

# **FIGHT ON**

Written by

Evette Betancourt

Based on characters from Between Bullets by Evette Betancourt

evette.betancourt@gmail.com  
619-208-1249

FADE IN:

SUPER: MEXICO

**EXT. VILLA HOME - BACKYARD - DAY**

A Hispanic male with a fearless spirit, JUAN VASQUEZ (36), teaches boxing to his twin daughters, YOUNG ISABELLE and YOUNG KARINA VASQUEZ (8).

The twins are the cutest as they wear matching sweatsuits and boxing gloves.

JUAN  
One. Two. One. Two.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY**

BLANCA VASQUEZ (32), watches proudly from the window. She has long, beautiful hair like the twins and more of a fighting spirit than Juan.

Blanca peeks out the door window: ominous BLACK SUVs speed down a dirt road with fury.

**EXT. BACKYARD - DAY**

Juan continues to shadow-box with the twins--

NOTE: SPANISH SPEAKING SCENES HAVE NO ENGLISH SUBTITLES.

BLANCA (O.S.)  
Es Felix con sus hombres que tienen  
pistolas.

Dread and familiarity fill Juan's eyes. He scoops up the girls and puts them in the house. Their eyes dart back and forth between the parents, confused by the language.

**INT. OFFICE - DAY**

Religious and organized. Below a cross is a World Championship Boxing Belt and a picture of the Vasquez family. Juan dashes inside and opens a safe, grabs:

- 1) An ENVELOPE with fake passports and money.
- 2) A kid-size PISTOL (it's a real thing).
- 3) GUNS for him and Blanca.

He speed dials PEDRO.

**EXT. MEXICO DESERT - VAN - DAY**

A coyote, PEDRO (50), smokes nervously and checks his watch. He's compact, muscular, and has intense eyes. He checks his rear-view mirrors, paranoid.

INTERCUT JUAN/PEDRO

PEDRO  
Juan...

JUAN  
Felix está aquí con sus hombres. Él sabe.

PEDRO  
Pues.

BACK TO:

**INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Juan hangs up, drops his phone.

JUAN  
Isabelle, go with your sister to the kitchen.

Isabelle crosses her arms with an attitude.

JUAN (CONT'D)  
Hurry, to the kitchen! Now.

KARINA  
It's okay, Isabelle. We'll play later.

ISABELLE  
Who's Felix, mama?

BLANCA  
A bad man, mija.

Blanca snatches the gun from Juan; checks it with expertise and quickness.

Juan takes off the twins' gloves and gives the kid-size pistol to Karina. She takes it without question. Juan and Blanca barricade the kitchen door.

JUAN  
(to Isabelle)  
Do you remember your hiding spot?

He gives the ENVELOPE to her.

JUAN (CONT'D)  
Give this to Pedro when you see  
him.

BLANCA  
No matter what happens to us, don't  
come out. Take care of each other.  
Now go!

She and Juan say their quick goodbyes, hopeful they'll live.  
The girls. Not them. That's the best-case scenario.

The twins' tiny hands embrace; they run into the kitchen.

**INT. KITCHEN HIDEOUT - SAME**

Isabelle and Karina stash themselves into a small, secret  
compartment in the floor. Fear has taken over them now.

As the twins stumble in, the envelope falls out of Isabelle's  
sweater. Karina snatches it and stuffs it into her pocket.

They stay quiet as a mouse...

**EXT. VILLA HOME - SAME**

Young GUNMEN jump out of the car with purpose.

Ahead of them is FELIX GUERRERO (38), slender and in shape  
judging by his form-fitting and expensive suit. He's a hands-  
on kind-of-cartel leader.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Juan and Blanca check their guns and prepare.

JUAN  
Pedro will find them.

Felix's men open fire from outside.

Blanca returns fire through the window like she's done this  
before or at least prepared for it.

A bullet hits her in the shoulder.

BLANCA  
AAAHHHH!

FELIX (O.C.)  
 Alive, stupido!!

Shots from outside cease.

POOF

A smoke grenade lands near Blanca.

JUAN  
 Blanca!

ERNESTO (20s), Felix's lead man, kicks the front door...  
 Before Blanca can fire, he knocks her out.

**EXT. VILLA HOME - SAME**

GUNMAN #1 and #2 storm through the front.  
 GUNMAN #3 and #4 storm through the back.

**INT. ISABELLE AND KARINA'S ROOM - SAME**

Ernesto bursts in.

The room is gender-neutral and only one of everything-- One bed, one closet, etc. They share everything.

Ernesto grabs a teddy bear backpack.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME**

Gunman #3 gun-butts Juan.

Ernesto shows Felix the backpack.

ERNESTO  
*Nada. Pero...*

Gunman #3 holds Juan.

Felix puts a knife to him and SLIDES his knife against his femoral artery.

Felix watches him bleed dry.

**INT. KITCHEN - LATER**

Felix sits adjacent to tied-up Blanca at the table.

FELIX

History shows women will share the  
destiny of their doomed men or  
betray them. As a mom, you're  
valuable in this situation.

He throws the backpack at her. He waits for a scared  
reaction. But she doesn't grant him the satisfaction.

He cuts her face; she doesn't scream nor flinch. Felix waits  
for something, anything, to weaken this woman.

**INT. KITCHEN HIDEOUT - DAY**

The twins hug in fright. Tears fall down Isabelle's face.  
Movement from above causes dust to fall on the girls.

Karina sneezes...

Thump.

Thump.

THUMP!

Isabelle grabs the gun from Karina and pushes her into the  
*SHADOWS*, unseen.

BLANCA (O.C.)

Noooo. You son-of-a-bitch.

Isabelle readies the gun... The hideout door jiggles...  
Ernesto fires a shot and breaks the lock inside...

BLAM!

The bullet shatters the board in Felix's face. Ernesto raises  
his gun, ready to shoot--

FELIX

Don't shoot!

Ernesto opens the door cautiously and sees Isabelle stand  
alone with the gun in hand.

Karina stays quiet and unnoticed in the darkness.

Ernesto snatches Isabelle.

**KITCHEN**

The hideout door shuts behind her. Felix sits Isabelle next to her mom. He takes a seat.

BLANCA  
It's okay, mija, don't be scared.  
I'm right here.

FELIX  
(to Isabelle)  
Amas tu mama?

Isabelle looks to her mom for some understanding. Felix's impatience slowly grows in his eyes. So does madness.

FELIX ESCOBAR  
Amas tu mama?!

BLANCA  
She doesn't know Spanish!

FELIX  
Do you love your mama?

Isabelle nods.

BLANCA  
Felix, stop! It's me you want.

Felix gives Ernesto a look. Ernesto pulls out his pistol and disassembles it on the kitchen table with military expertise. Isabelle is more confused than scared.

FELIX  
Win. And your mom will live.

BLANCA  
(re: gun)  
It's okay, mija. Pay attention.  
You'll have to assemble it.

Ernesto reassembles the gun in front of them like a card dealer teaching tricks.

BLANCA (CONT'D)  
Your men will just kill us if we win.

Felix slaps Blanca, offended by her notion. He's a crook, but an honest one.

Isabelle looks to her mom, waiting for her to do something. Blanca has the saddest eyes only a failed mother could give.

Gunman #2 & #3 dismantle their guns and place them in front of Isabelle and Felix with ONE BULLET between them.

Isabelle picks up the recoil spring in front of her. Felix slaps her hand, shakes his finger, and mouths, "NOT YET."

FELIX

Go.

BLANCA

Grab the hammer pin, the small--

Ernesto smashes Blanca's jaw multiple times, breaks it.

Isabelle sobs, scared for her mom.

She drops the hammer pin--

Felix connects the hammer and hammer pin--

He's on the magazine hitch--

He struggles to put the small pieces together--

Isabelle finds the tiny pieces on the floor--

She accidentally KNOCKS the bullet on the floor--

Isabelle is ahead of Felix--

Blanca regains consciousness and sees Isabelle beating Felix. Happiness lights her eyes, despite her pain.

Isabelle uses her tiny fingernails to attach the grip panels--

Felix picks up the pace--

Isabelle's eyes go wide--

She completes the gun and points it at Felix--

He looks her in the eyes--

CLICK

The gun DOESN'T FIRE.

Blanca moans and fidgets for one last attempt to escape. Felix completes his gun and picks up the BULLET AT HIS FEET.

YOUNG ISABELLE

Mama!

BLANCA VASQUEZ (O.S.)

Nooo!

BANG!



**KITCHEN HIDEOUT**

Karina cries silently, tears not merely of sadness but of remorse. Of guilt.

THUMP

THUMP

THUMP

THUMP

GAS seeps through the floorboards... a flash...

FIRE.

SMOKE.

Karina coughs.

She crawls up the steps and pushes the door open, but her mom's dead body blocks it.

She pushes with her useless little might--

Misses her footing-- rolls her ANKLE--

Karina eyes the latch, REACHES--

**EXT. VILLA HOME - SAME**

Isabelle REACHES toward the burning house as Ernesto drags her away, leaving Karina behind.

SMASH CUT TO:

SUPER: 15 YEARS LATER. SAN DIEGO, CA

**INT. CITY BOXING GYM - DAY**

Sweating. A young Latina, ISALA (E-SAL-UH) (23), wears boxing gloves and ANKLE wraps. She has an edge to her but kind eyes.

She strikes a punching bag with a fury like she has something to prove.

KYLE CHAZ (27), arrogantly walks around with his shirt off to show his toned body.

KYLE

You're really good on your feet.  
You do just boxing or M.M.A.?

ISALA

Thanks. Just box.

KYLE

Your payment is past due.

ISALA

You'll have it soon. Money is just  
tight right now.

KYLE

(flirtatious)

Have lunch with me, and we can work  
something out.

She rejects him with an impressive right hook that rattles  
the bag. An "ooof" look slides across his face. She snatches  
her things and bolts out.

**EXT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE - DAY**

More shack than a house. It has bars on the windows. The yard  
is bigger than the house and full of dead grass.

**INT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE - DAY**

Meager but cozy. It's a one-bedroom with a slim kitchen and  
barely a bathroom.

On a loveseat sleeps Isala's grandma, ESMERALDA LUNA (70).  
She's short and cute with long, beautiful hair.

Isala grabs the keys from her backpack and opens her bedroom  
quietly, but her cell phone alarm goes off.

Esmeralda wakes up as if an earthquake jolted her. Isala  
takes out her FLIP PHONE and turns off her SCHOOL alarm.

ESMERALDA

Mija?

ISALA

Yes, Grandma. It's fine, just me.

ESMERALDA

I'll make you something to eat.

ISALA  
No, I'm not hungry.

Grandma doesn't take "no" for an answer... it's a Mexican thing. She pulls out mouth-watering leftovers.

ISALA (CONT'D)  
Ok, I'll just eat a little.

**INT. ISALA'S ROOM - SAME**

Isala enters and quickly shuts the door behind her.

She unwraps her ankle supports. Her mattress sits on the floor of her minimal and poor room. San Diego isn't cheap. Isala turns on thrift store T.V.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O. ON TV)  
Today, new bodies were discovered in a house, where the owner was found dead. A.T.F. discovered decapitated bodies in a room and are not commenting if this discovery is related to the Guerrero Cartel's violent acts.

Isala stops, intrigued.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)  
More reports are coming in about illegal street fights plaguing--

She shuts off the TV and bolts out the room.

**INT. COMMUNITY COLLEGE OFFICE - DAY**

Cramped. Outdated. Isala sits with her COUNSELOR (50s).

COUNSELOR  
You're doing good, Isala. All your classes are transferable for your criminal justice major if you get good grades this semester.

ISALA  
My focus right now is just school.

COUNSELOR  
I have a friend in admissions at the university. I'll make a call.

**INT. COMMUNITY COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY**

Isala focuses on the lecture. She speedily writes as other students type on their fancy laptops. Her phone vibrates, and she carefully checks her phone.

A text message from WORK reads: Need you in early. ASAP.

**INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT**

Isala isn't tired, but there is something unfulfilled in her eyes. School. Work. Train. Repeat.

Male CUSTOMERS enter and immediately eye-fuck her. She doesn't notice such things. They grab their beer, jerky, and condoms. One of the customers winks at her.

She rings them up quickly, and they leave.

She cleans the counters--

Reads her textbook--

Checks the clock--

**INT. BUS - NIGHT**

Isala sits in the back. PASSENGERS have their heads buried in their phones and expensive earbuds. She doesn't-- her eyes are in constant observation mode.

**INT./EXT. BUS - MOVING - NIGHT**

Expensive high-rises suffocate the homeless into their tents and unsavory habits.

MONTAGE: DRUG-INDUCED CITY

-- Two HOMELESS MEN do a drug deal in the open street.

-- A HOMELESS WOMAN in bare feet smokes a crack pipe.

-- Another HOMELESS WOMAN on a bad high, and as dirty as the sidewalk, screams and shouts at an imaginary lover.

-- ANOTHER MAN shoots a needle in his arm in an alleyway.

END DRUG MONTAGE

**EXT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE - YARD - DAY**

Morning. Sweating-- Isala boxes on her makeshift and cheap workout set-up-- she takes a long gulp of water, spilling down her chin. She quickly wipes it off-- focused--

Her phone alarm goes off: CLASS.

**INT. FELIX'S STUDY - DAY**

The walls are bare, ready to store money or drugs. Expensive paintings sit on the floor. Plastic sheets hang from the ceiling to catch plaster dust or wrap dead bodies.

Felix sits by himself. He's a different man than he was fifteen years ago. He's relaxed, softer eyes, tranquil even. His experience in his line of work is complete.

There are aquariums of VARIOUS SNAKES not meant to be pets.

On the desk is a bloody CHESSBOARD. Felix has most of his pieces. His index finger wrapped with surgical gauze.

His opponent's pieces are replaced with body parts, FINGERS, FINGERNAILS, EARLOBES, and the like.

Another one of Felix's games...

Ernesto enters.

FELIX

How'd the cops find the bodies?

ERNESTO

I'm looking into it. Our man on the inside says we have nothing to worry about. If so, he'll take care of it.

FELIX

And the heads?

ERNESTO

Sent to their families as you instructed.

FELIX

Good. I want you to meet with the Triads. Finalize everything.

ERNESTO

They just called. They want to volunteer Sying in the fights. I think she could be a big draw.

FELIX

Uh huh....

ERNESTO

The demand for woman fighters is bigger than ever.

FELIX

Really? Americans and their equal opportunity bullshit.

ERNESTO

The Triads want Sying in the contest.

FELIX

Fine. As long as they bring in money.

**INT. MOTEL - MANAGER'S OFFICE - NIGHT**

Old-school with file cabinets everywhere, it has yet to be converted to an efficient digital filing system.

HOTEL BOSS, a White male (56), sits at his desk and wears oversized eyeglasses. Esmeralda enters, and he sort of acknowledges her.

ESMERALDA

You wanted to see me?

HOTEL BOSS

I have to lay you off.

ESMERALDA

I really need this job. You've already cut my hours; I don't understand.

HOTEL BOSS

It is best to have dignity, compassion, and consideration when leaving your place of employment after unexpected news. Leave the uniform.

**INT. CONVENTION CENTER - EXHIBIT HALL - DAY**

Dozens of foam mats line the room. Color belt ranks designate each section.

REYNA SANTIAGO (35), wears a brown belt. Her demeanor always professional as she grapples with her JIU-JITSU OPPONENT.

The Opponent is in her full guard. Reyna grabs her arm and submits her in a triangle choke. She taps out.

The REFEREE raises Reyna's hands in victory.

She opens her gym bag and grabs her phone. TEXT MESSAGE from Cousin Luis reads:

exclusive fight, washington st skate park gonna be a show!

**INT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE - DAY**

Isala darts in and out of her room and packs her work bag and lunch. She drops it on a stack of mail and sees:

PAST DUE rent bill states a deadline to pay or face eviction. Her demeanor changes, sluggish.

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY**

Laying in bed is Reyna's little brother, MIGUEL (15). He has tubes and machines keeping him alive and breathing. Reyna's MOM and DAD wait by his side.

Reyna enters and is greeted by her parents.

NOTE: ITALICS INDICATE SPANISH LANGUAGE WITH SUBTITLES

REYNA

*Any better.*

MOM

*Nothing.*

Reyna grabs his hand. A knock at the door...

Local DETECTIVE BLAKE AMSTAT (36), enters. He's a short cop version of Indiana Jones without the hat.

BLAKE

Hello.

He's greeted like part of the family.

BLAKE (CONT'D)  
Got a second?

REYNA  
Yeah.

**INT. HOSPITAL LOBBY - SAME**

Blake and Reyna...

BLAKE  
We found the guy who sold the drugs to Miguel. The dealer is part of Vincent's crew. But Felix is running his territory now.

REYNA  
Is he talking?

BLAKE  
Nope.

REYNA  
Vincent and Felix together. That's a bomb waiting to explode... Thank you, Blake.

BLAKE  
You know I'll do what I can.

Reyna walks away.

BLAKE (CONT'D)  
Where are you going?

REYNA  
I have a fight to go to.

**INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT**

Isala busies herself at the front counter; her LAZY CO-WORKER (30), enters from the stock room.

ISALA  
Did you finish stocking the freezers?

LAZY CO-WORKER  
Didn't have time.

He had time.



ISALA  
Do you have any shifts you don't  
want? I could use the hours.

LAZY CO-WORKER  
So could I. See ya.

He grabs some cheap burritos and leaves without paying.  
Grandma calls...

ISALA  
(into phone)  
Grandma, I'm at work.

ESMERALDA (O.S.)  
Sorry. Please grab some milk. Love  
you. Bye.

ISALA  
(into phone)  
Ok, I will. Love you, too.

**INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - OFFICE - LATER**

STORE MANAGER (45), a heavysset man who wears glasses, types  
away on the computer. Isala enters. Without looking up...

STORE MANAGER  
Check?

ISALA  
Yes, please. Are there any hours I  
can pick up?

STORE MANAGER  
No.

**EXT. TROLLEY STOP - NIGHT**

Isala, in her work uniform, runs to catch the trolley but  
misses it.

ISALA  
Shit.

**EXT. WASHINGTON STREET - NIGHT**

Dark, dirty, and wet from who knows what. Even the homeless  
avoid this place.

CHEERING catches Isala's attention.

**EXT. SKATE PARK - SAME**

Underneath a bridge is a diverse group of FIGHT FANS holding wads of CASH.

Reyna, undercover, sits high on a ramp and surveys.

She detects a familiar face, a large man, VINCENT DECHANT (40), Pacific Islander. He's often mistaken for a big teddy bear. Big mistake. He shakes hands with everyone.

Reyna cautiously takes photos of him. A GUARD snatches the phone from her.

REYNA  
What the hell, man?

GUARD  
No phones.

REYNA  
Uhh... just stalking my ex.

GUARD  
Not anymore.

The guard breaks the phone.

Reyna gets up, ready to fight him.

REYNA  
(re: Vincent)  
He has a phone.

Vincent takes a VIDEO of the crowd.

GUARD  
Because he can.

She's drawn unwanted attention to herself. She sits, and the guard walks off.

Isala sets foot on the vast gray asphalt like an astronaut on a different planet.

TWO BOOKKEEPERS collect money like vultures picking on flesh.

FRANKIE "FIST" (42), male, ugly, and wearing an equally ugly suit, takes the center.

Kyle takes the center; he spots Isala and slyly smiles. He works the crowd like a professional. His opponent is similar in size and his stance, wide.

FIST  
 Alright! Let's hear it for the  
 blood bags. You know the rules.  
 Time limit?

FIGHT FANS  
 None!

FIST  
 Rounds?

FIGHT FANS  
 None!

FIST  
 Let's bleed!

The crowd HOLLERS.

Kyle "Million-Dollar" Chaz vs. BULLDOG

The fighters throw haymakers.

Kyle has the striking advantage, landing simple but damaging  
 blows. Bulldog shoots in for a takedown. They fall.

Kyle leans on the ramp wall and wall-crawls to escape the  
 clinch. Bulldog swings with a big overhead left, knocking him  
 to his knees.

Kyle's eyebrow bleeds profusely. Bulldog kicks him in the  
 face but misses.

Kyle staggers up and uses Muay Thai boxing and knees Bulldog  
 in the face, again and again.

Bulldog finally drops from the unchecked blows. Kyle raises  
 his bloody hands in victory. His eye is swollen shut.

The crowd CHEERS.

Money exchanges hands.

Isala eyes the money.

TWO CUT MEN carry Bulldog away.

FIST (CONT'D)  
 (re: Bulldog)  
 Let's get this blood donor off the  
 floor. We're equal opportunity here  
 in The Pit. Let's hear it for our  
 rug munchers.

ATHENA, female and tough-looking, enters the pit and gives him a dirty look. Fist looks around for her opponent.

Promotor, HENRY GORDON (60), close to retirement and knows it. He's grizzled with some fashion sense, remnants of a previous rich lifestyle.

He holds a 40 oz. beer and approaches Fist.

HENRY  
My girl backed out.

FIST  
What the fuck? Leave it to the  
dykes to give this event blue  
balls.

Athena gives Fist the middle finger. The crowd JEERS. The bookkeepers have a healthy amount of money in hand.

Vincent comes behind Henry...

VINCENT  
I gave you more than enough chances  
for you to get your shit together  
and get a fighter out here.

HENRY  
I don't control what my fighters  
do.

VINCENT  
Yes, you do. If this happens again  
you're more than done.

He knocks the beer out of his hand.

FIST  
Hold your shitlets, people. Any  
takers to fight this fairy?

Reyna watches from a distance... anxious... ready to volunteer...

She moves in closer--

FIST (CONT'D)  
Anyone? We got a lot for this one.

ISALA  
How much?

FIST  
Everything you see. Style?

ISALA

Boxer.

The crowd laughs.

FIST

This is M.M.A.

ISALA

I'm in.

FIST

Maybe you want to give me the milk,  
first.

MORE LAUGHS. Any respect she had, gone. She hands the milk  
over.

FIST (CONT'D)

What's your name?

ISALA

Do I have to give it to you?

FIST

Dudes and dudette's I give you  
Athena versus...

He looks at the milk...

FIST (CONT'D)

The Milkmaid.

Isala scans the crowd, embarrassed, but keeps focus.

FIST (CONT'D)

By the way, there are no taps.

ISALA

What does that mean?

FIST

I always say girls are better on  
top! Let's bleed!

Fist steps away.

Isala shakes off her nerves, steps in and out of the center.  
She takes a punch to the jaw and is caught in the clinch.  
Isala wiggles out.

Athena closes the distance, JABS Isala in the face. Wounds  
open up. She lands an UPPERCUT-- destabilizing Isala.

Isala regains her footing and pushes her out of the way to maximize distance--

She sees an opening--

She delivers a career-ending RIGHT HOOK, knocks out Athena--

The crowd goes WILD. Henry is impressed. So is Reyna.

Isala immediately goes to the bookkeeper, collects her money, and leaves. She pushes through the crowd with a nasty cut under her eye and a busted lip.

Henry jogs, barely, toward Isala.

HENRY  
Hey, girl. Wait.

He catches his breath. Isala keeps walking.

HENRY (CONT'D)  
Milkmaid.

ISALA  
My name is Isala.

HENRY  
How would you like to train for free? You've got good footwork.

ISALA  
Look! I'm not going out with you or your trainers. Leave me alone.

HENRY  
Hold up, fight princess. I'm talking about fighting under the team. Best place this side of the border. Don't believe the Yelp reviews.

Isala walks away.

HENRY (CONT'D)  
Boxers are ancient gladiators in ugly skirts. You got your ass whooped back there.  
(re: wounds)  
Someone is going to notice you like that. At least let me give you a ride?

**EXT. STREET CORNER - NIGHT**

Henry, in his BMW, switches lanes without a signal... it's a fucking BMW thing.

He parks where he's not supposed to. Cars HONK at him. He flips them off.

Isala gets out; her face is better cleaned up with a small band-aid over her eye.

ISALA

Thanks.

HENRY

If you change your mind and want to make some real money.

Henry opens his glovebox; mini-liquor bottles flow out. He searches for his business card and hands it over.

HENRY (CONT'D)

I'm at the Arena.

ISALA

I appreciate it, but this was a one-time thing.

Henry nods and burns out into the street.

**INT. ISALA'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Isala stuffs her fight winnings in a YELLOW ENVELOPE, places it under her bed, and removes a folder.

She has the day's newspaper and cuts out an article.

The headline reads: Mexico and San Diego tensions rise over increased drug trafficking. Guerrero Cartel?

She puts the article in the folder and reveals pictures, news clippings, and prints-outs of Felix and his cartel. She shoves the folder back under the mattress.

**INT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE - DAY**

Isala is ready for a new day. Her wounds are still unhealed from the fight. Esmeralda watches TV while sewing. She doesn't look up.

ESMERALDA

Thank you for getting the milk. You got home really late last night. You stay overtime at work?

ISALA

Uh... yeah.

ESMERALDA

Oh my god, your face! What happened?

ISALA

Grandma, I'm fine. Really. I fell in the freezer locker at work.

ESMERALDA

Those are fight wounds, not fall down ones. I remember how your dad would come home from his boxing matches. You're not supposed to bring attention to yourself.

ISALA

I said I was fine. I was sparring, okay. I didn't want to upset you.

ESMERALDA

Maybe you should go lighter.

ISALA

I'll make sure to tell them that.

#### **INT. BATH HOUSE - DAY**

A nostalgic trip to the 1990s. Black and white checkered floors surround the pool. Greco-Roman busts and plants encircle pink walls.

A sucker for Western culture, Triad BOSS TAO (28), wears one AirPods. He has a good physique and pop boyband looks, except for all the gang tattoos.

Two MALE FIGHTERS fight in front of him and TRIAD GANG MEMBERS. This fight is far more intricate and technical than the skate park brawl.

BOSS TAO

Get him! Choke him out!

Ernesto is alert to his surroundings.



A Chinese woman, SYING CHEN (28), stands at Tao's side. Her rebellious eyes read opposite her submissive female culture.

ERNESTO

Felix will be in charge of the distribution with DeChant and his crew down South. East County is yours and the guns we'll store and move across the border. You can manufacture the drugs in our warehouses.

NOTE: *Italics* INDICATE CANTONESE WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES.

BOSS TAO

(to Sying)

*Can we trust him?*

Sying stares at him and smiles submissively.

BOSS TAO (CONT'D)

*Good answer.*

(to Ernesto)

We're done here.

ERNESTO

Yeah. Right.

Ernesto exits.

Tao exits the bath naked, as the rest of the members cheer the fight.

He motions for Sying to grab him a towel. She complies. He moves closer to her.

SYING

*When can I go back home?*

He dries himself off and gives the towel back to Sying.

BOSS TAO

*I've arranged for you to be in the contest. You'll be representing us. So don't disappoint. Win the contest, and you can go home.*

SYING

*This is horseshit. Those fights are beneath me!*

BOSS TAO

*I say what is beneath you!*

He quickly grabs her face, licks her cheek.

BOSS TAO (CONT'D)  
*You're lucky you're father is a  
 Dragonmaster.*

Sying wipes the saliva off her face with disdain.

**EXT. THE ARENA MMA GYM - DAY**

Henry throws some old gear in the trash and sees a HOMELESS TEENAGER (16), dumpster diving. Judging by her somewhat clean clothes, she hasn't been homeless long.

She wears black shoes with white studs.

HENRY  
 Hey, get outta there. There's no  
 food in there, and I don't recycle.

HOMELESS TEENAGER  
 Do you have a few dollars?

HENRY  
 Sure don't.

She leaves defeated, then...

HENRY (CONT'D)  
 There is a big industrial warehouse  
 three blocks down. It's one of  
 those food delivery warehouses.

**INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT**

Isala doesn't want to be here, more than usual.

Two MALE CUSTOMERS move about suspiciously.

ISALA  
 What's up?

MALE CUSTOMER #1  
 Nothin' much.

The guys grab some munchies and go to the counter--

MALE CUSTOMER #2  
 How's your training going?

His friend slowly reaches behind his back--

ISALA  
What do you mean?

Isala moves to the silent alarm--

MALE CUSTOMER #1  
You doing any more fights?

ISALA  
Do I know you guys or something?

MALE CUSTOMER #2  
You were at the skate park brawl,  
right?

ISALA  
Yeah, I was.

MALE CUSTOMER #2  
I knew it. Holy shit. That was a  
brutal knockout.

He takes his wallet out from his back pocket and pays. Isala  
eases away from the silent alarm.

ISALA  
I thought you guys were going steal  
something.

MALE CUSTOMER #1  
Nah, man, all you had to do was  
reach over and use that right hook  
of yours. She said, "blam."

He simulates the right hook on his buddy.

MALE CUSTOMER #2  
You can make shit tons of money in  
those fights. Keep fighting like  
that, and you'll be in front of  
Guerrero and get the big bucks.

His friend nudges him.

MALE CUSTOMER #2 (CONT'D)  
Never mind.

ISALA  
Nope, you're not getting your  
munchies until you tell me.

MALE CUSTOMER #2  
Felix Guerrero. The cartel guy. He  
sets up a big contest.

MALE CUSTOMER #1  
You didn't hear it from us, though,  
Okay?

ISALA  
Yeah, of course. My secret.

The guys leave nervous, like Guerrero himself is gonna walk in and kill them all.

**EXT. CHURCH - PARKING LOT - DAY**

Job fair. Tables from PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYERS fill the area. Esmeralda is out of place from the younger candidates.

She's handed a brochure. She smiles and accepts.

Esmeralda stops at fancy booths where little pay is offered for any job, college degree or not.

She stops at an employer for a local brewery. All of them are HIPSTERS and wave to her.

HIPSTER #1  
Check it out... We are a local  
brewery. We specialize in IPAs.  
100% organic. We're very cool like  
that but in an uncool sort of way.

HIPSTER #2  
We're also the only one in San  
Diego. We're hoping to add someone  
to our family. Or what most people  
call a Marketing Director.

The hipsters nod proudly. Esmeralda forces another smile, waves goodbye, and walks off.

KIMBERLY (50s), approaches Esmeralda.

KIMBERLY  
Hi, I'm Kimberly.

ESMERALDA  
Hi, I'm Esmeralda. What is your  
place of business?

KIMBERLY  
We work in conjunction with the  
church and do maintenance and  
cleaning for senior home assistance  
and living.

ESMERALDA

That's great. Well, most of my career is cleaning houses, and I used to work at a hotel.

KIMBERLY

I think you stopped at the right table. We are looking for team members with your experience. Do you speak Spanish?

ESMERALDA

Yes, I do.

KIMBERLY

Great. I didn't want to assume. Do you have time for an interview?

She extends her hand to a seat nearby.

**INT. THE ARENA GYM - DAY**

Halfway between dangerous and functional, but at least the canvas and mats are clean.

Henry holds a beer in his hand. Isala enters with fight gear and unchecked ambition in her eyes.

HENRY

I knew you'd come. You need the training, considering that pretty messed up face. Ready to make some money together, yeah?

ISALA

Let's do it--

HENRY

Too bad. Get out.

ISALA

What?

HENRY

I don't mind a rejection from a woman. But a second one... And she changes her mind... means trouble.

ISALA

Please, I need the money more than I thought. I want in.

HENRY  
I thought you didn't want to  
compete?

ISALA  
I have the motivation.

HENRY  
When it comes to money, everyone  
has motivation.

ISALA  
Not like me.

**INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT**

Drugs, drugs, and more drugs. A well-oiled machine of Chinese  
INDENTURED SERVANTS and their TRIAD overlords shepherding  
them along.

Triads with guns are posted everywhere.

CLICK-TY CLACK noises echo as money counters are on endless  
repeat.

BLAMP

Police burst into the warehouse.

Blake is on the first line in.

BLAKE  
Everybody freeze.

Yeah, right... TRIADS draw first blood.

BULLETS! WHITE POWDER! BLOOD!..... FLY EVERYWHERE!

BLAKE (CONT'D)  
Fuck.

He ducks and fires. He's accurate, taking two guys out with  
two bullets. Execution shots: no suffering.

What feels like minutes is over in seconds as the good guys  
beat the bad guys-- as in they're all dead.

Blake checks a pulse on one of the innocents caught in the  
crossfire. He's not lucky.

**EXT. MADERAS GOLF CLUB - DAY**

Felix plays golf with Vincent.

Felix takes a swing and hits the ball far. The ball doesn't land close to the hole, but Felix is having fun.

VINCENT  
(to Vincent)  
Good one, Mr. Guerrero.

FELIX  
Meh.

Felix receives a call from Boss Tao and picks up.

FELIX (CONT'D)  
(into phone)  
I'll be there.

His face goes red in a fury. He hangs up.

FELIX (CONT'D)  
One of the labs just got raided.

**INT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - NIGHT**

There are half-built, cookie-cutter houses on a cul-de-sac.

One street light FLICKERS. Four SUVs-- Felix, Vincent, and the Triads with Boss Tao exit their respective cars.

FELIX  
How'd did this happen?!

BOSS TAO  
You tell me. I did you a favor coming to meet you.

FELIX  
Favor? *Cabron*, my drugs were just stolen. All my money is gone.

BOSS TAO  
Our money. I lost good men in that raid.

FELIX  
You can replace men. Money and drugs are harder to come by.

They're ready for a gunfight. Sying steps up with a calm and tentative demeanor.

SYING

I can track down those responsible  
and kill them.

Boss Tao slaps her.

BOSS TAO

Shut up! You're not a Dragonmaster,  
so you don't make a decision, and  
you never will be!

VINCENT

Fighting each other isn't going to  
get the drugs or money back. It'll  
just bring attention to the  
operations.

FELIX

(re: Vincent)

He's right.

(to Boss Tao)

But if anything goes wrong, a Triad  
so much as sneezes on a test tube,  
it'll be more than just an ending  
of a partnership.

BOSS TAO

The same goes here, *amigo*.

**INT. THE ARENA MMA GYM - DAY**

Isala strikes a bag, this time with a punch and kick combo.  
Her kicks have little power, and her footing is off.

Henry does his rounds with a cigar in his mouth and a beer.  
He clocks Isala; he's not happy.

HENRY

I told you I'm not training you.

ISALA

And you're not. I'm a paying  
customer. I paid in advance.

HENRY

Good.

ISALA

Fine.

They go their separate ways.



**INT. THE ARENA MMA GYM - LATER**

FIGHTERS sway and sweat as they train. Henry watches the floor. Isala catches his eye again.

Isala spars with a blonde haired woman, ZOEY (27), who works her dangerously good. The fighter has no regard for Isala's lack of experience. Henry approaches, pissed off.

HENRY

What the hell are you doing?

ISALA

Training.

HENRY

Not you.

He gives Zoey dagger eyes, and they cut deep...

ZOEY

I got a fight coming up. I need a sparring partner.

HENRY

Bullshit. You're sandbagging her.  
You're a weight class above her.  
(to Isala)  
And you should know when to quit.  
Goddamit, I'm lucky you didn't  
break anything. Get out.

Isala grabs her things.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Not you.

(to Zoey)

You.

ZOEY

Are you fucking kidding me?

HENRY

Even when I'm funny, I'm deadly  
serious.

ZOEY

Everyone is right about you! You're  
a loser. You are "Coach Choker."

HENRY

(to Zoey)

Have a good time paddin' your  
record with soccer moms.

(MORE)

HENRY (CONT'D)  
(to Isala)  
I can recommend some good trainers  
for you.

ISALA  
I don't want good.

HENRY  
Why are you so hellbent I train  
you?

ISALA  
You have a comforting face.

No, he doesn't. He almost smiles.

HENRY  
You got heart. Fight princess. No  
one can teach that. I'll give you a  
call tomorrow.

ISALA  
Thanks.

HENRY  
Don't thank me yet.

**INT. ISALA'S ROOM - DAY**

Isala gets ready for work. Her phone rings.

ISALA  
(into phone)  
Hi, Henry... I have school then  
work... I'll meet you after, is--

-- Nope. The phone disconnects on the other end.

**INT. COMMUNITY COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY**

The class is full with only one empty seat. Isala arrives  
LATE.

She takes the vacant seat.

The PROFESSOR shakes his head in disappointment and hands her  
the quiz.

Isala unpacks her bag, disrupting students.

**INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT**

Isala arrives in her wrinkled uniform and school bag.

The store is unkept.

Lazy co-worker didn't do his job. Again.

She receives a text from Henry.

The text message reads: WHERE R U? U NEED TO BE HERE!

The store manager comes from the back room.

STORE MANAGER

Why isn't the stocking done?

ISALA

I just got here. I was--

STORE MANAGER

On your phone.

ISALA

No. Well yeah, but I--

STORE MANAGER

I don't want to hear it. Get it cleaned, now. Jesus, I thought you people were supposed to be hard workers.

She glances at Henry's text message again.

ISALA

Forget this. I quit.

STORE MANAGER

Where do you think you're going? If you walk out you don't get paid.

Isala leaves without hesitation.

**INT. ARENA GYM - NIGHT**

Ringside.

Isala gears up to train.

Henry calls her over, beer in hand.

HENRY

For a second there, I thought you weren't going to make it.

ISALA

It won't happen again. No more distractions.

HENRY

You have to prove yourself first. Vincent DeChant runs the biggest contest. That fight in the skate park was caca. We have former champs still in their prime fighting. People die, mama.

ISALA

I got it. Don't worry.

**INT. DIRECTOR CARMICHAEL'S OFFICE - SAME**

A large poster hangs on the wall: a hunter in the woods with a rifle, ready to kill a deer.

It reads: "A man who is a master of patience is master of everything else." - George Savile

DIRECTOR TOBIN CARMICHAEL (55); sports well-groomed pepper hair. He always looks stressed and on-edge.

Reyna, an A.T.F. Agent, enters without knocking--

DIRECTOR CARMICHAEL

Shouldn't you be at a desk?

REYNA

Let me on the Guerrero task force. I.A. cleared me.

DIRECTOR CARMICHAEL

But I didn't.

REYNA

My case against Vincent DeChant was solid, and you know it.

DIRECTOR CARMICHAEL

You're staying on desk duty.

REYNA

This is bullshit.

Reyna slams the door behind her. The poster drops.

**INT. REYNA'S OFFICE - SAME**

Reyna returns to her closet/office, isolated from everyone like a punishment rather than a team player. She picks up a pile of papers to file. Stops. Dumps them back on her desk.

**INT. THE ARENA GYM - DAY**

Henry readies his punch mitts. Isala wears fight gear and a fitness tracker.

MONTAGE: NO SURRENDER

-- Isala learns the basics of Jiu-Jitsu. She taps and taps.

-- She learns to guard from the bottom position and pushes off her FEMALE MMA PARTNER.

-- Isala doesn't give up. She's not tired like her PARTNER.

-- Henry works on striking with Isala. She's a quick learner.

END MONTAGE

ISALA  
So, how'd I do?

HENRY  
Like cheap beer-- kind of bad could be worse, but you still get a buzz.

ISALA  
I'll take it. So, when's my first fight?

HENRY  
Don't know. We're not in the competition yet.

ISALA  
Why not?

HENRY  
One doesn't simply get an invitation to a secret blood bath of games. I kinda know a guy that can help. We have a party to go to tomorrow. Salvation Army clothes are not accepted.

ISALA  
Well, I guess you have some shopping to do.

**INT. COMMUNITY COLLEGE - NIGHT**

Finals Day. The class is filled.

Isala is not in her seat.

The professor checks his watch and then the clock. He hands out the test.

**EXT. MANSION - NIGHT**

More of an art piece than a home; sits on a cliff facing the ocean.

A VALET ATTENDANT opens the door for Isala. Henry hands the valet the keys and a cheap tip.

Henry wears expensive casual wear but still looks like he doesn't belong.

Isala clearly bought a new wardrobe for the occasion, a very nice one with subtle CHEETAH PRINT.

ISALA

Nervous?

HENRY

Hell no. Do you know what my fight name used to be?

ISALA

Coach Choker?

HENRY

No, smart-ass. I was called Henry "Superman" Gordon because I was a man of steel. Nothing could faze me.

ISALA

That's not a very creative name.

HENRY

(shadow boxes)

I was creative with my hands, though.

Isala smiles at his bad joke.

Henry loosens up.

**INT. MANSION - SAME**

PARTYGOEERS dress like they have or haven't been to a party like this.

Wall street broker-types mix in with gold-digging women, and tattooed fighters make out with trophy wives. The husbands could care less, or they're into it.

Isala is greeted as if fucking Alex Rodriguez walked in. High-fives, nods of approval, and raised glasses encircle them, with comments of praise flooding her every direction.

PARTY GUEST #1

You knocked that bitch out; go, girl!

HENRY

You're popular now because of the skate park fight.

Isala smiles, being out and about, this good attention.

HENRY (CONT'D)

No boxer has ever won a fight in the M.M.A. underground. They're used to rules and technicalities.

ISALA

I got lucky.

Asshole WALL STREET guy walks up to them with drunk girls on his arm.

WALL STREET

(to Isala)

I'm betting on your next fight. Let me know if you need anything. Anyone?

HENRY

Get lost.

Wall street moves on.

ISALA

Who's this Vincent?

HENRY

Drug dealer and head of a gang called Faction.

ISALA

Oh.

HENRY

Don't stray too far and stay focused.

ISALA

I am.

HENRY

That's what worries me. You're ignoring the fact that this contest you so desperately want in is run by a drug dealer, and you say, "oh."

ISALA

You're in this too.

HENRY

I can't do anything about the drugs. Not my problem. I just train fighters.

ISALA

I'm not scared because I've been running my whole life. Now, I have a real sense of purpose.

HENRY

Fighting?

Isala gazes at him.

HENRY (CONT'D)

I know the feeling.

They share a moment.

**BAR**

Henry gestures the BARTENDER over.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Vincent is a real smooth talker. So don't let him suck you in.

On cue, Vincent shows up. He has a real knack for style and color coordination.

HENRY (CONT'D)

This is Isala.

VINCENT

I recognized you. Isala "the milkmaid"...



Waits for a last name. She doesn't give it.

VINCENT (CONT'D)  
A mysterious woman fighter... I can  
respect that. I can sell that.

The bartender drops a glass, Isala catches it before it hits  
the floor.

VINCENT (CONT'D)  
Quick reflexes.

HENRY  
I want Isala in your contest.

VINCENT  
She has to do an initiation fight.  
If she wins, she's in the contest.  
Tomorrow night.

ISALA  
I'll win.

VINCENT  
We need a new name, though... You  
have quick reflexes, quick  
strikes...

He clocks her cheetah print dress.

VINCENT (CONT'D)  
Perfect. Isala, "The Cheetah."

#### **EXT. SHIPPING YARD - NIGHT**

A large crowd is surrounded by stacked containers decorated  
with graffiti and BLOOD STAINS. There is only one way in and  
one way out.

A fight between MALE FIGHTERS finishes up as one barely  
claims victory via a choking maneuver.

Henry watches unimpressed. Isala fidgets.

HENRY  
You're ready for this.

Isala is in the zone. Nothing matters. The world stops.

Frankie "Fist" steps to the center--

VINCENT  
 (to Fist)  
 I got this.  
 (to crowd)  
 Now, for our main event. Isala "The  
 Cheetah" vs...

CHAD KILLMONGER... that's right, a dude... 6'1 and eighty-  
 pounds heavier, steps out of the crowd and into the center.

VINCENT (CONT'D)  
 Chad "Killmonger" Smith.

The fighters take their positions.

HENRY  
 Oh. Fuck. No. What is this  
 bullshit?!

VINCENT  
 She fights, or she doesn't get into  
 the contest.

HENRY  
 (re: Vincent)  
 He's fucking with me.  
 (to Isala)  
 Lets go. I'll get you money from  
 other fights.

ISALA  
 I'm not leaving.

HENRY  
 One hit and you're knocked out!  
 There are no rules, mama.

ISALA  
 I need the money. I can do this. I  
 have to.

She throws Henry a confident look; he reluctantly steps away.

KILLMONGER  
 I rather fuck you than fight you.

He blows her a kiss.

Isala puts her guard up. Ready.

Isala "The Cheetah" vs. Chad "Killmonger"

VINCENT  
 Fight.

Killmonger throws his hammer of a hand--

Isala ducks--

He charges his kick like a battery ram--

Isala ducks and uppercuts Killmonger right in the BALLS--

He immediately drops to his knees and vomits--

Killmonger stumbles up--

Isala kicks him dead on the chin--

His head snaps back like a rubber band--

He's down and out--

The crowd is SILENT--

Vincent's eyes lock with Henry; he knows Henry has a gold mine, and it bugs the shit out of him.

Isala walks away like a badass.

HENRY

Well... shit.

#### **INT. THE ARENA GYM - DAY**

Isala shadow boxes ringside.

In the lobby, prospective customers, FATHER and SON, look at photos of Henry when he was in his prime. Henry closes in to make a sale. He points to a picture on the wall.

HENRY

That's Chuck "Iron Fist," Sirron!  
Excellent Karate fighter. He  
coaches here.

The Son is bored-- Father, unimpressed.

HENRY (CONT'D)

We actually met in a competition,  
it was--

FATHER

We're looking for some place that  
has new equipment, younger coaches.  
Not has-been karate champions.  
Thanks.

He leaves with his son. Henry grabs a beer for comfort. Isala spots a defeated Henry.

ISALA  
Tell me the story about your fight  
with Mr. Iron Fist. Did you go all  
Bruce Lee on you?

She takes the beer from him and replaces it with punch mitts. He ignores the sleight-of-hand and trains her.

HENRY  
Only Bruce Lee can go Bruce Lee on  
your ass. But he was pretty close.

**INT. THE ARENA GYM - LATER**

Ringside. Henry holds the bag as Isala punches. He's sweating more than her. No beers in sight.

HENRY  
Time to ramp up your training.

**MONTAGE: NO EASY WAY OUT**

-- Isala has a medicine ball against the wall and makes circular motions with her forearms and elbows. She drops it, and as punishment, Henry takes a STICK to her mid-section.

-- She is in front of a large metal ring wrapped with THORNY vines. Henry drops a ball on one side of the ring. Isala inserts her hand to catch it, misses and SCRATCHES her hand.

-- In a pool, Isala balances and jumps from one floating board to the next without falling. TENNIS BALLS shoot at her with LIGHTNING speed. She dodges, kind of.

-- Isala chases after a CHICKEN. Dangerous instruments surround her: shovels, rakes, a coil of barb wire, planks of wood with nails, and a FUCKING BEAR TRAP.

END MONTAGE

ISALA  
I know you're my trainer, and I  
don't mean to question you, but  
what the hell was that back there?

HENRY  
First rule--

ISALA  
Don't talk about fight club--

HENRY  
Don't question me. Second rule--

ISALA  
Don't talk about fight club--

HENRY  
Don't question me. Third rule is  
don't talk about fight club.

Isala stares at him, unsure if he's being a smart-ass.

HENRY (CONT'D)  
Get some rest. Your first real  
fight is tomorrow.

RING

Isala's phone rings; her Counselor is calling.

RING

HENRY (CONT'D)  
You going to get that?

RING

Isala declines the call.

HENRY (CONT'D)  
Ya know, you could afford a better  
phone, now.  
(joking)  
Or are you afraid of Big Brother or  
something?

ISALA  
It's just easy to use.

#### **INT. SOLID ROCK GYM - DAY**

MOCK CAVES. Colorful, thick top ropes, arches, ledges, and large boulder areas spot the fight pit.

Sying watches Henry coach Isala in the distance.

Vincent enters doing his usual, friendly "my shit don't stink" routine.

Reyna is undercover as a spectator.

The CROWD holds wads of money. They scream and shout.

FIST  
Isala, "The Cheetah."

Isala unexpectedly works for the crowd, but not in a cocky manner. They eat it up. She belongs here.

Her opponent, TITAN (22), takes the center with an arrogance bigger than the room. She lives for this...

Isala "The Cheetah" vs. Titan

Titan is more stocky than muscular.

FIST (CONT'D)  
Let's bleed, girls!!

The women start strong, hitting one another.

Titan is unable to match Isala's speed. She shoots in to wrestle Isala, but she's unsuccessful.

Isala moves in, throws a punch and a right elbow. They land.

Sying watches, unimpressed.

Titan stumbles and kneels next to a TOP ROPE. Isala moves in to finish her off. Titan grabs the rope and strangles her--

Isala frantically shakes her off and pushes Titan against the cave wall, over and over again. Titan loosens her grip.

Isala sets up and punishes her with a triangle choke... Titan goes to sleep. Isala lets go.

The crowd ROARS.

She takes a look at the crowd and enjoys the adoration.

VINCENT  
(to Isala)  
You've made a fan out of me.

HENRY  
She's made everyone a fan.

VINCENT  
Not everyone...

Sying approaches them.

Henry grows nervous.

Sying walks right past them, bumps Isala in the shoulder.

ISALA  
Who was that?

VINCENT  
Syng Chen. She fights for the  
Triads.

An "oh shit" sweeps across Henry's face.

VINCENT (CONT'D)  
Good luck.

He walks off.

A bookkeeper gives Henry his winnings. Lots of cash. Odds were for sure against Isala. He splits the money with her.

TITAN'S HEAD COACH and fight CAMP greet Henry.

TITAN'S COACH  
Another star fighter you got there.

HENRY  
Sure is--

TITAN'S COACH  
Try not to fuck it up. Again.

He laughs at Henry along with the other coaches. This wounds Henry more than he thought as he clinches his jaw.

#### **INT. BUS - NIGHT**

Isala's black eye forms. Her face has a few band aids, but she smiles underneath it all.

A CUTE LITTLE BOY is curious about her.

She catches his look.

He points to her eye, concerned.

She opens her bag to reveal her training equipment and gloves. She smiles at him. He smiles back.

The BOY'S MOM catches the interaction, takes a quick glance at Isala's gear bag and rolls her eyes. The mom turns her back on Isala.

The little boy is intrigued with Isala, the woman fighter. The mom doesn't like it. She grabs him and move out of view.

**INT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE - DAY**

Esmeralda gathers her purse

The phone RINGS; she lets it go to voicemail.

ADMISSION COUNSELOR (O.C.)  
Hello, Isala. You missed your  
admissions interview today. Please  
call if you need to reschedule.

Esmeralda slowly grabs her purse in disappointment.

**EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY**

Esmeralda gets off the bus.

A HOMELESS MAN solicits for money.

She gives him a couple bucks.

**INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - SAME**

Esmeralda goes straight to Isala's Co-worker.

ESMERALDA  
Hi, I'm looking for my  
granddaughter, Isala. She works  
here.

LAZY CO-WORKER  
Oh yeah... She's not here. She quit  
a while ago. Walked out like a  
boss.

ESMERALDA  
Oh, my mistake. Thank you.

**EXT. THE ARENA GYM - DAY**

A large truck pulls to a stop. Henry greets the DRIVER.

HENRY  
I've tagged all the machines for  
you to haul out and replace.

The Driver and his MOVERS open the truck and unload PREMIUM  
gym machines and martial arts equipment.

An ELECTRICIAN installs a HANDICAP ACCESS DOOR SWITCH.



The entrance is larger, more appealing, and easier to access.  
Henry's winnings well spent.

**INT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Grandma enters the house as Isala exits her room.

ESMERALDA  
Working late?

ISALA  
Not for long.

ESMERALDA  
You're lying to me.

ISALA  
Like you were about the rent bills?

ESMERALDA  
Your right; I didn't want to worry  
you. I'm sorry.

ISALA  
No. I'm sorry. I quit the store and  
I got a new job.

ESMERALDA  
So why not say that?

ISALA  
It's... training people at a gym. I  
have to spar, and I know how you  
don't like that.

ESMERALDA  
And school?

ISALA  
I quit. We needed the money, so I  
needed to work more.

ESMERALDA  
Ugh... mija you shouldn't have done  
that.

ISALA  
Everything is fine, grandma.

ESMERALDA  
You're going to give the gym your  
notice and go back to school.

(MORE)

ESMERALDA (CONT'D)

I don't care what you have to do to go back. But you are.

ISALA

What about the money? You're not working.

ESMERALDA

I'll figure it out.

ISALA

Grandma--

ESMERALDA

I'm not asking.

**EXT. THE ARENA MMA GYM - NIGHT**

Henry closes the back door and sees the Homeless Teenager from earlier. He recognizes the black and white stud shoes.

HENRY

You can't sleep out here. Too dangerous...

She's doesn't move.

He checks on her and finds her dead. There is still some color in her face. Drug paraphernalia surrounds her.

A pain crosses his face that he hasn't felt in a long time. He struggles to show it, despite being alone. He dials 9-1-1.

**INT./EXT. HENRY'S NEW BMW - NIGHT**

Henry pulls up in front of Isala's house. He's a little less himself. Isala gets in.

ISALA

Nice wheels.

HENRY

Yeah.

ISALA

I found out what BMW stands for. Big. Money. Waste.

HENRY

Yeah...

Isala reads his energy, and they stare off to the road.

**EXT. BOTANICAL GARDEN - NIGHT**

This place should be the 8th wonder of the world. Luscious greenery from all over the world surrounds the habitat.

In this habitat is a mantis that is agile, patiently stalks its food, and makes swift work of its prey. A spider is the perfect prey.

Sying "The Mantis" vs. Sara "The Spider".

The crowd is more a cult as they cheer and admire Sying from the second level.

Henry and Isala...

ISALA

Why did you bring me here?

HENRY

To mentally prepare you.

ISALA

Is this Sying's initiation fight?

HENRY

She doesn't need one.

ISALA

Who is she fighting?

HENRY

Doesn't matter.

Above them is a TIMER 00:00.

The Mantis intricately closes the distance--

Spider weaves a useless web of hit combos--

Mantis lunges with quick hits, baits her in--

The Spider calculates the movements--

The Mantis takes out her leg--

Spider staggers up--

Mantis keeps a low profile, ready to strike--

TIMER sets 02:00--

CUT TO:

**SECOND LEVEL**

ISALA

I thought the fights don't have rounds?

HENRY

They don't. Sying's opponent can chose not to engage, and Sying will lose and not advance to the next round... or worse.

ISALA

That's dumb. Sying can do the same thing.

HENRY

That's not her style. If her opponent decides to lose on purpose, she'll have to answer to Vincent. I'm sure I don't need to tell you what that means?

Her face hardens.

**GARDEN**

The Mantis makes lightning-fast lunge strikes--

Spider is losing, but evades--

She's losing and wounded--

Mantis means to kill her opponent--

LIGHTS OUT

In the darkness--

SOUNDS of confusion echo--

LIGHTS ON

Mantis stands with NO OPPONENT in front of her--

45 seconds...

She searches for the Spider in the garden...

LIGHTS OUT.

RUSTLING of leaves and branches nearby...

LIGHTS ON.

Spider POUNCES on Mantis with a lackluster combo...

30 seconds...

Mantis defends awkward hit angles...

Spider sees an opening but doesn't have proper footing; she takes the shot...

An immediate regret as Mantis charges with a 3-hit combo followed by a fancy sweep kick...

10 seconds... 1 second...

Mantis rushes the Spider with her long legs and does a scissor kick...

They go to the ground...

She savagely elbows Spider in the back of the head multiple time... The Spider. Is. No. More.

The timer STOPS in the nick of time. The crowd ROARS for Sying. She calmly walks out and ignores her followers.

#### **EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - DAY**

Henry is cleaned up, nice, and handsome. He has flowers in his hand, a little shaky, a little nervous--

He knocks...

#### **INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE -DAY**

A young woman, MONICA (30), opens the door.

MONICA

Henry!

HENRY

These are for you.

MONICA

Thank you, come in.

HENRY

I don't want to bother.

MONICA

Don't be dumb.

Monica, in a wheelchair, leads him to the living room.

HENRY

How're your parents?

MONICA

Good. How's the gym? Has it been condemned yet?

HENRY

Got close, but no.

MONICA

Want something to drink?

HENRY

Beer.

Monica rolls her eyes and gets him some water.

MONICA

What's wrong?

HENRY

Nothing.

MONICA

You came here just for a pity party then?

HENRY

I shouldn't have come.

MONICA

Stop, Henry. You don't need my permission.

HENRY

I feel like I do.

MONICA

I can't redeem you.  
(re: wheelchair)  
This isn't your fault.

HENRY

I pushed you too hard. You weren't ready.

MONICA

I was ready for that fight like any other. I probably would have won, too.

HENRY  
Yeah, you would have... I gotta go.

MONICA  
Train her.

HENRY  
What?

MONICA  
I still have connections in the  
fight world.

HENRY  
So then you know what kind of  
fights these are?

MONICA  
All the more reason, she needs you.  
You're meant to train the best. So  
be your best.

He nods.

**EXT. THE FISH MARKET - DAY**

A TRIAD GUARD stands idle. Sying approaches...

TRIAD GUARD  
What do you want?

SYING  
To speak with Tao.

TRIAD GUARD  
Boss. Tao. About what?

SYING  
If he's heard any news from my  
father.

The guard allows her to enter.

**INT. THE FISH MARKET - SAME**

Sying walks through the market and stops in the hallway just  
before the office.

She overhears Boss Tao and TRIAD ENFORCERS...

NOTE: *Italics* INDICATE CANTONESE WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES.

TRIAD ENFORCER  
*Do you think Sying will win the  
 contest?*

BOSS TAO  
*Who cares?*

TRIAD ENFORCER  
*But I thought her father said she  
 could go home if she does?*

BOSS TAO  
*Her father is dying. I'll be  
 running things soon, and she'll  
 finally be mine.*

The enforcers are not sure to congratulate him or worry.

Every muscle in Sying's body tightens out of sheer anger.  
 Like a ninja, she leaves like she was never there.

**EXT. THE ARENA MMA GYM - DAY**

Monica arrives with her motorized wheelchair. She's more  
 impressed with the new paint and custom signage than the easy  
 access made just for her.

**INT. THE ARENA MMA GYM - DAY**

Isala hits mitts with Henry, but she's struggling...

HENRY  
*You couldn't knock a kid down with  
 those punches.*

Isala winces in pain.

HENRY (CONT'D)  
*Harder.*

Isala hits harder, barely. Before Henry can throw any more  
 insults Monica interrupts and catches Henry off-guard.

MONICA  
 (re: renovation)  
*I wish I trained here when I still  
 had my legs.*

Henry doesn't laugh.

MONICA (CONT'D)  
*Relax. It's good to see you.*



HENRY  
Monica this is--

MONICA  
The cheetah.

Isala extends her hand.

ISALA  
Nice to meet you.

HENRY  
How'd you know?

MONICA  
I still have my contacts.

Isala winces in pain, stretches' her lower back.

MONICA (CONT'D)  
I'm rooting for you against that  
bitch, Syng.

ISALA  
You fought her?

MONICA  
(re: wheelchair)  
Who do you think did this to me?

Isala gives Henry a knowing look... she gets it, now. Why  
Henry is the way he is...

HENRY  
C'mon. We're not done.

He holds the mitts and Isala kicks.

HENRY (CONT'D)  
Did you wake up with marshmallow  
legs?

ISALA  
I gotta go to the restroom.

HENRY  
Again?!

Isala storms out the ring and grabs her gym bag.

**INT. RESTROOM/LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Isala digs through her bag...

ISALA  
You gotta be kidding me...

She checks the TAMPON dispenser... Empty. Isala looks defeated and in pain.

Monica enters...

MONICA  
Here.

She hands Isala a tampon.

MONICA (CONT'D)  
Henry never fills those things up.  
Guys don't have to worry about that  
shit.

ISALA  
Thanks.

She takes off heating pads from her back and stomach.

MONICA  
Pretty soon, you'll be skipping  
them.

ISALA  
Won't that make me infertile?

MONICA  
I mean... if it's worth it. Right?

ISALA  
Right...

MONICA  
I've never seen Henry this happy  
before. You could really take this  
competition.

ISALA  
Yeah...

MONICA  
What are you going to do after you  
win?

Isala looks at her with empty eyes, she never thought that far ahead.

**EXT. SWAMP - DAY**

The crowd stands on the shore. Sying has a muscular opponent in PETRA from Slovenia.

Sying "The Mantis" vs. Petra "The Siren"

They stand in the middle of a makeshift raft on a nasty day.

Siren gets in a boxing stance--

Mantis doesn't--

Fist's annoying voice...

FIST

Fight!

Siren throws quick hit combos. Mantis dodges and escapes the hit zone in weird angles and small movements.

Siren creates distance to keep Mantis on the edge of the raft. Mantis nearly falls off.

Siren throws a kick. Mantis catches it and elbows her in the knee. Siren limps away. She's gassed from all the misses.

Mantis clocks this.

She moves in with quick jab and kick combo.

She chin checks her--

Siren staggers--

Mantis throws one punch and knocks her out--

She dunks Siren's head into the water--

Mantis drowns her to death.

**INT. FELIX'S AQUARIUM ROOM - DAY**

Felix feeds a mouse to a BOA CONSTRICTOR.

Vincent and Ernesto enter with the Gang Member that sold Miguel the drugs. He was a hard catch based on the wounds on his face and blood on his clothes.

GANG MEMBER

What are you doing? I'm one of yours.

VINCENT  
Not today, you're not.

FELIX  
We don't sell drugs to kids. One of  
them is a brother to an A.T.F.  
Agent.  
(to Ernesto)  
Put him on the wheel.

GANG MEMBER  
What the fuck is the wheel?

Ernesto rough handles him. Vincent stays behind.

FELIX  
If you don't punish your employees,  
you look weak. Good job, Vincent.

VINCENT  
Thank you, Felix.

FELIX  
The woman fighters actually living  
up to their potential?

VINCENT  
The girls are taking the Ws.

FELIX  
How boring?

VINCENT  
Take a look.

Vincent pulls out his phone and shows him the Skate Park  
fight-- Felix watches with little interest... then spots a  
familiar face-- Isala's.

#### **INT. HOTEL BALLROOM - DAY**

The Ballroom is an homage to Venetian décor. An ALL MALE  
crowd conceals their identities with masquerade MASKS.

Vincent is mask-less with Sying at his side.

Isala wears a dress. Henry wears jeans, a t-shirt, and a  
stupid fedora.

Isala is uneasy... the mask-wearing men look at her... she  
turns around... more masks turn to her... masks surrounding  
her now... she tenses up--

HENRY

Isala, pay attention! Focus!

ISALA

It takes a lot more than a mask to hide who they are. Why do we have to fight in these dresses?

HENRY

Would you rather fight naked? They pay to see your pretty face.

ISALA

You think I'm pretty.

HENRY

Stop joking around. Hurricane is your toughest opponent to date.

ISALA

You're right. I'm sorry.

Surrounding the dance floor at the center of the room is a TRIANGLE CAGE. One side is made of BARB WIRE.

ISALA (CONT'D)

(re: barb wire)

You're kidding me?

Henry goes to the bar.

Vincent approaches...

VINCENT

You think you have this fight in the bag?

ISALA

I'll manage.

VINCENT

How much are you making with Henry?

ISALA

Enough.

VINCENT

You sure he's fair?

ISALA

What do you want?

VINCENT

I want to bet on you.

ISALA  
What's stopping you?

VINCENT  
I want you to throw the next fight.  
I'll split the winnings  
fifty/fifty.

ISALA  
Real fighters don't throw fights.  
I'm a real fighter, and Henry is my  
friend.

VINCENT  
Somehow I believe that. But ask  
yourself... how loyal is Henry to  
you? He's Coach Choker for a  
reason. He drinking more?

Isala softens up, knows he's right.

VINCENT (CONT'D)  
Check the bar.

**BAR**

Henry is loaded. Isala pauses, disappointed to see him here.

ISALA  
Vincent stopped by to see me.

HENRY  
What'd he want?

ISALA  
He wants me to throw the next  
fight.

HENRY  
What'd you say?

ISALA  
That's a stupid question. I worked  
too hard to get this far. We both  
have. I'm not going to quit.

Henry downs his beer.

ISALA (CONT'D)  
Why do they call you coach choker?  
Do you run from your fighters? Give  
up?

HENRY  
You don't know shit!

ISALA  
Than tell me! I'm your friend. Or  
is Vincent right, and you're not as  
loyal as I think?

Henry gestures for another drink. Downs it. Isala stops him.

HENRY  
There was a fighter. She was the  
best. Almost as hard-headed as you.  
We made all the way to the  
championship, but she wasn't ready.  
But I pushed her anyway.

ISALA  
She get hurt?

HENRY  
Yeah. Her ground game wasn't as  
good as it should have been. Her  
opponent scooped her up and dropped  
her on her neck. She's in a  
wheelchair now.

ISALA  
It's not your fault.

HENRY  
It hurt more than any fight I lost,  
any punch I took... To see her like  
that.

ISALA  
Then why push me away?

HENRY  
Because I was afraid to fail you; I  
got back on my feet, but I couldn't  
stop the drinking. I trained a few  
other fighters, but each time we  
got closer, I blew it. So did my  
fighters; I wasn't there for them,  
and they lost--

ISALA  
Coach Choker.

Henry nods. Isala downs the drink she stole from him.

HENRY  
We're not going to hug, are we?

ISALA

No, you smell gross. I am going to win the contest. Can you at least try to cut back on the drinking? I need you.

Henry nods.

HENRY

Let's do this.

Isala enters the ominous cage with HURRICANE, lean and unassuming in a beautiful dress.

Like a cockroach that won't die, Frankie Fist shows up, works the crowd--

FIST

Fight!

Isala "The Cheetah" vs. Hurricane

Hurricane makes it clear her style is Muay Thai.

Isala dodges with her high-heels, making it difficult. She throws a kick, and her heel flies off.

She takes off the other heel. Hurricane does the same.

Hurricane throws a kick. Isala blocks.

Isala TEARS a slit in her dress for a better range of movement. She absorbs kicks, again and again. She scratches herself on the barbed wire.

Isala catches a kick and sweeps Hurricane, knocking her against barbed side of the fence... she SQUEALS.

Hurricane CLOSES the distance with a kick/punch combo, gets Isala in the clinch, and knees her. But her dress restrains her flexibility.

The crowd clears as GUARDS carry large canvas bags and release various venomous and non-venomous SNAKES. The crowd roars with excitement and for blood.

HENRY

(re: snakes)

The fuck?!

Isala loses her grasp on the fight. Her eyes estimate where the snakes land.



Hurricane knees Isala, they inch closer into the BARBED WIRE. Isala grabs a knee with an UNDER HOOK and strikes her. Hurricane judo throws her.

Isala drops--

Snakes are inches from her face--

A BLUE SNAKE stares Isala in the eyes and prepares to snap. She rolls in time and lands on the ANACONDA.

A RED SNAKE and black coral snake lands on Hurricane. She throws it against the fence.

The snakes SLITHER into the crowd. Security scares them with fire extinguishers.

Isala moves in and traps her in a standing guillotine choke.

Hurricane pushes her close to the barb wire, snagging her dress, but Isala weaves away from the wire.

An ALBINO PYTHON wraps around Isala's leg--

Isala can't give up her dominant position. She hurries to submit her before the snake can finish SQUEEZING.

Hurricane is about to pass out but does a scorpion kick and cuts Isala's eyebrow--

Hurricane is free, backs up, barely misses a snake--

Blood drains into Isala's eye--

She can BARELY SEE--

Isala is more concerned with the python than her opponent... She shimmies, turns, and cuts the snake on the wire, and the snake loosens its grip. Isala is free...

Snakes are closing in on the fighters--

Hurricane is distracted--

Isala executes a 180 roundhouse kick, misses, but follows up with the other leg and strikes Hurricane for the win.

She falls on the wire, but Isala saves her just in time.

HURRICANE'S TRAINERS gratefully nod at Isala.

Guards come in and take care of the snakes.

WHAMP

POLICEMEN and A.T.F. AGENTS storm the building.

BLAKE

Everybody! Freeze! Don't move!

People scatter like roaches. Vincent runs and hides under the ring. Reyna goes after him, but he's gone down a secret compartment.

REYNA

Shit.

Reyna targets Isala, making an effort to arrest her.

**INT. REGIONAL A.T.F. HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT**

Reyna and Blake move to an interrogation room.

BLAKE

Vincent got away. You got five minutes, Reyna, then I got to move her.

**INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - SAME**

Reyna enters with Isala, comfortably sitting down.

Reyna throws down some photos and files with a picture of Felix Escobar and Syng.

REYNA

Where is Felix?

Isala shrugs her shoulders.

REYNA (CONT'D)

Now's not the time to play tough, girl.

ISALA

I want a lawyer.

REYNA

You're way over your head on this.

ISALA

So are you. I remember you from the skate park.

Reyna shifts in her chair as she turns to the privacy glass, uncomfortable. Reyna gently moves a photo face down at Isala. She flips it over: it's the Vasquez family with Pedro.

ISALA (CONT'D)  
I don't know who they are, either.

REYNA  
Sure you do... Karina Vasquez.

Isala looks up, surprised that her cover has been blown.

REYNA (CONT'D)  
I did a background on all the  
fighters. There are very few  
coyotes that can pull off your type  
of identities...

**EXT. MEXICO DESERT - VAN - NIGHT [FLASHBACK]**

Pedro speeds down the dirt path to the Vasquez home.

REYNA (V.O.)  
Pedro Marquez. He told me  
everything...

**INT. KITCHEN HIDEOUT - NIGHT [FLASHBACK]**

Karina struggles to open the door, but Blanca's dead body is  
on top of it. Karina slips and rolls her ANKLE.

REYNA (V.O.)  
He told me about your ankle...

FOOTSTEPS...

Pedro opens the hideout door and grabs Karina as fiery debris  
nearly kills them.

**EXT. VILLA HOME - NIGHT [FLASHBACK]**

Karina screams and cries.

KARINA  
Mama? Papa? Isabelle!

Pedro buckles her inside the van and speeds off into safety  
as the house crumbles into ash.

REYNA (V.O.)  
I'm sorry about your sister...  
Isala? Did you give yourself that  
name to remember her?

BACK TO SCENE:

Isala holds in her tears and moves down to unwrap her ankle.

REYNA

The pain you feel and the hate that  
spawns from it isn't justice or  
redemption, its revenge. And death  
is the only way out.

Both hold in their anger, breathing heavily, unsure if  
they're going to throw down. Reyna steps back.

REYNA (CONT'D)

I almost lost a family member.

ISALA

Almost?

REYNA

My brother overdosed on Felix's  
drugs. I want him as much as you,  
but in cuffs.

ISALA

I'm sorry about your brother. I'll  
pray for him.

REYNA

Let go of your pride and relieve  
this city of Felix's poison. For  
good.

ISALA

Don't throw pride and revenge in my  
face. It got you this far.

REYNA

We can protect you if you  
cooperate. Tell me where the next  
fight is. I'll take it from there.

ISALA

I got this far, and I'm not going  
to quit. Felix isn't in prison. You  
had your shot. It's my turn.

Reyna checks the clock.

REYNA

I don't want you to get hurt.

Carmichael bursts through the door.

CARMICHAEL

Get out here now!

**HALLWAY**

Reyna and Carmichael...

REYNA

My job! She's a witness--

CARMICHAEL

To what, a fucking fight ring,  
supposedly linked to Felix?

REYNA

I followed DeChant to the fight. He  
is working for Felix. I can get  
them both! And Sying Chen!  
Something big is going down.

CARMICHAEL

Chen? The Triads with the Mexicans?  
That's a story.

Tobin gets in Reyna's face.

Nose to nose.

CARMICHAEL (CONT'D)

You can say goodbye to law  
enforcement, sweetheart.

**INT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE - DAY**

Esmeralda prepares Mexican food. She knocks on Isala's door.

ESMERALDA

Mija...

She knocks again, and the door opens. She enters.

On the wall is a workflow from previous pictures, news  
clippings, and printouts she had in her folder. She examines  
the wall with a scary look in her eyes.

Sticking from the mattress is a yellow envelope of Isala's  
fight winnings.

**INT. THE ARENA GYM - DAY**

The gym is busy. All the machines are in use, and people wait  
to hit the bags.

Henry and Isala...

ISALA

The machines were a good investment.

HENRY

Not everyone is here for the machines. People want to train where "The Cheetah" trains.

Isala gives Henry a sniff.

ISALA

Have you've been drinking?

HENRY

I stopped at eleven.

ISALA

That was half an hour ago.

HENRY

Baby steps. Enough about me. Let's work.

Henry puts on his body shield pad.

ISALA

Do you think I can beat Sying?

HENRY

I honestly don't know.

ISALA

I guess that's better than a definite "no."

HENRY

I see fighters fight for their kids, their families, but in the end, they aren't in the ring with them. Their purpose is temporary. If they cared so much to do things for them, they'd be dropping them off at school instead of starving themselves to cut weight and being here. You have something most don't, including Sying--

ISALA

Heart.

HENRY

No, smartass. Purpose. You're a selfish fighter, and that's okay, so is Sying. That's why she will be your toughest match-up. She has to fight for the Triads, and she loves to win, but look how she does it. The sliver of difference between you two is that your purpose is pure.

ISALA

What if my purpose isn't pure?

HENRY

Prepare to lose.

ISALA

Why do you always call me a smart ass?

HENRY

Would you prefer fight princess?

ISALA

That's condescending.

HENRY

It's endearing. Now shut up and kick me.

Isala kicks him, but not on the body pad.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Body. Pad.

He knows she did it on purpose. Isala playfully smiles. She kicks him in the pad over and over... with purpose.

**EXT. FELIX'S CHATEAU - BACKYARD - DAY**

Ernesto and Felix meet with Sying, who is unnerved.

Behind Felix and Ernesto is a large SPIN WHEEL. Attached to it is the Gang Member. He is badly beaten.

On the wheel are slots that read: Chess, Russian Roulette, Suicide, Candyland, Chicken, and Snake Pit, along with grossly morbid symbols and a "3."

FELIX

You delight me with your presence.  
And I hear your fight skills are  
quite brutal.

Sying stays silent.

FELIX (CONT'D)

Your father is dying.

SYING

How do you know that?

FELIX

I keep my friends close and my  
enemies closer. But I have no  
friends. So I'm left with more time  
to know my enemy.

SYING

Don't you mean partners?

FELIX

Partners, buying their time to be  
my enemy.

SYING

I'm dead to my father. I have been  
for some time, so whatever it is, I  
can't help you.

FELIX

I'm asking you to help yourself. I  
saw the way Tao talked to you.  
You're interested in bigger things  
than winning fights? You want to be  
the head of the Triads. A  
Dragonmaster?

SYING

China will never allow it.

FELIX

You're not in China.

Sying paces... contemplates...

FELIX (CONT'D)

I can make sure your takeover  
doesn't have any blowback.

SYING

Who do you want me to kill?



FELIX

No killing. Beat to submission.  
There is a woman in the  
competition. She goes by Isala  
a.k.a, "The Cheetah."

SYING

Why can't you do it?

FELIX

I'm a gamemaster. I control the  
scenarios, not the outcomes. Me  
interfering is cheating. I would  
compromise my integrity. No one  
would come to the fights or bet  
money, and I'd be cheated out of  
good entertainment.

SYING

How do I know you won't backstab  
me?

FELIX

You can't afford not to find out.

SYING

So are we partners or friends?

FELIX

Neither. We're allies.

Sying goes to the wheel and spins it... solidifying her  
acceptance in the game.

The Gang Member spins fast in agony.

#### **INT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE - DAY**

Grandma sits patiently; she abandoned the food.

Isala enters.

ESMERALDA

(re: money)

I know how the rent was paid. Is  
this from fighting?

ISALA

I told you, I have a second job.  
Why were you in my room?

**INT. ISALA'S ROOM - SAME**

Isala sees her wall is clear of Felix's workflow.

ISALA  
Why'd you do that?

ESMERALDA  
You're obsessed. This isn't healthy.

ISALA  
Guilt isn't healthy.

ESMERALDA  
I lost them too. It wasn't easy for me, either. What happened to you telling me the truth?

ISALA  
You don't get it. You didn't see what I saw and felt so helpless. I'm not going to feel that way again.

ESMERALDA  
You need to stop punishing yourself about Felix. None of it was your fault. Your sister wouldn't want this life--

ISALA  
I should have stayed with her. At least we would have been together. I was supposed to be the strong one. I'd rather it be me than her.

ESMERALDA  
Oh, mija. You were little. There was nothing you could do. There is nothing you can do. The fighting for money needs to stop now. Don't go looking for trouble. He's a clever man with money and easily corrupts people. We can't trust anyone.

ISALA  
Nothing is going to happen to us, Grandma. I'll make sure of it.

ESMERALDA  
I love you, mija. I always will.

ISALA

I love you too, Grandma. More than anything.

ESMERALDA

C'mon, help me finish cooking and we'll watch something after. We're celebrating. I got the job.

ISALA

That's wonderful, grandma.

ESMERALDA

Now, you can go back to school.

ISALA

Okay, okay, I will.

Esmeralda hugs her with a kiss on the cheek.

ISALA (CONT'D)

Grandma... the money...

ESMERALDA

Right. It did feel nice to hold it.

#### **INT. THE FISH MARKET - DOCK - DAY**

Sying SLASHES and STABS Boss Tao with vigor; blood spurts out and slathers large striped bass fish. Sying composes herself and struts to the...

#### **HALLWAY**

On the floor is a Triad enforcer. DEAD. His neck is broken at a 180-degree angle. Sying steps over him to the...

#### **DINING AREA**

She passes two TRIAD DEPUTIES hunched over. DEAD. Their food is flavored with blood, and their bodies are topped with chopsticks in their eyeballs. She flows to the...

#### **ENTRANCE**

She stops at a Triad guard that is supposed to be guarding the door. DEAD. His body mangled in some weird yoga pose gone horribly wrong.

**EXT. THE FISH MARKET - SAME**

Two lowly TRIAD SOLDIERS walk to the door. Blood drips on their shoes. They look up...

Sying stands by the door like a grim reaper waiting to collect more souls.

The Triad soldiers peek inside and spot the dead deputies. They look to one another then back at Sying. She scans them like a death robot scans for a threat... they're not.

SYING

Get rid of the bodies. You've been promoted.

The ~~soldiers~~ deputies hurry in and clean up Sying's mess.

**INT. SANTIAGO RESIDENCE - DAY**

Miguel, in a wheelchair, is surrounded by love and family. Reyna steers him to the living room.

There are decorations around the house and "welcome home" banners on the walls.

REYNA

I got your video games all set up in the living room.

She shows him a new video game.

MIGUEL

Awesome. When did it come out?

REYNA

Today.

She gets a call from Blake. She shoots a "this is important look" to her parents. They get it.

REYNA (CONT'D)

(into phone)

What's up?

**INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - CUBICLE - DAY**

Blake is doing better than a closet, but not by much. He talks in a low volume and searches for prying eyes.

BLAKE  
An informant spotted Vincent  
downtown at the Vanity Lofts.

INTERCUT REYNA/BLAKE

REYNA  
How long ago?

BLAKE  
About an hour.

REYNA  
Shit.

Reyna hugs Miguel goodbye.

REYNA (CONT'D)  
(to Miguel)  
I'll be back to play later. Okay?

Miguel nods.

REYNA (CONT'D)  
I'm on my way.

BLAKE  
Be careful.

# **INT. LOFT - BEDROOM - DAY**

Heavy breathing... a man MOANS. Sheets entangle their bodies as they roll around in passionate sex. They finish together. Vincent uncovers himself.

The WOMAN faces away from Vincent, undoes her ponytail, and puts on her underwear. She turns around...

SYING  
I need you to leave now.

Vincent leans in for a kiss. She gives him a quick one.

VINCENT  
Tao send you off on another  
bullshit errand?

SYING  
I killed Boss Tao.

VINCENT  
Are you serious? Tao's men will  
find you.

SYING

His men are now mine. My father is dying, and he has no power here with Tao gone. Felix will keep away the rest.

VINCENT

What do you have to do?

SYING

Don't worry about it. I'll build my own empire as the most feared dragonmaster. It'll be just a matter of time, and I can push Felix out for good, and I'll be the best partner you'll ever need.

**EXT./INT. REYNA'S CAR - DAY**

Reyna waits in her car, not too far from the lofts. Reyna takes out her phone and snaps a few photos as Vincent and Sying exit together. She dials Blake...

**EXT. PEARSON FUEL PIER - DAY**

Blake crosses yellow tape surrounded by FORENSICS. His phone rings; he picks up...

INTERCUT REYNA/BLAKE

BLAKE

Yeah?

REYNA

I'm gonna send you a picture. You recognize the woman?

Blake checks the picture.

BLAKE

Sying Chen. Her father is a Dragonmaster in China. She has done some damage for the Triads but was never accepted as one.

REYNA

Like what?

BLAKE

No one knows for sure. She's like a mythical figure.

(MORE)

BLAKE (CONT'D)  
Interpol, Scotland Yard, MI6,  
fucking Mossad... Everyone has  
heard of her.

REYNA  
Is she on your radar for anything?

BLAKE  
She is now. She's the new  
Dragonmaster.

On the deck is Boss Tao and his murdered men caught twisted  
in fish nets.

BLAKE (CONT'D)  
Is she with Vincent?

REYNA  
Yeah.

BLAKE  
Syng, Vincent, and Felix all in  
one city. That is a trifecta of  
fuckery.

Reyna hangs up abruptly and tails Vincent.

Forensics bags a fish. Blake looks confused.

FORENSICS  
(re: fish)  
It ate one of their eyeballs.

**EXT. ABANDONED PRISON - ENTRANCE - NIGHT**

Easily a location for a ghost hunting show. RICH PEOPLE  
arrive. They are screened, including Vincent.

Reyna tails him and wanders off for her entrance.

Reyna walks up to SECURITY #1.

SECURITY  
Invitation?

REYNA  
I don't have one.

SECURITY #1  
If you're not on the list or a  
fighter. No entrance.

The woman fighter that was kicked out of Henry's gym, Zoey, waits impatiently. She sizes Reyna with her eyes.

REYNA  
I am a fighter.

ZOEY  
You don't look like one.

REYNA  
Am I talking to you?

SECURITY #1  
Enough! Take them to the locker room.

Security #2 herds the fighters with a watchful eye.

No way for Reyna to escape.

#### **EXT. PRISON YARD - NIGHT**

This crowd is different.

They act more like this is a Broadway show than a bloody circus. They could easily be the Illuminati, suspects in political scandals, or cover-ups.

Multiple COACHES and HIGH ROLLERS talk amongst each other as bookkeepers take bets and write on their notepads.

#### **INT. ABANDONED LOCKER ROOM - SAME**

FIGHTERS prepare for battle like gladiators.

Reyna sneaks up on Isala.

ISALA  
You just don't give up do you?

REYNA  
A.T.F. is all over this place. You don't want to get hurt.

ISALA  
Bullshit. Our last conversation got interrupted by your pissed-off boss. Sounds like you're fighting your own fight.



REYNA

You don't have to do this. These fights are getting more out of control. If I know who you are, how long before Felix does?

ISALA

I'm not gonna stop.

Security #2 sees them arguing.

SECURITY #2

Save it for the ring!

ISALA

(under her breath)

Shit.

Isala moves to the exit.

REYNA

(under her breath)

Shit.

Fist enters.

FIST

Alright, head boppers. Line up.

He points to Reyna.

FIST (CONT'D)

You there, you're up next.

Shit...

## **PRISON YARD**

An enclosed chain-link cage sits in the middle of the yard.

## **CAGE**

Reyna "Bloodhound vs. Zoey "The Bulldozer"

They start on opposite ends and move to the center...

Reyna starts with haymakers. Zoey gets a strong clinch around her neck. Reyna is hit repeatedly by vicious knees.

Reyna swings misses. Zoey pushes her into the cage. Reyna wiggles out. Zoey delivers a hard elbow coming out of the clinch. Reyna is knocked down.

Zoey cuts in, punches, and kicks Reyna. Reyna trips, gets up fast, and catches a kick. She lifts Zoey, slams her, then switches to a RARE submission move.

Reyna wins-- that was a close one, and she knows it.

#### **CROWD**

Isala searches the crowd, a little intimidated and nervous. Henry is actually sober, and it doesn't look good on him.

#### **HENRY**

Yakuma is not just your toughest opponent but the best pound-for-pound in this tournament. Besides Sying.

Henry is more nervous than Isala. It's getting to her.

#### **HENRY (CONT'D)**

Dodge her leg kicks. Counter with punches by sitting up a fast front kick. Protect yourself at all times. This is it, mama. Last one, and you'll be in the Final Fight, and I can retire.

SMASH CUT TO:

The cage doors smash shut.

#### **CAGE**

#### Isala "The Cheetah" vs. Yakuma

Isala and YAKUMA (23), stare each other down, equally matched in confidence.

Yakuma moves around the cage, analyzing her opponent. She's identical in build and height, but she has a reach advantage.

.....Silence.....

Prison ALARM goes off--

FIGHT--

Isala meets to tap gloves out of respect--

POW

Yakuma fakes the kind gesture and CHEAP SHOTS Isala--

She staggers--

A ***fist*** flies in from another direction... another opponent--

POW

Sying enters the fight with a blow to Isala--

The crowd ROARS and are on their feet--

Psychotic fandom--

Isala "The Cheetah" vs. Yakuma vs. Sying "The Mantis"

YAKUMA

Front kicks Sying then targets Isala. She does a punch/kick combo; Isala blocks.

Takes down Isala and attempts an ankle lock. She has it in tight. She uses her legs to keep Sying at bay.

ISALA

Heel kicks Yakuma in the face, and releases her.

SYING

Attacks Yakuma with some kicks and punches. She grabs Yakuma by the waist and throws her back, then attacks Isala.

They bang. Blow by blow, their boxing skills are evenly matched. She realizes Isala is a more formidable opponent than anticipated. This isn't going to be easy.

She redirects her attention to Yakuma.

YAKUMA

Intercepts Sying with a superman punch. It lands. Sying bleeds. She's no match for Yakuma's reach advantage.

ISALA

Dives and cold-cocks Sying in the chin, but Sying throws a cross as she stumbles back.

Yakuma comes in with a flying elbow but misses Sying.

Yakuma kicks Isala in the rib. Isala moans in pain.

Together, Sying and Yakuma capitalize on the moment and kick Isala in the head... she ducks. The two women kick each other in the head. Sying is dazed but on her feet. Yakuma, barely.

Isala uses this moment to regain her composure.

SYING

Sees Yakuma is the weaker prey. She chops down Yakuma with kicks to the legs. Yakuma's thighs bleed from all the unchecked blows.

She lands a devastating elbow on top of Yakuma's head. Yakuma goes down with her head spilt open. Sying heel stomps Yakuma in the head. Over and over, again. Last one--

ISALA

Jumps into action and kicks away Sying's strike before it lands on Yakuma and saves her.

Isala executes a 180-roundhouse kick to the head... Sying goes down... Isala checks on Yakuma.

HENRY (O.S.)

What are you doing? Keep going!

Yakuma is unconscious. Isala drags her toward the cage exit to save her.

**CROWD**

YAKUMA'S HEAD COACH throws in the towel to surrender.

YAKUMA'S HEAD COACH

Stop!

Reyna is scared for Isala. She clocks a Security Guard and his gun.

SYING

Springs up like a damn jack-in-the-box and attacks Isala. But instead of defending herself, Isala shields Yakuma, becoming her protector rather than her opponent.

ISALA

Isala ingests shot after shot; takes an uppercut and an elbow across the jaw.

Isala is knocked out.

**CROWD**

Henry inches to the cage door and opens it, but Security stops him. He flashes his gun at Henry. He idles.

HENRY  
Wake up! Isala! Isala!

Reyna sees the commotion and moves in.

SYING

She ignores the surrender, grabs the unconscious Yakuma for a guillotine choke, and crushes her larynx.

Isala comes to with blurry vision, barely makes out Yakuma. She isn't moving. Sying is in a fight position.

Isala checks on Yakuma and realizes she's dead.

Isala's eyes of fury turn to sadness. Ambition into indifference. Hate into sympathy.

**CROWD**

Reyna takes the gun from the Security Guard and knocks him out with it. She FIRES into the air.

BANG. BANG. BANG.

Henry is sucked into the crowd as they flee. Security opens the cage door for Sying to get out and escape.

Henry scoops Isala out of the ring and carries her to safety.

Security heads for Reyna, but she loses herself in the crowd and ditches the gun.

**INT. THE ARENA GYM - OFFICE - NIGHT**

Henry grabs an alcoholic beverage.

Isala lies on the couch. She comes to.

Henry hides his drink.

ISALA  
(re: drink)  
I saw that.

HENRY  
Forget about my drinking and worry  
about your healing.

ISALA  
I'm sorry.

HENRY

Why?

ISALA

I lost.

HENRY

You didn't lose. The fight was cut off. You got another chance, Isala. Unless you don't think you can do this... I'm not going to make the same mistake twice. So, if you're done. Tell me now.

ISALA

I'm not done. I can beat Sying.

HENRY

You're damn right.

Henry finishes his drink.

ISALA

I gotta get home. My grandma will be worried.

**INT. HENRY'S NEW BMW - NIGHT**

Henry drives with Isala. He actually uses the turn signals.

In the distance, they see smoke.

ISALA

Faster.

HENRY

What's going on?

Henry turns the corner--

Her house is on fire--

She opens the car door--

Henry brakes--

She jumps out before the car comes to a complete stop--

HENRY (CONT'D)

Isala!

**INT./EXT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE - SERIES OF SHOTS - NIGHT**

The house is on fire.

Henry parks and jumps out of the car. The fastest he's ever been. He runs into the house with disregard for his life.

Through smoke and fire, Isala runs inside--

ISALA

Grandma!

Henry rushes in--

ISALA (CONT'D)

Grandma!

She searches her bedroom--

HENRY

We need to go!

ISALA

She isn't here.

Henry drags out Isala before they're baptized in fire.

SIRENS

HENRY

We gotta go.

**INT./EXT. HENRY'S BMW - SAME**

Henry and Isala...

ISALA

They took her.

HENRY

Who? What are you talking about?

ISALA

I know it's not Vincent that's in charge of the fights. It's Felix Guerrero.

HENRY

I didn't see the need to tell you. Why are you bringing this up?

ISALA

Because my name isn't Isala. It's Karina Vasquez. Felix murdered my family in Mexico, and me and my grandma have been hiding until now.

HENRY

This is the most sobering conversation I've ever had.

ISALA

I screwed up-- Reyna was right--

HENRY

Who's Reyna?

ISALA

She's A.T.F. and wants Felix for her reasons but in cuffs. He's not getting off that easy.

HENRY

So, that's why you wanted to get to the final fight. So you can kill Felix. Then what? That's not going to bring forgiveness.

ISALA

Forgive Felix?

HENRY

No. You. Look, mama, I can't imagine what it's like to lose a family. But, if you don't forgive yourself, you'll be in a bizarre dream state.

He speaks from experience...

HENRY (CONT'D)

Like there is always something unfinished. A big void filled with panic that sucks you in and spits you out. You're left in a big empty nowhere, but still, no room to heal.

ISALA

I don't deserve it.

Henry's phone rings.

ISALA (CONT'D)

Pick up.



HENRY  
(into phone)  
Hello...  
(to Isala)  
It's for you.

ISALA  
(into phone)  
... Please don't hurt her...  
(a beat)  
I'll be there.

She hangs up.

ISALA (CONT'D)  
They want me in the Final Fight  
against Sying. If I don't show,  
they'll kill her.

HENRY  
You don't have to go. I'll get you  
to a safe place, and I'll call the  
cops, and they can get Felix.

ISALA  
My grandma will be dead by then.

HENRY  
What do you want to do?

ISALA  
I don't have a choice. Fight on.

**INT. MARINA PARKING LOT - DAY**

Henry pulls up where two of Felix's men wait.

**INT./EXT. HENRY'S NEW BMW - SAME**

Henry and Isala...

HENRY  
Let me come with you.

ISALA  
Everyone I know is dead or hurt. I  
have to live with that. I can't  
make the void any bigger, not with  
your blood on my hands too.

HENRY  
Now, we can hug.

Isala smiles, and they hug for a good moment.

She walks out on him for the last time.

Felix's men bind her and take her away.

Henry takes a big swig from his soda... dials on his phone.

**EXT. FELIX'S YACHT - STARBOARD - DAY**

Isala finally meets her family's murderer, Felix... 15 years later; separated by pain and hard work, their eyes say nothing and everything to each other--

ISALA  
How'd you find me?

FELIX  
One of my associates showed a video of the Skate Park fight. I didn't know your mom had twins. She was a cunning bitch.

She lunges at Felix. His men can barely contain her.

ISALA  
You piece-of-shit... you didn't have to hurt my grandma.

FELIX  
Backstabbers and liars taint your bloodline. They all deserve what comes to them.  
(to Ernesto)  
Take her to her grandma.

**INT. FELIX'S YACHT - BEDROOM - DAY**

Isala is thrown in with her grandma, beaten so badly she clings to life and is incoherent.

ISALA  
Grandma.

ESMERALDA  
Blanca... Blanca?

ISALA  
No, Grandma, it's me.

ESMERALDA  
You look so much like your mom.

ISALA  
Grandma, hang on.

ESMERALDA  
You deserve so much better.

ISALA  
Don't say that. You gave me everything I needed. I'm sorry I didn't listen. I'm going to get you out of here. Hold on a little longer.

ESMERALDA  
I'm not going anywhere. I'm just gonna sleep for a bit and when I wake up I'll make us something to eat...

She fades.

ESMERALDA (CONT'D)  
And we can watch something. Okay?

ISALA  
Okay, Grandma.

Esmeralda closes her eyes...

ISALA (CONT'D)  
Hey! Hey! Someone help, please.

Ernesto enters.

ISALA (CONT'D)  
She's dying. I did like you asked, let her go.

Ernesto checks Esmeralda's pulse.

ERNESTO  
She's dead.

ISALA  
Grandma, wake up! Grandma! Don't go... I love you too much... I'm gonna take us back home... to Mexico... Grandma?

ERNESTO  
(to guards)  
Dump her body overboard.

ISALA  
Nooooooooooo! Don't touch her!

She fights them tooth and nail; she's uncontrollable. Ernesto takes out his gun, ready to shoot... but remembers... he hits her in the head, and she falls like a sack of bricks.

**EXT. MARINA PARKING LOT - DAY**

Vincent looks through binoculars. He sees Felix's yacht far into the ocean.

He dials on the phone.

**INT. DIRECTOR CARMICHAEL'S OFFICE - DAY**

The phone RINGS. Carmichael opens his drawer and answers his secret prepaid flip phone.

DIRECTOR CARMICHAEL  
What?!

VINCENT (O.C.)  
Felix and Sying are off the harbor.

DIRECTOR CARMICHAEL  
Why did you use the anonymous tip line?!

VINCENT  
I didn't. I called you.

DIRECTOR CARMICHAEL  
Someone did; now every damn law enforcement agency knows where he is.

**EXT. POLICE PARKING LOT - SAME**

Blake pulls up in an unmarked car.

Reyna enters covertly and checks her gun.

BLAKE  
You don't have prove anything.

REYNA  
Thank you, Blake. For everything.

BLAKE  
Just make sure I'm on your mom's  
tamale list.

**EXT. FELIX'S YACHT - HELICOPTER PAD - DAY**

The ocean glimmers at the sun like diamonds to be desired.

Felix's yacht fills with his ASSOCIATES and other GANG  
LEADERS. Two guards bring Isala to the center.

Sying stands at Felix's attention.

The guards drop Isala, still knocked out. Ernesto throws  
water at her. She comes to...

FELIX  
I killed many a man for very  
little, Karina. I loved your  
mother, and she left me for my  
fucking accountant! I hated her for  
it. Hate is a perversion of love,  
and now you know how much it  
wounds, and it will never heal. We  
are the same.

ISALA  
Go fuck yourself, and your stupid  
game.

FELIX  
Isabelle played one of my games and  
lost. It's your turn.

Felix gestures to Ernesto; he douses a ring of gas around  
them and sets it on fire.

Sying gets in her fight stance.

Isala "The Cheetah" Vasquez vs. Sying "The Mantis"

ISALA  
You don't have to do this.

SYING  
You can't count on your kind for an  
opportunity. So, you create your  
own.

ISALA  
I'm not fighting you.

Sying kicks her down. Isala stays put. The crowd BOOOS.

FELIX ASSOCIATE  
C'mon! Fight!

SYING  
Get up!

SIRENS

Isala throws dagger eyes at Felix--

ISALA  
(re: sirens)  
I'm not the same scared little girl  
you left to die.

FELIX  
(to Sying)  
If she doesn't fight, our deal is  
off.

Felix gestures to his men to prepare for a gunfight.

SYING  
I sat there and watched as they  
beat your grandma. You dishonor  
your family, and you should have  
died with them.

Isala gets on her feet with a renewed zest, swings and  
misses, then front-kicks Sying.

Sying dodges and follows with a kick to the head... she  
dishes out slow pain, chopping Isala down like a tree, and  
throws vicious leg strikes.

She kicks Isala behind the knee, drops, and Sying knees her  
in the face.

Isala flies back. Her arm touches the fire.

#### **EXT. FELIX'S YACHT - HELICOPTER PAD - DAY**

Isala does a superman punch, nearly K.O.'s Sying. She follows  
with a low roundhouse kick that sends Sying to the concrete  
and hits her head.

#### **OCEAN**

Law enforcement boats approach the Yacht.

Felix's security sprays them with bullets...

**STERN**

Law enforcement barely makes it on deck under a hail of gunfire.

Blake and Reyna return fire, take cover wherever they can.

**INT. GALLEY - DAY**

Reyna and Blake are ahead of everyone.

BLAKE

Phrase of the day: Be careful.

Felix's security shoots at Reyna and Blake. They duck and separate.

Blake gives Reyna cover fire; she moves up...

**HELICOPTER PAD**

Sying gets out of an armbar.

Reyna fires at security. Kills them. She's shut out from the fight and can barely make out Isala through the flames.

Felix joins the gunfight. He shoots, not wasting a bullet. Calm. Calculated.

Sying throws predictable kicks. Isala dodges and creates distance to set up a descending elbow. Sying is knocked down. Isala pounces on her for a submission. Sying gets on top.

Isala switches positions... she rolls Sying into the fire.

Sying scurries up and accidentally tumbles off the yacht. She doesn't scream on the way down.

**CONTROL ROOM**

Reyna takes a fire extinguisher under heavy gunfire.

**HELICOPTER PAD**

Reyna extinguishes a portion of the fire and draws her gun.

REYNA

(to Felix)

Don't move!

Felix shoots. Reyna fires back.

Business partners and associates head for safety. Some are on-fire and IGNITE the furniture.

Reyna shoots at Felix--

He uses Ernesto as a meat shield, killing him--

Reyna runs out of ammo--

Felix closes in for the kill with madness in his eyes--

Isala tackles Felix before he takes the shot--

They fall to--

#### **LOWER DECK**

Isala and Felix land hard with the gun in play. Felix grabs it, and she makes him EMPTY the clip away from her.

Felix tosses her against the glass door of the bedroom; it cracks.

He throws a punch--

She maneuvers out of the way--

He goes through the glass, into--

#### **CABIN**

Isala jumps on his back and chokes him. They stumble around.

Felix falls backward onto a table. She breaks the table and inadvertently lets him go. He gets up, out of breath.

She's disoriented. He readies to finish her. She throws a broken piece of wood at his face. It busts his nose.

She bobbles up--

Stumbles--

She's in a boxing stance--

Felix does the same--

Felix throws a right cross. Isala ducks but falls to the floor, still disoriented. She postures up and dodges more punches. She hits him in the liver (the worse place).



Felix grimaces--

He can't connect hits--

She is now fully recovered--

She fakes a right and uppercuts then uses her (in)famous right hook--

He loses balance on the broken debris and falls on his ass--

He grabs a small HARPOON GUN from right outside the room--

BLAP

The harpoon sticks her in the leg and into the wall--

CUT TO:

#### **HELICOPTER PAD**

Police helicopters hover above the yacht and drop water, extinguishing the fire.

CUT TO:

#### **CABIN**

Felix takes his time getting up--

He steps closer--

Isala throws useless swings at him, then winces in agony. Felix raises his hands... he chokes her.

She heel-stomps his feet, to no avail... eye-gouges him, but he effortlessly sways out of the way...

She aims for his throat; he moves his head back.

He chokes her harder. She fades away.

A waterfall of broken debris from the fight and fire spills into the room.

She fixates on the water runoff... her last breath...

She takes out the harpoon from her leg and stabs upward into his chin and brain.

Felix is DEAD before he hits the floor.

CUT TO:

**EXT. MARINA PARKING LOT - NIGHT**

Carmichael dials Vincent on his prepaid phone.

CARMICHAEL  
Felix is dead. You can send my fee  
to the same account.

**EXT. BOW SIDE - NIGHT**

Law enforcement settles the scene. A PARAMEDIC tends to Isala, who's handcuffed.

Reyna stands by her side. Isala sees Felix's body processed and put into a body bag.

DIRECTOR CARMICHAEL  
Karina Vasquez...

ISALA  
I don't have anything to say--

DIRECTOR CARMICHAEL  
You will.  
(to Reyna)  
You'll be back in front of I.A.

REYNA  
Can I take her in? If it weren't  
for her, we'd have Felix.

Carmichael nods.

REYNA (CONT'D)  
Is she good?

PARAMEDIC  
(re: harpoon injury)  
How could she be good? She can walk  
if that's what you mean.

Reyna escorts Isala away from the scene.

**INT. ENGINE ROOM - NIGHT**

The room is clear; Reyna brings Isala in.

REYNA  
Turn around.

CLACK

Reyna uncuffs her.

REYNA (CONT'D)  
You saved my life. Thank you.

She pulls out a photo and hands it over. The photo shows:  
ISABELLE ALIVE AS A TEENAGER.

REYNA (CONT'D)  
I found this in Felix's cabin.

ISALA  
It's my twin. I thought she was  
dead.

A look of hope comes over her. Reyna smiles for the first  
time, and it's a sight well worth it.

REYNA  
There's a small boat stern side.

ISALA  
Are you sure you want to do this?

REYNA  
I didn't give your name to my boss.  
I'm not sure what role he plays in  
all this, but it's probably safer  
if you leave.

ISALA  
My trainer, Henry, he's the one who  
made the tip. Can you tell him I'm  
okay?

REYNA  
I will.

Reyna hands her a set of keys. They share a moment as they  
finally understand each other, onto their separate paths.

REYNA (CONT'D)  
Isala, why ask him to tip us,  
knowing you might not have your  
chance at Felix?

KARINA (ISALA)  
I forgave myself... and you can  
call me Karina.

**EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN - DAY**

It's a beautiful view of the Puerto Vallarta Coastline. On a small boat, KARINA VASQUEZ (25), battered but not broken, rides toward Mexico in search of her twin.

FADE OUT.