Good evening, everyone. I'm Marisol, Linda's middle child, and I got picked to do this because my brothers are cowards.

Ma, happy birthday.

I want to tell you all something my mother did that she never told us about.

When I was in middle school, my parents split up and money got tight fast. We stayed in the same house, same school, same friends. Nothing about our lives changed that we could see. I thought we'd been lucky.

We weren't lucky. She worked doubles for two years.

Two years. And she got up and made breakfast anyway, and she came to every school play, and she never once said a word about it. I found out when I was twenty six, from my aunt, by accident.

That's who she is. My mother would rather be tired than have you know she's tired.

She has never missed anything. Not one play, not one game, not one graduation. She drove me to college with the car packed so high I couldn't see out the back window, and she cried in the parking lot after she thought I'd gone inside. I saw her.

And last Christmas I watched her stand in my kitchen and teach my daughter to make tamales, the same way her mother taught her, saying the same things, and I had to go into another room for a minute.

Ma, you're sixty. You feed everyone. You talk to every stranger in every line in

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this city. You will be the last person dancing at every wedding you're invited to, and we all know it.

So this is my wish, and it's the only thing I want from you this year. Rest. Real rest. Let one of your kids cook. Sit down at your own table.

Everybody, raise your glass with me.

To Ma. Sixty years, and the hardest working woman any of us know.

Te queremos. Happy birthday.

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