

INT. ALLEY - SUNSET

SUPER: 1981's SAN DIEGO

Armed Mexican Gang members crowd over DIEGO, 24, Mexican cholo, traditionally handsome, with long black hair slicked back, on the ground with several bullet shots in his chest. ESTEBAN, Mexican cholo, early thirties, his age shows with his brutal scars, takes commands.

ESTEBAN

Find that Motherfucker, Alive. I don't want to see any of you without that traitor Gabriel, half dead and pleading for his life.

The gang members dispersed in different cars, except one. EMMANUEL, 18, male, with demonic gang tattoos over his face, calm and menacing, kneeling over Diego's body, gently removing dirt and blood from his face.

ESTEBAN (CONT'D)

We don't know why he confronted Gabriel alone, but Gabriel got the upper hand.

Esteban waits for a response, never getting one.

ESTEBAN (CONT'D)

We have men headed to Rosa's, and the rest closing off the border. There is nowhere he can go or hide.

EMMANUEL

What about the brother?

ESTEBAN

We have him in Chile, working with the Bolivians.

EMMANUEL

Please send orders to have him killed.

Emmanuel slightly caresses Diego's cheek while holding back his intense grief. Emmanuel takes Diego into his arms and kisses him on the lips.

ESTEBAN

Jefe, People will see.

Esteban places his hand on Emmanuel's shoulder in an attempt to comfort him.

EMMANUEL

Ensure he receives a proper burial.

TONY

Of course, Jefe.

As Esteban removes Diego from Emmanuel's arms, Emmanuel's expression changes to menacing, and a shade of blood red consumes his eyes.

INT. ROSA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

ROSA, 17, Latina, beautiful Chola, with a retro pin-up style and a red rose in her hair, hastily packs a duffle bag. She hears a noise and looks up into her hallway. She reaches for the gun in her bag and checks the barrel for bullets. She cautiously walks towards the dark hallway.

INT. ROSA'S HALLWAY - NIGHT

Two gang members hide in the shadows as Rosa approaches the hallway, unaware of their presence.

EXT. ROSA'S NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

GABRIEL 19, Chicano/Cholo, handsome, is driving a 1970 black Ford Mustang Mach 1, with bullet holes on the side aggressively down a residential street. Gabriel turns the corner and pulls up to Rosa's house. Gabriel honks his horn. After a few moments of no response, he panics and unbuckles his seatbelt. Before Gabriel can exit his door, Rosa runs out of her house and into Gabriel's car, entering the passenger seat. They passionately kiss. Gabriel looks confused and then looks down at his hands, seeing blood. Gabriel moved Rosa's hand from her stomach to see a bullet wound.

ROSA

It was two of them. They caught me off guard. Don't worry, I took them out, baby.

GABRIEL

I need to get you to the hospital.

ROSA

There's no time.

Rosa grips Gabriel's hand.

ROSA (CONT'D)

I'll make it, baby.

Gabriel looks concerned. He kisses Rosa once more and speeds off.

EXT. SAN DIEGO - NIGHT

MONTAGE: Different sets of gang members drive around different streets, pulling over to harass and intimidate locals, break a shop owner's arm, bash a liquor store with a bat, and set a house on fire.

EXT. RITCHIE 'S GARAGE - DAY

Gabriel pulls into a gated mechanic's garage. RITCHIE, a 23-year-old Latino Jokester who remains chill under pressure, runs to Gabriel and hands him a backpack and car keys as Gabriel exits the car.

RITCHIE
It's the brown car, Brother.

Ritchie points to a brown Maserati Biturbo.

GABRIEL
Help Rosa get into the car.

Gabriel begins moving their bags into the car and changing into more American attire: jeans and a baseball hat. Ritchie runs to the passenger seat, opening the door to see Rosa slumped over and her shirt covered in blood.

RITCHIE
(to Rosa) Holy shit, What happened?

ROSA
I took two, Vato.

Ritchie picks up Rosa, carries her to the car, and buckles her in. Ritchie pulls out an unlabeled pill bottle from his fanny pack and puts four pills into Rosa's mouth.

GABRIEL
Hey, what are you doing?

RITCHIE
It will help with the pain.

Gabriel exits the car to retrieve a gun from a tackle box in the garage. Ritchie lifts Rosa's hand to see the wound.

RITCHIE (CONT'D)
This isn't good.

Rosa puts her finger up to her mouth and smiles.

ROSA
Don't tell him.

Ritchie removes his belt and tightens it around Rosa's waist as a tourniquet. Then, they give each other a knowing look.

RITCHIE
Greet me on the other side.

Ritchie grabs a blanket from the backseat, places it over Rosa, and kisses Rosa on the forehead. Gabriel then walks up to Ritchie and hugs him.

RITCHIE (CONT'D)
The money is in the glove compartment, and the tank is full. Eddie knows you're on your way. Make sure to tell him Ritchie says fuck you.

GABRIEL
Thanks, Brother. Where are you going to go? He's going to come after you as well.

RITCHIE
I'm not going anywhere, Brother. This is my City.

GABRIEL
You have always been a crazy motherfucker.

Gabriel puts his hand behind Ritchie's neck and places his head against Ritchie's head.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
I'll repay you one day for everything.

RITCHIE
I'm your older brother Santo, It's my job to keep your ass alive. Now go, Pendejo.

Gabriel gets into the car and speeds off. Ritchie watches as Gabriel disappears into the corner. Soon after, Ritchie enters Gabriel's Mustang and drives in the opposite direction.

EXT. SAN DIEGO - NIGHT

Two gang members sit in a car listening to a cop radio.

POLICE RADIO

Black Ford Mustang speeding down El Prado.

GANG MEMBER #1

It's gotta be him, man.

GANG MEMBER #2

Vamonos, Güey.

The gang members drive off.

EXT. TIJUANA BORDER CROSSING STATION- NIGHT

The line to get into Mexico is heavy with traffic. Gabriel reaches the front of the border. PAUL, 22, a white man with an embarrassingly short mustache and red tan lines, signals Gabriel to pull off to the side. Paul approaches Gabriel's car and flashes a flashlight inside, seeing Rosas' blood seeping through the blanket. Paul winces.

PAUL

Your girlfriend isn't looking too good, Amigo. Maybe you should take her to a hospital.

Paul smiles, causing Gabriel to clench his jaw and grip the steering wheel tightly.

GABRIEL

Can we speed this up?

PAUL

You know I'm only doing this for your brother. After he helped me get out of that bribery investigation, I owed him big time.

GABRIEL

I don't give a shit.

PAUL

Someone's cranky. What do you have for me, sunshine?

Gabriel opens the glove compartment, pushing his gun to the side to grab the envelope. Paul puts his hand on his gun holster.

PAUL (CONT'D)
(jokingly) Easy, baby boy.

Gabriel takes out two grand from the envelope and hands it to Paul.

GABRIEL
Oh, yeah, and Ritchie says hello,
you sack of shit.

Paul smiles as he counts the money and glances at the remaining amount in the envelope.

PAUL,
This is great, but unfortunately,
the price has increased. There is a
bounty out on your head. If you
want to cross this line, it will
cost you an additional three grand.

GABRIEL
That's all I have. I'm going to
need some cash to get my girl
medical help.

PAUL
I'm putting my life on the line to
help you. That's just how this game
is played, Chief.

Gabriel glances over at the gun.

PAUL (CONT'D)
You know you're smarter than that.

Gabriel hands the rest of the envelope to Paul, who smiles and hands Gabriel a Vanilla envelope. Gabriel looks inside, pulling out new identity documents.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Your new Documentation, passports,
IDs, and any other necessary items
are all included. Your new name is
Santiago Vasquez; her's is Elena.

GABRIEL
Great now let me the fuck through.

PAUL
You got it. Stay safe now.

Paul waves to the Border Patrol agent, who sees the signal and waves for Gabriel to drive through.

EXT. SUNSET CLIFFS BEACH - NIGHT

Ritchie hums a Spanish tune as he dumps gallons of gasoline into Gabriel's mustang, which has bullet-riddled male and female corpses inside, and sits near the edge of a cliff. He turns around and stops humming when he sees two cops. MITCH, a husky middle-aged cop with a heavy mustache, and Carl, black, mid-20s, slightly in shape, standing behind him.

RITCHIE

Where did you guys go?

CARL

Mitch got hungry.

MITCH

I brought you back an oatmeal cookie.

RITCHIE

Great job on the bodies, they could be twins.

MITCH

It was all Carl; he has a good eye.

CARL

This was a big ask, Ritchie. We're risking our jobs here.

MITCH

The Morgue is going to lose there shit when they find out there are two body missing.

RITCHIE

Well I risk my ass every time I helped the two of you get rid of those dead junkies that somehow keep dying in the back of your squad car.

CARL

We can shoot you now and fix that dead end.

RITCHIE

There's a prepaid envelope with all the evidence that will get you two the electric chair, waiting to get mailed to your sergeant if anything happens to me.

MITCH

I don't think he's bluffing, Carl.

RITCHIE

I help politicians get rid of
prostitutes, judges get away with
murder, and stupid cops hide
bodies—all to survive in moments
like this. If I go down, all of you
go down. Now, move your ass and
help me push this car off the edge.

Ritchie takes off the brakes on the Mustang.

RITCHIE (CONT'D)

Ready?

All three men begin to push the car off the cliff, causing
the vehicle to explode once it hits the ground.

CARL

I guess this makes us even.

RITCHIE

Not even close.

The sun begins to rise, as fire engulfs the Mustang.

MITCH

So, half the city is indebted to
you, Ritchie?

RITCHIE

If you only knew.

CARL

If I weren't one of those suckers,
I would be impressed with your
hustle.

MITCH

What are you going to do now,
Ritchie? The whole station knows
Emmanuel wants your and your
brother's heads.

Ritchie smiles.

RITCHIE

Don't worry about me, never worry
about me. I have a plan.

MITCH

It's best if you don't tell us.

RITCHIE
I wasn't going to.

MITCH
Best of luck, Ritchie

RITCHIE
Guys, can I get a lift?

Mitch looks over at Carl.

MITCH
Come on, man.

CARL
Alright, but he's riding in the
trunk.

The three men walk to the squad car.

EXT. MEXICO - DAY

Gabriel speeds down a long desert road holding Rosa's hand.
He looks over at Rosa, smiling.

GABRIEL
We're almost to the hospital, Baby,
hold on a little longer.

Rosa smiles back, looking pale and not long for this world.

ROSA
I knew we would make it, baby.

GABRIEL
We'll get you patched up and
finally get you that ring I've been
promising. Then we'll head to
Puebla, where I'll build the
biggest house so we can start our
lives together, baby.

ROSA
With a big yard for all our farm
animals.

GABRIEL
Yeah, and for all the kids we're
going to make.

ROSA
I don't want kids; I want ten dogs.

GABRIEL

What are we going to name all these dogs?

Rosa closes her eyes.

ROSA

I don't know. Name them for me, Baby.

GABRIEL

We're going to have a Rottweiler named Menace. And two Dobermans, Joker and Trickster.

ROSA

Just like us.

Gabriel squeezes Rosa's hand as he begins to tear up.

GABRIEL

And a big fat bulldog, T-bone, that looks just like your Pops.

Rosa gives a faint laugh.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

A terrier, your favorite.

Rosa's hand becomes limp.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Named Baby.

Gabriel pulls over on a dirt road.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Baby?

Gabriel unbuckles Rosa's seatbelt, removes the blanket, and cries into her neck as he holds her tightly.

CUT TO:

EXT. MEXICO DIRT ROAD. DAY

Gabriel sets Rosa down. His eyes are glossy and red as he leans back in his seat, looking disoriented. Gabriel's vision in a haze stares forward, and like a mirage, a small wooden house becomes clear in the distance. Gabriel drives to it as if in a fever dream.

EXT. WOODEN HOME - DAY

Gabriel pulls into the property and exits the car. As he walks up to the house, he stops, noticing a cemetery behind the house with wooden crosses and plaques, and walks to it unsteadily.

EXT. SMALL CEMETERY - DAY

Gabriel spots an elderly man who resembles a senior version of himself fixing up burial plots. The elderly man points to an empty burial plot.

CUT TO:

EXT. SMALL CEMETERY - DAY

Gabriel carries Rosa and lays her inside the empty plot. Gabriel stands over the plot, impassive, looking at Rosa. A female finger caresses Gabriel's cheek, causing him to look behind him. There is a vast field of Red Roses where only desert was before. Gabriel, unfazed, walks over to it.

EXT. FIELD OF ROSES - DAY

Gabriel grabs a white linen sheet from a wooden fence and begins to gather roses.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

The sun begins to set as Gabriel stands over the burial plot. Rosa lies inside, covered in red roses, exposing only her face. Holding back tears, Gabriel looks down at Rosa struggling to talk, fumbling over his words as his hands tremble.

GABRIEL
Please help me.

FLASHBACK BEGINS:

INT. SUBURBAN LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Diego removes the silencer from his gun. He stands over TED, a white, overweight, middle-aged man facedown in a pool of his blood. Ted is wearing boxers and a white tank. Diego pulls out plastic sheeting, unrolling it on the floor near the body. Diego rolls the body on the plastic sheet, revealing half of Ted's face shot off.

Diego, alarmed, turns around, gun ready. Emmanuel looms by the door, semi-obsured by Shadow.

EMMANUEL

Why do you release an entire chamber into your target's face? It feels like a waste of bullets.

DIEGO

It's my signature, Boss... What are you doing here?

EMMANUEL

I got bored, maybe I can help you out?

DIEGO

You want to get your hands dirty, Boss?

EMMANUEL

I'm here, I might as well.

DIEGO

I left my butcher knives in the kitchen. I'll get them, and then we can have some fun.

Emmanuel smiles with a confused look. Diego leaves to retrieve his knives. Emmanuel waits, staring at the blood dripping from the dead man's face.

INT. SUBURBAN LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Diego walks back into the room, kneeling behind him and putting his arm around his shoulder. He handed Emmanuel a butcher's knife.

DIEGO

You may want to change. I put some of the fat man's clothes on the couch.

Diego begins to take off his clothes in front of Emmanuel, getting completely naked. Emmanuel turns around to change.

DIEGO (CONT'D)

Are you shy, boss?

Emmanuel stares intently at Diego, affirming his intrepidity.

DIEGO (CONT'D)

I wouldn't have thought someone who
has terminated over 200 bodies
would be modest about nudity.

EMMANUEL

I didn't want to be disrespectful.

DIEGO

You're an interesting man... Ready.

Both men, wearing Ted's oversized clothes, proceed to hack
off his limbs.

CUT TO:

EXT. TED'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Diego closes the trunk of his 1977 Pontiac Firebird Trans Am
on Ted's plastic-wrapped limbs. Diego walks over to Emmanuel
and leans against the garage, Ted's high fence obscuring them
from the public. Diego lights a joint and proceeds to smoke
it.

DIEGO

You want a smoke?

EMMANUEL

No.

DIEGO

You're too tense, de-stress with
me.

Diego moves the cigarette to Emmanuel's mouth, his fingers
touching Emmanuel's lips. Diego doesn't break eye contact as
Emmanuel inhales.

DIEGO (CONT'D)

There you go, did you like it?

EMMANUEL

No.

Diego smiles.

DIEGO

What do you like?

Emmanuel remains quiet, expressing slight confusion over the
question.

EMMANUEL

How do you dispose of the limbs?

DIEGO

I know a guy with a pig farm not too far away with a wood shredder. I grind up the bodies and let the pigs eat up the slop.

EMMANUEL

That's pretty clever. You should be keeping that to yourself.

DIEGO

I trust you. I can take you there sometime.

EMMANUEL

Dead or alive?

DIEGO

I have too much respect for you to disgrace your body like that, boss.

Diego playfully taps Emmanuel in the chest, causing Emmanuel's body language to be more reserved.

DIEGO (CONT'D)

Are you uncomfortable being alone with me?

EMMANUEL

No.

Diego extends his hand to caress Emmanuel's cheek; Emmanuel remains still and does not express emotion.

DIEGO

Are you good?

Emmanuel feels Emmanuel arms, and laughs.

DIEGO (CONT'D)

Your shaking.

Diego abruptly kisses Emmanuel, stopping shortly after.

DIEGO (CONT'D)

It's ok?

Emmanuel nods his head. Diego brings Emmanuel closer and kisses him with vigor.

Seconds later, the bright lights of high beams halt the kiss, and both men stare at the car pulling in. Diego aims his gun at the vehicle, but Emmanuel places his hand over it.

EMMANUEL
It's Gabriel.

DIEGO
Holy Shit, you're right, I forgot
that Puto was on lookout.

Gabriel steps out of the car with a childish grin and proceeds to walk up to Diego and Emmanuel. Diego wraps his hand around Emmanuel's neck.

DIEGO (CONT'D)
Don't worry, Jefe, Gabriel's good.
He's won't say shit.

EMMANUEL
I'm more bothered about where he's
been all night.

DIEGO
Probably with his Heina.

Gabriel reaches the men. Gabriel and Diego greet each other with a personalized handshake. Emmanuel stares at Gabriel with focused, subtle disdain.

GABRIEL
What am I interrupting?

DIEGO
Nothing, Hommes. The site has been
sanitized; I'm on my way to discard
the merchandise.

GABRIEL
Are you gonna need a hand with
that, Carnal?

DIEGO
I'm all set, Hommes.

Diego slides his hand down Emmanuel's arm. Gabriel catches the gesture and winces.

DIEGO (CONT'D)
Do you want a lift, Jefe?

EMMANUEL
No.

GABRIEL

Good, we're all done here.
Gonna kick it with my Heina's.

DIEGO

Nice, Hommes.

EMMANUEL

Don't leave just yet, Gabriel.

GABRIEL

You got it, boss.

Diego gestures their gang sign before getting into his car and driving off.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

What's good, boss?

EMMANUEL

You were with Rosa again. You had a job to do.

GABRIEL

Diego can handle his shit, he didn't need me to cover his ass.

EMMANUEL

You were given a job. Those are not optional.

GABRIEL

You sound upset.

Gabriel smirks as he attempts to fix Emmanuel's collar, but is thwarted.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

No need to worry, boss. I won't say a word. You overlook my indiscretions, and I'll do the same.

EMMANUEL

That's not how this works. Rosa will be dealt with tonight.

GABRIEL

If you do anything to her, I'll...

EMMANUEL

What? What exactly will you do, Gabriel?

GABRIEL

From what I just saw, you have something just as valuable to you. I don't think you want to lose that.

EMMANUEL

You have firsthand experience of what I can do. Is that the direction you want to take with me?

GABRIEL

I'm well aware of all the fucked of shit you can do to me. But you also know I couldn't give a shit. Don't forget now, you raised me like fucking dog, you stripped me of all fear. Rosa is the only thing that matters. I may not be able to kill you, but if you take her from me. I will leave you with a mark you will never get rid of.

Emmanuel faints smile

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Good talk.

Emmanuel doesn't break contact as he watches Gabriel drive off.

FLASHBACK ENDS:

INT. EMMANUEL'S HOUSE - DAY

ESTEBAN (O.S.)

Jefe.

Emmanuel opens his eyes; he is kneeling in a small, closet-sized room with faded red walls, featuring Catholic iconography displayed throughout, lit Roman candles, and an altar dedicated to the Virgin of Guadalupe. Esteban speaks from the other side of the door.

ESTEBAN (CONT'D)

They're dead. They were gunned down and set on fire... This wasn't us.

Emmanuel looks at a statue of the Virgin of Guadalupe with dry blood near her eyes.

EMMANUEL

I know.

ESTEBAN
Who do you think it was?

EMMANUEL
This is no longer your matter. Have
the men continue with their regular
orders.

CUT TO:

Esteban turns the knob only to realize it's locked.

TONY
Jefe, everything alright?

EMMANUEL
Go.

CUT TO:

Esteban places his hand on the door, expressing concern, and leaves. Inside the room, the candles dim, and BASQUE, a small demonic child cloaked in darkness, appears sitting in the corner of the altar. Basque speaks in a distorted child's voice.

BASQUE
Hola, Emmanuel.

EMMANUEL
The girl should be dead by now. And
Gabriel is on his way to Puebla.

Emmanuel shows disdain towards Basque.

BASQUE
(With a smile) What's wrong,
Emmanuel? You look upset.

EMMANUEL
Diego wasn't supposed to die, you
understood this.

BASQUE
Mistakes happen.

EMMANUEL
I delivered on my part, now it's
time for you to fulfill yours...
Kill me.

BASQUE
Don't you want to see how all this
turns out?

EMMANUEL

No.

BASQUE

Oh, right, you want to join your dead boyfriend in hell. Unfortunately, your death will have to wait until the kid is born. I may need you again.

EMMANUEL

And how long will that take?

Basque smiles mischievously and shrugs his shoulders.

BASQUE

I don't know. You have been alive for over a century. What's a couple more years?

EMMANUEL

If you fuck me over I will personally carve out the life out of that kid.

BASQUE

If you only knew what this child will be capable of one day.

EMMANUEL

I don't care.

BASQUE

What about Gabriel?

EMMANUEL

What about him?

BASQUE

He killed Diego; you don't want him dead.

EMMANUEL

No, I am no longer fueled by revenge, power, or greed. The only thing I crave is death. You have been around longer than I have, I would think you would understand.

BASQUE

No, I don't... I'm going to get going. The next time you'll see me is when the child is ready. Until then, smile.

SUPER: PUEBLA MEXICO. ONE YEAR LATER.

EXT. FARM - DAY

All remaining dialogue is in Spanish

Gabriel dresses in dirty, worn-out work/cowboy attire and, now with longer hair, is scooping cow shit. FELIPE, 40'S, husky, Mexican man screams as he approaches Gabriel.

FELIPE

Santiago Puta Madre, Shovel that
shit like you have man size balls.

GABRIEL

Fuck off Felipe, for the shit your
paying me your lucky I'm putting in
any effort at all.

FELIPE

America has spoiled you. You're
essentially useless.

GABRIEL

What do you want?

FELIPE

I need you to drive into town and
get more feed for the cows.

GABRIEL

When I return, we need to talk
about a raise, old man.

FELIPE

You're lucky I'm paying you
anything at all. With your room and
board, I shouldn't be giving you
any extra cash.

GABRIEL

Can I at least get money to buy
some new clothes? I'm tired of
wearing your son's used hand-me-
downs.

FELIPE

You were sent here because of a
favor I owe to your brother.
Considering the alternative might
be prison or death for you. I would
count your blessings, boy. Now go
and get the feed.

(MORE)

FELIPE (CONT'D)

And work on your Spanish. You sound like a fucking gringo.

Gabriel gets in and starts the truck. Felipe walks up to the driver's window.

FELIPE (CONT'D)

I suppose you can use the leftover change to buy the clothes you want. At this point your clothes are more cow shit than cotton.

Gabriel smiles and gives Felipe their signature handshake.

GABRIEL

I knew you would come around.

FELIPE

Don't get use to it, Pendejo.

Gabriel drives off.

EXT. MARKET - DAY

Gabriel walks down a busy market, towering over the locals, drinking a beer. He checks out some of the clothes from the vendors but looks disinterested in the fashion styles. Multiple vendors show off the merchandise to get Gabriel's attention, but looking disappointed, he walks away. As Gabriel returns to his truck, GAEL, a short, middle-aged man with a gold tooth, puts up a vibrant poster for a Lucha Libre wrestling competition, halting Gabriel.

GAEL

You should compete, son, the man who defeats El Toro will walk away with twenty thousand pesos.

GABRIEL

You're in charge of this.

GAEL

I'm the promoter, son, and I know a winner when I see one.

GABRIEL

What do I need?

GAEL

A persona and a costume that will get the audience riled up.

Gabriel looks at the flamboyant costumes on the poster.

Gael (CONT'D)

I'll see you this Thursday. There is nothing to lose and twenty thousand to gain.

Gabriel pulls the poster off the wall and returns to one of the vendors. He purchases a mask and some brown, black, and red fabric.

INT. GABRIEL'S ROOM - DAY

Gabriel sits at his desk using a sewing machine to modify the lucha libre mask and a pair of old black sweats. Disturbed by the noise, Felipe walks in.

FELIPE

What are you doing with my dead wife's sewing machine, boy?

GABRIEL

What does it look like, old man? I'm making a costume to get some money.

Felipe approaches Gabriel and picks up the wrestling poster on his desk. He then begins to laugh.

FELIPE

Your making a costume to get your ass kicked in on Thursday?

GABRIEL

I'm doing this to get enough money to get the fuck out of here.

FELIPE

I'll tell you what. I'll drive you ill even stay to see you get your ass handed to you.

Felipe walks out of the room laughing obnoxiously. Gabriel slams the door behind him. Gabriel moves his bed and lifts a floorboard to pull out a Mayan talisman. He walks back to the sewing machine and begins to sew the talisman onto his costume.

FLASHBACK BEGINS:

EXT. DARK ALLEY - NIGHT

SUPER: 1943 LOS ANGELES

Juana, a Latina in her late 30s who looks disheveled and nervous, hastily walks down an alley holding MARCO, a six-year-old Latino's hand. She approaches a group of Latino men in Zoot suits with semi-concealed guns. Emmanuel, looking the same as he does in the present day, dressed in all black, stands in front.

EMMANUEL

Do you have what you promised me?

JUANA

It's not a fair trade. I should get more money for all the trouble I went through.

EMMANUEL

Your debt has exceeded \$2,000, and the repayment date has long since passed. This is not a barter, sweetheart; the alternative is one of my associates taking a hand saw to your face.

JUANA

Look, I understand. I just wanted to say it wasn't easy getting him. I don't have custody; I had to cut my own mother's throat to pry him out of her hands. Could I at least get something to get out of town?

EMMANUEL

Show me first.

JUANA

Look, Mijo, you're going to go with this man. He's your father now. But first, we have to show him what we practiced, OK?

MARCO

And then we can go back with Nana?

JUANA

Yeah, you can go back to Nana. But remember, you have to promise not to scream.

Marco nods his head in agreement. Juana walks Marco up to Emmanuel and pulls out a knife. She extends Marco's arm and proceeds to cut it. Marco winces in pain but doesn't make a sound. After a while, his wound begins to heal. Emmanuel looks content.

JUANA (CONT'D)
He has the devil inside him.

EMMANUEL
And the Talisman?

Juana pulls out a Mayan stone figure from Marco's pocket.

JUANA
He needs to be holding it to heal.
Otherwise, you will just kill him.

EMMANUEL
Where did it come from?

JUANA
It belonged to his dad, who used it
to turn into a dog. I don't
understand it. I know only that his
bloodline can use it; it's useless
to anyone else.

Juana hands Marco to Emmanuel.

JUANA (CONT'D)
We are good?

Emmanuel takes Marco's hand.

EMMANUEL
Yeah.

Emmanuel associates hands Juana a leather Doctor's bag. Juana quickly takes the bag and looks inside to see the money.

EMMANUEL (CONT'D)
You're done here. If my men see you
roaming in this city, you are dead.
Understand?

JUANA
Yes.

Juana places her hand on Marco's Shoulder.

JUANA (CONT'D)
Take care, Mijo.

EMMANUEL
Bye Mama.

Juana clutches the bag and turns to walk away, but shortly stops.

JUANA

You're not going to do horrible things to him, are you?

EMMANUEL

No.

FLASHBACK ENDS:

EXT. LUCHA LIBRE ARENA - NIGHT

Felipe and Gabriel pull up to a wrestling arena—a colorful outdoor ring with wooden bleachers surrounding it. Gabriel steps out, revealing his homemade costume. Felipe throws Gabriel his mask.

FELIPE

I'm gonna find a seat in the front row. I want the best view to see that American Cockiness beaten out of you.

Felipe drives to the parking area, laughing along the way.

EXT. SIGN UP BOOTH - NIGHT

Gabriel walks up to the signup booth.

GAEL

I knew you would show up. Sign in, kid, you're going to be our 14th competitor.

GABRIEL

14th? Were all fighting the same guy?

GAEL

Yeah, but don't worry, kid, he knows to take it easy on newcomers.

Gabriel crumbles his mask out of nervousness.

GAEL (CONT'D)

Put your mask on, kid. It's considered disgraceful for a wrestler to be seen without his mask.

Gael looks at Gabriel's outfit up and down.

Gael (CONT'D)
Nice, costume kid.

EXT. WRESTLING ARENA - NIGHT

Gabriel walks inside the arena and is directed to sit in the competitor's area. Gabriel stands out from all the other competitors, who wear professional, flamboyant-themed costumes. The competitors stare at Gabriel until the lights turn off and a spotlight shines on a decorated entrance.

ANNOUNCER
You all witnessed his terror and strength last week. And you all came back for more. Get out of your seats and give it up for the unstoppable monster heavyweight El Toro.

The crowd erupts in cheer as EL TORO, a muscular six-foot-four man in a black and silver costume, walks to the stage. Gabriel looks over at Felipe, sitting in the front row, laughing. El Toro looks at Gabriel menacingly. The timekeeper rings the bell, getting the first match underway.

MONTAGE BEGINS: El Toro beats several professional and amateur wrestlers one at a time. Gabriel grows more anxious as he witnesses every wrestler getting demolished.

MONTAGE ENDS:

Gabriel spots LUPE, 17, a beautiful Mexican woman in the crowd. The sight of her calms him. He smiles at her, and she smiles back. Lupe's sisters giggled at the exchange. Gael walks up to Gabriel.

Gael
You're up next, kid. Follow me.

Gabriel takes one last look at Lupe before he follows Gael. Gabriel stumbles as he enters the ring, causing the audience to laugh. Gabriel walks to the center of the ring opposite El Toro, who surmounts Gabriel. Gabriel looks around, feeling the weight of the crowd staring at him. The announcer covers the mic.

ANNOUNCER
(to Gael) Who's this? I said no more amateurs.

Gael
He's a fighter.

ANNOUNCER
He'd better last at least a minute.
What's his name?

Gael turns to Gabriel.

GAEEL
What's your name, kid?

GABRIEL
Santiago.

GAEEL
No, what's your wrestling name?

GABRIEL
I don't have one.

Gael looks at Gabriel's Mask, which resembles a Coyote.

GAEEL
No problem, I got you, kid.

Gael whispers into the announcer's ear. The announcer shakes his head in disappointment.

ANNOUNCER
Up next, we have?

Gael takes the Mic.

GAEEL
El Coyote!

Gael howls like a coyote into the mic as the announcer angrily takes it back.

ANNOUNCER
Ladies and gentlemen, please give
it up to El Coyote.

The crowd's cheers are weak, except for those of Lupe and Felipe, whose cheers Gabriel hears.

GAEEL
Good luck, kid.

EL TORO
If it gets to be too much for you,
kid, there is no shame in tapping
out. We wouldn't want to break that
pretty face.

GABRIEL

Don't worry about me, I'm good.

El Toro smirks. The bell rings, and Gabriel instantly punches El Toro in the mouth, hurting his hand. The audience goes quiet as a small amount of blood drips from El Torro's lip.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

What?

Gabriel looks back at Gael, who has his mouth covered in shock. Gabriel looks back at El Toro.

EL TORO

This is wrestling, not boxing.

GABRIEL

What's the difference?

El Toro picks up Gabriel, slamming him to the floor.

GAEL

(Screams at Gabriel) This is wrestling, kid, not a street fight.

El Toro picks up Gabriel like a rag doll over his head.

EL TORO

The audience wants to see a show.
And I'm about to give them one.

Upset, El Toro does several different wrestling moves at full force.

EL TORO (CONT'D)

Had enough, kid?

The crowd laughs and cheers, chanting for El Toro to finish Gabriel. Gabriel, attempting to get up, is too disoriented. He looks into the crowd and sees Lupe looking concerned. El Toro grabs the back of Gabriel's mask to remove it. Gabriel grabs some blood from his nose and wipes it on the talisman. The talisman shimmers, and Gabriel smiles. Gabriel grabs El Toro's hand to stop him from removing his mask. El Toro looks confused as Gabriel's strength had been excessively magnified, and he can't tear his hand away.

GABRIEL

You had your fun, now it's time to have mine.

Gabriel squeezes down on El Torros's hands, causing a cracking noise. El Toro screams. Gabriel puts El Toro in a chokehold, and he cannot break free.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Tap out whenever you want; there's
no shame.

SHORT MONTAGE: Gabriel repeats some of El Toro's moves back to him, but not with the same skill set. The crowd cheers louder than before. Felipe looks confused, shaking his head.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

I think we have given the people
enough of a show. I'm getting
bored, it's time to end this.

El Toro grabs onto Gabriel's makeshift wrestling belt to get up, inadvertently tearing it and the talisman off. The talisman rolls off the stage.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Fuck.

Gabriel's superhuman strength dissipates, and he loses his hold on El Toro. El Toro, noticing this, grabs Gabriel, lifts him, and performs the German Suplex. Gabriel is knocked out immediately. El Toro rips off Gabriel's mask, raising it for the crowd. The crowd begins to stomp the bleachers and cheer El Toro's name.

CUT TO

Gabriel is sitting on a bench, mask on his knee, bruised and sulking. El Toro from across the ring flexes his muscles as if to mock Gabriel as he exits the arena. Gael approaches Gabriel.

GAEL

What the fuck was that? I knew you
would be memorable, but I did not
expect that.

GABRIEL

Me neither.

GAEL

You guys must have rehearsed that
ahead of time?

GABRIEL

No just shit luck.

Gael hands Gabriel an envelope containing cash.

GAEL

Not what you wanted, but I threw a
little extra in there for you.

Gabriel unenthusiastically counts the cash.

Gael (CONT'D)

It was a good match tonight. The crowd went wild for that mid-fight switch-up. Use that money to get a better costume and work on a better ending—maybe one where you don't get humiliated.

Gael pats Gabriel on the back before walking away.

EXT. WRESTLING ARENA - NIGHT

Leaving the arena, Gabriel spots Lupe with her younger sisters as he walks over to Felipe's truck. He signals to Felipe to hold on and walks over to Lupe. Lupe's sisters giggle and taunt her.

GABRIEL

Did you enjoy the match?

LUPE

It was unlike any I have seen before.

GABRIEL

I take that to mean you liked it.

One of the sisters grabs Gabriel's sweatshirt.

SISTER #1

Who made your costume? It's not very good.

GABRIEL

I made it.

SISTER #2

You have an unusual accent; you're not from around here.

Lupe gives her sisters an angry look.

LUPE

Don't be disrespectful.

GABRIEL

It's alright.

Gabriel looks around and spots a paletero.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
Are you hungry? I'll buy you a
Paleta.

LUPE
That would be nice.

SISTER #1
Don't venture off too far, Lupita.

Gabriel and Lupe walk to a vendor. Lupe's sister can be heard
gossiping.

LUPE
How much pain are you in?

GABRIEL
Not nearly enough.

LUPE
You are not from around here, are
you from the States?

GABRIEL
Is my accent that bad?

LUPE
The way you speak and move is not
the way we do.

GABRIEL
Is that a bad thing?

LUPE
No, it's nice to experience some
change.

Gabriel and Lupe reach the vendor.

GABRIEL
What flavor do you want?

LUPE
Fresa.

GABRIEL
(To vendor) I'll take two fresa's.

The Vendor hands them their paletas, and Gabriel hands him a
bill.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
Keep the change.

VENDOR

Thank you, young man.

Gabriel and Lupe walk back.

LUPE

I almost forgot you dropped this.

Lupe pulls out the talisman and hands it to Gabriel.

GABRIEL

Thank you, I completely forgot it rolled away.

LUPE

If they knew you were cheating, it would have been a far worse outcome for you.

GABRIEL

You know what this is?

LUPE

Yes, I've never seen one in person. My grandmother taught me a great deal about the forgotten Mayan beliefs. People would kill to have that.

GABRIEL

It's useless to anyone but me.

LUPE

Still, you should be more careful with it.

GABRIEL

It's brought me nothing but bad luck ever since my dad gave it to me.

LUPE

I'm sure he gave it to you with the best of intentions.

GABRIEL

I wouldn't know. I received it after he died.

LUPE

I'm sorry.

GABRIEL

Let's change the mood. I have money and I'm starving. How about we go into town and I buy us some tortas?

LUPE

I can't. I have a curfew; I have to get my siblings home.

GABRIEL

Yeah, I understand.

LUPE

How about you walk me home?

GABRIEL

Yeah, I can do that. Give me a second.

Gabriel runs to Felipe.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

I don't need a ride.

FELIPE

Don't drag her into your mess.

GABRIEL

I won't. I'm just walking her home.

FELIPE

That's how it started with Rosa.

GABRIEL

Don't.

FELIPE

I'm here to make sure you don't bring any of that shit you started in the states. Walk her home and leave it at that.

GABRIEL

You got it.

FELIPE

And when you get home will discuss that stunt you pulled tonight, Pendejo.

GABRIEL

Sure.

Gabriel joyfully runs back to Lupe.

EXT. LUPES HOUSE - NIGHT

Gabriel and Lupe stand by her fence.

SISTER #1

Be quick, you know how Abuela gets.

Lupe's sister heads inside.

GABRIEL

Can I see you again?

LUPE

I'm not too sure about that. You are not the type of boy my grandmother will approve of.

GABRIEL

Maybe she will when she gets to know me.

LUPE

No, she's not a fan of American boys.

Lupe lifts Gabriel's sleeve.

LUPE (CONT'D)

Especially ones with gang-affiliated tattoos.

Gabriel leans in for a kiss, but Lupe stops him.

LUPE (CONT'D)

Goodnight Santiago.

GABRIEL

If I win my next match, can I take you on a date?

LUPE

Ok, Santiago. But only if you do it without the talisman.

GABRIEL

I will, I'll even let you hold on to it, so you'll have no doubt.

Gabriel hands Lupe the Talisman.

LUPE
Goodnight.

GABRIEL
And if I win the championship belt,
will you marry me?

Gabriel catches Lupe smiling as she enters her home.

INT. LUPE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

ESPERANZA: An elderly woman, dressed in traditional Mexican clothing with her hair in braids, looks out the window at Lupe and Gabriel. Her hands slightly tremble as she touches the glass.

ESPERANZA
Lucia.

Lucia stops what she is doing and walks over to Abuela.

LUCIA
Yes, Abuela.

Esperanza remains quiet, but her facial expression changes to concern and fear as she looks at Gabriel.

LUCIA (CONT'D)
What do you see?

Esperanza writes the date June 22, 1995, on the condensation-filled window.

CUT TO:

EXT. WRESTLING ARENA - NIGHT

MONTAGE BEGINS: Gabriel is losing multiple fights. Lupe is in the audience at all of Gabriel's fights. Gabriel finally wins his first fight. Gabriel and Lupe are going on a romantic first date. Gabriel successfully kisses Lupe. Promotional posters of Gabriel's fights are plastered around town. Gabriel is making the transition into wrestling, losing and winning matches. Gabriel, exhilarated, brings Lupe on stage as he raises his Championship belt to the sold-out arena. Basque lingers in the audience unseen.

EXT. DOWNTOWN - DAY

Gabriel and Lupe, in wedding attire, walk down the town, and the locals celebrate by throwing confetti and rice.

CUT TO:

At night, a mariachi band performs, and string lights illuminate the streets. The locals drink and eat as Gabriel and Lupe slow dance, surrounded by family and friends.