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As the family settles into their new life in New York, Laura Garcia embarks on a journey of innovation, driven by the desire to create improved household devices for her family. Her visits to department stores, where she'd listen to sales pitches and then sketch out her own ideas, showcase her resourcefulness and entrepreneurial spirit. Carlos's attempt to assert his dominance over Yolanda by tearing up the Whitman-inspired speech makes him appear as an oppressive figure to her. By drawing parallels between his father and Trujillo, he highlights how private patriarchy can be a form of political despotism. Despite his enthusiasm for American-style democracy, Carlos is uncomfortable with divergent views in his own family. His gesture of buying Yolanda a new typewriter the next day seems paternalistic but may also be an attempt to exert control over her. Laura's inventive spirit was crushed when she saw someone else had patented a suitcase on wheels, similar to her own idea. She gave up pursuing her dreams and instead took on traditional women's roles, including cleaning and bookkeeping for her husband. However, she continued to push for her daughters' independence, even if it meant going against her husband's wishes. When Yoyo wrote a passionate speech about freedom and independence, Laura's husband was furious, but Laura stood up to him, refusing to back down. Despite her anger, Laura ultimately showed compassion towards her husband, recognizing the trauma he had experienced in his past. This led her to put aside her own desires and take on a more submissive role as a wife again. After her husband fell asleep, Laura helped Yoyo write a new speech that was more cautious and polite, avoiding any words or ideas that might offend her father. When Carlos mentioned moving back to the Dominican Republic, Laura remained silent, not wanting to rock the boat. Despite being proud of having daughters in America, Laura felt she couldn't express this openly, as it would be seen as a failure as a wife and mother in her native country. The story leaves the reader wondering what Laura's true thoughts are on this matter and whether she will find a way to balance her desires with the expectations placed upon her by society. If Papi started planning to move back home, Laura might struggle with openly opposing him to protect herself due to her strong traditional upbringing. However, as the reader navigates Laura's complex personality, it becomes unclear if she would ultimately follow Papi's lead, much like she does when he speaks. With intuition and compassion guiding her, Laura manages to balance two contrasting cultures by adopting different postures for various situations. As a modern American woman, Laura is capable of creating innovative ideas, reading the New York Times, and standing up to her husband. On the other hand, as a traditional Dominican woman, she prioritizes household chores before pursuing her own inventions, cleans Papi's office, and remains silent even when disagreeing with him. Some might view Laura's compromises as failures, but Alvarez leaves the reader with the feeling that instead, she has passed on an essential trait to her daughter Yoyo. For Yoyo, Laura's speech is not remembered as a series of platitudes but rather as the moment her mother handed her responsibility and encouraged her to take charge: "Here's your chance, Cuquita; give it a shot." It appears that Laura has prepared Yoyo to fulfill their mother's dream of independence in America.