

Chimera of Sierra Madre

Psychological Horror Thriller

Story & Screenplay

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EXT. SIERRA MADRE RANGE - DAY (18 YEARS EARLIER)

TITLE: SIERRA MADRE OCCIDENTAL, MEXICO

TITLE: AUGUST, 1958

Gloomy evening. Storm clouds cling to the rugged, forested mountains. A rough track leads to the entrance of an abandoned mine. On the rock face, a broken mural of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Protector of Miners. Nearby, a sign with a skull and bones symbol, says: "Closed permanently by Government Order. STAY OUT - DANGER!!"

SUDDENLY, YOUNG MALENA (12) DASHES out of the mine, like a bat out of hell.

She zips down the path. A few seconds later, YOUNG MARCO, a 10-year old BOY, follows her. Scared, he's running for his life too.

The girl waits, grabs the boy's hand. Together, they bolt through the thick woods on the hillside, barreling down towards the valley.

EXT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A rambling, two-story wood and brick farmhouse with a sloping roof. A dark, foreboding, morose structure.

The boy and girl come running into the dusty front yard and hide behind a run-down barn, breathing hard.

MOMENTS LATER... FOOTSTEPS CRUNCH on gravel. The kids hold their breath.

The girl peers from around the wall. Not seeing anyone, she tiptoes out in spite of Marco trying to stop her.

Suddenly, a BOY (10) JUMPS in front of her. He's a SPITTING IMAGE of Marco!

BOY

Caught you! Now you're dead!

Malena SCREAMS.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - SAME

High sloping ceiling. Wood paneling. A four-poster bed.

DOLORES, a sick, unpleasant woman, looking much older than her 30-odd years, sits up in bed.

Her hands and feet ravaged by rheumatoid arthritis, knuckles gnarled like tree bark.

A bear-like man, GUILLERMO SANCHEZ (40) feeds her gruel. She grumbles, making a face.

GUILLERMO

Eat or the medicine won't work.
Remember what the doctor said.

DOLORES

Fuck the doctor!
(spits the food)
Take it away!

She strikes the bowl that CLATTERS to the floor.

Grunting, Guillermo gets down on his knees and sweeps the contents into the bowl. Dolores brings her face close to his.

DOLORES

I can't take this anymore. End my
misery, Guillermo! Kill me now!

Guillermo stares, fighting his rising anger, then leaves.

EXT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - SAME

Marco looks with trepidation at Young Malena struggling under his doppelganger.

YOUNG MALENA

MARCO! Help me! Nico, get off!

Mustering all his courage, Marco yanks Nico away. The identical boys roll in the mud, PUNCHING and KICKING.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - GUILLERMO'S GUN ROOM - SAME

Large room with an old furniture. Photographs of soldiers in WWII gear on the mantel. On the wall, a large photograph of Guillermo Sanchez in his Sergeant's uniform. A proud moment!

Energetic MILITARY MARCHING BAND plays on the old gramophone.

An M1 Garand Rifle with a 10-inch bayonet hangs below Guillermo's photograph. Two hands remove the rifle. Guillermo cradles the gun proudly in his hands.

He methodically removes the shining bayonet and proceeds to clean the rifle.

DOLORES

(O.S.)

Malena! Get me some fucking water.
I'm dying of thirst!

GUILLERMO

(calls)

MALENA?! Where's the fucking
bitch?!

Guillermo keeps the rifle on the stool. HEARING the kids jostling in the front yard, he looks from the balcony door.

GUILLERMO

Crazy motherfuckers!

Dolores CALLS again. Guillermo grunts and leaves the room.

EXT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - SAME

SUDDEN THUNDERCLAP. Large raindrops fall on the tangled kids.

Marco breaks free. He and Malena race towards the farmhouse.

They run around the house to the back yard and hastily clamber a wrought iron, rusty spiral staircase to a room on the upper level.

Rain begins to lash down on Nico, who watches them, grinning evilly, getting soaked to the bone.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Marco and Malena burst into a small storage room, filled with broken furniture and unwanted knick-knacks. They GIGGLE as they shake off their wet clothes.

Hearing the Marching Band MUSIC, they FREEZE. It's coming from a door leading into Guillermo's Gun Room.

Malena slowly opens the door. She peeps into the Gun Room. Not seeing anyone, she beckons Ravi, but he's scared. She gives him a stern look and waves him to follow her.

They hesitatingly enter

GUILLERMO'S GUN ROOM

YOUNG MALENA

Papa's not here. Go hide. Nico
won't find us here!

Malena jumps into the couch and covers herself with sheets.
Marco runs and hides

INSIDE THE CABINET

Young Marco squeezes in and closes the doors.

MOMENTS LATER, his excitement turns to fear when he HEARS
Guillermo's booming voice.

GUILLERMO

What the hell is going on? Where
the fuck were you?

YOUNG MALENA

We-- we were just playing--

GUILLERMO

Playing? You were supposed to feed
Mama! You lazy bitch! And get off
my couch! Your clothes are wet!
Take them off!

YOUNG MALENA

No!

Marco cowers as he hears JOSTLING, FIGHTING, SCREAMING.

He peers through the crack between the doors. He sees
Guillermo overpowering a struggling Malena on the couch.

Malena thrashes her legs, KICKING the stool. The rifle FALLS
and the bayonet CLATTERS to the floor. Marco stares at it.

Guillermo curses and reaches for his beloved gun. While his
back is turned, a HAND picks up the bayonet!

Guillermo turns around and seeing the newcomer, he SHOUTS.

GUILLERMO

Give that to me, you fucking--

Marco's POV: A hazy figure drives the bayonet into Guillermo!

Guillermo GROANS and CRASHES to the floor.

The killer leaps on Guillermo, SCREAMING and stabbing him.

Guillermo GROANS, GASPS and THRASHES ABOUT, then goes STILL.

The killer astride him turns around and looks directly into
the CAMERA - at Marco.

NICO! He wipes the blood spatters from his face and grins.

Young Marco recoils into the back of the cabinet, trembling.
He closes his eyes shut. Tight.

ON BLACK

YOUNG MALENA
(echoing whisper)
Nico did it!

INT./EXT. DURANGO MENTAL ASYLUM - DAY

TITLE: JULY 1976

A rambling, high security, stone and brick structure. The
board reads: DURANGO MENTAL ASYLUM FOR THE CRIMINALLY INSANE.

We go through the wrought iron gates, past the GUARDS,
yawning, chewing betel leaves, into the cavernous stone-
walled corridors, to the area marked for "Criminal
Detainees". The halls echo with anguished CRIES and WAILS of
women who having gone beyond reality.

We go past rambling, jostling FEMALE INMATES and OVERWORKED
STAFF trying to control them, until we reach...

CLAIRE MCADAMS (26), Caucasian, in white and blue striped
asylum garb, sits huddled on her bed, scared out of her mind.

A YOUNG INMATE tears papers into tiny bits.

YOUNG INMATE
He said he'll write but he didn't.
Hey postman, where's my letter? He
said he'll write every day...

Two NURSES try to calm down a BAWLING OLDER INMATE without
success. Senior nurse, JACINTA LOPEZ, 45, CALLS a BURLY
ORDERLY for help.

BURLY ORDERLY
(in Spanish)
Hey old woman! Stop wailing and
take your medicine, or else it's
straight to the special ward!

The older inmate immediately whimpers and takes her medicine.

Claire watches in horror. Jacinta gives her a stern look.

JACINTA
(in Spanish)
Don't stare with your pretty blue
eyes, Bette Davis.

Seeing her confused look, Jacinta continues in English.

JACINTA

Oh, you're new here! Follow our rules and you might survive.

(to staff, in Spanish)

Hey, we have a "Psycho" here.

Claire clutches to her arm.

CLAIRE

Nurse, why have they brought me here?

JACINTA

You must have done something to deserve this, no?

CLAIRE

I haven't done anything.

JACINTA

Then who did it?

CLAIRE

Nico did it!

JACINTA

And I am Evita Allende. Now, let go of me, I have other patients to see to.

Claire looks around her in anguish.

INT. DURANGO MENTAL ASYLUM - DR. DELGADO'S OFFICE - DAY

DR. ALEJANDRO DELGADO (55) - Outwardly, a grandfatherly man with a bushy gray beard, mane of white hair, and horn-rimmed glasses. But behind his smiling eyes, a mad scientist lurks. As he makes notes, he seems pleased with his own work.

Claire sits in a large couch in front of him, chewing her nails, fascinated by the rows of books behind Dr. Delgado.

DR. DELGADO

(in English)

So, Claire. How are you feeling today?

CLAIRE

When can I go home?

DR. DELGADO

You want to go back to the
farmhouse?

CLAIRE

No, not that dreadful place. Home.
To Canada.

DR. DELGADO

That will take a while, I'm afraid.
Unfortunately you've committed a
crime in Mexico, Claire. So you'll
be tried and punished according to
our laws.

CLAIRE

How many times do I have to tell
you, I didn't commit any crime. It
wasn't me.

DR. DELGADO

Mrs. Sanchez, I'm only trying to
help you. If you cooperate and tell
me what happened in your own words,
it may help to ease your situation.

Dr. Delgado pulls out his notebook. Claire looks about,
confused.

DR. DELGADO

So let's begin at the beginning. A
good place to start. You came to
Mexico with your husband, Marco?

CLAIRE

Yes. His mother had just died. We
came to take care of his property.
So we could sell it and go back...
But there were so many issues.

Dr. Delgado looks questioningly.

CLAIRE

The farmhouse for one. It's
haunted!

DR. DELGADO

Haunted? You mean by spirits?

CLAIRE

Just one. Guillermo. Marco's
father.

(MORE)

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I knew something was wrong with that house, the first time I set eyes on it. I just got the chills.

DR. DELGADO

Hmmm... Go on...

EXT. SIERRA MADRE ROAD - EVENING

The rainclouds BURST. The lush forest comes alive. The roads quickly turn to slush. A closed Jeep Wrangler climbs uphill, struggling through the potholes.

CLAIRE

(V.O.)

I was actually looking forward to this visit. First time out of the country. But it was nothing like I imagined. I mean, it was beautiful in its own way, but eerie. Very eerie. The day we arrived, the sky was pouring down. I thought we would drive off the mountain.

MARCO (now 28) at the wheel, curses softly. In the back seat, Claire holds on to her squirming 18-month old son, JOSHUA.

They pass a battered signboard on the side of the road:
"SANCHEZ COPPER MINES - CAUTION! SHUT DOWN BY ORDER"

CLAIRE

What happened to the mines?

MARCO

Flooded. Years ago. Fourteen miners drowned.

Before Claire can fully fathom the tragedy, the jeep lurches dangerously close to the edge.

CLAIRE

Be careful! How much longer, Marco?

MARCO

Not too far now.

After a few sharp turns, the old Sanchez farmhouse comes into view. Claire shivers as she looks at it. Marco looks grim.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

A row of Santeria idols on an altar. In the center, Santa Muerte, the Saint of the Dead, surrounded by beads, talismans, and burning candles.

In the dresser mirror, the reflection of MALENA (now 29). A strikingly beautiful woman with dark, intense eyes and a small scar on her chin. She's trying on Dolores' jewelry.

SOUND of CRUNCHING GRAVEL as the Jeep comes to a stop. Malena puts the jewelry down. A knowing smile dances on her lips.

EXT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - SAME

In the steady drizzle, Marco gets out of Jeep.

MARCO

Jorge? Jorge!!

Marco helps Claire get out from the back, with Joshua. She looks nervously at the dark imposing farmhouse.

CLAIRE

Looks like there's no electricity--

BOOM! The porch light comes on and she jumps back in surprise. In the naked glaring light, a swarthy man with blood shot eyes stands before her. It is JORGE (40). They speak in Spanish.

MARCO

Jorge, where the hell were you?

JORGE

I went to start the generator...

He quickly goes to help unload the vehicle.

MARCO

(to Claire)

Go on. I'll bring the luggage.

To get out of the rain, Claire walks quickly towards the house with Joshua, almost running into Malena in the porch.

MALENA

Hello, Claire! It's so wonderful to see you. At last!

They hug awkwardly as Claire is carrying Joshua.

MALENA

Here, let me take this bundle of
joy off your hands!

She takes Joshua into her arms and he goes willingly.

MALENA

Hello, my beautiful boy!

CLAIRE

His name's Joshua.

MALENA

I know. Welcome home, Joshua!

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Malena leads the way into the house. The old timber and brick
construction is cold and unwelcoming.

The furniture is from the early 1920's. A house that has seen
days of prosperity but fallen on hard times.

Malena sets Joshua down on the floor to play with some toys.
He picks up a stuffed teddy bear.

CLAIRE

Are there other children in the
house?

MALENA

Children? No! The house has not
heard the patter of little feet for
ages. I got these especially for
Joshua.

CLAIRE

Really? Thanks.

MALENA

I've been looking forward to meet
him-- and you-- ever since Marco
wrote to me about you both.

CLAIRE

Funny, he didn't talk about you a
lot.

MALENA

You know Marco! A man of few words.
Good quality in a husband, if you
ask me.

She goes to fetch her some tea.

MALENA

Here, I made some hot tea for you
with our local herbs. It will
revive you after your long journey.

Claire takes the steaming cup with a strong aroma.

MALENA

Canada! Never knew our Marco will
end up marrying a northern belle!

CLAIRE

Just the way it worked out.

MALENA

It's destiny. Nothing happens
without a reason.

Marco enters with a suitcase. Seeing Malena, he beams.

MARCO

Malena!

Malena gets up and hugs Marco tightly.

MALENA

My Marco! My little amigo!

Then, on cue, she bursts into sobs.

MALENA

Mama asked about you all the time.
She missed you so much. And I too!
We both missed you.

Claire takes a sip of the tea. It's too strong for her.

MARCO

Thank you for looking after Mama.
I'm glad you were there in her last
years.

MALENA

Yes, I tried my best to take care
of her. I'm sorry we had to bury
her before you came. But I will
take you to her grave tomorrow.

Jorge enters with more luggage and places them down.

MALENA

(curtly, in Spanish)

JORGE! What are you doing? These go into the guest bedroom.

(to Marco, in English)

The master bedroom is too damp and I didn't want Claire climbing up and down the stairs with a child and all. So I set you guys up in the guest bedroom on the lower level. It's a spacious room. And I set up Joshua's cot in the room next to it, so you guys can have privacy. I hope you don't mind.

MARCO

That's perfectly all right. Claire?

Suddenly feeling hot and bothered, Claire nods absently.

CLAIRE

Sure. I'd like to use the bathroom first.

MALENA

Of course. Your bladder must be bursting with the long journey!

She leads Claire to the bathroom in the passage while Marco heads to the back of the house with the luggage.

Claire opens the bathroom door and hesitates seeing it dark inside.

MALENA

There's a light switch right beside the door.

Claire is still nervous.

CLAIRE

Can you... please switch it on for me?

Malena smiles, puzzled.

MALENA

Sure. You don't have to be nervous here. The house looks like a haunted mansion but it's perfectly safe.

CLAIRE

It's not that. I-- I have a fear of electricity.

MALENA

Oh. I didn't know there was such a thing.

She leans in and switches on the bathroom light.

CLAIRE

It's a childhood fear.

Malena hugs her.

MALENA

You're perfectly safe here, my dear. Now go, do your business.

Claire shuts the door from within.

BATHROOM

The bathroom is cold and damp. Claire's distorted image reflects in a stained mirror in an ornate frame.

Claire turns on the faucet. It squeals as a tiny trickle flows out. The pipes shake and make a racket. Claire quickly turns off the tap.

A tree branch scrapes the open window pane as Claire uses the toilet. She feels a strange chill.

LATER...

Claire exits the bathroom. She hears Malena and Marco TALKING and LAUGHING in the back of the house.

Deciding to take a tour, Claire takes the creaking staircase to the upper floor.

UPPER LEVEL

Light filters from the master bedroom at the end of the passage.

THE MASTER BEDROOM

Claire peers in. She takes in the large, four-poster bed, the antique dresser and wardrobes.

Then, she notices the altar with strange idols and paraphernalia. She frowns and turns back.

A LIGHT flickers from under the door from the room opposite the master bedroom. Claire tries the door. It's LOCKED.

As she leaves, a SHADOW blocks the light for an instant from the inside. Then, the light in the room goes OFF.

Claire catches it from the corner of her eye, but before she can figure it out, she is startled by Marco calling her.

MARCO (O.S.)
Claire! Dinner's ready!

Claire quickly walks to the stairs.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

A rustic dining area overlooking a country kitchen. Malena brings hot pots of food and sets them on the table. A range of wholesome Mexican delicacies - enchiladas, tortillas, and pork bone soup.

CLAIRE
That's quite a spread, Malena.

MALENA
It's your first meal in Mexico so I wanted to make it memorable. But don't expect a treat every night.

MARCO
Don't believe her, Claire. Malena's an awesome cook.

She serves generous helpings for Claire, ignoring her protests.

MALENA
We're pueblo people, Claire. We eat hearty, we live hardy. Don't worry about putting on a little lard on the hips. Our men love it.

She jiggles her hips to show. She refills Claire's drink.

CLAIRE
Please go easy. What is this stuff?

MALENA
Tequila. Brewed right here. Nothing packs a bigger punch.

MARCO

Really? Old Man Hector still brews his stuff?

MALENA

Hector passed years ago. But his son Vincenzo has a better formula. A better body too. His abs, oh my!

MARCO

Malena! Still has the roving eye!

MALENA

Hey, you only live once. Right, Claire?

CLAIRE

I don't know anyone with abs!

MALENA

Come on! A pretty girl like you, must have had a lot of guys hanging around. Before Marco!

MARCO

Enough, Malena. It's her first night. Give her a break.

CLAIRE

(to Malena)

Did you always live here with Marco's family?

MALENA

No. I came here when I was six. After my Papi died.

MARCO

Malena's father was one of our miners.

CLAIRE

Oh, one of those who-- Oh, I'm sorry.

MALENA

(shrugs)

I had no one. But Marco's parents treated me like their own. Always.

CLAIRE

So you two grew up together then.

MALENA
We were like this.
(intertwines fingers)
Nothing could separate us.

MARCO
Yeah. We got into all kinds of
trouble. Together.

MALENA
Remember that one time when...

As Malena reminisces, Claire feels a heaviness coming on, due to the strong drink. She finds it hard to focus.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

Claire's eyes flip OPEN. The room is bathed in moonlight from the window. She's in bed, confused. Marco is beside her.

MARCO
Are you okay?

Claire nods.

CLAIRE
I don't remember how--

MARCO
Relax. You're exhausted with the
long flight, the drive. Just sleep.

Claire closes her eyes. Then, suddenly, she opens her eyes again as she remembers something.

CLAIRE
Who lives in the room above?

MARCO
No one. That's Papa's gun room. We
just keep it locked up.

CLAIRE
Why?

MARCO
It's a long story. I'll tell you
another time.

CLAIRE
When I was upstairs, I thought I
saw a light burning in that room.

MARCO

A light? You probably imagined it.

CLAIRE

Yes. Good night.

Claire closes her eyes. For some time, she tosses around. Then, she cuddles closer to Marco.

Playing with her hair, Marco stares at the ceiling. Lost in his memories. Some he would rather forget.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - SAME

Malena lies in bed, cuddling the teddy bear Joshua was playing with. She kisses it and smiles.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - NURSERY - SAME

Joshua is fast asleep in the nursery decorated with fresh, colorful wallpaper, surrounding by plush toys.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

A rural cemetery with colorful gravestones blessed with flowers.

A stone reads: "DOLORES MARISELA CARRERA SANCHEZ, Beloved Wife, Loving Mother. May 4, 1914 - June 17, 1976."

Below that: "SERGEANT GUILLERMO FIDEL SANCHEZ, Devoted Husband, Cherished Father. April 28, 1911 - August 5, 1958."

MALENA

I wanted them to be together. Just like they were in life.

She places a bouquet on the grave. Marco stands stoically. Claire holds on to Joshua, as he struggles to run free.

They turn and walk back towards their jeep. Joshua gets free.

CLAIRE

Josh! Darling! Be careful.

Joshua picks up some dead flowers from a grave. Claire quickly takes them away from him.

CLAIRE

NO! Don't pick stuff from graves.

MALENA

Claire, it's okay. It's not like they can smell the roses.

CLAIRE

No! It's not okay.

Joshua whimpers. Malena picks him up.

MALENA

Here, mi hijo. Let me show you something fun.

She takes him to the edge of the cemetery, from where she shows him the river far below, in the valley.

Claire is nervous she's too close to the edge of the hill.

CLAIRE

Be careful, Malena.

MARCO

It's fine. Malena knows this place like the back of her hand.

CLAIRE

I'd rather take my son back to Canada in one piece. How soon do you think we can return?

MARCO

I'm going into town this afternoon to meet the estate lawyer. He has a buyer lined up, so it shouldn't be too long. While you're here, just enjoy your holiday. I'm in no rush to get back to picking fruit.

EXT. SANCHEZ ESTATE - DAY

A few WORKERS picking apples. Malena and Claire walk along an orchard. Rural workers become wary upon seeing Malena. They nod to her respectfully as she and Claire pass by.

CLAIRE

It's strange that the first time I met Marco, he was picking fruit in the farm next to ours in Niagara. And here, his family owns all this property.

MALENA

Yes, he should never have left. But then, he would never have found you. And Joshua.

Malena picks an apple from a worker's basket.

MALENA

We grow the best apples in the region. But the thing I'm most proud of - my beloved herb garden.

She bends down and plucks some yellow flowers.

MALENA

This is Chaparral. It has medicinal properties to cure kidney disease and nervous disorders. This is what gave Marco's mother many more years than the doctors were giving her. Here, smell it.

Claire backs off.

CLAIRE

Yeah, yeah, I believe you. I grew up on a farm too. A dairy farm. Not this big, though. But milking cows was not my passion.

MALENA

So where did you meet Marco?

CLAIRE

He used to work on the strawberry farm next to ours. He was new. Couldn't speak much English, so he was the butt of jokes for the villagers around. I told them off once. Since then, he and I became good friends.

MALENA

You were already pregnant with Joshua, right?

CLAIRE

Yes. I was going through a rough patch. I was glad for Marco's support.

MALENA

I'm glad he's back home now. But now that he's here, he can take over from me.

CLAIRE

Wait! We didn't come to take care of the property. We want to sell it and go back.

MALENA

Oh!

Malena's face falls. She turns to yell at a worker.

MALENA

(in Spanish)

Have you got arthritis in your hands? Fill your basket quicker. I have a shipment to send today.

(to Claire, in English)

Workers! They're a lazy bunch. So, Marco agrees with your plan to sell the property?

CLAIRE

It's not MY plan. We decided together. We'll use the money to buy an apartment.

MALENA

Apartment! Why would you do that? When you have a big house and all this land! It'd be great for Joshua to grow up here!

CLAIRE

We're not settling here. No way.

MALENA

(softly)

Hmm... we'll see.

Lost in thought, Malena slowly grinds the flowers between her fingers to yellow dust.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - NURSERY - NIGHT

Claire tucks the sleeping Joshua into bed. Then, she moves to

GUEST BEDROOM

She gets into the bed and picks up a novel.

Moments later, she hears a faint SCRAPING sound from the room directly overhead. Then, a FOOTFALL. She sits up.

Suddenly, a CRASH and the RATTLE of a bottle falling on the wood floor and rolling. Then, a quick SHUFFLING of footsteps.

Alarmed, Claire, gets out of bed.

THE STAIRS

Claire gingerly walks to the foot of the stairs.

CLAIRE

Marco? Is it you? Malena?

She walks softly up the stairs.

Sound of MARCHING BAND filters down. She follows the music.

Muffled SOUNDS come from Guillermo's gun room. LIGHT streaks out from under the door.

CLAIRE

Who-- Who's there?

The MUSIC increases in volume, playing in REVERSE. TRAMPLING FEET approach. The knob TURNS.

The door RATTLES as if someone is trying to open it. Then, someone BANGS the door from within.

CLAIRE

Who is it? Who's there?

FOOTSTEPS recede and disappear. Claire waits a few moments.

Then, she tries the handle. It is LOCKED!

Someone comes out of the master bedroom and walks up softly behind her. Claire senses it. She turns and is STARTLED.

CLAIRE

Oh my God! MALENA! You scared the shit out of me. Who's in that room?

MALENA

No one. Just- you need to just relax. Come with me.

She takes her into

THE MASTER BEDROOM

And locks the door.

CLAIRE
That's Marco's father's room,
right? Isn't he dead?

Malena goes to the wardrobe and puts on a yellow turban with white beads. She puts on a red mark on her forehead.

MALENA
Yes. But his spirit refuses to
leave.

CLAIRE
You're kidding me.

MALENA
No, I'm serious. You see, Guillermo
died a very violent death. He was
murdered.

CLAIRE
What!!

MALENA
Didn't Marco tell you anything?

Malena picks up an idol that looks like the Grim Reaper.

CLAIRE
Not that he was mur-- Why? By whom?
And where are you going dressed
like that?

MALENA
You don't have to worry about
Guillermo. I'll take care of him.

CLAIRE
How? Are you an exorcist too?

MALENA
No. But I know how to deal with
nasty spirits. Just give me a few
minutes. You just stay here. And
keep the door locked.

While Claire looks perplexed, Malena leaves. Claire locks the room but stays close to hear what's going on.

She hears Malena CHANTING a spell above the music. A GROWLING sound answers her. Claire trembles.

A SHOUTING MATCH ensues. Then, THINGS are THROWN AROUND.

Claire is at her wit's end. She looks at the Santeria paraphernalia and is even more frightened.

Suddenly, the Marching Band MUSIC stops.

There's a soft KNOCK on the door.

MALENA
(O.S., softly)
Claire, it's me.

Claire opens the door. Malena enters, her turban askew, hair flying.

MALENA
He's one motherfucking ogre. But
he's gone now.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - DINING ROOM - LATER

Malena brings a hot cup of chamomile tea for Claire.

MALENA
I'm sorry this must be all a big
shock to you. But for us, this is
not new.

CLAIRE
I can't believe I'm living in a
haunted house.

MALENA
It's not haunted. We just have a
spirit that refuses to leave. He
does get agitated from time to
time.

CLAIRE
Why was he agitated now?

MALENA
It's the spirit's way of
demonstrating emotion. He felt the
presence of a new entity in the
house and wanted to show his power.
That's all. I've taken care of him.

CLAIRE
If you didn't arrive on time, what
would have happened to me and
Joshua?

MALENA

Guillermo doesn't harm anyone. So you don't have to worry. Especially not his own daughter-in-law and grandson.

CLAIRE

But-- who killed him? Why?

MALENA

You should ask Marco about that part of his family history.

Claire nods, still trying to come to grips with the situation.

EXT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - DAY

Malena plays with Joshua in the porch, while watching Marco and Claire talking in the front yard.

MARCO

I'm sorry I didn't tell you about Papa... I thought that was all in the past.

CLAIRE

Why didn't you tell me he was murdered?

MARCO

How could I, Claire? It's a family disgrace. More like a wound.

CLAIRE

But I'm your wife. You could've told me.

MARCO

You want to hear it? Okay, then.

They sit on a wooden bench near the grotto.

MARCO

Papa always had a terrible temper. And my mother, she was very sickly. He took care of her. But she could be very mean sometimes. So he would drink and take his anger out on me or Malena or Nico.

CLAIRE

Nico?

MARCO

Yes... my twin brother. He was a handful right from the start. We looked alike but our natures were poles apart. Papa used to beat him all the time. Sometimes, Papa would mistakenly whip me in his place. Then one day, when we were ten years old...

CLAIRE

What happened?

MARCO

I-- I don't remember very well, but Nico couldn't take the beatings any more and stabbed Papa in the room upstairs...

CLAIRE

Oh my God!

MARCO

He ran away from home. For months no one knew where he was. There were rumors that he had joined some gangsters.

CLAIRE

And what about you?

MARCO

I bore the brunt of the incident. Had high fever for days, was tormented by nightmares... you can't imagine the trauma, Claire. I was only ten. A child. They checked me into one hospital after another. All kinds of treatments. For seven years. Only after that, I could live some semblance of a normal life.

Claire hugs him. Malena sees that, while cuddling Joshua.

CLAIRE

I'm so sorry...

MARCO

No, I'm sorry, you had to face his shenanigans last night.

CLAIRE

Yes, I was petrified! Never had an encounter with a ghost before. But luckily Malena was there. I don't know what voodoo magic she used but she calmed him down.

MARCO

And hopefully, he won't wake up again.

He kisses Claire, and over her shoulder, exchanges a look with Malena. She smiles.

CLAIRE

You have a twin, eh? Another you.

MARCO

Yes. But believe me, you don't want to meet that "me".

INT. DURANGO MENTAL ASYLUM - DR. DELGADO'S OFFICE - DAY

A new session with Claire. Dr. Delgado scribbles the word "Malena" in Claire's file.

DR. DELGADO

So, Malena helped to drive the ghost away, you say.

Claire sits in the patient's chair, her eyes darting about.

CLAIRE

Yes. She's the witch, the voodoo queen. She can cast spells. She cast one on me too.

DR. DELGADO

But she was helping you too, wasn't she?

CLAIRE

That was her scheme all along, you see. She wanted to trap me. To steal my baby. And my husband. She was giving me all these "herbal" medicines, teas and what not. You can run my blood test. You'll find them all inside me.

DR. DELGADO

But you continued to take everything willingly.

CLAIRE

I had no choice. She's a witch, I'm telling you.

Dr. Delgado scribbles some prescriptions in her file. Then, closing it, he rings a bell under his table.

DR. DELGADO

That will be all for today, Claire. Continue taking your medicine.

CLAIRE

(desperate)

I can't stay here, Dr. Delgado. I must see my baby. My Joshua.

Two ORDERLIES enter the room to escort her out. She resists.

CLAIRE

I promise to take my medicines at home. Please don't send me back to my room. Those women. They're crazy. Not me. Please, Dr. Delgado.

Despite her protests, Claire is forcefully removed from Dr. Delgado's office.

After she leaves, Dr. Delgado ponders for a moment. Then he picks up the phone.

DR. DELGADO

(in Spanish)

Ruiz, can you ring Dr. Aguirre and find out how soon our electro convulsive therapy device will be ready?... I may have a likely candidate for it... Yes, pronto, por favor!

INT. DURANGO MENTAL ASYLUM - COMMON ROOM - DAY

Claire sits on a wrought iron bench, looking vacantly out the barred window. She sees an INMATE in the back garden, cuddling a doll. A tear rolls down Claire's face.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Joshua BABBLES as he plays with his toys on the floor.

Washing up at the sink, Claire sees Marco and Malena through the window.

They are at the grotto, laughing hard, sharing some old memory. Claire feels uneasy as Malena keeps snuggling closer to Marco and he does not seem to mind.

Suddenly, the milk bubbles over into the stove and Claire rushes to attend to it.

EXT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - DAY

Malena plays with Joshua on the porch, as Claire cleans up the dusty furniture.

MALENA

Okay, my sweetie pie, tell me,
what's my name? Ma-le-na... say,
maa...lay..

JOSHUA

Maa... maa... Mamma!

MALENA

It's fine. You can call me Mamma.

She holds him close lost in her world, her eyes misty.

Heena brings a plate with cut banana pieces.

CLAIRE

Malena! MALENA??

Malena comes out of her reverie.

CLAIRE

It's time for Joshua's snack.

Malena looks at the banana.

MALENA

I don't think that is good for him.
He's colicky today. So I gave him
some fennel juice to soothe his
tummy.

CLAIRE

When?

MALENA

This morning, while you were still
in bed.

(to Joshua, in baby talk)

Little man feeling better now?
Mamma takes cares of you.

Claire throws the banana in the bin.

Oblivious, Malena tickles Karan who squeals with joy.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

Claire lies alone in bed. SOUNDS of Marco and Malena TALKING and LAUGHING come from

THE LIVING ROOM

Marco and Malena are playing a board game. Marco counts an extra space, and Malena catches him cheating.

They SQUABBLE and playfully hit each other.

INTERCUT GUEST BEDROOM/LIVING ROOM

CLAIRE

Marco! It's getting late... aren't you coming to bed?

MARCO

Just five minutes more, darling. I have to beat Malena in this round.

MALENA

(in Spanish)

You will beat me, kiddo? Don't forget who taught you this game!

CLAIRE

Please... Joshua will wake up...

Marco shushes Malena, stifling a giggle. They whisper in Spanish.

MARCO

Your move...

MALENA

I already moved. It's your turn... are you sleeping or awake?

Claire can hear their WHISPERING and GIGGLING. Exasperated, she covers her head with her pillow.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - GUEST BEDROOM - DAY

Claire wakes up with a start. Sunlight streaks in from the open window. Birds chirp outside. She's alone in bed.

NURSERY

Claire finds Joshua's bed empty and panics.

HEENA

Josh? Marco!

EXT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Claire comes out of the house and looks around. She sees Jorge carrying a pail of water from the well, sloshing some on the ground.

CLAIRE

Jorge! Have you seen Marco?

Not understanding her, Jorge panics as she approaches him.

JORGE

(in Spanish)

I didn't do anything. I don't know anything. I'm sorry, forgive me.

CLAIRE

Marco? Senor Marco? Donde? Where?

Jorge drops the pail and runs into the barn. Claire is puzzled.

She HEARS sounds of HAMMERING coming from the Guest house at the end of the property. She walks towards it.

THE GUEST HOUSE

Marco is on a ladder, fixing up a window.

CLAIRE

What's going on?

MARCO

Just fixing up the guest house.

CLAIRE

We're having guests now?

MARCO

No. Just getting the place looking good.

He comes down the ladder. He comes to kiss her, but seeing he's sweaty, she backs off.

CLAIRE
And where's Joshua?

MARCO
With Malena. She got a bike from town. So, she's taken Josh for a ride--

CLAIRE
On a ride? In these mountains!

MARCO
Don't worry. She's an expert driver.

CLAIRE
I'm sure she is.

They sit on the bench by the grotto. Claire fans herself.

CLAIRE
How long is it going to take?

MARCO
What? The guest house?

CLAIRE
No! The sale! Looks like you want to settle down here.

MARCO
I'm only fixing up so we get a buyer.

CLAIRE
I thought you already had one.

MARCO
Well, he-- he backed out. He heard rumors about the house being haunted and all that.

CLAIRE
So, we're stuck here now?

MARCO
There's... there's another thing.

She turns towards him, anticipating more bad news.

MARCO
The lawyer said that before Mama died she made Malena a joint owner.

CLAIRE
(upset)
Great!

MARCO
(defensive)
She did look after Mama those last years! She wasn't an easy patient.

CLAIRE
So, now you can't sell without her say so.

Marco squirms, helpless.

SOUND of a motorbike as it comes ROARING up the hill.

Malena enters the compound. Joshua is strapped to her in a baby sling. He is squealing with delight, wind rushing through his hair.

Claire goes quickly and takes Joshua from her.

CLAIRE
Malena! Don't take him on your bike again!

MALENA
But he loved it, Claire.

CLAIRE
I don't want an argument, okay?

She takes Joshua inside. Malena looks at Marco, puzzled.

MALENA
Nothing happened to Joshua, man.

MARCO
She's just upset, that's all.

MALENA
(slyly)
Maybe, it's that time of the month.

Marco follows Claire inside the house.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - GUEST BEDROOM - LATER

Claire changes Joshua's clothes roughly, still upset.

CLAIRE

I've had it with her! I don't want her taking care of Joshua any more.

MARCO

Calm down, darling. Malena didn't mean to -

CLAIRE

She teaches me how to bring up my son! I know what Joshua likes or doesn't like. I'm his mother, not her!

MARCO

She can never be a mother, Claire! Malena is infertile!

CLAIRE

Oh?!

MARCO

Yes, that's why her marriage didn't work out, and she came back home to look after Mama and the farm.

Joshua begins to cry. She gives him a toy which he throws away. Exasperated, she sits on the bed.

Marco picks up Joshua, who calms down in his arms.

MARCO

If you still want me to, I'll tell her to stay away from Joshua.

Claire feels bad now. Frustrated, she flops back in bed.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Marco and Malena eat in silence. Claire enters and sits down. Malena offers her the main dish.

MALENA

I got Paella from town. From a lady that makes the best Paella. Try it.

Claire takes a small portion.

CLAIRE

Thanks.

MALENA

Claire... I'm sorry. About taking Joshua without asking you.

CLAIRE

That's fine.

MALENA

No, no. I understand. As a mother, you worry about your child. But I wouldn't let any harm come to Joshua. Not on my life.

Beat. Marco pours a drink for Claire.

MALENA

And I've been thinking. Maybe I should give you guys some privacy. I can move to the guest house.

CLAIRE

Look, you don't have to--

MALENA

No, it's fine, Claire. Marco has fixed it up real good.

MARCO

Are you sure?

MALENA

Yeah. Absolutely. It's not too far.
(to Claire)
Just give me a shout if Guillermo bothers you again!

Claire smiles weakly.

CLAIRE

Look, I'm sorry-- I didn't know-- that you can't have kids...

MALENA

It's just my fate. I prayed to every god there is. Tried every treatment. Nothing works. But when I see Joshua, it's like my motherly instinct takes over... And I...

She starts bawling. Claire goes over and hugs her.

CLAIRE

Hey... That's okay. Joshua is fond of you too...

Marco takes another helping of the Paella.

RAVI

I must say. You don't get jumbo
shrimp like this in Canada.

Malena looks at him sucking a shrimp and laughs through her tears. Claire smiles too.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - CHILDREN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Clean room with two small beds at either ends of the room - one with pink covering, the other with blue.

Joshua plays with toys on Young Marco's bed. Claire sits beside him. She notices a sepia photograph stuck in a corner of the wardrobe mirror.

She walks to it and takes it out for a closer look. It's a faded photo of Marco and Malena as kids. They look into the camera not smiling, almost stiff, as if scared of the person taking their picture. Claire frowns.

She flips the photograph over and reads the Spanish writing on the back.

Slowly, she figures out the English translation.

CLAIRE

"My Brother, My Friend, My Love"

Perturbed, she frowns, feeling blood rush to her cheeks.

Suddenly, in the mirror, she notices Young Marco's bed is empty. She whirls around. Joshua's gone!

HEENA

Joshua? Baby!

Sticking the photograph in her pocket, she darts out.

HALLWAY

It's empty. The gun room is closed, but the master bedroom is open. Heena hurries to it.

MASTER BEDROOM

Claire sees Joshua playing with a stuffed doll. She rushes in and grabs him.

CLAIRE
 Don't go away like that! Where did
 you get this?

She takes away the doll. It's very lifelike and someone had painted its lips with real lipstick, now smudged in places.

JOSHUA
 Maa... maa... mamma!

She looks at Joshua and thinks of Malena who taught him that word. She gives the doll back to him.

Marco's words echo in her mind.

MARCO
 (V.O.)
 She can never be a mother, Claire!
 Malena is infertile!

EXT. SANCHEZ GUEST HOUSE - DAY

Claire walks across the estate to the guest house. A flock of birds suddenly FLAPS past her.

Near the house, she spots Marco's Jeep. She frowns. She walks to the door and KNOCKS. It swings open to her touch.

CLAIRE
 Malena?

No one answers. She enters.

INT. SANCHEZ GUEST HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Fragrance of incense sticks, and soothing STRUMMING of a classical guitar welcome Claire in.

CLAIRE
 Hello?

The house is filled with strange idols, lanterns, curios and vessels. Claire looks around with puzzlement.

She walks towards the music. Parting a bead curtain, she enters...

MALENA'S BEDROOM

Lit candles are placed in a circle on the floor, and in the center on a mattress are Malena and Marco.

He is lying on his stomach, nude, except for a towel. Malena, wearing a flimsy silk top, sits astride him, dragging her fingers down his back. Their bodies are glistening with oil and sweat.

CLAIRE
Marco!! What the--!

Malena opens her eyes. She seems to be in a trance. She smiles languidly.

MALENA
Come, join us!

Marco looks up. He seems drowsy. Disgusted, Claire turns and runs out of the house.

EXT. SANCHEZ GUEST HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Claire catches her breath near a tree.

Marco comes to the window and CALLS her.

MARCO
Claire!

Claire looks back at his shirtless body. Then, quickly walks back towards the farmhouse.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Claire is livid. Marco is trying to calm her down.

CLAIRE
How long has this been going on?

MARCO
Claire, you're mistaken. I hurt my back. She was only massaging it.

CLAIRE
Yeah, and I'm sure she relieved all the other tension too.

MARCO
Claire, you are just being jealous!

CLAIRE
Jealous of that village bumpkin?

She pulls out the photo of Malena and Marco and throws it on the table.

CLAIRE
She's had the hots for you since
you were kids.

Marco picks up the photo.

MARCO
Where'd you get this?

CLAIRE
Brother, my ass! She's wrapped you
around her little finger. I don't
care how you do it but we must sell
this property and go back home as
soon as possible.

Marco sits down in a heap. Helpless.

MARCO
Look, it's not that easy, Claire.
Things are not how I thought they
would be. This is Mexico.

CLAIRE
So, what? You want to stay here?!

MARCO
I don't know. We must consider--

CLAIRE
(figures it out)
So she finally got into your head.
Well, you can stay here. But I'm
going back to Canada. With Joshua.

Marco leaps to his feet, suddenly angry.

MARCO
No. Never!

CLAIRE
(stunned at his reaction)
What do you mean?

Marco takes a menacing step towards her. She backs off.

MARCO
You can go if you like. But you're
not going to take my son.

CLAIRE
Your son?

MARCO

Yes, Joshua will live here. With me.

Marco storms out of the house, as Claire fumes.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

The house is quiet, and crickets CHIRP loudly in the forest. Claire lies alone in bed, deep in thought.

Suddenly, the lights BLINK and the power fails, sinking the house into DARKNESS.

Beat. An object CRASHES to the floor in the room above.

Claire jumps out of bed.

A low MOAN sounds. Then the sounds of someone DRAGGING a heavy chair. Soon it topples over.

Strains of the Marching Band filter down. A metallic object BANGS on a wall and CRASHES to the floor.

Claire rushes to the window.

CLAIRE

Marco! Jorge!!

Just then, a LOUD CRASH. The whole house shakes as some large piece of furniture is overturned in the gun room.

Claire peers out of the bedroom. It is pitch dark.

LOWER LEVEL HALLWAY

Claire stumbles in the dark looking for a flashlight. She finds one in the closet.

UPPER LEVEL HALLWAY

The orb of the flashlights bounces off the walls as Claire comes up the stairs. The door to the gun room shakes with great FORCE. The knob turns - and then it creaks OPEN.

Claire freezes, expecting the worse. But when on one emerges, gingerly steps forward.

GUILLERMO'S GUN ROOM

Her flashlight picks up broken bottles, glasses and overturned furniture.

Claire enters and turns off the gramophone throwing the room into silence. Just the LOUD TICKING of a grandfather clock.

Claire flashes the light around at the photographs and wardrobe. It finally lands on a FIGURE in a military uniform in the recliner. She GASPS.

Slowly, the figure RISES. Claire SCREAMS. The flashlight falls from her hands, casting eerie shadows on the walls.

A booming VOICE echoes in the room, uttering unintelligible, guttural sounds. Claire turns and flees.

UPPER LEVEL HALLWAY

She feels POUNDING footsteps behind her.

She misses her footing and is about to fall down the stairs, when someone rushing up, saves her.

With fading consciousness, she sees Marco's face... then everything turns BLACK.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Marco's face comes into focus again.

MARCO

Thank God, you're all right.

Claire touches her head. It is sore.

MARCO

Don't worry. It's just a graze.

CLAIRE

It was Guillermo... upstairs...

MARCO

Yes, I know. Malena is there right now. She'll fix everything.

CLAIRE

Why is he back? I can't take this, Marco. I wanna go back!

She breaks down sobbing. Marco holds Claire to calm her down.

AN HOUR LATER

Claire is half-sitting up on the couch with a hot water bottle to the side of her head.

Malena and Marco are sitting close to her, looking concerned.

Malena offers her a bowl with a red liquid to drink. She takes it hesitatingly.

MALENA

I've calmed Papa down. But his spirit is restless.

CLAIRE

Why?

MALENA

He can sense the presence of his killer nearby.

MARCO

Nico?

MALENA

Yes, he's definitely close by. Or else Papa would not be so agitated.

Rain begins to fall. Marco walks up to the window to close it. He stands looking outside.

MALENA

He's coming to get me, Marco.

CLAIRE

For you? Why?

MALENA

After killing Papa, Nico had fled into the mines. But some time later, he came down, looking for food. I locked him in Papa's room and ran to tell the police.

CLAIRE

So, he should still be in prison.

MALENA

No prison can hold that demon for long. My psychic sense tells me he's nearby.

Marco opens a closet. Claire sees two hunting rifles in it.

MARCO

He can come here if he dares. I'm not afraid of him.

Claire's eyes widen with fear. Marco assures her.

MARCO

I won't let anything happen to you
or Malena or Joshua. Trust me!

They look at one another in apprehension.

Claire has never seen Marco so intense and it unnerves her.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - GUEST BEDROOM - DAY

Claire watches Karan asleep in bed. She folds some of his
clothes, absently.

She HEARS some scuffling SOUNDS from outside.

She looks out of the window. Some shrubs RUSTLE and something
rolls on the ground. A liquor bottle.

Curious, she goes out the back door.

EXT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Claire walks into the overgrown backyard and GASPS when she
sees Jorge sprawled in the shrubs, next to a wrought iron
spiral staircase, seemingly dead.

She walks softly forward and touches him.

CLAIRE

Jorge?

Suddenly, he wakes up. Claire screams and backs off.

Seeing her, Jorge bursts into tears and starts blabbering in
Spanish. He is obviously drunk out of his mind.

Claire catches her and Malena's names in his speech but is
unable to make out anything else.

CLAIRE

Jorge! I don't understand you. What
happened?

Jorge tries to explain but someone yanks him back. Malena!

Yelling at him in Spanish, Malena drags Jorge away.

Cowering, Jorge half-runs, half-stumbles towards the barn.
Malena turns to Claire, dusting her hands.

CLAIRE

What's up with him?

MALENA

Drunk like a skunk! I've had it up to here with his shenanigans! I'm sorry he scared you.

CLAIRE

What was he saying about you and me?

MALENA

(scoffs)

Ravings of a mad man! I've asked him to look for another job! Can't have a crazy idiot like him around.

Claire looks at the half broken staircase going up to a rotting door on the top floor.

CLAIRE

I never noticed this staircase before.

MALENA

Oh, it's an old relic. Very dangerous, if you ask me. I've been meaning to have it taken away.

CLAIRE

Where does it go? To Guillermo's room?

MALENA

Used to, yes. But it's been locked up since he died. So no-one uses this. I think Joshua has woken up.

SOUNDS of Joshua fussing. Claire heads back into the house.

Malena picks up the liquor bottle and stares at her back. There's a grim look on her face.

EXT. PUEBLO MAIN STREET - DAY

LOCALS go about their business in a busy market square.

Marco's jeep drives down and parks near a restaurant. Claire is in the passenger seat. He looks at his watch.

MARCO

There's some time before my appointment with the Advocate. We can have coffee here.

They get down and enter the restaurant.

INT./EXT. LA ESTRELLA ROJA RESTAURANTE - DAY

Marco and Claire enter and find a table near the entrance. A WAITER comes to them.

MARCO

You should try their Churros with chocolate. Better than doughnuts.

She nods. Marco orders it for her.

MARCO

The office is right across the street. Over there.

He points it out. Claire appears nervous.

MARCO

You're worried about Nico? Don't be. He may never turn up.

CLAIRE

But Malena said...

MARCO

(scoffs)

It's the word of a spirit!
Besides, I'll deal with him.

The waiter brings coffee and churros. Claire eats one.

MARCO

Not so bad, right? We should come out more often. Let Malena take care of Josh for a while.

She's still nervous. He holds her hand.

MARCO

Look, I'm not the same Marco I was when we were children. Nico will regret it if he tries anything now.

He looks at his watch. She notices the phone booth next to the restaurant.

MARCO

Heck. It's almost time for my appointment. Let's go.

CLAIRE

Er... Why don't you go meet the man by yourself? I won't understand what you're discussing anyway.

MARCO

Are you sure?

CLAIRE

Yes. I'll wait for you here. Maybe have another churro.

Marco quickly gulps down his coffee and heads out of the restaurant.

Claire watches him cross the street and enter the opposite building.

INT. ADVOCATE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Marco waits in the reception area. Through the window overlooking the street, he sees the restaurant. Not seeing Claire at the table, he frowns.

He scans the street. He sees her in the phone booth.

INT. PHONE BOOTH/STREET - CONTINUOUS

Claire is on the phone, talking softly and urgently.

CLAIRE

Hello, Jeff? I need your help. Yes, our lives are in danger.

INT. ADVOCATE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Marco watches Claire with rage building in him. A FEMALE ASSISTANT approaches from behind him.

FEMALE ASSISTANT

Senor Sanchez, Senor Ortega will see you now. Senor?

Ravi turns abruptly, and smiles.

EXT. SIERRA MADRE ROAD - DAY

The Jeep makes its way around the narrow bends. Marco is focused on the road. Claire is silent.

MARCO
Everything okay?

CLAIRE
It's fine.

MARCO
You didn't ask me how it went with
the advocate.

CLAIRE
Yes, sorry. How was it?

MARCO
The buyer came back. They reduced
their offer but it's still not bad.
We have to finalize the paperwork
in Durango City. So I may be gone
for a couple of days.

CLAIRE
Couple of days? What about Nico?

MARCO
(scoffs)
Huh! Don't worry about him!

He stares out of the window. Claire is apprehensive.

INT. DURANGO MENTAL ASYLUM - DR. DELGADO'S OFFICE - DAY

Dr. Delgado makes a note: "Jeff Cochran" in his pad.

DR. DELGADO
So, Jeff Cochran, he's your ex-
husband?

Across from him, Claire shakes her head.

DR. DELGADO
But he's your child's father.

She nods.

DR. DELGADO
How was your relationship with him?

CLAIRE
(uncomfortable)
It was fine.

DR. DELGADO

But not fine enough. Otherwise you would have married him, instead of Marco.

CLAIRE

Look... I-- we knew each other since high school, Jeff and I. We were young and foolish. Only when I was pregnant, I realized Jeff-- I mean, I didn't like the friends he hung out with.

Dr. Delgado consults some papers.

DR. DELGADO

Says here, he had a pretty sketchy past. Trouble with the law, etc.

CLAIRE

Yes. That's why I broke off with him.

DR. DELGADO

Yet, he was the first person you thought of calling for help.

CLAIRE

I had no choice. I was desperate. You should've seen Marco. He wanted to stay and fight Nico, that vicious gangster. And he refused me from taking Joshua and going home. I felt like a prisoner. Our lives were in danger.

DR. DELGADO

I understand. So did Mr. Cochran arrive to save you?

CLAIRE

Yes. But not before Nico landed up.

DR. DELGADO

Your husband's twin brother?

Claire nods.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - NURSERY - DAY

Thunder ROLLS and lightening STREAKS in the sky.

Window BLOWS open. Claire comes to close it.

She notices a SHADOW dart in the trees beyond. Puzzled, she returns to tuck Joshua in his bed. He gurgles playfully.

Moments later, a SOUND of a pot being knocked over in the kitchen. Claire is alarmed.

KITCHEN

Claire enters. The window is open. A pot rolls on the floor.

She struggles to close the window against the gusty wind. A FIGURE walks into the kitchen behind her.

She sees his reflection in the window pane and whirls around. Before she can scream, someone puts his hand on her mouth.

She struggles in the strong grasp of the intruder, who hisses into her ears.

NICO

(in Spanish)

Be quiet! If you make a sound I'll throttle you with my bare hands!

She nods without understanding his words but getting his intent. He shoves her into a chair.

When she turns to look at him, she GASPS.

CLAIRE

Marco?

The intruder is Marco's spitting image, but darker, more evil looking, with tousled hair. He darts close to her.

NICO

(in Spanish)

Where's Marco?

CLAIRE

Marco! What's going on!?

Nico pushes her back. Then, it dawns on him.

NICO

(in English)

You don't speak Spanish?

Confused, Claire shakes her head. Nico laughs.

NICO

You think, I am Marco?

Claire realizes who he is and goes pale.

CLAIRE
Ni-Ni- Nico?

NICO
So you know my name! Where is my
brother?

CLAIRE
He-- he's not here.

NICO
A'right. I'll wait for him then.

He looks around the kitchen.

NICO
You have anything to eat?

He opens the refrigerator and takes out some leftover food.

She watches in terror as he thrusts two empanadas in his
mouth, and drinks a bowl of lentil soup like a savage.

NICO
(munching)
You're Marco's wife?

She nods, scared.

NICO
My sister in law!

He laughs maniacally.

NICO
I can't believe that *pendejo*
snagged a sexy *gringa* like you!

He sits near her.

NICO
Marco maybe thinks I'm still in
jail. You know, I have police from
three states looking for me. *Tres*.
I've been hiding for many months--

SOUND of Joshua crying stops him in his tracks.

He leaps up and grabs Claire, putting the kitchen knife to
her throat in one swift move.

NICO
Who is it?

CLAIRE

My- my son! He's hungry!

He pushes her forward but continues to hold the knife on her.

NICO

Okay, get up! Take me to your son.
But no smart moves, or else...

NURSERY

Joshua stops crying when he sees Claire.

Nico lets go of her. She gives Joshua a bottle of milk.

Nico watches her intently, his eyes boring through her.

She finally tucks Joshua back in his cot and turns. Nico's gone. She goes into...

THE LIVING ROOM

Claire goes softly to the gun closet and reaches for one of the two rifles, but someone GRABS her from behind.

CLAIRE

Please... don't hurt me!

Nico pushes his face close to hers.

NICO

I told you no smart moves...

Claire feels him grinding his hips into her. She struggles. But he pins her to the wall. His breath is hot on her face.

She can smell his musky sweat as he reaches into the closet and grabs a rifle. He thrusts the muzzle under her chin.

NICO

Tell Marco and that bitch I'm
comin' for them!

He shoves her into the couch. Claire holds her throat, gasping for breath. When she turns around, he has vanished. She breaks down sobbing.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Claire jumps up hearing SOUND of the jeep stopping outside.

From the window, she sees Marco exiting the jeep. She hugs him as soon as he enters.

MARCO
What happened?

CLAIRE
Nico... He was here!

MARCO
What!?

CLAIRE
He escaped from prison. He came
looking for you and Malena. He
tried to... He...

She breaks down weeping. Marco hugs her.

MARCO
Did he hurt you?

She shakes her head.

MARCO
Did you see him well? Was it really
Nico?

CLAIRE
Yes. He's your twin, for God's
sake.

MARCO
He won't last in the woods for many
days... and if he comes here, I'll
shoot him.

Marco opens the gun cabinet and takes the remaining gun.

CLAIRE
He took one of your guns. What are
you doing?

MARCO
I'm going to get that son of a
bitch! He could've gone to the
guest house.

CLAIRE
No, please... he's really violent.
Let's call the police. Listen...
wait!

Marco dashes out.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - GUEST BEDROOM - DAY

Early morning. Claire is asleep, alone.

A GUNSHOT rings out. She jumps out of bed, disoriented.

EXT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - DAY

Near the grotto, Malena sharpens one end of a stick with a knife. Claire comes out on the porch.

CLAIRE

Malena! Where's Marco?

MALENA

He's gone after Nico. He was prowling around last night. Go back in and lock up.

CLAIRE

Where are you going?

MALENA

To look for him. Don't open the door to anyone.

Malena runs towards the woods.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - NURSERY - DAY

Joshua cries in the bed, his face flushed. Claire touches his forehead. Alarmed, she tries to pacify him.

She takes a medicine bottle from her backpack. With shaking hands, she pours it into a spoon and gives it to Joshua.

Cajoling him, she picks him up and walks about the room.

HOURS LATER

Claire dozes in exhaustion. Joshua is asleep in bed.

A GUNSHOT rings out. Claire jumps up.

EXT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - DAY

The sun casts long shadows on the house as it sets. Claire cautiously steps out of the house.

Suddenly, one more GUNSHOT rings out. A flock of birds SHRIEKS and disperses into the air from the treetops.

EXT. WOODS - EVENING

Clutching a thick serape around her shoulders, Claire walks through the woods, calling out for Marco from time to time.

The thick foliage of the old trees block the fading sunlight. A fog rises from the swamps nearby.

Something GLINTS on the ground in a clearing. Marco's sunglasses!

Alarmed, Claire looks around. She hears RUSTLING in the shrubbery. She moves towards it.

Another GUNSHOT rings out. Claire jumps behind a shrub. She hears a low MOAN. An animal in pain!

She creeps into the clearing. A deer lies in the swamp, slowly sinking. Bleeding from a bullet wound in the neck.

NICO

(O.C.)

La arena movediza.

Claire whirls around to see a nonchalant Nico sitting on a rock with a smoking gun in his hands.

NICO

Quicksand. Once it traps you, you can't come out alive. I shot the deer to put it out of its misery. No one should die so painfully.

CLAIRE

Marco... Where is he?

NICO

If I knew, that would be him in the deer's place. I'm sure he's hiding in the bushes somewhere.

He turns and screams at the woods around.

NICO

Come out, you coward. I know you're out there, de puta madre. You can't hide from me.

CLAIRE

Please. For God's sake, leave us alone. Don't hurt my family.

He takes a step closer. He has a mean look, but seeing her scared reaction, he softens up.

NICO
You must think I'm loco! An escaped lunatic, evil incarnate! Yes, I am all that... because of your husband, Marco!

CLAIRE
No.

NICO
I don't blame you. You only heard their side of the story. You won't believe me when I tell you how they made me do what they had no balls for! Yes, my dear sister in law. Marco and that cunt Malena. They made me kill my own father.

CLAIRE
Look... I - I don't know anything--

Nico steps closer.

NICO
You don't believe me. Those two have filled your head with their lies about me.

He jabs the muzzle of the gun at her neck.

NICO
Tch, tch, tch, it would be a shame to kill you, but I have no choice.

CLAIRE
No... please... I'm innocent.

He cocks the rifle. Claire backs off in fear. Losing her footing, she falls down a slope. Nico watches, laughing.

Claire gets up and runs. Nico FIRES at her, but misses as she rolls into a ditch.

Struggling to her feet, Claire clammers out, as Nico reloads. She runs into the thick forest as the fog begins to rise.

Another GUNSHOT rings close to Claire. She ducks behind some thick shrubs.

NICO
You can't hide from me, *gringa*. I know where you live.

Claire slides further away. The SOUND of crackling leaves alerts Nico. He lunges for her.

She narrowly escapes his clutches and flees. He chases her.

She heads for the valley where the fog is thicker. Suddenly, the ground beneath her gives way.

She SCREAMS as she rolls and slides along the steep slope. She lands heavily on

THE ROAD

She gets up and runs, weeping and gasping for breath.

A pair of headlights comes up from behind her. She stops and waves for the car to stop.

The car stops. She runs to it.

It is a small pick up truck. There are two people in it. She BANGS urgently on the door until it opens.

She gets inside quickly.

CLAIRE

Drive... hurry... there's a killer
after me...

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

The DRIVER is a local Mexican. But the man next to her is Caucasian. He is alarmed to see see her in this condition.

JEFF

Claire?!

She turns to him. Recognizing him, she gasps with relief and falls into his arms.

CLAIRE

Jeff!! Thank God!

JEFF

What is it? Who is after you?

CLAIRE

Nico... Marco's brother! Didn't you
hear the shots?

JEFF

It's hard to hear anything in this
junkheap.

The pickup truck bounces around on the rough road, wheezing and lurching around bends.

JEFF

I'm lucky to find this gentleman though, who agreed to bring me to your estate. Where the hell is it anyway?

Claire peers out in the gathering gloom.

CLAIRE

Around the next turn.

EXT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - DAY

The pick up truck lurches to a stop. Jeff and Claire get out.

JEFF

Can you please wait for us?

The Driver puts his hand out for money.

DRIVER

No, no, *lo siento*. Very late.

Jeff hands him some money. The driver turns his vehicle around and leaves.

Claire runs up to the house, followed by Jeff with his bag.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Claire rushes in. Jeff follows.

CLAIRE

Lock the door. (calls out)
Marco! Joshua?

Jeff bolts the door while Claire rushes to the Nursery.

Jeff looks around at the house. Claire returns.

JEFF

Is everyone okay?

CLAIRE

Joshua's fine. But Marco's not here.

JEFF

Where is he?

CLAIRE
Went looking for Nico this morning.

Jeff sees Claire trembling with fear and holds her. She breaks down crying in his arms.

CLAIRE
Thank you for coming! Thank you!

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The skies have opened up and there's a downpour clattering on the farmhouse.

Claire sits with Jeff on the couch. Jeff turns to her.

JEFF
Oh my God! I didn't know you were going through some crazy shit. I knew this motherfucker was not right in the head. You should never have married him!

CLAIRE
I wouldn't have, if you hadn't fucked off to Saint John or wherever.

JEFF
That was a mistake. I apologized a hundred times, okay? I loved you. I always wanted you and Josh and me to be together. You know that.

CLAIRE
Let's not dig up that old shit. We need to get out of this hellhole.

JEFF
Then, grab your bags, and let's go.

LOUD KNOCKING on the door. Claire jumps up in fright.

MARCO
(O.S.)
CLAIRE! CLAIRE!!

CLAIRE
It's Marco!

She opens the door. Marco enters wet, dirty and tired.

CLAIRE
Marco! Are you all right!?

Marco is surprised and wary to see Jeff.

MARCO
Jeff? When did you arrive?

JEFF
Just now.

He gets up to shake his hand but Marco ignores it. He puts the gun back in the closet.

CLAIRE
Did you find Nico?

MARCO
The bastard escaped again. But not for long!

CLAIRE
He's coming to kill us all, Marco.

MARCO
Don't worry about him. He's just a loudmouth. Look, I've been out all day. I'm tired and hungry. I'm sure Jeff is too. I'll go wash up.

Marco heads to the bathroom. Claire looks at Jeff helplessly.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

Claire heats up some food and brings it to the table.

MARCO
So, Jeff, how did you suddenly land here?

Claire looks at Jeff. He gets her hint.

JEFF
I-- I had some business in Mexico.

Marco gives him a dirty look.

MARCO
I hope you didn't bring your "business" here.

JEFF
(flustered)
No, no. I've stopped doing that
long ago. It's all legit now.

He casts a sheepish glance towards Claire. She gets up to
refill the soup.

JEFF
I-- I just remembered your family
lives in the area. So I thought I'd
drop in and check on you guys. Is
everything okay?

MARCO
Yeah... what could be wrong?

JEFF
Claire tells me that...

MARCO
What has my wife been telling you?

JEFF
Look, Marco, I don't like busting
into a guy's home, but I'm worried
about Joshua...

MARCO
You don't have to worry about my
son.

JEFF
Right. But, your nasty brother has
all of you on his hit list.

Marco looks directly at Claire, hurt and anger in his eyes.

MARCO
So you called Jeff to take you and
Joshua back to Canada?

She turns her head away.

JEFF
It's only for their safety, Marco.

Marco chews his food for a while. Jeff sits, tense. The storm
rages outside.

MARCO

Okay. If that's what you guys want.
But there's a vicious storm out
there. The roads are washed off. I
suggest you stay the night. I'll
drop you all off in town tomorrow.

Marco gets up.

MARCO

(to Claire)

I should go check up on Malena.
Jeff can sleep in the master
bedroom.

JEFF

Thanks, man.

Marco nods and leaves the room. Claire and Jeff hear the door
open and shut, and exchange a nervous look.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - LATER

Claire puts a fresh sheet on the bed as Jeff paces about. A
severe thunderstorm lashes outside.

Jeff looks at all the idols on the mantel.

JEFF

Who is this Malena?

CLAIRE

Marco's family adopted her. She
runs the estate, and knows voodoo
and stuff. She's a witch.

Jeff scoffs.

CLAIRE

I've seen it with my own eyes.
She's put a spell on Marco.

JEFF

Whatever. But they can't hold you
captive like this. Once Marco gets
back to Canada, I will--

He smacks a fist into his palm.

CLAIRE

That's later. For now, we just need
to play along.

(MORE)

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
 He agreed too easily to let me
 leave with Joshua. I have a bad
 feeling about this.

JEFF
 Hey, I'm here. I'm taking you and
 Joshua back.

He hugs her. She sees his bulging backpack on the floor and
 frees herself from his embrace.

CLAIRE
 I hope you're not carrying any
 contraband!

JEFF
 What? No!

Then, seeing the searing look in Claire's eyes, he admits.

JEFF
 Okay, just a little. Nothing for
 you to worry. I couldn't go back
 empty handed now, could I? I spent
 a tidy sum getting here.

CLAIRE
 You're incorrigible! I thought you
 came for your son!

JEFF
 I did! Claire!

She angrily stomps out of the room.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - NURSERY - CONTINUOUS

Claire checks in on Joshua and makes sure he's asleep.

Then, she walks into

THE GUEST BEDROOM

She opens her suitcase on the bed, and starts packing.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - SAME

Jeff places small pouches with white powder in the lining of
 the luggage.

Something catches his eyes. A Black Moth flutters about in the room and lands on the idol of Sante Muerte. Jeff watches it as if mesmerized by it.

Then, SOUND of a SCRAPING CHAIR. He looks at the ajar door. He feels a SHADOW go past.

Jeff quickly zips up his backpack and comes out of the room. The hallway is empty.

MARCHING BAND MUSIC filters in over the din of the storm.

The door to Guillermo's gun room is OPEN.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

Claire wakes up with a start. Something woke her. A noise. She strains to hear but the pelting RAIN is louder.

She looks for Marco, but he's not in bed.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - GUILLERMO'S GUN ROOM - SAME

Jeff creeps towards the door that swings open, inviting him into the darkness.

The curtain billows at the terrace door. Rain lashes into the room. In the dim light, a HUMAN SHAPE sits in the recliner.

JEFF

Marco? Who's there?

The recliner CREAKS.

Jeff searches for a light switch and flicks it. The bulb in the ceiling comes on for a second then POPS and SHATTERS.

In that single flash, Jeff sees a MAN sitting in the recliner, unmoving. A man in full military uniform!

Suddenly, SOMEONE hits him on the back of his head with a rod. He falls face-down with a THUD!

INTERCUT - GUEST BEDROOM

Claire jumps out of bed. In the semi-darkness, she reaches out for Marco.

CLAIRE

Marco?

Her hand feels only pillows. She is alone in bed.

INTERCUT - GUILLERMO'S GUN ROOM

As Jeff stirs groggily, SOMEONE drives a knee into his lower back. His GROAN is quickly cut off as the assailant wraps a cord around his throat. And pulls.

Jeff struggles, kicking his feet into the floor but he is pinned down by more than one assailant. He struggles to free himself from the cord digging into his jugular.

His eyes bulge as his breathing is cut off. With the cord still around his neck, he is dragged to the terrace.

INTERCUT - GUEST BEDROOM

Hearing a HUGE CRASHING SOUND, Claire jumps out of bed and dashes out.

As she passes the bathroom, the light is still visible under the door. The water is still RUNNING. She BANGS on the door.

CLAIRE

Marco!

UPPER LEVEL HALLWAY

Claire rushes upstairs. Seeing the door to Guillermo's room wide open, she freezes. Then, cautiously, she peeps in.

GUILLERMO'S GUN ROOM

The terrace doors lash about in the wind. The curtains are on the floor. She runs to the terrace.

Below, in the rain, she sees a crumpled body. She SCREAMS.

Suddenly, SOMEONE grabs her from behind. She sees the green military uniform. She turns to see it's...

NICO! Her knees buckle and everything goes BLACK.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - GUEST BEDROOM - DAY

Malena's face comes into focus.

MALENA

Claire! Are you all right?

Claire weakly opens her eyes. She suddenly remembers Jeff.

CLAIRE

Jeff!

MALENA

Yes. He had an accident. They've taken him to the hospital. Marco's with him.

CLAIRE

Nico! He was in Guillermo's room. He killed Jeff.

MALENA

You must calm down! Here, drink this broth I made for you.

She gives her a steaming hot bowl of medicinal broth.

Claire drinks a little, and drowsiness comes over her.

MALENA

Yes, you rest a while, now. This'll calm you down.

Drowsiness overcomes Claire. She falls into a deep slumber.

INT./EXT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - GUEST BEDROOM - DAY

The room slowly comes into focus as Claire opens her eyes. Unintelligible WORDS and unfamiliar VOICES drift in from the back yard.

Claire forces herself to get out of bed. Her knees buckle. She walks slowly to the window.

FRONT YARD

Marco is speaking with a couple of men: DETECTIVE FELIX GARCIA in plain clothes and uniformed CONSTABLE HERNANDEZ.

They are at the spot where Jeff fell. Garcia, in a large white hat, sees Claire in the window.

GUEST BEDROOM

Claire is unnerved by the policeman's look. Malena enters.

MALENA

Claire! You shouldn't move around. You should've called me.

CLAIRE

What's happening to me?

MALENA

Don't worry, your pressure's gone up, that's all.

Malena helps Claire back into bed.

CLAIRE

Who are those people outside?

MALENA

I don't know... Cops.

Marco enters. He comes and sits on the bed next to Claire.

MARCO

Claire, how are you feeling now?

CLAIRE

Why is the police here?

Marco holds her hand.

MARCO

I'm sorry, Claire. Jeff... He didn't survive.

Claire bursts out sobbing. Marco holds her.

CLAIRE

No! It wasn't an accident. He was pushed. I heard it all. Nico was in the room. He pushed Jeff. You must tell the cops.

MARCO

They'll do their job. You must rest. It's all too much for you.

CLAIRE

I'm sorry I called Jeff. I-- I didn't know he'll be...

She bursts into tears again. Marco nods to Malena. She comes over and JABS a needle into Claire's arm.

CLAIRE

Ow, Malena!!

MARCO

You need to relax, Claire.

A sudden wave of dizziness comes over Claire.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Garcia with Constable Hernandez wait in the living room.

Malena carries Joshua on her hips, feeding him. Garcia touches his chin. They speak in Spanish.

GARCIA

Very sweet baby. Is it yours?

MALENA

I wish.

GARCIA

He's very attached to you. How is Mrs. Sanchez now?

MALENA

She goes by McAdams. Claire McAdams.

Claire walks slowly into the room with Marco's help. Seeing Joshua, she stretches out her arms.

MARCO

You can carry him later. Just speak with the policeman now.

Claire sits opposite Garcia.

GARCIA

Mrs. McAdams... I'm sorry about Mr. Jeff Cochran. I understand you had some prior relationship with him?

CLAIRE

He's Joshua's father.

GARCIA

I understand you invited him here. Why?

CLAIRE

Because of Nico. He wants to kill us all.

GARCIA

Nico?

CLAIRE

Yes. He's the one who pushed Jeff off the terrace.

Confused, Garcia looks at Marco. Marco makes a signal for him to change the subject. Garcia looks at his notes.

GARCIA

How can you be sure, Miss McAdams?

CLAIRE

I... Heard the noises. At first I thought it was Guillermo making his usual mischief, but...

GARCIA

Guillermo? Marco's father?

CLAIRE

Yes. I know he's dead. But ever since we came, his spirit's been very active.

She looks for support from Malena, but she pretends to be feeding Joshua.

CLAIRE

You must look for Nico. He was here last night!

GARCIA

Nico? Who is this person?

CLAIRE

He's Marco's brother.

Garcia is totally lost. Claire looks to Marco.

CLAIRE

Marco, there's no point in hiding any more. Tell the policeman everything.

MARCO

Mr. Garcia, please, Claire is still in shock...

CLAIRE

No! I'm telling you the truth. Nico's the killer. Why don't you believe me?

Seeing her agitated, Joshua starts to cry. Malena quickly takes him out of the room.

GARCIA

Ms. McAdams, what does Nico look like?

CLAIRE
He's Marco's twin brother...
they're spitting images!

Garcia stares at Claire as if she has lost her mind.

CLAIRE
Mr. Garcia, you have to do
something. He's out there waiting
to kill us. He shot at me too.

Marco gets up and holds the agitated Claire.

MARCO
(in Spanish)
Mr. Garcia, please. You'll have to
leave. My wife's not well.

Garcia and Hernandez get up.

GARCIA
I understand the shock has been
great for you, Miss. We'll come
another time.

CLAIRE
But - but... I...

The policemen leave.

CLAIRE
Marco, why didn't you tell them
what happened. They must think I'm
crazy. Oh God! Help me, please.

She breaks down in hysterical tears. Malena brings her a bowl
with medicine.

CLAIRE
No! No more drugs!

Marco holds her down. Firmly.

MARCO
Take it! It's good for you.

As she resists, Malena forces a spoon into her mouth.

Claire's eyes become drowsy. The room SPINS.

EXT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - DAY

Claire's POV. Blurry image of being carried out of the house on a stretcher.

A white van. A FEW MEN in white.

She struggles but finds her hands tied in a straitjacket. She tries to scream but has no strength.

She is forced into the van.

As it drives off Claire sees: Malena on the porch. Carrying Joshua. A smile plays on her face.

Claire BLACKS OUT.

INT. DURANGO MENTAL ASYLUM - MEETING ROOM - DAY

Marco is escorted by a GUARD into a room. An orderly brings Claire. Seeing Marco, she recoils in fright.

MARCO

Claire! It's me, Marco.

She has difficulty believing him.

MARCO

I'm not Nico. I'm Marco.

CLAIRE

Marco?

She breaks down in tears. Marco comforts her.

CLAIRE

Marco, please take me away. I can't live another day in this place. Why am I being locked up here?

MARCO

Claire, this is a hospital. They could've put you in a real jail.

CLAIRE

But what's my crime?

(whispers)

I didn't kill Jeff. Nico did! And he's still out there!

MARCO

Don't worry about him. I've taken care of him. He's not coming back.

CLAIRE
(confused)
Then, why hasn't the police caught
him yet?

MARCO
I'm sure they will soon. In the
meantime, just cooperate with the
doctors.

CLAIRE
All they do is drug me up and put
all kinds of wires in me. I want to
get out of here. I want to see my
son. How is Joshua?

MARCO
He's absolutely fine.

CLAIRE
Why can't you bring him to see me?

MARCO
I will. Soon.

CLAIRE
You always say that. I'm sure
Malena is taking care of him. She
stole my baby.

Marco shakes his head. Claire gets more agitated.

CLAIRE
She's a witch. She cast a spell on
you to take Joshua away from us.
But you're too blinded. Open your
eyes, Marco!

ORDERLY
Hey, enough shouting. Let's go.

The orderly grabs Claire and takes her away.

CLAIRE
I'll get her you for this. She
cannot steal my son!

As they take Claire away, Marco exits the room.

OUTSIDE THE MEETING ROOM

Marco watches Claire being led away down the passage. Dr.
Delgado walks up behind him.

MARCO

(in Spanish)

Doctor, what's going on? I thought you were treating her. She's only getting crazier.

DR. DELGADO

(in Spanish)

Believe me, Mr. Sanchez. I've tried everything. Now, there's only one treatment left. Electroconvulsive Therapy.

MARCO

What's that?

DR. DELGADO

Shock treatment. But for that, we need your consent.

MARCO

I'll give it. Do whatever you can. But, please hurry!

Marco stomps angrily out of the hallway.

INT. DURANGO MENTAL HOSPITAL - COMMON ROOM - DAY

Staff struggle to break up a fight between two aggressive inmates. Claire watches with apprehension from afar.

Nurse Jacinta walks up to her, ignoring the fracas. Claire looks nervously at her as she puts her hand in her pocket.

JACINTA

Don't worry, I didn't bring any needles with me this time.

Jacinta pulls out a pack of cigarettes. She lights one up. Claire watches her in disbelief.

JACINTA

What? Never saw a nurse smoking before? I do worse things, carino.

Claire looks away.

JACINTA

I read up your file. I think you did good. Killing that two-timing bastard.

CLAIRE
I didn't kill anyone.

JACINTA
He deserved it. He cheated on you.
Refused to marry you when you bore
him his child. I would have done
the same if any motherfucker did
that to me.

CLAIRE
But it wasn't me. It was Guillermo.

JACINTA
Save it, baby. I can see through
your act. Making up this story
about a ghost and a killer brother-
in-law. You want to plead insanity.
So they go easy on you and maybe
send you back to Canada to be
treated there. You're devious! I
mistook you for a bimbo.

Jacinta gets up to leave. Claire holds her hand.

CLAIRE
Please help me. They've stolen my
child. Joshua. I want to see him.

JACINTA
Ask your husband to bring him.
You're allowed to see family.

CLAIRE
But Marco won't bring him.

JACINTA
Marco? That's your husband?

CLAIRE
Yes.

JACINTA
(thinking)
Marco Sanchez...

The name rings a bell for Jacinta.

Nurse Pilar approaches.

NURSE PILAR
Jacinta, the police is asking us to
bring Mrs. Sanchez.

Claire looks nervous.

JACINTA

There you go, Goldilocks. Be a good girl and act insane!

Claire reluctantly goes with Pilar.

INT. DURANGO MENTAL ASYLUM - MEETING ROOM - DAY

Detective Garcia addresses Claire who sits in the middle of the room, apprehensive.

GARCIA

Ms. McAdams, can I call you Claire?
(on her nod)

Look. I don't like to see you rot in a Mexican jail forever. Believe me, it's not a nice place for a young Canadian woman like you. So it's better that you come clean and confess to your crime. Judging by your mental state, the court may be lenient with you.

CLAIRE

Confess to what?

GARCIA

Claire, we know you didn't have a very good relationship with your ex. You knew he was a drug dealer. Didn't you?

Claire looks away, frustrated.

GARCIA

Claire, your medical report shows you were drugged to your eyeballs! Was he supplying you drugs?

CLAIRE

No. It was Malena! She used to give me these potions--

GARCIA

Stop blaming her! You're an addict! And in your stupor, you killed Jeff, didn't you?

CLAIRE

NO!

GARCIA

Marco heard you arguing with Jeff. He heard the crash of his fall and came up to check. He saw you on the terrace. Did you push him, Claire?

CLAIRE

No! It was Nico. He was there. He grabbed me.

GARCIA

Who is Nico? Marco's brother?

CLAIRE

Yes!

Garcia BANGS his fist on the table.

GARCIA

Marco has no brothers, senora! No twin brothers, no step brothers!! He's the only child of his parents. Here are his birth records!

Garcia SLAPS a file on the table. Claire is taken aback.

CLAIRE

No, it can't be true... Nico was in jail for killing Guillermo.

GARCIA

There's no such person in the police, court or prison records. It seems the only Nico in this world is the one existing in your mind.

CLAIRE

No. I saw him with my own eyes. He tried to molest me. He shot at me.

GARCIA

He's just a figment of your imagination, Claire.

CLAIRE

No! No...

Claire pulls her knees to her chin, mumbling and muttering.

DR. DELGADO

(V.O.)

The first step in treating Schizophrenia is for the patient to admit that they experience, see and feel certain things which in reality are not there!

INT. DURANGO MENTAL ASYLUM - DR DELGADO'S OFFICE - DAY

Claire sits in front of Dr. Delgado, wild eyed, biting her nails.

Jacinta Lopez and a FEW INTERNS listening to Dr. Delgado as he uses Claire's case to make a point.

DR. DELGADO

When someone is under tremendous psychological pressure, the mind conjures up people, places and things as a coping mechanism. With time, these hallucinations increase in intensity and frequency to such a point that a person cannot normally function in society.

FLASHES of Nico intercut with her darting eyes:

Nico molesting her in the house.

Nico chasing her, shooting at her.

Nico grabbing her in Guillermo's room.

DR. DELGADO

You understand what I'm saying, Mrs. Sanchez?

Claire comes back to reality and stares at him, confused.

DR. DELGADO

The only treatment to get rid of all the demons in your head is electro-convulsive therapy.

CLAIRE

Electro... what?

DR. DELGADO

Electric shocks. We'll send short bursts of electricity into your brain...

CLAIRE
No. no shocks. I can't handle it.
Jacinta! Please!

DR. DELGADO
(firmly)
Claire, you're not in a position to
refuse treatment! In this country,
we only need your husband's
permission. And he has given me
carte blanche.

CLAIRE
No! You don't understand! It will
kill me! Jacinta!

Dr. Delgado signals the orderlies to take her away. When she
leaves, he turns to Jacinta. They speak in Spanish.

DR. DELGADO
What is she blabbing about?

JACINTA
She was electrocuted when she was
little.

DR. DELGADO
(scoffs)
We're not going to electrocute her!

He turns to Intern RUIZ.

DR. DELGADO
Ruiz, when can we get the new ECT
machine?

RUIZ
There's been a delay, sir. In some
tests, it was found to be too
severe for common usage.

DR. DELGADO
I don't care! I need the machine.
I'll make sure it works on her.

Ruiz shares a concerned look with another intern, but are too
afraid to say anything. Dr. Delgado angrily waves them away.

INT. DURANGO MENTAL ASYLUM - PSYCH TEST ROOM - DAY

Dr. Delgado tinkers with some knobs and switches on a machine
linked to a graphic printer on his desk. Wires run out of the
machine.

Claire, in an upright chair, watches nervously. Two ORDERLIES stand to attention near the door.

CLAIRE
What's all this?

DR. DELGADO
We're going to conduct a small test today, Claire. Nothing serious or painful. You won't even feel it.

Claire looks in terror at the two black wires in his hand.

FLASH: Fallen trees in an ice-storm. Toppled lamp-posts, naked wires dangling in the snow.

CLAIRE
No! Please! No electricity!

DR. DELGADO
It's absolutely painless, Claire.

Dr. Delgado approaches her. She recoils in terror.

CLAIRE
No! You don't understand. I can't handle it.

She starts SCREAMING. The orderlies try to restrain her but she fights with all her might. Seeing her agitation, Dr. Delgado decides not to go ahead with the experiment.

DR. DELGADO
(in Spanish)
Take her back to her room.

INT. DURANGO MENTAL ASYLUM - SPECIAL WARD

Claire crouches on the bed in a small 8x10 cell. Jacinta enters.

JACINTA
You must be someone special to get this treatment!

Claire comes close to her. There's terror in her eyes.

JACINTA
There's no need to blow your top, honey. Dr. Delgado was only going to use the truth machine.

Claire clutches her arm.

CLAIRE
No, please! I can't handle electric shocks. I was electrocuted once.

JACINTA
Really? When?

CLAIRE
In-- in Canada. When I was young.

EXT. NIAGARA STREET - DAY (FLASHBACK 1948)

The puppy runs towards the tangle of bushes intertwined with naked electric wires.

YOUNG CLAIRE
No! Tango! STOP!

CLAIRE
(V.O.)
There was an ice-storm. Power lines went down around our house.

Young Claire picks up the puppy before he touches the wires.

But her foot slips in the ice. The branch breaks. She throws the dog just before the naked wire touches the ice.

SPARKS FLY. Young Claire is THROWN several feet away with the shock, and gets buried in the snow.

Red and blue lights flashing. Sirens wailing.

CLAIRE
(V.O.)
By the time they rushed me to hospital, I had lost my vitals.

INT. NIAGARA HOSPITAL - DAY (FLASHBACK 1948)

An unconscious Claire is being rushed into ER. Her FATHER holds her hand and runs alongside her gurney.

Claire's POV moves up and tracks the scene from above.

CLAIRE
(V.O.)
But strangely, I felt I was near my own body. Watching it, as they took me into ER.

EMERGENCY ROOM

DOCTORS apply defibrillator shocks to Young Claire. Her body leaps. POV ZOOMS into her!

CLAIRE

(V.O.)

Then, suddenly, I got back inside my body.

Young Claire opens her eyes wide with a sharp breath.

INT. DURANGO MENTAL ASYLUM - SPECIAL WARD - DAY

Jacinta has a concerned look.

JACINTA

Nobody's gonna electrocute you here, okay?

She prepares a sedative syringe. Claire looks in panic.

JACINTA

Nothing to worry. Just something to calm your nerves. Relax now.

She jabs the syringe into Claire's arm.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - NURSERY - NIGHT

Hands fill frame. Then part to show Malena's close-up.

MALENA

BOO!

Joshua laughs in his cot. Malena is playing peek-a-boo with him. Then she picks him up and swings him around. His happy squeals echo in the air.

JOSHUA

Mamma... mamma...

MALENA

Yes, your Mamma's right here with you!

As she twirls, notices a SHADOW crossing the doorway.

MALENA

Who's there?

She peers around the doorway. No one. But, there's a SOUND from the kitchen. She puts Joshua back on his bed.

THE KITCHEN

Malena enters softly. A man with his back to her looks out of the window. She picks up a pan.

The man turns. It's Nico. A grim look on his face.

They stare at each other for a minute.

Then, slowly, a change comes over Nico. He MORPHS into a docile Marco! He looks around as if waking from a dream.

Malena steps closer.

MALENA

Marco?

Marco looks at her, confused.

She keeps down the pan and rushes to hug him.

MALENA

Marco, my Marco!

Suddenly, Marco pulls away.

MARCO

Nico! He was-- he was here!

MALENA

He's gone. We don't need him anymore.

When realization dawns, Marco begins to sob with relief.

She caresses his face as her tears begin to flow.

MALENA

You don't have to bring him out anymore. It's all over now.

He pulls him closer and kisses him. A long and intense kiss.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

In the dresser mirror, two figures are reflected in carnal embrace. SOUND of Malena MOANING in ecstasy.

LATER

Marco watches Malena putting on her clothes. She notices a look of worry on his face and caresses him.

MARCO

I thought I was rid of that monster.

MALENA

We had no choice but to bring him out. And I'm so proud of you. You could've convinced ME you were Nico.

MARCO

Sometimes it felt so real. I feel bad we had to kill Jeff. Now the cops are involved.

MALENA

Don't worry. Claire's locked up. And Garcia is convinced she did it.

Marco nods, although still worried. Malena snuggles closer.

INT. DURANGO MENTAL ASYLUM - SPECIAL WARD - DAY

Claire wakes up and finds some orderlies next to her.

Before she can protest, they strap her on the gurney. Nurse Pilar puts an IV drip into her.

CLAIRE

Where are you taking me?

They wheel her down the corridor to

THE ECT ROOM

Claire panics, looking at all the machinery around her. Some interns, nurses and orderlies are in the room.

CLAIRE

What's happening?

Dr. Delgado steps closer to her.

DR. DELGADO

We're beginning your new treatment.

Claire strains at her binds.

CLAIRE

I don't want it... Let me go.

DR. DELGADO

It will be better for everyone if
you just relax.

He reaches over and pulls some tubes and wires. He nods to Nurse Pilar who places electrodes on her head and chest.

Nurse Pilar puts a wooden piece in Claire's mouth.

NURSE PILAR

Bite on this.

Dr. Delgado nods to the TECHNICIAN at the controls to give the shock. He turns a knob.

The voltage surges through Claire. Her body goes rigid with shock and she bites on the wooden piece with all her might.

Then her body begins to jerk spasmodically. A long SCREAM strains to escape from her throat...

DISTORTED VISIONS

Trees rush by as if Claire is running through a forest.

She sees Malena carrying Joshua and running away.

She stretches her arms. They seem to increase in length, longer, thinner, as if made of elastic. She SCREAMS at Malena - a strange long WAIL, like the SCREECH of a bird of prey.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - NURSERY - DAY

Malena pats Joshua to sleep.

A SHADOW crosses the window. Malena goes to check it out.

Suddenly, a deranged woman comes close to the glass on the other side. Her hair flying wild, her eyes full of madness. It's a ghoulish Claire, reaching out for her son. A heart rending cry escapes her lips.

Malena SCREAMS and staggers back.

MALENA

MARCO!

Claire's apparition recedes from the window as if sucked by a tornado. Her SCREAM hangs in the air.

Malena picks up the crying Joshua and clutches him close. Marco rushes into the room.

MARCO
What is it?

MALENA
Claire!! She's outside!

Marco looks out of the window.

MARCO
There's no one out there!

MALENA
It was her. She came to take my
baby.

MARCO
But she's in the asylum!

MALENA
Believe me, it was her. I'm sure!

While still perplexed, they hear SOUND of treading FOOTSTEPS
and a bottle ROLLING from Guillermo's room. They look up.

MALENA
Guillermo's room! She's up there.

MARCO
You stay here with Joshua.

Sudden sound of a chair CRASHING into a wall.

Marco runs out of the nursery.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - UPPER LEVEL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Marco darts upstairs. He sees the door to Guillermo's Gun
Room SHAKING. The knob RATTLING.

Marco turns the knob and kicks the door open. A strong GUST
of wind blows him back. Marco enters

GUILLERMO'S GUN ROOM

The room has been turned upside down! Guillermo's portrait is
askew. The rifle's on the ground. Overturned chairs, broken
glass everywhere. Photo frames littered on the floor.

The curtain billows with wind gusting from the open balcony
doors. One of the panes is broken. Marco closes the door.

DISTORTED VISION

CHIMERA'S POV as she recedes from the Sanchez Farmhouse.

INT. DURANGO MENTAL ASYLUM - ECT ROOM - SAME

Claire's agonized face as she lies strapped in the gurney.
Slowly, her face relaxes. She becomes calm.

Dr. Delgado has a satisfied smile.

DR. DELGADO
(to staff, in Spanish)
Good work. Unhook Mrs. Sanchez and
take her back to her room.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - GUILLERMO'S GUN ROOM - SAME

Marco stares out of the window at the gathering storm clouds.

MALENA
Holy Mother of God!

Startled, Marco turns around.

MARCO
I told you to stay with Joshua.

MALENA
I've put him back to sleep, and
locked the nursery window. What
happened here?

MARCO
Probably just the wind...

MALENA
No. Something's not right, Marco.
These sounds, this racket...

MARCO
What are you saying?

MALENA
We did all these same things to
frighten Claire.

MARCO
Yeah, so?

MALENA
I think she's doing the same to us.

MARCO

That's impossible. Claire's in the asylum.

MALENA

Then how come I saw her outside?
Something's not right, Marco.

They look nervously around at the carnage in the room.

INT. PUEBLO POLICE STATION - DAY

A small police station in the village.

A MALE COP and a FEMALE COP play cards. Hernandez sits at a desk, cleaning his gun.

Garcia at another desk, goes over some files. Disturbed by the cops sharing a joke, he looks at them with irritation.

GARCIA

Don't you guys have anything better to do?

FEMALE COP

We just got back after finding Armando's goat that was missing for three days.

Garcia shakes his head.

HERNANDEZ

The Sanchez case is the biggest to hit this town in a decade. What brings you here from Mexico City, boss?

MALE COP

They only send you to these boondocks if you didn't lick the chief's ass clean enough...

FEMALE COP

Or the druglord's.

They laugh. Garcia ignores them.

GARCIA

Hernandez, any update on where Cochran got the drugs from?

HERNANDEZ

He made a stop in Oaxaca for a couple of days before he came here. He must've thought since he came all the way to Mexico, he wasn't going back empty-handed.

GARCIA

And what about those other herbs we found in the room he was in?

HERNANDEZ

I don't think those belonged to Cochran. I checked them out. It's Chaparral. A medicinal herb grown here. Here's a report on it.

He hands Garcia a report. He reads.

GARCIA

Medicinal? Who was it for?

HERNANDEZ

Dolores Sanchez, most likely.

GARCIA

Did her doctor prescribe it?

HERNANDEZ

She didn't have one. Malena was the one treating her.

GARCIA

Malena Del Rio?

HERNANDEZ

Yes. Dolores was Dr. Velasquez's patient for years, until Malena turned up and became her caretaker. She stopped the doctor's medicine, began giving her this herbal shit.

GARCIA

Hmmm. What do we know about Malena?

HERNANDEZ

Oh, she's a firecracker, boss. Grew up in the Sanchez household. But after the old man was killed, she was packed off to the orphanage in Durango. She was quite a handful there too.

FEMALE COP

Ran off with the janitor.

HERNANDEZ

But the marriage didn't last. She was back at the Sanchez house. Begged the old lady to stay and take care of her. Dolores was in terrible shape then. Couldn't manage the farm and all, so she took her back in. Now, she claims the old lady included her in her last will, so she owns half the property.

GARCIA

So she must be pissed off that Marco and Claire want to sell it.

MALE COP

Be wary of her, boss. She believes in Santeria.

FEMALE COP

I've seen her cast spells.

She makes a sign of the cross. Garcia is thoughtful.

INT. DURANGO MENTAL ASYLUM - SPECIAL WARD - DAY

Nurse Pilar brings Marco down the corridor to see Claire.

NURSE PILAR

See, your wife's right here, where she's been for two days. Recovering from her ECT treatment.

Marco stares at the prone Claire in bed, for a few moments.

As he turns to go, Jacinta walks in. He walks past her.

JACINTA

Marco? Marco Sanchez?

He stops.

JACINTA

You don't remember me, do you?

MARCO

(irritated)
Why should I remember you?

JACINTA

You were in this asylum years ago.

MARCO

I've never seen the inside of this place in my life. Is even the staff crazy in this asylum?

He storms out of the ward.

JACINTA

He was here all right. Just doesn't want to admit it.

NURSE PILAR

Really? When?

JACINTA

He was a little boy. I remember, he was one of my first cases. His father had been brutally murdered and he was in shock.

NURSE PILAR

Yes, Guillermo. Mrs. Sanchez says his spirit still runs amok in the house. I know you don't believe in ghosts and things, but they exist you know.

JACINTA

Pilar! Sometimes I wonder how you got into the medical profession.

Nurse Pilar leaves the room, shaking her head.

Jacinta looks at the sleeping Claire who has a smile on her lips.

JACINTA

Now, what's going on in that little head of yours, carino?

INT. DURANGO MENTAL ASYLUM - RECORDS ROOM - NIGHT

Dark room. The fluorescent bulbs come to life as Jacinta switches on the light.

The small room is filled with racks overflowing with binders, boxes and files.

She brushes aside dust and cobwebs, and reads the labels on each rack that mark the years.

She searches for and locates the year 1948. Sifting through the files, she finds one with the name "MARCO SANCHEZ" written on it.

She flips through the file. There are photographs, doctors' reports, police reports, various forms.

JACINTA
 (reading, in Spanish)
 Severe Psychological Trauma...
 Schizophrenic Tendencies... Treated
 for Personality Disorder
 Syndrome... Alter Ego - NICO!

As she stares at the report, she remembers...

INT. DURANGO MENTAL ASYLUM - SPECIAL WARD - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Young Marco sits crying and trembling before a bald MAN with a thick mustache, in a white coat, who towers over him.

YOUNG MARCO
 I didn't do it. It was Nico!

DR. AGUIRRE
 Stop lying, kid. There's no Nico.
 You made him up. You are Nico! And
 you killed your father.

YOUNG MARCO
 No! No...

On Young Marco's distressed face, Dr. Aguirre's words echo.

DR. AGUIRRE
 You are Nico... Nico... Nico...
 Marco...Marco...

INT. DURANGO MENTAL HOSPITAL - DR. DELGADO'S OFFICE - DAY

The door opens. Jacinta Lopez enters, carrying a file. Dr. Delgado is getting ready to go for Claire's treatment.

DR. DELGADO
 (snaps)
 Lopez, what is it?

JACINTA
 About Mrs. Sanchez--

DR. DELGADO
 Is she giving a hard time again?

JACINTA

I wanted to tal about Marco, sir.
Her husband. He was admitted here
as a child.

She gives him the file. Dr. Delgado hurriedly flips through.

JACINTA

Nico is his alter ego. Marco told
Claire that Nico really exists. He
and Malena were gaslighting her.

DR. DELGADO

Nurse Lopez! Where's the proof? And
this file, how did you get this?
This is a serious breach of
confidential information, Lopez.
You could be fired for it! Look,
I'm getting late as it is.

He gathers his things to leave. Jacinta follows him.

HALLWAY

JACINTA

If Claire is just a victim of
trickery then maybe she's not
insane, after all. And these
treatments may have an adverse
effect on her.

DR. DELGADO

Good heavens, woman! Are you going
to tell me how to treat my
patients?

Chastised, Jacinta stutters.

JACINTA

No, sir-- but-- but, sir--

DR. DELGADO

These shocks will cure her
completely. And this hospital will
be talk of the country. You'll see.

Perturbed, Jacinta follows Dr. Delgado into

THE ECT ROOM

Claire is strapped into the gurney.

DR. DELGADO
Mrs. Sanchez. We don't want any
trouble today--

He stops short, noticing Claire smiling. Dr. Delgado looks at Nurse Pilar.

DR. DELGADO
Did you give her an extra dose of
anti-depressants? She seems really
calm today.

Nurse Pilar shakes her head, nervously. Claire beams.

CLAIRE
I am calm today, Dr. Delgado. I
can't wait to see my son.

DR. DELGADO
Claire, those are just your-- ah!
Never mind.

He goes to speak to the staff. Clair clutches Jacinta's arm.

CLAIRE
Nurse, these shocks, they send me
to the farmhouse. I can see Joshua.

JACINTA
Honey, you're just imagining it.

CLAIRE
No, I really saw him the last
time. But then, I saw her too,
Malena, holding him. So, I got
really mad. I barged into
Guillermo's room and tore it apart.
I'll do it again. I won't rest till
I have my baby back!

DR. DELGADO
Okay, everyone. Stand back. Get
ready.

The Technician starts the machine. Jacinta looks on,
concerned, helpless.

Dr. Delgado watches electricity runs through the terminals
attached to Claire's head. Her body goes into spasms.

As Claire convulses, DISTORTED VISIONS appear again.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

The CHIMERA'S POV as it GLIDES through the trees, and FLIES towards the Sanchez Farmhouse.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Malena washing plates at the sink. Through the window, she notices some movement. Seeing leaves blowing in the wind, she is relieved.

As she turns, the window begins to VIBRATE. Cutlery and glassware on the shelves begin to SHAKE, RATTLE and then, FALL, shattering and clattering on the floor.

Malena reels back in fear.

MALENA

MARCO!

Suddenly, the window pane EXPLODES. Glass splinters fly everywhere. Malena falls, with cuts on her cheek.

Marco rushes into the kitchen.

MALENA

She's back!! Go! Go! Get her!

Marco runs into

THE LIVING ROOM

He grabs a rifle from the closet and runs out of the house.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Strong gusts of wind blow as Marco hunts for Claire. He sees a white, eerie figure running deeper into the forest.

MARCO

STOP RIGHT THERE!

The figure runs towards the swamp. Marco cocks and fires the gun. The figure flits around making it difficult to aim at.

Fog rises from the swamp. Marco wades through knee-deep water and crosses the swamp.

He stumbles as he emerges from the swamp, losing his gun behind a rock. Cursing, he stretches to reach it. Just then, a gentle voice from behind...

CLAIRE

Marco!

Marco whirls around. It is Claire, sane as ever. She has tears in her eyes.

CLAIRE

Please, Marco, give me my son back.
I can't live without him. If you
ever loved me, then give my Joshua
back to me. Please...

Marco scrambles to his feet.

MARCO

You... You're not Claire!

CLAIRE

I'm Claire, your wife. Joshua's
mother.

Claire steps forward.

MARCO

No! Get out of here! You will never
take Joshua from us.

CLAIRE

US? You... And Malena?

Her forlorn face contorts in anger. The mascara around her eyes starts to spread.

CLAIRE

Malena's childless for a reason,
Marco. Because she's a witch! One
who has cast her spell on you.

Marco is in anguish.

MARCO

No, no...

CLAIRE

She's messing with your head.
Making you go crazy. Just like me.

She laughs maniacally.

MARCO

No! I'm not crazy!

CLAIRE

Then stay with her if you like. But
give me my SON!

MARCO

No! Never! And I'm gonna end to
your harassment, you crazy bitch!

Marco grabs Claire by the throat. A demonic anger possesses
him as he squeezes. She sputters and gasps.

In his eyes, she can see the same murderous look as...

CLAIRE

(incredulous)

Nico? Nico!! You are Nico!

Realization dawns on her. She kicks him in the shin and
scrambles away.

Marco grabs his fallen rifle and chases her.

With him hot on her heels, she arrives at the swamp. In
desperation, she wades frantically through the slush... but
finds it harder to move as her feet start to sink rapidly.

CLAIRE

Help!! Get me out of this
quicksand, please! HELP, Marco!

Marco watches her flail her arms in vain. A smile begins to
break on his face. An evil smile.

MARCO

Marco's not here.

CLAIRE

Marco! Nico! Whoever you are! Help
me, please!

The more she struggles, the quicker she sinks. Now up to her
waist... then up to her chest. She sputters and chokes,
splashing mud all around.

Marco watches as the mud reaches up to her neck.

CLAIRE

I don't want to drown! Please!
Shoot me like you shot the deer!
Nico, please... Marco!

Marco sits on the rock and watches the quicksand suck her
under... completely!

When the final bubbles die down, he gets up and walks off.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Malena says a quiet prayer, clutching a Santeria idol. The door opens and Marco enters.

Seeing a smile on his face, she rushes to him.

MALENA

Tell me you got rid of her.

MARCO

She will not be bothering us, ever again.

They hug. Marco has a intense look in his eyes. Malena weeps with relief.

INT. DURANGO MENTAL ASYLUM - DAY

Marco marches down the corridor towards Dr. Delgado's office. Intern RUIZ gets up to stop him.

MARCO

I want to see Dr. Delgado!

RUIZ

Sorry, Senor. Dr. Delgado is with a patient.

MARCO

I have to see him now. One of his patients died last night!

He opens the door and enters

DR. DELGADO'S OFFICE

Dr. Delgado is talking to a patient sitting in front of him, with her back to the door. Near the door are a couple of other interns.

DR. DELGADO

Oh! Mr. Sanchez, please come in.

MARCO

Dr. Delgado, last night, I saw my wife was walking around in the woods near our house, alone.

DR. DELGADO

But how is that possible...?

MARCO

That's what I want to know. I saw her with my own eyes. You know there are wild animals in the forest. She could have been attacked.

DR. DELGADO

Mr. Sanchez, I assure you, your wife is perfectly safe. In fact, she's right here.

The patient sitting in front of Dr. Delgado turns around. It is Claire! She has a small crooked smile.

CLAIRE

Hello, Marco.

Marco reels back in shock.

MARCO

You... you're here...?

CLAIRE

You look like you've seen a ghost!

DR. DELGADO

We were just discussing Claire's progress report. We're very encouraged by our therapy.

Claire gets up and approaches Marco.

CLAIRE

I am going to get well, Marco. And I'll be going home soon.

She looks almost sane. Marco breaks into a sweat. Dr. Delgado comes and puts his arm around him.

DR. DELGADO

Mr. Sanchez, are you all right?

Marco drinks the glass of water offered by an intern.

DR. DELGADO

Rest assured, Claire is under our 24 hours watch. You may have seen someone else...

CLAIRE
Maybe an illusion... or was it a
delusion?

Marco staggers to the door.

MARCO
I'm - I'm sorry. Sorry...

Claire breaks into a laughter. Her long, cackling laughter follows him, as he walks rapidly down the corridor.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

As Claire's LAUGHTER echoes, a human figure SLOWLY EMERGES from the swamp, dripping with gooey slime!

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - NURSERY - DAY

Malena joyfully plays with Joshua. She hugs him.

MALENA
No one will take my baby away from
me. Ever! Ever!

SOUND of HEAVY FOOTSTEPS from upstairs. Malena jumps.

MALENA
Marco?

She peers into the hallway.

WET, THICK SLUDGE pours down from the Upper Level!

With a SCREAM, Malena locks the door and huddles with Joshua in a corner. Alarmed, Joshua begins to cry. She shushes him.

The whole house begins to REVERBERATE as if in an earthquake.

Then, HEAVY footsteps come down the stairs.

Panicking, Malena drags a dresser and jams the nursery door.

FOOTSTEPS come closer. An UNEARTHLY MOAN, followed by HEAVY POUNDING on the door. The dresser creaks.

The door squeals on its hinges as a powerful force tries to break it down. Malena squeezes back into the wall.

MALENA
Please... go away! Go away!

Suddenly, everything goes QUIET.

The only sounds are of Joshua WHIMPERING in Malena's tight grasp and her own GASPING breath.

INT./EXT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Marco arrives in the steady rain and parks his Jeep.

He goes up to the main door. Finding it locked, he KNOCKS.

MARCO
Malena! Malena!

He runs around the house to the side door and finds it open.
He enters

THE HALLWAY

And almost SLIPS.

MARCO
Oh my God!

The hallway and entire house is covered with streaks of MUD.
The floor, the walls. Everything!

MARCO
Malena! Joshua!

NURSERY

Hearing him, Malena jumps. Joshua is asleep in her arms.

She puts Joshua in the bed and goes to the door.

MALENA
Marco?

Marco BANGS on the door.

Malena pushes the dresser aside, letting Marco in. She falls into his arms.

MARCO
What happened? The house. It's a mess.

MALENA
Claire! She was here again!

They walk gingerly to the foot of the stairs. There are scattered mud footprints on the stairs.

The living room is covered in mud streaks.

MARCO

Oh my God!

He sits down heavily on the steps.

MALENA

I thought you saw her drown!

MARCO

Yes! But she was there... In the asylum... In the flesh. I don't know what's going on!

MALENA

She's a sorceress or she's possessed by evil. She using black magic to take my Joshua. But she's not going to take him from me! I'll rip her to pieces! I'll kill the fucking bitch!

MARCO

(bursts out)

Enough! Enough with this killing! That's how it began! This demon in my head! I can't handle it anymore, Malena! I can't!!

As he breaks down, Malena cajoles him. They sit huddled together consoling each other for a few moments.

Then, a KNOCK on the door startles them. Marco goes and peeps through the window.

MARCO

(to Malena, whispers)

It's Garcia.

Another more urgent KNOCK. Marco opens the door. Garcia and Hernandez are on the porch.

MARCO

Mr. Garcia?

GARCIA

Can we come in?

MARCO

Actually, it's not a good time.

Over Marco's shoulder, Garcia sees the mud streaks all over.

GARCIA

What the heck happened here?!

Marco has no choice but to let them in.

MARCO

It was... it was--

MALENA

That bitch Claire! She's escaped from the asylum again!

GARCIA

Claire? What are you saying?

MARCO

Yes. And this is not the first time.

MALENA

She's gone off her head and wants to kill us. You should put her in a proper jail.

GARCIA

She's in a secure asylum. Hernandez, ask the station to put in a call and find out?

Hernandez nods and steps outside. He speaks to someone on his walkie-talkie.

GARCIA

(looking at the mess)

This doesn't look like the work of one person.

MALENA

She's possessed. By the devil.

MARCO

Joshua. She's coming for him.

Garcia frowns, thoughtful, checking out the mud.

GARCIA

This looks like swamp mud. From the quicksand.

Hernandez enters.

HERNANDEZ

The station just confirmed Mrs. Sanchez is in the asylum. They say she never ever left.

Garcia looks at Malena and Marco.

MALENA

You think we made up all this? We would throw mud all over our own house?

GARCIA

I'm not saying that, Malena. It could be the work of some miscreants. Gangsters or such. Maybe some of Jeff's associates.

MARCO

No. It was Claire! I saw her run into the woods and...

GARCIA

And?

MARCO

She just disappeared in the swamp.

Garcia takes out his notebook.

GARCIA

When was this?

Marco and Malena start to give Garcia their statement.

INT. DURANGO MENTAL ASYLUM - DR DELGADO'S OFFICE - DAY

Garcia looks at the Rorschach Inkblot paintings on the wall from different angles. Dr. Delgado enters.

DR. DELGADO

Detective, I assure you. Claire Sanchez is under our guard 24 hours of the day!

GARCIA

I believe you, Dr. Delgado. But we must investigate this mud attack.

DR. DELGADO

Probably some miscreants, if you ask me.

(MORE)

DR. DELGADO (CONT'D)

I hear that lady, Malena Del Rio, has rubbed quite a few people the wrong way.

GARCIA

Marco also claimed to have seen Claire many times before.

DR. DELGADO

Well, I would take what Marco is saying with a pinch of salt. He was treated for schizophrenia in this very asylum.

GARCIA

Schizo? Really? When?

Dr. Delgado removes the file Jacinta gave him from a drawer.

DR. DELGADO

Eighteen years ago. When his father died. He was ten then and blamed a twin called "Nico" then for his father's murder. Who was nothing more than a figment of his imagination.

GARCIA

But Claire claims to have seen Nico. Who could have put "Nico" into her head?

DR. DELGADO

Maybe Marco. Regardless, Claire is now on the road to full recovery.

Dr. Delgado beams, holding up the magazine.

DR. DELGADO

We're breaking new ground, Garcia. Next week, an American journalist is coming to interview me.

GARCIA

Great. Shock treatment. Some think it's an inhumane procedure.

DR. DELGADO

Ignorant fools. This is bringing people back from the brink of insanity.

GARCIA

But is it also possible that your shock treatments are jarring Claire from this plane of reality?

DR. DELGADO

(laughs)

You read too many fantasy novels, Detective. That's scientifically impossible.

GARCIA

Has science been able to measure a mother's love or yearning for her child? You never know how far she will go to her son back.

DR. DELGADO

Stop chasing chimeras, Detective, and go after the real criminals.

Garcia gets up to leave. At the door, he turns.

GARCIA

Oh. Could you tell me when her next treatment is?

DR. DELGADO

Tomorrow. It's her final session.

Garcia nods and leaves.

DR. DELGADO

Detective! What a surprise!

GARCIA

These drawings. Are they supposed to mean something?

DR. DELGADO

They are whatever you want them to be. They help us better understand our patients.

Dr. Delgado pours Tequila and offers Garcia.

GARCIA

No, thanks. I'm on duty.

DR. DELGADO

So am I. But who's looking? Salud!

He takes a sip.

GARCIA

Actually, I'm here about your patient Claire Sanchez.

DR. DELGADO

Our star patient. Look, we're on the cover of the Mexican Psychology magazine.

He proudly shows the magazine, which has a smiling picture of Dr. Delgado only.

DR. DELGADO

Our therapy is the talk of the town. Thanks to it, Claire's improving by leaps and bounds. We just had her third session yesterday.

GARCIA

Yesterday? There was also a crazy mud attack in the Sanchez house.

Dr. Delgado frowns, thinking back.

DR. DELGADO

Hmmm. Strange, because the other day, Marco came here claiming he had seen Claire in the woods near his house... As if we let our patients roam freely!

GARCIA

She had a session that day too?

Dr. Delgado glances at Claire's file.

DR. DELGADO

Yes!... But surely this was a coincidence.

GARCIA

Too many coincidences for my liking, Doctor.

DR. DELGADO

Ah! A policeman talking. Come, think about it. Can Claire be in two places at the same time? Give me a break!

GARCIA

Marco saw someone who looks just like her. Maybe her double. A doppelganger.

INT. DURANGO MENTAL ASYLUM - DAY

Claire is drugged and being wheeled down the corridor for her shock treatment.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - NURSERY - SAME

Malena is rocking Joshua. She SINGS a LULLABY and Joshua falls asleep.

INT. DURANGO MENTAL ASYLUM - ECT ROOM - SAME

Dr. Delgado and his assistants prepare Claire for her treatment. Electrodes are inserted, tubes are placed, machines are started.

The technician switches on the current.

Claire's body lurches with shock.

DISTORTED VISION

Claire's POV as the Chimera zips through the woods.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - SAME

Malena looks out the window at the woods. Seeing the wind whip through the trees, she frowns.

MALENA

Come on, bitch. I'll end your terror today.

Malena puts on a yellow silk turban and goes into a trance. Her yellow dress swirls in the breeze.

DRUMMING starts up and slowly beats to a manic beat.

Malena kneels before an elaborate arrangement on the floor. Santeria idols stand in a semicircle. Santa Muerte idol is resplendent in a carmine robe. The other half of the circle completed by lit candles. A number of cowrie shells are scattered around.

INTERCUT - The Chimera in the woods, heads in the direction of the farmhouse. Only to be blown back by...

Santa Muerte in LIVING FORM. An 8-foot tall figure cutting through the trees. A macabre smile dances on the grim reaper's skull face.

He lifts a skeletal hand. On his finger, a golden ring with a blood red ruby stone. He turns it towards the Chimera. A red glow emanates from it. The Chimera writhes in the red glow.

IN THE ECT ROOM

Claire loses consciousness. Dr. Delgado is alarmed.

IN THE MASTER BEDROOM

Malena is in a manic trance. She's reciting a SPELL. Suddenly, the black MOTH lands on her hand. And miraculously, it stays still, mesmerized by her gaze.

With the other hand, she hold the wings of the moth. And very slowly, she CRUSHES the moth in her hands.

Bits of black dust fall into a bowl filled with oil.

The flames on the surrounding candles SHOOT UP.

Malena WAILS.

CLAIRE'S POV: The Chimera reels back from the force of the Santa Muerte's ring that is ejecting a blood red GLOW.

Crashing through the trees, the Chimera VANISHES.

IN THE ECT ROOM

Pandemonium. Dr. Delgado shouts at the technician.

DR. DELGADO
Turn off the current.

The technician turns the knob. But the machine SPARKS and becomes unresponsive.

Nurse Pilar tries to remove the wires from Claire but she gets a VIOLENT SHOCK and is THROWN BACK.

CLAIRE'S POV: Out of Santa Muerte's reach, the Chimera gathers her strength.

Then with a LONG PIERCING SCREAM she rushes into the red glow. She crashes into the Santa Muerte. The skeletal figure SHATTERS into a shower of bone fragments.

IN THE MASTER BEDROOM

The Santa Muerte idol in the altar ROCKS and FALLS OVER.

Malena looks at it in dismay. In a frenzy, she gets up and runs out of the room.

NURSERY

Malena opens the door to see... An EMPTY BED. Joshua is missing.

MALENA

Joshua!!

She looks through the window and sees: Claire's Chimera carrying Joshua. With a vindictive smile, the Chimera turns and glides towards the woods.

INT./EXT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - DAY

Malena rushes out of the house, shouting desperately.

MALENA

JOSHUA! MARCO! MARCO!

Marco rushes out from the barn where he had been chopping wood. He has an ax in his hand.

MARCO

Malena! What is it?

MALENA

She's taken Joshua! Into the woods!

Marco sees a white figure running towards the woods. He darts after it.

Malena rushes back into the house. She opens the gun closet and takes out Marco's rifle.

EXT. SIERRA MADRE ROAD - DAY

Garcia is driving. His Radio CRACKLES.

HERNANDEZ

(V.O. On Radio)

Detective Garcia! They were giving Claire shocks. She passed out.

GARCIA

Okay. I know where she's headed.
The Sanchez house. I'm going there.
Send reinforcements, Hernandez.

HERNANDEZ

(V.O. On Radio)
Okay, sir.

Garcia turns his vehicle towards the Sanchez property.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Marco searches for Claire and Joshua in the setting sun. As evening falls, the woods become darker.

MARCO

Joshua! Joshua!

His voice echoes in the woods. The trees sigh in the breeze. Dry leaves and twigs crunch under his feet as he searches.

Then, a faint gurgle. A giggle.

MARCO

JOSHUA! CLAIRE!

He heads towards the SOUNDS, and arrives at the edge of the stream.

On the rocky, sandy edge, Claire is her usual self, playing blissfully with her child. Giggling, laughing, running.

Marco makes a grab for Joshua and holds him.

Claire stops and looks at Marco. Their eyes lock. She is perfectly sane, happy.

CLAIRE

Marco! You've come to play?

MARCO

Go away!

CLAIRE

Come with me. Let's go away with
Joshua. Like the family we were.

Marco raises his ax as she comes closer.

MARCO

Don't get any closer! I'm warning
you.

She continues to step forward. Tears roll down her face.

CLAIRE
You want to kill me? Then, do it,
Marco. I can't live without my son.

She is barely a few feet from him. Marco's knuckles turn white as he squeezes the handle of the ax but he cannot bring it down on Claire. He takes a step back.

MARCO
Stop! Stop right there!

CLAIRE
Go on! Kill me!

Just then, a gunshot RINGS out!

A crimson fountain BURSTS out of Claire's chest. She falls.

Marco turns around and sees Malena standing with the smoking rifle in her hand.

Then, miraculously, Claire RISES BACK on her feet!

Malena fires another SHOT. It sears through Claire's body. Pieces of flesh and clumps of blood explode out of her.

MALENA
You want to steal my son? Bitch!!

Enraged, Malena steps forward, reloads and FIRES again.

Claire's bloody body spins down the rocky shore, getting covered in wet mud, eventually falling into the stream.

INT. DURANGO MENTAL ASYLUM - ECT ROOM - SAME

Claire's body starts convulsing. The asylum staff look in shock, as she flails like a fish out of water.

Her BP shoots up. The ECG machine starts beeping wildly.

DR. DELGADO
Quick! Hold her down.

Nurses and staff fly around, trying to contain the agitated Claire, straining to pin down her convulsing body.

Suddenly, she's STILL. Her heart monitor FLATLINES into a long MONOTONE.

EXT. WOODS - SAME

Malena and Marco watch in amazement as Claire's body slowly DISSOLVES in the stream.

MARCO

Oh my God! What have you done!

MALENA

(screams)

What have I done!! Why didn't you kill her? She tried to take my son!

She clutches Joshua. Marco look at her in disbelief.

MALENA

(disgusted)

What's the matter? Your heart melted seeing her crocodile tears? You're a pussy, Marco. You don't have it in you to kill anyone!

THUNDER Rolls. Rain starts to fall.

MARCO

That's not true! I killed! That's why we're suffering now. But I'm going to end it all today.

He starts running back home. Malena runs after him.

MALENA

MARCO! WAIT!

INT. DURANGO MENTAL ASYLUM - ECT ROOM - SAME

Dr. Delgado fires orders. Jacinta brings a long syringe. Dr. Delgado rips Claire's top and plunges the needle into her heart, injecting her directly.

After a few seconds, the ECG starts pulsing again.

EXT. SIERRA MADRE ROAD - SAME

Detective Garcia drives through the blinding rain. Day has turned dark as night. Headlights on full, the pickup SLOSHES through the wet, winding roads.

INT./EXT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - DAY

Thunder ROLLS. Lightening CRACKS, bathing the farmhouse in light for a flash.

Malena runs with Joshua, covering his head against the lashing rain.

She enters

THE LIVING ROOM

MALENA

Marco! Marco!

She takes Joshua into

THE NURSERY

She puts him into the bed. He cries.

The MARCHING BAND Music filters in over the din of the rain. Malena panics.

MALENA

Just play with your toys, Joshua.
Mamma will be back soon.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - GUILLERMO'S GUN ROOM - SAME

Marco is on his knees before the photograph of Guillermo.

MARCO

I'm sorry, Papa. Please forgive me.

He's holding Guillermo's army rifle in his lap. The one with a bayonet attached.

He picks it up and places the tip of the bayonet at his throat. He is weeping now.

Just as he is about to plunge it--

MALENA

MARCO!

Malena rushes in and pulls the rifle away.

MALENA

What are you doing!!?

MARCO
I can't take it anymore! I must
repent for killing Papa!

She hugs him.

INT./EXT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - SAME

Garcia arrives at the farmhouse. He dashes up the porch and into the farmhouse.

THE LIVING ROOM

Garcia looks around at the empty room.

GARCIA
Marco! Malena!

He hears the music and pulls out his gun.

He creeps up the stairs.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - GUILLERMO'S GUN ROOM - SAME

Malena holds the sobbing Marco.

MALENA
You didn't kill Papa, Marco.

MARCO
Yes. Nico killed him. But I am
Nico!

MALENA
We created Nico! And that's what we
decided to tell everyone! Don't you
remember? You were hiding in that
cabinet. Papa caught me sitting on
his couch with wet clothes and...

Marco holds his head as the true memory of that day comes rushing into his fuzzy head.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - GUILLERMO'S GUN ROOM - DAY (18 YEARS EARLIER)

INSIDE THE CABINET

Marco hears raised VOICES of Malena and Guillermo arguing. Then, SOUNDS of him SPANKING her, and her SQUEALING in pain.

Marco peers through the crack between the cabinet doors.

Malena KICKS the stool down. The bayonet CLATTERS to the ground near the cabinet.

Guillermo leaves Malena to pick up his fallen rifle. She picks the bayonet on the floor.

When he turns, Malena threatens him. He keeps advancing towards her. With a SCREAM, she plunges the bayonet into Guillermo's gut. Stunned, Guillermo falls to the floor.

Weeping, Malena stabs him again and again. Then, she turns and looks at Marco! He sees her blood-splattered face.

PRESENT DAY

Marco shakes his head, as realization dawns on him.

MARCO

You! It was you who killed him!

FLASHBACK

The two kids sit dazed beside Guillermo's dead body.

YOUNG MARCO

They will hang you for killing him.

She nods, weeping. Young Marco hugs her and weeps too.

YOUNG MARCO

I will tell them I killed him.

YOUNG MALENA

Then, they will hang you. No!

She shakes her head. Then, an idea strikes.

YOUNG MALENA

Unless... unless you blame Nico.

YOUNG MARCO

Nico? But he is...

YOUNG MALENA

Yes! No one can see him except us. They will look for him, but they won't find him.

YOUNG MARCO

But your clothes...

YOUNG MALENA
I'll burn them.

She takes the bayonet and cleans the handle. She kneels close to Marco, foreheads touching, eye to eye.

YOUNG MALENA
If you don't say Nico killed him,
they will hang me. You and I are
one, aren't we?

Marco nods.

YOUNG MALENA
So, what will you say?

YOUNG MARCO
Nico did it.

INT. SANCHEZ FARMHOUSE - GUILLERMO'S GUN ROOM - NIGHT

Marco sits, stunned.

YOUNG MALENA
(V.O. ECHO)
Yes. Nico did it!

MALENA
Yes, I killed him! For all the
cruel, terrible things he did to
us.

Malena moves closer to Marco reaching out to him. But he cringes away.

OUTSIDE GUILLERMO'S GUN ROOM

Detective Garcia overhears the conversation, his gun drawn.

INSIDE GUILLERMO'S GUN ROOM

MALENA
(laughs)
By blaming Nico we fooled everyone,
didn't we?

Marco shakes his head sadly.

MARCO
No. I was the fool. A fool that was
locked up in the asylum, given
shocks, told he was mad!
(MORE)

MARCO (CONT'D)

I believed I was sick in the head.
Had a split personality, a demon
who did all these terrible things!

MALENA

(lovingly)
You're didn't do anything, Marco.
You're my Marco! My innocent,
childhood amigo!

MARCO

No! That Marco is gone! You took
away his life, his love,
everything! For what, Malena! For
what?

MALENA

For a child, Marco. For my
womanhood that was taken from me.
You don't know, but Guillermo...
your Papa used to rape me. Every
night, after you went to bed. He'd
sneak into our room and bring me
here. Right in this couch.

MARCO

No!

MALENA

Yes! Every night. And after they
had taken you away, do you know
what happened?! I found out I was
pregnant. I was only 12. I didn't
know what to do! So I told Dolores.
And you know what she did?! Instead
of reporting it or taking me to see
a doctor, she... she killed the
baby herself.

MARCO

No!

MALENA

She put metal wires inside me to
kill the baby. She damaged me for
life, Marco. I could never have any
children. Never know the joy of
motherhood.

MARCO

Is that why you killed her?

MALENA

Inspite of what she did to me, I cared for her. But was she grateful? No, she only had foul words for me! Whore! Bitch! Cunt! She spat at me everyday. Yes, I killed her. But I gave her a merciful death, Marco. I relieved her of her painful life.

Marco, enraged, picks up the rifle and aims it at her.

MARCO

You destroyed everything I had. You took Claire away from me.

MALENA

I love you, Marco. I will worship the ground you walk on. I will take care of your child like no one else. I will be a real mother!

MARCO

But you are not his mother.

MALENA

Then, kill me, Marco. Shoot me now!

Garcia enters the room.

GARCIA

MARCO! Put down the gun! I've heard everything!

Garcia points his pistol in Marco. Malena is startled. In a swift move, she grabs the gun from Marco and holds him hostage.

MALENA

Drop your pistol, Detective. Or I'll kill Marco!

Marco is surprised, as she squeezes her arm around his neck. She pulls Marco back with her on to the balcony.

Garcia keeps his pistol trained on Malena.

GARCIA

Let him go, Malena. This does not have to end badly.

MALENA

You don't know what bad is, motherfucker.

Malena keeps pulling Marco back with her. She puts her mouth to Marco's ear.

MALENA

You and I are one, aren't we?

Malena turns the rifle towards Garcia, and is about to squeeze the trigger. Marco pushes the rifle away. A SHOT rings out, SMASHING Guillermo's portrait.

The powerful recoil stuns Malena. She drops the rifle.

With a SCREAM, Marco whirls around and shoves Malena back. She teeters on the edge of the balcony. Then, she FALLS.

There's a THUD as she falls to the ground. Marco sees her crumpled body and falls to his knees, wracked with sobs.

A pool of blood seeps from under Malena's dead body.

Garcia picks up the pistol and rushes to Marco. He sees Malena's body on the ground below.

GARCIA

Marco! What have you done!?

Marco turns around slowly. His face is contorted in an evil smile.

MARCO

Nico did it!

EXT. DURANGO MENTAL ASYLUM - DAY

The doors open and a tired looking Claire exits on a wheelchair pushed by Jacinta.

Breathing in the fresh air, Claire smiles. She rises and gives her a hug. Jacinta wipes a tear. A tiny voice comes from behind her.

JOSHUA

Mummy!

Turning, Claire sees Detective Garcia walking up to her, holding Joshua by the hand.

Claire breaks into tears of joy, as Joshua runs into her arms. She holds him tight.

Way up, from the third floor window, Marco watches.

IN THE COMMON ROOM

Male inmates wander about aimlessly. Some look strangely at the newcomer who is arguing with himself.

MARCO

Claire... No! She's the Chimera...
No, it's Claire! Chimera! Aargh!

Marco pulls at his hair. Orderlies rush to control him.

OUTSIDE

Garcia helps Claire to load her bags into his pickup. Claire gets in with Joshua.

The car exits the asylum grounds.

Slowly pull back to capture the blue hills and verdant forests around. The setting sun disappears over the hills and the Sierra Madre mountains get ready to welcome another nightfall.

FADE OUT