

CASSANDRO

Written by

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ENGLISH VERSION WITH ADAPTED SPANISH DIALOGUE

Spanish dialogue noted by bold italics

OVER BLACK:

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

*Good evening, El Paso and Juárez.
Tonight at Ray's Auto Shop,
Gigántico will face El Topo from El
Paso. And then, the exótico you
love to hate... Big Beltrán!*

**Buenas tardes, El Paso y Juárez.
Esta noche desde el Taller Mecánico
de Ray, Gigántico se enfrentará a
El Topo desde El Paso. Además, el
exótico que todos aman y odian...
¡Big Beltrán!**

FADE IN:

EXT. MECHANIC'S GARAGE, JUÁREZ - SUNSET

We see SAÚL (35) making his way through the city of Juárez.

He is short, compact, muscular, with a mustache and a chain with a large gold cross around his neck. His hair is short on the sides but on top it's longer, teased up and curly.

He pulls a small pink rolling bag behind him. The sun is low on the horizon, silhouetting Saúl and his tottering bag.

A light rain starts to fall as Saúl makes his way down the street towards a cinder block mechanic's garage. Saúl enjoys the feeling of the rain on his face for a moment. Then he heads inside.

INT. MECHANIC'S GARAGE - DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

A line of overweight men strip off their street clothes by the wall of the garage.

Other men push mechanical equipment and pallets of auto parts to the side and assemble a small makeshift wrestling ring in the center of the garage. The garage's cement floor is dark with oil stains.

Saúl greets a few of the wrestlers. One, EL MYSTERIOSO slaps him on the back and nods.

Saúl sits beside the stripping men on a box of oil filters. Other boxes make a dressing table. An old mirror leans against the wall.

Saúl takes a few items from his pink rolling suitcase. He places them on the dressing table: a photo of his mother, YOCASTA, and an eagle feather.

Around him, the half-naked men start to pull on colorful spandex outfits.

BIG BELTRÁN (36), a man wearing a wig pinned up in a bun. Big Beltrán sits at his dressing table, applying heavy eyeliner, half-dressed in a flamboyant skirt and stuffed bra.

Farther down, in front of another mirror, GIGÁNTICO (30) admires his own biceps. He lives up to his name - he is over a foot taller than Saúl, and almost twice as wide.

GIGÁNTICO

(looking at his biceps in
the mirror)

*Check this out! Muscle as pure as
fresh milk.*

**Mire, fíchala, tío. Puro queso de
Chihuahua.**

BIG BELTRÁN

Fresh milk? You're tripping, buddy.

**¿Puro queso de Chihuahua? Compa,
alucinas, alucinas.**

GIGÁNTICO

Screw you!

Chinga tu madre!

PETE (55), a Texas gringo wearing a stained polyester shirt, walks up to Saúl. A cigarette dangles from his lips. His eyes are ringed with dark circles.

PETE

What's up, mi chavo?

SAÚL

Hey, Pete, what's up?

PETE

You say hello to your rival?

SAÚL

He doesn't want to prepare, huh?
No, of course not. Okay.

MASKED MASSACRE

*Hey, Mole! Do you like digging
holes or getting your hole dug?*

**¡Topo! ¿Te gusta escarbar hoyos o
que te lo escarben?**

(MORE)

MASKED MASSACRE (CONT'D)

(LAUGHTER)

What's with the shitty mustache?
¡Y ese bigotillo guango, qué?

SAÚL

The mustache? I grew it for you, honey. I heard you like the way it tickles.
Este bigotillo, me lo dejé para ti, corazón. Porque sé que te gusta que te pique.

ALL

Come on!
¡Ándale!

MASKED MASSACRE

You should take off your mask and become an exótico.
Habías de quitarte la máscara y convertirme en exótico.

An other wrestler walks in with his gym bag at the hand. The man is GERARDO (47), dressed in a green luchador costume. Gerardo is very large and masculine, with a lot of chest hair and a beard. He slap a few other wrestlers on the back, laughing and joking.

BIG BELTRÁN

Gerardo, why are you always late?
¿Qué pasó, pinche Gerardo? No mames, cabrón, siempre llegando tarde.

WRESTLER

Talk some sense into him.
Compadre, habla con él, por favor.

ALL

Kiss! Kiss!
¡Beso! ¡Beso! ¡Ya bájale!

GERARDO

No fucking way!
Cómo chingas, cabrón.

Saúl as El Topo, wearing his ill-fitting mask, watches as popular Gerardo gets ready for wrestling.

Gerardo looks up and the two make brief eye contact before quickly looking away.

INT. MECHANIC'S GARAGE - NIGHT

The garage is now full. Saúl, in costume, peeks from behind a stack of the crates to see the ring. Grinding heavy metal music plays through a broken speaker. The announcer screams:

ANNOUNCER

From the sacred lucha libre ring at Ray's Auto Shop, it's my pleasure to introduce The Executioner of Tijuana... Gigántico!
Desde la lona sagrada del Taller Mecánico Ray, para todos ustedes, el Verdugo de Tijuana... ¡Gigántico!

CROWD (CHANTING)

Gigántico! Gigántico!
¡Gigántico! ¡Gigántico!

From behind the crates, Saúl breathes in and tries to prepare himself as best he can.

ANNOUNCER

In a spectacular mano-a-mano against a guy who only goes out at night! The most abominable creature from Madrigal Street... El Topo! Topo! Topo!
En un mano a mano espectacular en contra de un hombre que solo sale de noche, ¡porque la migra lo atrapa! La más abominable criatura de la calle Madrigal Street... ¡El Topo! ¡Topo! ¡Topo!

Then he bounds into the ring. The crowd screams as the two luchadores circle each other. Saúl throws his shirt.

SAÚL

(to CROWD MEMBER)

Hold onto my shirt, buddy. It's the only one I have!
Te la encargo, compa. ¡Es la única que tengo!

Saúl and Gigántico begin to wrestle.

MAN

That faggot likes to cry!
¡A esa pinche nena le gusta hacer llorar al mocoso!

Saúl's initial moves show his talent. In contrast to Gigántico's stomping, Saúl's movement is naturally fluid, dance-like. The problem is he's not showcasing these natural abilities. Instead, he's working against them, trying to come across as big and dominant. Saúl ends up looking silly, like a lumbering ballet dancer. Saúl jumps onto Gigántico.

SAÚL

Let's give them a show. Follow my lead.

**Les vamos a dar un show rifado.
Sígueme la corriente, compa.**

GIGÁNTICO

Eat my ass!

¡Hazte las nalgas!

Gigántico slams Saúl onto the mat.

GIGÁNTICO (CONT'D)

Hey, damn Topo, get up!

¡Oye, pinche Topo! ¡Súbase! Pinche Topo maricón. Esto es lucha, puto.

Gigántico laughs. He roars. He beats his chest.

CROWD

Get him! Get him!

¡Duro! ¡Duro!

MAN

Get out of there, sissy! He's gonna kick your ass, Topo!

¡Bájate, maricón! ¡Te van a romper tu madre, Topo!

Saúl and Gigántico lock and grapple in the middle of the ring. Saúl manages to free himself from Gigántico and does a frantic high kick, landing it on his opponent's chest. Saúl is limber and quick. Gigántico wasn't expecting this. He calls the Announcer for the microphone.

GIGÁNTICO

(into the mic)

Listen carefully, little mole. You strike me as the kind of guy who likes to get down on all fours! El Topo bites the pillow!

Mira, mira pinche topito. A mí se me hace que tú eres de esos ¡que les gusta ponerse en cuatro! ¡El Topo muerde almohadas! ¡El Topo muerde almohadas!

The crowd scream with approval and chant along.

GIGÁNTICO (CONT'D)

(like chanting)

*El Topo bites the pillow! El Topo
bites the pillow!*

**¡El-Topo-Muerde-Almohadas! ¡El-Topo-
Muerde-Almohadas!**

CROWD (CHANTING)

(to Saúl, following
Gigántico's lead)

*El Topo bites the pillow! El Topo
bites the pillow!*

**¡El-Topo-Muerde-Almohadas! ¡El-Topo-
Muerde-Almohadas!**

Gigántico drops the mic, lurches forward and grabs at Saúl. Saúl spins away, avoiding the bear hug. Saúl jumps on him from behind and tries to get him in a headlock.

Gigántico hoists Saúl over his shoulder and slams him on the mat like a sack of flour. Saúl struggles to roll free, Gigántico brutally knocks him down. The crowd laughs as Saúl hits the mat.

Gigantico squats over Saúl and sits on him. Saúl scrambles under Gigántico's massive ass, but can't escape. He's trapped, desperately clawing at the spandex-clad buttocks pressing down on him. Nothing can help him now.

The crowd hoots and jeers at him. Saúl feels their mocking eyes, reveling in his shameful humiliation.

ANNOUNCER

*Ladies and gentlemen, the winner of
this amazing battle, The
Executioner of Tijuana, Gigántico!
**Damas y caballeros, el ganador de
esta espectacular batalla es... el
Verdugo de Tijuana, ¡Gigántico!***

INT. MECHANIC'S GARAGE - DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

AFTER THE FIGHT, Saúl pulls his mask off and puts on his regular street clothes.

He looks at himself in the mirror, shamed but trying to pick himself back up and play it off.

SAÚL

*That guy has no poetry. None!
¡Ese suato no tiene poesía! Nada.*

EL MYSTERIOSO

(blowing out smoke from a
cigarette)

*He doesn't fool around, he gets to
the point. Unlike you, making an
ass of yourself.*

**No, pues es que la neta... no se anda
con mamas, se va al grano. No como
tú que te haces el pendejo, güey,
sorry.**

El Mysterioso looks at him, as if to say "Not like you." Saúl feels the sting of the criticism. In the background, other luchadores are getting into their costumes and roles. Pete, the booker, walks in and hands Saúl a meager five dollars.

PETE

Pretty good, mi chavo. Next week,
we'll do it again, you and
Gigántico.

SAÚL

Again? With Gigántico again? Come
on, Pete, we-we always do the same.
Come on.

PETE

You want to wrestle or not?

INT. MECHANIC'S GARAGE - NIGHT

Saúl slips into the crowd in plain clothes and is watching from behind the folding chairs. Without his mask, nobody notices him. Nobody knows who he is.

ANNOUNCER

*Don't go to sleep yet, Ciudad
Juárez. The night is just getting
started! The rival in this face-to-
face draws his strength from the
flutter of butterflies and brings
his exótico style into the ring.
Big Beltrán!*

**No te duermas, Ciudad Juárez. ¡La
noche apenas comienza! Su rival
para medirse frente a frente
obtiene la fuerza del vuelo de las
mariposas y encumbra su estilo
exótico sobre el ring. ¡Big
Beltrán!**

Saúl watches Big Beltrán enter the ring, fully decked out in drag now that resembles Lola Beltrán.

Big Beltrán carries a fake white guitar. Men whistle at him and scream vulgar compliments.

MAN

Fuck off! Get off the ring!
¡Fuera, fuera! ¡Bájalo!

CROWD

Faggot!
¡Pinche mariquita vegana! ¡Pinche marica!

ANNOUNCER

¡Un mano a mano explosivo y romántico!

The fight begins. El Mysterioso plays a very tough masculine character and Big Beltrán, a traditional exótico, plays the part of a limp-wristed and villainous gay stereotype, lisping and prancing about the stage. The crowd hurls insults at the exótico and cheers on El Mysterioso. Beltrán is pinned to the mat.

REFEREE

One, two, three...
Venga, uno, dos...

He bursts back to his feet. El Mysterioso smashes the white guitar over Big Beltrán's head. Big Beltrán is again pinned.

REFEREE (CONT'D)

One, two, three.
¡Uno, dos, tres!

The fight is over. Big Beltrán has lost the match.

ANNOUNCER

It's over, ladies and gentlemen!
The exótico has lost.
Esto se acabó ¡damas y caballeros!
El exótico es derrotado como siempre.

A CU on Saúl's face, watching the exótico, a smile.

EXT. US / MEXICAN BORDER - NIGHT

Saúl pulls his pink suitcase up to the border checkpoint, waiting in line. He is crossing the border back to El Paso, Texas. When he reaches the checkpoint, two agents are talking absently to each other.

BORDER AGENT
Hey, Saúl. Go ahead.

SAÚL
Yeah?

BORDER AGENT
Go ahead.

SAÚL
Okay.

The two border agents continue their conversation. Saúl walks to the bridge, feeling humiliated and alone.

INT. SAÚL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

As soon as Saúl gets home, he heads towards the bathroom. On the way, he passes by his mother's bedroom. Her door is open and YOCASTA (53) lies in bed sleeping.

Saúl goes into the bathroom, closes the door, strips off his shirt, and self-consciously shaves off his mustache.

TITLE CARD: **CASSANDRO**

INT. SAÚL'S HOUSE - MORNING

The next morning, Saúl sits at the kitchen table, watching a telenovela on a tiny black & white TV against a worn yellow wall. While he watches he is folding a pile of laundry.

His mother Yocasta brings him a sandwich and plunks down beside him to watch their favorite show together. Yocasta starts folding the laundry too. Several large bundles tied with string already sit on the counter nearby.

Yocasta has an unkempt bouffant red hairdo, and is wearing a black tank top and a purple snakeskin skirt. A few tattoos dot her arms and a cigarette butt hangs from her lips. She's short like Saúl and plump.

Their ramshackle house is tiny and filled with an eclectic mix of Catholic icons, votive candles, indigenous talismans, boxes of Yocasta's old vinyl records, and Saúl's taped up wrestling posters.

On the TV screen, the telenovela "Cuna de Lobos" shows a woman with an eye-patch and an expensive pearl necklace giving a melodramatic speech to a handsome young man.

SAÚL

Look at those earrings. And that nice, shiny ring.

Mira nomás, qué aretotes. Y ese anillo, cómo brilla.

YOCASTA

Do you think that would look good on me?

¿Crees que me vería bien así?

SAÚL

The earrings, or the limp?

¿Con los aretes o toda renga?

YOCASTA

Oh, you! The earrings, smart ass!

¡Cómo serás! ¡Con los aretes, menso!

SAÚL

She's gonna kill him.

Lo va a matar.

YOCASTA

She'll cut off the oxygen.

Le va a cortar el oxígeno.

SAÚL

Mm-hmm.

(then)

Mom, is Jezebel fixed?

Oye, Ma, ¿viajaron la Jezebel?

YOCASTA

I got her running last night. Just a broken hose clamp in the clutch. Are you going to help me drop off these clothes?

Anoche la eché a andar. Tenía rota la abrazadera del clutch. ¿Vas a venir conmigo a entregar la ropa?

SAÚL

In a minute, but look. I still need to mend all these. Some are missing buttons...

Sí, ahí voy, mamá, es que hace falta arreglar todo esto. Hay algunas cosas que no tienen botón...

YOCASTA

My hard working son. A boy will make you happy one day. Just don't end up with someone mean.

Ay, mijo, tú tan hacendoso. Algún día vas a hacer feliz con un muchacho. Ay, más no te vayas a conseguir gente gacha, ¿eh?

EXT. EL PASO ROAD - DAY

On motorcycle, they deliver the laundry to houses in a nearby, more affluent neighborhood of El Paso, until all the stacked cloth bags are gone.

EXT. HOUSE - EL PASO ROAD - DAY

At the last house, an OLDER MAID and a younger one opens the service door to Yocasta and Saúl. The Older Maid looks to Yocasta with obvious contempt. Yocasta seems to recognize her but doesn't know what to do.

YOCASTA

Hi, sweetie. Are you the new maid? What's your name?
¿Qué pasó, mija? ¿Tú eres la nueva? ¿Cómo te llamas?

OLDER MAID

Count the clothes, make sure nothing's missing.
Ahorita hay que contar la ropa, para ver si está toda completa.

SAÚL

It's all in there.
Sí está toda.

YOCASTA

When has that happened? What's your problem? You've been so nasty lately, what's the deal?
¿Cuándo te debo algo? ¿Qué te traes, eh? Hace un buen rato que me estás dando lata, ¿te debo algo?

SAÚL

Come on, Mom. Let's go.
Ya, ma, vámonos.

YOCASTA

How much are they paying her? Half what you make, probably.

(MORE)

YOCASTA (CONT'D)
**¿Cuánto le están pagando? La mitad
 de lo que te pagan a ti,
 seguramente.**

OLDER MAID
 (to YOUNGER MAID)
*That's why I told you to keep your
 legs closed, so you don't end up
 with a bastard son.*
**Por eso te digo que no abras las
 patas, Dianita, para que no acabes
 así, toda jodida con un chavalo.**

Yocasta looks confused and paralyzed. Then, a shadow of rage appears on her face. She's about to answer to the Older Maid, but Saúl holds her.

SAÚL
Let's go, Mom! Come on, hop on.
Vámonos. Súbete.

They drive away.

EXT. EL PASO ROAD - DAY

MUSIC carries. Saúl rides her motorcycle with Yocasta behind her clutching the teetering piles of wrapped laundry. The two speed along together, sharing a moment of freedom, the wind whipping at their faces.

INT. LUCHA VENUE AUDITORIUM - LATE AFTERNOON

A sports auditorium that is used for lucha events. It is much bigger than where Saúl usually fights and has bleachers.

Saúl walks in and sees a daytime lucha class in full swing. The teacher, SABRINA (34), works in the ring in the middle of the auditorium with her students, a bunch of teenage boys. Siblings and parents play in the bleachers during the class. A few other wrestlers work out along the walls.

SABRINA
*That's right, that's right, that's
 right!*
¡Así, así, así!
 (watches WRESTLERS)
Like that, like that, go hard!
That's right.
¡Así, así, duro! Así es.

Sabrina has a punk look and wears a tight "X-Ray Spex" t-shirt. Saúl recognizes her and watches, studying her moves. She's a pro.

SABRINA (CONT'D)
Come on, come on, yes, good.
Vamos, vamos, sí, bien. Bien, bien,
¿y ahora qué? Bien, bien. ¡Eso!

Sabrina calls the end to training.

SABRINA (CONT'D)
That's right. That's right. Same
time tomorrow. Good job. Yeah, well
done!
Así, así es. Okay, mañana, ¿no? Sí,
mañana. Muy bien. Muy bien.

She notices Saúl watching. She waves and walks over.

SAÚL
 Wow.

SABRINA
 Hey, you want to practice or you
 just watching?

SAÚL
 I've seen you fight at the
 coliseum.

Sabrina nods.

SABRINA
 Oh, yeah. Yeah, that's right.

Saúl is a little star struck, but keeps it inside.

SAÚL
 Lady Anarquía.

SABRINA
 Sabrina.

SAÚL
 Saúl.

SABRINA
 Hey.

She smiles. They bump fists.

SAÚL
 Nice to meet you.

SABRINA
You fight there, too?

SAÚL
No.

SABRINA
Mm.

SAÚL
No, um, I've been doing some nights
at el... Mecánico de Ray.

SABRINA
Oh, yeah. My students fight there
sometimes. I don't think I've seen
you. How long you been doing lucha?

SAÚL
Since I was a kid. But I've been
doing real fights since a couple of
years ago.

SABRINA
Oh.

SAÚL
But I'm gonna be fighting Gigántico
de Tijuana next week. And I want to
flip it. I want to turn it around,
you know?

(slams fist on mat)
*I wanna get that bastard. Take him
down! Make him sweat.*
**Quiero agarrar al culero, iquiero
ponerlo ahí! Ponerlo en problemas.**

SABRINA
You're hungry. You willing to work?

SAÚL
Yeah.

SABRINA
Come in here.

SAÚL
Sure?

SABRINA
Yeah, come on.

LATER

Saúl climbs in. Sabrina and Saúl practice in the ring.

SABRINA (CONT'D)
Come on. Let me guess. You're
always cast as the runt?

SAÚL
Yeah. They don't see nothing else.

SABRINA
Oh, yeah? What's your lucha name?

SAÚL
El Topo.

SABRINA
"El Topo." So cute.

Saúl flips Sabrina onto the mat. He twists her arm, Sabrina taps out.

SABRINA (CONT'D)
Oh, fuck.

Saúl pulls Sabrina up to her feet.

SAÚL
You okay?

SABRINA
Think I can work with you.

SAÚL
No, but I-I can't. I have no money.

SABRINA
Oh, shut up. We'll figure it out.

SAÚL
No, I'm supposed to...

SABRINA
We'll figure it out. We'll figure
it out. Come back tomorrow.

SAÚL
Okay, okay.

Saúl smiles. They bump fists. Sabrina climbs out of the ring.

SABRINA
Got to go pick up my daughter.

SAÚL

Do you know how-how many sessions
it'll take me to be as good as you?

Sabrina stops at ring ropes.

SABRINA

A hundred.

SAÚL

Oh.

SABRINA

At least.

SAÚL

Okay.

Sabrina LAUGHS as she climbs under the ropes.

SABRINA

"El Topo."

Saul somersaults in the ring and sits on the ropes.

EXT. SABRINA'S BACKYARD - DAY

Sabrina has a small wrestling ring on cinderblocks in her backyard by a baby pool.

Sabrina trains Saul and other teenage wrestlers with various drills and exercises.

SABRINA (CONT'D)

Okay. Laps. Run. I want four laps.
Run 'em. Faster. Come on. Come on!
Move it! Move it! Faster! What are
you gonna do? Come on, stand up.
Get up faster. Flip again. Come on.
Great, great, great. Fall, fall,
fall. Stretch it out. Stretch it
out, Saúl. Come on, come on. That's
right.

Saul now struggles with push-ups as Sabrina coaches.

SAÚL

One, two, three, four, five, six,
seven, eight...

SABRINA

One, two, three, four, five...

SAÚL
Four, five... No. No.

SABRINA
That's right. Till I say. Till I
say stop!

SAÚL
No, thirteen.

LATER

After training, they sit in folding lawn chairs by the ring
in the hot sun. Saul toasts a beer with Sabrina.

SAÚL (CONT'D)
Cheers.
(they clink bottles)
To men. Do you think I'm gonna be
able to do something with
Gigántico?

SABRINA
Oh, Saúl. I mean, it's like you're-
you're trying to fight like
you're... Hijo del Santo or
something. And that's not you. I
mean, there's a lot of ways you can
fight. You don't have to be the
runt. You ever thought about being
an exótico?

Saúl is offended and surprised at Sabrina.

SAÚL
No. No. No, they don't let exóticos
win, you know? No.

He shakes his head, thinking about how the exotico stereotype
has hurt him.

EXT. H&H CAR WASH - DAY

In an open air covered lot, Saúl holds a hose and sprays a
pickup truck with water. A few other washers scrub down the
back of the car. Saúl wipes down the dashboard with a rag.

He hears a car horn BEEP. He looks up and sees his mom in her
ancient AMC Hornet, waiting next in line for a wash.

YOCASTA
Hi, honey.
¿Qué hubo, mijo?

SAÚL

Hey.
¿Qué hubo?

YOCASTA

Are you going to be much longer?
¿Te falta mucho?

SAÚL

Yeah. A little bit.
Un poquito.

YOCASTA

Tell them to clean the ashtray. Do you want me to order something?
Diles que les encargo el cenicero.
¿Te pido algo?

SAÚL

Some tacos, yeah.
¿Unos taquitos? Sí.

YOCASTA

Don't take too long.
No te tardes mucho.

SAÚL

I won't.
No.

INT. H&H CAR WASH - DAY

Saúl and his mom eat tacos at the little coffee shop attached to the car wash while her Hornet gets washed. A mute TV plays above the counter.

A family comes in and sits down at a table near them. Saúl recognizes Gerardo, the wrestler he made eye contact with earlier, who is in the company of his wife and their two children. Gerardo sees Saúl too, but looks the other way without acknowledging him. There's a tension between them that Yocasta notices.

YOCASTA

You know them?
¿Los conoces?

SAÚL

No.
(Saúl shrugs)
I've seen him around. He's a luchador. They call him El Comandante.

(MORE)

SAÚL (CONT'D)
A él lo he visto. Es luchador. Le dicen El Comandante.

Yocasta looks over at them and makes eye contact with the woman. She smiles at her.

YOCASTA
Why don't you say hello?
¿Quieres saludarlo?

Saúl looks uncomfortable.

SAÚL
No, I don't know him.
No, no lo conozco, ma.

YOCASTA
I'll introduce you.
Pero te lo presento, mijo.

SAÚL
Mom, no.
Ma, no.

YOCASTA
Come on. Let's go.
Vamos, ándale.

SAÚL
No. Mom don't!
No. ¡Ma, no!

YOCASTA
Come on, son. Son!
Vamos, ándale.

She goes to them.

YOCASTA (CONT'D)
Excuse me... You're El Comandante, right?
¡Hijo! Dispensen... Usted es El Comandante, ¿no?

Gerardo nods awkwardly.

GERARDO
Yes, that's me.
Eh, sí, sí.

YOCASTA
My son is also a luchador, a famous one. What a coincidence.
 (MORE)

YOCASTA (CONT'D)

Fíjese que mi hijo también es luchador, es muy famoso. ¡Qué casualidad!

GERARDO

Sure.
Claro.

YOCASTA

He fights as El Topo. I've never seen him fight, it makes me anxious.

Bueno, también pelea como El Topo a veces. Dice que es muy bueno. Nunca lo he querido ir a ver porque me pongo muy nerviosa. Bueno, yo soy Yocasta.

Gerardo makes a quick look at Saúl, pained, and looks away. Gerardo's wife extends a hand. They shake.

GERARDO'S WIFE

Ah, mucho gusto...

Saúl ignores the conversation. He looks up to the TV. A telenovela has begun. The opening credits are playing, featuring the different characters and the actors who portray them.

As the final credit plays on the TV, a man kisses a woman on the cheek. The title card of the TV shows appears over them:

"KASSANDRA"

Saúl's eyes widen.

At the counter and an older woman ESTELA who works their smiles at him.

SAÚL

Take it out of my tips, alright?
¿Me descuentas de la propina?

ESTELA

Yeah?
¿Sí?

SAÚL

My mom's, too. Bye. Mom. Mom!
A mi mamá también. Adiós. Ma, mamá.

Saúl waves and leaves the diner.

EXT. H&H CAR WASH - DAY

Saúl waits in the car. He lights two cigarettes at the same time. He holds up his hand with the two cigarettes smoldering side by side.

Gerardo watches Saúl from inside the diner with regret on his face. Yocasta exits the diner and approaches the car.

SAÚL (CONT'D)

Where's yours?

¿Y el tuyo?

She laughs at their old routine and opens the car door.

YOCASTA

I didn't see you go out. All right, where's mine?

Ni te vi cuando te saliste. A ver, échame el mío.

Saúl hands one of the cigarettes to his mother. Saúl watches Gerardo and his family through the window as they pull away.

INT. SOFTBALL FIELD - TWILIGHT

Saúl and Yocasta pull their old beat up car into the dirt lot of a city softball field. They pull up near the field and turns off the car and lights.

EDUARDO (59), Saúl's biological father, is in the outfield. He's far away and difficult to see, unobtainable, but Yocasta watches him with a hawk's eye.

They park the car. Yocasta looks out on the field, where a game is in progress. The players are all older men playing for fun. Yocasta focuses on Eduardo. Saúl looks over, then looks away.

YOCASTA

Look at your father. You are just like him. You have his eyes. His mouth. You even have the same hair.

Mira a tu padre. Eres igualito a él. Tienes sus mismos ojos. Su boca. Hasta el pelo es igualito.

SAÚL

What the hell are we doing here? Let's go home.

¿Qué chingados estamos haciendo aquí, ma? Ya vámonos.

YOCASTA

He'd still be with us... if you had listened to me.

Todavía estaría con nosotros... si me hubieras escuchado.

Saúl stares ahead, deeply hurt. Yocasta continues to watch.

INT. SAÚL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

We see an old 1970s TV set with rabbit ears playing a lucha libre match. It sits on a ramshackle TV stand against a worn yellow wall decorated with religious icons and photos. The camera pushed in slowly as YOUNG SAÚL (12), a short scrawny effeminate boy, watches. This memory is seen through little flashes of shots, hazy. Everything is seen from a low angle, exactly how Young Saúl sees the world.

The image on the TV is filled with static as a giant wrestler in a silver mask stomps around the ring.

TV ANNOUNCER

The man in the Silver Mask, the amazing Santo! The audience welcomes him with such joy. Mariachis, cheers!

¡El Enmascarado de Plata, el fabuloso Santo! El público lo recibe verdaderamente con cariño.

¡Mariachis, algarabía! ¡Porras!

YOUNG EDUARDO, Saúl's father sits next to him on the couch. He is a big man with a big mustache. Young Eduardo is always seen from behind, or partly out of frame, or at a distance, never distinctly.

We hear the deep voice of Eduardo call and yell at the wrestlers on the TV.

ECU of Saúl's eyes watching.

YOUNG EDUARDO

He's the best, right? El Santo. Here, son. I got you a little present.

¿Ves eso? El Santo. Oye, mijo. Tienes un regalito.

ECU of his father's burly hands holding a Santo action figure. Saúl's tiny sticky hand takes it.

ECU of Saúl entranced by the figure, then the wrestlers on the screen.

More bodies slam, the crowd roars. Young Eduardo roars too.

Saúl looks at his father with reverence.

INT. SAÚL'S HOUSE - DAY

Saúl lays on the couch as an old wrestling match plays on TV.

INT. YOCASTA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Saúl looks through Yocasta's clothing in the closet, and then packs a suitcase with his select choices.

INT. YOCASTA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Yocasta is at her bedroom dresser putting on make-up with a bottle of tequila and a glass with lime beside her. She is dressed for going out dancing. Her bedroom is filled with Catholic icons, candles, feathers, Dia de Muertos imagery and incense.

Tucked into her mirror is an old color snapshot of Saúl as a teenager with dyed hair and pink t-shirt with the midriff cut out.

Patsy Cline's song "She's Got You" plays from a little cassette deck.

Saúl lies on her bed, sketching in a pad. We don't see what he draws. He looks up to watch his mom put on her make-up. Her make-up is spread out before her like the instruments of a religious ritual.

SAÚL

You know who was good at doing her eyebrows? Verónica Castro. Am I right?

¿Sabes quién sabía maquillarse bien las cejas? Verónica Castro. ¿Verdad?

Yocasta agrees.

YOCASTA

Few can do it like her.
De las pocas que lo sabe hacer.

SAÚL

Yeah.
Ey.

YOCASTA

I loved her hair most.
A mí lo que me gustaba era su pelo.

SAÚL
Oh, sure, the hair! Really extraordinary.
¡Ah, sí, el pelo! Era muy impresionante.

YOCASTA
I'm running late. I don't look like any actress.
Ya se me está haciendo tarde. Pero ya no me parezco a nadie.

Saúl rises to help Yocasta get dressed.

SAÚL
It's better that way. Much better. You're good to go.
Mejor. Mucho mejor. Ahí estás, se ve bien.

Yocasta stands, inspects herself in the mirror.

YOCASTA
I like it.
Bien, muy bien.

SAÚL
Look at you! Rapunzel has nothing on you!
¡Ándale! ¡Quién te viera, Rapunzel!

YOCASTA
Good? Don't wait up, son.
¡Está? No me esperes, mijo.

SAÚL
Okay.
No te espero.

She gets her purse and prepares to go out.

YOCASTA
Go to bed early.
Te duermes temprano.

SAÚL
Sure.
Dale.

Yocasta waves him away. She leaves the house to go to a dance club. Saúl watches her go.

EXT. SABRINA'S BACKYARD - DAY

Teenage kids practice tumbles in the ring. Sabrina and Saúl sit in lawn chairs as they watch.

SAÚL (CONT'D)

Can I tell you something? It's still a work in progress, okay, so, you know...

Saúl pulls out a sketch of a wrestler dressed in a long women's cape, a dress, high heeled boots, and make-up. At the bottom it reads CASSANDRA with the A crossed out to make it an O -- CASSANDRO. Sabrina looks at it, LAUGHS.

SABRINA

That's an exótico.

SAÚL

But he wins.

Sabrina looks at Saul with new feelings: delight, excitement. Admiration.

INT. MECHANIC'S GARAGE, JUÁREZ - NIGHT

A female wrestling match in progress as Saúl and Sabrina make their way through the auto shop.

SAÚL

It's so crowded tonight.

SABRINA

This is it. Hey, you got this, okay? Keep your chin up. Don't worry about them, okay? All right? And let me handle it, okay? I'll just take care of it. Just get your shit together.

The Announcer calls the next fight and Pete approaches.

PETE

You're up next, so get ready.

Sabrina butts in.

SABRINA

Yeah, hey, uh, listen, um, I just want to talk to you. Things are gonna be a little different tonight.

PETE

Oh?

SABRINA
Yeah, yeah.

PETE
Who are you?

SABRINA
I'm his trainer.

Recognizing her.

PETE
Lady Anarquía?

SABRINA
Yeah.

PETE
I'm a huge fan.

SABRINA
Oh, yeah? Um, here's the deal. So, tonight, Gigántico is gonna fight an exótico, and that exótico is this guy right here.

PETE
Oh.

SABRINA
But here's the thing. The exótico's gonna win. Yeah. Gonna turn the tables.

Pete puffs on his cigarette. He's not one to underestimate the power of a gimmick.

PETE
You got Gigántico to go along with this?

SABRINA
No. No, it's a surprise.

Pete laughs in her face.

PETE
Ah, okay. Then stop wasting my time, and, uh, you, get dressed as El Topo.

Sabrina is momentarily crushed. Saúl is half relieved, half disappointed.

INT. MECHANIC'S GARAGE, JUÁREZ - DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Saúl places his items on the dressing table: a photo of Yocasta, and the eagle feather.

Saúl goes to his chair with his rolling pink suitcase and opens it. Inside is his regular El Topo spandex costume and mask. Nestled beside that is a cassette tape labeled with glitter pen and a stack of his mother's clothes and sparkly boots. Saúl hesitates.

INT. MECHANIC'S GARAGE, JUÁREZ - MOMENTS LATER

The audience is primed for the next fight. Sabrina talks with a referee. Pete looks on.

Suddenly the speakers crackle to life. The announcer breaks in.

ANNOUNCER

*I'm told that there's been a change
in the program. This is about to
get ugly! Debuting tonight, a
luchador you've never seen before.
Coming to you from El Paso...
Cassandro the Exótico!*

**Me informan que tenemos un cambio
en el programa. ¡Esto se va a
poner muy feo! Tenemos el debut
estelar de un luchador nunca antes
visto. Con ustedes, desde El Chuco...
¡Cassandro, el exótico!**

The crowd applauds. Gigántico looks confused. This wasn't the plan. Pete looks around, pissed.

Gloria Gaynor's "I Will Survive" comes blaring over the speakers. Gigántico spins around, trying to figure out who's coming out to fight him.

The crowd turns. Down the aisle comes Saúl. His identity is not hidden by his usual red spandex luchador mask. In fact, he wears no mask at all. His face for the world to see.

Saúl is wearing his mom's clothes - an ill-fitting purple bra, green sequined cape, gloves, fishnets and garters, and an ostrich feather plumed hat. To complete the look, Saúl is wearing high heeled pink sparkly boots.

CROWD MEMBER

Faggot!
¡Culero!

For a moment, Saúl feels like he's made a terrible mistake. He's standing in his mother's underwear in front of scores of screaming lucha fans with a hulking macho monster bellowing inside ring, ready to take him down.

Saúl almost loses his courage. For a second he thinks about fleeing. He sees the mockery in the crowd's eyes.

Gigántico makes two huge muscles and encourages the crowd on in their chanting.

Saúl as "Cassandro" makes his way into the ring. The crowd boos and yells.

MAN

Gigántico's gonna crush you! You're nobody! Fucking faggot!

¡Gigántico te va a hacer pedazos!

¡No eres nadie! Pinche, puto --

Saúl jumps into the ring. He doesn't lumber or make muscles this time. He struts and pirouettes around the ring, his confidence building further (he's also getting used to the shoes). Gigántico, confused, steals a quick glance at Pete, who shrugs and urges him on.

CROWD MEMBER

Fuck you, Cassandro!

¡No eres estética, culero! ¡Chinga tu madre, Cassandro!

Gigántico taunts. The crowd chants.

CROWD

¡Gigántico, Gigántico!

Gigántico roars and runs at Saúl. Saúl gracefully leaps aside, and extends a leg with pointed toe, tripping Gigántico. The crowd whoops.

Gigántico retaliates. He flips Saúl in an Octopus clutch, then reaches around with one massive hand to give him a titty twister. Saúl howls. Gigántico laughs at Saúl, egging the crowd on to join in. The whole audience laughs at Saúl. Gigántico releases Saúl and mimics him, sashaying with a limp-wristed gesture that regular exóticos use.

Saúl looks out at the audience. He realizes it's the moment of truth. Lose the audience forever or turn everything on its head.

Saúl takes a deep breath and looks out to the jeering crowd, then looks down at his body in women's clothes.

Something shifts, like his own body isn't his anymore, and he's slowly rising up, looking at himself as if in a dream. The lighting becomes dramatic, the sound in the ring becomes heightened.

Saúl starts to see things differently. The crowd and the dirty garage recede into darkness around him.

As Cassandro feels himself become more fabulous, Gigántico becomes smaller, no longer intimidating. Cassandro lifts his arms up, sheathed with long beautiful gloves.

He squares Gigántico in his sights.

Cassandro deftly hops up on corner of the ropes and leaps onto Gigántico's back. From here, Gigántico can't reach him, and Cassandro pulls him off balance, toppling him. Cassandro launches into the air and lands on Gigántico, knocking the wind out of him. He grabs Gigántico in a camel clutch, almost choking him. Gigántico flips over, and Cassandro waves his ass in ladies underwear in Gigántico's face, teasing him. Gigántico fumes.

SAÚL

How's that?

¡Coman ahí!

The crowd starts to love this, the unexpected reversed power dynamic. Suddenly one or two are cheering for Cassandro.

Cassandro feels the rush of their scattered cheers and starts to flirt with the crowd, winking at them, teasing them as well.

Sabrina sees the wink and smiles. It's working. She chants.

SABRINA (CHANTING)

¡Cassandro! ¡Cassandro!

The crowd join in.

CROWD (CHANTING)

¡Cassandro! ¡Cassandro!

Pete watches from the wings, floored.

Saúl takes the upper hand and more of the crowd find themselves rooting for this strange, short man in exotico clothes. Gigántico is getting angry. Exoticos are supposed to let the luchadores win.

As Gigántico tries to regain control of the ring, Cassandro spins and performs a breath-taking acrobatic kick that lands on Gigántico's chests with such force that he goes flying high into the ropes.

Sabrina cheers. She's bursting with adoration.

Gigántico flips and Cassandro gets him in a choke hold. The crowd screams.

THE CROWD (CHANTING)

¡Cassandro! ¡Cassandro!

Gigántico lifts Saúl and throws him out of the ring.

SABRINA

No, Saul!
¡No! ¡Saúl!

Sabrina checks on Saúl laying outside the ring. He gives her a thumbs up.

ANNOUNCER

Ladies and gentlemen! The winner of this spectacular battle, The Executioner of Tijuana, Gigántico!
Damas y caballeros! El vencedor de esta batalla espectacular, El Verdugo de Tijuana, ¡Gigántico!

The fight is over. Gigántico is victorious, but Cassandro has won over the crowd. Sabrina is beaming. She punches him in the shoulder and Saúl flinches, then laughs.

INT. MECHANIC'S GARAGE, JUÁREZ - DRESSING ROOM - LATER

Saúl and Sabrina rest after match. Some of the other wrestlers and exóticos packing up give Saúl uncomfortable looks. A small group of them don't like what Saúl is doing. The Masked Massacre calls out loudly to Saúl from that group and the room goes quiet.

MASKED MASSACRE

You better watch it, Topo. Don't fuck with lucha libre. We have our traditions, got it?
Topo, no te pases de verde. La lucha es la lucha y se respeta, ¿capeas?

SAÚL

What?
¿Qué?

He gives Saúl a look like he better watch it.

INT. BACK OF GARAGE - NIGHT

As Saúl gets ready to go, he looks around for someone. At first he can't find the person he's looking for, but then spots him walking to the bathroom with his gym bag. It's Gerardo, the luchador that Saúl and Yocasta saw previously with his family at the car wash.

Saúl walks up, checking to see if anyone else is around. Gerardo is a little tense when Saúl approaches.

SAÚL (CONT'D)

El Comandante.

(he walks in)

You saw me?

GERARDO

Let's talk on Saturday.

SAÚL

Saturday?

(then)

So, they're going out of town?

GERARDO

Two days, yeah.

SAÚL

Two days? Wow, that's a lot.

Gerardo gives him a small smile, then looks around anxiously.

GERARDO

I got to go.

SAÚL

Okay, but you saw me?

GERARDO

It's better we talk about this at my place.

SAÚL

You saw me?

Gerardo's stiffness softens. He becomes tender for just a moment.

GERARDO

Sí, mi cielito. I saw you.

Gerardo furtively hurries off. Saúl smiles, cheers him on.

SAÚL
Kill 'em! Kill them all!
¡Mátalos, mátalos!

INT. JUÁREZ DIVE BAR - NIGHT

A dim, ramshackle bar filled with drunks, off duty cops, wrestling fans, old men gambling and playing dice. Music blares and the place is packed. Saúl walks in with a little swagger. Sabrina and a couple of his wrestler friends are with him to celebrate after the match.

A tough, savvy-looking guy approaches. This is LORENZO (42).

LORENZO
(to Saúl in a friendly manner)
Look who's here! Welcome!
¡Miren nomás quién llegó!
¡Bienvenido!

SAÚL
Thanks.
Gracias.

LORENZO
We were waiting for you.
Te estamos esperando.

Saúl, Sabrina, and his wrestler friends look at each other, confused.

LORENZO (CONT'D)
Follow me. My name is Lorenzo.
Welcome to my bar. Can I buy you a beer?
Bien, ándale. Yo soy Lorenzo.
Pásale a mi bar. ¿Me permites invitarte unas chelas?

SAÚL
Sure, thanks.
Claro que sí.

Sabrina and Saúl follow Lorenzo, surprised and delighted. Saúl's friends order shots.

Sabrina doesn't trust Lorenzo. She introduces herself.

SABRINA
Hey, I'm Sabrina, the trainer.

Lorenzo smiles wanly at her.

LORENZO
Feel free to order.
Pide lo que quieras.

Lorenzo hands out beers, including to an older man with a large mustache who is making out with a young woman. The older man takes the beer and kisses the woman again. Saúl recognizes him.

SAÚL
 (to himself)
Commander Gómez Pulido, the police chief.
Ay, cabrón, ahí está. Ey, el Comandante Gómez Pulido, de la policía.

Lorenzo tilts his head to the mustachioed older man.

LORENZO
 (to Saúl)
You know him?
¿Has hablado con él?

SAÚL
 (impressed but also wary)
No way. I only know him from the newspapers.
No, no, lo conozco de los periódicos, nada más.

LORENZO
Come with me.
Ven.

Gomez grins at Saúl's impressed look. Lorenzo slaps him on the back and leads him over, away from Sabrina.

SAÚL
Okay, I-I'll see you in a bit.
Bueno, te veo en un rato.

SABRINA
 Oh. Alright.

SAÚL
I'll see you in a bit.
Te veo en un rato.

Lorenzo leads Saúl to Gomez's table.

GÓMEZ PULIDO
How's it going, Lorenzo?
¿Qué pasó, Lorenzo?

LORENZO
Our rising star.
El nuevo ídolo de la raza.

GÓMEZ PULIDO
Hi, pleasure.
Hola, mucho gusto.

They shake hands at table.

SAÚL
Nice to meet you.
Mucho gusto.

WOMAN AT TABLE
Hola.

SAÚL
Hello. How are you? Well, sorry to interrupt.
Hola. ¿Qué tal? Perdón.

LORENZO
Let's talk over here. Have a seat.
Vente, vamos a hablar para acá.
Siéntate.

Lorenzo leads Saúl find a table at the end of the bar. From a distance, Sabrina watches Lorenzo with unease.

SAÚL
Thanks.
Gracias.

LORENZO
Holy shit. What a performance! You had us hypnotized.
Putá, qué pinche exhibición diste, cabrón. Los tenías pendejos.

SAÚL
Do you mean it?
¿En serio?

LORENZO
Oh, yeah. In bullfighting, they say: "Holy fuck! There's a god walking among us."
Sí, sí. El público taurino dice: "Putá madre, bajó- bajó el faraón".

SAÚL
It felt amazing. People seemed happy.

(MORE)

SAÚL (CONT'D)

Es que sí, me sentí muy bien. Y vi a la gente muy contenta.

LORENZO

They were happy all right. I was about to book Gigántico for a match in Monterrey, but now I'm not so sure.

Sí, sí, la gente estaba bien contenta. Yo pensaba escoger al Gigántico para una exhibición en Monterrey, pero tú me estás haciendo dudar muy cabrón.

SAÚL

You're a promoter?
¿Eres promotor?

LORENZO

I wear many hats in this life, but I want us to be friends. Can I be your friend?

Bueno, una de muchas cosas en esta pinche vida, pero... pero yo prefiero ser tu amigo. ¿Me permites ser tu amigo?

They shake hands again.

SAÚL

Of course. Friends. I've never fought outside of Juárez before.
Claro, amigos. No, amigos, amigos. Yo nunca he peleado fuera de Juárez.

LORENZO

The way I see it, lucha libre is the same everywhere. People are fucked up. That's why they like it. The world is fucked up. For a brief moment, the luchador offers escape. From the ring, he tells a story where good triumphs over evil. It's the same everywhere. China, Japan, Monterrey... The same formula no matter where.

Ah, para mí, este pedo es igual en todas partes. La raza está jodida. Por eso le gusta la lucha libre. El mundo está jodido. Y pues en un ratito, un pinche luchador le da en la madre, ¿no? A la desgracia.

(MORE)

LORENZO (CONT'D)

Desde un ring, te cuenta una historia donde el bien derrota al mal, ¿no? Eso es así. Así es en el pinche mundo. China, Japón, Monterrey... La misma mamada en todas partes.

Saúl hangs on these words.

SAÚL

I want to fight everywhere. In Japan, China, Monterrey...
Yo quiero pelear en todos lados. En Japón, China, Monterrey...

LORENZO

I bet you do.
Ey, cabrón...

SAÚL

Mexico City.
La Ciudad de México...

LORENZO

One thing at a time, kiddo. We gotta do it here first.
Te subes a la moto, cabrón. Primero hay que resolver el pedo aquí.

FELIPE, a young man in his early 20s, attractive and wiry, passes by.

LORENZO (CONT'D)

Felipe! Come here.
¡Felipe! Ven.

Felipe comes over. He has youthful charm but with a hint of desperation. Despite his good looks, he appears unhealthy; his eyes are a little sunken and his frame is gaunt.

FELIPE

Yeah, boss.
Mándeme, patrón.

LORENZO

Do you know this guy?
¿Sabe usted quién es?

FELIPE

No, I don't think so.
No, no, no lo saco.

LORENZO

Look again. Well, this is...
Míralo bien, cabrón. Pues este es...

SAÚL

Saúl. Cassandro.

Saúl is attracted to Felipe, and smiles at him.

LORENZO

Cassandro, el Exótico.

FELIPE

Exótico? You're a luchador?
¿Exótico? ¿Eres luchador?

SAÚL

Yes.
Sí.

FELIPE

Cool.
Ah, bien.

Saúl feels a rush of pride. Lorenzo reaches into his pocket and passes Saúl a small bag of cocaine. Swept up in the moment he takes it. Lorenzo turns to Felipe.

LORENZO

He's the one to watch. I want you to show him around, and make sure he has a good time.
Mira, no lo pierdas de vista. Quiero que lo saques a dar la vuelta, y que se la pase a toda madre.

FELIPE

Sure thing, you got it. A fucking good time!
¿Estás bien? Lo que necesites, me lo dices y te lo consigo, ¿eh?

Lorenzo stands up and walks over to friends, at the other side of the bar.

INT. DIVE BAR KITCHEN - NIGHT

Saúl and Felipe in the kitchen of the dive bar. They are alone. Saúl, not used to coke, snorts a heap off his house key.

FELIPE (CONT'D)

Are you feeling good? If you need anything, just say the word.

¿Estás bien? Lo que necesites, me lo dices y te lo consigo, ¿eh?

SAÚL

Cool, thanks. So you guys are in the lucha business?

Gracias, no. No sabía que estaban en la lucha ustedes. Que Lorenzo era promotor.

FELIPE

Whatever you want.

Cuando cree, nah.

SAÚL

Really? He was talking about a match in Monterrey.

Ah, ¿sí? Pero me habló de una pelea en Monterrey.

FELIPE

He's a mover and a shaker, he has a finger in every pie.

Él anda en la mera punta del tren, le mueve a todo.

Saúl snorts another bump.

SAÚL

Where did you get this? It's pure vanilla.

Ay, ¿de dónde sacaste esto? Esto es vainilla pura.

He trails off, gritting his teeth.

SAÚL (CONT'D)

Too bad you weren't there to see Cassandro.

Qué mal que no fuiste a la lucha a conocer a Cassandro.

FELIPE

Who?

¿A quién?

SAÚL

Cassandro.

FELIPE

Oh, yeah. I'm not really into lucha libre. I prefer strip clubs, stuff like that.

Oh, sí, sí, sí. Yo no soy de las luchas. Soy más de strip clubs y lugares así.

SAÚL

That's a shame. It's too bad, because it's a beautiful show. Real nice.

Qué triste tu caso. Qué mal porque es un show muy, muy bonito. Muy, muy lindo.

FELIPE

Well... I like the masks.

Fíjate... Me gustan las máscaras.

SAÚL

Yeah?

Ah, ¿sí?

FELIPE

Yeah, they're pretty cool. What's yours like?

Sí, me gustan las máscaras. A ver, ¿cuál usas tú?

SAÚL

Ain't got one.

Ninguna.

FELIPE

Really? No mask?

Ah, ¿no? ¿No máscara?

SAÚL

No mask! None.

¡Sin máscara! Así, fa...

FELIPE

You're different.

Diferente.

SAÚL

Yeah, always.

Ajá, siempre, siempre.

FELIPE

I like that.

Está bueno eso.

He looks into Felipe's eyes. Saúl leans forward even more, almost falling over.

SAÚL
Yeah. And you're cute.
Sí, claro. Y tú estás bien bonito.

FELIPE
Thanks.
Gracias.

SAÚL
If Cassandro were here, he'd tell you many things. Yeah, for example... that he wants to kiss you.
Y si Cassandro estuviera aquí, te diría muchísimas cosas. Sí, te diría, por ejemplo... que quiere darte un beso.

He looks into Felipe's eyes. Saúl leans forward.

SAÚL (CONT'D)
 (with an exaggerated sigh)
But Cassandro isn't here.
Pero Cassandro no está aquí.

Felipe eyes him for a moment then laughs uncomfortably.

FELIPE
Good, 'cause I have a girlfriend. Don't want any trouble.
Pues, qué bueno que no porque tengo novia y no quiero problemas.

SAÚL
I have a boyfriend, too.
Yo también tengo novio.

FELIPE
Yeah?
¿Sí?

SAÚL
Yeah. He's big. Really strong. Really.
Sí, está bien grandote. Y bien fuerte, sí. En serio.

They share a LAUGH as they walk out.

INT. SAÚL'S HOUSE - EARLY AFTERNOON

Yocasta is up tying up bundles of laundry. Saúl stumbles in from his bedroom, hung over and exhausted. He sits down for some very late breakfast.

Yocasta is quiet.

SAÚL (CONT'D)

Sorry I came home late. Did I wake you? Did I wake you?

**Sorry, ma, por llegar tan tarde.
¿Te desperté? ¿Te desperté?**

YOCASTA

No. The phone did, ringing all morning.

No. Me despertó el teléfono que estuvo sonando toda la mañana.

Saúl understands.

SAÚL

Yesterday was amazing, Mom. It was a great night, you should come someday.

Estuvo espectacular, mamá. Fue una noche bien linda, de verdad, algún día deberías venir a verme.

YOCASTA

It didn't cross your mind. What's your father going to say when he hears about this? He's going to be like a ranch dog when he finds out.

No se te ocurrió, ¿verdad? ¿No se te ocurrió pensar lo que va a decir tu padre cuando se entere? Porque se va a enterar y se va a poner como perro de rancho.

Saúl stiffens. She holds up one of his sketches. Saúl grabs it. Saúl runs from the room with the drawing.

YOCASTA (CONT'D)

Saúl! Son!

¡Saúl! ¡Mijo!

He slams the door to the bathroom and locks it. Yocasta knocks but he won't let her in.

YOCASTA (CONT'D)

It's not just that. You have to be careful. Remember what those kids did to Silvia's son?

No se trata solo de eso.

(MORE)

YOCASTA (CONT'D)

**Tienes que cuidarte. Mira lo que le
hicieron el año pasado al pobre
chamaco de la Silvia.**

Saúl doesn't respond.

INT. YOCASTA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Saúl takes an old leopard print blouse out from her closet. He lays it on the bed. The camera tilts to take in the blouse on the bed, and as it does, the room transforms to --

INT. YOCASTA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Young Saúl now walks into the room. He feels the blouse.

YOUNG YOCASTA (O.S.)

¿Te gusta, Saúl?

Find Saúl's mother, at 30 years old. YOUNG YOCASTA smiles and puts on the blouse. Her hair is a fiery orange bouffant. This memory is seen through little flashes of shots, hazy.

EXT. BANK OF THE RIO GRANDE - TWILIGHT

The whole neighborhood has turned out for a party by the river. Grills are set up, cooking skewers of meat and peppers, men are playing dominoes on card tables.

Young Saúl and Young Yocasta exit their car and approach a dominoes table carrying a plate of food.

YOUNG YOCASTA

Come, Saúl.

Vente, Saúl.

She gives it to a man, 36, with slicked back hair and his shirt open. This is YOUNG EDUARDO, Saúl's father.

YOUNG EDUARDO

Hey, big man. Are you having fun?

Thank you, baby.

Then Young Yocasta hears children laughing. She turns and sees a young beautiful white woman, Eduardo's wife SARA (32) walking up from the bank of the river with two young daughters (5 and 7) and an older daughter REGINA (13).

SARA

Eduardo, honey.

YOUNG EDUARDO
 (to Young Yocasta)
 You should go.

At the sight of Sara, Young Yocasta flees. Sara approaches her husband Young Eduardo and kisses him.

SARA
 How's it going?

YOUNG EDUARDO
 Good, good. How are the girls?

SARA
 Good.

YOUNG EDUARDO
 They having fun?

SARA
 Yeah. Everyone's good. I don't want
 the girls to see her.

YOUNG EDUARDO
 I told her to leave.

Young Yocasta is embarrassed and humiliated. Saúl watches her retreat to a tree by herself smoking.

In a flash of hazy memory, Saúl runs to her and hugs her belly. He buries his face in her bare stomach, lifting up her blouse. She holds him, her fingers intertwining with his hair. Young Saul looks back to his father.

INT. SAÚL'S HOUSE - DAY

Saúl sews the leopard blouse for ring attire.

INT. LUCHA VENUE DRESSING ROOM, EL PASO - NIGHT

CU of adult Saúl in front of his mirror wearing the leopard print blouse. He is startled. In the dressing room behind him, other luchadores are getting ready.

The sound of the screaming audience is heard coming from the arena.

Laid out in front of Saúl on his dressing table in a ritualistic semi-circle is make-up he's borrowed from his mom.

He puts the finishing touches on his eyelashes and takes in his look - beaming with newfound confidence.

Now ready, he prays.

INT. LUCHA ARENA - NIGHT

He's been booked now at a legit wrestling venue in El Paso. It's a squat cinder block affair that's really just a few rungs higher than the previous place. But the ring is nicer and there are real dressing tables in a separate room. The crowd is bigger. And there are bleachers instead of folding chairs. Moving up in the world.

Saúl looks out at the hungry fans. He's never wrestled in front of a crowd this large before. Sabrina coaches Saúl before the match backstage.

SABRINA

I saw your mom in the crowd.

SAÚL

Yeah?

SABRINA

Yeah.

SAÚL

Yeah, okay.

SABRINA

Are you ready?

SAÚL

Always.
Siempre.

Saúl steps forward as the announcer booms.

ANNOUNCER

Ladies and gentlemen... Welcome to this lucha libre night!

Damas y caballeros... ¡Bienvenidos a esta noche de lucha!

The CROWD cheer. The Announcer stands in ring.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Facing Blue Flame tonight in the main event... Let's welcome Cassandro!

Enfrentando a Blue Flame esta noche en la pelea principal, ¡démosle la bienvenida a Cassandro!

Answering the announcers call, he bursts into the arena. As the crowd yells, Saúl leaps into action against Blue Diablo.

Yocasta sits ringside, gestures to Sabrina.

YOCASTA
Sabrina, here.
Sabrina, aquí.

Sabrina takes her seat in front of Yocasta as Saúl taunts.

The match starts. Blue Flame thinks he has the upper hand, but soon Cassandro is charming the crowd.

CROWD MEMBER
Faggot!
¡Pinche, puto!

Yocasta hears this, hits the MAN with her purse.

YOCASTA
Shut up, that's my son!
¡Cállate, es mi hijo!

The two wrestlers roll on the mat. Sabrina watches, anxious. Cassandro takes a kick. Announcer referee checks on him.

ANNOUNCER
Cassandro, are you okay?
Háblame, Cassandro, ¿estás bien?

Saúl nods, match continues. The crowd jeer, boo Saúl.

CROWD (CHANTING)
Faggot, faggot! Faggot! Faggot!
¡Puto, puto! ¡Puto, puto!

Saúl feels Cassandro grow in strength and become more glamorous. The gritty realism of the real world melts into a fantasia of lucha libre spectacle - colors, lights, acrobatics, smoke effects.

The fantasy world blooms around him. He tries different things out, a scissor kick here, an iron claw there, delighted in discovering what Cassandro's powers can do. The audience eats it up.

CROWD MEMBER
Harder! Harder!
¡Duro! ¡Duro!

Saúl sits on ring post and taunts them.

CROWD (CHANTING)

Homo!
¡Culero, culero!

ANNOUNCER

Focus on the fight.
Concéntrate en la lucha.
Concéntrese, señor, arriba.

Saúl feels Cassandro grow in strength and become more glamorous. He climbs a ring post to pump up crowd.

Lorenzo in audience stands and joins the CHEERS.

CROWD (CHANTING)

Cassandro! Cassandro!

Saúl leaps from top rope and puts Blue Diablo in a pin.

ANNOUNCER

One, two... You can't get in here.
Uno, dos... ¡No te puedes meter!

Another hulking luchador, Magic Torch, jumps into the ring. Now it is two-on-one, and Cassandro toys with them, blowing kisses to the audience before skipping along the ropes to take the luchadores down.

As Cassandro woos the audience, the crowd suddenly starts booing the two other luchadores while cheering Cassandro's name. Blue Diablo and Magic Torch are baffled - they're the good guys in this battle. Angry, they try to take Cassandro out, but he is too wily for them. The crowd continues to fall into Cassandro's hand.

DANTE (55), wearing a country western shirt and pencil thin mustache, watches from the side of the ring, amazed at how the crowd is reacting.

Saúl grabs Magic Torch, the crowd cheer.

CROWD (CHANTING)

Kiss! Kiss!
¡Beso! ¡Beso!

Cassandro rears his head back and gives Magic Torch a full kiss on the mouth. The crowd goes wild as Cassandro leaps and bounds around the ring in triumph.

Dante steps towards ring to Magic Torch and Blue Diablo.

DANTE

Cassandro wins. Double the pay for everybody.

The two luchadores look at him like he's crazy.

BLUE DIABLO

Screw you, gringo! Fucking traitor!
I don't lose to exóticos!
¡Sácate a la chingada, pinche
gringo traidor! ¡Yo no pierdo con
exóticos!

Diablo storms out of the ring. The crowd throws beer cans at Diablo as he abandons the stage. Magic Torch looks at Dante.

MAGIC TORCH

Double?
¡Doble?

DANTE

Double pay.

Dante nods and Magic Torch shrugs and turns back into the ring to fight.

Magic Torch rears on Cassandro who is back up and dancing at him with a new attack. Saúl knocks Magic Torch comically high up into the air, and then catches him like a groom carrying a bride over the threshold. Cassandro blows kisses to the audience. People throw roses.

Cassandro dispatches Magic Torch, flipping off the turnbuckle onto him as he spins Magic Torch into a pin.

ANNOUNCER

One, two, three...
¡Uno, dos, tres!

He has won the match, and the crowd goes crazy. Cassandro lifts his arms up in triumph.

Saúl hugs Sabrina at ringside. Yocasta and Lorenzo celebrate with the crowd.

LORENZO

Come on! My idol!
¡Vamos! ¡ídolo, ídolo!

Saúl basks in the adulation as the crowd cheers.

CROWD (CHANTING)

Cassandro! Cassandro!

Yocasta beams with tears of pride.

EXT. LUCHA VENUE BACK PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Saúl says goodbye to his mom as she sits in her car. He leans in the driver side window.

SAÚL

Did you see the crowd roaring?
¿Viste cómo se puso la gente?

YOCASTA

Mother of God.
Virgen santísima.

SAÚL

Praised be the Lord! Now, picture me in a stadium or in a real lucha libre arena.
Alabado sea el señor. Imagínatelo en un estadio o en una arena de lucha libre de verdad.

YOCASTA

We'll cross that bridge when we get to it, son.
Cuando lleguemos a ese puente, lo cruzaremos, hijo.

He looks at his mother.

SAÚL

Are you worried? You are! You're worried about my dad. I know you are.
¿Estás preocupada? Estás preocupada, ¿verdad? Por mi papá, estás preocupada por mi papá.

Yocasta pointedly doesn't respond to that question.

YOCASTA

Go have fun. Don't stay up too late.
Mejor ve a divertirte. No te desveles mucho.

SAÚL

I won't. I could drive you home.
No. Pues, te llevo.

Yocasta makes a gesture of "nah".

YOCASTA

No.

SAÚL

*I'm serious.***Sí, mejor te llevo, ¿no?**

YOCASTA

*I'm not senile.***No estoy senil.**

SAÚL

*Are you sure?***¿Estás segura?**

YOCASTA

Sí.

SAÚL

*Please remember what the medicine man said. Drink the infusion.***Bueno, acuérdate lo que te dijo el médico. Toma la infusión.**

YOCASTA

*Okay, don't make a ruckus.***No hagas escándalo.**

SAÚL

*I promise I won't.***Es que no voy a hacer escándalo.****No, no voy a hacer escándalo**

YOCASTA

*Come on, go have fun, your friends are waiting.***Anda, vete a divertirte, que ahí te están esperando.**

SAÚL

*All right.***Dale.**

YOCASTA

*Don't cause a scene.***No hagas desfiguros.**

SAÚL

*Same goes for you!***¡Usted!**

Saúl looks around after his mom leaves.

EXT. GERARDO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Saúl sneaks around to enter through the back door.

INT. GERARDO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Gerardo is fixing drinks as Saúl walks in. The fridge is covered with children's drawings. "Amor eterno" by Juan Gabriel is playing in the back.

Saúl kisses Gerardo and wraps his arms around his waist.

GERARDO

I missed your mouth. **Espérate,**
espérate. One thing at a time.

They kiss deeper, deeper. Saúl's hands tracing down Gerardo's back and clutching his ass.

Then Gerardo pushes him away.

GERARDO (CONT'D)

First we eat. Can make some drinks
for us.

SAÚL

Okay, okay.

GERARDO

We need to celebrate.

Saúl sings to Gerardo the Juan Gabriel's song. Gerardo joins in as he stirs the pot.

INT. GERARDO'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - LATER

The two say the Lord's Prayer in Spanish before dinner.

SAÚL

*Thank you, Universe, for allowing
me to be here, all alone with
Gerardo. Just me and him.*
**Gracias, universo, por dejarme
estar solo, solo, solo con Gerardo.
Solo él y yo.**

Gerardo looks at Saúl in a doting, caring way.

INT. GERARDO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The two have sex in Gerardo's bed. It's passionate and sweaty. Saúl is a bottom and after Gerardo climaxes the two cuddle in bed. Saúl knocks something off the bedside table.

SAÚL (CONT'D)

Oh, sorry. Sorry, sorry, sorry. I think Cassandro's a top. He and I are so different.

GERARDO

I don't like when you talk about him like he's a real person.

SAÚL

He's also very daring and really fun and sexy. Don't you think he's sexy?

Gerardo groans.

GERARDO

I mean, yeah, but... I liked you better when you were just a regular luchador.

SAÚL

He'll come around. He'll grow up.

GERARDO

I like the way you are.

SAÚL

Yeah, 'cause you like fucking little weak topos.

GERARDO

Bastard. Stop it.

SAÚL

Hija de la chingada...

Gerardo growls and grabs his wrists. They play wrestles in bed, with Gerardo pinning a writhing Saúl down and smothering him, then kissing him.

Saúl squeals.

GERARDO

Where's Cassandro now?

Gerardo easily holds down Saúl as he tries to fight back. Then the wrestling relaxes into more tender romantic kisses.

Gerardo rolls over on his back.

GERARDO (CONT'D)

I got to get a beer.

SAÚL

Okay.

He slips on underwear and walks to the main room. Alone, Saúl looks at the child's baseball hat hanging on the wall. Saúl hears Gerardo in the kitchen open the fridge and take out a beer. Saúl hears the sound of a beer can popping open.

EXT. SOFTBALL FIELD - AFTERNOON

Yocasta and Saúl are in Yocasta's old beat-up car watching Eduardo play in the softball game. Yocasta is in the driver's seat. Saúl is miserable that they are here again.

Saúl angrily gets out of the car and walks around to her driver side window.

SAÚL (CONT'D)

Let's go, Mom. Let's go, scoot over.

Vámonos, ma. Vámonos, órale.

YOCASTA

Leave me be.

No, Saúl, déjame.

SAÚL

I'm going to take you somewhere special. Come on, let's go!

Te voy a llevar a un lugar bien bonito, vas a ver. Órale, ya estuvo.

Yocasta shifts over to the passenger seat as Saul gets in the drivers side.

SAÚL (CONT'D)

I'm telling you, you're gonna love this place. All right? It's really lovely.

Vas a ver, te va a encantar este lugar que te voy a llevar. Bonito, bonito.

Saul drives the car away.

INT/EXT. YOCASTA'S CAR - AFTER

Saul is now driving the car. Saúl pulls into a beautiful fancy neighborhood.

They look out at the houses for a while. Saúl turns on the radio.

Yocasta points to a fancy house passing by.

YOCASTA

I have a huge crush on the guy who lives there. I used to do his laundry, he smelled incredible.
Mira, en esa casota vive un güey que me encanta. Le hacía el laundry y me encantaba el olor.

SAÚL

Is he single?
¡Está soltero?

YOCASTA

Nah. Married, with two kids. I'm doomed.
No, hombre. Casado, con dos hijos. Estoy perdida.

SAÚL

Oh, no. Not again!
Ay, no, otra vez la mula al trigo.

They pass a mansion with a pool.

YOCASTA

Look. See that gnarly tree over there? The woman who lives there is a bed-wetter. Her bedsheets were always soiled.
Mira. Ahí donde está ese árbol ahí medio chueco, ahí vive una viejilla toda meada. Siempre me entregaba las sábanas todas manchadas.

Yocasta mimes picking up a crusty towel and shakes her head. Saúl giggles.

SAÚL

Gross!
¡Guácala!

YOCASTA

And her husband! I'm pretty sure he jerked off at least three times a day because the towels were always stiff! They stood up on their own.
¡Y su viejo! Se me hace que se tocaba tres veces al día porque... ¡siempre me entregaba las toallas así! Se paraban solas.

SAÚL
Seriously? Damn.
¿En serio? Ay, cabrón. No mames.

YOCASTA
It was gross! I can't think of any other explanation.
Yo no sé qué--

SAÚL
Look, mom.
Mira, ma.

YOCASTA
Sorry for being so crass.
Perdóname que esté de pelada, mijo.

SAÚL
Check it out. Here we are.
Mira nomás, mira nomás. Ahí está.

Saúl pulls up in front of a beautiful sandstone house, not as big as the others, but nice. The lights are off and there is a FOR SALE sign out front. He turns off the car. Yocasta looks at it, her eyes sunken. She is frail and deathly pale.

SAÚL (CONT'D)
For sale.
Se vende.

YOCASTA
But, son... We can't afford this.
Hijo, pero, no nos alcanza para tanto.

SAÚL
Just you wait. A few fights here and there in different cities. I'll get a loan. We'll figure it out. Let's go. Come on, Mom! I have a surprise for you in the back, come on.
Tú dame chance. Unas luchitas, por aquí, por allá en diferentes ciudades. Y luego pido prestado. Ahí vemos. Mira, ven. Venga, ma. Hay una sorpresita aquí atrás, ven.

Saúl looks at the house with pride. Yocasta's face, looking out at the house, is filled with sadness.

SAÚL (CONT'D)
Come here! Come on, hurry!
¡Ven! ¡Ándele, vente!

Saúl pulls her out and they sneak into the back of the house. Saúl strips to his underwear and jumps into the pool. Yocasta shakes her head and tries to get him out.

He is playful and calls to her. She smiles. In a matter of moments, she in her bra and panties and jumps in.

Mother and son splash and laugh in the backyard pool. Saúl is in heaven.

YOCASTA

You're going bald.
Te vas a quedar pelón.

SAÚL

Don't even say it. No, don't say it! When we get this house, I'll make it a heart-shaped pool.
Ni lo digas. ¡No, no lo digas!
Cuando la tengamos la casa, le voy a poner así, en forma de corazón.

YOCASTA

Like a heart?
¿De corazón?

SAÚL

Yes.
Sí.

YOCASTA

Why?
¿Por qué?

SAÚL

Just because. Just to be faggy.
Nomás, por joto, nomás.

YOCASTA

Oh, son.
Ay, mijo.

They both float in the pool, enjoying the water.

INT. LUCHA VENUE AUDITORIUM - LATE AFTERNOON

Saúl and Sabrina lay in the ring, post workout.

SAÚL

It's beautiful. It's got a yellow kitchen. I want to buy it as soon as possible.

INT. SAÚL 'S CAR - ALLEY - NIGHT

Saúl and Sabrina smoke cigarettes, parked. She waits for a moment, decides to get a little personal for the first time.

SABRINA
Where's your dad?

SAÚL
No.

SABRINA
It sounds like a story.

SAÚL
Oh, no, there's nothing much to tell, no.

SABRINA
Yeah, I don't believe that.

Saúl thinks for a minute. Then slowly he opens up.

SAÚL
So... my mom met him at a party when she was... she was very young. And, um, and they started to have an affair, instantly. That lasted years. But he had a wife. And then he had many kids. My mom was so in love with him. I think she still is.

SABRINA
So you-you knew him?

Saúl pauses, takes a long drag of cigarette.

SAÚL
Yeah. Yeah, he introduced me to lucha libre. Took me to a few matches.

SABRINA
You don't... you don't see him no more?

SAÚL
No, not for a while. I came out when I was 15. And he's very... He's a lot into Jesus. So, one day, he just stopped coming.

Sabrina nods, gives him space.

INT. DONUT SHOP - LATE NIGHT

Young Eduardo and Young Saúl sitting at the counter of an all-night donut shop. Young Eduardo is seen indirectly, obscured. Menudo's "Claridad" plays on the shop's jukebox in the corner.

Young Eduardo dips his doughnut into his cup of black coffee and passes it to Young Saúl.

Young Saúl takes the doughnut and savors a bite.

Young Saúl dunks the last piece of his doughnut into his father's cup, watching the doughnut fall apart into a soggy mess. The powdered sugar from the doughnut swirls into a whirlpool.

Music begins.

MONTAGE:

EXT. STREETS - DAY - MONTAGE

Saúl runs as training, faster.

EXT. SABRINA'S BACKYARD - DAY - MONTAGE

Sabrina coaches Saúl as he lifts weights.

EXT. WRESTLING VENUE - DAY - MONTAGE

Lorenzo smokes cigarettes as one of his cronies takes pictures of Cassandro posing on an old point and shoot 35mm camera.

EXT. EL PASO STREET - DAY - MONTAGE

We see hands putting up a makeshift flyer on telephone poles, photocopied and typewritten, with one of the photos of Cassandro advertising him on a fight card.

INT. WRESTLING VENUE - NIGHT - MONTAGE

Backstage at a fight, Sabrina unhappily watches as Lorenzo flatters Saúl, puts his arm around Saúl's shoulder and showers him with compliments.

LATER

In the ring: Saúl, as Cassandro, is fighting and winning against more luchadores, one a wrestler in a lizard costume.

The crowds are bigger. Gerardo fights in his camouflage lucha outfit.

Fighting the lizard man, blood covers his face pouring down from his forehead with dramatic effect. With each victory the crowd cheers louder.

CUT TO:

We see grown macho men in the audience pump their fist for Cassandro.

INT. LARGER WRESTLING ARENA - NIGHT - MONTAGE

Cassandro, in a bigger ring, fights three luchadores from a ladder and with break-away chairs. In the crowd, we see a skinny teenage boy wearing a Cassandro-like tiara and cheering loudly.

INT. WRESTLING ARENA - NIGHT - MONTAGE

Smash cut to a hulking lucha libre wrestler dressed as an astronaut swinging a fluorescent light tube onto the face of another luchador. The bulb shatters into a million pieces and blood pours from the fighter's forehead.

A luchador jumps on Sabrina's back, and smashes her with a 2x4. Another wrestler tosses thumbtacks onto the ring's mat and throws the astronaut onto the ground, his back now pierced with tacks.

The crowd screams as blood trickles down the mat and from the ropes. It's a chaotic scene, and blood, real blood, covers everyone.

Into the arena steps Saúl as Cassandro. The music changes to a disco song and the spotlight catches him. He is carrying a baseball bat and is wearing a lace cocktail dress and a tiara.

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT - MONTAGE

Lorenzo hands Saúl a huge wad of cash after a fight. Saúl, in pain from the fights, injects himself with a painkiller.

EXT. SAÚL'S HOUSE - DAY - MONTAGE

Saúl leads his mom out front of their house and reveals the shiny new red Harley. Yocasta can't believe it.

INT. DIVE BAR, JUÁREZ - NIGHT - MONTAGE

Saúl clinks glasses with Lorenzo as money is counted.

EXT. DIVE BAR, JUÁREZ - NIGHT - MONTAGE

Saúl, Sabrina, Yocasta and Felipe dance as they celebrate Saúl's birthday. He blows out the candles as all cheer.

END MONTAGE

INT. SAÚL'S HOME - NIGHT

Saúl lights two cigarettes off the burner of the gas stove.

He enters the living room and looks at his mother lying on the couch. He smokes both cigarettes at once.

SAÚL
Where's yours?
¿Y el tuyo?

Saúl gives her one cigarette.

Suddenly the sound of running from outside the house shakes the window. Dogs barking. Saúl looks out the window. He sees two figures run by in the darkness.

Then another.

His mother hears them from the couch.

YOCASTA
Who's that son?
¿Quién es, miijo?

SAÚL
Just some migrants. They've crossed over.
Unos paisanos, ma. Están cruzando.

YOCASTA
(weak)
Tell them to come inside, give them some food. There are chili beans in the fridge.
Diles que entren, dales algo de comer. En el refri hay chile y frijoles.

SAÚL
They're already gone.
No, ya se fueron.

Saúl looks out the window into the darkness of their yard, remembering. His mother quietly smokes.

YOCASTA

They must be hungry. Thirsty.
Deben tener hambre. Sed.

SAÚL

They're gone, Mom.
Pero ya se fueron, ma.

YOCASTA

Sometimes they have little kids with them.
A veces vienen con sus niños chiquitos.

Saúl understands she hasn't really understood him. It worries him a little. He sits down, inspects pill bottles on table.

SAÚL

Are these empty? Are you taking them?
¿Te las acabaste? ¿Te las estás tomando?

YOCASTA

Yes, son. I ran out last night.
Sí, mijo. Anoche se me terminaron.

Saúl puts the bottle down, worried.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Saúl rolls his suitcase as a MAN passes.

MAN IN STREET

Hey, blondie. Looking to score? Party in a bag? No?
Ey, güero. ¿No quieres fiesta? ¿Fiesta pa' llevar? ¿No?

Saúl wags his finger "no." Saúl continues, stops at a El Hijo Del Santo mural on the side of a building.

INT. LORENZO'S OFFICE - DAY

Lorenzo is on the phone. Saúl and Felipe sit, waiting for him to finish the call.

LORENZO

(into phone)
Yeah, man. Don't try to lowball me.
(MORE)

LORENZO (CONT'D)

*You know what's at stake here.
That's too much, I can't make that
work.*

**Sí, pues. Bueno, pero no me estás
haciendo eso. Pues si sabes muy
bien que esto yo no lo puedo
plantear. O sea, ¿de cuánto estamos
hablando? Eso es mucho. Yo no
puedo. Yo no puedo con esos
términos.**

Lorenzo hangs up, turns his attention to Saúl.

SAÚL

Good afternoon, Lorenzo.
Buenas tardes, Lorenzo.

LORENZO

What's up?
¿Qué húbole?

SAÚL

*You know... just wondering about
Monterrey. I'm a little short on
cash...*

**Qué hubo, pues viendo lo de
Monterrey. Es que ando un poco
necesitado de lana, entonces...**

LORENZO

*No, man. Monterrey fell through.
But check this out. Palacio de los
Deportes in Mexico City, man! Son
of Santo wants to put on a big
fucking show! He's looking for a
rival fit for the challenge.
Someone different, worthy of him,
and I thought you could be it.*

**No, pues... Ya valió algo mal lo de
Monterrey. Pero checa este dato.
¡Palacio de los Deportes de la
Ciudad de México, cabrón! El Hijo
del Santo quiere armar un pinche
show mamalón. Y anda buscando un
pinche rival a su altura. Alguien
distinto, digno para él. Y pensé
que tú eras el pinche rival.**

SAÚL

(shocked)
Against Son of Santo?
¿Contra el Hijo del Santo?

FELIPE
The one and only.
El mismísimo.

LORENZO
You have your work cut out for you.
**Te tienes que comer un pinche
 pollote bien bañadote.**

SAÚL
I'm not fucking this up.
No, no la voy a cagar.

LORENZO
Will he step up, or wuss out?
**¿Y tú qué crees? ¿Que jale o que se
 rane?**

FELIPE
I think he'll wuss out.
Yo creo que se arrana.

Saúl LAUGHS.

SAÚL
*So, that's how it is? Good to know,
 man. I thought you knew me. Well
 done, Lorenzo. Good job. Now that's
 a deal.*
**¿Así vas a estar? Algo-- vas a ver,
 ¿eh? Vas a ver, no, ya habíamos
 quedado. Eso, Lorenzo, bien. Está
 fácil así hacer negocios.**

Saúl shakes Lorenzo's hand as Felipe closes the door.

EXT. GERARDO'S HOUSE - EARLY AFTERNOON

Saúl is pacing the living room. Gerardo listens, excited.

GERARDO
 It's what you always wanted. And
 the money.

SAÚL
 Yeah, and like 22,000 people, they
 say. Yeah. That way, I can get the
 house for my mom.

GERARDO
 I'm so proud of you.

SAÚL
 Why don't you come with me, then?
 Come.

GERARDO
 No.

SAÚL
 Come on. Be my man. Come on.

GERARDO
 I'll still be watching you.

SAÚL
 From home. With your kids. And your
 wife. On your sofa. Big like in
 your home theater.

GERARDO
 You don't understand.

SAÚL
 I don't...

GERARDO
 You don't have...

SAÚL
 I don't have what? What don't I
 have? I don't have a family?

Saúl looks off. His hands are shaking. He feels like he's
 just vomited.

He races to the door.

SAÚL (CONT'D)
 Fuck you!
¡Chinga tu madre!

Gerardo rises, tries to stop him.

GERARDO
 Saúl. No, the back door.

EXT. GERARDO'S HOUSE - EARLY AFTERNOON

Saúl runs out. Gerardo rushes to the door. Saúl is shaking on
 the front porch.

SAÚL
 Fuck you!
¡Chinga tu madre!

GERARDO

What are you doing? What are you doing? Come in here. Saúl, get in here. Come on.

Saúl doesn't move. Gerardo starts to seem a little panicked. Saúl looks at him and then around at the yards of the nearby houses. He suddenly knows why Gerardo is so tense. Gerardo gestures for him.

SAÚL

Fucking hell.

Gerardo chases Saúl around the car to get him inside.

SAÚL (CONT'D)

Everyone should see us! Everyone!

Saúl spins around, raising his voice to the other houses. Gerardo freaks out.

GERARDO

Shut up! Get in the house!
¡Cállate! ¡Adentro!

SAÚL

Everyone!

INT. GERARDO'S HOUSE - EARLY AFTERNOON

Gerardo pulls him inside and closes the door. He pushes Saúl who crumples onto the floor of the entryway. Saúl keeps yelling out.

SAÚL

Your kids!

Gerardo smothers Saúl's mouth with his giant paw of a hand. Eventually Saúl quiets down and lets his body slacken.

GERARDO

Fucking idiot. What are you doing?
Shut up! Come on, stop.
Pinche... No, ¿qué haces? ¡Cálmate!
Ya, cálmate.

Saúl slowly and gently peels Gerardo's hand from his mouth. He kisses Gerardo. Gerardo is tense and cold. Saúl whispers to him as he kisses and caresses his body.

INT. GERARDO'S BATHROOM

Saúl and Gerardo sit in a hot bath together. Gerardo looks down, torn about something.

GERARDO

The other wrestlers think you're getting too big.

SAÚL

What do you mean? That's a good thing, no?

GERARDO

You're pushing things.

Gerardo gets out of the bath. He stands with his back to Saúl.

SAÚL

So it's my fault? Are you saying it's my fault?

GERARDO

That's not what I'm saying. I'm worried about you. Things before were... Everything had a place.

SAÚL

Yeah. I was there when you wanted to fuck me and out of the way when you didn't.

Gerardo is silent.

SAÚL (CONT'D)

I want you to leave her. You heard me.

Gerardo stiffens. He does not say anything.

Gerardo walks out of the bathroom, leaving Saúl alone in the tub.

INT. SAÚL'S CAR - NIGHT

Saúl drives home pensively.

INT. SAÚL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Saúl walks into his house. Many people are already there, with grave faces. An older woman, Saúl's aunt, sees him and hugs him.

SAÚL

Hello.
Hola.

SAÚL'S AUNT

Sweetie. I'm so sorry.
Mijo, lo siento.

FAMILY MEMBER

It was her heart, Saúl.
Su corazón ya no aguantó, Saúl.

INT. YOCASTA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Yocasta's lifeless body is lying in her bed. Candles and herbs surround her. Family and friends have gathered to mourn. Saúl enters the bedroom.

His cousins talk to the medicine man.

Family members looks at him with empathetic eyes. Saúl ignores everyone in the room. He approaches the bed and touches his mother's cheek.

GRIEVING FAMILY MEMBER

We didn't know what to do.
Mijo, no supimos qué hacer.

MEDICINE MAN

*The burial will be tomorrow at 2:00
p.m.*
**El entierro será mañana a las 2:00
p.m.**

Around him, family members have hushed conversations.

LATER

Mourners usher themselves out. The room is silent.

Saúl goes to his mom, caresses her cheek, gazing at her.

He goes and gets his mom's make-up kit from her bag. He lays it all out in the ritualistic fashion just as his mother used to, under the Catholic icons and Dia de Muertos imagery.

He kneels beside her bed and carefully, tenderly, does her make-up. It's the best damn make-up job he's ever done.

He looks at her as if she might still open her eyes and see him again. She looks beautiful.

INT. SAUL'S HOUSE - BURIAL CEREMONY - DAY

Saúl stands surrounded by Sabrina and his extended family. The Medicine Man places herbs in the coffin, which is already filled with many of Yocasta's belonging - clothes, jewelry.

Saúl crosses himself.

The Medicine Man does a ritual with smoke over Yocasta lying in bed.

MEDICINE MAN (CONT'D)

Today is a good day to die.

Hoy es un buen día para morir.

Saúl looks to his mother and the icon of Christ above her.

INT. SAÚL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Saúl's house is messier than before his mother died. There are old fast food wrappers, dirty dishes.

Walking by Yocasta's room, Saúl pauses to look at her now empty bed.

INT. SAÚL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Saúl lights only one cigarette off the gas stove.

EXT. SABRINA'S BACKYARD - NIGHT

Sabrina and Saúl are watching an old movie projected from a beat-up video projector onto a bedsheet in her backyard. Sabrina wears an old ripped T-shirt with a logo for the band "The Specials." Sabrina's daughter and teenagers from the neighborhood have come to watch the movie.

They are watching Santo y Blue Demon contra los Monstruos (1970) and cheering Santo, doing their own moves and playing acting in the throw of the projector. Saúl is wrapped up in the movie.

SABRINA

She's gonna be watching over you in Mexico City. Everyone will. You're gonna be all over TV.

Saúl is barely listening, so intent on the movie.

SAÚL

Shit yeah?

SABRINA

Shit yeah.

She swigs a beer. This last line hits Saúl. He starts to feel scared.

EXT. MEXICO CITY - DAY

Aerials of Mexico City. Sabrina and Saúl marvel at the city - they've never seen an urban center like this before.

EXT. PALACIO DE LOS DEPORTES - AFTERNOON

The magnificent domed stadium towers above Saúl and Sabrina as they enter the building. Saúl is wearing sunglasses and a zebra print top.

SABRINA

It's huge.

Saúl and Sabrina are met at the entrance by an assistant.

RICARDO

Cassandro! Welcome, how are you?

What's your name?

¡Cassandro! Bienvenido, ¿cómo estás? ¿Tú cómo te llamas?

SABRINA

Sabrina.

RICARDO

Nice to meet you. I'm Ricardo. Come on. My uncle is waiting for you.

Mucho gusto, Sabrina, yo me llamo Ricardo. Mi tío los está esperando.

Ricardo leads them inside.

INT. PALACIO DE LOS DEPORTES AUDITORIUM - AFTERNOON

Saúl and Sabrina sit in the cavernous auditorium with the event producer. Men are working to put up a professional ring in the middle. Others are hanging lights on the grid. Saúl can't believe the size of the place, with its 16,000 seats.

PRODUCER

Of course, Santo always wins, you know that. Your goal is to prove you're worthy of fighting the king. He's very excited to work with you. Only the greatest artists have played here.

(MORE)

PRODUCER (CONT'D)

*He saw you in video or something.
You're gonna like him. I mean...
he's the Son of Santo.*

Va a estar cabrón, ganarle al Hijo del Santo. Lo que tienes que lograr es que toda esta gente, hasta la última silla, te idolatre. Que está bastante emocionado en conocerte, por cierto. Quiere que le enseñes la Vicente Guerrero que la vio en no sé qué video. Es un tipazo. Te va a caer muy bien. Digo, es El Hijo del Santo.

SAÚL

The legend!
¡La leyenda!

PRODUCER

Exactly.
La leyenda, ¿no?

SAÚL

A living legend!
¡Es la leyenda viviente!

PRODUCER

For now, get some rest. Try not to party too hard while in Mexico City.

Mira más, descansa. No vayan a agarrar mucho pinche desmadre aquí en la Ciudad de México.

The producer winks at Saúl.

SAÚL

No, of course not. No, we're focused.

Ah, no, no. No, estamos concentrados.

INT. NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

Sabrina and Saúl are out at a gay night club in Mexico City. Saúl dances through the crowd until he finds Sabrina and dances with her.

LATER

Sabrina orders at the bar.

SABRINA
Two tequilas, please.
Dos tequilas, porfa.

Saúl joins her at the bar.

SAÚL
 Sabri.

SABRINA
 What's up?

He reveals a large bag of coke in his coat pocket.

SABRINA (CONT'D)
 Hey. What is that? Put it away. Put
 it away.

SAÚL
 For after the fight.

SABRINA
 Put it in your pocket.

He playfully puts it away.

SAÚL
 Okay. Okay. Mm. Pocket. Okay, okay.
 Pocket. Mm.

Saúl hugs Sabrina, enjoying the moment.

SAÚL (CONT'D)
 I love you. I love you.

SABRINA
 Okay. I love you, too. I love you,
 too. Yeah, yeah.

SAÚL
 Love you very much.

Saúl looks into the crowd and disappears into a sea of dancing men.

Sabrina gets the drinks for both of them from the bar, bopping to the music. When she turns back she sees Saúl on the dance floor, now dancing with a cute young buff guy, MAN IN CLUB.

SABRINA
 Here. Saúl?

Saúl looks over from dancing. He's grinding with the man, who slides his hands over Saúl's hip. The music blares and lights flash.

INT. CLUB BACK ROOM

Saúl and the man do a line of coke together.

SAÚL

Hey, do you want some?
¿Quieres un poquito?

MAN IN CLUB

Yeah, there you go. You're from the north, right?
Sí, eso. Eres norteno, ¿verdad?

SAÚL

How did you know?
¿Cómo sabes?

MAN IN CLUB

(mimicking Saúl's accent)
You have a thick accent. Are you from Chihuahua?
Porque hablas acá, bien golpeado. ¿Eres de Chihuahua?

SAÚL

(yelling over music)
I'm from El Paso.
Del Chuco, del Paso.

MAN IN CLUB

So you're a gringo! Welcome, then.
Ah, entonces eres pocho. Bienvenido, paisano.

SAÚL

Thanks.
Gracias.

MAN IN CLUB

What brings you here?
¿Qué te trae por aquí?

SAÚL

(flirting)
I was looking for you.
Andaba busque y busque.

MAN IN CLUB

No, seriously. Come on, tell me.
No, ya bien. Ya bien, pláticame.

He caresses Saúl's arms.

SAÚL

The truth is... I'm a luchador. I'm fighting Son of Santo tomorrow night.

Mira, la neta es que... Soy luchador. Y voy a enfrentarme al Hijo del Santo mañana.

MAN IN CLUB

Yeah, right... liar.

Sí, chucha y tus calzonzotes.

SAÚL

No, I'm serious.

En serio, es neta.

MAN IN CLUB

Well then, nice to meet you, I'm Selena.

Y yo, mira, y yo soy Selena.

SAÚL

My pleasure.

¿Y luego?

MAN IN CLUB

I saw that poster on the street, girl. You're cute, really cute, but that ain't you.

Ya vi el cartel en la calle, querida. Si estás cuera, estás cuera, pero esa no eres tú.

SAÚL

Lucha. Lucha libre. Lucha libre, libre. Lucha libre. I'm free.

Lucha. Lucha libre. Lucha libre, libre. Lucha libre. Soy libre.

Energized, Saúl walks out to return to the dance floor.

INT. TAXI CAB - NIGHT

Sabrina is sitting next to Saúl in the back of the cab looking pissed. Saúl rambles and mumbles into her shoulder, slurring his words.

At a stoplight, he manages to open the door to lean out and vomit, but can't get back up. Sabrina has to reach over to help him sit up and close the door.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - BATHROOM

Saúl washes his hands. He catches his reflection of himself in the mirror, studying what he sees.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

It's 4am. Sabrina is passed out asleep in the single bed. Saúl is sitting in a chair by the window, smoking a cigarette and drinking a beer with a few more empty bottles in front of him.

Saúl crushes the cigarette out in the ashtray and lights a new one.

SAÚL

Sabri?

He says it calmly. He waits for her to move.

SAÚL (CONT'D)

Sabri. Sabri!

Sabrina opens an eye and sees Saúl collapsed on the chair.

SAÚL (CONT'D)

They sold the house. The one up the hill with the heart-shaped swimming pool. It's gone. They bought it. Somebody bought it. It's gone, Sabri.

Sabrina sits up in bed, listening.

SAÚL (CONT'D)

Ah, we were gonna be dancing. Living room with a fireplace and smoking in the kitchen, the huge yellow kitchen that was there.

(then, pained)

Oh, fuck. Ay.

La puta madre. Ay.

Saúl pauses, taking a drag in his cigarette. Sabrina gets out of bed and goes to Saúl.

SAÚL (CONT'D)

That-that was the only reason I wanted to be here.

Saúl collects himself, looks to his cigarette.

SAÚL (CONT'D)

*But it's over. I'm done. Last one.
I'm done. No more.*

**Pero ya. Ya. La última. Y ya. Ya no
más.**

Saúl looks at her with hooded lids. His eyes open. Sabrina embraces him.

SABRINA

Saúl.

SAÚL

No more.

SABRINA

Don't.

SAÚL

Hey. Hey.

SABRINA

Come on.

SAÚL

No.

SABRINA

Come on.

She guides him to slowly to bed.

SAÚL

Sí. I love you, girl.
Sí. Te quiero, morra.

SABRINA

I love you too.
Yo también te quiero.

INT. ARENA WINGS - NIGHT

Lorenzo, wearing a slick suit, stands with Saúl by the stage door. Lorenzo slaps him on the back.

LORENZO

*Twenty-two thousand people are
coming to see you, man. I told you.
We made it!*
**22 mil personas vienen a verte,
cabrón. Te lo dije, ilo logramos!**

SABRINA

*Yeah.***Ey.**

LORENZO

*Do you have someone watching at home?***¿Tú te crees que te estén viendo en tu casita?**

SAÚL

*No. You know, because...***No. No, porque...***(he thinks, then)**Well, maybe my dad. Yeah, maybe him. I hope so.***Bueno, por ahí mi papá. Yo creo que mi papá. Ojalá.**

Lorenzo puts his hand on Saúl's shoulder, walks away.

INT. ARENA MÉXICO - NIGHT

Saúl in a massive dressing room. Naked from the waist-up except for purple sequined elbow length opera gloves, he reaches into his pink rolling suitcase. He places the photo of his mother and the eagle feather on the dressing table. Then he carefully lays out and performs his make-up ritual. He applies lipstick, powder, blush. He slips into the rest of his outfit.

It's his most flamboyant Cassandro outfit yet. Towering feather plumage, a floor length evening gown. He looks stunning.

He can hear the crowd chanting from the stadium.

CROWD (CHANTING)

Santo! Santo! Santo!

INT. SAÚL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

We hear the deep voice of Young Eduardo call and yell at the wrestlers on the TV.

ECU of Young Saúl's eyes watching.

Eduardo woops in delight. Young Saúl watches in hushed awe, taking it all in. He joins his father in a cheer.

YOUNG EDUARDO/YOUNG SAÚL

Santo! Santo! Santo! Santo!

INT. RING - NIGHT

A microphone is lowered from the ceiling to the announcer in middle of ring.

ANNOUNCER

Ladies and gentlemen, I'd like to welcome you all to the Palace of Lucha Libre! Tonight's main event features a terrific luchador! He came all the way from El Paso, Texas. And also straight from the beauty parlor! Let's give a warm welcome to... CASSAHHHHN-DRO!

¡Señoras y señores, sean ustedes bienvenidos al Palacio de la Lucha Libre! Hoy, en su presentación estelar de un magnífico luchador, el cual viene directamente desde El Paso, Texas. Y por si esto fuera poco, ¡recién desempacado del salón de belleza! ¡Vamos a recibir con una fuerte ovación a ¡CASSAHHHHN-DRO!

At the stage door, Saúl pauses for a second. He looks down at his beautiful purple elbow length evening gloves. Then he looks at the TV cameras and the blazing lights. He looks right at the lens of one of the cameras, imagining where that picture will end up. For a moment he is terrified. He buries his fear as deep down as he can. He summons up everything he has.

He bursts out into the arena. Gloria Gaynor's "I Will Survive" suddenly rocks the arena. The crowd doesn't know what's hit them. They begin to boo and jeer.

Sabrina cheers him on from the crowd.

Cassandro ascends the ring, his theme song blaring. Shot from behind, silhouetted, Cassandro is having his "A Star is Born" moment.

He feasts in the lights, the crowds, the music.

Sabrina watches from her seat, in awe. But the Mexico City crowd isn't used to Cassandro's exotico.

The Referee moves to check Cassandro's wrestling attire.

REFEREE

Ready, Cassandro? Let me check you.

Thanks.

Venga, Cassandro, lo reviso, por favor. Gracias.

Undaunted, Cassandro encourages them, grinning and waving his hands for more. He feeds off them.

Suddenly, the music stops and the lights go off.

ANNOUNCER

*And now, ladies and gentlemen...
let's welcome the descendant of a
legend! He's the true heir of the
Silver Mask! Let's give a big round
of applause to... The Son of Santo!*
**Ahora, señoras y señores... vamos a
recibir ¡al descendiente de una
leyenda! ¡Es el gran legado que ha
dejado la Máscara de Plata! Vamos a
recibir con un fuerte aplauso a...
¡El Hijo del Santo!**

The lights come up as the crowd explodes. Like a god is about to appear.

CROWD (CHANTING)

Santo! Santo! Santo! Santo!

Santo bounds into the ring and looms over Cassandro like a giant. Santo bellows like a bull.

The two warm-up and shake hands. The battle begins.

The crowd is screaming for Santo, but soon enough they find themselves struck by Cassandro's confidence, his bravado. His powerful style. They're entertained, and soon they are falling for him too.

The fight is epic, with Santo and Cassandro working together to put on a great show. Cassandro is, for the first time, fighting someone who he respects, and it gives the fight a whole new level of depth, chemistry, and excitement.

Sabrina watches, holding her breath the entire time. She can't believe they're here but also feels she's left out and forgotten now that they are.

Towards the end of the fight, Cassandro takes down Santo in a head lock. The crowd loses it. They can't believe it.

Santo spins Saúl into a pin.

REFEREE

One, two...
Uno, dos...

Saúl kicks out of the pin, spins Santo into a hold.

CROWD

¡Puto, puto! ¡Puto, puto!

REFEREE

*One, two...***Uno, dos...**

Santo now spins out of the hold as the two continue to battle. Saúl spins Santo into another hold, grabbing arm.

In the ring, Santo looks up at Saúl, who is supposed to let him go now. But Saúl is not letting go.

EL HIJO DEL SANTO

*(whispering)**Let me go!***¡Suéltame!**

WOMAN IN CROWD

*Let him go, motherfucker!***¡Suéltalo, hijo de tu puta madre!**

MAN IN CROWD

*Hey, let go! Santo! Santo! Santo!***¡Oye, cuera, suéltame! ¡Santo!****¡Santo! ¡Santo!**

Saúl doesn't hear him. He is entranced by the lights, the crowds, the screams. Suddenly he sees one of the large TV cameras on the side of the ring, filming them and beaming the image to TV sets all over Mexico. To his father. He looks directly into the camera and freezes.

We see a close-up of the eye of the TV camera lens, pushing into it....

CUT TO:

INT. SAÚL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Young Eduardo and Young Saúl sit on the couch together, watching a hulking luchador battle an exotico. Young Eduardo laughs at the mincing exotico.

YOUNG EDUARDO

Fucking exótico faggot.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. RING - NIGHT

Back in the ring with Santo, the sound is deafening. Something in Saúl snaps.

Sabrina sees this and gasps.

Saúl is frozen. The Referee pulls Saúl off Santo, who pushes him.

SANTO

What's wrong with you?
¿Qué te pasa, cabrón?

CROWD (CHANTING)

Faggot! Fagott!
¡Puto! ¡Puto!

Overcome, Cassandro rolls out of the ring and runs. Runs right out of the arena to the exit door as the Crowd get on their feet to see where he went.

The screaming mob looks around, confused. As does Lorenzo, Sabrina, the Referee, and Santo.

Then Santo points up to the balcony. A spotlight catches a lone figure standing high on the edge of the balcony. It is Cassandro. The crowd gasps.

Cassandro makes a flamboyant upward gesture with his arms. With that, he swan dives fifty feet right down into the audience below. He is caught by the crowd, and carried across the rippling hands and faces of the screaming masses.

Cassandro acts like he is floating in the sea, pantomiming swimming and crowd surfing. He then somersaults back into the ring, and Santo bellows.

Cassandro blows a kiss to the crowd and winks. They cheer him on. Sabrina and Lorenzo leading the cheer.

CROWD (CHANTING) (CONT'D)

Cassandro! Cassandro! Cassandro!

Cassandro leaps up on top of the ropes and nimbly dances along them like a tight rope walker. But Santo comes up behind him and yanks his legs, sending Cassandro toppling to the ground. It isn't long before Santo has him in a ghastly choke hold.

The fight is over, with Santo the winner as he must be.

The Referee holds the belt for Santo. Cassandro rushes to grab it, hands it to Santo himself. They share a hug.

Cassandro has come out on top nonetheless. The crowd loves him. As he bows and twirls in front of the audience, the crowd throws roses at him and screams.

LORENZO

Bravo!

A number of super fans start to scramble up into the ring. Sabrina muscles her way up too. She reaches Saúl in the spotlights, ecstatic.

Out of respect, Santo puts Cassandro on his shoulders and walks him around the ring. He is surrounded and his new fans reach out to try to touch his cape.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Saúl is in the cemetery where his mother is buried. The edges of the frame team with the colorful plastic blossoms, and the piles of them stretch on forever.

He sits at his mother's grave.

SAÚL

He carried me on his shoulders, and everyone was screaming.

Me llevó en hombros, toda la gente gritaba.

Tears fall from his eyes. He laughs a little through them. It's the first time we've seen Saúl cry.

INT. SAÚL'S CAR - CEMETERY - DAY

Saúl lifts up an unlit cigarette from the ashtray. He studies it a moment, decides to put it back.

In his rearview mirror he sees a man now at the grave.

It is his father, EDUARDO. Now age 59.

Saúl freezes, he starts the car and drives away.

INT. JUÁREZ BAR - NIGHT

Back in Juárez, Saúl is out drinking with his wrestling crew to celebrate his success in Mexico City. Gerardo sits amongst them at the bar.

SAÚL

I was talking to Santo's team. They want to set something up in New York, or maybe Boston.

(MORE)

SAÚL (CONT'D)

I don't remember which cities exactly.

No, si estuve hablando ahí con la gente del Santo. Como para ir a montar algo ahí en Nueva York, o en Boston. O algo así, no me acuerdo qué ciudades.

EL MYSTERIOSO

So, just between us, what was he like?

Oye, ya así, en corto, ¿cómo se porta?

SAÚL

He's a nice guy.
Bien.

WRESTLER #2

Did he take off his mask backstage?
¿No se quitó la máscara en el camerino?

SAÚL

No way, he's the real deal. They say he never takes it off, not even when he sleeps.

No, pues es de verdad. Sí, ni siquiera para dormir, dicen. En serio.

Gerardo doesn't say anything but drinks his beer quietly.

EL MYSTERIOSO

How much did you make?

Oye, ¿como cuánta feria te dieron?

SAÚL

A fair amount, yeah. Get yourself a drink.

Pues bien, eh. Bien, pídete algo.

EL MYSTERIOSO

(to Bartender)

Get me another one.

Sí, échate otro trago.

As the conversation moves on, Saúl walks over to Gerardo. He leans in so that no one can hear them:

SAÚL

Hey.

¿Qué hubo?

Gerardo shifts uncomfortably.

SAÚL (CONT'D)

We can talk because they think we're talking about El Santo, so it's okay. I think we have to be together. I need you.

Gerardo drinks his beer, and tries to look like he's just listening to Saúl talk about Mexico City.

GERARDO

(loudly)

Did he show you his scalp collection?

¿Y te enseñó su colección de cabelleras?

SAÚL

What?

GERARDO

(louder)

Santo. The scalps. Did you see them?

Santo. Sus cabelleras. ¿Te las enseñó?

Gerardo continues to ignore him, growing more uncomfortable. He nods as if Saúl is saying something about Santo.

SAÚL

Okay, if you want to keep it a secret, we'll keep it a secret. It's fine. It's just that, you know... you can come to my place now. That way, she won't know. I promise I won't tell anyone. Never. Never. It's our secret. Ours.

GERARDO

She knows. She says she's taking the boys and leaving if it doesn't stop.

Saúl's heart drops. He knows it's over.

Gerardo plays it off like they are talking about something about Santo.

GERARDO (CONT'D)

(talking loudly now)

Do you think he'll give you a rematch?

¿Y a poco te va a dar la revancha?

SAÚL

Yes. I think so. That's what he said. I don't know when, but yes.

Sí, creo que sí. Dijo que sí. No sé cuándo pero sí.

GERARDO

What else did he show you?

¿Y qué más te presumió?

SAÚL

(painfully trying to play act the conversation)

He showed me the scalps and the... the lock of hair he took from Ultraman. Belts from the time he fought Blue Demon Jr. and Huracán Ramírez. And his trophies. It was full of trophies. Like I'd never seen before.

Todas las cabelleras, todo el... la cabellera que le ganó al Ultraman. El cinturón de campeonato que le ganó a Blue Demon Jr. Al Huracán Ramírez. Todos sus trofeos. Así, lleno de trofeos. Como nadie en la vida.

EL MYSTERIOSO

They say he's a real stand-up guy who treats everyone with respect.

Dicen que es bien gente, que trata a todos con madres.

WRESTLER #2

Look at you, Saúl. Rubbing elbows with royalty. That's amazing, Saúl. You made it! Congratulations, man.

Quién te viera, pinche Saúl. Codeándote con la nobleza, cabrón. Al huevo, pinche Saúl. ¡Ya la armaste! Felicidades, cabrón.

Two stools down, Saúl spots Felipe. He walks over to him.

SAÚL

Felipe.

FELIPE

What's up?
¿Diga?

SAÚL

You got some?
¿Traes mugrero?

FELIPE

Yeah, in the office. Let's go.
En la oficina tengo. Vamos.

SAÚL

Are you fucked up?
¿Estás chisquiado?

Felipe shrugs.

FELIPE

You know it.
Ya casi, ya casi.

Felipe starts to laugh. Saúl makes sure to make eye contact with Gerardo as he and Felipe disappear into the bathroom.

At the table of wrestlers, one of the wrestlers goes to use the bathroom, but comes right back.

EL MYSTERIOSO

Damn, Saúl's going to make out with that little gangster. I don't care that he bats for the other team, but why does he have to rub it in our faces?

Pinche Saúl ya se va a jainear con ese pinche halconcillo. A mí no me importa que sea del otro bando, ¿pero por qué nos lo tiene que estar restregando en la jeta?

WRESTLER #2

I know, man. If he's in the bathroom, I'm scared to pull my dick out. Wouldn't want to catch something.

Ya sé, ni me digas, cabrón. Si cuando voy al baño y está él da miedo sacarme esa madre porque no me vaya a pegar algo, ¿no, cabrón?

EL MYSTERIOSO

Don't flatter yourself.
No, tampoco fantasee.

Everybody laughs except Gerardo. He listens to all of this, his heart aching. After a moment, he gets up to leave.

GERARDO

*See you, fellas. I think I'll call
it a night.*
Se ven, camaradas. Yo ya.

WRESTLER #2

Already?
¿Qué, ya?

GERARDO

Yeah, good night.
Sí, gracias.

He turns and they quickly forget him, they're so drunk. Gerardo walks out. He is almost in tears.

INT. LORENZO'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Felipe taps coke out on his hand for Saúl.

FELIPE

Right from my hand, like a bird.
En la mano, como los pajaritos.

SAÚL

There it is. That's good.
Ahí está. Ven.

FELIPE

Sí.

Saúl snorts off Felipe's hand, moving to kiss him. Felipe gently pushes Saúl away again and lowers his head.

FELIPE (CONT'D)

I really can't do this.
No puedo, no puedo.

SAÚL

*It's okay, don't worry. Don't freak
out. It's okay.*
**Está bien, está bien. No te
preocupes, está bien. No te ondees.
Está todo bien.**

Felipe shakes his head.

FELIPE

I'm sorry.
Perdóname.

SAÚL
See you around, stud.
Nos vemos, mi rey.

Saúl exits the office.

INT. JUÁREZ BAR - NIGHT

Saúl drunkenly searches the bar after he leaves the office. He looks around at each table for Gerardo. But Gerardo is gone.

Saúl passes Lorenzo who is talking to a young up-and-coming luchador.

LORENZO
 (to the young luchador)
I want us to be friends.
Yo lo que quiero es ser tu amigo.

YOUNG LUCHADOR
Sí, señor.

LORENZO
Can I be your friend?
¿Me permites ser tu amigo?

YOUNG LUCHADOR
Yo quiero aprender.

LORENZO
Listen, you can be famous! You don't know your potential, but I have a nose for these things. Trust me.
Muy bien. Tú puedes llegar a ser famoso. Tú no sabes lo que tienes, pero mira, yo tengo olfato para eso. Confía en mí.

Drunkenly, Saúl stumbles his way out of the bar.

Music begins. Synth music, the opening theme song of a TV show.

CUT TO:

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - DAY

It is ONE YEAR LATER.

A bustling TV studio. Lights are being hung and positioned.

A CU of a pixelated video screen, showing a hulking man in a luchador mask surrounded by smoke effects. Music continues to play. A yellow title of the TV show appears:

"EXPERIENCIAS con El Hijo del Santo"

This is the recently retired El Hijo del Santo's new cable access talk show. Cassandro is tonight's guest. El Hijo del Santo is a little heavier than when Cassandro fought him in Mexico City. He now wears a boxy black business suit. But the iconic silver mask on his head is the same.

On the video screen, El Hijo greets the TV viewer.

EL HIJO DEL SANTO
*Welcome once again to Experiences
 with the Son of Santo.*
**Bienvenidos a una edición más de
 Experiencias con el Hijo del Santo.**

He opens a giant door and smoke pours out of the entrance. El Hijo enters a dramatic set, with all black walls, filled with podiums and glass cases filled with awards, locks of hair, and trophies.

EL HIJO DEL SANTO (CONT'D)
*I won this trophy a year ago at
 Palacio de los Deportes against a
 great luchador who was unknown back
 then. Although I defeated him, that
 night, a star was born.*
**Este trofeo lo gané hace un año en
 el Palacio de los Deportes frente a
 un gran luchador quien entonces era
 un perfecto desconocido. A pesar de
 que lo derroté, esa noche, surgió
 un gran ídolo.**

Santo makes his way to the stage.

EL HIJO DEL SANTO (CONT'D)
*Tonight, he will join us to look
 back on this time and so I can pay
 my respects and show my admiration
 to a pioneer of the gay community
 in the world of lucha libre.*
**Esta noche, nos acompaña para
 recordar esos grandes momentos y
 para poderle mostrar mis respetos y
 mi admiración a un pionero de la
 comunidad gay en la lucha libre.**

Santo continues to address his audience at the stage.

EL HIJO DEL SANTO (CONT'D)

He has changed the image of exótico wrestlers. Joining us tonight in Experiencias with the Son of Santo, my dear old friend, Cassandro the Exótico.

Él ha cambiado la imagen de los luchadores exóticos. Esta noche está con nosotros en Experiencias con El Hijo del Santo, mi querido y gran amigo, Cassandro el Exótico.

Saúl enters to big applause. He is interviewed by El Hijo del Santo on a set with a small table, a potted plant, and bright TV lighting. Saúl as Cassandro is in full make-up, hair teased up, and wearing a black silk shirt unbuttoned to the navel. His body seems stiffer, beaten up over the last four years. His forehead under the make-up is covered in razor-slash scars.

Audience cheer as Saúl gives Santo a hug in the middle of the stage.

EL HIJO DEL SANTO (CONT'D)

Welcome, dear friend.
Bienvenido, mi querido amigo.

SAÚL

Thank you so much.
Muchas gracias.

EL HIJO DEL SANTO

Do you want to fight, or talk?
¿Vamos a luchar o vamos a platicar?

SAÚL

No.

EL HIJO DEL SANTO

It's better if we talk, please have a seat. We will talk as friends. Cassandro, you know that our audience wants to learn new things about our old friends.
Mejor platicamos, ¿verdad? Toma asiento, por favor. Vamos a charlar entre amigos. Cassandro, tú sabes que al público de Experiencias pues le gusta conocer lo desconocido de sus conocidos.

Saúl and Santo sit down in the chairs.

SAÚL

Sure.

Claro que sí.

EL HIJO DEL SANTO

Tell us something.

Cuéntanos algo.

SAÚL

Well... For me... my greatest source of inspiration are women. I was raised by women. Women have helped me learn who I want to be, where I want to go, and where I come from. I have great admiration for Mother Teresa, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Marie Curie and for Princess Diana.

Bueno... Para mí, mi más grande fuente de inspiración son las mujeres. Crecí entre mujeres. Es entre mujeres con quien he encontrado quien quiero ser, hacia dónde quiero ir, de dónde vengo también. Admiro mucho a la Madre Teresa de Calcuta, a Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Marie Curie a la Princesa Diana.

(reflects, then)

Lady Anarquía, my friend and trainer. She's always been there. And... My mother, of course. My mother was the one who made me who I am.

A Lady Anarquía, mi amiga, mi entrenadora. Siempre estuvo conmigo. Y... Bueno, claro, sí, a mi madre. Mi madre es quien de alguna manera, gracias a ella, soy quien soy.

EL HIJO DEL SANTO

How have you overcome adversity and strife? What's your secret?

¿Cómo has logrado, después de tantas adversidades, de tantos tropiezos...? ¿Cuál es tu secreto?

SAÚL

I just try to be myself. Just being me. I think that's how.

Creo que siendo yo mismo. Siendo yo. Creo que es así.

EL HIJO DEL SANTO
What's next for Cassandro?
**¿Qué sigue en la carrera de
 Cassandro?**

SAÚL
*I have the pleasure to announce
 we're launching a world tour. We're
 bringing Mexican wrestling
 everywhere because it's the best in
 the world.*
**Tengo el placer de anunciarles que
 vamos a empezar una gira mundial.
 Vamos a llevar la lucha libre
 mexicana a todas partes del mundo
 porque es la mejor del mundo.**

The audience cheer and clap at this.

EL HIJO DEL SANTO
That's right.
Claro que sí.

SAÚL
We're taking it everywhere.
Por todos lados, todos lados.

EL HIJO DEL SANTO
*Cassandro, if you allow me, I would
 like to pass the mic to a young man
 who has a message for you.*
**Cassandro, si me permites, quiero
 cederle el micrófono a un joven que
 quiere enviarte un mensaje.**

SAÚL
Of course.
Claro que sí.

EL HIJO DEL SANTO
Shall we?
¿Lo escuchamos?

SAÚL
Yes, where is he?
Sí, ¿dónde está?

EL HIJO DEL SANTO
Right here, in front of us.
Aquí está, en frente de nosotros.

The cameras pan to the group of fifty or so people watching in folding chairs. One YOUNG MAN, about 21, stands up. He is nervous, searching for his confidence. He is star struck.

YOUNG MAN

Cassandra, it's a dream come true to talk to you in person. I've seen all your fights on the Saturday shows, and I've seen you live five different times. I also collect your merch, including your action figure.

Cassandra, es un sueño hecho realidad poder dirigirte la palabra en persona. He visto cada uno de tus combates en las funciones de los sábados, y he ido a verte en cinco ocasiones en vivo. También colecciono tus productos, incluyendo la figura de acción.

He holds up the doll, pauses and collects himself.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

(fighting back tears)

A few... A few months ago... I came out to my father. I told him, and he... he gave me his support. He's here with me tonight. I couldn't have done it if it wasn't for you.
Mira... Hace... hace unos meses... salí del closet con mi papá. Le conté y él... él me apoyó. Él está aquí conmigo. No podría haberlo hecho si no fuera por ti.

The young man gestures to his father sitting next to him who nervously nods. A good dad - a gay son isn't what he wanted, but still. He's there.

CROWD MEMBER

Bravo.

YOUNG MAN

Thank you, Cassandra!
¡Gracias, Cassandra!

The audience cheer and clap. Saúl looks on beaming, but underneath it all he is devastated. He is thinking of his own father, and what it would be like to have a father who would stand with him, accept him. Behind his smile is resentment and sadness.

El Hijo del Santo stands and claps and the tearful audience * joins him.

INT. SOFTBALL FIELD - PARKING LOT - DAY

Alone now, Saúl sits in his car as he smokes a cigarette. He watches the game.

INT. EL PASO BAR - DAY

Saúl walks into an El Paso bar but the butch look is nowhere to be seen. Instead he is dressed fabulous and flamboyant, complete with rhinestone rimmed sunglasses. He looks around.

He sees his father sitting alone at a booth with a bottle of beer. His father is 63. He is clearly sick and looks much older than he is. His skin is thin and blotched and he is stooped. He still has the same mustache, but it is now white.

Without a word, Saúl sits down across from his father. The server appears and asks what he wants. Saúl orders a seltzer. He looks up at his father.

He suddenly thinks this is a terrible mistake.

They don't speak for a while. Then:

EDUARDO

When Sara told me you called, I didn't believe her. I thought you never wanted to see me again.

SAÚL

I thought you were the one who didn't want to see me again.

EDUARDO

People tell me you're really good. I see your posters around town, even in my church. Last week, I see you on a mural. How was it like wrestling El Hijo del Santo?

Saúl can't believe it.

SAÚL

You didn't see?

Eduardo sighs and shakes his head.

EDUARDO

I... I didn't want to watch what happened to my little boy.

SAÚL

I needed you. At a certain point in my life, I-I needed you. But now I don't. And it's okay.

Saúl slowly starts to realize that it doesn't matter anymore what his father thinks or feels. He has said what he wanted to say.

Eduardo looks at his son.

EDUARDO

Saúl... Sometimes I think I didn't
have a choice about the person that
I ended up being.

SAÚL

Neither did I.

The two men look at each other for a long time. Eduardo looks at his son in his flamboyant outfit. Saúl looks at his dad. Slowly, Saúl feels the pain and anxiety that has weighed on him for years lift from his shoulders. He no longer needs his dad's approval.

For the first time, we see an emotion on Saúl's face we haven't seen before. A feeling of relief from the pain.

Saúl leaves Eduardo at the table as he walks out.

EXT. EL PASO - DAY

Saúl leans on the hood of his car, looking up at a mural, half-completed, of Cassandro on a two story building. Cassandro's painted figure is saintly with beams of light radiating from his head.

INT. WRESTLING ARENA, EL PASO - LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Saúl prays before a match at his dressing table where the photo of Yocasta and the eagle feather sit.

INT. WRESTLING ARENA, EL PASO - NIGHT

The wrestling venue is packed and ready for Cassandro.

Saúl stands alone in the wings, silhouetted and framed by the wide door opening into the auditorium.

ANNOUNCER

It's my pleasure to introduce...
Cassandro...
Con ustedes, desde El Chuco...
Cassandro...

He takes in the cheering crowd. Sabrina approaches.

SABRINA

You ready?

SAÚL

Yeah.

ANNOUNCER

...el Exótico!

SAÚL

Yeah.

Saúl waits a moment for dramatic effect and then steps out into the spotlight. The fans in the arena jump to their feet.

Saúl's POV: his way to the ring, mobbed by fans. He signs autographs. A skinny BOY (10) strains to touch his dress. Cassandro sees the young boy and steps over to him. The boy's parents are beside him, thrilled.

Saúl gets nearer the ring. He tosses off his sparkly yellow cape and the crowd grabs at it, cheering.

He leaps into the ring and lifts his arms to the deafening cheers of the crowd.

CUT TO BLACK

END