

ONLY THE DEAD

based on  
ONLY THE DEAD (Know the End of War)  
by  
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EXT. TEXAS FRONTIER - DAY

The sun hangs high in the sky, casting long shadows on the ground. The sky is a brilliant, cloudless blue, vast and clear. The air seems to shimmer with heat as the desert stretches out endlessly.

Lizards scuttle across sand, their movements quick and precise. The sound of buzzing insects fills the air as they seek shade in the sparse vegetation.

A mule cart comes into view, trundling along the dusty path.

JOHN MICHAEL (white, polish, blue eyes, 5'7, 17, lean wiry build) sits at the front of the mule cart, holding the reins, along with MISS LUZ (Mexican, tanned, early 50s, slightly plump, black hair, black eyes) next to him, guiding the way. Behind them in the cart is a woman and a little girl, sitting close together.

Up ahead on horseback, leading the pack is a man wearing a cowboy hat. A couple of guys on horseback flank either side of the two wagons.

JOHN MICHAEL  
(wiping the sweat from  
his brow)  
Boy, as warm as it is in the day  
here, how does it get so cold at  
nigh-

John Michael is suddenly interrupted by Miss Luz.

MISS LUZ  
(suddenly alert)  
Shh! Quiet, *hijo!*

Her eyes narrow and scan the horizon, squinting against the bright sunlight. She spots something from the corner of her eye and slowly turns her head.

John Michael looks at her with a puzzled expression. As he opens his mouth to speak, an arrow whizzes by his chest and grazes Miss Luz's leg before getting impaled into the side of the wagon.

John Michael is in a wide-eyed shock.

JOHN MICHAEL  
Golly gosh!

Miss Luz snatches the reins from John Michael, sets the break, bringing the wagon to a screeching halt.

She grabs John Michael and shoves him under the wagon, jumping after him.

The guys on horseback start yelling.

Hiding behind the wagon, Miss Luz peeks out and notices a movement in the distance.

A group of figures on horseback, partially obscured by the shimmering heat waves, moves among the rocks ahead. Their chests are bare, adorned with tattoos in hues of reds and blacks. Their long dark hair is braided and decorated with feathers and beads. The sun glints off of something metallic - an arrowhead.

Miss Luz curses in Spanish.

Up ahead, Mister G.P. MACALISTER (anglo, Scots-Irish, late 50s, 6'2, tanned skin) leaps from his horse onto the mule cart carrying John Michael, Miss Luz, ROSALIE (white Polish, mid 30s, 5'8, blue green eyes) and AMELIA (Spanish, 8 years old, warm olive skin, deep brown hair, dark brown eyes).

He pushes them down against sacks of grain and lays on top of them, and starts firing his rifle.

John Michael's widened eyes emerge from under the cart just to see G.P. Macalister's lightening quick rifle kill one Indian and wound another.

Miss Luz pulls two more rifles from the wagon and thrusts one into the hands of John Michael.

MISS LUZ  
(firing a rifle,  
casually)

You know how to shoot, *hijo*? Just point and squeeze. And above all, *control* your emotions. Aim and shoot with the coldness of the north wind.

Miss Luz shoots another Indian coming out from behind a large bolder with an arrow cocked on his bow. The bullet from her gun hit him square in the chest just as he releases the deadly projectile.

John Michael turns around to see another Indian fall to the ground next to him, one eye missing where a bullet entered his skull.

His hands shake as he aims and fires a few times but misses. Sweat is beginning to form on his face and he is breathing heavily.

A second later he hears a blood curling scream, coming from his left side.

He whips his head around to see an Indian sneakily make his way near their wagon, behind their cowhand, MAURICIO (Spanish, 6'2, 20s) Mauricio falls to the ground as a fountain of blood gushes out of his throat.

The Indian turns around and locks eyes with John Michael and quickly starts making his way toward their cart.

John Michael quickly raises his rifle with both hands and shoots him point blank.

BANG.

The Indian falls backwards and hits the ground with a THUD.

John Michael stares at his lifeless body, gasping for air himself.

G.P. MACALISTER pushes John Michael back down into the wagon, where he sits trembling, his hands shaking uncontrollably.

2 EXT. WAGON - DAY

G.P. and Miss Luz look around to see the remaining Indians retreating.

MISS LUZ  
You alright there, John Michael?

JOHN MICHAEL  
(stuttering, speaking  
shakily)  
I, uh...I th-think so. Y-yes ma'am.

John Michael hangs on to the side of the wagon and violently throws up.

MISS LUZ  
(checking her rifle)  
*Hermano?* You okay?

G.P. grunts and Miss Luz looks up to see the arrow impaled in his leg.

MISS LUZ  
Ah, let me see, Gerardo.

She slits his pant leg open to reveal the full extent of his injury.

G.P. MACALISTER  
Was that Mauricio that blasted  
Injun got?

MISS LUZ  
Yes. You got lucky, hermano. It's  
in the side. It won't do too much  
damage to push it through. The  
point is even poking out a bit.

G.P. MACALISTER  
(in broken German)  
Rosalie, Amelia? You alright?

Rosalie nodded and came over to inspect the wound. She looks  
at Miss Luz with a worried expression on her face.

ROSALIE  
Was kann...umm...gemacht...err  
werden über es?  
(What can be done about it?)

Miss Luz uses sign language to aid the conversation.

MISS LUZ  
Your husband's going to be okay. We  
just gotta push the arrow through  
and clip off the barb.

With Rosalie's help, G.P. gingerly climbs out of the wagon,  
his jaw clenching.

G.P. MACALISTER  
Jacob! Come on, son. You got to  
push this arrow through.

An unhappy JACOB (Anglo/German, 19, thin, blue eyes, light  
brown hair) comes galloping on his horse and dismounts next  
to G.P. He looks at the impaled arrow, his face devoid of  
any emotion.

John Michael looks at Jacob, assessing his face.

Jacob takes a long swig from his flask, wipes his mouth with  
his hand and settles in behind G.P.

Rosalie sits under G.P.'s left arm supporting his body while  
Miss Luz stands in front holding his right leg steady.

G.P. MACALISTER  
Now boy, push! Steady those hands  
and push!

Jacob's hands are trembling. His face looks more annoyed than revolted.

G.P. closes his eyes and grunts.

G.P. MACALISTER  
 (muttering under his  
 breath)  
 I live, but I shall not live  
 forever.

As Jacob starts to push, G.P.'s voice gets louder.

G.P. MACALISTER  
 Mysterious Moon, you only  
 remaiiiii-n! Push! Damn it boy,  
 PUSH!

A tiny bit of the arrow's barb begins to push through the front of Macalister's leg. Blood quickly forms around it and flows down his knee and shin. G.P.'s grunting prayer gets louder and louder.

G.P. MACALISTER  
 (groaning in agony)  
 Wonderfullllll Earth...ahhhh!

Jacob loses his cool and starts shaking his head.

JACOB  
 I ca...I can't do it, GP.

He suddenly stands up, grabs his horse's reins, mounts and rides off.

G.P. MACALISTER  
 (panting and yelling)  
 JACOB! Damn it, boy! Now, who's  
 gonna push the dang thing through?  
 It's gonna take a lot of strength!

John Michael squares his shoulders and takes a deep breath.

JOHN MICHAEL  
 (rolling up his sleeves)  
 I'll do it.

Miss Luz and G.P. look at each other with slight concern. John Michael holds his breath until Miss Luz nods at him. He exhales in one go.

John Michael rolls up his sleeves and with a strained grunt, begins to push, his muscles straining against the resistance. G.P. groans in agony.

Sweat pours down John Michael's face and arms, mingling with the blood around G.P.'s wound.

G.P. MACALISTER  
 (groaning in pain)  
 Wonderful Earr-rth, only you live  
 forever-rrr, ahhhh!

G.P. begins panting in short breaths. Teeth clenched, face red with effort, his breath comes in ragged gasps. John Michael keeps pushing. Slowly, he sees the arrow begin to move.

MISS LUZ  
 That's far enough, *hijo*.

She quickly lops off the barb with a pair of wire cutters.

MISS LUZ  
 Now, pull it back and out.

John Michael slowly starts pulling the arrow back and out of G.P.'s leg. G.P. clenches his jaw. It takes John Michael one last hearty, steady tug to completely pull the arrow out.

John Michael staggers back, gasping for air. G.P. lay panting, but looks at John, giving him a slight nod.

ROSALIE  
 (speaking in broken  
 German)  
 Eh...what have to clean?

MISS LUZ  
 Cookie, bring me a bottle of  
 whiskey and some strips to use as  
 bandages. We will do the best we  
 can, Gerardo, until we reach Fort  
 Concho.

Rosalie looks puzzlingly at Miss Luz.

MISS LUZ  
 (looking at Rosalie,  
 speaking in German)  
 There's a doctor, well sort of, at  
 the fort on the way to the ranch.  
 Two or three days out. We keep the  
 wound clean as best as we can till  
 then.

3 EXT. TEXAS FRONTIER - NIGHT

Darkness encompasses the sky, revealing a cloudless night, filled with an endless array of stars. The platinum moon glows over the flatland to the east, casting its faint but pearly light over the cart, wagon, horses and riders against the inky blackness.

The air is crisp, with cold winds whooshing in the vast emptiness of the desert. The eerie silence is only broken by the titillating call of poorwills and the high-pitched wail of coyotes in the distance.

John Michael settles in the mule cart, wrapping a blanket tightly around himself, shivering from the icy winds.

He looks to his left, next to the chuckwagon and sees Jacob take a furtive sip from his flask before laying down to sleep.

He looks at the chuckwagon where Rosalie is next to G.P. gently singing him to sleep. John Michael smiles warmly to himself and gazes at the stars.

4 EXT. KOTULA RANCH - DAY

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

The sun hangs high over sprawling fields. John Michael works alongside other farmhands, his face screwed in concentration.

JOHN MICHAEL (V.O.)

We lost Papa on the voyage to the new World. But our family was helped during those first couple of years - saved, actually - by the kind ministrations of Joséf Kotula and a few other Poles who'd come to Texas years before.

5 INT. KOTULA HOUSE - DAY

Inside the modest but warm Kotula home, Rosalie and MARIANA (Polish white, 15, 5'5, fair skin, rosy cheeks, blue green eyes, light brown hair, slim) clean and prepare meals. Their faces reflect joy and contentment.

JOHN MICHAEL (V.O.)

Mister Kotula took an interest in our family, hiring my mother and sister as domestics, and giving me work as a farmhand.



6 EXT. KOTULA RANCH - DAY

G.P. Macalister, stands tall and imposing with his big moustache, examining the English Herefords with a keen eye. JOSÉF KOTULA stands beside him, negotiating.

JOHN MICHAEL (V.O.)

So, when Mister G.P. Macalister came to the Kotula ranch seeking to buy some of the English Herefords, his and my mother's needs seemed fulfilled in each other.

7 INT. KOTULA HOUSE - EVENING

In the cozy, candle-lit dining room, Mister Macalister and Rosalie share a warm, knowing look across the table.

JOHN MICHAEL (V.O.)

They married scarcely a week later.

8 EXT. KOTULA RANCH - DAY

John Michael, Mariana, the Kotulas, some of the farmhands, Rosalie and G.P. are all in wedding clothes. They laugh and hug each other in the decorated ranch.

CUT TO:

Present day John Michael, wrapped in the blanket, stares at the sky and slowly drifts off to sleep.

9 EXT. PAPAPLOTL'S HUT - DAY

JOSÉ NICOLÁS DE COS DE LA PORTILLA (Spanish, 13, 5'5, wiry build, dark hair, hazel eyes) sits atop his mare, with a sullen expression on his face, outside a hut.

He shakes his head and tries to drown out the voice of a couple doing it coming from inside the hut, by staring at the landscape.

He gazes down at the lush greenery of the hills and valleys below, where the dense foliage shimmered in shades of emerald and jade. The massive Lerma River snakes through the landscape, its silvery surface reflecting the bright sunlight. The gentle breeze caresses José Nicolás's face and makes his horse's mane sway like rippling silk. Birds dart among the treetops, their vibrant plumage creating streaks of color against the grassy backdrop. High above, a majestic golden eagle soars gracefully on the wind currents, its powerful wings cutting through the sky with effortless elegance.

José Nicolás de Cos de la Portilla looks into the distance. From atop the hill, he looks down and sees the town. José Nicolás quietly looks at the rows of homes that seem to stretch endlessly.

A towering man, DON JOSÉ MAXIMILIANO DE COS DE ASUNCIÓN (Spanish, late 30's, plump, 6'2) emerges from the hut. José Nicolás turns around to see him.

José Maximiliano stops and stretches, taking a deep breath and exhaling with a sigh of satisfaction.

He ambles over to José Nicolás and takes the horse's reins from him.

JOSÉ MAXIMILIANO

(with an impish grin)

All right, Nicos - José Nicolás!  
You are thirteen years old today  
and a man. It is time you do what  
*real* men do, like your brother  
Antonio! She's waiting inside and  
expecting you.

José Nicolás looks at his father, shocked and dumbfounded.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS

But Papá, she was like my second  
mother!

JOSÉ MAXIMILIANO

That's precisely *why* I brought you  
here! So you can be with a girl you  
*know*, one you might feel  
comfortable with.

José Nicolás begins to sweat.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS

But Papá...how can I...with someone  
who took care of me as a  
child...played with me? Someone who  
was like a mother...

JOSÉ MAXIMILIANO

Come on, Nicos. She's waiting.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS

But papá...

JOSÉ MAXIMILIANO

Enough! No more buts, hijo. It is  
time. Go on.

José Nicolás slowly dismounts his horse and walks toward the hut, his head hanging low in embarrassment/shame.

10

INT. PAPAPLOTL'S HUT - DAY

Stepping inside, José Nicolás is immediately hit by the stench. His nose scrunches up and he blinks several times to adjust to the darkness. He turns his head and spots the leftover corn tortillas and lard lying on the makeshift kitchen counter.

He takes another step and hears a woman's voice call out to him.

PAPAPLOTL (O.S.)  
Hello, *mihijo*. You're all grown up.

José Nicolás widens his eyes further, and strains his neck. He can barely make out the silhouette of PAPAPLOTL (Indian, mid 30s, dark hair, dark eyes). She is sitting on a raggedy, corn shuck mattress, laid out on the dirt floor, barely covered by a threadbare blanket.

She lifts one side of the blanket, and pats the place next to her.

José Nicolás swallows audibly. On shaky legs, he goes to sit next to her.

Papaplotl gently pulls him down beside her and begins to open the buttons on his jerga.

She presses her body against José Nicolás and he begins to respond.

Suddenly, a baby's CRY split the darkness and José Nicolás opens his eyes, sits up and looks around, astonished.

PAPAPLOTL  
It's alright, Nicosito. She's just hungry, she can wait.

The baby's cries become more insistent and José Nicolás averts his gaze from Papaplotl.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS  
(stammering)  
Uhh...you better see...I can't with that...

Papaplotl hurries towards the baby and starts to feed her.

PAPAPLOTL

It will only take a minute,  
Nicosito.

José Nicolás nods, Papaplotl starts to nurse the baby. He steals a glance at her. He likes what he sees. The glance turns into a transfixed stare.

Suddenly, the image of his father having sex with Papaplotl flashes before his eyes.

Startled and disgusted, he shoots up and grabs his shirt, not noticing he is putting it on backward. Papaplotl looks at José Nicolas, startled.

PAPAPLOTL

Wait, Nicosito! We can still...

José Nicolás is already on his way out. Papaplotl becomes alarmed.

PAPAPLOTL

Please, hijito! We can do it. The baby is fine now. She'll just go to sleep.

Papaplotl puts the baby down on the blanket and quickly makes her way to José Nicolás. She grabs his hand with both of hers and looks at him pleadingly.

PAPAPLOTL

(looking panicked)  
Please Nicosito! We have time...

JOSÉ NICOLÁS

(looking uncomfortable)  
I'll...I'll tell my father that we did it. That, uh...that it was good...very good.

Papaplotl pauses for a moment and just stares at him.

PAPAPLOTL

Are-are you sure, *hijito*?

José Nicolás nods, averting his gaze, and Papaplotl quickly breathes a sigh of relief. She turns around and begins fixing his shirt.

11

EXT. PAPAPLOTL'S HUT - DAY

José Nicolás quickly walks out of the hut and breathes a sigh.

He throws his shoulders back, swings his arms in a swagger, puts on a confident smile and approaches his beaming father.

José Nicolás mounts his horse and looks confidently across the landscape.

JOSÉ MAXIMILIANO

Well? Tell me boy, how do you feel now that you've had your first woman, now that you are a man among men?

JOSÉ NICOLÁS

It was fantastic, father. Truly fantastic.

José Maximiliano gives José Nicolás a hearty slap on the back, throws back his head and lets out a booming laugh.

Still laughing, he kicks his horse to a sudden gallop.

José Nicolás' horse, following the other's lead, gallops after him.

Papaplotl takes a peek out of her hut entrance. She lets out all her breath in one go, and closes her eyes with a relieved sigh.

12

INT. JOSÉ DE ARREOLA'S HOME - DAY

JOSÉ NECAHUATL DE ARREOLA (mestizo, 16, lean build, short brown hair, 5'7) lay next to the window, reading a book. The air is hot, and the sunlight filters in through the window, casting warm patterns on the floor.

A woman walks in with a tense face, wringing her hands. José de Arreola looks at her and sits up, his expression worried.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

What's wrong, mama?

JOSÉ'S MOTHER

(sniffing)

Forgive me, son. I had no choice...after your father stopped visiting...we can't...so much debt...I made a deal for you to join the obraje.

José de Arreola smiles, and goes to hug her.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

I understand, mama. It's fine. We must do what we can to survive, no?

José's mother pulls back, wipes her tears and nods. José de Arreola looks at the book he's still holding in his hands and smiles.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

Remember all the books papa used to bring me? I devoured those! Perhaps more than all the good portions of beef or leg of lamb or even a whole cabrito he used to bring.

José's mother laughs a little.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

(chuckling)

I used to bombard him with questions about his meetings, and governance, the history of New Spain and the mother country! He never got tired of my relentless questions. José Sebastian de Arreola y Riaño was definitely a man of patience.

A somber look comes across José de Arreola's face as he gazes at the calendar on his desk.

13 EXT. OBRAJE/WOOLEN MILL - DAY

José de Arreola stands outside the *obraje* and looks at the grey building. He sighs and walks in with a backpack on his shoulder.

14 INT. OBRAJE/WOOLEN MILL - DAY AND NIGHT

MONTAGE SEQUENCE

José de Arreola works diligently at his station. He looks at his fellow workers and their monotonous expressions, some showing signs of fatigue and frustration. José, with a focused and determined face, begins to develop a rhythm, performing his tasks with mechanical precision.

José de Arreola watches nervously as his fellow workers were whipped and beaten regularly. He keeps his head down and focuses on his work station.

José demonstrates a more efficient way to perform a task, and his colleagues watch attentively, nodding in agreement. The workers, now following José's guidance, move with synchronized efficiency.

From the window, days turn into nights, which turn into days again. A new machine is delivered to the mill.

José, curious and eager, examines it closely while others look on uncertainly.

The machine breaks down unexpectedly. Workers express concern, but José steps in, tools in hand, and begins repairing it with meticulous care.

15 INT. SAINT CECILIA CHURCH - DAY

José de Arreola sits patiently listening to the priest's sermon inside the church. He smiles when the priest translates bits of the sermon in Náhuatl.

FATHER HIDALGO

In my ceramic workshop in Dolores, a day or two's journey from San Miguel, we craft pottery much as we craft souls.

Father Hidalgo patiently smiles.

FATHER HIDALGO

You see...the best, the most enduring and valuable pieces are made by common Indians...so their souls might just be the purest of all! Christ tells us blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

José de Arreola leans in to listen more intently. His eyes are wide, and his mouth is slightly agape.

16 EXT. SAINT CECILIA CHURCH - DAY

José de Arreola walks out of the church, lost in thought. He notices a crowd gathered outside. He makes his way near the group but stops as he sees the crowd is mostly made up of well-dressed aristocrats. In the centre, is the priest from the church.

FATHER HIDALGO (Spanish, early 50s, white hair) is holding a poorly made piece of pottery, and showing it to his audience.

FATHER HIDALGO

This piece, you see, is poorly made. It serves as a reminder of our imperfections and the work we must do to improve ourselves.

He sets the piece down and picks up another that appears perfect.

FATHER HIDALGO

And here, we have what seems to be  
a perfect piece.

He holds it up, turning it slowly so everyone can see.

FATHER HIDALGO

Yet, even in this seemingly perfect  
piece, there are tiny flaws and  
almost invisible cracks.

The priest points out a nearly invisible crack on the  
pottery.

FATHER HIDALGO

These flaws make it prone to  
breakage and loss, even as the  
flaws within us may occasion the  
loss of our very souls.

José de Arreola is moved by his words, his gaze transfixed  
on the priest. He takes a step forward to talk to Father  
Hidalgo, but stops.

He, once again, looks at the crowd of aristocrats  
surrounding Father Hidalgo and chews his lips.

The priest finishes his lecture and is about to go into the  
church when José de Arreola blurts out in his mother tongue,  
Náhuatl.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

Bless me Father for I have sinned.  
My pottery is flawed!

The crowd around the priest turns around to stare at him.  
José de Arreola notices several condescending and disgusted  
looks directed towards him.

FATHER HIDALGO

Come closer, my son, and tell me  
who you are and where you come  
from.

José de Arreola looks nervously at the crowd. He pauses for  
a few seconds, takes a step forward, and stops.

Father Hidalgo nods at him encouragingly. The crowd of  
aristocrats whisper to each other, casting judgmental  
glances his way.

José de Arreola walks hesitantly toward the Father.



JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
 (swallowing  
 uncomfortably)  
 I am José...de Arreola, the son  
 of...the illegitimate son of Don  
 José Sebastián de Arreola y Riaño.

The church's deacon, MANUEL URBANEZ, stands next to the priest. He looks scandalized by José's honest answer.

DEACON MANUEL  
 (irritated)  
 Look here, boy. You are addressing  
 the pastor of Dolores, Guanajuato,  
 graduate of San Nicolás Obispo  
 College and its onetime rector.  
 This kind of impudence-

FATHER HIDALGO  
 (cutting off the deacon)  
 Please, Manuel. Let the boy speak.  
 And what do you do here in San  
 Miguel, José de Arreola?

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
 I work in the local obraje to pay  
 off my family's debt, Father.

FATHER HIDALGO  
 And how did you get permission to  
 attend Mass?

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
 It's a reward for being the first  
 to learn how to operate the new  
 machine and for doubling cloth  
 production.

FATHER HIDALGO  
 (impressively)  
 Double the production? Was it  
 difficult?

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
 Not really, Father. It just takes  
 concentration.

José glances around nervously at the deacon and the crowd of aristocrats.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
 (shrugging)  
 Most of the workers are Indians and  
 Negro slaves.

FATHER HIDALGO  
 (thoughtfully)  
 How is it working in the obraje?  
 I've heard the conditions are  
 harsh.

José hesitates, then speaks in Náhuatl again, smiling to mask his true feelings.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
 It is Hell on earth, Father.

The deacon looks suspiciously at Father Hidalgo.

DEACON MANUEL  
 What did he say, Father?

FATHER HIDALGO  
 (with a gentle smile)  
 He said it's...not quite Heaven on earth, but he's learning from the experience.

DEACON MANUEL  
 Father, we must prepare for this afternoon's Mass-

FATHER HIDALGO  
 (cutting the deacon off)  
 We have plenty of time, Manuel. Come with me, José de Arreola. I could use someone with your talent in my pottery mill.

Father Hidalgo winks at José and escorts him through the church doors. The deacon looks shocked.

17

EXT. TEXAS FRONTIER - DAWN

The sun rises above the eastern horizon, its rays spreading warmth across the land. The few clouds that had reflected the orange glow of dawn quickly disappear, leaving a clear, blue sky. The sunlight brightens the desert, casting long shadows and highlighting the rugged terrain. A gentle breeze carries the earthy scent of the desert, while the distant call of a coyote breaks the morning silence.

John Michael and Miss Luz are back in the mule cart with Rosalie and Amerlia. Jacob is on horseback flanking the mule cart.

Up ahead, John Michael watches as G.P. Macalister struggles to mount his horse. G.P.

tries to swing his leg over the saddle but fails and trips a few steps backward. The horse shifts restlessly.

G.P. Macalister grunts, tries again. With a bit of effort, he finally swings his leg over the saddle and settles onto the horse.

JOHN MICHAEL

Miss Luz, I've heard you address  
Mister Macalister as 'hermano.'  
That means brother, don't it?

A barely visible closed-lipped smile breaks across Miss Luz's face.

MISS LUZ

Yes *hijo*. It does. You wonder how  
we can be brother and sister when  
I'm Mexican and he's Anglo?

JOHN MICHAEL

Well...yes ma'am. But I don't mean  
to pry.

MISS LUZ

It's quite all right. There's  
nothing personal about it. It is a  
story of survival, of the savage  
brutality of the Texas frontier and  
the primitive peoples that  
inhabited it and some that sti-  
*Hermano?*

John Michael looks up to see G.P. pull himself upright from a considerable lean.

JOHN MICHAEL

(alarmed)  
Did he almost faint?

G.P. MACALISTER

(curtly)  
I'm alright, Luz.

MISS LUZ

We should stop, Gerardo. Everyone  
must be hungry, including yourself.

G.P. MACALISTER

We should keep movin', let's get  
farther on our way.

MISS LUZ  
 (firmly)  
 Brady Creek must be coming up.  
 We'll stop and camp there.

G.P. is quiet for a minute, but then just nods silently.

Miss Luz sighs and looks at G.P.

MISS LUZ  
 I'll start at the beginning—at  
 least, from my beginning. Hand me  
 the reins so that you can listen  
 carefully and at your ease.

She takes the reins and a deep breath which she exhales with  
 a big sigh.

MISS LUZ  
 When I was six or seven, my father,  
 a captain in the army of New  
 Spain—now Mexico—was sent to  
 establish a colony in the Spanish  
 province of Texas. He took ten  
 soldiers, their families, two  
 Franciscan priests, and Indian  
 servants. The goal was to reaffirm  
 Spanish sovereignty, as Anglo  
 settlers despite swearing  
 allegiance, outnumbered us. We  
 traveled from Veracruz to the  
 Brazos River, searching for the old  
 French post, Fort Saint Louis. We  
 found its remains and began  
 repairs.

John Michael looks at her with wide-eyed interest.

Miss Luz is silent, staring into the distance, deep in  
 thought.

18

EXT. BRAZOS RIVER - DAY

A young girl walks down a path in the woods, thick with  
 foliage. Her dark hair is neatly braided into pigtailed. The  
 air is filled with cheerful BIRDSONG, blending with the  
 gentle RUSTLE of leaves swaying in a soft breeze. Towering  
 trees cast intricate patterns of dancing shadows upon the  
 forest floor, illuminated by shards of sunlight that cut  
 through the dense canopy, creating prisms suspended in mid-  
 air. The sound of a river rushing can be heard in the  
 distance.

## MISS LUZ (V.O.)

Since I was young girl, my contribution was minimal, so I often explored the area. My father said a fierce Indian tribe called the Karankawa had killed all the French settlers in the original fort, but yellow fever and malaria wiped them out. One day, maybe two years or so after we'd come to the area, I was upriver fishing.

Young Luz walks out of the path to a vast and open area where the river is WHOOSHING by. She grabs a large wooden stick, finds a spot near the water and settles down.

She takes a knife out of her pocket and refines the stick. Then she attaches a string to the stick, picks a worm off of the ground and baits the hook. She throws the stick into the water, making a PLOP.

She stares at the water, waiting for her makeshift fishing rod to catch something when she hears a woman's excruciating SCREAM from a distance, followed by a jumble of yelling sounds from several men.

She jumps up, drops her stick in the water, and whips her head around trying to figure out the direction of the noise. She's completely still for a second, a look of fear and worry on her face.

19

EXT. FORT SAINT LOUIS - AFTERNOON

Following the commotion/noise, Young Luz runs as fast as she can to make it back to her family's camp. She reaches the family camp and slows her pace. She crouches behind a dense thicket, her eyes widening in horror at the scene unfolding before her.

Bare chested Indian Karankawas with their entire bodies covered with tattoos and their faces painted in red and black, are attacking her family and community members, their savage cries piercing the air.

Women are being viciously dragged by their hair, kicking and screaming in sheer horror.

The sickening sound of clubs meeting flesh and skull echoes through the clearing as the merciless Indians bludgeon the men - each impact reverberating with a THWACK, THUD, CRACK.

Other Indians are repeatedly stabbing men, women and children with their spears.

Young Luz sees one of the priests on his knees fervently saying prayers out loud, tears rolling down his face when, suddenly, he is hit from behind with a club.

Young Luz sees him fall to the ground, a pool of blood forms around his head - his eyes open and now lifeless.

Young Luz gasps and covers her mouth. Tears well up in her eyes as she watches the chaos unfold from a distance.

Those who are left alive are gagged and bound, hand to foot with leather bands cutting into the skin. The Indians drag them on the ground as they leave.

20 EXT. JUNGLE - AFTERNOON

Young Luz follows from a distance, keeping herself hidden from view, moving silently. The Indians cheer and holler as they walk back to their own camp.

21 EXT. INDIAN CAMP - LATE AFTERNOON

The Karankawa camp has a huge fire burning in the middle, the flames casting an orange-red glow that illuminates the faces of the tribesmen in a scary glow.

Next to the campfire is a giant stake with rough hewn stones and animal skulls scattered about.

The captured men and women are thrown and roughly tied to the stake, terror etched on their faces, their eyes darting around nervously.

Young Luz watches as one by one, the Karankawa men drink a black colored drink from a carved wooden bowl and start dancing around the fire to the sound of rhythmic drums in the background. Each of them brandish their knives in the air.

As they pass the victims, they sliced off a piece of flesh, toast it like a marshmallow in the fire, and then consume it before the victim.

The victims scream in agony and Young Luz covers her ears and screws her eyes shut each time a knife meets with flesh.

22 EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Young Luz quietly takes several steps back until she has enough distance between her and the Karankawa camp. Then she runs through the woods, tripping over fallen branches and falls face flat into wet mud.

She quickly gets up and keeps running without looking back, until she finds a hollow tree trunk. She climbs inside the trunk, on her knees. Young Luz pushes her knees close to her chest and starts crying in the darkness.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE

23 EXT. RIVERSIDE - DAY

Young Luz, hair all mussed up, dirt on her face, splashes her face from the river water several times. In the river, she catches sight of fish swimming about and grabs a sharp looking stick nearby and impales the fish with a grunt. She takes it out of the water and stares at it hungrily.

24 EXT. WOODS - DAY

Young Luz grabs a few berries off of a tree and devours them hungrily. She immediately gags and spits the berries out, heaving and rubbing her tongue.

Young Luz is building traps made with twigs and stones, one of them catches a racoon. Young Luz smiles a big smile and runs toward the trap.

25 EXT. RIVERSIDE - DAY

Young Luz walks north along the river, until she comes across a cave of sorts with a small, narrow entrance. She goes inside and looks around. She lies down in a corner and hugs her knees. Eventually she falls asleep.

26 EXT. CAVE - DAY

Young Luz is covering the cave entrance with sticks, grass and mud, trying to make a door. She steps back and hears thunder in the background. She looks at the grey skies with a worried expression.

27 EXT. CAVE - NIGHT

It's pouring rain, lightening and thunder crackle in the background. Young Luz is soaking wet, running and reaches her cave. She looks at the entrance and sees the rain wash away all the sticks, grass and mud she'd used to cover the entrance.

She goes inside the cave, huddles in a corner and shivers uncontrollably. The rain still pelts her inside at an angle and water floods at her feet. She cries herself to sleep.

END MONTAGE SEQUENCE

28 EXT. WOODS - AFTERNOON

Young Luz is walking barefeet in the woods, her hair now longer and messier, knotted and tangled, when she spots smoke coming from a little distance away.

She follows the smoke and sees a boy with yellow hair. She quickly hides behind a tree and watches him quietly. The boy senses a presence and slowly turns his head to look around. He then turns his head in Young Luz's direction. She gasps and quickly disappears from the boy's sight. The boy stands there staring at the empty spot where young Luz was.

29 EXT. WOODS - DAY

Young Luz goes back to the spot she saw the boy in and sees a bunch of crows pecking on something on a big group of boulders.

She steps closer and her eyes widen as the crows flew away, revealing chunks of meat and bread.

The next day, Young Luz goes back to the boulders and sees more food has been laid out in the same spot. This time, most of it is gone.

Young Luz slowly steps toward the small leftover chunks and takes a bite, chewing slowly.

30 INT. FATHER HIDALGO'S HOME - DAY

José de Arreola stands outside the parlour, ear pressed against the door, as he tries to eavesdrop on the heated argument between Father Hidalgo and DON IGNACIO ALLENDE.

FATHER HIDALGO

(heatedly)

No! These peasants have endured two years of drought, famine, and the brutality of their Spanish lords! Was it the *gachupines* who starved, heard their children's cries of hunger, and watched helplessly as starvation took their little ones' lives? Of course not!

Don Ignacio Allende (Spanish, mid 30s, brown eyes, 5'8) is about to speak but Father Hidalgo cuts him off.

FATHER HIDALGO

Since the *Grito de Dolores*, we have had incredible success!

(MORE)



FATHER HIDALGO (CONT'D)

Our insurgents took Celaya without a fight, and now here in San Miguel, we have even more people joining the cause. These people...their only motivation to fight is to *finally* have some reward, some opportunity to express their outrage! And they have every right to visit upon their tormentors just a taste of their years, their decades, their centuries of suffering!

There are cries of agreement and applause in the room after Father Hidalgo's heated speech.

DON IGNACIO ALLENDE

(calmly)

Father, no one is denying the suffering of the Indians, but if we're going to replace the government, we *must* show we are capable of governing! All this looting and pillaging demonstrates quite the opposite.

FATHER HIDALGO

We must teach the Spaniards a lesson. They cannot go on treating everyone else however they want without consequences! All true Spaniards must be exiled back to Spain and if they refuse, they must be executed!

José de Arreola looks alarmed listening to the Father and quickly joins his hands for prayer.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

(muttering in a low breath)

God, please keep my father safe from the brutal retaliations visited upon loyalists!

He continues listening at the door and hears Don Iganacio's voice.

DON IGNACIO ALLENDE

Father, we cannot win a war - any war - without discipline.

FATHER HIDALGO  
And who will fight this war without  
incentive?

DON IGNACIO ALLENDE  
Incentive is important, but we *must*  
also instill discipline to turn our  
men into a formidable force.

As the two argue, José de Arreola sighs and walks away.

31 EXT. FATHER HIDALGO'S HOME - NIGHT

José de Arreola sits on the steps of the home's main  
entrance. He looks at the vast expanse of the sky, the  
cloudless night revealing an array of bright stars.

Father Hidalgo walks out and sits next to him on the steps.

FATHER HIDALGO  
You've hardly said a word since  
this morning's meeting, hijo.  
What's on your mind, boy?

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
Well...all this chaos...the blood  
and the slaughter, Father it...

José de Arreola pauses and sighs.

FATHER HIDALGO  
What is this? You agree with Don  
Ignacio? You think the people don't  
have legitimate grievances?

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
Of course they do, Father. But  
I'm...I'm also thinking about the  
long term effects of all this  
carnage. These...indulgences of the  
worst impulses in human behaviour.

FATHER HIDALGO  
I think it's necessary to send a  
message to those who oppose us!  
They need to see how their  
treatment of the lower classes has  
fermented such resentment.

Father Hidalgo pauses to let José de Arreola answer but he  
is silent.

FATHER HIDALGO

Speak up boy, You have nothing to  
fear from me.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

(hesitantly)

The message...shouldn't we clarify  
that it's not the men we oppose,  
but the rigid social order that  
binds all Mexicans—even the  
aristocracy? It chains us based on  
birth or parentage and handcuffs us  
into roles that waste our  
individual talents.

Father Hidalgo frowns, and looks confused.

FATHER HIDALGO

(irritated)

But it is *these* men that have  
created this infernal system. At  
any rate, I disagree with your  
assessment, José. I'm not sure if  
it's even that important. The  
social order is ordained by God.  
Just as Heaven's hierarchy is  
divinely structured - with seraphim  
above cherubim, saints above the  
common man - so the Pope,  
designated by God, rules here on  
earth in clerical matters. We, as  
God's chosen, are here to shepherd  
this poor flock of heathens toward  
salvation.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

But I-

FATHER HIDALGO

(cutting off José)

The Lord chooses the king and  
princes to rule in earthly matters  
and direct their inferiors. Should  
we not attempt to replicate the  
divinely inspired order established  
by our Creator?

José de Arreola listens intently, his hands clasped  
together, lost deep in thought.

José de Arreola and two other fellow mestizos watch Father Hidalgo give a heated speech to a gathering at a distance from the entrance of the parlour.

FATHER HIDALGO

I know these Indians! They will not fight for abstract ideas like independence or autonomy. These concepts are meaningless to them! They will only join our cause if we do it in the name of King Fernando, to restore him to his rightful consecrated place on the throne of Spain.

José de Arreola shakes his head in frustration. He speaks to his fellow mestizos standing with him.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

(frustrated)

Why can't they see? That very way of thinking, hoping for the 'good and kindly Father' to rescue them, keeps them mired in the misery they seek to escape. People looking to others for salvation are easily dominated and controlled!

The two mestizos look at him intently.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

It is the individual who undertakes his own deliverance who thrives and who thereby makes the greatest contribution to society as a whole.

José de Arreola sighs and walks off.

END FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

33

EXT. FATHER HIDALGO'S HOME - NIGHT

José de Arreola takes a deep breath and looks at the stars in the sky.

He turns to Father Hidalgo.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

I...I wonder if we are imitating the form instead of the spirit of the Divine, Father. Did He not take the form of a common man and lead by example rather than by fiat?

(MORE)

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA (CONT'D)  
 Why did He not incarnate Himself as  
 emperor of Rome if such rigid  
 hierarchy is the true way? The only  
 way?

Father Hidalgo is taken aback by José's ideas.

FATHER HIDALGO  
 You have an extraordinarily supple  
 mind, José Necahautl de Arreola.  
 You've given me considerable food  
 for thought. I maintain, however,  
 that someone must lead, and some  
 have to follow. Believing that  
 these unlettered pagans have the  
 necessary wisdom is absurd, if not  
 blasphemous.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
 (hesitantly)  
 Weren't the Apostles simple  
 fishermen, Father, who became the  
 founders of the Catholic Church?  
 And were they not Jews?

Father Hidalgo stares at José de Arreola for a long time,  
 and looks somewhat irritated.

FATHER HIDALGO  
 Yes...yes, they were.

Father Hidalgo gets up and walks away, leaving José de  
 Arreola alone on the steps.

34 EXT. GALLOWS - DAY

The sun glares down on a dusty path as José Nicolás on  
 horseback, escorts a line of manacled prisoners riding on  
 mules. Most had their heads bowed, while others silently  
 cried.

José Nicolás looks at the prisoners with contempt.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS  
 (talking to a loyalist  
 next to him)  
 So much death and destruction, so  
 much suffering and pain...finally,  
 this stupid and bloody insurrection  
 is over! I shall revel in their  
 gruesome fate!  
 (MORE)

JOSÉ NICOLÁS (CONT'D)

It was they who wreaked such havoc  
and misery in New Spain, *they* who  
are responsible for Anto-Tony's  
death!

José Nicolás chokes back tears at the mention of Antonio. He looks at the prisoners angrily again, then into the distance ahead.

José Nicolás is startled out of his reverie when he hears a voice talking to him.

SLAVE (O.S.)

What is your name, young man?

At that moment, José Nicolás' mare rears at it's master's movement, and almost throws José Nicolás from his saddle. He pats the mare's mane and calms the creature down.

SLAVE (O.S.)

Oh, I do so humbly beg your pardon  
for startling your mount. Please  
forgive me. I merely hoped for some  
distraction for a brief moment from  
the reality of my coming fate.

José Nicolás looks at the manacled slave with a curious expression, cocking his head at how calmly he seems to be sitting atop the mule. The slave is José de Arreola. José Nicolás then looks two mules ahead, at a priest, who shivers in terror and constantly keeps muttering prayers. José Nicolás straightens himself, and looks ahead.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS

(quietly and casually)

I'm José Nicolás de Cos de la  
Portilla.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

(almost cheerfully)

Oh! I'm José as well. The rest of  
my name, however, is not nearly so  
distinguished. I'm simply José de  
Arreola.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS

(surprised tone)

Arreola? Are you related to  
Señor José Sebastian de Arreola y  
Riaño?

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

Indeed. He is my father. But my mother is an Indian. Of course, they were never married.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS

(looking at Arreola  
curiously)

You are a *mestizo*! Then how come that you are among those to be hanged? Is it possible that-

José Nicolás stops mid-sentence as José de Arreola immediately bows his head and looks down. José Nicolás looks ahead to see one of José Maximiliano's lieutenants ride by for a quick check.

After a few minutes of silence, José Nicolás addresses José de Arreola again.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS

How is it that a commoner of mixed blood is among the very top leadership of this insurrection?

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

I was merely a student and servant of Father Hidalgo. I just happened to be with him when we were captured.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS

Well...didn't you tell them? Explain your situation?

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

(scoffed)

Oh, I tried. This so-called revolution was doomed from the start. Even if it had won on the battlefield, it would have just replaced one ruling elite with another. Nothing would have changed for Mexican society.

José Nicolás stares at José de Arreola, taken aback a little.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS

Well, isn't that what a rebellion is for? Is it not instigated by those who resent their betters?

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
 Unfortunately, that was exactly the sum of this revolution. It is my belief that *that* is precisely why it failed.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS  
 (stammering)  
 Well..I-I-I don't..I-I can't...

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
 There's nothing to be done. We all have to die eventually. Perhaps this early death is blessing in disguise; it might be saving me from a life of misery, like the one I had before being rescued from the *obraje*. Not that I want to die, mind you, but I imagine I would find it just as disagreeable at sixty as I do at twenty.

José de Arreola steals a look at José Nicolás from the corner of his eye. He sees José Nicolás sitting atop his mare, face concentrated in thought. José de Arreola smiles subtly to himself before José Maximiliano's thundering voice breaks the silence.

JOSÉ MAXIMILIANO  
 Nicos! What's going on here?

José Nicolás blinks as he looks at José Maximiliano, and swallows.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS  
 Oh, uh...pap-Father, I uh...I know this man looks like a creole but he's actually a *mestizo*.

JOSÉ MAXIMILIANO  
 Good! We'll shoot the purer part of him and hang the heathen.

José Nicolás licks his lips and hesitates.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS  
 (nervously)  
 Well...I mean, as a *mestizo* he couldn't—he couldn't have been a leader, wouldn't have had any substantial role in the uprising. He was probably coerced as a servant to the priest.



JOSÉ MAXIMILIANO  
 (spat)  
 And?

JOSÉ NICOLÁS  
 Well, I just-I just wondered...if  
 we...if we could perhaps spare him.  
 I mean since he was really forced  
 into service of the rebellion.

JOSÉ MAXIMILIANO  
 (booming voice)  
 These miserable cockroaches are  
 responsible for your brother  
 Antonio's death, for God's sake!

José de Arreola takes a quick look at José Maximiliano.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS  
 (trying not to cry)  
 I know, father. I know. But...

JOSÉ MAXIMILIANO  
 But WHAT? You want to save this  
 half-breed mongrel so he can be a  
 burden on Spanish society?

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
 Mi Coronel! I would never want to  
 be a bur-

JOSÉ MAXIMILIANO  
 SILENCE DOG! You've been given no  
 permission to speak!

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
 (bowing his head)  
 Your pardon, sir.

Up ahead, Father Hidalgo stops his prayers suddenly and  
 addresses José Maximiliano.

FATHER HIDALGO  
 If I may speak a word, my esteemed  
 Colonel?

José Maximiliano turns away from José de Arreola and looks  
 at Father Hidalgo in rage.

JOSÉ MAXIMILIANO  
 What is it you have to say,  
 traitor?

FATHER HIDALGO

Only that this young man is the son of José Sebastián de Arreola y Riaño, one of your compatriots in this war-

JOSÉ MAXIMILIANO

(cutting him off)

This rebellion!

FATHER HIDALGO

Yes, yes, your pardon, Colonel. This...rebellion. I-

JOSÉ MAXIMILIANO

And what am I supposed to do with his parentage? His mere association with a butcher like you condemns him to this fate. More than three hundred innocent peninsular Spaniards beheaded and thrown like garbage into a ravine!

FATHER HIDALGO

My honourable Colonel, that was one of my captains, I did not authorize-

JOSÉ MAXIMILIANO

(seething with anger)

A captain you commissioned! And why am I even arguing with the likes of you, a traitor, a heretic and an apostate!

José Nicolás looks at his José Maximiliano, who looks furious.

Just as José Nicolás is about to speak, Father Hidalgo stops his donkey, and turns around to address José Maximiliano.

FATHER HIDALGO

Your pardon, sir. There is no defense for the evil I have committed. I am ashamed for the blood of innocents that stains my soul.

Father Hidalgo pauses as José Maximiliano just stares at him, looking irritated.

FATHER HIDALGO

(pleadingly)

I have no right to ask, but I must plead. This boy, José Necahuatl de Arreola, has the purest soul, loyalist and rebel alike. He urged me to stop and even imprison the bloodthirsty captain. I will go to my grave forever repenting that I didn't heed his directive. I found out later that this young mixed breed even formed a group to spirit those destined for execution to safety, putting his own life in peril. He is, in fact, a hero to you, the loyalists - and now, I realize all too late, to myself. I humbly beg you, Colonel to spare his life. I believe he is the true future of Mexico.

José Maximiliano stares intently at Father Hidalgo, his face of irritation slowly changing to contemplation. He glances at José Nicolás who gives him a slight nod.

With a stiff nod at one of his lieutenants, José Maximiliano gallops away on his horse. The lieutenant removes the manacles from José de Arreola and sets him free.

José Nicolás and Father Hidalgo breath a sigh of relief.

FATHER HIDALGO

(bowing his head)

Thank you, Colonel. May God guide your decision.

35

EXT. BRADY CREEK - DAY

Miss Luz removes the blanket covering G.P.'s leg and sees a reddish bruise spreading above and below the bandaged wound. G.P. winces and swears under his breath. Miss Luz looks at the wound grimly. John Michael looks at her and then at G.P. with a worried face.

G.P. MACALISTER

That blasted Injun musta' soaked the barb, maybe the whole arrow, in somethin!

MISS LUZ

Could be. That chiseled edge alone causes enormous damage the minute it's pushed into flesh.

After silently observing for a few minutes, Miss Luz jumps into action and starts barking orders.

MISS LUZ

Cookie! Get me more of that whisky.  
*Hijo!* Find a stick down and whittle  
 it down to a point - but not too  
 sharp! Rosalie, help me open this  
 wound wider!

John Michael jumps to do exactly as he is told and quickly finds a stick and goes to work on it with a knife. Cookie rushes over and hands the bottle of whisky to Miss Luz.

COOKIE

You in pain Mista' GP?

G.P. MACALISTER

(distractedly)

Ahh...some

COOKIE

Mebbe we should put some peppermint  
 oil on it, soothe it a bit. N ' get  
 some of that stuff Mister Jacob  
 take.

G.P. quickly shoots Cookie a withering look. Cookie cowers back a little.

COOKIE

Er mebbe jus' de peppermint oil.

John Michael hands the whittled down stick to Miss Luz and notices Jacob standing by, looking uncomfortable. He narrows his eyes and shoots him a long look. He turns the other way and looks at Rosalie, Miss Luz, Cookie, and Amelia all gathered around G.P. looking worried. He shakes his head and joins the others.

Miss Luz grabs the stick and wraps a rag around it. She heavily pours the whisky on the rag and completely douses it before carefully inserting it inside G.P.'s wound, gently pressing and moving it around.

G.P. hisses in pain, and closes his eyes. He starts muttering under his breath.

36

EXT. CAVE ENTRANCE - DAY

Young Luz walks out of her cave, holding a sharp stick and wears an animal hide as clothing.

She freezes in her tracks as she sees a slice of pie laid out on the ground in front of her cave. She stares at the pie for a few seconds, blinking several times and whips her head to look around.

She spots the young boy with the yellow hair peeking at her, crouched behind a bush. She immediately takes out her knife and points it at him.

The young boy slowly gets up, with both hands raised and just looks at her calmly.

YOUNG G.P.

Woah now! I ain't gon' hurt you.  
Name's Gerard Phillip - but  
everybody calls me G.P.

Young Luz just stares at Young G.P. not putting the knife down.

YOUNG G.P.

I just brought you some pie. My  
momma makes it real good, honest to  
God. Here, I'll even take a bite.

Young G.P. slowly walks toward the pie. Young Luz stares at him, holding the knife tightly in her hand.

He carefully takes a bite of the pie, chews it, and swallows audibly.

YOUNG G.P.

See? It ain't poisoned 'er nothin'

He grabs the remaining pie and places it closer to Young Luz, and takes several steps back slowly. The two stare at each other for a few seconds.

Young Luz finally lowers the knife, picks up the pie, while keeping an eye on Young G.P.

She takes a large bite and her eyes widen, her mouth and cheeks full from the bite. She quickly devours the rest of the pie and wipes her mouth with the back of her hand.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE

37

EXT. CAVE ENTRANCE - DAY

Young G.P. sets meat and bread outside the cave. Young Luz eats the entire thing in a flash. He chuckles.

Young G.P. bites into an apple and tosses one to Young Luz. She takes a bite and the two eat in silence.

38 EXT. WOODS - DAY

The two are walking together, and they stop at a bush with berries. Young Luz plucks off a few and hands them to him.

They walk together to the spot where Young Luz first saw Young G.P. and he gestures at his family members, standing there, looking expectantly.

Young Luz smiles a small smile.

END MONTAGE SEQUENCE.

39 EXT. MACALISTER FARM - DAY

Young Luz and Young G.P. are running after each other in the thick, green corn fields, laughing and playing together. MISTER MACALISTER (Scots-Irish, 40, greying hair, lean) is on his knees, working on a fortification around the house. He pauses occasionally to watch the children with a warm smile. MRS. MACALISTER (lean, Scots-Irish, blonde hair, 35) is cooing to a baby in her arms, gently rocking back and forth on the porch swing. She hums softly, and the baby giggles, it's tiny fingers reaching up to touch Mrs. Macalister's face.

The children dive into the tall corn stalks, their giggles muffled by the green walls around them. They emerge with armfuls of wildflowers, presenting them proudly to Mrs. Macalister. She laughs, her eyes crinkling with happiness, and takes the flowers, placing a few in her hair and tucking some behind the baby's ear. Mister Macalister finishes his work and stands, wiping his brow and stretching his back, a satisfied look on his face. He picks up his tools and walks over and joins the rest on the porch. Young Luz goes to hug him and he smiles.

SUPER: "Three years later"

The peaceful scene is broken when Mister Macalister stops Young Luz, puts his tools down and slowly gets up, squinting into the distance, spotting a cloud of dust.

The sound of galloping horses is faintly heard. Mister Macalister jumps over the porch and stares wide-eyed into the distance.

MISTER MACALISTER  
(yelling)  
G.P.! Luz! Ya'll take yer mama and  
baby Daniel into the house right  
NOW!

They all run toward the house, terror on their faces.

A spear comes flying and lands itself in Mister Macalister's back. He screams in pain and falls.

Mrs. Macalister, Young G.P. and Young Luz all stop to look back at Mister Macalister. Mrs. Macalister screams.

The Comanches, armed with spears and bows, jump the fence of the Macalister farm and start circling in on the Macalister family.

The Macalisters huddle closer together, with Mister Macalister struggling to get up.

Two of the Comanches suddenly grab Young G.P. and Young Luz while the others shoot several arrows, further injuring Mister Macalister.

MISTER MACALISTER

Ahhhh...not my  
children...please...ahh.

Young G.P. and Young Luz struggle and kick as the Comanches rip off Mrs. Macalister's clothes. They then do the same to Young Luz.

They beat Young G.P. mercilessly and tie his hands together.

The others force Mister Macalister to his knees and rip his head back to scalp him. They beat him with their bows and one of the blows lands on his skull with a sharp CRACK. Mister Macalister falls to the ground in a pool of dirt, and blood - dead.

Young G.P., hands bound, manages to slide them down his legs, and brings them in front. He spots a piece of wood on the ground and seizes it.

With a guttural scream, Young G.P. charges at the Comanche on top of his mother and smacks the piece of wood on his head with force.

The Comanche warrior grunts in pain and falls back, clutching at his wound.

Another warrior quickly comes over and hits Young G.P. on the head and he crumples to the ground, forehead dripping with blood, eyes swelling up from the beatings. The warrior raises his spear to kill Young G.P. when he is suddenly stopped by the Comanche clutching his wound.

He has long, thick braids and a feathered headdress - he looks like their leader. The other Comanches fall back at his command.

He grabs a knife and looks at Young G.P. before plunging it into Mrs. Macalister's heart.

COMANCHE LEADER

(in native language)

Take these two back to camp. The girl can work as a slave. I'll handle the boy.

40 EXT. COMANCHE CAMP - NIGHT

The Comanche warriors throw Young G.P. and Young Luz to the ground.

They take their bloodied hands and bind them with leather braided bands. Then they bind their ankles to their hands. They tighten the bands until Young Luz cries out.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE

41 EXT. COMANCHE CAMP - DAY

Young G.P. is led away by the Comanche leader. He glances back at Young Luz helplessly.

42 EXT. COMANCHE CAMP - NIGHT

Young Luz struggles carrying heavy chunks of firewood on her back, bent over, and sweating profusely. One of the Comanches walks up to her and pushes her with his leg, causing her to fall, with the firewood tumbling on top of her. The rest of them laugh.

43 EXT. COMANCHE CAMP - AFTERNOON

Young Luz is tied to a tree, her back bare and filled with scars. She cries out as she's whipped till she bleeds.

44 EXT. COMANCHE CAMP - EVENING

Young Luz's cheeks are marked with glowing live coals pressed against them by the Comanches. They laugh cruelly as she screams in pain.

45 EXT. COMANCHE CAMP - NIGHT

Young Luz's body is bound to four posts, hands and feet stretched out. The Comanches approach with live coals, their faces twisted in sadistic glee. Young Luz's eyes widen and she starts shaking her head no, struggling to move. They press the coals on her body, and Young Luz cries in agony.

When they finally leave, she is left alone and weary on the ground.



She carefully touches the scars on her face and body, her tears mixing with the dirt and blood on her cheeks.

END MONTAGE SEQUENCE.

46 EXT. COMANCHE CAMP - DAY

SUPER: "Three years later"

Teen Luz watches from a corner as Teen G.P. quickly walks past her. He looks carefully around him, making sure no one is watching them.

TEEN G.P.  
(low voice)  
It's time. Tomorrow. You'll know.  
Be ready.

Without looking at Teen G.P., Teen Luz nods and walks off.

47 EXT. FOREST - AFTERNOON

The Comanche leader dismounts his horse and walks over to retrieve the deer he has just killed.

He turns around with the kill in his hands to see teen G.P. wielding a knife at him. The Comanche leader shows no emotion.

He drops the dead deer and carefully takes out his own knife. Teen G.P. and the Comanche leader dance around each other, circling, staring and pushing their knives at each other, cutting flesh here and there.

Suddenly, the Comanche leader gets teen G.P. into a chokehold with the knife at his throat. He hesitates for a second and teen G.P. seizes the opportunity, turning and sinking a knife into his opponent's heart.

Teen G.P. grabs the reins of the Comanche's horse and jumps onto his own.

48 EXT. COMANCHE CAMP - AFTERNOON

He races back toward the camp, not stopping for a second. The Comanches spot him, start yelling and making noise. Teen Luz looks at teen G.P. and drops the firewood she's carrying. She races toward him and mounts the empty horse next to him, on the run.

49 EXT. WILDERNESS - NIGHT

They gallop on and ride hard through the wilderness. Exhausted, they continue their journey with minimal breaks, eating and sleeping on the run.

50 EXT. FORT HOUSTON - EVENING

The weary pair finally reach Fort Houston on the Navasota River. Teen Luz collapses on the ground out of exhaustion.

51 EXT. MEXICO CITY - DAY

A group of people gather around a flagpole, where a Spanish flag is being lowered. Their eyes are fixed on the pole. As the flag reaches the bottom, it is removed and folded. The crowd is silent, holding its collective breath.

A Mexican soldier steps forward with the new flag of Mexico. He attaches it to the flagpole and begins to raise it. The crowd starts to murmur.

Cheers start to ripple through the crowd as the Mexican flag rises higher. By the time it reaches the top, the entire crowd is cheering and clapping loudly, thumping each others' backs.

The ecstatic men, women and children wave hats and handkerchiefs, some with tears of joy streaming down their faces.

52 EXT. MILITARY CAMP - DAY

José Nicolás, his eyes closed, lay on the ground under the shade of a tree, his mare tied next to him. With no one else around, José Nicolás looks content.

CLOSE-UP OF JOSÉ NICOLÁS' FACE.

The sound of a girl's joyous laughter is heard as José Nicolás smiles slowly.

53 EXT. CORN FIELDS - DAY

DREAM SEQUENCE

José Nicolás stands amongst the corn fields that stretch endlessly, lush and vibrant under a clear blue sky. A gentle breeze rustles the tall leaves, creating waves of movement that dance with the sunlight.

José Nicolás runs in the fields, smiling ear to ear, as he chases after ISABEL ARREOLA Y RIAÑO (Spanish, dark hair, 14, 5'1). Her long raven hair flows behind her, and she turns to look at José Nicolás, her dimples deepening with her joyous laughter.

Isabel turns around to look at José Nicolás.

ISABEL  
(mischeivously)  
Nicolás! Nicolás!

END DREAM SEQUENCE

54

EXT. MILITARY CAMP - DAY

An angry looking José Maximiliano looms over José Nicolás lying on the ground, casting his large shadow on him.

JOSE MAXIMILIANO  
Nicolás! Nicolás! What are you  
doing out here?

José Nicolás sits up, brushing the dirt off of himself.

Joé Maximiliano is about to speak when he spots a lone rider, galloping toward him, a cloud of dust trailing behind him. He carries a satchel slung across his back.

José Nicolás gets up and stands next to his father.

The rider stops a few inches away from Joé Maximiliano and dismounts quickly. Panting, he pulls a document from his satchel and hands it to Joé Maximiliano.

Joé Maximiliano grabs the document with a puzzled expression and his eyes quickly scan the paper in his hands.

His expression turns from confusion to absolute rage.

JOSE MAXIMILIANO  
(screaming)  
Never! I will never submit to these  
treasonous pirates! The devil has  
taken hold of their blackhearted  
souls! How can men nursed at the  
hand of Spain commit such  
treachery?

JOSE NICOLÁS  
(muttering to himself)  
How can they not? When it is the  
steady diet of this civil war?

José Maximiliano doesn't hear him. Fuming, he signals one of his men to bring his horse. He mounts quickly, and turns to look at his army men.

JOSÉ MAXIMILIANO  
Follow me, now! We must make haste!

55 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

MONTAGE SEQUENCE

José Nicolás rides beside José Maximiliano on horseback, their faces grim. The army behind them is small in number.

56 EXT. DUSTY ROAD - DAY

The troops march on, the army formation looks thin. Some soldiers begin to slow down and quickly slip away from the formation. They disappear into the landscape, leaving major gaps in the ranks. José Maximiliano turns back to look at the army, and purses his lips. He continues forward.

57 EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

The army is now reduced to a small band of men. The terrain of the Bajío looms ahead.

END MONTAGE SEQUENCE

58 EXT. OUTSKIRTS SAN MIGUEL EL GRANDE - DAY

On a hill overlooking the town of San Miguel el Grande, José Maximiliano dismounts, dropping his horse's reins and stands gazing below, silent and immoveable.

José Nicolás turns to the few ragtag, starving troops that remain and with just a nod of the head dismisses them all. In ones and twos they noiselessly shuffle away, leaving José Nicolás and José Maximiliano alone.

From the hill top, José Nicolás and José Maximiliano stand side by side, looking at the land below.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS  
(bitterly)  
All our land, all our  
wealth...taken. In the end, what  
was it all for?

59 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

José de Arreola comes across a mule train and stares hungrily at a caravan preparing supper.

He closes his eyes and takes a good long whiff. There are corn tortillas, pinto beans and corn on the cob being plated for the caravan men.

His stomach GROWLS loudly and he places a hand on his belly.

José de Arreola goes up to the caravan and speaks to the man cooking the meals.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

Excuse me, sir, who is the owner of  
this caravan?

COOKING MAN

(pointing in the corner)

That'd be Señor Tomas Sanchez.

José de Arreola nods and goes up to the Señor.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

Señor Sanchez, pardon me. I haven't  
eaten since yesterday morning.  
Could I exchange some work for a  
meal?

Señor Tomas SANCHEZ (Mestizo, 6'1, moustache, greying hair, 40s) turns around to look at José de Arreola from top to bottom.

SEÑOR TOMAS SANCHEZ

And what do you know how to do,  
joven? Do you know anything about  
the care of mules, loading and  
unloading merchandise, the  
servicing of wagons and carts?

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

Sir, I must confess that I know  
very little of horses, mules or  
donkeys, but I learn very fast. I  
was once manager of a pottery  
workshop and know very well how to  
pack even fragile items for  
transport—and to unpack them safely  
and expeditiously. I also know what  
materials and foodstuffs to include  
for an extended journey and to  
barter and trade, if those skills  
would be of help.

José de Arreola hesitates for a minute.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

I feel for some reason, however, that I should tell you that in the pottery business I always tried to give my clients a fair deal for their money or trade, even when I knew I could milk a better deal for myself. In fact, I even tripled their profits.

Señor Tomas looks at him, and tilts his head.

SEÑOR TOMAS SANCHEZ

Very well.

He turns to grab a tin bowl and spoon from his wagon and starts to usher José de Arreola over to the food.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

Oh, sir, I must do the work before taking advantage of your hospitality.

SEÑOR TOMAS SANCHEZ

(chuckling lightly)

I find that all my workers perform better when they are not starving to death. You have that look.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

But sir...

SEÑOR TOMAS SANCHEZ

*No hay pero que valga.* Go on. Eat up.

José de Arreola digs into the bowl of food and devours it hungrily.

60

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Señor Tomas Sanchez shrewdly observes José de Arreola's from a distance as he brushes and pickets the mules.

José de Arreola then goes to inspect Señor Tomas's merchandise and gestures to the workers how to secure it with less binding.

Señor Tomas walks up to José de Arreola.

SEÑOR TOMAS SANCHEZ  
 How would you like to be hired for  
 our entire journey - we are on our  
 way to San Luis Potosí and from  
 there to Guanajuato. We will pass  
 through the heart of the Bajío.

José de Arreola looks at him and beams.

61 EXT. DUSTY ROAD - DAY

MONTAGE SEQUENCE

José de Arreola walks alongside Don Tomás, eagerly talking.  
 Don Tomás listens and then talks animatedly, gesturing a  
 lot.

62 EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT

José de Arreola assists with various tasks, like harnessing  
 the mules, stacking the boxes on the carts and checking  
 their binding. Señor Tomás observes, and nods in approval.

63 EXT. MARKETPLACE - DAY

José de Arreola talks somberly with another man. Señor Tomás  
 watches from a distance, smiling proudly.

64 EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT

Señor Tomás hands José de Arreola a small pouch of coins.  
 José de Arreola initially protests, but Señor Tomás nods,  
 patting him on the back.

65 EXT. POST OFFICE - DAY

José de Arreola puts money in an envelope, his face worried.

66 EXT. DUSTY ROAD - DAY

Señor Tomás and José de Arreola continue their journey,  
 working together seamlessly as a team.

END MONTAGE SEQUENCE.

67 EXT. GUANAJUATO - DAY

José de Arreola and Señor Tomas are out of the caravan and  
 arguing.

SEÑOR TOMAS SANCHEZ  
 José, you have saved me untold  
 amounts above the added sales you  
 made.

(MORE)

SEÑOR TOMAS SANCHEZ (CONT'D)  
 Who knows how much of the money you  
 sent actually got to your family,  
 if any? You'll need this if you're  
 lucky enough to find them alive.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
 (pleadingly)  
 Señor, plea-

SEÑOR TOMAS SANCHEZ  
 Listen to me! I'll be passing this  
 way after a short trip to  
 Valladolid. I'll find you in San  
 Miguel or Dolores or wherever you  
 end up. In the meantime, take the  
 money and find your family! You'll  
 be no use to me dead or mourning.

The two hug goodbye, and José de Arreola sets off.

68 EXT. SAN MIGUEL EL GRANDE - DAY

José de Arreola hops off the mule cart and looks around. He  
 stands in the middle of a busy streets and looks at several  
 vendors setting up their stalls.

He looks at different stalls selling corn and beans,  
 cheeses, milk, leather goods and medicinal herbs.

He notices the street is filled with haggard looking men and  
 women begging at various corners for food.

His starts to walk and scans several corners and alley ways,  
 until he finally spots a bunch of figures huddled together.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
 (whispering to himself)  
 No...

He runs toward the figures and sinks down to his knees.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
 (shocked)  
 Mama...Veronica,  
 Patricia...Luisito!

José de Arreola's mother looks at him, squinting her eyes.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA'S MOTHER  
 José...is that you?

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
 What happened, mama?



JOSÉ DE ARREOLA'S MOTHER

(crying)

José...we were forced out of our home! We have been living on these streets, begging to survive. We tried to keep going, José. But it's been s-so hard.

José de Arreola hugs his family.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

(tears streaming down his face)

I'm here now. We'll find a way out of this. I promise.

69 EXT. POST OFFICE - DAY

José de Arreola tears open the letter in his hands addressed to him, with Señor Tomas's name at the back.

José de Arreola quickly scans the contents of the letter, reading it aloud in bits and pieces.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

Be in Guanajuato ...delivery to San Luis...Mexico City...to Acapulco...shipment to the East...

José de Arreola pockets the letter and smiles.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

(thinking out loud)

This is perfect! Dolores is on the way to San Luis and I can check on the the pottery workshop myself...it'll work as the perfect new home for the family.

70 EXT. POTTERY WORKSHOP - DAY

José de Arreola stands there looking at the abandoned building.

SEÑOR TOMAS SANCHEZ

José! Did you find the owner?

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

Yes, Don Thomas. The workshop is owned by some local Spanish merchant. But...

SEÑOR TOMAS SANCHEZ

But what?

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
 (sheepishly)  
 He isn't too keen on a common  
 mestizo like me taking over.

SEÑOR TOMAS SANCHEZ  
 That's absurd! But there are ways  
 to convince him...

Tomas smiles slyly and makes a gesture with his hand,  
 repeatedly rubbing his thumb over the tip of his index  
 finger and middle finger.

José de Arreola and Don Tomas smile.

José de Arreola turns around and looks at the pottery  
 workshop with longing.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
 Don Tomás, I'll have to take my  
 family back to-

SEÑOR TOMAS SANCHEZ  
 (cutting him off)  
 No, you shall not. Your family will  
 join the caravan.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
 Oh, but Don Tomás, I couldn't  
 impose on you that way.

SEÑOR TOMAS SANCHEZ  
 (smiling)  
 What you will not deprive me of is  
 the extra help your family can  
 provide. They will work for food  
 and shelter. If they're half as  
 smart as you, I'll make out like a  
 bandit on the deal.

José de Arreola turns back to look at his family and sighs  
 in relief.

71 INT. POTTERY WORKSHOP - DAY

SUPER: "Two years later"

José de Arreola and Señor Tomas walk around the abandoned  
 pottery workshop.

José de Arreola runs his hands along a potter's wheel and  
 dusts off his hands.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
Well...we've finally rented it. All  
we need is our artisans to design  
the pottery.

Señor Tomas walks around the empty workshop, looking  
carefully at his surroundings, a faint smile on his face.

SEÑOR TOMAS SANCHEZ  
All in good time, boy.

72 EXT. SAN MIGUEL EL GRANDE - AFTERNOON

José de Arreola walks up the hill and comes across an adobe  
hut with beautiful designs etched and dyed in shades of  
blue, yellow and white, adorning its exterior.

José de Arreola gasps and stands there for a few seconds  
staring at the designs, running his hand over them  
reverently. He spots the door propped against the entrance  
of the hut and knocks on it.

A middle-aged woman opens the door, her face sunken and  
emaciated. She looks at José de Arreola nervously.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
Good afternoon! I was walking by  
and couldn't help but admire the  
beautiful designs outside your  
home. Did you make them?

The woman looks at him suspiciously and nods.

José de Arreola cranes his neck and looks past her into the  
house. He spots some cups made of clay.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
And the ollas and cups I see on  
your shelves?

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN  
My daughter and I, we make  
together.

José de Arreola could barely contain his smile.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
Could I ask what kind of potter's  
wheel you have to make those fine  
designs?

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN  
 (confusingly)  
 What is potors huil? We have no  
 potors huil. Only our hands.

Jose de Arreola holds Papaplotl by her upper arms.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
 (beaming)  
 Madam, you are the God-given answer  
 to my prayers!

The middle-aged woman looks at him, amazed and confused.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
 I would like to hire you, and your  
 daughter to work in my pottery  
 workshop.

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN  
 Hire? You mean to pay me?

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
 Yes! To pay you and your daughter.  
 I mean, at first it would not be  
 much, but with time and success it  
 would certainly increase.

The middle-aged woman looks skeptical.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
 Do you know of Father Hidalgo? His  
 Talavera pottery?

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN  
 I have heard, but I know nothing of  
 potors huils.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
 I will show you. Believe me, it  
 makes the production of pottery,  
 the variety of designs so much  
 easier. You and your daughter will  
 love it. Please, can both of you  
 come with me to my workshop in  
 Dolores? Please have no fear,  
 Señora, I will provide  
 transportation and sustenance. Can  
 you leave tomorrow?

José de Arreola takes out some money from his pocket and  
 places it in the middle-aged woman's hand.

She stands in bewilderment looking down at the money. He closes her hand around it.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

You and your daughter can come with some food in your stomachs. Oh, my name is José Necahuatl de Arreola.

The middle-aged woman smiles at looks at José de Arreola.

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN

I am called Papaplotl.

73

EXT. U.S. ARMY CAMP - DAY

G.P. and Miss Luz stand before a U.S. army Colonel, with a few soldiers scattered about, cleaning guns, loading supplies.

U.S. ARMY COLONEL

A woman? Scouting for the army?

He throws his head back and lets out a booming laugh. A few of the soldiers snigger.

U.S. ARMY COLONEL

(bemused)

Well ma'am, I do appreciate the offer but we got some Tonkawas providin' that service.

G.P. MACALISTER

(unamused)

Tonkawas 'er good at followin' trails, and they'd love to help wipe out the Comanches, but they don't know Comanche ways like we do.

The colonel chews his lips for a moment.

U.S. ARMY COLONEL

I'm sure that's true, and we'd welcome your help, Mister Macalister, but the idea of the army lettin' a woman face that kinda danger is a pretty tall order.

G.P. Is about to speak when Miss Luz cuts him off. She shoves up her sleeves to reveal the deep scars on her arms and wrists.

MISS LUZ

You see these scars? *I* survived the Comanches! They beat *me*, tortured *me*, tried to break *me*. They burned off my nose with their cruel fires.

Miss Luz points to the marks on her face.

MISS LUZ

These marks on my face? Marked forever with live coals, seared deep into my cheeks, reminders of every scream they laughed at.

Miss Luz opens her mouth wide with both her index fingers to show the gaps where her teeth used to be.

MISS LUZ

I lost my teeth to their fists and stones. I endured every savage act with a fire inside that they could never extinguish. How many of your soldiers could do the same?

The colonel looks at his soldiers, rubbing his chin.

G.P. MACALISTER

You take both o' us or neither.

74

EXT. COMANCHE CAMP - NIGHT

U.S. army soldiers along with G.P. and Miss Luz watch the Comanche camp from a distance, hidden behind bushes.

G.P. narrows his eyes and looks around the camp.

G.P. MACALISTER

(whispering)

I don't see no men...they might be out huntin' or raidin'

One of the soldiers raises his hand and signals the rest to move forward.

The Comanche camp is rushed by the sudden, movement of yelling soldiers, clad in uniforms and brandishing weapons, storming into the camp, their faces grim.

A Comanche woman, her face etched with fear, clutches her child tightly as they run towards the safety of the forest. The child's CRIES pierce the chaos.

The camp erupts into pandemonium. Tents are ripped apart by the soldiers, and the camp is set on fire by lit torches, sending sparks into the night sky. The old Comanche men left behind attempt to fight back, wielding makeshift weapons, but are quickly overpowered.

An elderly Comanche man tries to guide a group of young boys towards the edge of the camp, but they are intercepted by soldiers. The old man is struck down, and the boys are rounded up, their faces reflecting shock.

G.P. and Miss Luz see the carnage being unleashed by the soldiers and look at the scene in wide-eyed shock.

Suddenly, G.P. spots a soldier on horseback about to bayonet a Comanche child, who has his arms crossed in front of his face.

He runs toward the scene and knocks the soldier off of the horse, giving the Comanche child time to run away.

G.P. Macalister runs all over the camp, berating soldiers and is eventually able to stop the ongoing slaughter.

Fuming in anger, G.P. and Miss Luz gallop away on their horses.

75 EXT. U.S. ARMY CAMP - NIGHT

As G.P. and Miss Luz dismount, the Colonel spots them from a distance and walks toward them.

With a confused expression on his face, the Colonel is about to speak but G.P. cuts him off.

Miss Luz and G.P. tear their army badges off of their arms violently, hand them over to the Colonel, and mount again.

Without another glance, they gallop away.

The Colonel watches them quizzically with the badges in his hand.

76 EXT. SAN ROMAN RANCH - DAY

José Nicolás walks toward the porch and shoots a disgusted look at José Maximiliano, sitting in a rocking chair, staring into oblivion. His eyes seem lifeless, his face devoid of any emotion. José Maximiliano has dark circles under his eyes, and has lost a considerable amount of weight. His pot belly protrudes from under his clothes. His skin looks sallow, his hair matted and tangled. He holds a bottle of tequila out of which he occasionally takes long swigs.

As José Nicolás steps onto the porch, he looks up in surprise to hear shouting voices coming from inside the house.

José Nicolás hesitates before walking in.

77

INT. SAN ROMAN RANCH - DAY

Inside the house, he looks in the corner of the parlour and sees DOÑA ANASTASIA (Spanish, 40s, 5'7, light brown hair) looking at the ground, silently crying, her hands clasped together tightly. CARIDAD (Spanish, 15, brown hair, 5'5) stands beside her, rubbing her shoulders and consoling her.

In the middle of the room, DON ELEUTERIO SAN ROMÁN DE ULÚA (Spanish, early 50s, balding, 5'8), livid with anger, is shouting at DOÑA MARÍA IMELDA DE LA PORTILLA DE SAN ROMÁN (Spanish, late 40s, 5'6, dark hair).

DON ELEUTERIO

It was since they came to live with us that everything has gone to hell! They are traitorous leeches, sucking the life out of all the fruits my pure Spanish hand has created. And they need to know it!

DOÑA MARIA

(panicked expression)

Teo, please! Not in the presence of-

DON ELEUTERIO

(cutting her off)

No! They need to hear! I don't care if they're your family. It is our harboring of treasonous pirates that has dragged us down, dragged *me* down. They live off all my hard work, making no contribution, sucking up whatever pitiful bit of—of good I can squeeze out of our possessions! Our possessions.

DOÑA MARIA

Husband, they cook, they clean, they work in our garden, they make their own clothes. Things they've never had to do before. Nicos cares for your stock-



DON ELEUTERIO

And he does a terrible job! Go on, take their side because they're your family. I don't even have the support of my own wife!

DOÑA MARIA

I am only asking you to be reasonable!

DON ELEUTERIO

No! What you are asking is for me to dig our family's grave in order to cater to your sister's wretched family!

DOÑA ANASTASIA

(sniffs)

Eleuterio please, the idea of being a burden is repugnant to me.

José Nicolás moved to stand beside her and held her hand.

DOÑA ANASTASIA

We have tried to be as little disruptive to your lives as possible and to contribute as best we can. But if our presence here is intolerable for you, we will find some alternative. I ask only for some few weeks to find other accommodations.

DON ELEUTERIO

(sarcastically)

Yes, by all means, find someone else to leech off of.

Doña Maria gasps and puts her hands on her mouth.

DOÑA MARIA

(indignantly)

Eleuterio!

At the same time, a fuming José Nicolás goes up to Don Eleuterio and slaps him across the face with a resounding SMACK.

There were gasps in the room as Don Eleuterio falls back several paces, hand on his cheek.

For a moment, Don Eleuterio is too stunned to speak, unsure of how to react. He then shakes his head, and goes directly to his collection of guns on the wall of the parlour.

He grabs a pistol, and quickly advances toward José Nicolás, while loading the pistol.

DOÑA MARIA  
(panicking)  
Teo, no!

Doña Maria tries to insert herself between Don Eleuterio and José Nicolás. Don Eleuterio pushes her aside and as he cocks the pistol, he brings it up within centimetres of José Nicolás's forehead.

José Nicolás takes one short step forward to place his forehead firmly against the pistol's barrel, his face devoid of emotion.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS  
(coldly)  
Go ahead, uncle. You'll be doing me  
a favour.

For a moment, everyone stands frozen in place. Doña Anastasia, clutches Caridad. Doña Maria, has her hands over her mouth. José Nicolás standing firmly in front of Don Eleuterio's pistol.

Don Eleuterio carefully lowers the pistol, not taking his eyes off of José Nicolás.

DON ELEUTERIO  
(quiet, but firm)  
You will be out of this house  
tomorrow at daybreak.

Don Eleuterio turns around and walks out of the room without looking back.

78 EXT. ESTATE - DAY

José Nicolás, Doña Anastasia, and Caridad stand at the steps to the estate's entrance, clutching their meagre belongings.

DON FELIPE (Spanish, 28, brown hair, brown eyes, 6'0) and CONSUELA (Spanish, 19, light brown hair, 5'7) stand at the door.

DON FELIPE  
Absolutely not! I have debased  
myself enough, marrying the  
daughter of a traitor!  
(MORE)

DON FELIPE (CONT'D)

To harbor the rest of his family, and especially the son who followed him in his perfidy, would consign my reputation to the depths of a starving street mongrel!

CONSUELA

(timidly)

Don Felipe, my dear husband, could we not let them stay in one of your other houses? Or the ranch outside San Miguel, maybe? Not even in the main house; perhaps one of the ranch hands' quarters. They would be far enough away that no one would know.

DON FELIPE

No one? Everyone! Everyone would know in a heartbeat. You've no idea how fast gossip travels throughout the provinces! I'm being considered for a seat on the Congress in Mexico City. Nothing would dash those hopes faster than the harboring of royalist traitors!

Don Felipe slams the door in José Nicolás's face. Livid with anger and shame, José Nicolás turns around to walk away with Doña Anastasia and Caridad.

CONSUELA

Nicos! Wait!

José Nicolás turned around to see a tearful Consuela looking nervously at him, her hands clutching a wrapped pile.

She looks behind her and quickly takes out a sparkling diamond necklace from the concealed wrapper in her hand.

She shoves the necklace in José Nicolás's hands.

CONSUELA

(tears streaming down her face)

Here, brother. Take this, I'm-I'm so sorry!

Consuela wipes her tears and quickly goes inside the house, quietly shutting the door behind her.

José Nicolás looks at the necklace in his hands and a single tear rolls down his face.

79

INT. POTTERY WORKSHOP - DAY

José de Arreola looks around the pottery workshop with a satisfied expression. The sound of the potter's wheel running, the busy faces of Papaplotl and AXOCHITL (Mestiza, 19, long dark hair, 5'6) as they work together side by side, and Don Tomas overseeing the packing and shipping of the pottery goods makes him smile.

Don Tomas walks over to José de Arreola, arms wide open.

SEÑOR TOMAS SANCHEZ  
(grinning)  
Business is booming, eh?

JOSE DE ARREOLA  
(beaming)  
More than I could have imagined.

José de Arreola then spots LUISITO (Mestizo, 5'4, overweight, bowed legs, 18) sulking in a corner, alone, taking long swigs from a flask.

José de Arreola sighs and shakes his head.

80

INT. POTTERY WORKSHOP - NIGHT

José de Arreola stands by the window, his face lit by the fire crackling in the background.

Señor Tomas studies him, his face somber.

SEÑOR TOMAS SANCHEZ  
I'm sorry about Luisito's death,  
*hijo*...that drunken brawl was  
outrageous. But this criminal  
charge against you...you will lose  
this case.

JOSE DE ARREOLA  
(smiling wryly)  
That is a foregone conclusion.

Señor Tomas Sanchez sighs and runs his hand through his hair in frustration.

JOSE DE ARREOLA  
It's sad, you know.

SEÑOR TOMAS SANCHEZ  
Sad? It's criminal, *hijo*!

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

(smiles)

My distress is for all of Mexico, Don Tomás. By creating this flourishing enterprise, we've given good, meaningful work to people all over this country. Of course, we did it in our own self-interest, but in doing so, we have provided employment and hope to so many—even to those perennially excluded from such opportunities. And now, because of the accident of our birth, and simple envy, the country will destroy such promise. For all Mexico, as I can't imagine we're the only ones.

SEÑOR TOMAS SANCHEZ

Ah...that.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

And now, we have a so-called republic with a President who hides away from his obligations on his hacienda in Veracruz!

José de Arreola walks away from the window and stands next to the fire.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

Why *can't* we govern ourselves?

SEÑOR TOMAS SANCHEZ

Ah *hijo*, you ask questions beyond my old brain's ability to even consider. All I can handle now are much simpler perplexities of this life: like how we're going to save you from these false charges.

José de Arreola turns to Señor Tomas with a curious look.

81

EXT. POTTERY WORKSHOP - NIGHT

José de Arreola and Señor Tomas stand beside three wagons, full of belongings. José de Arreola's mother peeps out from under one of the rolled and loaded carpets.

José de Arreola looks around quickly and uses his hand to gesture her to hide back inside.

José de Arreola's mother nods and conceals herself under the rolled up carpet again.

Papaplotl and Axochitl dressed in men's clothing with loose ponchos and wide-brimmed sombreros, help each other mount horses to join the journey.

José de Arreola whistles, and a young boy comes running. He hands him a pouch of coins.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
(looking around)  
Anybody who asks, tell them we're  
leaving for Mexico City in the  
morning.

The young boy nods and runs off. Señor Tomas looks impassively at José de Arreola.

SEÑOR TOMAS SANCHEZ  
You think it'll work?

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
(grimly)  
It has to.

82 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

The travelling caravan with José de Arreola, Señor Tomas and the others slowly travels a dusty road.

They pass by a sign. José de Arreola looks at it intently.

CLOSE-UP OF SIGN READING: BIENVENIDO A VERACRUZ!

83 EXT. VERACRUZ MARKET - DAY

José de Arreola and Alfredo are setting up their stall at the bustling marketplace.

Suddenly, a commotion erupts nearby as two other vendors start arguing loudly.

José de Arreola and Alfredo look up and quickly move to break up the fight just as one vendor pulls a pistol out of his belt. The action prompts the other to do the same.

The first vendor fires his pistol with a loud BANG but misses his target. Screams erupt in the marketplace, as men, women and children hunker down, hands protecting their heads or covering their ears.

At the same time, the sound of the pistol causes Axochitl's horse to rear with a NEIGH and she is thrown to the ground.

José de Arreola rushes to her aid. As Axochitl sits up, the second vendor fires his pistol with another BANG.

José de Arreola manages to keep Axochitl's horse from bolting by quickly grabbing the reins. Don Tomás and Alfredo also quickly gain control of the mules.

Nearby, a horse and buggy with a very dignified and rich looking doña and a young girl takes off in startled fury at the sound of the pistol, yanking the reins from the *dama's* hands.

The two ladies scream in terror and José de Arreola whips his head in the direction of the noise.

He jumps on Axochitl's horse and gallops at breakneck speed, catching up to pull alongside the runaway buggy.

He tries to grab hold of the reins, but can only manage to take one in his hand. It quickly escapes him.

He then put his left foot up on his horse's saddle and jumps onto the runaway horse, almost falling underneath it.

He grabs the reins and gently pulls on them.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
(soothing voice)  
Woah, boy, *tranquilo!* Eaaasy.  
Woahhh.

After a few seconds, the runaway horse begins to slow down and gradually comes to a halt. José de Arreola doesn't dismount immediately - he spends some time stroking the horse's neck and talking to it in a low, soothing voice.

He looks behind him in the buggy and sees well-cushioned seats in a royal shade of emerald with red velvet curtains. José de Arreola looks over at the two ladies inside, in a state of shock, tightly holding onto each other, breathing heavily.

José de Arreola dismounts the horse, and immediately grimaces as he feels pain in his foot. He bends over and grabs his knee, before crumbling to the ground.

Before he can get up, the two ladies collect themselves and rush out of the buggy to kneel beside him.

The young girl throws her arms around José de Arreola as the Doña examines his foot.

DOÑA

Your ankle is broken, *caballero*. We will take you to our hacienda and pick up the doctor on the way. Are you in much pain?

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA is about to speak, but the Dona speak interrupts him.

The Doña looks at José de Arreola with a hint of pride.

DOÑA

(somberly)

You saved me and my daughter's lives, *Señor*. My husband will reward you handsomely.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

Oh please, *Señora*. Anyone would have done the same. I-

DOÑA

But no others did, and if they had, very few would have been successful. You will stay on our hacienda until you're completely recovered. You will have the best doctor in the state of Veracruz - maybe the best in all Mexico. My husband and I will see to that.

The young girl leans in with a wide smile.

YOUNG GIRL

I'm María Joséfina López de Santa Anna. And you, sir?

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

De Santa Ana? You mean your father is...

DOÑA

Antonio López de Santa Anna, yes.

84

EXT. GUANAJUATO - DAY

José Nicolás, Doña Anastasia and Caridad are all crammed together in a dimly lit room with a tiny window. A single, threadbare mattress lies on the floor, its worn fabric barely concealing the lumps and springs beneath. The mattress is the only piece of furniture in the room. The walls are stained and peeling. In one corner, a small pile of belongings - frayed blankets, a few pieces of clothing, and a chipped ceramic jug - sits haphazardly.



Doña Anastasia holds a letter in her hands, and reads some of it aloud. José Nicolás and Caridad stare off into the distance.

DOÑA ANASTASIA  
 (eyes scanning the  
 letter)  
 Dear sister...bankrupt...Don  
 Eleuterio...his  
 pistol...suicide...family  
 debt...sold the ranch...

Doña Anastasia looks up in terror. There is a heavy knock on the door. Caridad jumps as José Nicolás goes to answer it.

José Nicolás opens the door to a short woman with a sunken face.

SHORT WOMAN  
 Listen up. Your presence...in my  
 rooming house has become  
 intolerable. Pack your stuff and  
 find somewhere else to stay. Now.

The woman walks away, leaving José Nicolás stunned in silence for a few seconds.

He slams the door shut, breathing heavily, his hands forming fists, shaking with rage.

85 EXT. GUANAJUATO STREETS - EVENING

The wind WHISTLES as it sways the trees dangerously. José Nicolás crosses his arms and rubs his shoulders as he walks to a makeshift shelter on the streets of Guanajuato. He looks at Doña Anastasia's sunken face, and Caridad huddled with her knees to her chest, shivering from the cold.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS  
 (frustrated)  
 Nothing today either. I asked  
 everywhere, no one will hire me.

Beat.

CARIDAD  
 (nervously)  
 I...I may have a solution.

José Nicolás looks at her sharply, his face a picture of relief.

CARIDAD  
 (tentatively)  
 There's a local latifundista...Don  
 Francisco de Aranjuez. He will let  
 us stay in one of his houses on the  
 road to San Miguel.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS  
 (suspiciously)  
 In exchange for what? I recently  
 approached him about trading work  
 for lodging and his reaction was,  
 if anything, contemptuous.

Caridad is quiet for a moment. José Nicolás looks at Doña  
 Anastasia, who silently stares off in the distance.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS  
 (frowning in confusion)  
 Cari...? What does he propose,  
 sister? Is he asking for your hand  
 in marriage?

CARIDAD  
 Not exactly...marriage.

Caridad lowers her eyes to the ground. José Nicolás looks  
 confused for a second. Then his face changes to shock, and  
 then anger.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS  
 (angrily)  
 And did you spit in his face, then?

A tear rolls down Doña Anastasia's haggard face. Caridad  
 keeps her head down, scratching at something on the ground.

José Nicolás lets out his breath in one go and staggers  
 back, hitting a wall. He slides down the wall, one hand on  
 his head, and stares vacantly in the distance for a few  
 seconds.

He hears a man's voice behind him.

STRANGER (O.S.)  
 José Nicolás de Cos de la Portilla.

G.P. and Miss Luz arrive on horseback into a town. They pass  
 a signboard labelled 'Liberty.'

From a distance G.P. and Miss Luz see a YOUNG LADY (German, brown hair, blue eyes, 5'6, sturdy build) attend to an old man who is chained to a whipping post in the town square. His face is bloody, and swollen.

She gives him some food and goes to fill a cup from the town pump. She walks back to the old man and helps him drink.

At the same time a Mexican army captain arrives with his troops in tow and looks at the young lady offering water to the chained old man.

The captain breaks from his troops and runs his horse right at Young Lady as she turns. He knocks her and the cup of water down. The young lady gasps and falls backwards, her clothes now marked with dirt.

Miss Luz dismounts but G.P. stops her and goes to Young Lady instead. He helps her up, dusts her off and, looks straight at the captain while refilling the cup with water from the pump.

He hands the cup to the Young Lady and slowly escorts her back to the old man.

G.P. walks up to the captain and the two just stare at each other. A crowd has gathered by now, gasping and whispering at the scene.

A few seconds later, the captain withdraws and walks off, without a word. He mounts his horse and continues on his way with his troops behind him. He trains his gaze forward, and never glances back.

Young Lady looks nervously at G.P.

YOUNG LADY

*Danke.* Eh, thank you.

G.P. tips his hat and looks into her eyes. She smiles a tiny smile at him.

G.P. MACALISTER

You're welcome ma'am. Please let me get you some more water for your...is this your father?

YOUNG LADY

*Ja,* he is.

G.P. just stands there for a moment, staring at Young Lady. Then he slightly shakes his head and clears his throat.

G.P. MACALISTER  
 (awkwardly)  
 I'll uh...I'll be right  
 back...It's, uh...it's just right  
 over here. I'll just, uh...

Miss Luz tilts her head and looks at G.P., crossing her arms with a bemused expression on her face.

87 EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

G.P. and Miss Luz free the old man from his chains using smithing tools.

He rubs his wrists and breathes a sigh of relief.

OLD MAN  
 Danke, danke! Ihr müsst mit uns  
 nach Hause kommen und zu Abend  
 essen. Meine Tochter, sag ihnen,  
 dass sie mit uns zu Abend essen  
 müssen.

The old man looked at the young lady.

YOUNG LADY  
 (smiling)  
 He's very, very grateful. He's  
 insisting you must come home to  
 supper with us. Oh, I'm Edeline,  
 and this is my father, Jakob Bauer.

G.P. looks at her and smiles.

88 INT. BAUER HOME - EVENING

G.P., Miss Luz, Edeline and Jakob Bauer are having supper at the dinner table. The room is sparse but cozy with lit candles. A single, well-worn wooden rocking chair sits in one corner, facing a modest stone fireplace where a gentle fire crackles, casting flickering shadows on the walls. A handmade quilt, intricately patterned, drapes over a simple, sturdy bed. The wooden floor is bare except for a braided rug near the hearth.

MISS LUZ  
 Edeline...if you don't mind me  
 asking, why'd they whip your  
 father?

EDELINE

(chewing slowly)

For signing a petition. He didn't know what he was signing since it was in English. I was not here to eh...translate. I just hope that awful Captain Bradburn won't take away my father's land because of the petition.

MISS LUZ

(nodding at G.P.)

Oh. G.P. here and I also applied for ours - we used my Spanish name. We got a good chunk.

Edeline is about to speak when she spots Jakob Bauer about to doze off.

MISS LUZ

Uhh...I think we should get going. Mister Bauer needs rest.

EDELINE

(smiling kindly)

No, please. Stay.

Edeline turns to Jakob Bauer and has a quick, sharp conversation with him in German. She keeps her voice down and pats his shoulder.

Jakob Bauer nods sleepily, smiles at the G.P. and Miss Luz and gets up from the table to exit the room.

As Miss Luz gets up, G.P. begins to rise as well but is immediately pulled down discreetly by his belt by Miss Luz. She looks at him without blinking. G.P. clears his throat.

Miss Luz leaves the room, leaving G.P. and Edeline alone at the table. The two gaze at each other and a hint of a smile breaks on G.P.'s face.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE

89 INT. SMALL CHAPEL - DAY

G.P. and Edeline exchange vows in a modest ceremony. The couple beams with joy, surrounded by Miss Luz and Jakob Bauer.

90 EXT. BAUER RANCH- DAY

G.P. shakes hands with another landowner. The landowner walks away with several horses in tow.

SUPER: "Two years later"

THE CAMERA PULLS BACK TO REVEAL ADJOINING LANDS WITH EDELINE AND JAKOB BAUER STANDING ON THE OTHER SIDE, NOW FORMING A SINGLE, EXPANSIVE FARM.

91 EXT. BAUER/MACALISTER RANCH - DAY

Miss Luz, G.P., and a few ranch hands toil in the fields. Jakob Bauer seems to be giving instructions. They plow the earth, plant seeds, and tend to the growing crops, working seamlessly together.

92 INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - DAY

Miss Luz and Edeline bustle around the kitchen. They laugh and chat together.

93 EXT. BAUER/MACALISTER RANCH - DAY

Jakob Bauer looks at the fields in the farm, giving directions and inspecting the crops. Nearby, Edeline sits with ledgers, diligently scribbling away.

94 EXT. BAUER/MACALISTER RANCH - EVENING

G.P. and Edeline walk through the green fields, hand in hand, and smile at each other. G.P. says something and Edeline laughs and rests her head on his shoulder.

END MONTAGE SEQUENCE

95 EXT. GUANAJUATO STREETS - EVENING

José Nicolás slowly looks up to the voice that called out his full name.

His gaze travels from the shiny brown shoes, up the startlingly white pantaloons, the crimson red and navy blue jacket with gold buttons and the white sash criss-crossed over the front, up toward the STRANGER'S smiling face, his head tilted.

STRANGER

What has become of you, José  
Nicolás, my savior?

José Nicolás screws his face in confusion. He blinks several times, and rubs his eyes.

STRANGER

You don't recognize me. I certainly  
can't blame you.

(MORE)

## STRANGER (CONT'D)

We met in another lifetime. Perhaps if you picture me not beside this mighty steed but rather astride the sorriest burro imaginable. See me not in this officer's uniform but in peasant's attire with my hands bound behind my back.

Stranger turns to pull out tortillas, jerky and a blanket from a bag tied to the steed. He holds the food out to José Nicolás.

## STRANGER

How can you forget the young rebel whose life you saved from the hangman's rope?

Seeing the food, Doña Anastasia, Caridad and José Nicolás jump to grab it. They devour the tortillas and jerky, barely even chewing, almost swallowing it whole.

Stranger unfolds the blanket and wraps it around Doña Anastasia and Caridad. He takes out more food from his bag and holds that out.

## STRANGER

I entreat you to slow your consumption of my pitiful offerings and chew them thoroughly before swallowing. You have the look of those who have lost true acquaintance with regular meals, so I fear your stomachs will rebel at only partially chewed food.

José Nicolás ignores the stranger's advice and wolfs down the food in his hands.

Suddenly he stops chewing, cocks his head and gasps. He looks at the stranger with his eyes wide, hastily swallows the food and points his finger at him.

## JOSÉ NICOLÁS

You...you...at Coahuila!  
at the end of the first rebellion.  
You were part of the train with  
Father Hidalgo y Costilla, on its  
way to their execution. You were  
the only one in peasant's clothes.  
But I forget your name. No,  
wait...It was José, like mine.

The stranger smiles.

STRANGER

Yes, it is José, like yours. I am José de Arreola, now a general in the army of President Antonio López de Santa Anna, preparing to march to the province of Texas in an attempt, which I fear will be futile, to put down a nascent independence movement—which my leader calls a rebellion of pirates.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS

So you did join the rebels. After you were spared.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

Actually...I did not. How I got to be a member of the army of General López de Santa Anna is a tale to be told over a real meal, at the house where my wife, Axochitl and I are staying.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS

What are you doing here, in Guanajuato?

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

I am tasked with mustering troops for the adventure in the northern province—a duty I find quite distasteful owing to my pessimism concerning its chances of success. But alas...a soldier must carry out his orders, disagreeable as they may be. I owe my life and the lives of my mother and sisters to the president.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS

How did that come to be?

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

I will gladly tell you my story - my whole story. But first, all of you need sustenance. Our rented apartment isn't far, and it's almost time for supper. Come.

Axochitl, with a gentle smile on her face, clears the wooden table, stacked with plates of finished food.



José Nicolás, Doña Anastasia, Caridad, and José de Arreola all sit at the table.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS

(shocked)

You actually went to the capital as the President's representative?

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

(ironic smile)

I did. For all the good that came of it.

CARIDAD

You weren't successful? What were you trying to accomplish? And why did you leave?

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

I left to save my life, and so that my wife and children would have a husband and father.

AXOCHITL

(wryly)

I told him it would be safer to be a soldier.

CARIDAD

You were threatened? But why?

José de Arreola sighs.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

I think that question goes to the heart of everything that keeps our country so dysfunctional. If your concern is a cynical desire for power, the logical stratagem is force, violence or subterfuge. How many of our leaders have been assassinated or exiled? How many of them gained the presidency by their own rebellions or acts of sabotage?

José de Arreola gets up from the table and walks toward the window.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

There is no good faith in America, not among nations. The treaties are papers, the elections are combats.

(MORE)

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA (CONT'D)

When I went to Mexico City as a representative of our president, I went with all the political philosophy I'd learned at the hand of Father Miguel Hidalgo.

José de Arreola pauses for a moment and scoffs.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

Even in that name, I see a problem with Spanish culture. It means 'Hijo de algo,' 'the son of someone important,' as if other children lack value. It suggests worth is not in what one does but in who one is and where they were born, a toxic idea that rots Mexican society's soul. Without meritocracy, people cheat, especially when they see supposed betters doing the same.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS

Could you find no others to join you in working for the good of the country?

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

Oh, there were true patriots—quite a few, actually. But once on their own, most would revert to their old ways, their narrowly conceived self-interest.

Everyone at the table is silent for a moment, lost in thought.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS

Something I don't understand, General Arreola. How can the president's own representative be threatened? Did such an exalted position not provide you with an air of protection?

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

Nicos, my friend, I think you've hit upon the very core effect of what ails this country.

(MORE)

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA (CONT'D)

It is true that President López de Santa Anna stays in Veracruz on his hacienda because he loves to rule, to wield power, but finds actual governing supremely boring--annoying even.

AXOCHITL

(speaking in Nahuatl)

Be careful what you say about the President, husband.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

Yes, my love, thank you for reminding me. But I believe it's safe considering our guests' history.

Axochitl squeezes José de Arreola's shoulder.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

You see, if the President himself is afraid of exposure to rebellion, or the prospect of assassination, then pity his lowly representative. I don't think you realize how expendable we factotums are. But I managed to escape, with help from a friend.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS

But you succeeded in creating a constitution, did you not?

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

Yes. It was one based quite closely on that of the United States. However, I fear that even with the most perfect document in the world, a society must have a critical majority willing to live within its precepts. Remember that, irony of ironies, the Republic was recently overthrown in the name of the Republic!

JOSÉ NICOLÁS

And yet you follow our president to Texas. You muster troops for him, despite your pessimism as to its outcome. Why?

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

Because when we arrived in Veracruz, our host went beyond whatever he felt he owed me for saving his wife and daughter. He gave me employment on his hacienda, eventually making me foreman.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS

So...is it a debt you feel you owe him?

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

That is...part of it.

The table is silent for a moment until Axhochitl gets up.

AXOCHITL

Doña Anastasia, Caridad, Don José, I can only imagine the exhaustion you must be feeling. Why don't you retire for the night in the parlour? I've already put out blankets and pillows for your comfort.

Doña Anastasia looks shocked. She glances at Caridad and José Nicolás.

DOÑA ANASTASIA

But Axo-Doña Axochitl, we have already too much imposed on your generosity. We cannot-

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

Yes, Doña Anastasia, you can. If it weren't for your son, Don José Nicolás de Cos de la Portilla, I would have had the majority of my life cut off at the tender age of twenty. I would never have met my beautiful wife or experienced the joy of having a child.

Doña Anastasia tears up. José Nicolás stands up from the table, extending his hand.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS

Don José de Arreola, you have saved us from a fate worse than death. Whatever debt you felt you had in my favor I consider paid a thousand times over.

José de Arreola smiles warmly, and stands up to shake José Nicolás's hand.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS

(hesitating)

I have no earthly right to ask any more but...now that the final war for independence is hopefully a fading memory...is there...is there any possibility that your commander, our President, might allow me to join his army on this campaign in the north—even as the lowliest soldier?

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

(somberly)

No, my friend, I'm afraid that would be impossible.

Axochitl frowns. José Nicolás purses his lips and nods, avoiding José de Arreola's gaze. Doña Anastasia squeezes José Nicolás's hand comfortingly.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

(bemused)

As my adjutant, however, a man of your character and military experience would be an invaluable contribution to my retinue.

Axochitl smiles and gently shook her head. José Nicolás slowly looks up. For a moment, he is speechless.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS

Gen-General Arreola, I am speechless before your generosity.

97

EXT. BAUER/MACALISTER RANCH - DAY

Edeline sits in a rocking chair on the porch, heavily pregnant, rubbing her belly gently.

G.P. and Miss Luz stand in the fields, looking at the ranch around them. G.P. fixes his gaze on Edeline and smiles warmly.

G.P. MACALISTER

All I've ever known is fightin' Indians and trainin' and leadin' men in battle. How did I get so lucky here, Luz?

Miss Luz smiles at G.P. Macalister.

At that moment, G.P. And Miss Luz spot a rider on horseback galloping at breakneck speed toward them.

The two look at each other warily.

The rider dismounts, blood spurts from his forehead, his hair is all mussed up, and his clothes are torn. He staggers a few steps toward G.P. on shaky legs and collapses near him.

Edeline stands up and approaches G.P. and Miss Luz.

EDELINE

Who is this man?

G.P. MACALISTER

It's Diego Carbajal, one of the rangers under my command. Let's get him inside.

98 INT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Diego is lying in bed. Miss Luz, G.P. Macalister and Edeline surround him.

DIEGO

I rode all thee way from San Antonio. I was sent to get reinforcements for thee Alamo Meeshon t'ere. Ess a goo theeng you never join' up, GP. All dose boys...Santa Anna...he keel t'em all! He execute t'em like dogs!

G.P.'s expression turns into burning rage and he runs his hands through his hair in frustration, breathing heavily.

Miss Luz looks at the ground, somber.

99 INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

Miss Luz and Edeline sit at the kitchen table. G.P. paces the room anxiously.

G.P. MACALISTER

It's outta the question, Edy! Even if I wanted to, I cain't leave ya right now, not in this state!

EDELINE

(sighing)

G.P., you will be of no help to me during the delivery and care of the child.

(MORE)

EDELINE (CONT'D)  
Especially not in your current  
state.

Edeline waves her hand dismissively.

EDELINE  
Besides, Luz and I went to the  
midwife. She tell us, pregnancy is  
all normal, everything is fine. And  
papa even hired another farm  
hand...that slave that came seeking  
refuge, what's his name...Ah  
Cookie! See, we have plenty of  
help.

Edeline turns her attention to Miss Luz.

EDELINE  
I think you should also go with  
him.

G.P. stops and stares at Edeline.

G.P. MACALISTER  
Absolutely not! That ain't  
happening!

EDELINE  
Oh come on, G.P.! I know-

G.P. and Edeline start arguing - G.P. in his Texas accent  
and Edeline in German.

Miss Luz stood up.

MISS LUZ  
Alright, alright, enough, you two!  
I will stay with Edy for the birth  
of the child.

EDELINE  
But-

MISS LUZ  
Uh-uh. No more butts. I will stay.  
You should go, Gerardo. They need  
you.

EDELINE  
Yes, go. We will be fine.  
Everything will be fine, husband.

G.P. sighs and sits down at the table. For a moment, there is silence in the room.

G.P. MACALISTER

All right then. I'll head out at dawn fer Goliad. Diego mentioned there's Texian troops holed up at a fort they call La Bahía. They done renamed it Fort Defiance after takin' it from them Mexicans. Sam Houston's ordered 'em to fall back to Victoria in east Texas, so I reckon I'll join 'em.

100 EXT. BAUER/MACALISTER RANCH - DAY

Edeline sits on the rocking chair on the porch, a baby cooing in her arms. Miss Luz stands next to her. She smiles gently at the child and looks at Miss Luz.

EDELINE

Luz. Baby Jacob is here. He's fine, I am fine. I need you to go, now.

MISS LUZ

Edeline, I-

EDELINE

Please. I need you to go after him, after G.P. I need to know he's safe. I know you'll keep him safe. I know you'll lookout for him, you always have.

Miss Luz sighs and looks into the fields in the distance.

101 INT. PRESIDIO LA BAHIA/GOLIAD - DAY

José de Arreola sits at his desk, holding a sealed letter in his hands.

CLOSE UP OF THE LETTER TO SHOW AN OFFICIAL LOOKING SEAL/PRESIDENT'S SEAL.

The desk is cluttered with maps, documents, and letters. An ink pot and quill sit atop a stack of paper, next to a brass candle holder with melted wax drippings cascading down its sides.

José de Arreola looks out the window, lost in thought.

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE



102

EXT. THE ALAMO - DAY

José de Arreola stands before General Antonio López de Santa Anna.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

My esteemed Commander, the rebels have had no relief for two weeks. They're bound to have no food left. We haven't let them have a good night's rest in all that time, either. They simply can't hold out any longer.

General Antonio doesn't look at José de Arreola. He stands with his hands crossed behind his back.

GENERAL ANTONIO LÓPEZ

(confidently)

We must show these rebellious traitors that there will be no mercy for them. It is the only way to put down this insurrection of guttersnipes once and for all. We will show them the terrible fate awaiting those who defy the glorious and sacred state of Mexico.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

My general, I'm not so sure it will inspire fear so much as hate. These people don't strike me as a people easily daunted. They are a people who fought the Comanche successfully, where we could not.

General Antonio glares at José de Arreola.

GENERAL ANTONIO LÓPEZ

People are the same everywhere, José. Rebellious sheep need to be reminded who is in charge and what the consequences for such treason are and always will be.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

General I-

GENERAL ANTONIO LÓPEZ

There are only rulers and ruled in life, General Arreola. We are the shepherds, and they are the rebellious sheep.

(MORE)

GENERAL ANTONIO LÓPEZ (CONT'D)  
 They must be reminded of that  
 undeniable truth!

José de Arreola hesitates for a moment, before continuing in a quiet, low voice.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
 We could spare our own rank and  
 file, hundreds, perhaps even a  
 thousand dead my General, by just  
 allowing the rebels to surrender.  
 They are bound to be starving.

General Antonio fully turns to face José de Arreola, his face livid with anger.

GENERAL ANTONIO LÓPEZ  
 (loudly)  
 There is no glory in a bloodless  
 victory, General Arreola!

END FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

103 INT. PRESIDIO LA BAHIA/GOLIAD - DAY

José de Arreola takes a deep breath and rips open the letter in his hands.

CLOSE UP OF LETTER WITH TEXT: CARRY OUT MY ORDER OF  
 EXECUTION ON PAIN OF DEATH FOR TREASON!

José de Arreola places the President's letter on his desk, sits back and taps his lips with his fingers.

He leans forward, grabs a quill and a sheet of paper and begins to write.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
 (reading aloud)  
 My...Esteemed...Commander and  
 President, it  
 is...with...great...regret...that I  
 find...I-

José de Arreola stops writing and frowns. He takes the paper, crumples it into a ball and sets it aside.

He grabs a new sheet, and begins to write again.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
 (reading aloud)  
 My...Esteemed...and  
 Most...Honorable-

He stops again and crumples the paper and throws it aside.

He gets up from the desk, walks to the window, and looks down at his troops guarding prisoners.

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

104 INT. DOLORES - DAY

SUPER: "The first Mexican rebellion"

A young José de Arreola stands at the window, next to Father Hidalgo. They both watch in silence as troops guard the Spanish prisoners.

FATHER HIDALGO  
 Do you know what the Viceroy of  
 Spain used to say whenever he  
 received an order from Spain or  
 from The Council of the Indies that  
 was distasteful to him?

José de Arreola shakes his head and looks at him quizzically. Father Hidalgo chuckles.

FATHER HIDALGO  
 He would send the same message back  
 to his superiors. "I obey, but I do  
 not carry out."

END FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

105 INT. PRESIDIO LA BAHIA/GOLIAD - DAY

José de Arreola slowly smiles and goes back to his desk. He quickly grabs a new sheet of paper and the quill and begins writing.

CLOSE-UP OF TEXT ON THE LETTER: OBEDEZCO, PERO NO CUMPLO (I OBEY, BUT I DO NOT CARRY OUT).

He immediately rolls up the letter and ties it off with a bit of ribbon. He marches to the door to his office and opens it hastily.

Opening the door, José de Arreola sees his adjutant, CAPTAIN MANUEL ORDÁZ (Spanish, 5'9, 22) arguing with a Mexican woman with a disfigured face.

The Mexican woman and Captain Ordáz stop arguing as soon as they spot José de Arreola. The captain immediately comes to attention and salutes.

CAPTAIN ORDÁZ

Sir, this woman insists on having an audience with you. I have told her you are much too busy with official matters to attend to any civilian, but she continues to argue. Shall I have her removed?

José de Arreola and the Mexican woman stare at each other.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

What is it you wish to see me about, madam?

MEXICAN WOMAN

The prisoners, General Arreola.

José de Arreola studies her for a second, then opens his door wider, and nods at her to come inside.

He looks at the rolled letter in his hand and is about to hand it over to Captain Ordáz, but hesitates and stops. He follows the woman inside and closes the door behind him.

José de Arreola gestures at the Mexican woman to take a seat before him.

MEXICAN WOMAN

You must not execute these prisoners of war, General Arreola.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

Would that be because one of them is your husband, madam?

MEXICAN WOMAN

Brother. I am Luz Macalister. Once upon a time, Doña Luz Cortez de Aranda. I was adopted by the Macalister family as a child, after my family was killed by Indians.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

I see. I would be more than fascinated to know the details of your history, but I gather you wish to forgo that in favor of addressing the fate of the prisoners.

(MORE)

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA (CONT'D)  
 Tell me please, Madam, what would  
 you have me do with them?

MISS LUZ  
 Either keep them as prisoners of  
 war or release them.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
 Hmm. So that they can rejoin the  
 rebellion and kill more of my men?

Miss Luz is silent. José de Arreola studies her.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
 As you can see, I have a hard  
 enough time feeding my own  
 regiment, much less over four  
 hundred prisoners. As to the latter  
 alternative, that would most  
 certainly subject me to the fate  
 you wish me to spare these men.

Miss Luz licks her lips and straightens up in the chair. She  
 meets José de Arreola's steady gaze.

MISS LUZ  
 (without blinking)  
 Not if you join us.

José de Arreola stares at her, not showing any emotion.

MISS LUZ  
 If you choose to perpetrate the  
 crime of the Alamo, I warn you  
 General, you will not in any way  
 cower these people that even the  
 Comanche could not intimidate.  
 Rather, you will be bringing on  
 yourself and the whole of the  
 Mexican army such retaliation as  
 would turn the stomach of the  
 hardiest soldier.

José de Arreola leans back in his chair and folds his hands  
 in front of him.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
 Yes, Doña Luz, I am quite aware  
 that fighting such an independent-  
 minded and self-reliant people with  
 lead and steel is at best a dicey  
 proposition.

MISS LUZ

There are Mexicans among your prisoners, sir. Most came here on their own, not through Mexican colonies. They've built lives alongside the Anglos. That same initiative led them to start businesses and trade with Anglos. They're as dedicated to Texas independence as any Anglo.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

Yes. I've noted that very phenomenon during my limited time in the province. All those entrepreneurs had to come here to realize their dreams because they couldn't in Mexico. And I know very well why.

José de Arreola sighs.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

So many lives were bettered as a result of our pottery mill. How tragic that men seem to allow their prejudices to outweigh their own self-interest and that of their community.

MISS LUZ

Then you know the answer. Spare these men, and join us.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

That would be...the rational thing to do.

José de Arreola suddenly stands up.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

Doña Luz Macalister, you are an extraordinary woman. I sincerely thank you for the opportunity to get to know you, and I for sharing your admonitions. I will take your offer under serious consideration. Meantime, I suggest you refrain from sharing your attachment to the rebel force with anyone outside this office—for your sake and for mine.

Miss Luz gets up and offers a handshake.

MISS LUZ  
You are a man of great honor and  
integrity, General Arreola.

José de Arreola shakes Miss Luz's hand, and escorts her to  
the door.

He turns to Captain Ordáz.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
Captain, see that this lady has  
access to her brother, a prisoner  
named Macalister. Then, dispatch  
one of our messengers to deliver  
this letter to Commander López de  
Santa Anna, post-haste.

106 INT. GOLIAD PRISON - DAY

Miss Luz holds G.P.'s hands through the prison bars. He has  
minor cuts and bruises on his face.

MISS LUZ  
*Hermano, you okay?*

G.P. MACALISTER  
I'm fine, Luz. Jus' tired. How's  
the baby? And Edy?

MISS LUZ  
Baby's fine, named him Jacob, like  
ya'll wanted. Edy's strong as a  
horse. Back to work after just two  
days.

G.P. closes his eyes.

G.P. MACALISTER  
Thank God in heaven.

MISS LUZ  
Don't worry about a thing now.  
Here, I brought you some food.

107 INT. PRESIDIO LA BAHIA/GOLIAD - DAY

José Nicolás sits, hands folded in his lap, before José de  
Arreola.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
How have you been, Nicos? You've  
seemed preoccupied. Are Carmen and  
your child well?

JOSÉ NICOLÁS  
Oh uh...yes, quite well.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
I heard there was an issue amongst  
the prisoners.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS  
Yes, sir. A common soldier had  
taken control and resolved it. No  
markings or authority, yet everyone  
followed his suggestions like  
orders. I believe it was the same  
man that the Mexican woman visited?  
Maqueter?

José de Arreola subtly smiles.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
Macalister, yes. His adopted sister  
was quite an imposing woman. From  
your account, her brother seems  
equally formidable.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS  
I suppose so. But how their army  
can manage itself with a plain  
volunteer taking control of such a  
situation is beyond my  
comprehension.

José de Arreola leans back in his chair.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
Their military prowess for a  
hastily assembled unit is quite  
impressive, especially at Coletto  
Creek. Completely surprised, they  
still managed to form a square  
three ranks deep in record time. No  
officers even had time to give the  
order.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS  
They must have been drilled over  
and over by their leaders.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
Must they have? Their forces had  
little time to be so organized. Had  
Colonel Fannin not dawdled, and  
they'd made it to the grove of  
oaks, we'd have had a much rougher  
go with so much cover.



José Nicolás leans forward, eyes widening slightly.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS

But sir...we defeated them handily  
and took many prisoners with  
moderate losses.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

With considerably superior numbers  
and artillery, Nicos. Once their  
left flank became porous, if you  
had taken the initiative, you could  
have broken through and ended the  
battle quicker with fewer losses.

José Nicolás is embarrassed and looks away nervously.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS

But your orders, sir, they...

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

Yes, my orders were to weaken that  
left flank from a distance as much  
as possible. By contrast, I noted  
that apparently without an order  
from a superior, their ordinary  
soldiers on their own went to  
fortify that vulnerable flank, and  
the opportunity was lost. I wonder  
where that kind of self-motivation  
comes from.

José de Arreola looks at José Nicolás who is awkwardly  
avoiding his gaze.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

Please, Nicos, don't be  
embarrassed. We all have to learn  
from our mistakes. You may have to  
take over command of this regiment  
one day, after all.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS

(aghast)

Sir! I could never replace you!

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA

(bemused)

That day may come sooner than you  
think, José.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS

My General, sir-

At that moment, José Nicolás is interrupted by a knock on the door.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
What is it?

Captain Ordáz enters the room with a letter in his hand. José Nicolás looks at him, irritated.

CAPTAIN ORDÁZ  
(stammering)  
S-sir. I...I have a letter marked  
urgent from General López de Santa  
Anna.

There is a pause of silence for a moment.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
Then by all means, deliver it,  
Captain.

Captain Ordaz hesitates. He looks panicked and fearful. José Nicolás looks at him, visibly angry.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS  
Captain Ordáz, if you have a  
message from our supreme commander  
for the general, then deliver it  
immediately! Why do you hesitate?

CAPTAIN ORDÁZ  
(swallowing)  
Sir, it...it is not addressed to  
General Arreola...but to you.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS  
To me? Why on earth...?

José Nicolás looks at José de Arreola in astonishment.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
(calmly)  
General, you have a message, an  
urgent message from your commander-  
in-chief and president. It is your  
duty to immediately attend to it.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS  
(stuttering)  
B-but why would...

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
 Captain Ordáz, do your duty and  
 deliver the letter to its intended  
 recipient.

Captain Ordáz snaps to attention, and hands the letter to José Nicolás. He salutes and swiftly walks out of the room.

With trembling hands, José Nicolás tears open the seal and unfolds the letter.

He casts a worried glance at José de Arreola before looking at the letter.

Moments later, José Nicolás shoots to his feet, his chair falling backwards with a CLANG.

His eyes widen significantly, his mouth hangs open, and he whips his head up to look at José de Arreola, aghast. He quickly scans the letter again. He looks at José de Arreola, confused and horrified.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS  
 My General...José! This...this  
 can't be! It makes no sense!

José de Arreola stands up to meet José Nicolás's gaze.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
 (calmly)  
 It will, Nicos. Let me guess, the  
 letter says that you are to relieve  
 me of my command; that you are to  
 assume command of the regiment  
 yourself; and finally, that you are  
 to effect my execution for  
 dereliction of duty—the disobeying  
 of a direct order.

José Nicolás grips the edge of José de Arreola's desk with both hands and looks at him pleadingly.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS  
 My commander...my dear friend...my  
 brother. How-how can this be? How  
 in the name of God? What gross and  
 preposterous error can have been  
 committed here?

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
 There is no error, General  
 Portilla. I made a choice. Not an  
 easy one and I'm not even certain  
 that it was the right one.

(MORE)

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA (CONT'D)  
But, the decision has been made, so  
now I must suffer the consequences.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS  
What choice? What could you have  
done? And why? How could you  
disobey an order from the supreme  
authority we have?

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
Because I'm counting on there being  
an even higher authority.

108 INT. PRESIDIO LA BAHIA/GOLIAD - DAWN

José Nicolás tears open the letter in his hands and quickly scans it with his eyes.

CLOSE-UP OF TEXT ON THE LETTER: EXECUTE THE TRAITOR OR FACE EXECUTION YOURSELF.

José Nicolás throws the letter on his desk with a frustrated grunt.

José Nicolás breathes heavily, and a single tear rolls down his face. He slams his fist down upon the desk, in the middle of the letter from the commander.

He then immediately exits the room and passes Captain Ordáz who stands to attention and salutes.

José Nicolás passes him without acknowledging his salute. Captain Ordáz waits until José Nicolás hastily descends the stairs and then sits down, looking after him in bewilderment.

109 INT. GOLIAD PRISON - DAWN

José Nicolás marches on to the prisons, passing by several soldiers who stand to attention and salute. José Nicolás ignores all of them.

He passes the prison guard and enters the single-celled stockade. The soldier-jailer stands to attention and salutes. José Nicolás ignores him and waits for him to open the wooden door with a fidgety leg.

The soldier-jailer stays at attention, holding his salute, not opening the door. José Nicolás turns to him, scowling and quickly salutes back with a dismissive swish of his hand. José Nicolás nods at the door angrily.

The befuddled jailer nervously opens the door to reveal José de Arreola standing in the center of his cell.

José Nicolás and José de Arreola stand staring at each other in silence.

José de Arreola looks at him and gently smiles.

José Nicolás looks up at the ceiling to choke back his tears.

Moments later, José Nicolás lowers his eyes to the floor and steps back. José de Arreola walks forward, stops beside José Nicolás, and places his hand on his shoulder.

110

EXT. PRESIDIO LA BAHIA/GOLIAD - DAWN

José de Arreola stands against the eastern wall of the fort. He looks at the firing squad assembled before him, their faces grim in the morning light.

With shaky hands, Captain Ordaz offers José de Arreola a blindfold, but he shakes his head no.

José Nicolás has his back to the scene. His arms are crossed tightly, as he fights back tears. He turns around and looks at José de Arreola with a pained expression.

Captain Ordaz gets into position.

José Nicolas walks up to Captain Ordáz. He dismisses Captain Ordaz with a nod.

José Nicolás takes a deep breath and exhales it slowly.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS

¡Listos!  
(Ready!)

The firing squad load their rifles with resounding CLICKS.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS

(his voice breaking)  
¡Apun-ten!  
(Aim!)

The firing squad lowers their rifles and aims them at José de Arreola. José de Arreola stands there, slightly trembling. He puts his chin up, and looks into the distance, devoid of emotion.

José Nicolás has tears rolling down his face. He stares at the ground before him, lips tightly pursed, his body shaking.

There is silence for several seconds.

The firing squad looks at José Nicolás, and glance at each other, confused. They shift uneasily, rifles loaded and aimed.

JOSÉ NICOLÁS  
(hoarsely)  
Fue...  
(Fi...)

José Nicolás chokes up. He takes several breaths, gulping air.

José de Arreola locks eyes with José Nicolas. He stares at him for a second.

JOSÉ DE ARREOLA  
(clearly)  
¡Fuego!  
(Fire!)

There are several resounding BANGS and the sound of a single THUD, as José Nicolás closes his eyes and let his tears fall freely, his body shaking violently.

111 INT. GOLIAD PRISON - DAWN

G.P. is slumped against the prison walls, sleeping. He wakes up startled at the sound of several BANGS.

G.P. rubs his eyes and shakes his head. Suddenly, he sees prison guards ascend on them and open the cells. Their clubs clang against the metal bars.

PRISON GUARD  
¡Date prisa! ¡Vámonos! ¡Vámonos!  
(Hurry up, let's go! Let's go!)

Confused, G.P. feels himself being pushed out of the prison with the rest of the prisoners.

Crowds of prisoners are marched out of the fort with prison guards flanking them on either side.

112 EXT. GOLIAD - DAWN

G.P. looks around, confusion etched on his face.

G.P. MACALISTER  
(muttering)  
Somethin' ain't right.

A prisoner who is walking next to him, looks up.

PRISONER

What's that?

G.P. MACALISTER

They about to execute us all.

PRISONER

(frowning)

That cain't be... Wouldn't they have done it while we was still inside the fort? Why wait all this time?

PRISON GUARD

HALT!

G.P. MACALISTER

(panicked)

Get ready to run fer your lives!

PRISON GUARD

AIM! FIRE!

Chaos ensues as all the prisoners scream, take cover, fall on the ground, and run everywhere. Gunfire tears through the tree branches, splintering wood and leaves.

The sound of gunshots fills the air as the soldiers fire repeatedly. Some are bent on one knee with their muskets aimed, while others shout orders.

The open ground is quickly marked with pools of crimson colored blood.

Muskets balls whiz past G.P. as he darts in a desperate zig-zag pattern across the open ground. His breath comes in ragged gasps, eyes wide with panic.

113

EXT. WILDERNESS - DAY

G.P. reaches a thicket of oak trees and keeps running. He looks behind him for a second and steps into a gopher hole, crumpling to the ground.

G.P. Lands with a thud, closes his eyes and plays dead.

Moments later, a soldier looms over him. He pulls a knife from his belt and grabs G.P. by his hair, yanking his head back to expose his throat.

Suddenly, G.P. opens his eyes and with lightning speed, grabs the soldier's hand holding the knife. He twists his body, using his legs to knock the soldier off balance. The knife barely grazes G.P.'s lower jaw.

G.P. quickly rolls him over, and gets on top of him. With force, he twists the soldier's hand with the knife, plunging the weapon into the soldier's heart.

The soldier's eyes go wide with shock and blood starts spurting out of his mouth. In seconds, he goes completely still, with G.P. still on top of him.

G.P. breathes heavily, and looks at the lifeless body beneath him.

In the distance, G.P. hears horses galloping. He looks up to see mounted soldiers approaching, pockets the knife, and immediately gets to his feet.

He runs a short distance and climbs a massive oak tree, putting some of the branches in front of him to conceal his position.

Moments later, a soldier on foot stops almost right under G.P.'s position on the tree and looks around.

G.P. moves a little and the movement causes the tiniest RUSTLE. The soldier whips his head up and spots G.P.

G.P. jumps from the tree and onto him. He grabs the soldier's knife from his belt and stabs him with it.

The soldier lay dead in a pool of his own blood.

More soldiers start yelling in the distance. G.P. stands up and a mounted soldier runs directly at him.

G.P. quickly side-steps the horse, grabs hold of the officer, mounts behind him and slit his throat all in one motion.

He throws the dead soldier off of the horse and gallops at breakneck speed back toward the fort.

114

EXT. PRESIDIO LA BAHIA/GOLIAD - DAY

G.P. rides his horse straight into a guard, who screams and gets knocked unconscious from the impact.

Another soldier fires his musket at G.P. but misses.

Miss Luz is standing outside the Goliad prison. She sees G.P. galloping from a distance and starts looking around.

She spots a soldier that has just bridled his horse. Miss Luz runs at him and as he is lifting the saddle, she pushes him aside along with the saddle and jumps on the horse.



The horse rears and NEIGHS, but Miss Luz manages to stay mounted, and gallops toward the gate.

A soldier's pistol ball whizzes past her ear but she keeps riding.

G.P. rides his horse into the other guard at the gate just as he raises his pistol to shoot.

G.P. rides hard through the gate, with Miss Luz following right behind him.

A few soldiers fire after them, but misses. G.P. and Miss Luz escape the fort, with a massive cloud of dust forming after them.

115 INT. FORT CONCHO - DAY

Miss Luz, John Michael, Rosalie, Amelia, and Jacob all surround G.P. who's lying on a doctor's table.

Miss Luz looks dull with exhaustion. John Michael's shoulders are slumped. Jacob's face is streaked with dirt and sweat. Rosalie strokes Amelia's head lovingly. Amelia stares at G.P. looking sad.

The doctor examines G.P. and looks at Miss Luz sombrely.

DOCTOR

I'm afraid there's nothing I can do at this point. It's already turned into gas gangrene, which means the infection has traveled throughout his body. Cuttin' off his leg would just cause him a lot of pain without makin' a speck a difference.

He pauses for a moment and turns to Jacob.

DOCTOR

I'm sorry, son.

Jacob is silent. John Michael looks at Jacob. Jacob's face is devoid of all emotion. He looks almost bored.

G.P. lay on the table, almost motionless. His skin has a mottled appearance, with patches of dark green and black spreading ominously across his leg. The infected wound on his leg looks swollen and grotesque, the skin stretching taut over the bone. His face is a mask of pain and exhaustion and every breath he takes is shallow and laboured. Beads of sweat dot his forehead, lips cracked and pale.

He attempts to wave at Miss Luz, motioning her to come over, but he is barely able to lift his hand.

Miss Luz looks at G.P., leans in close and holds G.P.'s hand.

G.P. MACALISTER  
(breathing heavily)  
Lu-luz...

MISS LUZ  
I'm here, *hermano*.

G.P. MACALISTER  
(barely audible)  
Bu-bury me-me...att...La-lazy...Eight...

Miss Luz purses her lips and nods.

MISS LUZ  
Alright, *hijo*. Let's get him back into the wagon.

DOCTOR  
Now, hold on here, Miss, uh...

MISS LUZ  
Luz.

DOCTOR  
Miss Luz. He'll be a lot more comfortable here. I've got some laudanum to ease the pain, and...you know, help him on his way...

The doctor clears his throat, looking slightly uncomfortable.

Jacob looks up, with an intrigued expression on his face, the mention of the word laudanum.

MISS LUZ  
(dismissively)  
He won't take it. His last wish is to die and be buried on our ranch. That's the least we can do.

The doctor hesitates.

DOCTOR

Well, Miss Luz, you don't look like you've had a decent rest in days yourself. Are you sure-?

MISS LUZ

The Lazy Eight is less than a day away. I'll rest only after I give my brother his final request.

116 EXT. FORT CONCHO - DAY

As they make their way out of the fort, soldiers at the entrance stand at attention in two lines on either side of their path. As the wagon passes, the soldiers salute.

Miss Luz's eyes well up and as John Michael looks at her, he blinks back his own tears.

117 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

A campsite sprawls across a clearing in a dense forest, illuminated by the soft glow of moonlight filtering through the canopy. Rows of canvas tents stand in neat lines, their silhouettes barely discernible against the dark trees. Some tents emit a faint, warm light from lanterns within. Horses are tethered to nearby trees and makeshift posts.

Soldiers move about the campsite with quiet efficiency. Some tend to the fires, adding logs and adjusting the embers, while others clean their weapons, the metal glinting in the moonlight.

A large campfire burn low, the flames omitting a reddish-orange glow. The fire crackle softly, the sound blending with the murmurs of hushed conversations of soldiers.

G.P., Miss Luz and a five soldiers sit around the campfire, deep in thought.

SOLDIER 1

I can't believe General Houston's tellin us to retreat again. It ain't right. Not after what they did to us at the Alamo and the Goliad.

SOLDIER 2

(animated)

Houston's orders make no sense. We oughta stand our ground and fight! We need to send a message to those darn Mexicans - they massacred our brothers!

SOLDIER 1  
 Darn right we do. Heard some of the  
 boys talkin' 'bout splittin' off.  
 Takin' a stand on our own.

There is silence for a second. SOLDIER 1 looks at G.P. with  
 a curious face.

SOLDIER 1  
 (curiously)  
 Say here Mister Macalister, you  
 interested in leadin' us, if some  
 o' us boys banded together and took  
 on Santa Anna's army on our own?

G.P. is silent for a moment. Then he sighs and rubs his  
 face.

G.P. MACALISTER  
 (mumbled)  
 Houston's bein' smart.

SOLDIER 1  
 (incredulous)  
 Smart? How's retreatin' smart?

G.P. MACALISTER  
 This part of east Texas is swampy.  
 Makes it harder for their soldiers  
 to maneuver. We know the terrain.  
 The Mexicans don't. That's a big  
 ol' advantage.

SOLDIER 2  
 So what? Houston's plan is to wear  
 'em out?

G.P. MACALISTER  
 Exactly. They're gettin' tired and  
 findin' food around here is tough  
 if you don't know the territory.

The soldiers shrug and start to converse among themselves.

Moments later, they all leave, heading out one by one.

Miss Luz and G.P. remain by the campfire. Miss Luz looks at  
 G.P.'s face, with worry. G.P. has a face of bitter contempt.  
 He takes out his pistol and starts polishing it  
 aggressively.

He checks and rechecks the pistol, taking aim, turning it  
 over, and then just places it in his lap, staring at it.

Miss Luz looks at him sorrowfully.

118

EXT. MEXICAN CAMP - AFTERNOON

The Mexican troops are sprawled out, taking their siestas. The camp is eerily quiet, with the occasional rustle of leaves and soft snores filling the air.

Nearby, the Texian troops are poised and ready.

GENERAL SAM HOUSTON (Anglo, grey hair, grey-green eyes, 6'6) takes out his sword and raises it.

GENERAL SAM HOUSTON  
Remember the Alamo!

The Texian troops charge down the muddy slope, the ground squelching under their boots. The air fills with the clanging of metal and the shouts of soldiers.

TEXIAN TROOPS  
Remember the Alamo! Remember the  
Alamo!

G.P. moves swiftly with the troops, muttering under his breath.

G.P. MACALISTER  
Remember Goliad!

The Mexican troops, caught off guard, scramble to their feet, reaching for weapons in a panic.

Their faces are etched with shock and terror. Some manage to grab their rifles, but many are killed before they can grab their weapons.

The Texians swarm through the camp, slashing with bayonets and firing point-blank. Smoke from gunfire mixes with the fog of the swamp, creating an eerie, hellish scene.

GENERAL SAM HOUSTON  
(shouting to his  
officers)  
Hold the line! Don't let them get  
away!

Houston cuts down a fleeing Mexican soldier with a grimace.

Mexican soldiers beg for mercy, their voices desperate.

MEXICAN SOLDIER  
(pleasing)  
(MORE)

MEXICAN SOLDIER (CONT'D)  
Me no Alamo! Me no Alamo!

G.P. moves through the chaos, a look of grim determination on his face. He uses his rifle, a knife, and a saber he'd taken from a fallen soldier and kills several Mexican troops.

Amidst the chaos, G.P. spots a man in a general's uniform, ushering a woman holding something in her arms, inside a tent.

G.P.'s grimaces and took several strides toward the uniformed man. Miss Luz spots G.P. from a distance and quickly joins him.

As G.P. and Miss Luz approach the uniformed man, he turns to face them.

The man is unarmed, standing stoicly at the entrance of the tent. G.P.'s face is twisted with barbaric hate. He takes his time to raise his pistol.

G.P. MACALISTER  
(steady, cold)  
José Nicolás de Portilla. This is  
for Goliad.

He fires, the bullet hitting José Nicolás squarely between the eyes, knocking him back into the side of the tent. He lies there, motionless, his eyes open and lifeless as blood starts to erupt from the bullet hole.

A scream of horror emanates from inside. G.P. and Miss Luz look at each other.

A WOMAN emerges from the tent, struggling to cock a pistol with trembling hands. G.P. stands still, his face a picture of resignation.

The woman continues to cock the pistol, without success, as tears stream down her face and she cries profusely, loudly wailing.

G.P. moves a few steps closer to the woman and just stands, facing her. He makes no move to disarm her or avoid the shot.

The woman manages to pull the hammer back into position. She holds the pistol with both hands, her shoulders trembling with sobs.

Miss Luz looks at G.P. with a panic. She looks at the woman who is about to press the trigger, Miss Luz takes out her own pistol swiftly, aims and shoots the woman in the heart. The woman crumbles to the ground instantaneously.

G.P. continues to stare at the two bodies before him, half on top of each other.

Suddenly, a FEMALE CHILD (Spanish, 4, brown hair) walks out of the tent.

G.P. immediately turns to Miss Luz with a look of horror. He watches the child for a moment and then approaches her.

The female child looks curiously at G.P. G.P. kneels down before her, and the female child smiles.

G.P. MACALISTER  
 Hola, preciosa. ¿Cómo te llamas?  
 (Hello beautiful, what's  
 your name?)

FEMALE CHILD  
 Amelia.

G.P. smiles at her. He picks her up and tenderly hugs her, for a while.

G.P. turns to Miss Luz, Amelia still in his arms, and looks at her.

Miss Luz smiles and nodded.

The Texian troops start cheering for joy. Miss Luz and G.P. mount their horses with Amelia and ride off.

119 EXT. BAUER/MACALISTER RANCH - DAY

G.P. and Miss Luz arrive at the ranch, on horseback - G.P. hands over Amelia to Miss Luz.

He dismounts quickly, his gaze fixated on Edeline who is playing with a little boy nearby. Cookie is standing at some distance away, grinning at Edeline and the little boy.

Her eyes lift up and she spots G.P. staring at her. She squints her eyes and suddenly gasps. Her laughter turns into a face of shock.

G.P. is teary eyed and rushes toward Edeline. She runs to meet him. Her hands tremble as they cover her mouth, tears streaming freely down her face.

G.P. hugs her tightly, lifting her up and spinning her around. They both laugh and kiss.

G.P. puts Edeline down and the little boy runs over and grab's Edeline's skirt. Edeline looks down at the little boy and he starts to whimper.

G.P. takes off his cowboy hat and runs his hand through his hair, looking at the little boy in awe.

He kneels down toward the little boy, and holds his hands out to pick him up.

The little boy hides further behind Edeline's skirt and put his lower lip out, looking up at Edeline fearfully.

EDELINE

(in German)

Jacob, that's your daddy. There's no reason to be afraid.

Little Jacob turns away and hides his face in Edeline's skirt.

Edeline laughs and strokes his head. She looks at G.P. apologetically and takes his hand.

EDELINE

He'll come around, give him a few days.

G.P. MACALISTER

Edy...I...it's good to be home.  
Jakob...?

At the mention of Jakob, Edeline's lips start quivering and her eyes are well up. She looks at the ground and shakes her head.

EDELINE

(whispering)

Fa-father died a few days after you left...for Goliad.

G.P. closes his eyes with a pained expression. He looks toward the sky and sighs.

G.P. MACALISTER

May his soul rest in peace.

G.P. takes Edeline in his arms and hugs her. While hugging G.P., Edeline spots Miss Luz who is still mounted on the horse with Amelia.



She pulls back slowly, and G.P. looks at her, gazing at a tired, but smiling Miss Luz and Amelia, who is waving from the distance.

Edeline turns to G.P. and looks quizzically at him. G.P. puts his arm around Edeline and smiles. Together the two walk toward Miss Luz and Amelia.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE

120 INT. BAUER/MACALISTER RANCH - EVENING

Miss Luz, Edeline, Jacob, and G.P. all get up from the empty dinner table. As G.P. settles into a rocking chair nearby, Amelia crawls into G.P.'s lap, curls up against him and falls asleep. G.P.'s sombre face melts into a loving smile.

121 EXT. UNDEVELOPED LAND - DAY

G.P., Miss Luz, Edeline, Jacob, Amelia, Cookie and a couple of ranch hands look around the vast expanse of undeveloped land around them.

122 EXT. NEW RANCH - EVENING

Jacob, G.P., Miss Luz and ranch hands build a safe house made of adobe. They look at the narrow slits in the safe house and try and fit their rifles inside it. They all nod.

123 INT. NEW RANCH - NIGHT

Edeline gives birth to a girl, G.P. looks at her happily. Amelia beams over his shoulder.

124 EXT. NEW RANCH - DAY

G.P., a pregnant Edeline, Miss Luz, Amelia, and Jacob sit on the porch talking. Amelia gets up and starts dancing, as everyone laughs and claps.

END MONTAGE SEQUENCE

125 EXT. THE LAZY EIGHT - DAY

G.P. and Jacob are on horseback, herding the sheep in the fields. LUCITA (Anglo, blue eyes, brown hair, 5 years) is sitting right outside the barn, bottle-feeding a baby lamb in her arms. Near the barn, FIONA (Anglo, blue eyes, brown hair, 8 years) and Miss Luz watch as a ranch hand tries to tame a mustang horse in the corral.

Suddenly, the ranch hand stops taming the horse, squints his eyes, and looks into the distance.

His eyes widen and he jumps over the corral toward Fiona and throws her over his shoulder, racing toward the safe house.

Miss Luz watches him and runs toward the barn, grabs Lucita in her arms and follows the ranch hand to the safe house, panting and heaving.

126

INT. SAFE HOUSE - DAY

Miss Luz is breathing heavily and places her eyes in front of the slits in the safe house walls. She sees G.P. and Jacob racing toward the safe house on horseback.

G.P.'s face is grim, while Jacob looks terrified. Jacob turns his head to look behind him for a second and immediately turns around and ducks as an arrow comes flying by close to his ear.

Behind them is a group of bare chested, tattooed men with braided hair, on horseback. While hollering, they raise their bows and arrows in the air.

Two ranch hands grab their rifles and place their heads through the slits. They start firing.

Miss Luz grabs another rifle from the wall and joins the two ranch hands, settling her rifle in the middle slit and starts firing.

Fiona and Lucita are huddled together in the corner, covering their ears, their faces terrified.

There are loud BANGS of gunshots reverberating.

Miss Luz removes her rifle and looks through the slit, seeing G.P. and Jacob near the safe house.

She quickly goes to the door and opens it, as G.P. and Jacob dismount and run inside, holding their rifles.

Miss Luz shuts and bolts the door behind them. Three arrows sink deep into the door as soon as Miss Luz closes it.

G.P. immediately goes to another slit opposite Miss Luz and places his rifle through the opening. He takes aim and starts firing.

Jacob joins in the slit next to G.P. and starts firing his own rifle.

For several seconds, there is only the sound of gunshots. BANG. BANG. BANG.

Suddenly, G.P. stops firing, and starts looking around the safe house frantically.

G.P. MACALISTER  
 (maniacally)  
 Edy...Adolfo! Chris! Luz! Where the  
 hell is Edeline?

Adolfo and Chris are about to speak but G.P. gets up and runs toward the door. As he is about to open the bolt, Miss Luz stops him.

MISS LUZ  
*Hermano!* There she is, I see her!

G.P. runs to Miss Luz looks through the slit. He lets out a choked grunt.

127 EXT. THE LAZY EIGHT - DAY

Edeline is struggling in the arms of a Comanche Indian mounted on horseback, right outside the safe house walls.

128 INT. SAFE HOUSE - DAY

G.P. looks livid, and immediately takes aim. He fires his rifle and looks through the slit.

129 EXT. THE LAZY EIGHT - DAY

G.P.'s bullet hits the mounted Indian and he falls to the ground with a THUD. Edeline, her hair all mussed up, looks for a second at the fallen Indian. She then grabs the horse's reins and looks ahead, a panicked expression on her face.

At the same time, another Comanche Indian grabs Edeline off the horse she was on, and onto his own horse. Edeline screams and elbows the Comanche. He starts to gallop away from the safe house.

Another bullet hits the mounted Comanche and he takes Edeline and the horse down as they all crumple to the ground.

Edeline quickly manages to get up. Her face is streaked with dirt, she tries to limp away from the Comanche, but after a few strides another Comanche scoops her up and throws her across his horse in front of him.

130 INT. SAFE HOUSE - DAY

G.P. watches through the slit as the Comanche gallops away with Edeline screaming in his arms.

He takes aim and pulls the trigger but there is no gunshot - only a CLICK.

G.P. whirls around to face Adolfo, Chris and Miss Luz.

G.P. MACALISTER  
(yelling)  
Who's got ammo?

CHRIS  
I got two bullets left, GP.

G.P. snatches Chris's rifle out of his hands, takes aim and fires. He watches as the Comanche and Edeline fall, with the horse half on top of them, a good distance away from the safe house.

G.P. looks through the slit, his eyes dart around, as Edeline gets up with some effort, and starts to hobble away from the fallen Comanche and his horse.

G.P. watches helplessly as Edeline stumbles toward the safe house, but is quickly scooped up by a Comanche.

G.P. looks at the rifle in his hands and then looks at Miss Luz with a pained expression.

Miss Luz nods at G.P.

MISS LUZ  
Do it, brother. You know what her fate will be if you don't.

At that moment, a panicked Jacob looks at the exchange between G.P. and Miss Luz, and drops his rifle. He runs toward G.P. and grabs his rifle with both hands.

JACOB  
(panicked)  
No, Papa! No! Please! We'll go after her! Please, no!

Miss Luz grabs Jacob and holds him tightly as he continues to scream. He struggles, and kicks trying to free himself but Miss Luz holds on to him.

G.P. raises his rifle and takes aim. He hesitates for a second.

MISS LUZ  
(yelling)  
Gerardo! You must! Do it now!

G.P. has tears rolling down his face as he pulls the trigger and fires. BANG.

Jacob slumps in Miss Luz's arms, his eyes widening in shock.

JACOB  
(crying)  
NOOOOO!

There is silence in the safe house.

131

EXT. THE LAZY EIGHT - DAY

G.P., Jacob, and Miss Luz and three ranch hands ride into the ranch, dust swirling around them. They dismount, looking tired.

Just as their feet hit the ground, the sharp CRACK of gunshots splits the air. Some distance away, the cattle start to stampede, their hooves THUNDERING.

G.P. whips his head in the direction of the cattle range. He spots armed men on horseback rallying around the cattle.

G.P. MACALISTER  
Darn it! We've got rustlers!

Miss Luz, Jacob and G.P. and the ranch hands immediately remount and spur their horses into a gallop, chasing after the rustlers and the panicked herd.

They race across the open range, the sun glaring down on them. G.P., Jacob, and Miss Luz and the ranch hands exchange gunfire with the rustlers. They kill a few rustlers, causing the rest to scatter.

G.P. and Jacob split off, galloping after two Indian rustlers driving the herd. Gerardo fires a bullet from his rifle. The Indian rustler and his horse crumple to the ground, dead. G.P. fires again but the rifle clicks, doing nothing. He puts the rifle away.

The other Indian rustler suddenly turns around, riding hard back toward them.

G.P. turns to Jacob with a wild look in his eyes.

G.P. MACALISTER  
(yelling)  
Jacob, shoot that Indian!

Jacob raises his rifle but hesitates, his hands shaking.

G.P. MACALISTER  
 (urgently)  
 Damn it, boy, shoot! He's comin'  
 after us!

Jacob pulls the trigger, but the Indian drops to his horse's side, avoiding the shot.

G.P. MACALISTER  
 (furiously)  
 Shoot the damned horse!

Jacob raises his rifle again, still hesitating. The Indian closes in, raises his bow and arrow, ready to fire.

G.P. snatches the rifle from Jacob's hands and aims. G.P.'s shot hits the Indian's horse just as the arrow flies, striking Jacob's horse.

Jacob's horse rears, and he's thrown, his foot caught in the stirrup.

Jacob is dragged, dirt and rocks tearing at his skin. G.P., gallops after him and spots the Indian, trapped under his fallen horse, struggling to free himself. G.P. shoots him in the head as he gallops after Jacob. He stops Jacob's horse, grabbing its reins.

Jacob lies unconscious, his foot twisted at an awful angle, his face and body bruised and cut all over.

G.P. dismounts and kneels beside him.

132 INT. FORT CONCHO - AFTERNOON

G.P. and Miss Luz watch anxiously as the doctor sets Jacob's ankle and tends to his other wounds.

Seconds later, Jacob regains consciousness, and starts screaming and struggling in pain.

The doctor, G.P. and Miss Luz try to hold and calm him down, but Jacob keeps struggling, his head moving constantly, as he howls loudly.

DOCTOR  
 Wait, I've got something that'll  
 help ease the pain.

He quickly grabs a flask from a table nearby and helps Jacob drink from it.

Jacob calms down and closes his eyes.

133

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAWN

Miss Luz and John Michael are in the wagon, with G.P. laying in the back. Rosalie is by his side with Amelia in her lap. They are silent for a while.

JOHN MICHAEL

Boy, that musta been...tough.  
Really tough. I guess I can  
understand at least to some degree.  
I just don't...well.

MISS LUZ

Go on, ask *hijo*. You know most of  
the secrets of your new family now.  
You might as well - you *need* to  
know them all.

JOHN MICHAEL

Well Miss Luz, I...I wonder how  
Jacob seems to be so-so...aloof all  
the time - especially after  
everythin' that happened. He  
doesn't seem to even care - about  
much of anything. And why wasn't he  
able to help his father with the  
arrow? I mean, I understand, or  
think I understand about the  
feelings he has for his father,  
but...

MISS LUZ

(deep in thought)

Jacob was always a sensitive boy.  
He didn't even like to hunt or  
slaughter a cow. He's never been  
quite the same since the death of  
his mother, since the death of Ed-  
Edeline.

Miss Luz looks into the distance, then sighs.

MISS LUZ

You've seen the flask he drinks  
from all the time?

JOHN MICHAEL

Yes, ma'am. I gotta admit I was  
curious about that.

## MISS LUZ

That flask Jacob carries with him  
is whisky with a touch of laudanum  
mixed in. He's slowly killing  
himself.

John Michael looks at her in shock.

134

EXT. THE LAZY EIGHT - SUNRISE

As the sun starts to break above the horizon, the softest, gentlest light brings the ranch house into distant view. It seems to glisten in the early morning light. The house, barn and corral emerge through a mist and John Michael leans forward, craning to get a better look.

The sky is painted in the softest shades of pink and lavender. As the sun finishes it's slow ascent, the colors deepen, transforming into vibrant oranges and golds that spread across the sky.

Birds begin to stir, their songs filling the air with a cheerful, lilting melody. There are cattle grazing in the distance, their bells CLANGING faintly. The leaves RUSTLE and sway in a gentle breeze.

As the wagon approaches the front of the house, Fiona and Lucita run down the porch steps. They immediately go to the back of the wagon and climb in.

Lucita pounces on G.P., hugging him tightly.

Fiona stays a step behind, blinking as she is hit by the stench coming from G.P.'s wound. She kneels down at G.P.'s feet placing a gentle hand on his ankle.

John Michael look at Fiona and Lucita with a saddened expression.

An elderly Mexican man comes out of the house, removes his cowboy hat and holds it in his hands. He crosses himself. Miss Luz stands up, put on the breaks and hands the reins to the elderly Mexican man.

Lucita helps G.P. sit up with a grimace, and she looks at Fiona.

Fiona and Lucita both hold each of G.P.'s hands in theirs, tears streaming down their faces endlessly.

Miss Luz climbs back around them and hugs the girls hard from behind.



Fiona and Lucita cry harder, their sobs turning into hiccups, looking helplessly at G.P. and Miss Luz.

Rosalie gets out of the side of the wagon and keeps a respectful distance. John Michael goes to stand by her side. They hold hands.

Miss Luz wipes her tears and squares her shoulders.

Miss Luz and the Mexican man grab the mattress from one side, as John Michael and Rosalie step forward to grab it from the other side.

They slide G.P. out of the wagon and carry him over, struggling and panting, some distance away to a marked grave with a headstone. Fiona and Lucita follow, hugging each other tightly.

G.P. holds out his left hand, weakly.

G.P. MACALISTER  
Rozi...come.

Rosalie kneels beside G.P. and takes hold of his hand, trying to choke back her tears. Amelia stands next to Rosalie, looking at G.P.

Fiona and Lucita settle down on the other side, kneeling next to G.P. and take his other hand.

G.P. MACALISTER  
Don't...fret...my-  
my...girls...Im...leaving  
you...with...two fine...mothers  
and...a new...brother. You'll  
be...just...fine. I...love  
you...both so mu...

FIONA  
(whispering)  
Oh Papa, we love you!

Lucita nods silently.

G.P. MACALISTER  
(breathlessly)  
John Mich....come.

John Michael looks confusingly at Miss Luz. Miss Luz just indicates with a nod to go to where G.P.'s head lay, while she stays at his feet.

John Michael swallows and goes to G.P. He kneels down close to his head.

G.P. lets go of Rosalie's hand and grabs John Michael's collar, feebly pushing him down to where his mouth is.

G.P. MACALISTER  
 Lazy Eight...must...survive. The  
 business...won't. Family...Lazy  
 Eight...family. Must last! See to  
 it...boy. Swear.

John Michael turns his head and looks around. Jacob is nowhere to be seen. John Michael looks at Miss Luz who nods at him imperceptibly.

G.P. MACALISTER  
 (gasping for air)  
 Promise me...boy!

JOHN MICHAEL  
 Yessir...I-I promise.

Moments later, G.P. hands and body go limp. His ragged breathing stops. Fiona and Lucita collapse on top of him sobbing uncontrollably.

Rosalie, her own face streaked with tears, puts her hand on G.P.'s forehead and gently closes his eyes.

Miss Luz, Adolfo and Rosalie cross themselves.

Amelia, buries her head in the crook of Rosalie's neck as tears roll down her cheeks.

John Michael stands up, and looks at Miss Luz. She looks back at him, unblinkingly, her face masked from emotion.

John Michael's tears fall silently.

JOHN MICHAEL (V.O.)  
 And just like that, G.P. was gone.  
 Feels strange...to sense this  
 kinship with a man I knew for such  
 a short amount o' time. Through  
 G.P., I realized how we got here,  
 how we fought not just for land or  
 power, but for our rights. He died  
 fightin' for what he believed in,  
 and we owe it to him to carry on,  
 to keep fightin' for the future he  
 dreamed of.

There is utter silence except for Fiona and Lucita's heartrending sobs.

FADE OUT.