

"Let me ask him," I tell them.

"No hard feelings," she says.

I pick up the box of clothes and go back inside. Trompo Loco is taking deep, angry breaths. I'm not worried that if I let the activist in to say sorry Trompo would punch them, I just don't want him spinning around and hurting himself some more.

"Trompo, you feel better?" Mom says to him, and he doesn't say anything but puckers his lips real tight and turns his head toward the wall.

"Julio," Maritza tells me, "those people did to him what they hope the person who owns that building doesn't do to them."

"No, I told him that was going to happen to him," I look Trompo's way, "didn't I tell you this was going happen? There, you happy now? See?"

Trompo shrinks, he shrugs his shoulders high and in. He slouches on the couch like a puppy, a puppy with a bag of ice on his head.

"Julio, *bendito*, the poor guy—"

I cut Pops off.

"Poor guy nothing, he doesn't listen to me." I look at Trompo again, "You don't listen to me."

"*Basta ya*," Mom says, "no yelling."

No one listens.

"That was wrong, Julio," Maritza says, "that was not right. We got to do something—"

"Like what, Maritza, like what? Those people are just doing what they know is right. They aren't hurting anybody, they just want a home, like everybody else."

"Like Trompo wants a home too—"

"Trompo needs to listen to me!" I say to Trompo again.

## 15D

**Trompo** Loco is sitting on the sofa with a bag of ice on his head. My mother, father and Maritza are tending his bruises and bloodied nose. I'm outside by the door, talking with three of the activists who dragged him here. They are very apologetic and have even brought with them most of his possessions.

"We didn't mean any harm to him, *tu sabe?*" says a lean man with a mustache, "but this is serious stuff. We tried to just carry him out but he began to spin like crazy and hurt himself."

"My wife and kids live there and you know, I'm fighting to keep it," another activist tells me as he pushes at me a box filled with clothes. "If he wants to come by and pick up the rest of his stuff, he can."

"Yeah, we're not going to throw any of it away," the fraud activist, a woman, reassures me. "Can I tell him we're sorry?" She tries to peek inside my house.

