

**A WAY IN**

A short film

Written by  
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**EXT.** SOUTH LOS ANGELES - SUNRISE VIEW FROM THE RIVER - 3 seconds  
- Audio: local birds chirping

**INT.** LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN

Audio: The birds are still chirping. Then, the end of a popularized Mexican happy birthday song plays:

“Mira que ya amaneció, ya los pajarillos cantan, la luna ya se metió.”

[Translation: look it is already dawn, the birds are already singing, and the moon has set”]

Actress sings or recorded video/audio plays.

During the singing: We see an eye-level full frame of the time, the clock shows: 6:14AM turns to 6:15AM. It is otherwise quiet. The sun is just creeping in through the blinds and windows. We see 2 lit candles to show the number 57 on a chocolate cupcake near 3 other cupcakes.

A hand-held camera shot shows **ELIANA**, a twenty something, blowing out the candles. There is little expression on her face. We sense this has become an annual ritual and she lets out a small breath from her nose and smirks slightly. We see her smirk leave as quickly as it came. She cuts one cupcake in half and eats one piece.

Audio: A soft jazz instrumental starts to play

We see her move from the dining table to the kitchen, but we stop to see a white board calendar with Spanish writing on it - related to mom's doctor's appointments, other family member's after-school schedule, and dad's birthday (Today). Eliana is gathering items in the background as we focus on the board.

Eliana fills a kettle with water - we see the water entering the kettle in an angled bird's eye view, full frame, listening to the water hit the bottom. We see she places the kettle on a gas stove burner. She lights the burner. 10 second sequence.

Sequence: From over Eliana's right shoulder, we see her ration out raspberries and blueberries in 4 individual glass containers. We see her seal the lid on all 4, from left to right, zooming in as she progresses. You see her place something, maybe a sandwich, wrapped in aluminum foil and a bag of assorted nuts in a fourth lunch bag. We see all lunch bags zipped up and closed. We see two lunch bags have a written name on a ribbon tied to the handle, "JADE" and "MIA."

ELIANA hears the kettle start to whistle and she turns off the stove but leaves the kettle.

(then) she grabs her water bottle, puts it in her bag, and grabs one of the lunch bags. She hesitates, looking at the other half of the cut cupcake. From the view of where the cupcake is, we see her grab it while smiling and put it in her bag. She is about to leave the kitchen when she steps on something - a small pile of dog feces. The camera quickly pans to a dog in the living room and zooms in. We see a small chihuahua curled in a blanket, awake. She makes a frustrated face and tense hand movements toward the dog. She sets down her lunch bag and day bag.

She hurries to the bathroom to wash off her shoe. She cleans up the floor and sets out a clean puppy pad.

We see the clock - it's 7:03 AM. She again grabs her stuff and heads out the door. We see her close 2 doors, and lock both locks on the metal door.

She sees some birds on electric wires and poles and hears them chirp. She waves good morning to one of her neighbors.

She then walks toward her car parked on the street. The car is somewhat dirty on the outside. She sees a flyer and a parking ticket dated from 4 days ago on her windshield. From inside the car, we see that she leans her head back, grabs both, and enters the car. She places them in her cup holder - the flyer is inviting her to an adventure in a national park.

Eliana starts to drive, playing a more upbeat jazz instrumental song. She drives by a billboard that has a green dragon on it - it's an ad for a community resource center.

**EXT.** PARKING LOT

She parks her car and turns off the engine. We assume she is at work. She does not want to be there, but she makes a decent income and has the responsibility of supporting her family. We see a handwritten note that reads "Échale ganas" hanging from her rear view mirror.

She receives text messages from "**STORE MANAGER.**"

Audio: Instrumental, slow blues song

STORE MANAGER

"Eliana, we have an early shipment coming in today and I need you to work a longer shift."

"John would do it but he's going through a tough time. Megladoo passed away this morning."

[Receives photo of one dead floating goldfish in a bowl.]

"You should stop by and pick up some breakfast for everyone again. I promise you'll be reimbursed this time."

Eliana, frustrated, thinks for a moment. She responds.

ELIANA

"Sorry to hear about Megladoo, but I can't go to work today. I'll see you tomorrow."

After she sends the message, she says out loud, "Maybe."  
Song fades out.

We see the time in her car - it's 7:38AM. She anxiously taps her fingers on the steering wheel. She looks in all of her car mirrors and checks her surroundings.

Eliana turns on the car and drives off.

Audio: Upbeat jazz, instrumental

From the ground level behind the car, we see her drive away from the parking lot.

We see some Spanish billboards, some freeway signs, some mountain peaks.

From a bird's eye view, we see her pull into a parking spot at the base of a mountain.

From inside the trunk of her car, we see her move some things around and grab a medium sized backpack. She closes the trunk.

We see her sitting in her car and tying the laces to a pair of hiking boots. She grabs her lunch items and puts them in her backpack - noticing the nature flyer in her cup holder. She closes the door and begins to walk toward the start of the trail. She pauses at the trail sign.

POV on the trail, we see a smiling Eliana looking up at the mountain she is about to climb.

With her first step on the trail, we hear an instrumental big band jazz song. We see her from behind her head, walking, (then) we are ground level and only see her shoes moving. She takes 7 steps.

We see a timelapse of the clouds.

We see the scene: shrubs, flowers, birds, lizards, insects.  
10-15 second sequence.

We see her at the top of the peak, tired, panting, maybe she's sweating. She finds a place to lay down. She takes off her backpack and falls to her side. From her perspective, our viewpoint starts to tilt to one side and ends level to the ground - sideways.

Song fades out.

Eliana notices a geocache positioned under a tree or near a rock. We see her get up and walk towards it.

From the side of her and the box, we see Eliana open the box. Eliana's POV: She reads various notes, sees a granola bar, bracelets, drawings, different rocks, and then sees a small statue, smaller than the palm of her hand. It is a green **DRAGON** wrapped around the arms of a female **WARRIOR**. She reaches for it and feels a spark when she touches it.

Audio: A suspenseful rumble - a deep bass.

We see over her shoulder: She holds the statue in her left hand, moving it around noticing all of the details. She sees the dragon slightly move and has a slight change of color to it.

POV: the dragon in her hand

We see Eliana's eyes open fully and she slightly brings her head back in shock and wariness. We see a soft green glow of light on her face.

The statue becomes animated, with the warrior moving her head and the dragon slightly moving. It begins to speak to Eliana.

DRAGON

"Ya era hora de que llegaras. Olvidaste la importancia de estar en lugares como este. Veo tu esfuerzo en mantener a tu familia, en cuidar tus responsabilidades, pero no seas guey. El que no arriesga, no gana."

[Translation: It was about time you arrived.  
You forgot the importance of being in places  
like this. I see your effort in supporting your  
family, in taking care of your responsibilities,  
But don't be a fool. He who doesn't risk, doesn't  
gain."

Eliana, surprised yet comforted since it sounds like something  
her dad would say, gets an idea. She takes out her lunch, starts  
eating, and enjoys the view.

Timelapse of a plant/ecosystem, real time of 4 hours or so.

**INT.** ELIANA'S LIVING ROOM.

Eliana is on her laptop. Eliana's POV: we see her scroll down  
and click "Submit" or "Apply."

As she closes the laptop, the screen goes black.

TITLE ON SCREEN: A WAY IN

CREDITS