide?

MARIANA

That should be perfect. It'll come out Friday and that will give voters the weekend to read it through and realize you're the best candidate. Representative Lohman won't have enough time to respond at that point. That should put us in spitting distance of beating him.

BIANCA

We might actually make this work, then.

JACKSON

Actually? What do you mean by actually? We've had this in the bag from the start! This solidifies your lead.

SANDRINE

Jackson, help me sit down. He's right, Bianca. You've got a real shot at this.

BIANCA

Thanks, mom. We do have to look at the numbers, though. Jackson's head needs to find its way out of the clouds a little more often.

JACKSON

You sure you wouldn't rather join me in heaven?

BIANCA

I'd rather you join me at the state capitol.

MARIANA

Get a room, you two. There's too much romance in the air. I can hardly breathe without coughing up some pheromones.

BIANCA

So says the soon-to-be-wed campaign manager. You're the work-and-pleasure juggler if there ever was one.

MARIANA

I don't have to juggle because I set one ball down before I pick up another. Do you see Ben anywhere around here?

*Enter BEN SUGIYAMA stage right. He squeezes through the front door, which BEEPS as it opens, to the campaign office. He signals to a copy of THE HILLSBORO TRIBUNE in his hand.*

BEN

Hey, guys. Have you seen the Hillsboro Tribune today?

BIANCA

(giving Mariana eyes)

No, we haven't, Ben. Thank you so much for coming to the campaign office to see your lovely, lovely fiancée and bringing us this amazing news.

BEN

(confused)

Right. Yeah. So, did you read it yet?

MARIANA

I skimmed it this morning. Lots of news to cover, so little time, you know how it goes. Thank you for picking it up, Ben. I'll look it over.

BEN

Okay, first—

*Ben kisses Mariana*

BEN (CONT'D)

—and second, Representative Lohman has an op-ed on page eight. I didn't know if you'd seen it yet.

*Bianca and Mariana open the newspaper up together, scanning the article.*

BEN (CONT'D)

It's not much, but it's probably good to know where his head is right now. You guys are only three points behind him in the polls.

MARIANA

Two points behind as of this morning.

BEN

Congrats.

*Bianca wrings her hands and paces the room.*

JACKSON

What's it say?

BIANCA

Nothing.

JACKSON

We can handle it. What's it say?

BIANCA

It doesn't say anything.

JACKSON

I have just as much a right to know as you do.

SANDRINE

Answer him, Bianca. What did Lohman say? We all want to hear.

MARIANA

(removing her ENGAGEMENT RING  
and fiddling with it)

She's right. It's nothing. It's a nothing article.

BIANCA

Homelessness, community development, and Hillsboro's responsibility to the climate crisis. He's reestablishing his platform. It's nothing we haven't heard him say a thousand times. It's nothing.

JACKSON

It doesn't look like it's nothing to you.

SANDRINE

You can tell by the way she's holding her hands.

BIANCA

(to Mariana, dropping her  
hands)

Did we submit my op-ed to the Hillsboro Tribune?

MARIANA

It came out yesterday.

BIANCA

Why didn't I read it? I should've read it to make sure it said what I wanted it to say.

JACKSON

(taking the newspaper from  
Mariana)

You wrote it yourself. I proofread it. There wasn't anything wrong with it. Mariana looked it over, too.

BIANCA

Did he respond to anything I said?

MARIANA

I didn't see any quotes on my first read.

*Mariana mindlessly sets her engagement ring on her desk.*

Let me check again.

BIANCA

He probably wouldn't quote me directly. He's a seasoned politician. He'd be more subtle. See if he makes any backhanded remarks.

SANDRINE

Mijita, why are you so worried? If it's nothing, it's nothing. Let the man lose on his own terms.

JACKSON

It's the Hillsboro Tribune. Hardly anyone's going to see it. And those who are have already read yours. I don't think it's going to matter.

MARIANA

And your Oregonian interview is much higher caliber.

BIANCA

I don't need all of Oregon to vote for me. Just Hillsboro. We might've cast our net a little too wide.

SANDRINE

People in Hillsboro read the Oregonian, too. Everything you said in there was about Hillsboro, not the whole state. You'd have to have your head on backwards to think you didn't have nothing but this city's best interest at heart. The voters who read that interview are going to know exactly where your priorities lie: with them. Not some mega-donor with his vineyard out in Oregon City. It's about the constituents. You know that. And they know you know that.

BIANCA

Okay. I'm waiting for the other shoe to drop, is all.

JACKSON

There's no other shoe.

BIANCA

There's always another shoe that drops. It's how my life runs.

SANDRINE

There's no other shoe.



BIANCA

At OSU they told me last minute I needed two more credits. Columbia almost didn't give me my Master's because of a technicality. Half of the jobs I've applied for have fallen through on the back end and every milestone ends up a mile-and-a-half further down the road. There's always another shoe.

SANDRINE

This isn't OSU and it isn't Columbia. You've got nothing to worry about.

MARIANA

(to Ben)

Why did you show us this?

BEN

The picture they printed with it. It's of all of us.

JACKSON

You showed us an article written by Lohman because it has a picture of us?

BEN

He didn't pick the picture. The Hillsboro Tribune printed it opposite his story but they don't have a picture for him.

MARIANA

What's a picture got to do with anything?

BEN

People vote based on name recognition. Not 100%, but if they recognize your face more than the other guy, then they're more likely to vote for you. I thought the Tribune was making a subtle play for you.

BIANCA

They haven't endorsed any candidate yet.

MARIANA

I think they're waiting until after the primaries this year. Hillsboro has turned more purple lately.

BEN

Officially they haven't said anything. But I think they unofficially just did.

BIANCA

Oh.

SANDRINE

Why didn't you say that before my heart attack, Ben? Madre de Dios! I'm sitting over here sweating like God just walked in and you didn't say anything.

BEN

You guys got really into the campaign stuff. Not really my place.

MARIANA

(taking Ben's hand in her left hand)

Thank you for showing us.

*Ben feels Mariana's hand, then looks around in search of her ring.*

BEN

Mare, you gotta stop playing with your ring.

*Ben finds the ring and slips it on Mariana's hand again.*

I swear I'm going to have to buy six replacements before the wedding even gets here.

MARIANA

Maybe I just like you putting it on my finger again.

BEN

(Mariana's flattery wrestling with Ben's irritability)

Please, just don't lose it.

MARIANA

Okay.

(kisses him)

Enough shop talk. Who's hungry?

BIANCA

Let me read over this article once more. Other shoe's still hanging over me.

SANDRINE

Bring it here. Everyone's gotten to read it except me.

MARIANA

Skip the first paragraph. Lohman's just stroking his own ego there.

SANDRINE

I'll read the whole thing, thank you.

MARIANA

Of course, Ms. Rivera. Boys, can you figure out dinner?

JACKSON

(to Ben as they both pull out their phones)

So, Chinese buffet again?

BEN

Oh, just because I'm Asian?

JACKSON

No. Ben, I didn't mean—

BEN

Just kidding, man. Chinese is my favorite. I love fucking with white people.

JACKSON

Good, I was worried.

BEN

I know. That's the best part. So, Chinese? Or do you not like Asians enough to give us your business?

*Jackson starts to devolve into fear, then snaps his fingers and laughs awkwardly.*

JACKSON

No, yeah, no. Chinese is fine. Unless you're feeling something else.

BEN

Mariana and I have wanted to try this Mexican place in Beaverton. Her brother said it's really authentic.

JACKSON

Actually authentic or American authentic? If it's not better than Bianca's abuela's food, it'll be a bust.

BEN

Oh, yeah. I hadn't thought of that.

JACKSON

Yeah. No matter what, we need to get Bianca's okay on it.

BEN

Yeah.

*Ben and Jackson scroll through their phones in silence.*

So, what are your odds on her winning?

JACKSON

On what?

*Ben motions to Bianca.*

JACKSON (CONT'D)

Oh, 100%. Yeah, she's got this made.

BEN

Right, but, like, what are your actual odds?

JACKSON

100%, Ben.

BEN

I'm only asking for Mariana's sake, you know? She's got a lot riding on this.

JACKSON

So do I. So does Bianca. We all want this to happen. Right?

BEN

Right.

JACKSON

Do you want this to happen?

BEN

That's not what I'm saying. I'm just trying to be a realist here. She's going up against an incumbent. Lohman's won the primary for three straight elections.

JACKSON

Four straight elections.

BEN

No, this is his fourth, right?

JACKSON

This would be his fifth.

BEN

Hmm.

*They scroll in silence.*

JACKSON

What are your odds?

BEN

I just go with the polls. Realistic.

JACKSON

Polls aren't everything.

BEN

They're right enough to matter. What Bianca has done so far is impressive. She has a lot to be proud of throughout this campaign. Even if the vote goes somewhere else, she's establishing herself in this community. I think it's worth celebrating.

JACKSON

Right.

*They scroll more.*  
So, Chinese then?

BEN

How about Mongolian? There's a grill downtown that's not far from a MAXX stop.

JACKSON

Does Ms. Rivera like Mongolian?

BEN

Do you want to ask her or should I?

JACKSON

No, I got it. Can we also keep talks of losing to a minimum for the rest of the week? Momentum is key in the homestretch and pessimism can bog things down.

BEN

It's realism.

*Jackson waits for a reply.*  
I'm hardly here anyway.

JACKSON

Good. Hey, B?

BIANCA

One moment.

BEN

We think we found a place, Ms. Rivera.

SANDRINE

Is it Chinese again? Jackson always picks Chinese.

BEN

Mongolian. The grill and hot pot on SW 2nd.

MARIANA

I've wanted to try that place! Good pick, Ben.

BIANCA

This is a whole lot of nothing. We're fine. I don't know why Lohman didn't take the shot when he could've, but it looks fine.

SANDRINE

It's because he hasn't realized he's supposed to feel threatened by you. If he had as much going on in that head as he lets on, he'd know a contender when he sees one.

MARIANA

I'm with Ms. Rivera. Too many easy wins have made him arrogant. We could tell him we're going to punch him in the face and he still wouldn't duck.

BIANCA

We're not going to do that.

MARIANA

I mean that metaphorically. Not to say that we couldn't do it for real. We won't. But we could.

*The gentlest KNOCK rattles against the campaign office door. Through the glass, KAT JENSEN waves in at the company.*

BIANCA

Kat!

(opening the door, which  
BEEPS, and hugging Kat)

I told you, you don't have to knock when you come over here.

KAT

Sorry, I forgot. I was just passing by and saw you all in here. Hi, everyone.

MARIANA

Hey, Kat. How's the cafe? Sorry, bakery. I keep forgetting what you landed on.

KAT

No worries. It's a bakery.

SANDRINE

I still think you should've gone with the cafe. Kat's Cafe. Has a nice ring to it.

KAT

Peter thought a cafe would be tacky. He was right, of course. Not to say you're wrong, Ms. Rivera.

SANDRINE

You're seeing success. Every now and then you can disregard me and it works out. Just don't let it happen again.

KAT

(amused)

Yes, Ms. Rivera. But it's good, yeah. It's good. We sold out of kolaches this morning.

JACKSON

Are those the little jam-filled scone things? I really liked those.

KAT

Yeah.

(back to Bianca)

It's my grandma's recipe from when she grew up in Czechoslovakia. How's the campaign?

BIANCA

Pretty good.

(indicating the countdown sign)

Coming down to the wire.

KAT

I could never do what you're doing, Bianca. I'd probably faint the first time a camera got pointed at me.

BIANCA

You've got plenty of gumption, Kat. Hell, running a business isn't any less difficult than running a campaign. You gotta care about it, and you've got care in spades.

KAT

Thanks, Bianca. Anyway, I just wanted to say hi to everyone. I've gotta get home.

BIANCA

We were all about to go to dinner. You should come with us.

KAT

That's really sweet you guys, but Peter's making dinner tonight.

BEN

Bring him along.

*Mariana tugs on Ben's arm.*

MARIANA

Text him and see if he wants to come. If he doesn't, then he'll know you're with us. He can trust you with us for one night.

KAT

He gets worried when I'm not home on time.

BIANCA

No one's going to force you to come out to dinner with us. You're not being held hostage and we're not going to force feed you Chinese food.

MARIANA, BEN, AND JACKSON

Mongolian.

BIANCA

Since the campaign started I feel like I've hardly seen you. You have to get up so early for your bakery and I practically live here in the office.

KAT

Yeah. Peter's probably already worried.

SANDRINE

Katherina, if your amor is going to have a fit because you're with friends, that's his problem. But, if it becomes your problem you gotta do what's best for you. And if you don't come tonight, I will have you over for dinner another night. Either way, you win.

*A text PING goes off on Mariana's phone, and she checks it.*

KAT

I'll just text him really quick and see how he's feeling. Maybe he'll want to come.

MARIANA

Shit!

BEN

What's up, Mare?

MARIANA

Shit, shit, shit.

BIANCA

What's wrong?

MARIANA

Lohman's newest ad. One of our interns just texted me the link. It's an attack ad.

SANDRINE

Bianca doesn't have anything to hide. How's he trying to attack her?

BIANCA

Turn up the volume and play it for me.

*Mariana plays the AUDIO from her phone.*

LOHMAN (V.O.)

(plucky music plays)

Bianca Perez is a homegrown Hillsboro native,

(music darkens)

at least that's what she's told you. Where has Ms. Perez been the last few years?



Pursuing her prestigious, "elite" degree on the other side of the country, Bianca Perez lost touch with almost everyone she's ever known. Many of you here went to high school with Ms. Perez. When was the last time you heard from her? Though she claims to be a champion of the LGBTQ+ community, she hardly seems in touch with those of us here in Hillsboro, even in her own relationships. Ms. Perez wasn't here for nearly all of the COVID-19 pandemic. How can you be sure she'll know what you need today?

(music brightens)

I'm Gary Lohman, and throughout my time as your representative, I've stood up in defense of legislation that helps our LGBTQ+ youth. And most importantly, I know what Hillsboro needs now. Because I've been here. I'm Gary Lohman, and I approve this message. Paid for by the Gary Lohman Campaign Fund.

*The group looks at each other.*

BEN

First off, fuck that guy.