

DEL LADO DE LOS MUERTOS

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"Del Lado de Los Muertos"

FADE IN:

EXT. CALAZADA INDEPENDENCIA - NIGHT

Heavy rain blurring everything. Adding more water to the already wet street.

LABORED BREATHING.

Bare feet running. Old, dirty, fast. Running from something or someone. Every other step hitting a newly formed water puddle in the middle of the neglected road.

With a view of his back, the size of the man's torso is revealed. A large, obese torso. The man's face unseen. This is, or was, JUAN MENDOZA(50's).

In his path a glass bottle. He runs over it, smashing the bottle with his feet. Doesn't even flinch. His pace continuous, awkward.

INT. THE ARC - STAIRWELL - NIGHT

The sound of UNEVEN FOOTSTEPS hitting a wooden floor. Almost as frantic as the thing in the street.

CLOSE ON

Black dress shoes, well worn, as they take each step as fast as they can.

WIDER VIEW

Shows RAFAEL(60's), carrying his aging body up the stairs towards something.

INT. THE ARC - STUDY - NIGHT

A young man, TOMAS(20's), lies in bed shirtless. His hairless chest covered partly by an open magazine, an old, AMERICAN CELEBRITY MAGAZINE. Hides his face.

The familiar arrhythmic FOOTSTEPS of Rafael approach. Reach the room's partially open doorway.

Rafael stands within the doorway. Gives Tomas a look. Shakes his head.

Tomas, unenthusiastically moves the magazine to one side.

TOMAS

What?

RAFAEL

He's running. Get the van.

Rafael leaves without waiting for a response from Tomas.

A look at the room from a distance shows Tomas' body completely and we get to see what Rafael was shaking his head at: Tomas' pants standing straight up like a tent post is inside.

EXT. CALAZADA INDEPENDENCIA - NIGHT

Juan's shoeless feet continue running through the dark, wet, empty streets.

Every now and then a street light lights up the pavement and Juan's face briefly.

Mostly the street is pitch black.

EXT. THE ARC - NIGHT

An old, Catholic Church, THE ARC, sits on one side of an empty street. Its wooden facade has years of neglect covering it.

Rafael exits the old church doors. Gets in the driver's side of a street parked CARGO VAN. Turns the engine on.

Slower, Tomas exits. T-shirt on now. Large MACHETE in hand. Heads for the passenger side of the van.

RAFAEL

Go on foot. Down Independencia.
Towards Centro.

Rafael quickly takes off. Leaves Tomas in the street.

Tomas isn't happy about being left. Watches the van take off down the dark street. Shakes his head.

TOMAS

Shit.

Tomas takes of running fast down a connecting street and turns onto

EXT. CALAZADA INDEPENDENCIA - NIGHT

In the distance, behind the man, Tomas suddenly turns the corner onto the street. His skinny frame much faster than the larger man in front of him.

Tomas closes in on the heavier Juan. Almost behind him.

Juan reaches a corner, turns it. As he does, turns to look behind him and we go to

EXT. CALLE JUAREZ - NIGHT

Rafael's van approaches fast. Juan turns the corner right in front of the van. Head turned backwards towards Tomas.

INT. CARGO VAN - NIGHT

Rafael reacts to seeing Juan in his headlights directly in front of him. Too late to stop.

With the headlights on the side of Juan's head, we notice something peculiar about it. Odd and discolored.

SMACK! Rafael Runs directly over Juan. The face and body hitting the windshield, cracking it. Almost certain death.

EXT. CALLE JUAREZ - NIGHT

Tomas gets close enough just in time to watch the hit. Stops.

The van stops immediately. Its ENGINE and HEADLIGHTS the only sign of life.

Rafael gets out to check.

The front-end badly damaged.

Rosary in hand, Rafa goes around to inspect. Looks for Juan's body. Not sure what to expect. PRAYS something to himself. Holds the rosary close to his chest. Concern in his eyes.

Rafael gets low to look under the truck. Sees the heap of Juan near the rear tire.

The rain blurring his image.

Suddenly, Juan's arm begins to move. Trying to get up.

No way the guy could still be alive. But he is.

Rafael jerks back.

Then, suddenly, Juan gets to his feet, takes off Running again. A mangled extremity dangling by his side.

EXT. CALLE JUAREZ - NIGHT

Tomas still watching unsure of what to do. Finally, hurries to Rafael.

RAFAEL
He's heading for the wall.

Tomas takes off after Juan, again.

Rafael gets back in the van. The van takes off and turns the next corner.

EXT. CITY CEMETERY - NIGHT

The largest, oldest cemetery in the city. Riddled with hundred year-old gravesites and cement headstones of different shapes and sizes.

Then, the sound of running, approaching footsteps.

GRUNTING.

Juan, still running, gets lost in the shadows.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

The street lined with old abandoned cars and squared, cement homes.

Tomas still running. Stops, realizing Juan is nowhere around.

Then, at the opposite end, Rafael's van round the corner. Its headlights and ENGINE familiar.

Tomas realizes something suddenly. Takes off back from where he came.

EXT. CITY CEMETERY - NIGHT

Juan kneels on the ground digging furiously in the wet earth with his hand. Only his large, dirty back exposed. The rain soaking the already wet shirt.

Digs. Digs.

His fear replaced by obsession. Finds something. Stops and raises it in front of him.

A BLACK COCOON.

Eagerly takes it in his mouth. Unsatisfied, digs some more.

EXT. CITY CEMETERY - ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Tomas rounds the corner and immediately enters

GRAVESITE

Where Tomas finds Juan. Stands over him.

Juan reflexively backpedals away from Tomas. The shadows hiding his gruesomeness, his fear. GRUNTS as if trying to tell the boy something.

Begging.

Tomas stalks him. The machete hanging loosely by his side. The boy looking more frightening now.

Tomas stares at him, unmerciful.

Juan turns and crawls further into the darkness. Trying to get away. His GRUNTING, GROANING getting more persistent.

Rafael approaches fast. Stops next to Tomas.

Tomas looks to Rafael.

Juan continues to try and escape. The wet earth causing him to slip. Keeping him off his feet.

Rafael hesitates. Looks at Tomas. Nods before

JUAN MENDOZA

Rafa?

Rafael stops. His eyes falling into the darkness. Hesitates. Frozen.

Then, as quick as it left, Juan's animal-like fear returns. Lunges towards Tomas from the shadows.

Reacting, Tomas swings the machete hitting into Juan's flesh, though we don't see.

RAFAEL

Tomas!

Tomas swings the machete again. Again.

Tomas finally stops. Stands there looking over the now headless corpse.

EXT. CALAZADA INDEPENDENCIA - NIGHT

The storm's rain filling every possible space. Water flowing uninhibited down the street.

THUNDER.

The deteriorating, CARGO VAN passes by. It's exhaust RUMBLING as it goes. It's SMOG filling the wet air. Not so urgent this time.

INT. CARGO VAN - NIGHT

Rafael drives, the passenger seat empty. His eyes close to the windshield trying to get a good look at the dark, obscured road ahead. His eyesight not so good anymore. Squints.

COUGHING like he's gonna lose a lung, Rafael pulls his white handkerchief away from his mouth, looks at it.

Specks of RED BLOOD covering it. From Rafael's lungs.

Rafael takes his eyes off the road to look towards the rear of the van. Secretly puts the handkerchief away.

INT. CARGO VAN - CARGO AREA - NIGHT

Tomas sits on the wheel hub watching over the heap of the Juan's corpse on the Van's floor. A blanket covering it. The mangled arm falling on the van's floor near the boy's foot.

A good look at the arm, its hand, shows its grotesque shape.

The machete sits on Tomas' lap. Though he's taken this ride several times, he looks as worried as though it was his first.

The boy surveys the corpse paying particular attention to the lifeless, ugly hands. Curious.

Blood from the corpse pools around the bottom. The liquid moving in rhythm with the van's movement.

Tomas raises his feet to keep them from touching the stuff. His face disgusted, irritated.

The rumbling of the van's ENGINE and the RAIN falling on the metal roof the only sounds.

Then, Tomas notices movement from beneath the blanket. Or so he thinks.

Tomas leans in closer to the corpse, slowly, to get a better look.

Closer.

Closer until A BUMP from the van causes the body to move abruptly, falling towards Tomas.

TOMAS

Shit.

Barely holding the corpse in place, on its side now.

Rafael looks over his shoulder.

RAFAEL

Everything alright?

Tomas manages to get the corpse rolled back on its back. He gets some space between he and the corpse.

TOMAS

Fine.

EXT. THE ARC - NIGHT

The Rain finally stopped if only for a few minutes.

The cargo van is parked with its engine off. Its headlights light up the wet road in front. Its back doors open.

At the rear of the van, Rafael and Tomas pull at the pant legs of the enormous mass.

Sliding out, all body parts THUMP as they go past the bumper.

Not a very graceful way to move a body.

A final THUD as the corpse hits the wet ground.

Tomas closes the doors to the van.

INT. THE ARC - NIGHT

THUNDER. The storm not gone quite yet.

A plastic covering flaps in the wind overhead. The plastic a useless covering for the large hole in the church's ceiling.

LIGHTNING

lights up the sky visible through the hole.

Saintly EFFIGIES stare down at nothing. Each one's face broken. Eyes either carved out or fallen out. Falling apart, forgotten.

CANDLES

light the interior casting eerie shadows.

The inside as dilapidated as the outside. The textures the only thing differing. Candlelight from the front showing off the decaying wood.

A RED FLAMED CANDLE

standing out amongst them. Something special about this one. Something sacred - God's Candle.

PRAYERS coming from somewhere within the church.

INT. THE ARC - NIGHT

At the front of the temple, Rafael sits on a bench facing an altar.

His hands hold an open, deteriorating Bible. A ROSARY dangles from the end of his fingers below the open Bible.

With his fingers as guide, Rafael takes the rosary beads, one by one.

The PRAYERS growing louder more persistent until

THUNDER shakes the outside. The prayers suddenly cut off by it.

Tomas enters.

Rafael closes his book and puts it away. Removes his reading glasses.

RAFAEL

Ready?

Watching Rafael's figure approach the altar, we move past him and enter a connecting

HALLWAY

A dark, empty hallway of the church. At the end, a LOCKED DOOR. The lock, the heavy antique kind.

A long look at the door, the lock. Closer to the keyhole. Expecting something to come busting out.

Within the keyhole, the image goes to

EXT. CALAZADA INDEPENDENCIA - DAY

Four lanes of wet, paved, city road lined by old, squared, one-storied buildings. Not a sign of life from any of them.

The streets empty except for a lone BIKE and its rider.

Rhythmic SQUEAKING from a bike's chain.

Tire spokes spin round and round. The early morning sun reflects off the spoke's metal.

The tires SPLASHING puddles every so often.

SQUEAK. SQUEAK. SQUEAK of the bike's chain.

CHUY (30's), an overweight man, rides the too-small bike as fast as it will move without falling apart. His clothes soaked from the recent rain.

The bike climbs up the side walk, avoiding the rough, pot-holed road. Its tires splitting the water.

EXT. THE ARC - CEMETARY - DAY

Broken headstones surrounded by wild flowers and overgrown grass.

RATS

nibbled and chew. They are all over the place.

The SQUEAKING from the bike nearing.

INT. THE ARC - WORKSHOP - DAY

Tomas BANGS down the last of the corner nails on a large, handmade, wooden coffin.

EXT. THE ARC - DAY

SQUEAK. SQUEAK. SQUEAK.

The bike approaches the Church's old cement structure. The bike wobbling from Chuy's unsteadiness.

INT. THE ARC - DAY

BIRDS

fly overhead within the church from one structural beam to the next.

The sunlight pours in through broken, stained glass showing off the church's deteriorating state.

Then, a persistent KNOCK from the large front doors.

Rafael limps toward them. A cane helping him now. Gets to the large wooden doors, unlocks the several locks. The heaviness of the door apparent.

The door disrupts a purposely laid SALT LINE crossing the front of the door on the floor.

Standing soaked on the church steps, Chuy, his bike thrown carelessly on the ground behind him, smiles at Rafael - his smile evidence of his mental handicap.

CHUY

Guess what? Storm's gone, Rafa.

Rafael sticks his head just past Chuy looking for anyone else who might have followed him.

Chuy steps just inside out of the rain.

CHUY
(slow)
The Father sent me.

Rafael takes a 1000 PESO BILL from his pocket and gives it to Chuy. Smiles, rubs the simple-minded man's head.

RAFAEL
Tell him he's ready.

Chuy eagerly takes the bill, reflexively lifts it and holds it against the light analyzing its authenticity.

RAFAEL
Was worth a lot of money at one time.

Chuy hesitates a moment, not sure what to do. Places the bill in his pocket. Finally smiles, realizing something and turns to go.

CHUY
I have the perfect place for it,
Rafa.

Then, walks head down out the door. Turns back to Rafael. Shows an eager, child-like smile.

CHUY
Can I help, Rafa?

RAFAEL
You've done enough. Now go.

Reluctantly Chuy goes. Picks his bike off the sidewalk. Rides off down the street.

Satisfied, Rafael closes the large, protective door. Locks it from the inside. Fixes the salt line back into its neat row against the bottom of the door.

As he fixes the salt row

WE FOLLOW

its path around the inside of the church. The salt following the contours of the internal walls.

Then, Rafael heads to somewhere within the church. His limp more obvious.

EXT. THE ARC - CEMETERY - DAY

An overcast sky.

A woman, MRS. MENDOZA (30's), cries near a freshly opened hole on the soil.

MRS. AGUILERA (30's), her husband, MR. AGUILERA (30's) and their daughter, EDEN AGUILERA (6), stand nearby.

Rafael and Tomas look on from a distance.

FATHER RIVERA(50'S), a priest in traditional, black robe, stands next to the lowering coffin.

RAFAEL

Did you go to confession last week?

The handmade coffin is slowly lowered into the ground.

TOMAS

No. I don't like telling my prayers to the priest.

Rafael looks at Tomas.

Chuy shovels a pile of dirt into the hole.

Tomas avoids Rafa's disciplining gaze.

TOMAS

Rafa?

Rafael hesitates.

RAFAEL

Yes?

TOMAS

You ever been to the ocean?

RAFAEL

Once.

TOMAS

What was it like?

RAFAEL

Big.

TOMAS
Can we go there?

Rafael hesitates. Knows the answer but considers what to say.

RAFAEL
No.

Rafael looks at Tomas again. Trying to gauge his body language.

RAFAEL
Maybe one day, we'll see it. When
all this is finished.

Tomas smiles, satisfied.

TOMAS
You ever have doubts?

Rafael looks Tomas, unsure where this is going.

RAFAEL
About?

TOMAS
About what we're doing. Why we are
here.

RAFAEL
No.

TOMAS
Never?

RAFAEL
Never.

Rafael looks at the side of Tomas' head.

RAFAEL
If you prayed more you wouldn't
have so many doubts.
(pause)
Your head wouldn't be filled with
impossibilities.

Tomas looks Rafael.

Rafael looks forward. Avoiding any more conversation.

RAFAEL

Besides

(at Tomas)

The ocean is full of creatures that
will eat you. Full of them.

Tomas looks. His face neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

EXT. THE ARC - CEMETARY - DAY

Chuy finishes his work.

TWO OLD LADIES

sing a chant while leaving.

The others file out.

After them, Rafael walks with Father Rivera.

Tomas follows, from a distance, just out of earshot.

FATHER RIVERA

We are nearing the epoch, Rafael.
Many are nearing their end. We must
protect our numbers.

Rafael COUGHS. Covers his mouth with the white handkerchief.
Pulls it back revealing large specks of blood.

The priest notices.

Rafael stops and looks directly at the priest.

They both look back to see Tomas, distracted on his own
thoughts.

FATHER RIVERA

Tomas? Does he know?

RAFAEL

No. Not yet.

The priest SIGHS.

RAFAEL

I want to spend the last days with
my family. Before I walk with God.

Tomas walks behind them.

The three figures get lost on the distance, crossing the gate to the cemetery yard towards the Church proper.

FATHER RIVERA

This is the time to be strong.
Difficult times are coming. We must
train a replacement. Soon.

A light RAIN begins.

RAFAEL

Send him to me. I will train him.
(coughs)
Tomas will take over for the
Church. It will be in honest hands.
Protected.

Now Tomas is close enough to listen. Hears the conversation.
His face not agreeing with his father's words.

FATHER RIVERA

You must prepare yourself for your
end, Rafael. Protect your family.

They leave.

EXT. RANCH - YARD - DAY

A storm announces its coming in the sky. Clouds blackening
the sunset forming in the horizon directly over the city's
outline.

A strong wind blowing the hanging sheets thrown across a
drying line. Though the tangerine tree's leaves and tiny
fruits remain unmoved.

In the distance, A premonition of something bad coming.
Something unseen.

CONSUELO(50's), an honest woman, takes the hanging sheets and
places them in a basket, hurried.

Her young daughter, NENA(16), sits off to the side.

Right away one can tell something is wrong with her.

The girl sits and rocks her head rhythmically back and forth.
Her face pale, bluish, almost lifeless.

Suddenly, she stops her movement. The young girl's eyes lost
in the emptiness. Focusing on something only she knows is
there.

A SIREN begins to blare from somewhere way off. The siren the type that gets people running indoors.

Consuelo stops her task, looks in the direction of the city in the horizon.

Nena's empty eyes also searching. A white cloudiness covering her pupils makes her face frightening.

A GERMAN SHEPARD

stands beside her agitated by the high pitched siren. Its ears perked up, looking at its master for comfort.

Nena takes a moment. Moves her head around, bothered.

Consuelo leaves the remaining sheets and hurries her task.

EXT. THE ARC - ROOFTOP - DAY

Rafael sits on the roof rigging the plastic tarp. Places a rock on one of the corners to hold it down. Another.

Then the SIREN.

Looks towards the source.

An expansive, FIFTY FOOR HIGH WALL in the distance a few blocks away. A barrier for the city expanding in both directions as far as the eye can see.

Rafael finishes. Leaves the roof.

EXT. THE ARC - DAY

At the street in front, the van sits with its back doors open.

The SIREN continuing.

INT. THE ARC - HALLWAY - DAY

Rafael walks by the locked door. Checks the integrity of the lock. Looks at the door for a moment before leaving.

INT. THE ARC - TOMAS' ROOM

Tomas sits on his bed, looks through the old worn, AMERICAN CELEBRITY MAGAZINE.

CLOSE ON MAGAZINE

Shows beautiful photos of different young actors and actresses

TOMAS

Continues looking. Takes a moment to review the specifics of each page. The details. Runs his hand across the image of a BEAUTIFUL ACTRESS posing, as if trying to feel the textures of some far away place no longer existing.

Interrupting

Rafael enters startling Tomas.

Tomas tries hiding the book.

Too late. Rafa notices.

TOMAS
(embarrassed)
Hey.

Rafael takes the book from Tomas, pulls a chair to have a seat, facing Tomas. Still some space between them. Flips through a few pages.

RAFAEL
Pictures always make a place appear better than it really is. People, too. Always making them look better than they really are.

Rafa rolls the magazine into a tight spiral. Points it towards Tomas - by the look of dread on Tomas' face we know he wishes Rafa wouldn't do this.

RAFAEL
When you meet a person face-to-face that's when you get to see person for who they are. All the wrinkles, scars, deformities. Everything that's hidden in photos.

Rafael looks to nowhere. Reminiscing.

RAFAEL
Long time ago, before you were born, I had a crush on a very famous, Actress.

TOMAS

What was her name?

RAFAEL

Penelope Cruz. I used to watch her in the theatres and thought she was the most beautiful person alive. I couldn't imagine anyone being any more beautiful.

Tomas sits forward. Shows some real interest in the story.

TOMAS

I remember the theater. I remember going with you. Remember that, Rafa.

(smiles)

RAFAEL

Yeah, I remember. What did we see, again?

TOMAS

Star Wars.

RAFAEL

That's right. Great movie.

(reminisces)

Well, I saw this actress, Penelope Cruz, walking in the street one day and rushed over to meet her.

TOMAS

What'd you say to her!?

RAFAEL

What'd I say to her? Well, I couldn't say anything.

TOMAS

Why not!?

RAFAEL

I saw her face, and it didn't look anything like it did in the movies. She looked... well... old.

TOMAS

(Laughs)

What happened then?

RAFAEL

I kept walking. Right past her. I hid in the store until she left. I'm not sure who I was more embarrassed for. Her or me.

TOMAS

Wow.

RAFAEL

So I married your beautiful mother instead.
(smiles)

Tomas returns the smile.

Rafael readies himself to leave. Holds the magazine out for Tomas to take. Tomas does.

TOMAS

Rafa?

RAFAEL

Yes.

TOMAS

I think there is something wrong with me. Something strange has been happening to me.

Rafael stops. More interested now.

RAFAEL

Well, tell me. What is it?

TOMAS

I'm getting these
(searching)
feelings all the time.

RAFAEL

Feelings?

TOMAS

Yeah, I look at this magazine, see the pretty women and get weird. I don't know. I can't control it.

Rafael laughs. Understands.

RAFAEL

Like all feelings they go away, eventually.

RAFAEL(cont'd)

(points finger)

Remember, your emotions can get in the way of you making the right decisions. Being loyal. That's why God made women...

Rafael begins a coughing fit. COUGHS several times.

TOMAS

You okay?

Rafael stands and moves away from Tomas, hiding the severity of his cough.

RAFAEL

I'm fine. We'll talk later. Five minutes and I'll be ready.

TOMAS

Okay. Sure.

Rafael leaves.

Tomas takes the magazine and unrolls it. Carefully and gently replaces it back into its plastic protective covering. Finally places the magazine in a shoebox, taking care not to damage it.

INT. CARGO VAN - CARGO AREA - DAY

Tomas checks the contents of two large, plastic containers. Shakes them. Empty. Puts them back.

INT. THE ARC - RAFAEL'S STUDY - DAY

Rafael packs belongings into a small bag. Takes the remaining books from a bookshelf. Puts those in. The crucifix on the wall, too.

Rafael goes to the window. Looks down upon Tomas at the back of the van.

EXT. THE ARC - DAY

Chuy rides his bike in circles in the street near Tomas. A perfect racetrack. Not another vehicle on the road. Makes a sound with his voice mimicking the siren's.

Tomas stands at the back of the open van doors.

INT. THE ARC - DAY

Dark and gloomy.

Rafael kneels at the front of the church. Prays. Rafael looks up at the effigy of JESUS. The RED CANDLE directly beneath the statue.

The red candle never seeming to get smaller. Never ending. Finally, the SIREN'S call ends.

RAFAEL

Please, Father. Whatever your plan is for me, I'll accept. Just take care of my boy.

TOMAS(OS)

We're out of fuel.

Startled, Rafael turns to see Tomas standing in the doorway.

TOMAS

You'll have to siphon some on the way.

Tomas leaves the doorway, allowing the full sunlight come in.

Rafael turns back to the Jesus effigy for final words.

RAFAEL

Just tell me, Father, if I'm doing the wrong thing. Give me something.

With that, Rafael makes the sign of the cross. Stands, turns to leave.

EXT. THE ARC - DAY

Chuy still riding in circles. Should be nice and dizzy by now.

Tomas chases Chuy.

Chuy trying to get away. LAUGHS.

Rafael exits carrying a small personal bag and a SHOTGUN. Sees the boys playing. Smiles to himself.

Tomas sees his father. Goes to him.

RAFAEL
Can I make it to the old gas
station outside of town?
(coughs)

TOMAS
I think so. Not sure what's left.

RAFAEL
Well. I need to get going before
the sun goes.

TOMAS
So you'll be back in a week?

RAFAEL
If I'm not, stay here.
(points at Chuy)
Just make sure you watch over him.
(beat)
The integrity of the church is your
responsibility for the time being.
Take care of her.

Tomas turns to look at Chuy lost in his make believe play.

TOMAS
I will.

RAFAEL
Take care of yourself, too, son.

Rafael reaches out to shake Tomas' hand.

TOMAS
One week.

Tomas shakes. His actions seems to be looking for something more from his father. A hug maybe.

Rafael hesitates his answer.

RAFAEL
One week.
(smiles)

Rafael goes to the van. Gets in the driver's side.

RAFAEL
(from window)
Get inside and lock the place
before it gets dark.

TOMAS

Don't worry.

Rafael drives off.

Tomas watches. Looking like he's wishing his father would turn around and get him. Not happening.

The van turns a corner out of sight.

Tomas holds his gaze into the emptiness for what seems like forever.

THUNDER overhead.

Tomas looks up to see the thunderclouds quickly forming overhead.

EXT. DOWNTOWN PROPER - DAY

Sun getting lost behind the low buildings. Clouds overhead.

The focus of the low skyline, A large, two-towered cathedral, looking like tall cat ears, sits abandoned to one side.

Though, one can tell it was at one time the focus of spirituality for the city. Not anymore.

A few hopeless INHABITANTS walk the streets.

The most unusual thing is the FIFTY FOOT HIGH WALL cutting through the center of the city. Made to keep something in or out. Due to its trajectory cutting through neighborhoods and streets, you can tell it wasn't there when the city was built.

Rafael's van approaches, speeds through the blacked-out, empty, intersection. Not stopping for anyone or anything.

EXT. STREET TUNNEL - DAY

Only the sunlight from each end providing light. Empty otherwise.

Then, the van enters from the far end. Going away from the city.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The van passes by quickly on the two-laned highway. An empty GAS STATION sits abandoned. No one around.

The van pulls in. Drives to the side and comes to a hesitated standstill. Out of gas.

The gas pumps useless, though. By the looks of them have been for years.

Rafael exits the driver's side. Leaves the door open. Goes to the filling well for the gas station. Pries the metal cap from the ground with a metal bar.

Rafael gets low to the ground. Peers into the deep gas well.

A silent moment looking before he goes to the back of the van. He brings back a home-made apparatus with a long stretch of tubing connected to it.

Rafael places one end of the tubing into the ground well.

The tubing falls into it until its length is exhausted.

Back to the van, Rafael retrieves one of the plastic containers. Gets the free end of the hose into it.

Then, he pumps. A foot pump provides the labor needed to pump the fuel from the well.

Rafael pumps furiously for a few minutes. Nothing but air.

Checks the pumps integrity. Looks into the well again. Gives the pump a few more tries. Again, nothing.

The well bone dry. Not a drop left.

RAFAEL

Not good.

A STRANGER

approaches on foot carrying a plastic fuel container in one hand and a rifle dangling from the other.

CLOSE ON STRANGER'S HAND

Shows fresh blood covering it.

The Stranger sees Rafael already at the filling well.

Rafael notices. Rafael doesn't move. Waits for the man to make a move.

Between them, the two fueling islands with their discarded pumps.

Finally, Rafa moves first, goes to the driver side door of the

VAN

Where he grabs his shotgun from between the seats. Looks up through the passenger side window to where the man was standing, now no longer there.

Rafa moves

BACK OUTSIDE

Where Rafa searches the surrounding area with his eyes. No sight of the man now. Rafa gets the shotgun at the ready and moves around the front of the van.

Slow. Deliberate.

Around the front of the van, Rafa comes face to face with

Nothing but the wind blowing across the dirt.

Rafa then moves towards the first gas pump island. Checking here and there still finding nothing.

Rafa steps between the first gas pumps.

Takes one step. Another.

Now standing between the pump station islands, Rafa relaxes a bit. Lowers his shotgun by his side.

Rafael stands there a moment before turning around to find

THE STRANGER

Standing right behind him, between him and the van.

Rafa maintains his composure, his coolness - even though the guy scared him shitless.

RAFAEL
Nothing left here.

The stranger takes a whiff of the air around him.

STRANGER
Nothing left anywhere.

A certain distrust in the man's eyes for Rafael.

Rafael the same. Keeps his eye on the man's rifle hanging loose by his side.

RAFAEL
Where you headed?

STRANGER
Nowhere to go. Is there?

RAFAEL
Depends on where you want to go.

The Stranger gives Rafael a smirk.

STRANGER
Been following that wall for days.
Doesn't seem to be an end. You know
anyone that's been over it?

RAFAEL
Nope. Why?

The Stranger looks around at the complete desolation surrounding them. CHUCKLES.

RAFAEL
Don't think you'd want to go over
there, if you could, anyways.

STRANGER
What's over there can't be any
worse than what's left of this shit
hole. The ground ain't even worth
spitting on.

Rafael gets uneasy.

RAFAEL
Well. Should get going. Would offer
you a lift.

The man just stares. Not a smile, nothing.

STRANGER
Where you headed?

Rafael gets uneasy.

RAFAEL

Out for an evening stroll is all.

STRANGER

Ain't the place to be takin' a stroll, is it? Lot of them monsters hanging around here. Lot of them were hanging around, anyways.

(smiles)

If you know what I mean.

CLOSE ON

Stranger's gun as Rafa's eyes move to it.

RAFAEL

Don't think I'll run into any trouble, do you?

STRANGER

Depends on where you're going. Dead man's land out here. Nothing for hours except a ranch a few hours walk from here. You walk on that road away from the city long enough, you run right into it.

The stranger waits for a reaction from Rafael.

Rafael plays it cool.

STRANGER

Looks like a few survivors living there. Not sure how they're doing it or how many there are. Sure was a nice old woman, though. Nice enough to give me some water and bread. Pretty old thing. Wouldn't let me in, though. Go figure.

RAFAEL

Probably got a stockpile of weapons inside. You're lucky you weren't shot.

STRANGER

I'm pretty sure she was alone. Be easy pickins if something wanted to go after it.

Again, the Stranger gauges Rafael's body language.

RAFAEL

I'd be careful with any survivor.
Didn't survive this long on luck.

STRANGER

Well. There surviving because these
goddamned dead ain't out there.
Probably worse things out there for
them than these nasty things
wondering around here. Like no
water.

RAFAEL

You're probably right. Still, I'd
be careful thinking any survivor is
alone and vulnerable.

Neither the Stranger nor Rafa makes a move.

RAFAEL

Well, better get moving before it
gets too late. People expecting me.

Rafael gives a courteous smile then goes to the van. Grabs
his personal bag. Keeps an eye on the Stranger's position
through the windshield

Rafael begins walking down the road away from the station.
Looks back checking to see if the man is still there.

The man doesn't budge. Just watches Rafael walk.

Leaving the van door open, the van abandoned, Rafael heads in
the direction away from the city. On foot now. Checks one
last time to see where the man is.

At the station, the man is bent over checking the fuel well.

Rafael gets moving.

Rafael throws the shotgun over one shoulder. Looks back
towards the city.

The direction of the now dead siren. Looks up at the falling
sun. Both an indication to hurry. Gets moving as fast as his
old body will carry him.

AT THE STATION

the stranger goes through the van looking for something.
Anything that may help him survive.

INT. CARGO VAN - DAY

Inside, the stranger continues his search.

At the steering console, the single ignition KEY still sits inside. Ready to be turned.

The man notices, Turns the key to try and start it.

The van makes several attempts. Not turning over, though confirming what he already knew.

Frustrated, The stranger takes the single key out of the ignition and throws it in the dirt nearby.

INT. THE ARC - NIGHT

Tomas closes the large front doors to the church. Takes a container with salt. Lays a heavy line over top of the stuff already surrounding the church walls.

INT. THE ARC - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Tomas checks the antique lock on the door at the end a few meters away. Keeps a safe distance.

INT. THE ARC - NIGHT

Tomas sits in the candle light. Stares up at the effigy of Jesus. Searching. Bows his head. Says a silent prayer.

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The road more isolated. Complete darkness surrounding everything. Nothing but desert on each side.

Rafael still walking. Though he looks as though he is about to give in. His strength about to give out. COUGHS a terrible cough.

His mind the only thing keeping him walking. Still a measurable toughness in the old man. Stubbornness.

Rafael sweats. The illness inside him.

The old man stops suddenly. Remains frozen. Senses something around him. Stalking him. Gets his gun to the ready.

Nothing but black out there. Whatever it is, its blending in with the night.

Just up ahead, a squared, cement STRUCTURE. Too small to be a house.

Rafael sees it. Heads for it. His shelter for the night. Safety.

INT. STRUCTURE - NIGHT

Nothing but four, cement walls and a roof. Nothing else except empty spaces for door and window. Someone never finished whatever it was going to be.

Rafael inside. Lights a candle. Peers out one of the squared holes. Looking for something, nervous.

From the window complete blackness and silence. The type of silence that brings something with it. Hiding something.

Then, within the blackness, EYES. Red, hunting eyes staring at the squared structure. At Rafael. Hundreds of them. Something knows he's there.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

The squared, cement structure several meters away.

The RED EYES fixed on the structure. Not able to see what the eyes are attached to due to the darkness.

INT. STRUCTURE - NIGHT

Rafael scans the darkness for a moment. Doesn't see anything. Gets comfortable in one of the corners. Furthest from any opening. A protective posture.

Settles in for the night.

Sitting with his back against the wall, Rafael pulls the shotgun close.

Squints from some internal pain. Sweating again. Closes his eyes for just an instant.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

The RED EYES closing in on the structure.

INT. STRUCTURE - NIGHT

Rafael, still. Coping with his pain. His face wincing.

A NOISE just outside the structure gets Rafael's attention. Reflexively gets his gun up. Sits dead still. Waits.

A silent moment. Can smell the fear from the old man.

A RAT runs into the structure. It too trying to find safety from the dangers outside.

Rafael responds. Immediately gets a lock with his shotgun. Realizes.

Relaxes just enough before...

A WOLF

jumps in to attack. Its fierce eyes and rabid mouth showing to Rafael.

Rafael point his shotgun. Gets the postured wolf in his sights.

The wolf stays dead still. Shows its sharp teeth. GROWLS, stalking Rafael.

Then several other WOLVES appear behind the first. They, too want a piece of Rafael.

No one making a move.

A tense moment when

EXT. DESERT - STRUCTURE - NIGHT

Several, large WOLVES stare at the structure. Straight, firm positions. Waiting. Their fierce, red eyes fixed on their prey. Beaten up, starving creatures.

One WOLF'S ears perk up, eyes fix on something. Something behind the pack.

Something in the darkness.

Several other WOLVES sense it, too. Eyes fix on something unseen. Ears shoot up like crazy.

LIGHTNING in the horizon over the city.

Sensing something even more dangerous than themselves, several wolves get out of there.

INT. STRUCTURE - NIGHT

A silent standstill.

Rafael with the shotgun pointed at the leader. The others out of range, just behind the leader.

GROWLS.

Then, sensing something, the Leader backs off leaving his for sure meal behind.

The rest of the pack obediently follows.

Rafael keeps his weapon pointed just in case. Then, SIGHS a huge sigh of relief. His life saved by something.

He keeps his eyes glued onto the door way. Expecting the worse.

Nothing, though.

We hold on Rafael's tired face then go to

EXT. DESERT - DAY

A HUNDRED FOOTSTEPS running to or away from something. Frantic, fast.

Pounding the dirt. Dust flying around all sides.

INT. STRUCTURE - NIGHT

Rafael struggles to keep his eyes open, alert. The shotgun slips lower with each flutter of his eyelids.

The FOOTSTEPS continuing. From some other place and time.

INT. THE ARC - TOMAS' ROOM - NIGHT

The FOOTSTEPS reaching a crescendo when

Tomas sits up straight in his bed. Catches his breath. A nightmare waking him from his sleep.

A book falls from his lap. Hits the bare, wooden floor.

Silence now.

Tomas puts his arms close to his body. The cold bothering him. An unusual coldness.

He gets up, finds a shirt. Quickly puts it on. Helps a little.

Picks up a book, THE ADVENTURES OF GILGAMESH.

His bookmark, a LAMINATED BUSINESS CARD showing off a nice beach front and ocean. A time and place far removed from the present day.

Tomas takes a moment to look at the card. Then shoves it in the book.

Unsettled, Tomas goes to the window. Scans the outside for any sign of anything.

Just outside his window is the cemetery. Looking down upon the headstones. The fresh grave of Juan Mendoza.

LIGHTNING in the sky.

EXT. THE ARC - CEMETARY - NIGHT

GRUNTING. As if someone working.

The back of a figure, a LOST SOUL, hunches over the soil. Throws dirt off to one side. Digging for something.

INT. STRUCTURE - NIGHT

Rafael sitting, unconscious. His posture agitated. A persistent sweat soaking his face and clothes.

Rafael shivers.

RAFAEL
(sleeping)
No!

INT. THE ARC - TOMAS' ROOM - NIGHT

Tomas still standing at the window. LIGHTNING again. Almost lighting up the entire cemetery yard. Tomas looks towards the sky.

Turns to leave.

INT. STRUCTURE - NIGHT

Rafael's face. Still sleeping. Anguished. Or dead. Not sure which.

INT. THE ARC - STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Tomas descends the dark, spiraled staircase.

The CLANG of something down further.

Tomas stops suddenly.

Listens carefully.

Nothing, continues down. Slower now.

The CLINKING of something down the stairwell.

Again, Tomas stops.

Waits.

Listens.

Looks around for something. Anything to use as a weapon. Nothing.

Tomas hesitantly continues down into

INT. THE ARC - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Within the hallway, Father Rivera secures the lock on the door. The locked door. Turns to go.

Tomas stands right in front of him. Father Rivera stops, startled.

FATHER RIVERA

Tomas.

Tomas just looks.

Father Rivera walks towards Tomas.

FATHER RIVERA

Just checking up on you. Making sure everything was okay.

TOMAS
Everything is fine.
(beat)
What were you doing?
(points at door)

The priest looks behind him at the now locked door. Back to Tomas.

FATHER RIVERA
Like I said, I was making sure you
were okay.

Reaching Tomas, the priest stops just inches from him. Looking to get by.

Tomas obliges. Moves to let him by and they both move into

MAIN CATHEDRAL

FATHER RIVERA
I see you got your salt line nicely
laid.

TOMAS
Best part of the job. Maybe when I
get out of here I'll get a good
paying job laying salt lines for
wealthy customers.

Father Rivera stops. Gets serious.

FATHER RIVERA
You think God has given up on us,
don't you, Tomas?

TOMAS
I think he's got a sense of humor.

This gets a CHUCKLE from the priest.

FATHER RIVERA
It is difficult to comprehend those
things you cannot see. Things that
seems so one-way. So dead ended.
Believe me Tomas, there is some
sense in all of this. Even if you
don't understand it.

TOMAS
Uh-huh.

FATHER RIVERA

Remember the story of Noah and the Flood?

TOMAS

Yeah.

FATHER RIVERA

The point of the story was God telling us that sometimes we must serve him regardless of how absurd or difficult the task may be. Like Noah did. We need to have faith, Tomas. An enormous sense of trust in order to succeed. You are Noah, Tomas. Whether you believe it or not. You are doing things that you don't understand yet you still have the faith to do them.

TOMAS

I do these things because I have to.

FATHER RIVERA

Exactly. You have an obligation not only to God but to the people. Just like Noah did. In order to save not only himself but every other living creature. Because of Noah's unselfish work, we exist.

TOMAS

So I should blame him.

FATHER RIVERA

Not what I meant exactly.

(beat)

We'll pick this up some other time.

Get some rest.

Rivera heads straight for the exit.

Tomas follows.

Near the door, Tomas notices the salt line hasn't moved indicating the priest came from somewhere inside the church.

The priest unlocks the several locks on the door, opens the large door. Sticks his head just outside scanning the area for anything.

Looks back at Tomas who is still trying to understand why the protective salt line hadn't been moved.

FATHER RIVERA

You're doing something good, Tomas.
Something that will be repaid in
the after life. You have to be sure
of that.

(smiles)

Good night.

With that, the priest leaves.

Tomas watches. Goes to the open door. Watches the priest get lost in the shadows.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - CONSUELO'S ROOM

A pitch black room. Not much on the walls. A bed and chair.

Within the room, RUSTLING of something.

Nena sits on the floor in the corner, the darkness. She turns the dial on a MUSIC BOX. Lets it go.

The box makes a SOUND. Simple music.

Nena enjoys it. Shakes her head to it. Her dead eyes lost in the darkness.

Consuelo pulls back from the closet, dressed. She pulls a sweater, puts it on.

Takes Nena by the arm. Nena follows. Both leave.

EXT. RANCH - YARD - DAY

The first rays of the sun just barely shown. Still mostly dark out.

Within the ranch a good look shows a protective, concrete wall surrounding the place.

The large, RANCH HOUSE sits in the center with the cornfield to the side.

Nena sits on the front steps playing with her music box. Content. The girl sings along with the music.

NENA

(singing)

The wall, is our salvation,
salvation. Only it will keep them
away, Keep them away, keep them
away. It's the only one that sees,
one that sees, one that sees...

Horse stables to one side line an exterior wall. HORSES WINNY
from inside.

Nena HUMS.

Excitement from the horses. Something going on in the
stables.

Consuelo exits one of the stables leading a large, black,
saddled STALLION by the reigns. The large horse WINNEYS,
SNORTS, showing its excitement.

The German Shepherd following close behind.

Consuelo leads the stallion to a post. Loops the leash. Goes
to get something.

The other HORSES within the stable WINNEY. They want to go as
well.

The large stallion pulls at the leash. Moves in excited
motions. Bucks once, twice.

Nena senses the horse's unease. Immediately goes to calm it.

The horse responds. Calms down immediately with just a touch
and silent whisper from the girl. Shows the girl's
specialness.

Consuelo goes to the horse. Unties it.

NENA

It's father, mother.

(beat)

Father is out there.

CONSUELO

I know, dear.

Consuelo comforts her daughter. Rubs her cheek.

NENA

It's father, mother.

CONSUELO

Go inside, my dear. Wait for me there.

Consuelo pulls the stallion towards the large entrance gate. Opens it without hesitation. Several, secure locks.

Before leaving, looks back at Nena who is standing in the early morning. Lost in her own thoughts.

The German Shepherd staying with Nena. Loyal.

Nena turns the music box. Gets some sound. Satisfied. Finds her way back to the ranch house.

EXT. DESERT - RANCH - DAY

Just outside the walled compound, Consuelo mounts the stallion easily.

Nothing but miles of desert in every direction.

Consuelo takes off in a direction unknown to all but her.

A low THUNDER rumbles in the distance.

INT. THE ARC - DAY

Rain hits the roof. Comes in through the large hole. The plastic covering FLAPS from the wind. Not a good patch job by Rafael.

BIRDS fly here and there to get better positions out of the rain.

At the open front entrance, Tomas sits on the floor watching the outside rain that has started once again.

With the large, front door open, the continuity of the salt line is disrupted leaving a bare spot at the door's entrance.

On the wood floor, Tomas lightly carves what appears to be rows of ocean waves. Stares ahead, through the rain at nothing.

EXT. THE ARC - CEMETARY - DAY

Several holes dug within the yard. The rain filling them up.

EXT. DOWNTOWN PROPER - DAY

The trees all either dead or dying. None with any green. Sign of the city's decay and neglect. The persistent rain not even helping bring the trees to life.

Trash accumulated everywhere.

The city is empty, deserted, except for ABANDONED CARS here and there. No matter where one looks, every tree and street an empty skeleton.

The fifty foot high wall going on forever in both directions. Its presence a constant reminder.

EXT. DESERT ROAD - DAY

The hot sun midway in the sky. The stallion carrying Consuelo through the desert. An old, barely used road.

Off to the side in the near distance, a pack of mutilated, WOLVES' BODIES. The same pack from the night before. Torn to shreds by something or each other.

Consuelo notices. Covers her mouth and nose to hide from the smell. An awful dead smell. Makes a face. Keeps moving.

EXT. DESERT ROAD - DAY

Consuelo continuing her journey.

Something in the distance catches her interest. Gets the stallion moving.

EXT. DESERT ROAD - DAY

Consuelo approaches.

In the road, Rafael lays. Near death.

CONSUELO

Rafa!

Consuelo notices. Dismounts without hesitation, leaving the horse to fend for himself. Rushes to her husband's side.

EXT. THE ARC - CEMETARY - DAY

Later in the day. The rain gone leaving everything nice and soaked.

Tomas systematically fills in the numerous holes with a shovel.

Several holes already topped with fresh dirt.

In the background, Chuy swings the machete. Play fights with some unseen opponent. Makes child-like noises.

EXT. THE ARC - ROOFTOP - DAY

Tomas hammers down the plastic covering nice and tight.

Chuy stares on from a window. Eager to get on the roof also.

CHUY
Can I help?

TOMAS
Stay there. It's dangerous up here.
Stay there, Chuy.

Then, the SIREN begins signaling the end of the day. The night approaching soon.

Tomas looks towards the source.

TOMAS
(to himself)
Here they come.

Continues his task.

INT. THE ARC - NIGHT

The eyeless saints staring down into the dark cathedral.

RAIN hitting the roof. The plastic holding for now. Only drips of water here and there.

Tomas and Chuy sits on the floor. A large pot of obscured liquid sits between them.

Tomas dips a bowl into the pot. Chunks of something mixed in. Hands it to Chuy.

CHUY

Why couldn't we go with Rafael,
Tomas?

Chuy takes it. Brings it to his nose to smell it before tipping it to his mouth to eat. Takes most of it down in one gulp.

TOMAS

We have to protect the church,
Chuy.

CHUY

From what? The monsters?

TOMAS

Yeah, the monsters.

Tomas does the same. Takes most of the bowl's contents in one gulp.

CHUY

Why are there monsters, Tomas?

TOMAS

I don't know, Chuy.

Both share their meal in the candle light. The red flame flickering as well.

CHUY

Guess what, Tomas?

TOMAS

What, Chuy?

CHUY

Regular people used to eat human
meat. That true?

TOMAS

Depends on how hungry you are.

CHUY

You wouldn't eat me, would you?
Even if you were starving, Tomas.

TOMAS

I don't know, Chuy. You might be
too salty. Would have to cook you
too long. Get all that salt out.

Chuy gives a frightened look. Tomas holds his look serious before giving in. Smiles.

CHUY
You're joking with me.

TOMAS
Yeah, I'm joking with you. I
couldn't eat my best friend.

CHUY
Guess what, Tomas?

TOMAS
What, Chuy?

CHUY
I'm your only friend.

Tomas looks around at the emptiness of the church. At his friend. Lonely. Empty.

EXT. RANCH - YARD - DAY

From outside the gate, BARKING.

A persistent, eager BARKING. The main gate opens from the outside. Consuelo walks the large stallion through the gate. Rafael laid over the saddle.

Consuelo easily maneuvers the stallion towards the ranch house.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - CONSUELO'S ROOM - DAY

Rafael lays in bed nice and tucked in. Eyes closed. Looks ill but alive.

Nena sits by his side on the floor. Rocks rhythmically.

Nena turns her head to the side as if listening for something.

Seconds later, the dog BARKS outside.

Nena holds her position listening.

FROM THE WINDOW

in the yard, the German Shepherd barks at the closed front gate. Someone or something just outside.

Consuelo crosses the yard towards the gate.

The dog continues to BARK eagerly.

Consuelo opens a tiny view door within the large gate. Says something or someone unseen on the other end.

Nena hears the conversation. Not sure how but she gets every word.

EXT. RANCH - YARD - DAY

Consuelo unlocks the large steel door. Opens it. Hold the German Shepherd back by the collar.

A tall, young, gentleman neatly dressed in all black enters. Politely removes his black, rimmed hat. Introduces himself to Consuelo. Looks oddly like an old Quaker. The gentleman is ANDRES(18).

Nena listens from the open front door. She hides herself with the edge of the door frame.

ANDRES

I have been sent by the priest. I'm here to see Rafael.

Andres notices Nena. Watches her intently while talking to Consuelo. Shows his immediate interest in her. Though not the good kind.

CONSUELO

What business do you have with my husband?

ANDRES

Church business.

Andres gives Consuelo a knowing smile.

Consuelo leads him towards the house.

EXT. THE ARC - DAY

Tomas stands at the entrance. Places two large buckets hanging at the ends of a wooden stick, on the ground.

Chuy exits with a similar apparatus. His apparatus is thrown across his shoulders. The two buckets hanging from the ends.

Tomas locks the church's doors. Gets his apparatus and lifts it across his own shoulders.

Tomas and Chuy walk down the street.

EXT. STREET TUNNEL - DAY

Protected by the darkness of the tunnel, several figures, LOST SOULS, surrounding something or someone. Tearing it violently.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

A desolate, empty street. Like the rest.

Tomas walks with Chuy steps behind.

CHUY
Guess what, Tomas?

TOMAS
What, Chuy.

CHUY
This is the place mother used to by all the beautiful fruits. Peaches, apples, mangos, avocados...

TOMAS
Avocado's not a fruit, Chuy.

Tomas looks back at his friend close behind.

Chuy ignores Tomas continues his list of fruits.

CHUY
Melon, limes, oranges, bananas...

EXT. CITY STREET - WATER PUMP - DAY

Finally reaching their destination, a WATER PUMP, they unload their buckets.

Tomas takes the handle. Up, down. Up, down. Finally, clear water leaves the end of the spiquet. Barely.

CHUY
Do you have a mother, Tomas?

Tomas stops for a moment. Looks at Chuy. Continues pumping.

TOMAS

We all have mothers at one point,
Chuy.

CHUY

Where is your mother, Tomas?

Tomas begins filling the first of his buckets without looking
in the direction of Chuy.

TOMAS

She dead like your mother, Chuy.

CHUY

Why do all mothers have to go away,
Tomas. I wish I had a mother,
still.

TOMAS

So do I, Chuy. So do I.

CHUY

Guess what, Tomas?

TOMAS

What, Chuy.

CHUY

You know where they used to sell
fruit, they sold cooked rats on a
stick. You could eat a rat, if you
wanted to.

TOMAS

You sure they were rats? They
weren't cats, or Chihuahuas?

CHUY

Nooo. they wouldn't cook dogs,
would they?

TOMAS

You never know.

CHUY

My dad used to say they put dogs in
hotdogs. I guess you are right.

EXT. THE ARC - DAY

Tomas and Chuy making it back from getting water. Tomas
unloads his heavy load from his back.

Chuy does the same, except his buckets are still empty.

Tomas unlocks the church door.

INT. THE ARC - DAY

Tomas enters. Chuy follows close behind.

TOMAS

Go get the big jar from Rafael's room.

CHUY

Yes, sir!

Chuy gives Tomas an awkward salute. Then eagerly takes off to do Tomas' bidding.

Tomas grins.

INT. THE ARC - RAFAEL'S STUDY - DAY

The sunlight falling upon the wooden desk. Besides the desk, the room looks deserted.

Chuy enters. Looks around for the jar.

Goes to the nearby closet. Opens it. Nothing there. Not even a piece of Rafael's clothing.

INT. THE ARC - DAY

Tomas unties the buckets from the wooden post. Chuy enters.

CHUY

Guess what, Tomas?

TOMAS

What, Chuy.

CHUY

He must have taken it with his other stuff.

Tomas looks up.

TOMAS

What stuff?

CHUY
His clothes and stuff. They're all
gone.
(pause)
Even his books are gone.

Tomas get interested. Gets up hurriedly. Goes to check.

INT. THE ARC - RAFAEL'S STUDY - DAY

Tomas stands in the doorway. Immediately goes to the closet.
Opens it revealing its emptiness.

Chuy follows. Tomas looks around the room. Everything that
mattered to Rafael gone. Books. The hanging crucifix.

CHUY
I told you.

TOMAS
He's not coming back.

INT. THE ARC - TOMAS' ROOM - DAY

Tomas packs a few belongings into a small backpack. Water,
book, food.

Takes his plastic covered magazine and carefully places it in
his backpack.

INT. THE ARC - DAY

Chuy chases a few PIGEONS that have ventured onto the church
floor. As he gets close, they fly away. Doesn't discourage
him though.

Tomas enters with his back pack thrown over his shoulder. His
MACHETE by his side.

He sees Chuy chasing the birds. A little kid trapped in a
large man's body. Smiles. Shakes his head.

EXT. THE ARC - DAY

At the front door, Chuy watches as Tomas adjusts his bag over
his shoulders.

CHUY
So you'll be back in a week?

Tomas looks at Chuy. His face not agreeing with what he's about to say.

TOMAS

Sure. I'll be back in a week. Take care of the Church. It is your responsibility now.

Chuy looks on. The sadness evident in his eyes. Goes to Tomas. Hugs him tight.

Not expecting it, Tomas stiffens up. Then allows the embrace. Hugs Chuy.

CHUY

I won't disappoint you.

Chuy pulls back and smiles at Tomas.

TOMAS

Good.

(beat)

You think the bike will make it?

CHUY

Guess what, Tomas?

TOMAS

What, Chuy.

CHUY

That's the fastest bike around. Sure it will make it.

Tomas smiles. Rubs Chuy's head, messing his hair up.

Then the SIREN begins. Tomas looks towards its source.

TOMAS

Get inside and lock the place before it gets dark.

Tomas rides off on the bicycle down the street. Chuy waves like an eager child.

EXT. DOWNTOWN PROPER - DAY

Tomas rides Chuy's old bike through the blackened out intersection. Passes the large, abandoned Church.

SQUEAK. SQUEAK. SQUEAK of the bike's chain.

BARKING from a dog down the street.

An old woman, SEÑORA RAMIREZ (80) leans on an old broom. Watches something in the distance.

Tomas approaches the old lady. Before passing her he stops. Not because of her but because of what he sees up ahead.

Down the road, Father Rivera walks swinging a large incense holder by his side. Black smoke wofts from the ceremonial instrument.

A STREET DOG barks wildly at the priest. Ready to attack him. The old lady just watches.

Tomas watches also.

SENORA RAMIREZ
Dogs know bad souls.

The lady looks at Tomas. Goes back to sweeping the street.

Tomas doesn't answer. Just watches the priest purifying the street with his holy smoke.

The priest continues his task. The street dog continuing barking.

Tomas rides off.

Father Rivera stops. Watches Tomas ride off.

EXT. DOWNTOWN PROPER - DAY

SQUEAK. SQUEAK. SQUEAK.

Tomas riding the bike past the fifty foot high wall. Riding along side it.

EXT. DOWNTOWN PROPER - DAY

Señora Ramirez pulls weeds in front of her drive. Her house the only one on the street that looks taken care of.

Father Rivera approaches.

The old lady stops her task, faces the priest. Gives him a distrusting look.

SENORA RAMIREZ
What's the problem, Father?

FATHER RIVERA

No problem. Gotta get rid of some
of these street dogs, is all.

The priest smiles, continues cleansing the street with wofts
of smoke from the incense holder.

Señora Ramirez watches the priest walk down the street.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - LIVING AREA - DAY

Andres sits on a sofa facing Nena.

Nena's lost in her own doing. Fiddling with something in her
hands.

Andres watches her strange, almost grotesque face. Gets a
good look at its emptiness, her white, useless eyes. Almost
makes a disapproving face.

Consuelo enters carrying some fresh water. Hands it towards
Andres.

Andres eagerly takes it. Like he hasn't had a drink in days.
Takes the entire glass down in one gulp.

Consuelo sits across from Andres next to Nena. Close enough
to touch her daughter. Let her know she's there.

CONSUELO

I found him this morning. He was in
pretty bad shape. He's recovering
now.

ANDRES

I'm not surprised. The city has
become unlivable. The surrounding
area is next. This area will be
affected soon.

Andres looks at Nena, her odd face.

ANDRES

The dead must be made to suffer.

Consuelo pulls Nena close, protecting.

CONSUELO

Your family was killed, recently,
were they not?

ANDRES

(cold)

Unfortunately, yes. Having to make the decision to take the heads of your own mother and father was a difficult one.

Consuelo's face shows us that for the first time she understands Andres. Fear in her eyes.

ANDRES

One I'm sure you could understand. I'm sure you realize the importance of keeping the city free from the dead.

CONSUELO

The dead do nothing. They are lost souls without a place. Harmless, mostly.

ANDRES

You have been sheltered out here. Protected from their ugliness. They are evil. It is my duty, everyone's duty, to rid the city of them. For the Church. For God. Or we will all suffer. That is why I am here, to help your husband finish his work of cleansing the city. Until the day were are finally free of this plague.

CONSUELO

If the dead are God's will then who are we to intervene?

Andres takes a moment to look at Nena.

Back to Consuelo.

ANDRES

You haven't been left alone because of these things. You still have your family. I would have similar, flawed thoughts if I were in your position. In fact, I used to think the dead were harmless creatures, also. Seeing one's parents like that changes one's perspective. The fact is, our opinions don't change reality though.

ANDRES(cont'd)

The reality that these things
exist. The reality that they must
be exterminated.

Andres smiles, holds his water glass out. An eerie over-the-top friendliness to him.

ANDRES

More water, please?

EXT. STREET TUNNEL - DAY

SQUEAK. SQUEAK. SQUEAK.

The outline of Tomas on his bike entering the tunnel from the far end.

Tomas gets completely inside the dark tunnel. As he does, the BUZZING of flies.

Tomas passes the mangled, chewed up CORPSE of some unknown creature. Can't tell if its human or animal. Whatever it was, it's been almost completely eaten.

As he passes, Tomas makes a sour face.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The gas station sits quiet and alone.

Rafael's cargo van sits abandoned. Just like Rafael left it.

Chuy's bike lays on its side near the front of the van.

Tomas pulls himself away from the driver's side door. Looking for any sign of life. Looks around at the empty gas station.

No one around.

INT. GAS STATION - DAY

Dust, turned over shelving, more dust. The place appears abandoned for years.

Tomas' outline peering into the front, intact glass.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Tomas picks up the bike, gets on it and rides. In the same direction his father took.

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DAY

The sun getting lost in the horizon.

Chuy's bike laid over on its side in the middle of the road. The back tire busted, flat.

Tomas walks. His backpack on his shoulders, his MACHETE by his side.

Expansive desert all around.

The distant SIREN begins from somewhere far off.

Up ahead, the structure. Tomas heads for it.

INT. STRUCTURE - NIGHT

Tomas lays on the concrete floor reading his magazine. His machete laying across his lap.

A single CANDLE provides light.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

The early morning sun.

Tomas passes the several decaying WOLVES' BODIES. Makes a face.

EXT. RANCH - DAY

The morning sun a little higher in the sky.

Tomas walks towards the large, entrance gates of the ranch. Takes the last of his water from his bottle.

The ranch's walls an oasis in the middle of nothing.

Close, Tomas gains strength. Picks up the pace. Quickly gets to the iron doors.

Without an obvious way into the place, Tomas scans the front for something. Nothing.

He BANGS on the iron doors.

TOMAS
Hey! Anyone there?

He BANGS the iron door again. Waits for a response. Nothing.

TOMAS
(to himself)
Where is everyone?

Then, Tomas remembers. Scans the cement and brick wall for something. Finds it.

A brick sticking out from the wall just enough to be recognized by someone looking.

Tomas goes to it. Wiggles it out with his fingertips. Finally, it comes loose.

Tomas pulls it out, reaches in and gets the KEY to the front. Replaces the brick.

At the large, iron doors, Tomas unlocks it. Pushes open a smaller portion of the door. A door within the larger door.

EXT. RANCH - YARD - DAY

Tomas stands at the open door. Scans the area.

No one around. Everything suspiciously quiet.

Quietly, Tomas enters. Closes the door behind him. He stands just inside surveying everything. His face showing his distrust.

On the opposite end, around the house's corner, the outline of Nena appears then quickly disappears.

Tomas notices. Not a hundred percent sure of who or what it was. Goes to check it out. Picks up a nice piece of wood as a weapon.

Horse stables to one side line an exterior wall. HORSES WINNY from inside. Unnerved about something.

Slowly but with purpose, Tomas approaches the corner of the house. Surveys the area behind him.

No one there.

Tomas continues.

Nena SCREAMS from behind the building.

With that, Tomas sprints to the corner's edge and around it to find...

Andres with his back to Tomas. Holding on to the arms of Nena.

Nena standing in front of Andres. Exactly what is going on can't be seen. Though Andres appears to be in an aggressive posture.

Nena struggling.

Before Andres can turn around, Tomas hits him across the back with the piece of wood. Drops him to his knees.

Nena just stands there. Looking innocent and lost. Scared.

Tomas readies another shot. Stands over the injured Andres.

Andres lays on his back, arms up defensively.

ANDRES

No, wait!

Before Tomas can get another shot off

RAFAEL(OS)

Tomas, enough!

Tomas turns to see his father leaning against a cane looking not a hundred percent recovered, coming from the ranch house.

RAFAEL

Put that thing down, now!

CONSUELO

Nena!

Consuelo rushes to Nena. Checks her over. Takes her hand.

Nena fights her mother a bit. Reluctant for some reason.

Tomas motions towards Nena and Consuelo.

Nena reflexively pulls away from Tomas' presence.

NENA
(to Consuelo)
He's come to take me, mother.

Consuelo takes her daughter. Holds her tight. Soothes her.
Looks up at Tomas as if Nena is referring to him.

Tomas turns back to Andres. Gives him a "you're lucky" look.
Andres glares back.

RAFAEL
Tomas! Put it down!

Tomas throws his weapon to the ground.

RAFAEL
Why aren't you at the church!?
(beat)
Answer me!

Tomas ignores the scolding. Walks towards his father.

TOMAS
You had no intention of returning,
did you?

RAFAEL
I did what was best for us. For the
church.

TOMAS
(laughs)
Your empty and useless church.

RAFAEL
If you only understood, Tomas.

TOMAS
Understood? Make me understand.
What'd you think I'd do? Wait there
forever for you to return? Become a
servant of your priest?

Rafael just looks on without answering.

TOMAS
(looking at Andres)
It doesn't matter. You've found
someone to replace me.

Tomas moves past Rafael and Consuelo.

Consuelo tries grabbing Tomas.

CONSUELO
Tomas, wait.

Without waiting for a response, Tomas is already inside the ranch house.

RAFAEL
Tomas.

Andres picks himself up, dusts himself off. Looks towards where Tomas went.

RAFAEL
Are you alright, Andres?

ANDRES
(smiles)
I'm fine. Pride's hurt is all.

Rafael follows Tomas inside.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - LIVING AREA - NIGHT

An expansive room with a lit fireplace on one end. The room filled with homages to Catholic Saints and Popes. Pictures, statues.

KEROSENE LAMPS provide most of the light for the place.

Tomas fiddles with a handheld, AM RADIO on the floor. Tries getting something. Nothing but static.

Rafael and Consuelo sit together on a sofa.

RAFAEL
In whose hands did you leave the Church?

TOMAS
Chuy.

Rafael struggles to get off his seat. Uses his old cane.

RAFAEL
Tomorrow you will take a horse and go back.
(to himself)
How could you be so stupid?

Andres enters just in time to hear the scolding.

Irritated, Tomas finally turns the radio off. Sets it aside.

Rafael is furious. He can barely contain himself. If he were well, he'd probably kick Tomas' butt all over the place.

CONSUELO

Rafael.

RAFAEL

Don't protect him.

TOMAS

When? Tell me when she's protected me. Mother hasn't had time to protect me.

CONSUELO

Enough, Tomas.

TOMAS

You've been selfish, Rafael. Why'd you leave me there?

(pause)

So you could replace me?

With that Tomas storms out. Gives Andres a look before leaving. Andres plays the game. Exchanges glances. Smiles a prickly smile.

RAFAEL

Toma...

Rafael's strength gives way. Almost falls.

CONSUELO

Rafael.

Andres rushes to aid him.

RAFAEL

(weak)

The church must be protected.

The sound of distant THUNDER.

Consuelo helps Rafael to his room. Leaves Nena alone with Andres.

Andres stares at Nena. The light giving his face an eerie glow.

ANDRES
Our time together is nearing,
little girl.

Nena rocks back and forth. Her unknowing face glows in the candle light.

INT. THE ARC - NIGHT

A close look at the lit, red candle.

The LIGHT. Then, the flicker of candle light coming from another source somewhere within the main cathedral. The plastic FLAPS overhead. The rain coming in through the hole. Busted again.

Near the ground with the lit candle, Chuy searches the church floor for something.

CHUY
(singing)
Where are you?

He looks under a pew. Then another until

CHUY
There you are.
(smiles)

Chuy reaches into a shadowy corner of the church and lifts up a wounded PIGEON from the ground.

Sets the candle on the ground. Holds the bird carefully in both hands. Chuy takes it and sits on the pew. Pets it.

Other birds flap wings overhead. Something annoying them.

CHUY
Good boy.

Chuy takes the bird to the front of the church, near the altar. The single candle barely giving enough light. Chuy sets the bird down on the altar.

CHUY
Good birdie.

The bird squirms under the weight of the man's large hand.

A THUNDERCLAP causes Chuy to stop and turn behind him.

Startled by something. Letting his grip go on the bird, the wounded bird struggles away. Its injured wing a useless thing. Its good wing flapping it upright. The bird jumps off the altar and onto the floor towards the rear of the church, the door. The open door.

Chuy follows it.

CHUY
How'd you get open?

The lightning from the outside lights up the inside of the church through the open door.

The bird gets under the last pew and sits.

Chuy goes for the open door. Peers outside looking to each side. The rain hitting his face. Sees nothing. Goes back inside.

Inside, Chuy closes the heavy door. Adjusts his eyesight to the darkness. Immediately, Chuy goes after the hidden bird again.

Lightening lights up the inside once again. THUNDER follows.

A FIGURE stands in the shadows within the church.

Though one can't tell what it is, you know it isn't good.

Chuy not noticing. Chuy reaches under the pew.

The bird just out of reach.

Reaching.

CHUY
Come here birdie.
(pause)

Chuy sniffs. Makes a face. Chuy pulls himself from beneath the pew. Sniffs again. Turns around to see

A LOST SOUL

The birds fly overhead creating a ruckus of their own.

CHUY(OS)
Hey.

The sudden HEAVING of Chuy as if being attacked. No screams.

The birds overhead FLAPPING wildly. Going crazy.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - TOMAS' ROOM

Tomas sits on the edge of his bed.

Consuelo enters.

Tomas sees her.

CONSUELO
Can I come in?

TOMAS
Yeah.

Consuelo sits next to Tomas on the bed.

CONSUELO
How have you been, son? Your father
treating you okay?

TOMAS
Fine.

CONSUELO
Listen, son, I know I haven't been
the mother I could have.

Tomas gets interested. Looks at Consuelo. Back at the ground.

CONSUELO
Just because I don't show it,
doesn't mean I don't love you. Look
at me, Tomas.

Tomas obeys. Tears in his eyes.

Consuelo takes Tomas in her arms. A tender mother/son
embrace.

Tomas allows himself to cry.

CONSUELO
I love you, son. I want you to
understand this. Don't ever think
for a moment that I don't. My baby
boy.

(beat)
Sometimes we get distracted by our
own selfishness and forget about
the things that matter.

We hold on this before we go to

INT. RANCH HOUSE - LIVING AREA - NIGHT

Rafael reads from his book. Consuelo enters.

RAFAEL

How is she.

Consuelo sits next to her husband.

CONSUELO

She's finally asleep. Tomas is upset.

RAFAEL

Let him be. He needs rest. It will be a long trip tomorrow.

CONSUELO

Rafael.

RAFAEL

The church must be protected. We must keep our word. Until the end. It is all that matters now.

Consuelo finds her courage to complain for once.

CONSUELO

How could that be more important than...

RAFAEL

You have your beautiful girl, don't you? Your sweet angel.

Consuelo doesn't answer. Cries in silence.

RAFAEL

This is the way it has to be. You know that. Love means sacrifice many times.

Rafael looks at the wall where he stares at a

HANGING CRUCIFIXION. A bleeding Jesus.

We hold and go to

INT. RANCH HOUSE - NENA'S ROOM - NIGHT

The sound the FOOTSTEPS. Hundreds of them rushing.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

The FOOTSTEPS continuing. The footsteps turning up dust.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - TOMAS' ROOM - NIGHT

Tomas tosses and turns in his bed. The recurring dream returning.

The sound of the FOOTSTEPS filling his head.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

A young boy holds the hand of YOUNG RAFAEL(30's). The boy, YOUNG TOMAS(3) looks up at his father. Eyes full of concern.

The hundred FOOTSTEPS surrounding them. Consuming them.

Directly in front of them, the old, locked church door, now open wide. Hundreds of LOST SOULS exiting from the unsecured door in the middle of the desert.

Rafael looks down at his young son. Shakes his head "no".

INT. RANCH HOUSE - NENA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Nena sleeps in the dark room. Sweat shows on her pale forehead. Her BREATH fast, uninhibited.

INT. THE ARC - NIGHT

The hundred FOOTSTEPS getting closer.

Faster. Urgent.

At the front, the red candle's flame flickers then blows out.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - TOMAS' ROOM - NIGHT

Tomas continuing to toss and turn to his nightmare.

The FOOTSTEPS continuing. Getting louder more persistent.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - NENA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Nena seems to be having a seizure, some kind of contractions. She shakes as if going through something terrible.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

YOUNG TOMAS

holding his hands covering his ears. Screams a silent scream. His screamed drowned out by the footsteps.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - TOMAS' ROOM - NIGHT

The FOOTSTEPS continue until Tomas sits up straight in bed stopping the sound. Catches his breath.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - NENA'S ROOM - NIGHT

The bedroom door pushes open.

Suddenly, the shaking stops, as the bedroom door opens.

Nena looks dead, unmoving.

Consuelo enters, hurried and gets near to her daughter's side.

CONSUELO
Somebody! Please!

Tomas enters. Hurried. Scared.

TOMAS
What is it?

CONSUELO
My baby! Nena!

Tomas looks on, confused, doesn't know what to do.

Consuelo tries talking to the girl, some incomprehensible murmur, when

NENA

raises her head and scoots back against the wall out of the arms of her mother, away from Tomas.

His presence frightening her.

NENA
He's here, mother.

Consuelo gets close to her. Looks back at Tomas standing silent.

CONSUELO
Sh, sh, sh.

Nena shakes. Something internal.

NENA
Don't let them get me, mother.

ANDRES(OS)
Something's happening. They are
growing, impatient. The wall won't
protect us.

Consuelo and Tomas looks back at the unexpected presence. Andres stands in the doorway.

INT. THE ARC - NIGHT

Chuy's lies on the church floor face first. Dead.

Silence.

Blood pools around Chuy's corpse. Slowly grows, expanding outward in a circle.

A close look at Chuy's hand laying unmoving on the church floor.

THUNDER in the sky outside, overhead.

Then, the hand contracts suddenly, a tetanic contraction, involuntary.

EXT. RANCH - YARD - DAY

Nena, recovered now, sits under the tangerine tree.

In the yard, under a nice shade, Rafael sits with his bible resting in his hands. Consuelo approaches and sits next to him.

The sun sits on the horizon, and in the distance, Tomas prepares a STALLION for the journey back.

CONSUELO
I'm worried, Rafael.
(pause)
They're going to be coming for her.
I know it.

Rafael doesn't respond. His expressions show that she is right.

CONSUELO
You have to protect her, Rafael.

RAFAEL
We can't protect her from God's
will, Consuelo.

CONSUELO
God is the reason for what has
happened, Rafa.

This comment draws a stare from Rafael. Chastising Consuelo with his eyes.

RAFAEL
God allows us to make our own
choices. For good or for bad. His
Will is an eventuality. An outcome
regardless of our choices,
Consuelo. You know that. There is
nothing we can do to change it.

CONSUELO
So why protect the church? Your
precious church. The only thing in
this world you care about.

RAFAEL
You will never understand,
Consuelo. I am not protecting the
church for our sake.

CONSUELO
Then who are you protecting? What
is more important than your own
family?

RAFAEL
You are one to talk. Since this has
happened, you've forgotten you have
a son and husband who need you.

CONSUELO
That's not fair, Rafa.

Interrupting...

NENA

Mother.

Nena stands, smile gone, raises and faces towards the entrance. She senses somebody is coming.

The German Shepherd also raises its ears a moment after Nena.

CONSUELO

What is it, angel?

NENA

The priest.

Rafael looks towards the same direction Nena is looking. The front gate. Stands.

EXT. RANCH - DAY

Father Rivera, wearing his long, black cassock, black hat and glasses approaches to the ranch. A missionary on his duty. Too far away to see him clearly.

EXT. RANCH - NIGHT

FATHER RIVERA (V.O.)

You have work, Rafael.

A loud, scared WHINNEY from one of the horses. Three figures in the dark, each one riding a horse, leave the ranch, hurriedly.

RAFAEL (V.O.)

I'm too weak to go. I'll never make it.

Fast, consistent HUSTLE in the dark, through the desert. The TROT of horses. The beasts BREATHING.

FATHER RIVERA (V.O.)

Then I will go. It must be done.
The church's integrity is at stake.
You must address the problem while
I'm gone. It is time.

The three men riding in the night. The horses COMPLAINING.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The HUSTLE decreases as the horses and its riders get lost in the distance. The highway remains empty. Heavy clouds in the sky announce a storm. Obscure the full moon's light.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - LIVING AREA - NIGHT

Rafael stands near the fireplace. Watches Nena sleeping on the nearby couch. Contemplating something.

Consuelo enters. Lights the remaining kerosene lamps.

RAFAEL

How's Nena?

Consuelo continues her task. Her demeanor shows she's not happy with Rafael.

CONSUELO

Bothered by something. As usual.

RAFAEL

You're gonna have to deal with it eventually, Consuelo. You know that, don't you?

CONSUELO

I deal with it every day, Rafael. You don't know the guilt I've had.

(cries)

She's my baby. She's harmless.

Looks at the sleeping Nena. Calm, peaceful. Rafael eases up. Goes to console Consuelo.

RAFAEL

He has forgiven you. We have to trust

Consuelo avoids him. Finds her mental strength.

RAFAEL

(continuing)

in him.

CONSUELO

Does Andres know?

RAFAEL

Of course not. Why?

CONSUELO

He acts strange around her. Like he knows something.

RAFAEL

Andres is physically strong, but his mind is weak. That is why the priest chose him to help. He's loyal to the church.

(pause)

A good replacement to finish the task.

CONSUELO

Sometimes I wish God would just put a quick end to all of this.

Consuelo goes, sits by Nena. Touches her forehead.

SERIES OF SHOTS

The horses and their riders pass the cement structure.

RAFAEL (V.O.)

He will.

The horses passing the abandoned gas station. Rafael's van sitting dead.

Same horses entering the long, barely lit, street tunnel.

INT. THE ARC - NIGHT

RAFAEL (V.O.)

Put an end to it. Eventually.

The heavy door pushes open revealing

The RAIN coming down hard.

The rain hits the roof, the plastic overhead.

A distant, sad, CRY coming from somewhere within the church.
A little boy's CRY.

A terrible sight inside.

A DEAD PIGEON

on the floor lays hurt, dying, bleeding. Still moving.

Close to it, another.

Another. Dozens.

HUNDREDS OF PIGEONS

Dead or dying. A gruesome image.

Andres, his outline against the outside light and rain, watches the scene, frozen. Takes a deep breath.

ANDRES
Father Rivera.

Rivera stands behind him, with horror on his face.

Andres turns back to see him, when loud FOOTSTEPS sound from above from the direction of the church tower.

Andres maintains his courage, follows the sound into

HALLWAY

Where moonlight's the only light in the place. RAIN the only sound.

EXT. THE ARC - NIGHT

Tomas stands across the street. Holds the horses reins.

Watches Father Rivera stand in the Arc's doorway. Rivera turns to Tomas.

FATHER RIVERA
(to Tomas)
Stay with horses.

The priest disappears into the shadows of the arc.

INT. THE ARC - HALLWAY - NIGHT

HEAVY BREATHING behind coming from somewhere. Like a beast's breathing. Inconsistent. Frantic.

Andres listens carefully, and approaches, slowly, following the length of hallway towards

THE BREATHING

getting closer. Coming from behind a DOOR at the end.

Andres approaches the door slowly, quietly. His hand goes to open it. His face showing his anticipation. Readies his weapon.

The door slowly opening when

It bursts open suddenly with a BANG!

A heavy, inhuman hand, sharp, dirty nails, hits Andres' face. Cuts him instantly. Forces him backwards.

Andres SCREAMS.

Confused, vision blurred from the hit, Andres struggles to regain his composure.

A huge heavy mass, Chuy, lunges towards him from the other side of the door, GROWLING like an animal.

Chuy, or what was once Chuy, straddles Andres. Ready to kill.

EXT. THE ARC - NIGHT

The horses sit patiently in the rain.

Tomas paces beneath an overhang, out of the rain. Studies the front of the church trying to find any sign of something happening.

INT. THE ARC - NIGHT

FATHER RIVERA (O.S.)

Chuy! No!

Standing within the frame of the door, Father Rivera stands, weapon in hand by his side. Looks menacing.

Chuy turns his attention to the priest standing in the doorway. Leaves Andres lying, bloodied, knocked unconscious on the floor.

CHUY

Father?

Chuy walks towards the priest. As he does, we notice a third of his neck has been cut into, though not completely severed. The wound given to him by Andres.

Father Rivera approaches. His hand firm on the MACHETE hanging by his side. He slowly approaches Chuy.

CHUY
Father, what's going on?

FATHER RIVERA
You've been a good boy, Chuy. Come here.

CHUY
I didn't mean to do anything, Father.

FATHER RIVERA
I know, son. Sometimes we have to do things. We have no choice.

As the two get within a few meters, Father River suddenly lunges at Chuy with the machete. His swing missing his head and hitting his shoulder.

Chuy's child-like demeanor suddenly turns to rage. He rushes Father Rivera and takes him down. Attacks him wildly.

EXT. THE ARC - CEMETARY - NIGHT

Rain. THUNDER.

The usual graves, now looking worse. Damaged, broken even more than before.

Freshly dug holes on the soil everywhere.

Tomas running, here, there, looking for something. Stops, bends over.

A hole full of dead, mutilated BLACK COCOONS. Half eaten. Grabs one. The black insides smearing his hand.

He runs, jumps, avoiding graves stones and holes.

Out of breath, Tomas reaches

INT. THE ARC - NIGHT

The dead pigeons everywhere. Taking up every space on the floor, it seems.

Chuy sits in the middle of the church floor. Holds what appears to be a body. Father Rivera's body.

CRYING aloud.

Chuy stares at the door, frozen. Rocks back and forth, like a child that has detached himself.

Tomas stops a short distance from him, frozen at the sight.

TOMAS

Chuy?

CHUY

(crying)

Tomas?

A sudden, sharp machete hits Chuy from one side.

Chuy falls on the floor, bleeding from the side of his neck. The machete only cutting it the rest of the way.

Andres, his face bloodied from earlier, goes over the human mass and stands.

Tomas stares frozen. Then, with a burst, Tomas lunges towards Andres.

TOMAS

No!

Reflexively, Andres lifts the handle of the machete. Catches Tomas square in the face with it. BANG!

BLACKNESS.

INT. THE ARC - DAY

The sun finding its way onto the wooden church floor.

Tomas lays unconscious on the floor. Where Andres left him. Blood seeps from an open wound in his forehead.

Chuy's body and head lay nearby. Next to Father Rivera's body and head. Both decapitated.

A surviving PIGEON COOS near Tomas' head. Pecks around at something on Tomas' arm.

Tomas awakens suddenly with a GROAN. Immediately grabs his wounded head. Throbbing.

The surviving pigeon gets lost.

TOMAS

Chuy?

Tomas slowly lifts himself off the ground. Looks around at the carnage. The dead birds. Chuy's decapitated body.

TOMAS

Chuy.

Tomas makes a face at seeing his friend killed. Notices the dead priest. He, too, decapitated.

EXT. THE ARC - DAY

Tomas exits. Looks down the street for the horses.

Two horses lay dead. Tomas' way out of there, gone with them.

EXT. RANCH - DAY

Consuelo tends to the property. Carries a bucket of something.

The German Shepherd BARKS. Someone coming at the front entrance.

Consuelo goes to the door. Checks to see who it is. Hurriedly opens it.

Andres enters without waiting for Consuelo to invite him. Pulls the poor dehydrated, near-dead horse behind him.

Consuelo asks him something.

Andres answers.

Hearing the news, Consuelo drops her bucket.

Liquid splashes all over the place.

She falls to the ground inconsolable. Andres leaves her and continues inside.

At the window from the ranch, Rafael watches. Knows already.

EXT. DOWNTOWN PROPER - DAY

Tomas walks the desolate, empty street.

EXT. RAMIREZ HOME - DAY

Tomas knocks at the door. Looks around to make sure no one is around.

A dead response.

He knocks louder. The door pushes open. Someone been here already.

TOMAS
Anyone there?

Tomas pushes the door open. A smell pushes him back a bit. He cringes.

TOMAS
Hello? Señora Ramirez? It's Tomas.

FLIES buzzing somewhere inside. Must be thousands of them. Loud.

Tomas keeps going. Hides his nose with his shirt.

INT. RAMIREZ HOME - HALLWAY - DAY

A dark, concrete hallway with some light at the end. Sunlight coming in from somewhere.

Tomas is all the way inside now. Looks behind him before going further inside.

The BUZZING gets louder with each step he takes towards the end.

Tomas slowly and cautiously makes his way. Looks back towards the front door every now and then.

Slowly.

Slowly.

INT. RAMIREZ HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

The source of the BUZZING. FLIES take up most every space within the room.

Miss Ramirez's decomposing CORPSE lies on the floor.

It's head taken off. Laying somewhere separate.

Tomas enters. Immediately notices.

TOMAS
Jesus.

GAGS. Holds his vomit. Turns from the sight of the rotting flesh.

Regaining his composure, Tomas steps just inside. Steps over the several bodies, towards the back.

Tomas goes to the back wash room. The source of the sunlight.

INT. RAMIREZ HOME - WASHROOM - DAY

Several potted plants dead or dying. Their caretaker no longer able to care for them.

Tomas enters quickly. Goes straight for a cupboard. Opens it. Removes the large, plastic gas container. Shakes it.

TOMAS

Darn.

Empty.

Tomas quickly scans the area for other containers. Nothing.

Tomas quickly leaves.

INT. RAMIREZ HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Tomas leaves, careful not to step on anything not living.

EXT. AGUILERA HOME - DAY

Again, Tomas knocking. Looks up and down the empty street for any sign of anyone. No one.

Tries the handle. Locked.

EXT. AGUILERA HOME - BACKDOOR - DAY

Tomas enters through a busted in back door. Someone or something already been here, too.

INT. AGUILERA HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Everyday things. A table, dishes here and there. The dinner table set with rotting food.

Tomas enters. Quietly goes to the adjacent room.

INT. AGUILERA HOME - ROOM - DAY

Again, that familiar BUZZING of flies coming from within the room. The signal that something dead is inside.

Tomas enters.

Again, the smell catches him. Covers his mouth.

TWO CORPSES, Mr. and Mrs. Aguilera, lay in the floor. Both beheaded.

Tomas quickly steps over the corpses and goes into the next room.

INT. AGUILERA HOME - STORAGE ROOM - DAY

An old, musty storage room.

Tomas enters and goes straight for cabinets. Opens them. Goes through several items looking. Not what he's looking for.

Another cabinet door. Opens it. Finds another fuel container. Takes it out, shakes it. It too is empty.

TOMAS

No.

Tomas takes a moment to think about his options.

Something STIRS from behind old metal. Something moving. Alive.

Tomas realizes. Freezes.

The STIRRING again.

Tomas slowly stands. Trying to get a glimpse of what it is. An animal?

Another STIR. Whatever it is, it isn't big. Hiding behind the metal and tools.

Realizing this, Tomas moves slowly towards it.

Closer.

Closer until

A YOUNG CHILD'S FACE covered, hidden.

Tomas realizes, moves the metal sheet back a bit.

The child, Eden Aguilera, hides behind the metal.

The frightened girl moves further away from Tomas. Makes some unintelligible SOUND.

TOMAS

It's okay, I won't hurt you.

The girl doesn't believe him. Scoots further away, until the wall prevents her escape.

Tomas reaches her. Grabs her shaking arm and picks her up.

The girl fights him for a moment. Gives in.

TOMAS

It's okay, I'm not going to hurt you. It's me, Tomas.

Tomas holds her close to him.

Eden, finally realizing Tomas isn't going to hurt her, grabs onto him tightly. Finally safe.

Tomas leaves the room with the girl in his arms.

INT. AGUILERA HOME - ROOM - DAY

Tomas enters carrying the little girl in his arms. Pulls her head tight against his shoulder so she can't see what he's stepping over.

Hurries out of there.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Tomas sits on the curb with Eden sitting beside him.

She gobbles down a stale piece of bread.

TOMAS

Easy. Here.

Tomas gives her a bottle with water.

She takes it eagerly. Spills it down the sides of her face drinking it.

TOMAS
What happened?

The girl stops suddenly. Looks at Tomas.

EDEN
(matter-of-fact)
The man. It was the black man.

INT. AGUILERA HOME - DAY

A black and white scene.

Mr. Aguilera and his wife sit at the table preparing themselves to eat.

MRS AGUILERA
(to next room)
Honey come and eat.

ANDRES (O.S.)
Thanks but I'm in a hurry.

Startled, Mr. and Mrs. Aguilera look up at the unexpected visitor, Andres, standing in the doorway.

Andres raises the machete and we go to

BATHROOM

Where Eden listens to the BUTCHERING coming from the next room. She quickly exits and goes into

STORAGE ROOM

Where she hides behind a metal sheet.

We hold on her scared face and go back to

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Eden goes back to her meal. Takes another drink of water. Too hungry and thirsty for conversation.

Tomas looks like he's seen a ghost. His face goes white.

Tomas stands. Grabs the girl by the shirt sleeve.

TOMAS

We have to go. Now.

Tomas pulls the girl in a direction.

EDEX

Hey.

The girl follows.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - LIVING AREA - DAY

Rafael paces in front of the unlit fireplace.

Consuelo sits, her head hanging in despair. Listens. Her eyes red from crying.

RAFAEL

We must take Nena back to the church. We have to end it or we all will end up like the others.

CONSUELO

I won't do it. She's all I have. All that's left.

RAFAEL

We have no choice.

CONSUELO

There must be another way.

RAFAEL

Don't be selfish, Consuelo.

(to himself)

We should've ended this when we had the chance.

Rafael looks out the window towards nothing. Lost in his thought.

Consuelo gets up quietly and goes into the next room.

CONSUELO

I need to lay down.

Rafael looks over just in time to see Consuelo go around the corner.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Tomas walks like he's in a hurry.

Eden following as fast as her tired, little legs will carry her.

EDEN

Where are we going?

TOMAS

We need to find gas. Fuel.

EDEN

I know where some is.

Tomas stops dead in his tracks, in the middle of the empty road. Turns to face Eden. Grabs her shoulders with both hands.

TOMAS

Tell me, where?

EDEN

Back at my house. In the kitchen.

Tomas can't believe what he's hearing. Though his face showing the fact that he has to go back and see the rotting corpses again.

Finally, takes the girl by the hand. Leads her back in the direction from where they came.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - NENA'S ROOM - DAY

The room without any light. The sunlight casting shadows in the room's corners.

Consuelo hurriedly dresses Nena. Looks back at the closed door every now and then.

Shirt. Socks. Almost there.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Rafael enters. Looks down the hallway for Consuelo. Goes to the end to a closed door. Stands by it. Puts his ear close trying to hear anything.

Finally, Rafael KNOCKS lightly.

RAFAEL
Consuelo?

With his ear tuned in, Rafael listens. Waits.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - NENA'S ROOM - DAY

Consuelo still dressing Nena. Getting her shoes on. Stops suddenly. Looks towards the closed door. Hurries her task even more.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Rafael still standing, waiting. KNOCKS again.

RAFAEL
Consuelo, I'm sorry about what has
happened. He was my son, too.

Rafael listens again. Nothing from the other side.

Rafael tries the lock. Won't budge. Locked from the other side.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - NENA'S ROOM - DAY

Consuelo stands at the closed window. Tries getting it open. Pulls with all her strength. Not moving.

Nena sits on the edge of the bed. The music box in her hands. She turns the handle once. Lets it go.

Consuelo's urgency apparent now. She tries again to get the window open. Pulling with everything she's got.

A close look at the window shows that it has been nailed shut. A protective measure now preventing an escape.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Again Rafael tries the lock.

RAFAEL
Consuelo!
(beat)
I'll kick it in!

Suddenly, Rafael's easy demeanor changes. More hostile now.

Rafael gives the door a

BANG!

With his fist. Unable to do much more.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - NENA'S ROOM - DAY

Consuelo stops what she's doing for a moment. Stares at the door. Expecting it to come crashing in.

ANDRES (O.S.)
You'd better hurry. He'll be in
here next.

Startled by the unexpected voice, Consuelo looks towards the corner covered by the shadows.

Andres sits, once undetected, in Nena's chair.

Consuelo stands dead still. Watches Andres. Looks over at her daughter playing with her toy on the bed.

INT. AGUILERA HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Tomas enters from the hallway. Covers his nose and mouth with his shirt. Hesitates before stepping over the decaying corpses again.

From the open front door, Eden's outline stands guard.

EDEN
It's in the laundry room.

Tomas looks back at the little girl's profile. Stops.

TOMAS
Wait there.

Tomas carefully makes his way towards the back, through the back door.

Within the laundry room, Tomas scans the area quickly. Notices a red, fuel container partially hidden by a table's throw cloth.

He quickly goes to it, grabs it and takes it out. Sloshes some of the precious liquid on himself.

EXT. AGUILERA HOME - DAY

Eden waits near the front entrance looking inside for Tomas.

Tomas finally exits carrying the fuel container. Hurriedly grabs the little girl's hand. Pulls her away from the house.

EDEN

Did you see my mommy?

Tomas looks down at the concerned girl.

TOMAS

No.

They get going down the street.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Somehow, Rafael finally gets the locked door open to

INT. RANCH HOUSE - CONSUELO'S ROOM - DAY

Empty. Neither Consuelo nor Nena there. Rafael goes to the connecting bathroom to make sure.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - NENA'S ROOM - DAY

Consuelo continues to stand frozen near the window. Nena sits on the bed.

Andres gets up slowly. Comes from the shadows.

ANDRES

A little girl without a pulse
should have been the first clue.

Consuelo moves to a defensive position. Watches the distance between Nena and Andres.

ANDRES

That
(at Nena)
thing is the reason for all of our
suffering.

CONSUELO

Suffering comes from within each of
us.

ANDRES
Don't give me that crap.

Nena continues to play. Looks up, her attention now on Andres' tense voice.

NENA
Mother?

CONSUELO
It's okay, Nena.

From his side, Andres holds a curved scythe. The kind used to cut down corn.

Consuelo notices.

ANDRES
Her sacrifice will put an end to this.

CONSUELO
No.

A KNOCK at the door. Both Consuelo and Andres look towards it.

RAFAEL(OS)
Consuelo? Please.

ANDRES
He's not going to save you.

Nena goes over to answer the door.

CONSUELO
Nena, no.

Nena continues. Opens the door.

Rafael stands on the other side.

Immediately sees Andres and Consuelo in the face off.

RAFAEL
Andres. Let me handle this.

ANDRES
Like you've handled everything else?

Andres steps forward.

RAFAEL

Killing her won't bring your
parents back. Won't bring anybody
back.

Consuelo moves toward the door.

ANDRES

It will put an end to everything.
Let's finish this for good.

Consuelo estimating her odds mentally. Stands firm.

Suddenly she makes a move toward Nena. With one good swipe,
Andres takes her head clean off with the scythe. SWACK!

RAFAEL

No!

In a flash, Rafael grabs Consuelo and at the same time rushes
towards Andres.

Reflexively, Andres turns the end of the pointed instrument
on Rafael. Digs it into his belly nice and deep.

ANDRES

The priest should've finished this
a long time ago. My parents
wouldn't have suffered the fate
that they did. You're partially
responsible. Now you'll suffer the
same way they did. Like your son. I
will let you roam the city dead
before killing you for good. Allow
you to taste the suffering.

Andres removes the scythe from Rafael's belly.

Rafael grabs his bleeding wound. Looks at Andres astonished.
Eyes wide.

NENA

Mother?

Nena crawls towards her mother's body. Feels it's warm torso.
Not realizing the head is missing.

Andres grabs the girl by the arm and forces her out of the
room.

Nena SCREAMS.

EXT. STREET TUNNEL - DAY

METAL WHEELS grinding across the asphalt within the tunnel. Getting closer.

A good look shows Tomas pushing an old rusted grocery cart with Eden and the fuel container loaded inside.

Tomas sweats from the miles he's travelled already.

THUNDER outside indicating the storm coming.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Just on the other side of the tunnel, Tomas continues to push the cart.

The clouds overhead hiding most of the daylight.

Then, the SIREN begins in the distance behind them. Tomas ignores it, keeps to task. Looks up at the falling sun.

EXT. HIGHWAY - GAS STATION - DAY

The sun leaving the world. The last of its rays getting lost. The clouds now covering the sky for miles.

At the abandoned station, Tomas goes through the van. Furious.

TOMAS(OS)
Shit. Shit.

Within the van, Tomas looks under the seat, between them. The ignition key nowhere to be found.

Nearby, the little girl plays in the dirt. Watches Tomas rant and rave.

The grocery cart sits nearby.

The now empty fuel can near the van's fuel tank. The van's fuel cover open.

Tomas pulls back from the van's door.

Looks at the little girl playing. Unaware of their predicament. Thinks about what to do next.

Without another option, Tomas goes to the girl, lifts her up and sets her in the grocery cart.

Now, their only mode of transportation.

They get on the highway asphalt and get going. The metal wheels grinding.

EDEN

Why don't we take the van?

Tomas looks at her caring, concerned face. Rubs her head.

TOMAS

We need a key to start it.

EDEN

You mean one like this?

With that, Eden holds up the key to the van. Found on the ground.

Tomas' eyes immediately light up. Kisses the little girl on the forehead.

TOMAS

Yes, one exactly like that.

Tomas eagerly turns the cart around and gets it going back towards the van at a sprint.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The sun almost completely gone. The SIREN continuing.

The cargo van pulls out of the dusty gas station. Throws dirt as it leaves.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

The noise of the siren gone.

The sun sets as the van passes on the road in front of the cement structure - same one Rafa and Tomas slept in.

Andres watches from atop a horse hidden behind the structure. One of the horses from the ranch.

Nena lays across the front. Her hands and feet taped nice and tight. Her mouth covered, preventing any noise.

ANDRES

There. You see. Tomas is coming for
you.

(rubs her hair)

Andres gets the horse going towards the city. Towards the
darkness.

EXT. DESERT - RANCH - NIGHT

The headlights of an approaching vehicle. Coming fast.

The cargo van comes to an abrupt stop a few yards from the
open gate of the ranch.

INT. CARGO VAN - NIGHT

Tomas drives. Eden riding shotgun. Her seat belt nice and
snug.

Through the windshield, the headlights of the cargo van
cutting a beam of light through the desert's darkness. From
the windshield, Tomas notices the unsecured front gate to the
ranch. A sign that something is definitely wrong.

Tomas sits. Watches. Waits.

To the side near the outside of the wall, a couple of HORSES
from the ranch linger. Let out of their stalls.

Tomas turns the van off leaving the headlights on. Casting
eerie shadows within the walls of the compound.

Not a light on in any of the ranch house windows.

EXT. RANCH - YARD - NIGHT

Tomas runs inside the house ranch, breathless. Carries his
machete with him.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - LIVING AREA - NIGHT

No sign of life, as Tomas passes by, fast. Only a deadly
feeling of abandonment.

TOMAS

Mother!? Rafael!

Obvious something's not right.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - NENA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Then he sees her. Consuelo's dead body. Its head removed, laying near it.

TOMAS
Oh, God! No!

Tomas GASPS. Covers his mouth. Holds his vomit.

Hysterical. Tomas drops to his knees inconsolable. SOBS.

TOMAS
Why!?

His body language shows that he has all but given up.

Tomas turns his sight from his mother's body.

A fresh blood trail from Nena's door to the next room.

Tomas notices. Gathers himself and follows it into the next room.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - LIVING AREA - NIGHT

No sign of life. Tomas enters, frantic.

TOMAS
Nena!?

The room remains still.

Tomas leaves.

A human figure lying on the floor. GROANS.

TOMAS(OS)
Nena!? Rafa!?

Something CRASHES within the room.

Tomas returns. Searches.

TOMAS
Nena?

Rafael lays on the floor, dying. Broken glass next to him. An open wound In his belly. His blood leaving his body.

Tomas rushes to aid his father.

RAFAEL
Please, for God's sake, kill me.

TOMAS
Oh God, Rafa. Where's Nena?

RAFAEL
Andres.

Tomas SCREAMS, enraged by what he hears.

RAFAEL
There is nothing you can do.

TOMAS
Tell me where she is.

RAFAEL
This is the way it has to be. You
can do no more. This is how it
ends.
(coughs)

Tomas stares at the desperate Rafael.

TOMAS
Andres killed the families. They
weren't affected. Why?

RAFAEL
Everyone is affected.
(coughs)
Even you. It ends with Nena.

TOMAS
No. I don't believe you.

RAFAEL
Tomas, please, don't let me become
one of them. Sever my head.

TOMAS
Like mother!? Poor mother.
(angry)
Tell me where he went.

RAFAEL
You can't stop it.

TOMAS
Tell me! Or you'll spend eternity
walking this dead place.

RAFAEL
(dying)
The church.
(coughs)
Please.

Rafael dies. His dead corpse lays there, unmoved.

Tomas looks over Rafael's dead body.

TOMAS
You were selfish, Rafa. How can I
forgive that?

Leaves the room.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - CONSUELO'S ROOM - NIGHT

Tomas enters. Looking for something. Everywhere. Frantic.

He takes the nearest kerosene lamp. Dumps its contents over the bed, every piece of furniture.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - LIVING AREA - NIGHT

Tomas does the same. Takes each of the kerosene lamps. Dumps the fuel all over the place. Leaves the room.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - NENA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Consuelo lays on the floor.

Tomas watches, tearful from the doorway. Finally, he strikes a match and throws it on his mother's corpse. It instantly goes up in flames.

EXT. RANCH - NIGHT

A distant shot of the ranch. Engulfed in wild flames. Tomas watches the blaze from a good distance.

The young girl stands by his side. Scared. Holds onto Tomas' side.

Tomas stands, watching everything in the world left for him go up in flames.

The tears in his eyes the only sign of emotion from him.

In front of him, flames and destruction. The tangerine tree burns as well. The corn field. Everything.

The fire out there is the fire inside, hurting, killing him inside until

A blurry FIGURE comes from the flames, slow. Approaches Tomas.

Rafael.

It can't be. Impossible.

Tomas stares. Not sure if what he sees is real.

The figure gets closer.

Tomas backs up.

TOMAS

Rafa?

The figure has a recognizable face. Rafael, limping, walks towards him. His face different somehow. Its life gone.

Rafael now one of the walking dead.

Tomas stands unmoved.

RAFAEL

Son. I'm sorry.

Tomas walks back. Scared at the sight of his father.

The flames behind them outline each figure.

Ashes fly in the wind, as it passes.

TOMAS

Stay away!

Tomas holds his machete ready to strike.

RAFAEL

You can't kill me, son. I'm already dead.

DARK VOID

YOUNG TOMAS (V.O.)

What's it like, daddy? To be dead?

YOUNG RAFAEL(V.O.)
I don't know, son.

EXT. THE ARC - DAY

BELLS calling people to attend mass.

A full shot of the church shows the church as it used to be: complete, surrounded by life. Flowers at the entrance.

A pilgrimage, a large group of FOLLOWERS, SINGS a sad chant as it heads towards the church.

A little boy approaches a man among the people within the group of people. YOUNG TOMAS. Looks up at the man leading the procession, YOUNG RAFAEL.

YOUNG TOMAS
What's it like, daddy? To be dead?

The younger Rafael keeps walking, not answering.

On his shoulder, The corner of a COFFIN. The other corners carried by three other HELPERS.

Someone's funeral.

YOUNG TOMAS
Does it hurt, daddy? Being dead?

Rafael doesn't answer.

Behind them, the crowd continues singing, chanting.

Clouds accumulate in the sky, as the people enter the church.

INT. THE ARC - DAY

The inside a beautifully simple, Catholic church. Everything together, clean and in order. Well taken care of.

The four men, including Rafael, put the coffin at the front of the church, and open one end for viewing.

WOMEN MOURNERS, with their heads covered, sit in front.

Then, the TOWNSMEN follow. Take seats in the church.

Young Tomas approaches the coffin.

Inside, wearing a white, funeral dress and flowered tiara is NENA(16). The same age. Not any younger nor older.

Tomas stands on tiptoe to get a better view.

Nena, inside the coffin sits dead. Her face an unmoving thing.

Next to her, Consuelo, devastated, grieves. CRIES.

Rafael tries to comfort her, but she pushes him back.

Little Tomas, too, tries to hold her hand, but she ignores, doesn't even seem to notice his presence.

At the front of the church, Father Rivera stands in front of the people, ready to say something.

People mark a cross sign on their foreheads. All except for Tomas.

Tomas cries looking to his mother for comfort.

Consuelo ignores him.

Tomas cries even louder.

The PARISHONERS whisper to one another.

A close look at another young boy, YOUNG ANDRES(3) sitting with his MOTHER and FATHER watching.

Finally, Rafael takes little Tomas by the hand. Leads him towards the back. Says something in a whisper to him.

RAFAEL

You're sister is sleeping, Tomas.

TOMAS

What about mommy?

Tomas goes with his father reluctantly. Looks back one last time at Consuelo.

RAFAEL

Mommy's still here.

TOMAS

Does she still love us?

RAFAEL

I hope so.

A long look at the outline of Nena's face until

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Rafael stands in front of Tomas. The van's headlights light up the area, including Tomas and Rafael.

RAFAEL

The dead have been left to wander
this place. Lost. Punishment for
what happened.

The cargo van sits quiet.

Tomas stands in front of the headlights looking towards the rear of the van.

Eden stands next to him. Shivers from the desert cold.

TOMAS

What do we do?

Rafael hides his gruesomeness from Tomas and Eden.

RAFAEL

We must hurry. To the church. It is
where it began, it is where it must
also end.

Rafael gets in the passenger side of the van.

Tomas takes Eden by the hand, puts her in the back of the cargo van.

Tomas gets in.

The van's engine comes to life. The van turns around and gets going in the direction of the city.

INT. CARGO VAN - NIGHT

Tomas drives as Eden sits in the cargo area. She plays with something.

Rafael hides his face from Tomas. Looks out the window.

Tomas looks over at his father. Stares, in fact, trying to get a better look.

Outside the passenger window, the cement structure whizzes by, indicating their location as at least half way to the city.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

An empty darkness. Lightning lights up the horizon ahead. The van's headlights light up the road ahead. Its engine now quiet, dead.

Rafael leads, walking towards the lightning.

Tomas following carrying the little girl. Eden sits atop Tomas' shoulders. Watches Rafael curiously. Inspecting, analyzing him.

EDEN

What's wrong with his face? Is he sick?

TOMAS

Yeah, he's sick.

RAFAEL

(to himself)

Have to end it. Make it stop. Have to find her. This was never about you, Tomas.

Rafael continues on. His obsession apparent with his repeated, monotonous phrases to himself. An inhuman tone.

EDEN

(low)

He looks just like the monsters.

Tomas looks up at Eden, quiet. Then looks at his father. His ghoulish profile. Eden is right. He is a monster now.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The rain coming down pretty good. Obscuring the dim light to the tunnel entrance up ahead a few meters.

The outline of a figure trudges through the rain towards the lit tunnel.

The figure, Andres, has the lump of a body thrown over his shoulder. Nena. Her weight a pretty good burden for the young Andres.

As Andres gets near the dry sanctuary of the tunnel, GNASHING and the TEARING of flesh coming from inside.

As Andres get just inside of the tunnel entrance, he stops suddenly. Freezes.

Within the tunnel, the yellow light shows several LOST SOULS ripping into something. Something that was once living.

Suddenly, LOST SOUL #1, a thin, ghoulish man stops his task. Looks directly up at Andres. The man's mouth and face covered in blood.

LOST SOUL #2 and #3 do the same. Stop their meals and turn to see their next.

Each sniffs the air.

Lost Soul #1 takes off towards Andres and Nena. The other two follow.

Without hesitation, Andres turns and darts for the hill at the entrance, going up and around to the top.

Andres drops Nena on the ground, leaving her at the mercy of the fast approaching Lost Souls.

Andres scrambles up the wet hill slipping here and there.

The Lost Souls almost at the entrance just as Andres gets to the top of the hill. Hides within a crevice. Gets his scythe ready to fight. His breath louder than the rain falling.

The Lost Souls stop at the bound and gagged Nena lying in the road. Sniff around her.

After a few moments they leave her. Not what they're looking for since she's already dead. Stand at the entrance looking around, searching for Andres.

The Lost Souls sniff the air. Find something with their noses. Take off down the dark road.

EXT. STREET TUNNEL - OVERHEAD - NIGHT

The rain still. Andres slowly makes his way from his safe spot. Goes to look over the edge of the tunnel's overhang. Looks down at the road below.

Several hundred meters down the road, the Lost Souls tear at the wounded horse left by Andres, Nena left by herself directly below him.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

With the Lost Souls preoccupied, Andres makes his way slowly down the embankment. Gets to Nena without the monsters noticing him.

With the RAIN covering his noise, Andres pulls Nena up the embankment.

Just as Andres gets Nena up the embankment and out of sight, Lost Soul #1 looks up from his meal expecting something. Nothing.

EXT. STREET TUNNEL - OVERHEAD - NIGHT

Andres throws Nena over his shoulders and gets moving as fast as he can. Toward the city.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Rain, still.

Rafael approaches the entrance to the street tunnel, now a ways away. Far enough just to make out the light.

Tomas still behind. Holds the hand of the little girl. Almost pulling her.

Now, Eden, too walking. Her weight too much for Tomas.

As they get closer, the partially eaten corpse of Andres' horse comes into view.

Rafael passes it without looking. Not a wince.

Tomas gets to it, makes a face. Eden sees it, hides behind Tomas' leg. Tries to pull herself to him.

Tomas grabs her and carries her past.

Eden hides her face in Tomas' shoulder.

EXT. DOWNTOWN PROPER - NIGHT

Andres struggles with Nena's weight. His will, obsession, the only thing keeping him going.

Up ahead, The Arc's tower peers from behind low buildings and the rain.

Andres sees it and gets going towards it.

EXT. DOWNTOWN PROPER - PARALLEL STREET - NIGHT

From a slightly different angle, The Arc's tower sticks up in the skyline.

A little further distance from The Arc than Andres, Rafael, Tomas and Eden head towards it.

EXT. CALAZADA INDEPENDENCIA - NIGHT

The Arc within view now.

Andres with Nena approaches.

As they get close, Nena gets anxious, struggles. GROANS loudly. YELLS an inhumane noise.

With Nena struggling, Andres stops and puts her down on the wet street. Nena squirms away from Andres.

ANDRES

No you don't.

With that, Andres grabs her arms and begins dragging her towards the church entrance. The large scythe dangling from his belt.

EXT. THE ARC - NIGHT

Andres stands with Nena at his feet. Looks up at the large doors, the church's wooden structure. His final destination.

Suddenly, the Church bell RINGS, like someone calling mass.

Andres stares.

The doors to the church BANG! open. Like its been waiting for this moment for years.

Andres takes Nena's hands once more and drags her up the stairs.

ANDRES

C'mon, you monster.

Nena struggles. She seems to understand why she's here.

EXT. DOWNTOWN PROPER - PARALLEL STREET - NIGHT

Rafael and Tomas getting closer to the church. The streets looking familiar.

The church BELL rings in the distance.

Rafael looks towards its source. Gets going faster, making his limp apparent again.

Tomas tries keeping up.

Eden close behind.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Several LOST SOULS drag themselves slowly towards the church bells. The sound calling them.

OTHERS come out of the darkness and join them.

EXT. THE ARC - NIGHT

Andres continues to struggle with Nena up the wooden steps and through the doors.

ANDRES

C'mon.

INT. THE ARC - NIGHT

From the front, the RED CANDLE is lit again. Its light casting eerie shadows.

Andres' back at the door. Pulls at Nena.

A close look at Nena shows something evil brewing in her eyes. No longer lost, dead. Something worse than dead: A LOST SOUL.

EXT. THE ARC - NIGHT

As Nena's feet slide past the doors entrance

The doors SLAM! Closed behind.

At the same time, the tower BELL ends abruptly.

EXT. CALAZADA INDEPENDENCIA - NIGHT

Rafael looks up toward the now dead church bell.

RAFAEL
Hear that?

Tomas trails close behind.

TOMAS
What?

RAFAEL
The bell. It's gone.

Eden's scared face. She keeps going. Follows Tomas.

INT. THE ARC - NIGHT

The doors now closed. The red light - God's Light - the only sign of the living - once again burning.

Andres has Nena at the front of the church near the altar.

INT. THE ARC - DAY

A black and white image. The old church, the way it used to be.

Young Father Rivera stands at the front, behind Nena's casket. Consuelo stands over the casket where Nena lays, dead.

CONSUELO
God, please give me my child back!
Please!

The Churchgoers looks around at each other. Most whispering to one another. All surprised at Consuelo's reaction.

CONSUELO
God Dammit! Give me my child back!

Consuelo looks toward the ceiling of the church. The MURMUR of the people within the church grows louder, more constant.

CONSUELO
All the forces of evil, if you exist, I dare you! Dare you!

With that, the priest throws holy water over both Consuelo and Nena as if performing an exorcism.

EXT. THE ARC - DAY

A beautiful day. The sun a majestic thing in the sky overlooking the pristine city.

Rafael walks near the entrance of the church with young Tomas, still crying. Comforts him.

Then a BOOM! Of something crashing through the roof of the church.

Rafael turns around in time to see a flash of light over the top of the church.

Panicked SCREAMS from inside the church.

Rafael hurries towards the closed church doors. Pulls at them. Won't budge.

The SCREAMS louder now from the inside.

INT. THE ARC - DAY

CHURCHGOERS running for the exits. Falling over one another, stepping on each other. Everyone trying to save himself from something.

EXT. THE ARC - DAY

Rafael continuing to bang on the stuck door.

VOICES from the inside indicating they want out. They, too, can't open the doors from the inside.

Rafael BANGS! on the door once more.

Young Tomas holds onto his father's leg. Crying. Scared.

EXT. THE ARC - NIGHT

Old Rafael, his grotesque face replacing the one before, BANGS! on the doors of the church.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Eden standing behind, hanging onto Tomas. Crying. Scared.

EXT. THE ARC - DAY

Young Tomas stops crying. The sounds of the world leave for a moment. Looks up at his father's distraught face.

EXT. THE ARC - NIGHT

Eden stops crying for a moment. Looks up at Tomas.

Tomas watches his father, or what was once his father, bang on the door.

The sound of the world leaves for an instant.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

The drenched streets covered by Lost Souls. Hundreds of them. All heading for the church.

EXT. THE ARC - NIGHT

Finally, Rafael gets the large wooden door forced open. Enters.

INT. THE ARC - NIGHT

The rain pouring in through the hole in the ceiling. The plastic flapping in the wind. The storm outside growing more furious, impatient.

The RED CANDLE showing the inside of the church off.

At the front altar, Nena slices an already wounded Andres with the scythe. Blood goes here and there with each swing of the instrument.

Nena no longer looks like the young girl. Now she looks possessed, like a demon. Something from another world.

The demonized Nena looks up. Sees Rafael standing in the open door. Looks at the outline briefly then goes back to hacking at Andres.

INT. THE ARC - DAY

Black and white scene.

The church doors open showing off the light outside.

The large hole in the ceiling directly over the altar at the front.

Young Rafael stands within the door's entrance. Besides Consuelo at the front holding Nena, the church has been abandoned.

Young Rafael sees Consuelo holding Nena. Both untouched.

Looks up at the hole in the ceiling. Back to Consuelo.

Rafael goes to them.

Young Tomas stands in the doorway. Watches his father rush to Consuelo.

EXT. THE ARC - CEMETARY - NIGHT

The lightning and THUNDER going crazy.

Several Lost Souls go through the cemetery. Some dig. Some eating the black, wormed substance.

INT. THE ARC - NIGHT

Rafael slowly approaches the demonized Nena.

RAFAEL

It's time for us to go home, Nena.

With the sound of Rafael's voice, Nena becomes the tender girl again. Lowers the scythe.

Andres' body shakes with the last bits of life. Dead.

Tomas and Eden watch from just inside the church, out of the rain.

The THUNDER and lightning get furious. Light up the hole in the roof overhead.

Rafael reaches Nena.

RAFAEL

It's time to go home, Angel.

NENA

Daddy?

Rafael takes Nena by the hand and walks over to the first pew. The exact spot where Consuelo was sitting when the event happened.

NENA

Don't leave me, Daddy.

The rain falls on top of them.

Tomas realizes.

TOMAS

Dad!

Tomas moves towards both Rafael and Nena.

Rafael looks directly at Tomas. Smiles. His distorted, dead face softer. His face showing hope that his son has forgiven him.

EXT. THE ARC - NIGHT

The Lost Souls surrounding the church. At the front entrance when

INT. THE ARC - NIGHT

Eden makes a break for the entrance. Just as she does, a Lost Soul is there to meet her. She SCREAMS.

The Lost Soul grabs Eden. Going to kill her when

Tomas Hacks at it with his machete, severing its arm and freeing Eden.

The Lost soul continues on. Several OTHERS enter behind. The church becoming filled with them.

Tomas and Eden back up. Trapped.

All looks like it's going to end violently when a sudden

CRASH! of lightning and thunder through the hole overhead right on top of Rafael and Nena.

An EXPLOSION within the church then

DARKNESS and

Silence.

No more rain. No more Lost Souls. Silence.

INT. THE ARC - DAY

Tomas lies on the floor unconscious. Not a sound in the world. Only silence. His eyes flutter open. Head bleeding from somewhere.

Eden stands next to him trying to get his attention. She mouths some words to him.

Tomas gets up slowly. Immediately looks at the place where Rafael and Nena were last. Nothing now.

Within the main cathedral, Lost Souls dead all over the place.

EXT. THE ARC - DAY

Hundreds of Lost Souls dead on the streets, in the cemetery.

INT. THE ARC - DAY

Eden takes Tomas by the hand. Leads him past the bodies.

At the front, Tomas inspects the pew where his father and Nena were. Gone. Nothing.

INT. THE ARC - HALLWAY - DAY

Eden still leading Tomas somewhere.

Eden looks up at Tomas. Mouths the words, "I found something." To him.

Nothing but silence though. The explosion took Tomas' hearing.

At the old door, now unlocked, Eden points to it. Smiles. Pulls Tomas towards it.

Tomas refuses.

Eden insists. Smiles.

Tomas agrees. Reluctant.

INT. THE DOOR

Complete darkness. The kind of darkness that you can't adjust your eyes too without a light.

Tomas stands at the door's entrance.

Eden leaves for a moment, leaving Tomas by himself.

INT. THE ARC - DAY

Eden steps over the corpses of the Lost Souls.

Goes to the front of the church. Gets the still lit red candle - God's candle - and takes it with her.

INT. THE DOOR

Tomas still standing alone in the dark.

TOMAS

Eden!

Eden gets by his side. The candle's light now showing the tunnel clearly. A rounded, cement tube structure.

Tomas and Eden enter the tunnel.

INT. TUNNEL

Neither end of the tunnel visible. Both ends look endless.

Eden walks in front carrying the candle. Tomas follows close behind.

The candle, now a stub, burns out. The complete darkness now taking over.

With the candle out, a bit of light coming from one end. FOOTSTEPS picking up the pace. Moving towards the light.

At the light, a set of stairs.

Tomas climbs them, Eden following.

END OF TUNNEL

Tomas finds himself in an exact replica of The Arc - Priest Rivera's church - Except this one is new, well taken care of.

Leaving the church, Tomas goes

OUTSIDE

A Utopia. Clean houses, life everywhere.

People in clean clothes and smiles.

Flowers and green trees everywhere.

The FIFTY FOOT HIGH WALL not far away. Except this is the other side.

Tomas can't believe his eyes. His eyes wide, his mouth agape.

A MOTHER and her YOUNG SON walk their nice dog. The dog escapes and runs towards the wall.

Her son follows it, reflexively. Gets right against the wall.

MOTHER

Get back here. Get away from that wall.

Like any child, the boy ignores his mother's warnings.

MOTHER

The monsters are on the other side.

The child looks at the wall. Runs towards his mother, pulling the dog chain, dragging the poor dog behind.

The mother scolds the little boy. They start walking again away from the wall.

Tomas watches out of sight, intrigued. Hesitant.

Then, the SIREN begins.

Tomas looks towards its source, a set of SPEAKER HORNS set atop a tall pole. As tall as the wall itself. Signaling the end of the day. The coming of the night.

The boy plugs his ears.

BOY

What if they jump the wall, mommy?

The mother hugs her son, and touches his hair.

MOTHER

They can't, baby. Don't worry.

Tomas runs with Eden in the opposite direction. Deep into the Utopian city.

Further until their outline gets lost in the early evening shadows.

The mother and son unaware of their presence.

Then, backwards movement away from the ground towards the sky. Higher, higher, until the entire city is looked down upon, showing the outline of the wall.

The wall forming a circle around the forgotten city. Keeping the bad ones from getting out.

The backwards movement continues until the earth's surface takes up the entire screen.

The dead have finally penetrated the city.

Del Lado de Los Muertos (From the side of the Dead)

FADE OUT.

THE END