

Los Abrazos Rotos

(Broken Embraces)

Written and to be directed by:
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BROKEN EMBRACES

THE TASTE OF YOUR MOUTH

DOUBLE IDENTITY

THE ETERNAL EMBRACE

SUB-VERSION

THE PRISONER OF O'DONNELL STREET

EMBRACE ON BLACK BEACH

"FOURTH DRAFT"

SEQUENCE 0. DUSK, OR NIGHT HAS ONLY BARELY FALLEN.

A huge clock marks 7:55 p.m. (The clock belongs to some landmark building, to be determined). Immediately following, the building goes dark.

Establishing shot of the Eiffel Tower, lit. Suddenly, all the lights go out.

The same thing happens with the Granada's Alhambra, Seville's Giralda Tower, the Guggenheim at Bilbao, the Gate of Alcala. All these well-known architectonic wonders turn dark, abruptly. (Beauty that

disappears suddenly, beauty that's extinguished and envelops us in darkness.)

1. HARRY CAINE'S HOME. INT. NIGHT.

Harry (fifty years old) sits, as if he were waiting, without hurry, immobile and patient in his study next to his desk, as if it were the thing keeping him company. He isn't doing anything. He lets time take its course. His silence is broken by the sound of footsteps that come and go. At first we can't see who the footsteps belong to, until they stop.

In the living room, a few meters from Harry, Judit stops. She, too, is shrouded in darkness. She looks at her wristwatch, the second hand moves from left to right on the watch face. Judit (forty-eight, looks younger) breathes, impatient. (She is dressed soberly, in a dignified and practical manner).

She approaches a window that looks out onto the street. Everything outside is also in darkness. The building in front is just a dark mass. She looks to the end of the street. Almost all the buildings visible from the window are dark, the Gate of Alcala in the background is also not lit. Without turning, she says to Harry:

JUDIT

The Door of Alcala has also darkened.

Harry is still sitting, inert, absorbed by his thoughts. The whole house is in darkness, only the ambient clarity of the night comes through the windows, curtains drawn back.

Judit heads slowly toward the kitchen. On the wall there is a Vitra clock, to which she gives a cursory glance.

She turns on the faucet and fills a glass of water. From her pocket, she removes a tiny heart made of black nacar shell and rimmed in silver. She opens it. She grabs a small pink pill. She takes it.

She glances once more at the stylized design of the Vitra clock. The minute hand nears 8 p.m.

On a windowsill (or on the kitchen table) there is an open newspaper. The exposed page displays an article about the dangers of global warming. An international date has been convened for a five minute blackout at 8 p.m.

Standing in the kitchen, Judit, poised and tense, looks up at the spot where the clock is. The stillness of all the elements comprising the frame make it seem like a painting. She waits until the seconds hand completes its cycle and it's 8 o'clock sharp.

Swiftly, Judit powers the central electrical switchboard, which is in the kitchen. The kitchen lights up, the refrigerator emits its characteristic sound. The lamps in the living room also light up. (Low-hanging lamps that make the light bounce. The house is awash in a special luminous atmosphere - dense, translucent, with darkened zones). All the furniture is flush with the walls. There are some paintings hanging and a rug on the ground, everything is of the kind of quality that denotes good personal taste.

Upon the light's return, Judit exhales a profound sigh of relief. She moves toward the window where she was standing earlier and contemplates how, in the building across the way, the windows begin to blink, in square patterns of light.

2. FLASHBACK. 1994. LANZAROTE HOSPITAL. INT. DAY.

The light's return is contagious, a true spectacle, which ends with a blinding light that floods the screen.

It will probably be a close-up of the sun.

That very sun enters through another window, which is not that of Harry's house, nor that of the building across the way. It is the window of a hospital room (perhaps a sign should specify that the following scene occurs "Fourteen years earlier")

The hospital is on Lanzarote Island, in the Canary Islands. The scene occurs fourteen years earlier. The characters are the same. Harry and Judit.

Harry lies in bed, his head completely bandaged. Sunlight enters through the window.

Judit is seated on the bed. She holds his hand and pleads, worried and loving:

JUDIT

Mateo, say something!

MATEO-HARRY

Mateo is dead.

JUDIT

(Sweet and devastated) Don't say that!

The character to whom Judit refers as Mateo, (the same one that in the previous scene we have called Harry), has a recent wound, either on his arm or on his hands, along with his head, which is completely covered by bandages.

Mateo and Harry are the same person, the difference is the fourteen years that separate them. Harry, in the present (2008), is fifty

years old. In '94, the time period when the flashback takes place, he was thirty-six. Let's say that when he was thirty-six, Harry was called Mateo. The character has two names, which his own voice-off explains, while we observe what his day-to-day consists of in 2008.

OFF HARRY

I always wanted to be another person, to be someone beside myself. To dispose of a single identity didn't seem enough. Living a single life wasn't enough for me. And half-joking, I came up with a pseudonym for myself, Harry Caine, an adventurer who, as fate would have it, became a writer. At that time, I had him author all the scripts and stories that I wrote. I came up with a standard biography to fill the back flap of his books. He had been a sailor, an industrial spy, the doorman at a Parisian cabaret, a boxer, a waiter and an advertisement hand-double. A self-made man, active and attractive like an English spy, vital, skeptical and sarcastic. For many years, Mateo Blanco and Harry Caine shared the same person, me, but a time came when, all of a sudden, I couldn't be anyone other than Harry Caine. I became my pseudonym. (He applies lotion in front of the mirror, we first see him in front of it, and then, doubled, reflected in it. Then, suddenly, the mirror does not reflect him. Of his two identities he only has one left). Just as I had planned, a heterodox writer and, never better stated, a self-made man, one might even say, "self-written man". There was only one detail I had not foreseen, Harry would be a blind writer.

3. IMAGES THAT ACCOMPANY THE VOICE -OFF. HARRY CAINE'S DAILY RITUALS.

Despite his fifty years and his blindness, Harry is a man that keeps himself in great physical shape.

Harry's Home. Interior. Day.

In the morning: he places a CD in a player. By himself, he selects and starts the program on a treadmill. He steps on and begins exercising.

He takes a shower (*"Mateo Blanco and Harry Caine shared the same person, me, but a time came when, all of a sudden..."*), the camera pans over various parts of his body under the running water, dense waves of white foam slide down his skin, as if it was a landscape.

The hangers have Braille-stickers that indicate the characteristic of the clothing they hold. (All the closets have sliding doors)

In his bedroom, he opens the closet and looks for the clothes he will wear. Despite the fact that he cannot see himself, he stands in front of a mirror. He smiles, pleased with his appearance .

Everything in the house is rigorously ordered. All that Harry needs to ascertain the identity of the things around him is his touch.

He exits onto the street.

4. HARRY'S STREET. EXT. DAY. PEDESTRIAN CROSSING.

Harry traverses (aided by an umbrella?) the pedestrian crossing. When he reaches the opposite sidewalk, the credits appear on the black and white stripes that mark the crossing. The crossway is clear of pedestrians so that only cars pass through (not many) and as they do,

they run over the letters of the credits, making them disappear, in pieces. On a different stripe, a new title appears and as it does, it is run over and destroyed by another car. Like this, successively.

5. SIDEWALK ACROSS FROM HARRY'S BUILDING. EXT. DAY.

Just on the sidewalk across from where Harry lives, there is a news-stand, and next to it, perhaps on the nearest corner, a bar.

Harry buys the newspaper at the news-stand. This is part of his daily routine. He greets the attendant familiarly. He has the kind of face that provokes pity. He grabs the newspaper, folds it, and places it under his arm.

Cut to.

6. BAR ACROSS THE WAY. INT. DAY.

He enters the bar. He leans down somewhere on the bar table. Just as soon as he sees him, he is approached by his Waiter Friend, an approachable guy, somewhere in his forties, who is helped by a South American waitress, wearing her makeup since the early part of the morning, whom he is obviously screwing. He brings him a coffee. All of these actions are part of a daily ritual.

WAITER FRIEND

Do you want me to read you something from the newspaper?

HARRY

No, thanks. I am off on a stroll.

RETURN TO SEC. 5

Harry exits the bar and becomes immersed in the different noises of the street, the passersby, their different sounds and corporeal odors. Auditory life. The camera swirls around his head. At first he hears all the noises, indistinctly mixed, and then he begins to separate them. He selects one he likes, the rest of the sounds of the street disappear or their volume is lowered. Girls, cars, high heels, the smells of different ethnicities. A multi-racial street. Harry selects an odor (the body of a woman, whose aroma appears and disappears), Harry follows it, having also singled out the sound of her heels. He loses them. He finds them again.

He walks self-assuredly, without tripping either on the urban furniture or the people. He leans, lightly, on his umbrella, which he uses as a cane. At first glance he doesn't appear blind ...

He reaches a pedestrian crossing. Nearby, he recognizes the odor which had attracted him, he follows its trace until he reaches the sidewalk. The odor emanates from a young Girl, just next to him, waiting before the crosswalk. Harry searches with the tip of the umbrella, until he brushes her shoe. He excuses himself, as if the contact had been inadvertent. The girl regards him. Harry then takes one step forward, intent on crossing the street, the cars come very close to him, almost running him over. (A real sense of danger). The light is red for pedestrians. The Girl takes him by the arm, pulling him toward her, frightened.

GIRL

(Alarmed) Watch out! You can't cross!

HARRY

Sorry . . .

GIRL

I'll tell you when!

HARRY

Thank you very much.

7. MATEO-HARRY'S STREET. EXT. DAY. PEDESTRIAN CROSSING.

They make it through the crosswalk. She is not holding his arm (but almost), Harry doesn't need it. He knows the surroundings well.

They reach the other sidewalk.

Harry thanks her for her help, the Girl observes him the entire time, intrigued and curious.

HARRY

I live nearby, two blocks up, would you mind coming along with me?

The Girl accepts, delighted. Tall, thin, attractive, modern, and inexpressive like a model, this is what the Girl is like.

8. CONTINUED. BUILDING'S ENTRANCE. EXT. DAY.

Once at the entrance, Harry invites her to come up so that she can read aloud the newspaper to him. The Girl checks her watch, and ends up accepting.

GIRL

But I warn you, I've never read out-loud, you may not like it!

HARRY

You will only have to browse.

9. LIVING ROOM, MATEO'S HOME. INT. DAY.

The same living room we've seen in Sequence 1. There is very little light.

GIRL

Do you mind if I turn on the light? So that I can read... It's too dark in here.

HARRY

Oh, yes... Turn the light on...

The Girl turns on a table lamp.

Cut to.

Harry is sitting on a sofa and she is in front of him, on an armchair. She opens the newspaper down the middle, before she reads anything she directs a brief but intense glance at Harry. She reads about the percentage of those in Madrid who abided by the blackout that was organized in the name of global change. She turns a few pages and stops. Reads as if for herself:

GIRL

Ernesto Martel is dead!

HARRY

Who?

GIRL

Ernesto Martel. I know one of his granddaughters...

HARRY

So he's dead.

GIRL

You knew him?

HARRY

No...

Turns more pages.

GIRL

What are you interested in, politics, economy... culture?

HARRY

I am interested in you. What are you like? Do you mind describing yourself?

The girl begins to describe herself, at first a little tentative.

(Her measurements? She smiles. She knows them by heart.)

She describes herself. The color of her eyes. Her hair. Her skin. How she's dressed, while she traces over him with her glance (When she speaks of her eyes, we see his eyes; when she speaks of her mouth, we see his, etc). Her gaze stops at Harry's crotch. Harry can feel her watching him. The situation seems perfectly natural.

Harry approaches her (he knows she's right in front of him). With his hands, he places a brief caress on each of the parts the Girl has just described. The eyes, the hair, the mouth. He lowers his hands until they fall, spread, on her breasts. It is as though the blind man could gaze at her with his fingers and palms. He rests his head on the Girl's breast, pulls down her bra straps and he begins to savor

her breasts, delicately. Harry's cell phone rings, but he ignores it, doesn't pick up.

Cut to.

10. CONTINUED. HARRY'S HOME. INT. DAY.

They make love on the sofa.

Cut to.

The Girl asks for the bathroom, Harry gestures with his hand in its direction. Half-naked, with some of her clothes in her hand, the Girl heads for the bathroom. Harry, still sitting on the same sofa, begins to dress and to smooth down his clothes, without hurry.

11. CONTINUED. HARRY'S HOME. INT. DAY.

The doorbell rings. Twice in a row. Immediately following, the key is inserted into the keyhole, from the outside.

Someone is opening it.

Harry rises. Before he arrives to the foyer, the door is already open. In the middle of the doorway, a woman, Judit (the same one who had been with him during the blackout of the opening sequence).

Harry finishes tucking his shirt, barefoot. Judit closes the door slowly and surveys him up and down with inquisitive eyes, which he cannot see but one could say that he can guess. He smiles.

JUDIT

What are you laughing at?

HARRY

I am only smiling, because of the way you're looking at me.

The sound of a running faucet emerging from the bathroom distracts Judit; first the sound, then the immediate appearance of the Girl. Both women look at each other and are surprised, despite their attempt to hide it. Judit appears more annoyed than surprised. After a very brief silence:

GIRL

(To Harry) I must go.

HARRY

Thanks for helping me cross.

Judit (forty-eight years old, seems younger, is dressed in an informal and sober manner, little color, etc., her hair is pulled back, parted in the middle, her attitude is that of a guardian), she puts away the key to the door while she gazes sternly at the young woman.

The Girl, very uncomfortable, quickly vanishes.

12. CONTINUED. HARRY'S HOME. INT. DAY.

Once alone:

JUDIT

(Annoyed and without apologizing, even if it seems she's trying) I'm sorry, I thought you were alone.

HARRY

She helped me cross the street and I invited her in to read me the newspaper . . .

JUDIT

Harry, you can't bring into your house the first person who helps you across the street. One of these days something awful will happen to you!

HARRY

(Sullen and ironic) Everything awful that's had to happen to me has. Now, all that's left is for me to enjoy life . . .

Judit changes the topic so that Harry may also change his tone. She turns off the table lamp and she opens the window drapes that lead to the terrace.

JUDIT

Diego told me yesterday that you finished the script.

HARRY

I would like to add a final epilogue. It may not be necessary, but I'd like to write it.

JUDIT

I agreed to deliver the definitive version to the producer and director today.

HARRY

You will have it by tomorrow, don't worry.

As he speaks, Harry has made his way back to the sofa, without the use of a cane, he knows by heart the landscape of the house, which he walks through as if he could see. If anything, he touches any given piece of furniture with the tip of his fingers, as if to ascertain whether it's still there. He walks both with ease, and with the characteristic rigidity of blind people.

He picks up the socks from the floor and slips them on (the newspaper is open on the floor). He puts his shoes on. Judit watches him for a moment, and then turns toward the window.

13. JUDIT'S POINT OF VIEW. THE SIDEWALK ACROSS THE WAY. HARRY'S STREET. EXT. DAY.

She observes how, on the sidewalk across the way, the Girl enters the main door of the building just next to the news-stand where Harry buys his newspaper. From the window she can make out that it's an important Modeling Agency.

RETURN TO SEQ. 12

Judit is still looking out the window, her back to Harry, when she hears him say:

HARRY

Ernesto Martel has died.

Judit turns to Harry, surprised but masking it with her voice.

JUDIT

I think he was very ill...

HARRY

It's been so long since we've spoken of him!

Judit nods plainly with her head. Silence. Ernesto Martel's death doesn't bring good memories to either of them.

14. HARRY'S HOME. INT. DAY. CONTINUED.

The doorbell rings. It's Diego, Judit's son, who doubles as Harry's typist and co-scriptwriter. He is a special kid, twenty-five years old. Baggy-eyed, a weary aspect, but he overflows with charm. Dresses as a modern kid, but not obnoxiously so. He speaks delicately, an attitude uncommon for someone his age. He greets his mother.

JUDIT

You look awful ...!

DIEGO

I ran here.

HARRY

And it's Monday! Diego, you don't have to run for me. We are not in a hurry.

JUDIT

I am, I've committed ...

HARRY

You'll have it by tonight, don't worry.

JUDIT

Start thinking of the next script. Some kind of horror or fantasy story for bratty teenagers. It's what sells best ...

HARRY

I don't know if I'll know how to. I was thinking of developing a story inspired by Arthur Miller's son...

JUDIT

(Perplexed) The writer who married Marilyn?

HARRY

Yes... After Marilyn he married the photographer Inge Morat and they had a son. He was born mentally handicapped and Arthur Miller hid him; he doesn't even mention him in his memoirs. He never recognized him publicly. From the moment he was born, he had him placed in an institution and wanted to hear nothing of him. Despite his condition, the boy was able to learn and to make an almost normal life for himself. He lived in an apartment with other friends and he found a job as a clerk in a supermarket...

Judit looks at him perplexed. For some reason, Harry has his back turned. This happens many times.

JUDIT

And Miller never saw him? ...

HARRY

(Continues, his back turned) One day, Miller was giving a conference in defense of a mentally retarded man, who had been condemned to death, after what was believed to be a forced confession. Among those present was his mentally handicapped son, who was integrally involved with organizations that aided all sorts of disabled people. The son was very proud to finally be sharing something with his father. At the end of the conference, he approached the stage and held him in an embrace that must have seemed endless to Arthur Miller, who did not know how to extract himself from this mentally handicapped man; imagine, it would not have been politically correct, least of all given the situation in which Miller found himself. Then the stranger let go of him and told him: "I am

your son, Daniel, and I am very proud of you, Father!"

This was the only time father and son saw each other.

Judith listens, affected and disoriented. She looks at her son as if she were looking for help. Diego stops thumbing through a magazine in order to listen to Harry and to witness his mother's reaction. She wasn't ready for Harry to counter with such a shocking narrative.

JUDIT

(Somewhat tense) It's very moving, but I don't think we can write a script about Arthur Miller without procuring rights from the family.

HARRY

We change the names, the story is not about the writer's miserliness, but about the strength of the son who survives without the least bit of rancor toward the father who has ignored him his entire life. It is a story of troubles overcome and of inherent goodness. There aren't those many good men that one can write about.

Judit would like to say that when she spoke of a commercial script this is not what she had in mind, but she doesn't want to come off rude. Diego keeps watching them. Her mother appears oddly cornered, until she remembers a past comment of Harry's, that suits her just right:

JUDIT

It's a beautiful story. But years ago, when you began writing again and I began selling your scripts, you told me you'd never write remakes, sequels, nor biopics. Nor stories whose protagonists were film

directors, handicapped or blind. I remember clearly because the part of the biopics surprised me.
(Smiles)

HARRY

I can't bear them... (As if he had at that very moment remembered) It's true, it's true I said all that, but this wouldn't exactly be a biopic...

They hear the doorbell ring, two or three times. For Judit, it's the best way to escape the conversation.

JUDIT

I'll get it.

Diego settles on the armchair, in front of his laptop. On the other side of the table sits the computer that is specially programmed for Harry. Diego powers his laptop. Harry heads for the work table. And he sits in front of Diego.

HARRY

Diego, go to the end of the document.

Diego obeys while we hear Judit approaching the door and, before she opens it, someone opens it from the other side. We see the document's text (a script) scrolling, fleetingly, over Diego's computer screen.

At the door, Judit finds Mariacruz, the Latin American maid, who also has her own key to the house. She is carrying two shopping bags. Judit gives her some directive (about the windows, the curtains, the kitchen furniture, the food, the floors, things to be dry cleaned, etc.) and she leaves, saying goodbye to Harry and Diego with a simple "Boys, I'm leaving. Goodbye!"

15. NIGHT. BAR WITH MUSIC. INT. BOOTH.

Diego chooses a track that functions as background music to the three night sequences that follow, although it's not absolutely necessary. He works at a modern bar (not very large), as a D.J. He spends most of the time inside a small booth, which only a few friends access. Alex, his same age, enters.

DIEGO

Did you bring me the session?

Alex takes three CDs out of his jacket.

ALEX

It's still warm. Just downloaded from the eMule.

DIEGO

Dude. I'll throw it in now. You want something to drink?

ALEX

Yes. And you, would you like a tip of "crystal"?

DIEGO

I pass. I do need to sleep once in a while.

16. HARRY-MATEO HOME. DEN. NIGHT

At that moment, Harry is in front the computer (a special computer, sonorous, set up for Harry, with Braille signs jutting from the keyboard). He attempts to "read" some digital newspaper, its contents

can be heard spoken by a very unpleasant synthetic voice. His search produces annoying and strange sounds. Harry continuously makes mistakes, but that's the way to do it.

He manages to get into *El Pais*, the obituary section. He listens to a list. He finally finds the news of Ernesto Martel's death. He listens to the headline.

The sound of a mobile phone ringing interrupts him.

17. JUDIT'S OFFICE. INT. NIGHT.

It's Judit, from her office.

In front of Judit, on the other side of the table, full of papers, is the head of production and someone from the American production. They are trying to decide on the budget.

From the ashtrays full of cigarettes, the bottles of water and the cups of coffee, one assumes that they must have been at this task for many hours. (One should be able to see the layout of the shooting schedule, something visual). The American production can be heard in the background.

(Seq. 16 and 17 run in parallel)

She greets Harry.

JUDIT

You need anything?

MATEO

No, thanks.

JUDIT

What are you up to?

Harry touches the small MP3, much easier than to listen to the digital newspaper. He doesn't want to tell her that he is attempting to listen to Ernesto Martel's obituary, so he tells her what he will be doing next.

HARRY

I was going to read an Alice Munro story on the MP3.

JUDIT

Then I'll leave you. I'll stop by tomorrow, when I can. I have to finish the budget for the Americans as soon as possible, so that I can decide what to do ...
(Hangs up) (To the Americans, in English). Ok, we can continue tomorrow...

Once he hangs up his mobile, Harry returns to his computer, this is when we actually hear the biographical sketch of the deceased financier.

Fade to black.

During the fade to black, we continue to hear the biography. In voice-off.

OFF

Ernesto Martel has passed away at his residence in the countryside, "La Berzosa." Financier, of Chilean origin, who achieved great success and notoriety due to his involvement in the financing of crucial public infrastructures in different Latin American countries.

18. THE BUILDING'S ENTRANCE. EXT. DAY. 1990.

A modern building in the financial district. A sign displays the name of an important financial company (M. Capital) and the year when the action takes place, 1990.

19. 1990. ERNESTO MARTEL'S OFFICE. MODERN SKYSCRAPER. INT. DAY.

The end of the voice-off is heard over the image of Ernesto Martel himself, alive, attending to a phone call, while we hear the last words of his obituary, in off.

OFF

Recently he had been involved in various financial scandals. He was implicated for fraud in the infamous "case of Bank Banelco". He was married three times, and had two children...

The interior of Ernesto Martel's office: elegant, ostentatious, and decorated without concern for cost. Through the windows one can witness a cosmopolitan Madrid, from whose soil skyscrapers begin to bud.

Ernesto Martel, almost sixty, impeccable suit, settles a conversation with the Transportation Minister.

Framed photographs sit on a piece of accessory furniture, one of him with his two children, a boy and a girl, who do not resemble one another. They have different mothers.

The walls are decorated by an abstract painting belonging to the avant-garde group El Paso.

ERNESTO

... I just spoke to the Transportation Minister. Things are in full swing. Yes, we are doing the Caracas

metro ... there's a lot of money ... at least five years.
I am looking for a qualified company and had you in
mind ... of course, I will serve as intermediary, I have
been told so by the President himself.

Cut to.

**20. ERNESTO MARTEL'S OFFICE BUILDING. ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES.
INT. DAY. 1990.**

On the same floor. Fairly close to the boss' office, divided by modern and ample cubicles, we find some of the company's employees. His secretary, Magdalena (her diminutive is Lena), is speaking on the phone with a look of contained alarm. Personal problems. In her early thirties, Lena is dressed soberly, almost excessively so (as if she were attempting to project a maturity, effectiveness and responsibility that she not yet possesses). She is a very beautiful woman, on whose countenance the passing of time has begun to leave its mark. She has a small mole, slightly raised, next to the seam of the lips, and another one on the top edge of the nose. She could do more with her physique, modernize it, but this is not what she aims for. Her face reminds us of one of the heroines of the American film noir, brought up to date. She possesses the turbulent and at once translucent beauty of Gene Tierney and the bored disdain of Linda Darnell (in "Fallen Angels"). Lena is a splendid fallen angel. We can't hear what she says, but judging from her reaction, the content of her conversation is dramatic. Her eyes flash with indignation and anger.

RETURN TO 19.

Ernesto Martel calls Lena, his personal secretary, by way of an internal line.

RETURN TO 20.

Magdalena interrupts her conversation with "I'll call you later", as the indicator lights up, announcing another call on the line. She pushes on the button corresponding to that phone call and she hears her boss' voice summoning her. "Yes, sir", she responds, promptly. She gets up from the table. She dries her eyes and nose with a Kleenex, grabs a pen and a rectangular writing block and heads to Ernesto Martel's office.

21. ERNESTO MARTEL'S OFFICE. INT. DAY. 1990

Despite the fact that he's dealing in grand-scale business, there are few documents for him to consult on his desk. It gives the sense that for the most important part of his job (grand scale speculation), Ernesto deals directly. He is the great intermediary without intermediaries.

Magdalena enters. He invites her to take a seat. She complies without altogether controlling her nervousness; professionally detached, she attempts to hide the tension that the recent, and truncated, telephone conversation has caused her.

ERNESTO

I will dictate a letter for the Minister of Industry...

Magdalena opens her writing pad, ready to write, looking serious. Her pen drops to the floor. Ernesto M. observes her.

ERNESTO

Are you alright?

MAGDALENA

(As she picks it up) Yes, thank you.

But it's not true. Lena looks agitated, despite her efforts to hide it.

ERNESTO

Why don't you tell me what's wrong? I'm sure I could help you.

Lena looks at him, serious and hurt:

MAGDALENA

My father is very ill. This afternoon they are releasing him and I wanted to ask you if I could leave an hour early to go pick him and my mother up.

ERNESTO

Of course. What's wrong with him?

MAGDALENA

Stomach cancer, metastasized.

ERNESTO

I am really sorry.

**22. SURROUNDINGS AND ENTRANCE, PUERTA DE HIERRO HOSPITAL. EXT.
DAY. 1990**

It's a hot and sunny afternoon at the end of July. Lena arrives inside a taxi to the entrance of Puerta de Hierro Hospital. On the sidewalk, next to the entryway, her mother awaits, (chubby, tired, defenseless and impatient, she's around sixty) next to her, a suitcase and a huge plastic bag full of clothes. The mother is a small-town woman, dignified and beaten. The shock provoked by the situation has liberated her, if only momentarily, from falling into desperation.

Through the car's window, Lena can see her mother on the sidewalk, and her ailing Father (a man in his sixties, very debilitated and aged), sitting on a sofa in the foyer.

Lena tells the cab-driver to wait, and runs toward her mother. They kiss.

LENA

I can't believe they have thrown you out of the hospital, like dogs...

MOTHER

(Humiliated, hurt) Yes, honey, yes...

LENA

(Indignant) Does Dr. Alvaro de la Torre know this?

The mother gestures for them to get away from the door, that way the Father cannot see them.

MOTHER

He's been the one...

LENA

But how? If he was going to operate him this week, and last week, and the other week...

MOTHER

I couldn't explain on the phone. (She recounts) Dr. De la Torre called us for an appointment. I thought it would be to tell us that they were finally going to operate on your father... but instead he tells us they are releasing him. (In disbelief) I asked him what he meant and he replied: "quite simple, it's July and I am leaving for my vacation" (as her story moves forward the mother relives the same states of mind that she went through in her conversation with the doctor) And I told him, "you are throwing us out onto the street?" and he insisted, without the least bit of compassion, "I am releasing him so that you can go home", but "what can I do with him at home in his condition?". "That's your problem" he told me (she cries), "do whatever you like, I am leaving on vacation". "He is dying!" I begged. "Well, let him die in peace, at home", he said to me.

LENA

(Powerless, furious) It cannot be! They can't keep him for twenty days, torturing him with tests in preparation for an operation and now leave him like this, just because the doctor is leaving on vacation!

The Mother looks at her without knowing what to say. She takes a small handkerchief to her nose.

LENA

Have you protested?...

MOTHER

To who? Dr. De la Torre is the head surgeon. There is no one over him.

Lena refuses to accept the situation.

The father appears through the doors of the hospital entrance, exhausted. He leans down to catch his breath. With a weak voice, almost inaudible, he says to them:

FATHER

Did you forget about me?

Lena and the mother approach him, almost jubilant, hiding their sense of helplessness and frustration.

LENA

(Her eyes welled up with tears, she gathers her last bit of strength) How could you think that Dad!

Between the two women they help the father to the taxi that is waiting for them nearby. They put him in the car. The man can hardly walk. He is very thin, his bones jut out from under his ashen skin. He walks crouched over.

The taxi pulls off.

23. PERIPHERAL HIGHWAY, MADRID. INSIDE THE TAXI. HIGHWAY. DAY.

FATHER

You know what Dr. De la Torre told me before he broke the news?

He falters. He is too exhausted to speak.

FATHER

(To the Mother) You tell her, Paca.

MOTHER

He said: I am glad you are not still in the service,
Emilio.

LENA

(Not understanding) Why?

MOTHER

"Because if you were still in the service, after what
I am going to tell you, you'd shoot me..."

Lena stares, completely wide-eyed with amazement.

LENA

He really said that?

FATHER

Yes... and he was smiling, he thought it was funny...

24. PERIPHERAL NEIGHBORHOOD. EXT. DAY. 1990.

The taxi parks in front of a humble building, in one of those outlying neighborhoods in the periphery of Madrid, a commuter town. Children, women, street ambience. It's like a provincial town, transported to a huge city that is in the midst of merciless development. At that hour there are few people on the street.

The passage between this sequence and the next happens through the doors of the car and the apartment, respectively.

The Father exits, aided by Lena and the Mother, when the door to the taxi closes it's the door to the apartment that shuts, with all three characters inside the entry hall.

25. LENA'S PARENTS' HOME. INT. DAY. 1990.

Lena locks the door from inside. It's a humble and small apartment, Magdalena and her mother situate the man on the bed in the master bedroom, in the most comfortable way possible.

The décor reflects the bad taste of the era, especially of that social class, here and there a certain rural detail stands out. Antique photographs of the grandparents. Photographs of the Father in his policeman uniform, next to the Mother.

Over the headboard, there is a crucifix on the wall and perhaps a thick, wooden rosary. Religious images on the nightstands. Attention placed on the bedspread, the curtains, the dresser, the closet and the walls. Everything is new, ugly period furniture. The effect generated is of a somber kitsch.

Lena opens a dresser drawer, on top of it sits the picture of the father in his policeman uniform, with the Mother. She finds a Star 9mm pistol. She grabs it and tries its weight, the mother sees her and tells her to leave the weapon in its place. (Perhaps at that very moment the mother is injecting the Father with morphine).

Cut to.

In the dining hall, Lena hands her mother money so that she can buy food and her father's medications.

LENA

Call me any time, no matter what it is!

The light that shines through the windows, covered with curtains of an indefinite but slightly brilliant pattern, begins to fade.

Mother and daughter kiss.

25 A. LENA INSIDE A TAXI RETURNING TO MADRID. NIGHT.

While Lena was at her parent's apartment, night fell.

Lena departs lost in her thoughts, she can't shake off her parents' situation. She shifts her eyes. She must find a solution, urgently. She lights a cigarette. She looks at her wristwatch. She seems to have made a decision. She looks out the window. She finds the inter-urban landscape desolating.

25 B. NEIGHBORHOOD: PROSPERIDAD, VALLEGAS OR LA LATINA. EXT. NIGHT.

The taxi stops in front of the building where Lena lives. She exits the taxi and opens the door.

26. LENA'S HOME. (NEIGHBORHOOD: PROSPERIDAD, VALLEGAS OR LA LATINA). INT. NIGHT. 1990.

Lena enters her apartment. A tiny studio, but charming. No sooner has she dropped all that she is carrying, than she heads to the phone and makes a call. The décor is agreeable. Little money, but well spent. A poster of Hitchcock's "Vertigo" dominates one of the walls, or a framed photochrom of Kim Novak in the film. There may be another

film reference (Jean Seberg and Romy Schneider). Lena, secretly, is a cinephile.

27. MADAME MYLENE'S DEN. 1990. INT. NIGHT.

27. A. LENA'S HOME. INT. NIGHT.

(Alternating between both spaces)

Madame Mylene is a blonde woman, very dressed up, older (between fifty and seventy), has had plastic surgery, and has not renounced her womanhood. Despite the quality of her attire, her makeup and her jewels, there is something about her appearance that is unequivocally sinister and heartless. While she speaks she has a drink and smokes a cigar. A man of "professional" appearance keeps her company. It's the den of a high-class Madame. The den seems more practical than feminine.

LENA

Madame Mylene? Hello, it's Severine.

MADAME MYLENE

Severine! It's been so long! I'm so happy to hear from you.

LENA

I need money.

MADAME SEVERINE

How soon?

LENA

Now! My weekend's free. I am busy during the week.

MADAME MYLENE

I'll see what I can do. May I call tonight if I find something?

Her tone gives it away that she won't have the slightest problem "finding something" for Lena.

LENA

Yes. I'll wait for your call.

Cut to.

28. LENA'S HOME. INT. NIGHT. 1990.

The telephone rings. Lena has her hair down, she has put makeup on (in excess). She looks more attractive, but the makeup also gives her a harder edge. She covers herself with a robe. She immediately grabs the phone. She seems like a different woman, worldly and nocturnal.

LENA

Yes?

OFF ERNESTO MARTEL

Severine?

LENA

(On alert) Who is it?

29. LIVING ROOM, ERNESTO M.'S MANSION. INT. NIGHT.

We see Ernesto Martel, speaking on the phone, in one of the living rooms of his mansion. He is dressed to go out, a drink in his hand. He is alone, his tone is that of a man courting a woman.

ERNESTO MARTEL

I am calling on Madame Mylene's behalf.

Lena recognizes the voice, there is no doubt it's his. Despite the shock she manages to bluff, categorical and quick:

LENA

(Slightly altering her voice) You've made a mistake, sir. No Severine lives here.

Ernesto Martel doesn't believe her, but he plays along.

ERNESTO MARTEL

I must have dialed wrong. Excuse me.

Lena hangs up, confused and irritated.
Calls again.

30. LENA'S HOME. INT. NIGHT AND

31. MADAME MYLENE'S DEN. INT. NIGHT. 1990

Lena dials Madame Mylene's number

MADAME

Hi! Has he already called?

LENA

Who?

MADAME

The client! You will not complain about my speediness!

LENA

(Furious) But... how have you given him my number?!

MADAME

I couldn't say no.

LENA

Things aren't done like that! Have you gone mad!?

MADAME

He knows everything. And I haven't been the one to tell him, he found out on his own account, he knows about your foray into acting, and that you sometimes "acted" for me...

Lena listens, furious and impotent.

MADAME

Months ago he made me promise him that if you got back in contact with me I would call him. I couldn't say no, he is one of my best clients.

LENA

You bitch!

MADAME

(Unmoved) Look on the bright side. He must really like you to go to the lengths he has... Perhaps you've found your Sugar Daddy.

Lena remains in silence, humiliated, cornered.

MADAME

What have you agreed on? Remember I am part of the business.

Lena doesn't respond. She hangs up the telephone.

32. LENA'S HOME. INT. DAY. 1990.

IN THE MORNING.

Magdalena is sleeping in her bed. The phone wakes her. It's her mother, in the middle of a crying fit and panic attack.

LENA

(Wakes up, suddenly, frightened) How is Dad?

MOTHER

(Crying) Not well at all, my dear. We've been through a hellish night. He has not eaten anything. But he won't stop bleeding... and everything is coming up... it's as if he has burst inside.

The mother speech falters, she is very scared...

LENA

I will be there with an ambulance immediately. Be ready to leave!

Before she calls an ambulance, Lena calls Ernesto Martel. They greet each other. Ernesto does not pretend to be surprised, he comes across cordially. He thinks this may be the continuation of their phone call from the previous night.

LENA

Mr. Martel? It's Lena.

ERNESTO

(Delighted) Good morning, Lena.

LENA

I am sorry to bother you...

ERNESTO

(Gallantly) You are never a bother.

LENA

My father is dying. We must admit him urgently, but I don't know where. As I told you, they released him from Puerta de Hierro yesterday.

Ernesto changes his tone. Now he is an all-powerful man, generous and with every recourse at his fingertips.

ERNESTO

Don't worry. We will take him to the Emergency Room at a private clinic. (Wanting to confirm) You told me that he has stomach cancer...

LENA

Yes.

ERNESTO

(Thinking) The best digestive surgeon in Europe is at the Clinica de la Luz. I will take care of the admittance issue. Call an ambulance and tell them to pick up your parents. I'll meet you at the Clinica de la Luz in an hour...

LENA

(Plainly, but grateful) Thank you very much.

Even though neither one of them mentions the phone conversation of the night before, it is present on both of their minds.

33. MADRID STREETS. EXT. DAY. 1990

An ambulance traverses Madrid at full speed.

**34. SURROUNDINGS AND ENTRANCE TO CLINICA DE LA LUZ. EXT. DAY.
1990**

It arrives to the Emergency ward at the Clinica de la Luz. They carry Lena's father in a stretcher, her mother alongside him.

35. CLINICA DE LA LUZ. HALLWAYS. INT. DAY. 1990

One of the hospital's hallways.

The Mother, Lena and Ernesto are waiting together on a row of chairs next to a door. Dr. Blasco emerges, an eminent Surgeon Specialist. An impenetrable man, he doesn't mince words. Getting information from him is like pulling teeth. He is polite, but not accommodating in the slightest.

ERNESTO

How's the patient?

SURGEON

You have brought him in terrible conditions... Which I suppose you know.

The mother affirms with a gesture.

ERNESTO

(With good manners, but authoritarian) Will you be able to save him?

SURGEON

We will do everything possible... at this very moment
it is impossible to operate...

Lena and the Mother look at both men, anxiously.

SURGEON

Perhaps tomorrow. We are providing parenteral
nutrition... He will need a blood transfusion...
(Looks at both women) Do you have any relatives who
can donate?

LENA

Well, here... I don't know...

The Mother also doesn't know what to say.

ERNESTO

Give him the best blood you've got!

SURGEON

I will keep you updated on his condition in the next
hours... (He says goodbye to them)

MOTHER

May I stay?

SURGEON

Yes, of course. You can stay in his room as long as
you wish.

The Mother is not accustomed to so many privileges.

The doctor says goodbye to Ernesto Martel and the women, mechanically.

When the three are alone the Mother thanks Ernesto Martel for what he has done for them. She looks at her daughter, in a knowing way, as if she understands (and accepts, what else can she do!) the situation.

LENA

I'll stay here, Mom. You have to rest...

MOTHER

(With strength, but beaten) No, you rest... You've already done enough... Thank you very much, Mr. Ernesto. If my husband survives, it will be thanks to you.

ERNESTO

He will survive, ma'am.

LENA

Really, you don't want me to stay? Or that I bring you something?

MOTHER

No, go. You both must have things to do...

Lena complies. In effect, there is something urgent she must do: pay the price for all those privileges. To pay the cost of her father's life.

Ernesto and Lena walk to the other end of the hallway. Before she enters the room, the Mother bids farewell to them with a look that's sad, tired, but of fortitude.

The two figures slowly recede down the hallway, until they disappear in a

Fade to black.

37. MATEO-HARRY'S HOME. RETURN TO 2008. INT. DAY.

From black.

The door to Harry's apartment. The doorbell rings. The house is completely dark. Harry moves with his characteristic naturalness. He is coming from the bathroom, his hair wet and wearing a robe. He feels around until he finds the peephole. He opens it and reaches his eye toward it, as if he could really see the person on the other side. He is not waiting for anyone, so he hopes the visitor will think he is watching, even if he can't see a thing.

HARRY

(From inside) Who is it?

A voice on the other side of the door responds:

RAY X

I'm Ray X ...

HARRY

Ray X? There's no such a name.

RAY X

It's a nickname, at one time I took a lot of ecstasy.

HARRY

What do you want?

RAY X

To write a script with you, so that I can direct it.

HARRY

It's your first film?

RAY X

I made a documentary (naïve) ... a very good one, eighteen years ago, this would be my first fiction film.

HARRY

OK. Call Judit Garcia, my agent, and explain everything. If she finds it suitable, she will set up a date for us. And now, I'd like to go dry myself, you pulled me out of the shower and I am dripping wet.

RAY X

(The words escape) You are naked?

HARRY

It's none of your business.

Ray does not move. Neither does Harry. They both remain still and mute on their respective sides of the door, waiting for the other to do something. Ray is mortified about having asked the last question.

HARRY

Will you stand there all day?

RAY X

You haven't given me Judit Garcia's phone number.

HARRY

Find it out. She is a well-known Production Director.

This time Ray steps away from the door and walks toward the elevator.
Cut to.

38. HARRY'S HOME. 2008. INT. DAY

At another point in the day.

Harry plays music (a CD with songs that Diego has selected for him, expressly), he looks after the bonsai, or he waters the plants while

he listens to the radio. Harry touches the plants as well as the bonsai delicately, with the tip of his fingers.

The phone rings.

OFF JUDIT

Hi Harry. It's me.

HARRY

Tell me.

OFF JUDIT

A young director has been in contact with me. His name is Ray X and he wants to write a script with you... Does this ring a bell?

HARRY

Yes... (He is about to tell her he showed up without notice, but Judit doesn't give him time to).

JUDIT

(Since she is always busy and in a hurry) Well, he wants to see you this afternoon, or tomorrow, if you can. I have asked him for an advance and he has accepted, but I cannot accompany you either today or tomorrow...

HARRY

I will speak to him... and let you know.

JUDIT

Good, I hope you like him, he seems to be loaded.

HARRY

Have you seen him?

JUDIT

No, just judging from his voice. And from the check I am about to ask him for. I will send Diego over so that you're not alone.

Cut to.

39. HARRY-MATEO HOME. DEN. INT. DAY. 2008

(The next morning, Harry wears different clothes than in the previous sequence and Ray X as well.)

The doorbell rings. It's Ray X. Mariacruz opens the door. Harry waits for him while seated at his desk, one can hear the noises his computer generates.

Ray X heads toward the den and introduces himself.

Harry stretches his hand and waits for the other man to find it and shake it.

RAY X

Hi, I'm Ray X.

They shake hands.

HARRY

Hello Mr. X. Please, have a seat...

RAY X

Please, don't address me formally.

(Perhaps the kitchen is lit and only the light from the window enters the area where the conversation is taking place).

Ray watches Harry inquisitively. He observes everything, the furniture, the wall-hangings and Harry's own body, shamelessly, taking advantage of the fact that Harry cannot see him.

Mateo senses the heat of his visitor's gaze over his body.

Ray is thirty-five years old and his physique is somewhere between freakish and bohemian but expensively dressed, hard to classify, thin, with a beard. Only when he speaks he reveals his well-bred origin (not excessively, nor parodically, just sufficiently evocative). He is excited by the very fact of being there, it seems it is something he has been desiring for some time.

He takes advantage of the fact that Harry cannot see him in order to observe him without reserve.

During the conversation, Harry is not always sitting. At some point he moves (to look for cigarettes, perhaps) and remains standing.

RAY

I love your work, I know it from the start.

HARRY

Thank you.

RAY

I have seen all of Mateo Blanco's films, including the last one, "Girls and Suitcases".

HARRY

Is that so? You must be the only one.

40. HARRY'S HOME. VESTIBULE AND KITCHEN. INT. DAY. 2008.

At this exact moment, Diego enters. Mariacruz opens the door for him. Just in time to hear Ray's question.

RAY

What happened to Mateo Blanco?

HARRY

Why do you ask?

40 A.

Diego goes to the kitchen. Harry has heard him, he knows he's there, if he hasn't called him it's because he doesn't need him.

RAY

Because he vanished from public life..

HARRY

It would seem that way.

RAY

Almost as if he'd died.

HARRY

Yes . . . (Ironically) I lost track of him some time ago.

RAY

I've always been intrigued by the case of his last film.

HARRY

Whose?

RAY

Mateo Blanco's. The first five are stupendous. You were the screenwriter for all of them, how do you explain that the last one was a disaster?

HARRY

(Made uncomfortable by the topic) Films turn out well or badly. The reason is always a mystery. (Mateo switched genres, perhaps he wasn't skilled for comedy). But tell me about the story you want to write.

Ray X measures his words, it's very important to him and he doesn't want to do so hastily.

RAY

... I would like to write a story about a son's revenge, one against the memory of his father.

HARRY

Why does the son desire revenge?

RAY

(Speaking personally) Because the father ruined his life, practically nullifying him while he lived. The father is a successful financier, violent, homophobic, very powerful and unscrupulous. He thinks everyone has a price and that's how he behaves with people. I don't know if you've had the misfortune of meeting someone like this...

Harry does not allay his doubt.

HARRY

When you say he is powerful, what kind of power are you referring to?

RAY X

Economic, with everything that entails. He is a broker, of the generation of speculators that made quick, high-profit gains in the 80s; he amassed a great fortune during the oil crisis. The son is sensitive, with complexes and artistic preoccupations, and lives under his shadow, trying to please the father in everything. Despite being a bit... homosexual, the son marries twice, just like the father, and, just like him, he separates. He has a

son that hates him just as much as he hates his own father. When the father dies, the son is finally able to rebuild his life. That is his salvation and his revenge.

HARRY

I get it. I am afraid I am not the writer you are looking for.

RAY X

You are, you don't know how much!

Harry registers what he has just heard.

RAY X

I will pay whatever you ask.

HARRY

It's too personal.

RAY X

Make it yours. I am not aiming for a biopic, rather, I think of it as a base from which to develop a fiction.

HARRY

Thanks, but no. (He rises) And now, if you don't mind..

41. CONTINUED.

He calls Diego. The boy responds in that instant, he was in the kitchen, waiting for Harry to call him.

Ray X will not give up, so he writes his telephone number on a piece of paper and places it in his hand.

RAY X

There you have my phone number, if you change your mind.

Harry is still standing, with the piece of paper in his hand. Diego observes both men.

Ray gets up.

RAY X

I am sure we will see each other again.

HARRY

In my case, that would be a miracle.

Diego accompanies him to the door. And closes it behind him.

Harry opens his desk's drawer and places the piece of paper with Ray's telephone number inside. He rummages through the drawer's interior until he finds a key. He grabs it.

42. CONTINUED.

Harry and Diego are now alone, in the den. Ruminating over Ray X's visit and the story he was proposing Harry.

HARRY

Did you overhear that?

DIEGO

Yes... I'm flipping out! Why did he ask you if Mateo had died?

HARRY

To provoke me... I don't know... Help me find something... (he points toward the drawers at the bottom of the bookcase and he hands him the key to open one of them) Look inside that drawer.

Diego opens the drawer with the key Harry has given him. The drawer is full of different groups of photographs and various objects mixed in a certain order. There is a black notebook. A box with Mexican handicrafts. Some 1980s postcards as well some from other decades, some movie postcards, some others of exotic landscapes... Some of the groups of photographs are sorted into envelopes, boxes or transparent binders. For Diego it's like looking into a treasure chest. It has been many years since that drawer has been opened. This was out of respect, not from lack of curiosity, Diego would never do so behind Harry's back.

HARRY

Look through the pictures of the '94 shoot. Some of the photographs must have the date on it.

After tossing aside various envelopes, Diego finds a lot of photographs of the shooting, dated '94. He takes them out of their envelope.

He shuffles through them, until he pauses at one.

DIEGO

I think this is him...

HARRY

Who?

DIEGO

The man who just left.

HARRY

(Rising) Describe the picture to me.

DIEGO

It's from the shoot. (He looks at the box from where he's taken it). He is carrying a small camera, like a Super 8.

HARRY

It's a 16mm. Are you sure it's him?

DIEGO

He is now thinner and wears a beard, but it's him. He is talking to you.

HARRY

What am I saying?

DIEGO

I don't know. He is handing you something, it looks like a pack of cigarettes.

HARRY

It's a radio microphone. He is asking me to wear it and I am refusing it.

DIEGO

Who is he?

HARRY

Ernesto Martel's son.

Harry is perturbed by the confirmation of his doubts. He would have preferred to be mistaken.

HARRY

(Serious and pensive) You can put them away now...

Diego returns the different sets of photographs to their place, inside the drawer a photo appears of Lena's face, in close-up. It's the same woman who appears in sequences 20 through 36.

The drawer closes, darkness engulfs its interior, drowning Lena's image, soon reborn in the next sequence.

43. HOME, ERNESTO MARTEL SENIOR. (1992)

Out of the darkness, Lena's image emerges, the year is '92: A close-up of the woman, looking at herself in the mirror, touching up her makeup. She grabs a dress by a famous designer of the time and puts it on.

A few meters away, in the bedroom, Ernesto buttons up his fly, after tucking in his shirt tail. The scene is that of a wealthy couple, who get along.

They are preparing to attend a concert. Ernesto is a big fan of classical music.

Lena looks rejuvenated and more refined. Her life and her facial skin have both improved since the first time we see her in Martel's office. The moles have disappeared from her face. Her demeanor is still adult, that of a young woman who has experienced life.

Ernesto Martel frequently rests his gaze on her, fascinated, it's hard for him to believe that "such beauty" belongs to him.

44. CONTINUED.

The phone rings. Ernesto Senior picks up the handset. His relaxed countenance changes the second he hears the voice on the other end.

It's his second wife, whom he divorced years ago. He treats her with disregard.

ERNESTO S.

I can't talk now, Rosanna.

OFF

It's about your son. I have caught him trying on my dresses. And it's not the first time..

ERNESTO S.

It's your fault, you made him effeminate to humiliate me!

OFF

That's not the problem, the boy is very depressed, I've had to take him to a psychiatrist.

ERNESTO S.

Don't call him "boy". He is already seventeen.

OFF

The doctor has told me he is in need of a father figure... I think I am going to send him your way so that he can spend some time with you, after all you are his father.

ERNESTO

If I haven't been a good father in eighteen years, I don't think I can learn to be one precisely now.

OFF

How can you speak like that! Have you no feelings?

ERNESTO

(Looks at Lena, intently) I have them. Very deep feelings, they just don't include either of you.

While he speaks, Lena consults him about the jewelry she is about to put on, she tries on different pairs of earrings for his approval, something he gives without pausing his phone conversation.

Lena makes a gesture of reproach. Ernesto should not speak to his ex-wife in that tone.

OFF

If anything happens to him, you'll know who's at fault.

ERNESTO

Stop blackmailing me, Rosanna. Tell Ernesto that if he wants to talk to me he should call me himself.

Ernesto Martel Senior hangs up, bewildered.

45. CONTINUED. 1992.

LENA

(In reprimand) Don't be so harsh with them, Ernesto!

He sips from his drink, or he serves himself another one if he has already finished the first.

ERNESTO

Blackmailers!

LENA

Why don't you invite your son to spend a few days here?

ERNESTO

It'd be better if you didn't get involved with them, Lena.

Ernesto takes a sip from his drink.

LENA

He can keep me company... Does he like movies or theater?

Ernesto Senior casts her a sideways glance.

ERNESTO

I don't know. But the mother has told me he is a bit faggot. If I ask him to come I would like for you to tell me if that's true... and whether you think there's any remedy...

LENA

And how would I know?! What an idea!

ERNESTO

I am not asking you to fuck him, but you good-looking girls can tell these things.

LENA

Call him, but you can't count on me for the rest.

Ernesto approaches the telephone and dials a number.

46. ERNESTO MARTEL'S MANSION. (2008). INT. NIGHT.

Fourteen years later - in the same room, decorated differently, (more modern, more colorful), although it still retains some noble and timeless furniture pieces and the same layout - Ernesto Junior (we in effect confirm that this is Ray X) speaks on the telephone while getting dressed to leave for a party. In that very room, another man (young, handsome and ambitious) is getting dressed in front of a piece of furniture equipped with a mirror, at the very spot Lena had been

earlier. (This piece of furniture is not the same one as the one fourteen years earlier, this is a more masculine piece, the other one was a type of boudoir).

OFF EX-WIFE

I am not reproaching you for our separation but that you live with a man... What will your children think!

ERNESTO JUNIOR

(On the phone) That their father is a homosexual (he gazes at his handsome boyfriend) and that he has very good taste. If they love me and you don't set them against me, they will accept it.

OFF EX-WIFE

You should have told me before we married!

ERNESTO JUNIOR

If you hadn't been so exclusively concerned with my father's fortune you might have noticed it yourself.

The ex-wife grumbles furiously. The beautiful boyfriend continues to dress and smiles at Ernesto.

Another telephone rings.

ERNESTO JUNIOR

I have to go, I have another call.

47. ERNESTO SON'S MANSION. INT. NIGHT 2008

47 A. JUDIT'S PRODUCTION OFFICE. INT. NIGHT.

ERNESTO J.'S LOVER

Will it be your other ex-wife?

ERNESTO JUNIOR

I hope not. (Into the headset) Yes?

JUDIT

(Dryly) It's Judit Garcia.

ERNESTO JUNIOR

Oh, hello, Judit. (In an amiable tone) Did you get the money?

JUDIT

I don't want it! I just sent it back, Ernesto!

She emphasizes his name.

ERNESTO JUNIOR

You won't call me Ray? It's my artistic name...

JUDIT

Artistic? What are you up to?

ERNESTO JUNIOR

Hoping to erase my father's name.

JUDIT

And what does that have to do with Harry?

ERNESTO JUNIOR

I've been wanting to see him for a long time. And it's true that I want to shoot a movie and that I want him to write the script. (Looks at the boyfriend) I've got the protagonist.

The boyfriend catches the allusion.

JUDIT

You are not a director!

ERNESTO JUNIOR

You should take a look at my documentary, you'd change your mind.

JUDIT

Ernesto, forget about us!

ERNESTO JUNIOR

Don't be afraid of me. I am not my father.

JUDIT

Do not come near Harry again. If you ever stop by his house again I will report you for harassment.

And she hangs up the phone. At that very moment Judit is in her office with the American production team. She apologizes and attempts to recover her calm before undertaking the subject of the meeting at hand.

48. JUDIT'S HOME. JUDIT'S BEDROOM. INT. NIGHT. 2008

The house is not very big, but it is large enough for two people. It's discretely feminine and very practical. The details indicate that an independent woman lives there, as well as a young-man, twenty-five years old. There is some detail of the décor (the curtains, for example) that is replicated in Harry's home. It is clear that Judit has had a hand in setting up the writer's home.

Judit is packing her bags, she paces back and forth. She is a bit overwhelmed, with multiple thoughts crossing her mind. At times, she asks for Diego's help.

JUDIT

I am not at all pleased with having to scout outside Madrid, but the Americans pay a bundle and we need money.

DIEGO

You can leave without concerns. Don't worry about me.

JUDIT

I am also worried for Harry. (Sounds more like an order than a request) Please, look after him during my absence...

DIEGO

(Protests) I have things to do, mom. I can't look after him all day.

JUDIT

It's only two weeks!

DIEGO

Harry manages perfectly on his own and right now we are not writing anything.

Acknowledges the reason for her worry.

JUDIT

I am worried about Ernesto Junior's visit. I would like for you to be on guard in case he appears or calls and then let me know immediately!

DIEGO

Why are you so worried?

Judit stops what she's doing, and takes a moment to take a deep breath.

JUDIT

He's crazy. I don't trust him.

DIEGO

Why?

JUDIT

(Evasive) It's a long story.

DIEGO

(Persistent) Summarize it!

JUDIT

Diego, please, this is not the moment.

DIEGO

It never is for you!

JUDIT

(Exasperated) Hey, if it bothers you so much to look after Harry, I'll quit the job and stay in Madrid! Or I'll hire someone.

DIEGO

It doesn't bother me to look after Harry! But I am tired of so much secrecy!

(It's a civilized encounter, no screaming. There is tension, but it is kept under control by both of them)

49. IN A PUBLIC PARK AND ON THE STREET. EXT. DAY. 2008

A public park. Diego and Harry are walking along a straight pathway. Kids, dogs, people jogging. It is a tranquil and pleasant place. Diego is in front, Harry is behind him, holding on to his elbow, (as reference), but it's Harry who is moving faster, pushing Diego from his elbow. The boy shows signs of exhaustion, he is wearing black sunglasses.

DIEGO

Don't go so fast!

HARRY

We are exercising..

DIEGO

I'm not. I'm just keeping you company. How can you walk so fast?

HARRY

I am training and I don't work at night, nor do I drug myself.

DIEGO

(On guard) What do you mean by that?

HARRY

That I take care of myself, with the fanaticism of an older, handicapped person.

DIEGO

You are no fanatic.

HARRY

Yes, I am. All of us who survive a critical physical injury are. There is no other way.

Cut to.

50. CONTINUED. EXT. DAY.

They exit the park. While they wait at a stop sign, a billboard catches Diego's attention. Half of the billboard is taken up by the motto: DONATE BLOOD. The names of participating ambulatory hospitals and their hours appear below.

Harry can tell his company is distracted, so he asks him:

HARRY

What are you looking at?

DIEGO

A billboard.

HARRY

Why so?

DIEGO

In huge letters it says "Donate Blood", it includes where one has to go.

HARRY

You want to donate blood?

DIEGO

No, no... I was thinking that "Donate Blood" is a good title for a movie..

HARRY

Yes. It has a good ring.

DIEGO

For a vampire flick.

Harry finds it amusing. They walk toward home.

HARRY

It's true.

DIEGO

(Ironizing, kidding, improvising) Imagine that behind the billboard a whole group of vampires that work in ambulatory care are hiding... and they actually keep the blood they get from donors for their own consumption, of course...

HARRY

Your mother would like that story.

Cut to.

51. HARRY'S HOME. INT. DAY. 2008

Mariacruz, the Latin American maid, is preparing something in the kitchen. Meanwhile, Diego and Mateo gather around the table. Diego sits in front of his laptop.

Both of the characters are improvising, rapidly, and become increasingly excited, completing each other's sentences. They are having fun, as if playing a game. The sequence becomes a demonstration of the process of creating fiction, based on an trivial, real anecdote. (They will begin the sequence by opening a document. Diego writes the title in caps: DONATE BLOOD.)

DIEGO

The vampires would be like a type of ethnic group, completely assimilated into Spanish society, they don't stand out. There are vampires who occupy important positions, keeping it a secret (like the Opus Dei). But even though they live in the shadows, they have amassed great social and economic power...

HARRY

They control various industries. For example, the one responsible for dark sunglasses...

DIEGO

(Smiles) And those that provide nightly entertainment: bars, discos, after-hours... Since they don't need drugs to stay awake, they are the most apt for working at night. They don't burn out...

HARRY

And for the sunscreen business. The poor things are very sensitive to climate change and to the holes in the ozone layer. Their sunscreens are some of the best on the market.

DIEGO

(Laughs) And those which sell best... This is all great...

Diego talks and takes notes on his laptop. Harry paces back and forth, in front of the table, like a caged animal.

HARRY

Protected by the sunscreen, they can function all day... The lotion must be as dense as armour.

DIEGO

(More inspired) This is how the story could begin: (describes) A gorgeous woman, totally naked, rubbing her body with a super-dense lotion, before heading to work at an ambulatory hospital. Her body is a velvety pale, beautiful...

HARRY

(Continues) What a great opening! We also need a love story...

DIEGO

A hybrid love story, between the female vampire and a normal guy.

HARRY

Like in "Cat People", a love story between beings of different species...

DIEGO

She works at one of those labs where blood is donated and where they snatch it for themselves. The guy has gone to donate his, or to get some tests. They like

each other immediately. After the first needle prick into his vein, she gets completely excited. So, they start to date. But she doesn't want to turn him into a vampire... these aren't proselytizing vampires, they are above biting people... unless they truly need it to survive...

HARRY

But they must like sex, right?

DIEGO

Of course. That's one of the problems, the couple desire each other desperately. But when it comes to fucking, she becomes prudish...

HARRY

Why?

DIEGO

Because she is afraid of losing control in her excitement and taking a bite into his jugular...

HARRY

Aha.

DIEGO

When they're horny, she lets him do everything, front, back, whatever he wants, except ravaging her mouth.

HARRY

And her breasts?

DIEGO

Also... But that gets into high-risk territory. When he sucks on her breasts, she has to cover her mouth with a pillow, which she ends up shredding with her fangs...

HARRY

And when she sucks his dick?

DIEGO

No, no sucking. She would tear it on the first bite.

HARRY

And how does he react? A man may do without kissing, but it's very rough not to have your cock sucked.

DIEGO

Since he is deeply in love, he accepts the situation (or gives up to it). Once they are more comfortable with each other, she wears a muzzle, as security for both. Because when she's turned on, she has a type of dental erection, her face grows into something like that of a she-wolf...

Diego writes furiously, while cracking up.

HARRY

I like your story very much, Diego.

DIEGO

Our story.

HARRY

No. This one was your idea, and you'll author it. I'll be your sparring partner, for all the times you've done the same for me..

Harry is welcoming him as a writer. This fact doesn't escape the boy, he feels an unexpected pride.

52. MODERN AND MODEST BAR WHERE DIEGO WORKS. NIGHT. INT. 2008

At nights, Diego D.J.'s inside a small booth. Two of his friends, or just acquaintances of the club scene, one of them we've already seen

earlier, keep him company. The one we don't know, Friend A, looks pretty loaded. He is very "friendly" with the other two.

DIEGO

(Without acrimony) Stop fondling me... damn it!

ALEX

It's the GHB. It kicks your ass.

Diego takes a sip of Coke and whisky and sets it down somewhere inside the booth.

ALEX

Do you want a little bit of "X"? (referring to "MDMA", aka Ecstasy)

DIEGO

Just a tip. (He licks his finger and sticks its moist tip into the bag that Alex offers him, he takes his finger to his mouth) Tomorrow I have to work, we are writing a vampire script that's going to be the shit!

AT THE BAR .

The Friend, high on GHB, grabs a glass of Coca-cola from the bartender's hands, at the bar. He takes out a small container and adds a few drops of liquid ecstasy into the drink.

He takes a sip and enters the booth where the other two are. He sets the glass down and begins to jump, euphorically.

DIEGO

Stop already, you are going to go through the roof.

In between songs, (he is changing the tune) Diego grabs Friend A's drink. They are both drinking Coca-Cola, Diego's has whisky and Friend A's has liquid ecstasy. Distracted by changing tunes, Diego does not realize that he has grabbed the drink with GHB. He takes a long sip. And he falls flat to the floor.

The two friends, bewildered and scared, attempt to revive him, but to no avail. Perhaps Alex will exclaim:

ALEX

Holy shit, he's taken a drink from your glass! Why in the world did you get Coca-cola! Didn't you notice he was drinking a jack and coke?

FRIEND A

I didn't realize!

ALEX

(Very alarmed) He's unconscious!

53. BAR EXTERIOR. NIGHT. 2008 (OPTIONAL)

An ambulance arrives.

They carry Diego out, unconscious, from the bar on a stretcher. Alex goes with him, very scared. Before they go into the vehicle, Diego's mobile phone rings. Alex takes it from Diego's pocket, he doesn't know why he is doing so, it is a hysterical reaction. On the other side of the line, he hears Harry's voice.

ALEX

No. I'm a friend. Diego just... he's not well. We are taking him into the emergency room...

HARRY

Emergency? Can I talk to him?

ALEX

No... because...

HARRY

What hospital are you taking him to?

The friend asks one of the ambulance employees who tells him the name of the hospital. Alex repeats it for Harry.

ALEX

Who are you?

HARRY

(Improvising) ...His uncle. I am on my way.

54. ENTRANCE TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM OF A HOSPITAL. EXT. NIGHT. 2008

Harry gets out of a taxi. He aids himself with the typical blind man's cane. He can't find the entryway. He bumps into something. We have not yet seen him this clumsy. Someone helps him enter. The same person accompanies him to the reception desk in the waiting-room area. He is no longer the blind man who was walking euphorically along his street's sidewalk, umbrella in hand.

HARRY

(Anxious) I am here to see Diego Garcia. He's just been admitted.

The "receptionist" looks through the admittances. Taking into account that Harry is blind, she decides to call the Doctor who has attended Diego.

54 A.

Shortly thereafter, the Doctor appears. He heads directly for Harry.

HARRY

I am here to see Diego Garcia.

DOCTOR

Are you immediate family?

HARRY

(Improvises) Yes... I'm his uncle, and his godfather.

DOCTOR

Your nephew is at the ICU, he arrived in a coma...

Harry reacts to the news.

HARRY

In a coma?

DOCTOR

Yes...

HARRY

But, what has happened?!

DOCTOR

He ingested liquid ecstasy and alcohol... it is a lethal combination. His friend informed us it was a mistake...

(It happens sometimes, kids grab the wrong glass...)

HARRY

My God! But Diego is a very healthy boy...

The doctor makes a neutral gesture of acknowledgement...

DOCTOR

Barring any complications, he will recover in six to twelve hours.

HARRY

If that's the case, I'll wait...

DOCTOR

Go home, we will call you...

HARRY

I'd rather wait.

DOCTOR

Are you certain?

HARRY

Yes. Guide me to a place where I can sit, please...

The Doctor directs him toward an area with sofas.

DOCTOR

Would you mind providing us with his parents' phone number?

HARRY

He only has a mother and, at the moment, she is working outside Madrid... I would prefer to call her myself... I don't want to alarm her, unless he is truly in a grave condition...

DOCTOR

Normally, he should recuperate in a few hours... but, in any case, you should have a talk with him, once he's better...

HARRY

Yes, of course...

They arrive at a couch set, ugly and lacking style, Harry collapses on one of the armchairs, demolished.

The Doctor returns to work.

The girl at the reception desk stares at Harry, who is immobile, readied for a long wait.

A slow fade to black.

55. HARRY'S HOME. HARRY'S BEDROOM. INT. DAWN. 2008

From black.

Harry is still waiting, this time at home, sitting on a wingback chair close to the bed where Diego sleeps.

On the nightstand, there are some medications and a glass of water, next to a plastic bottle, an alarm-clock. And perhaps a book.

Through the window you can see the day beginning to break, Diego awakens. At first he doesn't know where he is. In the darkness of the room he discovers Harry's figure, sitting on the wingback chair. He can't tell if he's awake or asleep, but it soothes him to know he's not alone. Diego stares at him, he doesn't say anything. Just stares.

To his surprise, Harry asks him:

HARRY

How are you?

Diego makes a listless gesture.

DIEGO

I don't know... dazed. Did you speak with my mother?

HARRY

Yes, I told her it was something you ate..

DIEGO

And she believed it?

HARRY

I don't know. She wanted to hurry back, but I convinced her to continue with the location scouting. At some point you'll have to call her.

Silence. Diego thinks about everything's that's happened.
After a few seconds:

HARRY

Are you asleep?

DIEGO

I'm not sleepy anymore.

HARRY

Do you want to talk?

DIEGO

No...

HARRY

Would you like me to speak?

DIEGO

I don't know. If you'd like...

HARRY

I say so in order to distract you. When I was young, before I got into making movies, I was very good at telling stories.

DIEGO

(Not sure) Well, then... would you mind telling me why my mother is so afraid of Ernesto Junior?

HARRY

She's afraid of him?

DIEGO

Before she left, she made me promise that I would remain alert, in case he reappeared..

HARRY

She didn't explain why?

DIEGO

She never explains anything.

Harry remains pensive for a moment, Diego's request has taken him by surprise.

HARRY

It's a long story...

DIEGO

Judit says the same thing. How did you meet him?

It is not easy to talk about. In some way it must be obvious that Harry has spent many years (fourteen) avoiding this topic, but he is determined to do anything necessary to entertain Diego.

Diego serves himself some water and prepares to listen.

HARRY

We met him... In an office we had rented in preparation for my new film, about fourteen years ago.

56. MATEO'S OFFICE. INT. DAY. 1994

The images that correspond to the past are edited more freely than the rest of the narrative. Summarized and sped-up by Harry's voice-off, mixing media from diverse sources.

OFF HARRY

...After having written five dramas, I had finally managed to write a script for a comedy, or that's what I thought. I wanted to change genres... to take a risk (ironic-destructive) And I swear I accomplished that, the part about taking a risk.

In 1994, everyone calls Harry "Mateo". He is sitting behind a table filled with papers, photographs, books, magazines, an ashtray, pencil and pen holders, etc. At its center, a script lies open, with tons of notes scribbled on the margins of its pages. He is finishing the definitive version of "Girls and Suitcases".

The casual messiness of the place produces its own aesthetic. The only decorations on the walls, here and there, not following any particular symmetrical rule, are postcards of painters, actors or landscapes, held in place by tacks. There is also a newspaper page that has caught Mateo's attention. Or some astonishing photograph, taken from a magazine. The cover of some magazine. Everything without framing, tacked directly onto the wall.

The furniture is pastel, medium-shade green or red, with velvet tapestry, worn and outmoded. The pieces don't match, but they look good together.

Judit enters (also fourteen years younger, but this is less obvious. She is a woman unmarked by the march of time.)

Mateo is focused on the script's pages. Judit is Mateo's right-hand man, they are accomplices in everything, both professionally and emotionally.

JUDIT

A girl has stopped by. She doesn't have an appointment,
so there is no reason for you to see her...

MATEO

(Without much interest) What's she like?

JUDIT

Too beautiful to be funny.

MATEO

(Smiles) Really?

JUDIT

She is Ernesto Martel's lover, the tycoon. She is
here with his son.

MATEO

And she's an actress?

JUDIT

(Ironic) Her? If she's been with him for three years,
she must be. In any case, go out and say hello, to be
polite. One must get along well with important men.
You never know.

57. CONTINUED. WAITING AREA. 1994.

Mateo exits his office. In the improvised waiting area (it is not a proper waiting room but a transient-space turned waiting area by a couch left over from the furnishings of some previous film). He finds Ernesto Junior (in other words, the character who had introduced himself as Ray X fourteen years ago; in his case, the age-difference is noticeable, he's just a kid). He is a little heavier, his hair longer, he reminds us of the love-struck big-kid that Phyllip Seymour Hoffman played in "Boogie Nights".

Mateo's gaze rests only for an instant on the young man, even though the boy does not take his stupefied eyes away from Mateo throughout the entire sequence.

Ernesto Junior has accompanied Lena. When he sees her, Mateo freezes, at the door to his office.

Lena's back is turned, or her head is tilted as she reads a magazine. Ernesto elbows her, Lena raises her head and discovers Mateo, watching her from the door to his office.

Mateo's heart churns, it's a cinematographic churn, he feels like James Stewart in "Vertigo", when he first sees Kim Novak at the restaurant, with her famous green dress. Time stops for an instant so that Mateo may contemplate this woman's apparition.

After this brief hypnotic moment, they introduce themselves, forgetting Ernesto's presence, who then, since no one pays attention to him, introduces himself.

Even though she's a bit nervous, one can tell that Lena is a strong and decisive woman. Brunette. Mysterious. Made-up in dark tones that stand out on her pale skin. Refined. She doesn't have the aspect of a comedienne, her presence is too intense, she seems better suited to be the heroine of a film noir (as we've said).

Genres and their iconographies pose no limit on Mateo's capacity to be attracted to her, from the first instant.

LENA

I am sorry we showed up like this, but I've heard you are running auditions... and I would like for you to give me a try out.

Mateo observes her intently. She does not resemble any of the characters in the script, but he no longer cares about that. At some

point, Judit makes her appearance and gets to contemplate this scene herself, displeased.

LENA

I can come whatever day is convenient.

MATEO

You're already here. Let's read something.

It doesn't sound like "let's read something" but more like "let's have a drink."

They disappear through Mateo's office door.

Fade to black.

58. ERNESTO SENIOR'S MANSION. (IN PUERTA DE HIERRO OR SOMETHING LIKE IT). EXT. NIGHT. 1994.

From black.

(Over an establishing shot of the mansion, one hears Harry's voice-off as he speaks to Diego)

OFF HARRY

The reading didn't work out. We were both too nervous. The first meeting and the reading we did only served to make me realize that woman's very presence perturbed me.

Great mansion, with a huge green parcel of land with various trees, bushes, flowers... Two or three dogs are running across the lawn. The

plot of land must span about 6,000 square meters or more. (The dogs approach the camera, as if it were a trespasser).

Alarm system, etc. The main building has two levels, joined by a grand staircase. All decorated by wives with the wish to be decorators, aided by hired decorators. Brand-name furniture, two or three paintings worth millions. A piano and a certain desolateness. One can tell that his previous wives have left along with a part of the furnishings.

**59. LIVING ROOM ON THE TOP LEVEL. LENA AND ERNESTO SENIOR
DINE. INT. NIGHT. 1994**

The Father already knows he is missing information about something unexpected that has gone on that morning. They are at dessert.

ERNESTO SENIOR

Where have you been this morning?

LENA

Ernesto hasn't told you?

ERNESTO SENIOR

I haven't asked him.

LENA

(She hates having to account for herself.) I went to see a film director.

ERNESTO S.

What for!

LENA

(Dryly) For an audition.

Ernesto looks at her with surprise, he doesn't approve of it.

ERNESTO S.

An audition? How so?

LENA

(With less determination than she would like, but enough to alarm Ernesto Senior) I want to work.

ERNESTO S.

Weren't you going to study interior design? Weren't you going to redecorate the house? I thought we agreed that you would transform what's left of my two shipwrecked marriages into something more our own...

LENA

Call a decorator... I want to be an actress. I've always wanted to.

(Brief pause)

ERNESTO S.

You've already attempted it once... and look how you've ended up.

Lena shoots him a fulminating glance.

LENA

(Affected) That's a cheap shot.

ERNESTO S.

(First, he attacks. Then, he is sorry. Like any violent lover) I am sorry, forgive me.

Lena is frustrated and restless. She rises.

LENA

Excuse me, I am retiring to my room.

Ernesto grabs her and then embraces her. Lena remains still within his arms, imprisoned and elusive, the two locked in a strange posture.

LENA

In any case, don't worry. It didn't turn out well. I was too nervous.

60. CONTINUED.

Someone calls at the door. "There's a call". It's the voice of one of the hired help, behind the door. "it's Mr. Mateo Blanco, and he says it's important".

LENA

(Yells) Come in!

She breaks free from Ernesto's embrace and runs toward the door where the maid is holding the supplementary handset. Avidly, she grabs it from her. She listens, excited. She responds only in monosyllables, affirmatively. She hangs up the phone. Her eyes glitter with intense happiness, a feeling from which Ernesto feels excluded.

LENA

(Enthusiastically) That's the film director. He says the reading was not sufficient and he wants to see me once more!

Lena looks imploringly at Ernesto Senior.

ERNESTO S.

What are you going to do?

LENA

Go see him, no?!

Ernesto makes a gesture that betrays his anger and displeasure.

LENA

Please, Ernesto. I need to do something! And I've always wanted to be an actress!

ERNESTO S.

And what will become of me?

LENA

They have not given me the role yet.

ERNESTO S.

They will...!

LENA

Well, if I were to get it, we would still see each other every day, as it has been, in the mornings and evenings. Nothing will change, except that during the day I would work, just like you.

ERNESTO S.

Why don't we get married?

LENA

(Taken by surprise) What?

ERNESTO S.

I am asking you to marry me...

LENA

Don't you think you've married and divorced enough times already?

ERNESTO S.

With you it'd be the first.

LENA

We've been living together for three years, aren't we fine like this?

ERNESTO S.

(Somber) It doesn't seem you are.

61. IN THE MORNING. HARRY'S HOME. SIGNIFICANT ELLIPSIS. INT. DAY. 2008

Diego is better, but Harry prefers to keep caring for him. Harry makes him breakfast. Diego is sitting at the table.

HARRY

Ernesto Martel offered to produce the movie. Your mother didn't want him to. She was waiting for a subsidy from the Ministry and an advance sale to television, but that would take months and I was suddenly in a great hurry to begin shooting.

62. DRESSING ROOM FOR MAKE-UP, HAIR, AND COSTUME. INT. DAY. 1994

Part of the voice-off is edited over these images.

Lena is in the process of being made-up, coifed and dressed. This, under the control of Mateo Blanco, who does not stop speaking, offering references, making ironic remarks, etc. All of this is seen through the lens of a 16mm camera. (Images of contrasting colors). The editing is vertiginous and doesn't at all respect continuity

rules. The young Ernesto Junior is carrying the camera. We also see this scene from the other side of the 16mm frame, from the point of view of the main narration, which includes images of Ernesto Junior filming with the 16mm camera.

On the inside frame of the dressing room mirror, there are photographs of a young Shirley MacLaine, Kate Hepburn (young), Judy Holliday, Audrey Hepburn, Goldie Hawn (in "Butterflies Are Free" or any other film where she wears her hair long with a fringe). Icons of the romantic comedy of today and yesteryear.

Over the voices of the characters that appear on frame, one hears Harry's voice-off.

OFF HARRY

I enjoyed making her up, styling her and dressing her. Lena could be the Shirley McLaine of "The Apartment" and the Audrey Hepburn of "Breakfast at Tiffany's", or even Goldie Hawn...

Through the 16mm camera we can see the details of Lena's mutating image, how it gets constructed. It is true that she reminds us of the three actresses that Harry mentions in his voice-off. The members of the team assisting her (hair-stylist, makeup artist, costume designer, etc. and Lena herself) laugh heartily when they finish setting her up with Goldie's blonde long-hair wig with a fringe. And they stare, dumbfounded, when she is made-up as Audrey Hepburn in "Breakfast at Tiffany's" or "Sabrina". It's a style that fits Lena like a glove. They are all fascinated by the change, except Judit, estranged and angered by their playfulness.

(For Judit, Mateo is constructing his ideal woman. She finds all that playing around obscene and dangerous).

OFF HARRY

Your mother didn't like Lena.

Judit watches Lena-Audrey with a fatalistic stare.

OFF HARRY

I, on the other hand, liked her a lot, and she liked me.

Mateo manifests his enthusiasm over the changes and Lena looks at him with excitement. She also feels transformed on the inside and that's thanks to Mateo.

OFF HARRY

Ernesto Junior also liked me...

Ernesto Junior directs his camera lens toward Harry's face, not hiding his admiration.

OFF HARRY

I was hoping to use him for my own ends. His father had asked him to make a documentary about the shooting...

63. SCREENING ROOM, ERNESTO MARTEL SENIOR'S HOME. INT. DAY. OR NIGHT. 1994

Ernesto Senior is watching the make-up test, the hair-styling test, etc., part of what we have already seen through the 16mm lens. The sound is chaotic, many people are always speaking at once.

CONTINUED OFF HARRY

As far as Ernesto Senior was concerned, (we observe him watching the projection uncomfortably) I've never known a man more obsessed with a woman, except myself. He was producing the film out of a desperate attempt to not lose Lena. In the middle of this emotional quagmire, we began shooting... Your mother was present at every instant, her face like a sergeant's.

(End with a shot in 16mm of Judit.)

64. SHOOTING. THE SET OF "GIRLS AND SUITCASES". INT. EFFECT TO BE DETERMINED. 1994

Images from "the making of" shot by Ernesto Junior on 16mm, with high grain and contrast, mixed with direct images from the establishing shot of what is occurring.

The look of Lena's character is openly inspired by the Audrey Hepburn of "Breakfast at Tiffany's", with Sabrina's hair style and loop earrings (fringe and ponytail). She has also adopted the style of Holy Golithly, her kind heart and that urbane sophistication that characterizes modern girls from rural origins. The only difference is a more visceral quality, Pina (Lena's character) is exalted and Mediterranean, nothing like Hepburn. Her wardrobe is that of a modern girl in '94, she is a professional model for cosmetic products. One of her advertising photographs is framed and hangs on one of the walls of the loft where she lives.

IN STUDIO-MADE KITCHEN, INSIDE THE COMPLEX "PINA'S LOFT".

Pina, Lena's character, is cutting tomatoes for a gazpacho, inside a beautiful and shiny kitchen.

Pina is sad, probably thinking about "all the times she has had gazpacho with Ivan, the absent lover". A tear drops from her face onto the knife with which she's cutting the tomatoes. (In slow motion, one sees the collision of the tear with the knife, in a cut-in). Hers is a subtly comic sadness.

When she is done grinding up the tomatoes she takes a box of sedatives, which she is carrying in her apron's pocket. She throws all the pills into the gazpacho. She keeps two or three for herself. (She may even say out loud, "These are for me".) With a wooden spoon, she mixes the orange liquid, even though it only contains red tomatoes.

The cut-ins are to be alternated with the "making of" of the cut-ins. As well as Mateo's comments over the action, which instruct Lena how to react.

The clap-board marks the end. It's the fifth take. Mateo says "Great". Lena almost screams with joy.

Cut to.

65. ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SET. INT. DAY. 1994

(Maybe on two random chairs from THE LOFT TERRACE, which are piled up with objects from the set, given that this is not where they will be shooting; the chairs are next to the corral with the chickens and

rabbits.) Seen through the 16mm camera: In the foreground, the team that's preparing the next shot for the next sequence; in the background, without being able to hear what they are saying, Mateo speaking to Lena. They are both holding a script in their hands. Mateo is giving her directions. Everything is very professional, but their demeanor radiates understanding, complicity and... a latent desire. They are not talking about anything personal.

"Now we will do the part where you return home, frustrated, after having left Ivan a note on his door. When you bump into Julieta. You just open this door, you look at the answering machine from afar. The machine has become some kind of monster to you. You are terrified of it."

"A Monster?"

"Yes... Your sanity depends on it. If the light blinks, it means there may have been a call. And if it doesn't blink... you can't do anything but wait... and you lost your patience some time ago."

66. ERNESTO SENIOR'S SCREENING ROOM. INT. 1994

What Lena and Mateo are saying on the terrace, as captured by the "making of" by Ernesto Junior, is being seen and listened to by Ernesto Senior, in the screening room that he's had installed in his own home. Next to him, a young female lip-reader (A girl of neutral aspect, but interesting, dressed as a glamour-less Russian.) is translating for Ernesto Senior what Lena and Mateo are saying, as if she were dubbing them. (The tone of her voice does not betray anything suspicious. Everything sounds strictly professional, a director and an actress who speak, in complicity, about their work.) They both appear

contained, their attraction made more evident by what they hide than by what they show.

Judit is present in all the shots of the setting up, including the ones where Mateo and Lena are in the background, as Mateo makes suggestions on how to add nuance to Lena's performance. Judit appears solemn and always with an annoyed expression. Ernesto Senior feels sympathy for this woman.

Cut to.

67. END OF THE WORK DAY. INTERIOR OF THE STUDIO. INT. DAY. 1994

The team has just finished shooting a shot with Pina on the terrace, leaning over a railing, her back turned, waiting for Ivan. Mateo yells "cut". And the Assistant sends the team away, until the next day.

The Production team hands out the order for the next day, as if handing out the last edition of a newspaper with breaking news.

Dispersal.

The different teams disband and head toward the exit doors.

Mateo crosses paths with Ernesto Junior.

ERNESTO JUNIOR

Are you going to work on something?

MATEO

No. You may go.

ERNESTO J.

I don't mind staying.

MATEO

It's best if you leave. I am going to try out some wigs.

ERNESTO J.

Wigs? I love wigs!

MATEO

(Categorically) No! You don't love them! You already have many hours shot of wigs. This is more of the same.

Disappointed, Ernesto Junior says goodbye.

ERNESTO J.

And Lena?

MATEO

After she tries on the new wigs, she's asked for a massage therapist, she has a spasm...

ERNESTO J.

Spasms... I don't have footage of spasms... Couldn't I shoot that?

MATEO

Ernesto, stop being a pest and leave already! See you tomorrow!

Mateo speaks to him in a friendly tone, as if there were a warm rapport between them. He does so strategically, given that he thinks the boy is the plague.

Ernesto Junior finally understands that there is nothing for him to do and disappears.

And Mateo breathes.

**68. WAREHOUSE HALLWAY AND HAIR & MAKE-UP DRESSING ROOM. INT.
DAY. 1994**

Mateo accompanies Edurne, (the make-up artist and old flame, collaborator and accomplice in other films), to discuss some detail of Lena's hairstyle and makeup. They end up at the make-up and hair dressing room. Lena's dressing room is just next door. She is there with one or two actors who are still hanging around. The rest have left. (The reason of the previous scene has been a pretext. They both know it)

MATEO

(To Edurne) I am going to speak to Magdalena... Do you mind being on the lookout? Don't let anyone interrupt us.

The hairdresser gestures in accord.

69. LENA'S DRESSING ROOM. INT. DAY. 1994

Lena sees him enter, she glances at him ardently, not surprised to have him in her dressing room.

LENA

Is Junior around?

MATEO

No. I sent him home. There's only Edurne, on watch...

Mateo approaches Lena and, without the slightest preamble, launches himself at her mouth, kissing her fervently. The impression is that they are about to devour each other. They separate as if to catch their breath, looking intensely into each other's eyes.

They tear each other's clothes off (she's in a robe).

LENA

This is madness, Mateo. I am no good for you.

MATEO

You should have warned me sooner.

There are no overtures. They devour each other, hungry. They make love on a small bed, as if they were on the edge of a precipice. Desire, contained by both during the past weeks, explodes and levels them. Neither one does anything to stop it. (A train passes by at high-speed, both images fuse, the lovers and the train across their bodies.)

Fade to black.

Ellipsis.

70. ERNESTO SENIOR'S HOME. INT. NIGHT. 1994.

Lena arrives late from the shooting, tired and satisfied. This is supposed to be another day, not the same day of the "scene" in the dressing room.

Ernesto Senior awaits for her in the living room, in front of a muted television, with a drink in hand. (Perhaps the train will still be present, on the television screen.)

Lena approaches him and kisses him.

ERNESTO S.

(Ironic) I didn't know one worked so hard in the movies.

LENA

(Smiles) Well, yes, especially if you're a girl.

ERNESTO S.

Why if you're a girl?

Lena sits and takes a sip from his drink.

LENA

Because you must put on makeup (and then remove it), dress up, do your hair. Get dressed again, do your hair again. And that takes hours.

ERNESTO S.

And you're not tired?

LENA

At the end of the week, sure, but I'm happy...

ERNESTO S.

I was thinking we should take a break, a weekend. Just the two of us, alone. At the house in Ibiza, or in Paris... wherever you want... you and I.

LENA

I can't travel until the shoot is over...

ERNESTO S.

I am talking about just a weekend.

LENA

We rehearse on weekends.

ERNESTO S.

Don't you also rehearse during the shooting?

LENA

Yes.

ERNESTO S.

What's going on, you spend all day rehearsing!

LENA

(Without losing her cool) That's how one makes a movie! (thinking, "you moron!", but she doesn't say it).

ERNESTO S.

And everyone else's life? It can't be set aside for months!

LENA

The movie is boss.

ERNESTO S.

Excuse me, I'm the producer, so I'm the boss.

Cut to.

71. ON A SET IN MID-CONSTRUCTION, WITH CARPENTERS, PAINTERS, ETC. INT. DAY. 1994

Mateo argues with the set designer over one of the sets.

Distractedly, Judit waters the plants, real ones, of Pina's fake terrace, some of them somewhat shriveled from being away from the sun for so long.

Mateo is going to go complain to her about the set, but he notices that she is so worried and tired that he doesn't say anything.

MATEO

You look awful...

JUDIT

Little Diego... he could hardly breathe all night... neither of us has slept a wink.

MATEO

(Worried) You still don't know what it is?

JUDIT

Some doctors say it's asthma, others that it's allergies, but we don't know to what... They are still running tests, but it's driving me to the brink..

MATEO

Take all the time you need... Even if we're shooting, your son is more important.

JUDIT

Thanks. (Changing subjects) One more thing, I've talked to the producer.

MATEO

And?

JUDIT

He complains that the shooting is monopolizing Lena.

MATEO

(Exasperated and condescending) And how does he think one makes movies?

JUDIT

Ernesto is a businessman, not an artist.

MATEO

Then he shouldn't have signed up as a producer, no one asked him...

JUDIT

I warned you! Ernesto Martel doesn't give a crap about this movie and those of us making it, except for one person! This weekend he is taking her to Ibiza with him, so you won't be able to rehearse.

Mateo looks at her as if she had just slapped him. Mumbles:

MATEO

Son of a bitch!

72. LUXURIOUS IBIZAN HOUSE. EXT AND INT. DAY. 1994

Lena and Ernesto spend the weekend together, at an Ibizan house minutely decorated with ethnic details. The decoration, super-luxurious hippie, does not ring untrue to the Island's aesthetic.

Consider that Ernesto Senior and Lena are in the bedroom, on the bed, making love luxuriously. There's no hurry, they pay careful attention to all the details.

After the final sprint, they both come, satisfied. Or so it seems.

Ernesto remains spent on the bed, motionless. Lena gets up and goes to the bathroom.

She opens the faucet and lets the water run.

Immediately, she is overtaken by vicious retching. On her knees, she vomits into the toilet.

After she's done vomiting she gets up and looks at herself in the mirror. She wipes off her mouth and closes the faucet. She looks very pale, the exertion from the vomiting is written on her face. Quickly, she puts some makeup on. Enough to bring some color back to her cheeks and to get rid of the bags under her eyes. Her eyes still glimmer from the tears she's shed. More than in any other sequence, it is here that Lena reveals her talent as an actress.

She exits the bathroom, wrapped in an elegant robe, a bit divine-hippie.

73. BEDROOM IBIZAN HOUSE. INT. DAY. 1994

Ernesto Senior is still lying in bed, recuperating.

He gazes at her, love-struck.

ERNESTO S.

Have you put on makeup?

LENA

(Animated, without exaggeration. A well-faked serenity) I want you to find me pretty.

ERNESTO S.

To me, you always are! It's impossible that you wouldn't be pretty.

Lena sits on the bed, her back to Ernesto. He wraps his arm around her waist while she makes some typical girl-gesture: looks at her nails thinking of how she'll fix them, looks into her pocket mirror and ponders the color of her hair, grabs a magazine on the nightstand and thumbs through it, calls her mother to see how she's doing... Or, simplest of all, takes a cigarette out of its box, looks for the lighter, finds it and lights it. Everything is done sluggishly, she's trying to take up as much time as possible.

LENA

Would you like a cigarette?

ERNESTO S.

No... thanks.

LENA

Do you know how many fucks we've had since we arrived yesterday?

ERNESTO S.

(Smiles, like a champ) Six?

LENA

(Also smiles) Ten.

ERNESTO S.

With honours, yes?

Lena forces a smile, with her back to Ernesto.

LENA

Yes, I suppose so.

Ernesto Senior embraces her from behind and brings her toward him. He mumbles, affectionately:

ERNESTO S.

We have to take advantage of our time. We only have one more day left.

74. ENTRANCE HALL, PINA'S LOFT. INT. DAY. 1994

SHOOT. THE FOLLOWING MONDAY.

Only the indispensable members of the team and the actors are clustered around the entrance hall and the elevator:

A scene is being shot where Pina exits the elevator and walks through the entrance hall, in a hurry, toward the street. She bumps into Chus, the porter, who is holding two metal objects (A Robert Indiana "LOVE", impressive and metallic, and a Gucci alarm clock in the shape of a G, the G is also metallic.)

Chus stops her, almost by force. She is a very "communicative" woman and Pina attempts to get her off her back, as quickly as possible, without being rude to her.

Chus shows her both objects, with a questioning look on her face.

CHUS

Look at what I've found on the sidewalk, they fell from your terrace.

PINA

They are gifts from Mr. Ivan and I tossed them out. He told me to keep them, but I don't want them!

CHUS

But you can't do that, Ms. Pina. You could have killed somebody... You can't just throw things off the terrace, much less if they are metal...

PINA

In Naples, on New Year's Eve, they even throw out furniture, my grandfather was Neapolitan... I carry it in my blood.

CHUS

But this is not Naples, nor is today New Year's Eve...

PINA

I was anxious and throwing things relaxes me... Keep them if you like.

CHUS

Thanks so much, Ms. Pina. But that's not right...

Pina exits the entrance hall, leaving the porter mid-sentence, while the porter repeats, still, two more times.

CHUS

It's not alright, Ms. Pina.

The scene is very simple, but it must exude charm. Chus is a natural comic talent and Pina's character must act with a flippancy that plays comically. At the same time, Lena is noticeably exhausted, both physically and emotionally. Instead of lending the text lightness, she brings it down. And she's aware of it.

For the first time, Mateo does not hide his annoyance as a director because the scene turns out badly, and as a lover because he is jealous of her weekend with Ernesto Senior. Lena cannot stand to look at him, she can't bare his angered expression.

Mateo takes her aside to a secluded corner of the set and away from the team.

MATEO

(Serious) Your tone is off, Magdalena.

LENA

(Very depressed) I know.

MATEO

(In a very low voice) What's wrong?

LENA

(Whispers, on the brink of tears) I'll tell you later.

Mateo gestures for the Assistant to come over. Lena still has her back toward the team. Mateo says something to the Assistant, who then says out loud for all to hear:

ASSISTANT

We break for thirty minutes, it's snack time!

Mateo meets with Lena in the darkest corner of the entrance hall.

75. ERNESTO SENIOR'S HOME. SCREENING ROOM. INT. 1994

Ernesto Senior must be intercut, watching in his screening room all that occurs at the shoot. Next to him, the lip-reader.

76. CONTINUED. ENTRANCE HALL.

The members of the team slowly depart from the entrance hall. They take the opportunity to grab a bite or get some air, they gather close to the trucks or next to the catering. All except Ernesto Junior who remains inside and hides furtively behind a styrofoam panel, somewhat removed from the couple, who cannot see him.

Mateo looks all around to ensure that they are alone.

MATEO

(With urgency) What's happened?

LENA

I've had a horrible weekend...

MATEO

But... we haven't rehearsed, so that you could rest!

LENA

Rest? I haven't slept a wink all weekend... (Sighs, on the brink of tears) It's been a nightmare!

Mateo once again ascertains that there is no one in the entrance hall. He hands her a Kleenex so that she may wipe her tears.

LENA

I have literally had Ernesto on top of me, all those forty-eight hours, like a leech! (repulsed expression) He has not given me a second to breathe, the asshole!

Mateo grabs her by the arm and takes her up the stairs to an apartment that the production company has rented in the same building.

77. ERNESTO SENIOR'S SCREENING ROOM. INT. 1994

Ernesto Senior hears the entire conversation from the lips of the lip-reader. A stony expression on his face. The "reader" repeats the dialogues in an unexpressive tone, which makes them sound even more dramatic and painful.

Cut to.

Fade to black.

78. ON THE SET OF PINA'S LOFT. FLASHBACK. INT. 1994

A DIFFERENT DAY.

Returning from black.

Various shots of Pina's loft. Everything seems chaotic, typical of the end of the work day. The furniture is out of place, silverware and plastic is all mixed together with electrical material and stage equipment. The warehouse lights begin to shut off.

The team disbands.

On her way to the dressing room, Lena tells Ernesto Junior that she is headed to her yoga class, as she does every day. And that she wants to go alone.

ERNESTO JUNIOR

My father asks me why it is that I don't go with you to yoga, he asks me all the time.

LENA

Well, you tell him that I am a grown-up now, and free, and that I've forbidden you to follow me.

ERNESTO JUNIOR

You know I can't tell him that.

LENA

Try it. It would do you good.

ERNESTO JUNIOR

I can't.

LENA

Do as you wish, but you're not coming with me.

And she leaves him behind. Ernesto Junior watches her walk away, disoriented. He always has a tripod attached to his camera, as in "Peeping Tom".

79. STREET, MATEO'S HOME. EXT. NIGHT.1994.

It's the first time we see this setting: the entrance of the building where Mateo lives. Almost all the windows are darkened. It's midnight. We watch this sequence through the 16mm camera, situated just in front of the building's doorway.

We watch as Mateo appears on the sidewalk, walking toward the building's doorway.

In front of the building, in the main narrative, we see Ernesto Junior filming with his 16mm camera. He is hiding behind a bush, or cloaked by a tree's shade. Either way, Mateo does not discover him.

80. ERNESTO MARTEL'S MANSION. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT. 1994.

LOWER LEVEL

At the same time that the former is taking place, Lena arrives to Martel's mansion. She finds Ernesto Senior with a drink in his hand, in one of the living areas (or playing the piano), she approaches him and gives him a slight kiss on the lips, in a gesture of hello.

ERNESTO SENIOR

(Quotidian and tranquil, an unexpected demeanor for a character of his temperament) How are you?

LENA

Good, tired.

ERNESTO SENIOR

And relaxed.

LENA

(On guard) Yes...

ERNESTO SENIOR

The yoga is doing you good, isn't it?

Lena catches Ernesto's allusion, but she pretends she hasn't. She demonstrates her control over herself and her cold determination.

LENA

Yes, especially after work...

ERNESTO SENIOR

I am going to snack on something. Will you join me?

LENA

I am not hungry, I'd rather go to bed right now. I'll only have a yogurt.

Lena climbs up the long staircase, heads directly for her room. Ernesto listens to her steps as they recede. His ironic tranquility disappears and gives way to a furious expression.

Fade to black.

81. FRONT ENTRANCE, MATEO'S HOME. EXT. NIGHT. 1994.

From black. (A different day.)

Framed by the window to Mateo's living room seen from the street, one observes the bottom halves of Mateo's and Lena's bodies, as they move around the apartment. Only half of their body is visible because the roman shades are halfway drawn. (One gets the impression that Mateo is showing her around the house).

They say goodbye.

We see all this through a 16mm camera. Without a pause in the shooting we realize that the person carrying the camera crosses the street and waits outside of the front door to Mateo's building.

82. FRONT DOOR TO MATEO'S BUILDING. NIGHT. EXT. 1994

Lena exits through the door. The second she discovers the camera, she confronts it.

LENA

Ernesto, what are you doing here?

ERNESTO JUNIOR

Working.

LENA

Turn that off, you idiot! Hasn't Mateo forbidden you to tape us outside the shooting?

Not far from them there is a garbage truck that is making horrendous noises and makes it difficult to hear what they are saying. The truck gets closer and the noises louder so that Ernesto Junior and Lena must scream back and forth at each other.

ERNESTO JUNIOR

My father has told me not to listen to him... he wants to see everything.

LENA

You both have no scruples!

ERNESTO JUNIOR

Remember I am taping you.

Lena throws herself at Ernesto Junior and attempts to take the camera from him. They struggle (the camera continues shooting, the images move around, dizzily). Ernesto Junior manages to break free from Lena. They are both out of breath. Ernesto backs up a few steps in order to frame Lena again and so that he can focus her image. Lena could take off running, but instead she stays right where she is; she lets Ernesto bring her into focus and frame her correctly, while she fixes her hair. She looks straight at the camera:

LENA

(In a barrage) Listen carefully, Ernesto. Yes, I am talking to you. (She points toward Mateo's house) I was just with the man I love and I am the happiest I've been all my life because he loves me too! (screams) And listen carefully, Ernesto! I will let

you be very soon! There is no need to spy on me.
There is nothing left to hide!

83. PRIVATE SCREENING ROOM, ERNESTO SENIOR'S MANSION. INT. DAY.

1994

(We see this at the same moment it's happening.)

The next day, Ernesto Senior is watching the previous night's scene on the screen of his private projection room. We discover this when he is halfway into it; the images pick the action up at the point when Lena exits Mateo's house and confronts the camera, right after she has attempted to grab the camera away from Ernesto Junior.

The shots in 16mm alternate with the shots in 35mm that belong to the main narrative. The sound is uproarious, we can hear what they say in a low volume, just as reference. Ernesto asks for the sound to be muted so that the "translator" can do her job.

The "lip reader" tries, as usual, to be "neutral and inexpressive", but on this occasion she cannot help but have the violence of the scene affect her. She acts as a mere vehicle, not part of the conflict; nonetheless, she gets a little nervous. She is seated next to the volcano: Ernesto Senior, stony, frozen, silent, and about to explode.

84. CONTINUED. SAME LOCATION.

Just a little earlier, right before the dizzying images appear on screen, those caused by Lena's attempt to remove the camera from Ernesto Junior's hands:

On the opposite end of where the screen is, behind the back of both Ernesto and the translator, a door opens. Lena appears.

She watches the scene that is unfolding on screen as she lets her voice rise to her mouth. (The entire dialogue in which she has addressed Ernesto Senior directly is seen during the action taking place in the projection room, not on the street.) At first, her voice overlaps with that of the translator, who becomes instantly silent and turns her head toward the door where Lena is standing. Lena is dubbing herself.

LENA

I was just with the man I love and I am the happiest that I've been all my life because he loves me too! And listen carefully, Ernesto! I will let you be very soon! There is no need to spy on me. I don't have anything left to hide!

The translator watches Lena and Ernesto Senior, who is still motionless, watching the screen.

On screen, we see Lena walking, her back turned, for a good stretch.

With an equal obsession, she is followed down the street by the son and in the screening room by the father.

85. LENA'S BEDROOM, ERNESTO'S MANSION. DUSK FALLING. 1994

An avalanche of snow, on the television screen.

(Some short shots of both ice and whisky as they fall into a tall glass function as an ellipsis between one scene and the next).

Lena paces around anxiously in her bedroom. She attempts to focus on a fashion magazine, but is unsuccessful. She takes a deep breath, makes a decision. She opens the closet and takes out a small, weekend suitcase. She fills it with her most indispensable clothes.

She exits her bedroom, on the top floor. In the hallway, only a few meters separate the door to her bedroom from the stairway. There is a small landing just before the top of the stairs, it has a small table against the wall, a beautiful vase with flowers, a mirror and two small sofas on either side of the small table. Ernesto is seated on one of them, holding a glass of whisky in his right hand. It cannot be the first he's had. One could say he's been waiting some time now for Lena's exit, a bottle and an icebox keeping him company. Lena walks a few steps. She approaches Ernesto, but keeps her distance. She speaks to him in passing.

LENA

(Suitcase in hand) I am leaving, Ernesto. I am leaving you.

ERNESTO SENIOR

(Cold, drunk, contemptuous) You are not going anywhere.

LENA

And how will you stop me?

(Every single one of the words in this dialogue sounds laded and slow) No sooner has she said it than Lena realizes that it has been an unnecessary provocation. But it's too late to take back what's been said. Ernesto Senior shoots her a deathly look. But then gets up and changes his expression to calm her.

ERNESTO S.

(Pleading) Lena, please.

One more time, Ernesto begs forgiveness, but Lena doesn't want to see him or hear him. She turns and begins to descend the stairs. The first step.

Ernesto approaches her slowly, from behind. He is still pleading, as in a litany: "Lena, please". "Lena..."

86. CONTINUED. ON THE STAIRWAY.

But Lena keeps her back to his supplication, descends one more step, her second one. Suddenly, without any change in his expression, Ernesto pushes her with a quick and unexpected movement of his arm. Lena loses her balance and falls, rolling, bouncing violently against the edges of the steps until her whole body hits the floor at the foot of the stairs. During the time the fall takes, Ernesto doesn't move, he watches her fall, bump by bump. He waits until she's on the floor and she casts him a fulminating glance, before he reacts.

87. CONTINUED.

Lena lands on the floor, broken and stunned by the blows. She lifts her head and attempts to move, but can't. Ernesto descends quickly and comes to her side. He begs, calmly, without violence, for her not to move. Lena cannot stand, her battered body only allows her to drag herself toward the door, like a reptile. Ernesto takes her, delicately, in his arms. Lena gazes at him in horror.

88. PUERTA DE HIERRO MANSION. LAWN. EXT. NIGHT. 1994

He exits into the night, onto a green lawn, with the woman in his arms, they look like two newlyweds. The dogs, disconcerted, follow them in procession, they intuit that something is not right.

Once inside the car (none of the hired help is there that night), he opens the gate from the inside and exits onto the highway.

89. HIGHWAY. EXT. NIGHT. 1994.

Lena is lying on the back seat, pale and in pain, but she's not complaining. Ernesto is driving faster than 180 Km/hr. He alerts a pair of patrolmen. When he realizes he's being followed, he increases his speed. The patrolmen signal with their lights for him to stop on the curb, but Ernesto Martel ignores their signal until the police car catches up to him and forces him to stop.

90. A DIFFERENT SEGMENT OF THE HIGHWAY. EXT. NIGHT. 1994

The two patrolmen get out of their vehicle and head, enraged, toward Ernesto. They gesture for him to lower his window.

Ernesto lowers the window, relaxed, despite the situation. The two patrolmen, especially the one who calls the shots, recriminate him, their voices raised, for all the infractions he has just committed. They are very agitated and they quickly notice the high level of alcohol emitted by the driver's breath.

Knocked out on the back seat, Lena observes the whole scene. Her face is contorted with pain and anxiety.

(A river of cars continues to pass nearby.)

Using a nasty tone, one of the policemen asks Ernesto for his documents.

The following conversation takes place while the policemen verify the vehicle's documents. Ernesto explains to them with a common sense that's disarming:

ERNESTO SENIOR

We have to get to the hospital. My wife is badly hurt...

Lena moans in affirmation. The Policeman takes a look inside the car, in order to ascertain that she is indeed not faking it...

POLICEMAN

What's happened?

ERNESTO

I was in the living room and, since we weren't planning to go out, I started drinking early. I am pretty drunk, as you may notice. Suddenly, I heard a thump, I ran to the stairs and there she was. She tripped and fell down the stairs...

POLICEMAN

Is this true, Madam?

LENA

Yes... Can't you leave the paperwork for later?

POLICEMAN

Your husband can't drive in this condition!

ERNESTO SENIOR

What do you mean?

Ernesto attempts to start the car, but the other policeman stops him.

POLICEMAN

You're crazy!

Lena moans inside the car. She may even start crying.

LENA

Please!

She says this to the two men.

POLICEMAN

Get out of there! I will drive!

ERNESTO S.

Absolutely not!

POLICEMAN

You either let me drive or we all stay here until the ambulance arrives!

LENA

(To Ernesto) Stop it, Ernesto! Let him drive!

POLICEMAN

(To Ernesto, paternalistic and contemptuous) Get down and sit in the back, with your wife!

ERNESTO S.

(Threatening) If anything happens (referring to Lena), you better be ready... You have no idea who I am!

Taking his time, Ernesto vacates the driver's seat and sits in the back, next to Lena.

POLICEMAN

I will pretend that I didn't hear you. I will also pretend I noticed neither how drunk you are nor your affronts to authority, Mr. Martel.

Sulking and with an alcohol-driven affection (and casual) he asks
Lena:

ERNESTO S.

Are you all right?

LENA

(Screams) No! (to the policeman) And could we get (the fuck) going?!

The policeman gets the car moving and his partner follows them in the patrol car.

91. HOSPITAL ENTRANCE. EXT. NIGHT. 1994

Ernesto's car, driven by the patroleman, arrives to the entrance of a hospital.

Cut to.

Immediately, at the Emergency Room, some male nurses arrive with a stretcher.

92. HOSPITAL. INT. NIGHT. 1994

X-Rays of arms, legs and head, along with all other routine tests, in short shots. A broken leg. Various contusions. A cast must be applied.

The image of the X-Ray takes up the whole screen. We may hear the nurses giving instructions. "Don't move", "Don't breathe", etc.

93. HOSPITAL. INT. NIGHT. 1994

The last thing we see is the X-ray of the head, which dissolves over Lena's head and face as she asks a nurse for the telephone, telling her that she needs to make an urgent phone call.

Ernesto censures her with his look. Once the last X-ray has been taken, the nurse brings her a supplementary handset and plugs it in. She hands the handset to Lena.

ERNESTO

You really can't wait?

LENA

(Defiant) No.

Ernesto looks at her not knowing what to expect. Nonetheless, he remains seated next to her. Lena doesn't react, she doesn't care if he overhears the conversation, she almost wants him to.

The brutal beating to which she has been victim is an inescapable reality that gives her an edge over Ernesto, an edge of which she intends to take advantage. She is wounded, but she is no longer afraid of him.

She rings Mateo's number. They greet each other.

LENA

Hello, Mateo?

OFF MATEO

What's going on? Are you not coming?

LENA

Not tonight.

OFF MATEO

Has something happened?

LENA

Something unexpected has happened, but don't worry, everything's OK.

OFF MATEO

Tomorrow the shooting begins in the afternoon, will I see you before then?

LENA

I won't be able to. I will see you directly at the studio. I have something to do.

OFF MATEO

(Worried) You're acting strange, Magdalena. Are you sure nothing's wrong?

LENA

Yes. I'll see you tomorrow.

**94. THE NEXT DAY. PUERTA DE HIERRO MANSION. ON THE LAWN.
DAY. 1994**

Ernesto Senior's car arrives at the Puerta de Hierro Mansion.

Various members, three or four, of the Mansion's personnel approach to help the couple.

Lena exits the car with her leg covered in a cast up to her knee. She leans on crutches or a cane.

Cut to.

95. MANSION. GROUND FLOOR. INT. DAY. 1994.

The group gathers in the living room of the ground floor. Ernesto asks the help to bring them something and then to leave them alone.

Cut to.

96. MANSION. GROUND FLOOR. INT. DAY. 1994

A table set ad hoc.

Lena is sitting in front of her breakfast (or lunch), sullen, pale, implacable, she doesn't move a single muscle of her massacred face.

Ernesto Senior is all sweetness toward his victim. Lena begins to pick at her food, listless, in silence, in order to keep her mouth and eyes occupied.

ERNESTO SENIOR

(Begs, sincerely) What would you like me to do? What can I do so that you will forgive me?

LENA

(Seriously) Take me to the studio.

ERNESTO SENIOR

You shouldn't move.

LENA

If you don't take me, I'll go there myself, even if I have to drag myself.

Her face is still covered in bruises, on her cheekbone and around her eyes.

At some point someone from the hired help appears: "Sir, Madam, do you need anything else?". "No, you can leave us alone, I have already told you this, for God's sake!" Ernesto Senior responds. The servant quickly vanishes.

Lowering his tone:

ERNESTO SENIOR

And what will you say? how will you explain the cast on your leg and the bruises?

Lena appears implacable throughout the conversation.

LENA

It's up to you.

ERNESTO SENIOR

To me? I will do whatever you ask, as long as you promise you'll stay with me.

LENA

I will stay, under the condition that you let Mateo finish the shooting, according to what he decides.

ERNESTO SENIOR

He will barrage you with questions, that guy's not stupid.

LENA

I will tell him I tripped.

ERNESTO SENIOR

And how will you shoot, if you can't walk?

LENA

I don't know. Whatever Mateo decides, but I want to rest assured that you will respect his decision, no matter the cost nor the time that it will take. Is that clear?

Ernesto Senior hates to negotiate under predetermined limitations. He weighs out his options and realizes that Lena has the upper hand.

97. WAREHOUSE, SHABBY STUDIO. EXT. INT. DAY. 1994

They enter the warehouse, temporarily turned into a studio. (The darkness is almost absolute. A huge door opens. The silhouettes of Ernesto Senior and Lena, on a wheelchair, enter.)

The dark, vast space is pierced by the blinding light of a doorway, which both frames and silhouettes the figures of Ernesto and Lena, like cut-outs; creating a powerful image. Epic and terrible.

They bump into some of the members of the team, who begin their work day, slothfully.

When Mateo discovers the pair, he approaches them immediately.

Cut to.

98. MATEO'S OFFICE, IN THE WAREHOUSE TURNED STUDIO. INT. DAY. 1994

Mateo is seated at a casual table. The entire decoration of the office is casual and chaotic, not luxurious, austere, nothing like Lena's dressing room. An enormous drip eats away at one of the corners of the room.

Lena is sitting across from him, on a wheelchair, and seated on an ugly armchair, Ernesto Senior. Judit is also present, she's standing. They have just finished talking. Lena has told the version that she and Ernesto Senior agreed on.

LENA

... And that's it.

Mateo looks at them in disbelief. Judit, still as a statue, waits for the others' reactions. Lena breathes, expectantly. And Ernesto Senior looks uncomfortable and insecure, he is used to being the one who calls the shots; the inverse role, that of listener, disorients him and puts him in a bad mood.

LENA

Ernesto is prepared to support whatever you decide.

MATEO

(Containing his rage) Decide, what?! I can't move from one shot where you are walking normally to another one where you are wearing a cast! How long must you wear the cast?

LENA

Three weeks.

Mateo lets out a huff...

JUDIT

(To Ernesto Senior) Can we stop for those three weeks? With pay for the team, of course.

ERNESTO S.

If there is no other option!

MATEO

(A bit agitated) I hate stopping! Movies, when you pick them back up, are no longer the same!

Looks at Judit and Ernesto Senior.

MATEO

(Dryly) Do you mind if I speak to Lena alone for a moment?

It's not a question but a demand.

Judit shoots him a look of recrimination, as if saying "This is not the moment for that", but she cannot do anything to stop him.

Ernesto Senior is also not pleased (but he knows he cannot say no, and this irritates him even more). He glances first at Lena, who orders him with her own glance to accept, and then looks at Judit, who warmly invites him to exit with her.

For some reason, Ernesto Senior empathizes with that woman.

**99. WAREHOUSE, SHABBY STUDIO. NEXT TO MATEO'S DRESSING ROOM.
INT. DAY. 1994**

Judit and Ernesto Senior exit the office and hang around not far from to the door. They smoke, perhaps. They are both restless. They look at each other as if seeking some kind of understanding, despite their differences. And they find it. They are joined by their jealousy.

At the other end of the warehouse, like a mirage amongst the shadows, Pina's loft appears, majestic, ramshackle and mysterious. Ernesto contemplates it without understanding it, but is affected by its presence. He is unable to understand the essence of this make-belief game, but it's the first time he begins to grasp its hermetic fascination.

100. MATEO'S OFFICE. WAREHOUSE, SHABBY STUDIO. INT. DAY. 1994

Mateo lifts her skirt in an attempt to see how far up the cast goes. On the white skin of her thighs, like in an uneven print, various asymmetrical bruises stand out. Mateo touches with his lips on every one of them, kissing them delicately. Lena shudders.

LENA

Be careful, he may walk in.

MATEO

Let him walk in!

And he continues kissing her thighs until he comes close to her pubis. Lena lifts and/or caresses his head. Mateo lifts it to look at her.

MATEO

Tell me the truth! People don't fall down the stairs,
that only happens in movies.

Lena avoids giving a direct answer, but in her own way, she lets him know, somberly and urgently.

LENA

Mateo, we must finish the shooting as soon as possible! Until then, I cannot leave Ernesto.

MATEO

Why not? He's a psychopath! What more proof do you need?

LENA

I cannot leave, I've made a deal with him.

MATEO

A deal? What deal?

LENA

I have promised to stay in his house in exchange for his letting you finish the film, under your conditions.

MATEO

But I cannot ask you for such a sacrifice.

LENA

You have not asked me...

MATEO

I can't accept it either.

LENA

(Pleads) Mateo, please!

MATEO

There must be another answer.

LENA

What else? The only solution is that I continue to live with him until you finish the film.

MATEO

Can you take it?

LENA

You don't have to think about that... What's important is that you finish shooting.

MATEO

Exactly what have you agreed to?

LENA

I've told you, to live under the same roof, with him in his room and me in mine. He doesn't have the right to anything more.

MATEO

And you think he will be content with that?

LENA

(Angst-ridden) I don't know... but the sooner you finish shooting, the better! Come up with a reason not to pause!

Mateo goes over the story in his head, desperately attempting to think of something. Lena observes him, expectantly. Finally, something seems to hit him.

MATEO

(Unenthusiastic) We would have to repeat part of the stairway scene...

**101. SHOOTING AT THE STAIRWAY. STAIRWAY LANDING, IVAN'S HOUSE.
INT. DAY. 1994**

(Taking up the whole screen, we see the scene through the Moviola, with the texture of a bad copy, streaks, grain, etc. The solution Mateo has proposed is to repeat the last part of the sequence. On the surface of the Moviola screen, the reflection of Mateo's face is barely visible over the first set of images screened.)

A wooden landing and stairway in a building of the old Madrid. At its center, an elevator, also antique.

Pina has just left a note for Ivan on the door to his study asking him to please call on her, that she needs to speak to him urgently, that something unexpected has come up... (She is dressed as she was when she came out of the entrance hall in the previous scene with Chus. This sequence is supposed to be the one that follows it.)

She has just left the note when Julieta appears, she is dressed conventionally, but with some extravagant detail, something that garners attention. She bumps into Pina by the elevator, Pina does not know her. Julieta knocks on the studio's door (just as Pina had done earlier), she doesn't get an answer. She notices the note that Pina has just affixed on the door. She takes it down and reads it, much to Pina's bafflement, who has been watching her from the other side of the landing. After reading it, Julieta crumples it up. Pina cannot believe it. She remains motionless on the other side of the landing, because she doesn't trust the eccentric looking woman.

PINA

(Indignant) Leave that note there! It's not for you.
How dare you take it and crumple it?

Julieta throws the crumpled note through the gap in the stairway and looks condescendingly at Pina while she approaches her, prepared to walk down the stairs.

JULIETA

What do you have to speak to Ivan about, you whore!

PINA

It's none of your business.

JULIETA

I am his wife.

PINA

His wife has been admitted at a psychiatric hospital
for twenty years now.

JULIETA

Not anymore.

UP TO THIS POINT WE WATCH THE SEQUENCE THROUGH THE IMAGE-TEXTURE OF THE MOVIOLA AND THE REFLECTION OF MATEO'S FACE.

(These images are what will be retained from what had been shot previously.)

102. SHOOTING AT THE STAIRWAY. CONTINUED.

Pina makes a gesture as if to say: "So you are the ex-wife, the crazy one."

Pina and Julieta begin to descend the stairs.

JULIETA

(Repeats) I am no longer committed. I am now here with you. Walking down the stairs.

Pina looks at her apprehensively... She steps down only one stair.

JULIETA

You are in a hurry to see him, aren't you?

PINA

Yes...

JULIETA

Well, what are you waiting for!

She pushes her and Pina falls, rolling all the way to the bottom.

Cut to.

103. WAREHOUSE, SHABBY PLATEAU. VARIOUS SPACES. 1994

Images that indicate the passing of time during the shooting. Short sequences of the minute work done by each of the teams, as if assembling ballet pieces, all of it accompanied by a musical score:

The D.P. sets up the lighting for the shoot, the bulbs are lit, the filters applied, the interior of the camera cleaned, the film is loaded. The atmosphere is set. Pina in her bedroom, lying on the bed, with one leg in a cast, is relaxing, breathing deeply. The actress playing Chon jokes around with the costume team, they laugh. But no one pays attention to the others. Edurne, in a close-up, retouches one of Pina's eyes. The mouth as well. Chon stops laughing so that the hair-stylist may shape her hair.

All the images are very brief... The score predominates, the ambient sounds of the activities of the different teams is heard more like a whisper. The scene must not last longer than a minute. This set of images serves to abridge time and to indicate that the shooting is in its final days, after a long journey.

There will probably not be many images, but less: the bulb that lights, Lena's eye as Edurne retouches it, its blinking, its sadness. Chon's mouth as she speaks without pause, stopping only when lipstick is added. The film loaded, the hair fluffed. Lena lying on the rug in her dressing room, totally motionless, her eyes made-up and closed, doing breathing exercises for relaxation, her leg in a cast, etc. Motor. Action!

104. WAREHOUSE STUDIO. PINA'S LOFT. 1994

SCENE FROM "GIRLS AND SUITCASES"

The doorbell rings in the loft. Pina limps over to the door. She looks through the metal peephole, its design creates an optical illusion. On the other side of the peephole, Chon's exalted eyes appear. Chon is a Better Midler type, in her 40s, that kind of extroverted woman who at first glance appears chubby but isn't quite so. She is wearing designer clothes, despite the fact that her demeanor is direct and crass. Both of them, Pina and Chon, are tired and hysterical, which each one of them interprets in her own way. Pina opens the door and Chon enters. Even though they are good friends, the last thing Pina is in the mood for is to see Chon, much less an over-excited Chon with "problems".

PINA

(Whispers) What a drag! (she opens the door, in a languid, bored tone) Oh, it's you?

CHON

(Reproaches, depressed) I've left you a thousand messages!

PINA

Yes...

Chon notices Ivan's suitcase in the middle of the foyer and looks at it as if she'd never seen a suitcase.

CHON

And this suitcase?!

Judging from the tone, one would guess she could care less. But the script asks for her to inquire about the suitcase and she inquires.

PINA

(Sounding bored, asleep) It's Ivan's. He's leaving me.

Chon, disconcerted, notices that Pina drags herself around with a cast on her leg.

(She has picked up Pina's inexpressive tone)

CHON

And that broken leg?

PINA

His ex-wife, the crazy one. She pushed me down the stairs . . .

CHON

I see, we're in great shape...

MATEO

(Interrupts the take) Cut!

Final clap board. It's take number twelve.

105. SHOOTING AND SURROUNDINGS. INT. EXT. DAY. 1994

The camera team directs "load camera" (new film stock is loaded, the one already inside has run out).

Mateo has a look of worry, the scene is not funny at all, the actresses are bored and tense. They behave like automatons. Lena looks at Mateo, she had never seen him so disconsolate.

A general impasse and discouragement. The team betrays boredom, preoccupation, and exhaustion.

The actress playing Chon grumbles, annoyed. Juanba, the hair-stylist, approaches her to fix her hair. In the background, one sees Mateo speaking to Lena.

Ernesto Junior wanders around the set.

We suppose that he has already shot the other takes, we notice a change in his attitude. He watches Lena and Mateo converse, then watches them as they move away from the set; he has no intention of following them. One might say that he is now on their side, against his own father.

106. WAREHOUSE, SHABBY STUDIO. AWAY FROM THE LOFT. AT THE MAKE-UP & HAIR DRESSING ROOM, OR SOME OTHER PLACE. 1994

In some place of the warehouse where no one can see them and they can speak calmly. Mateo and Lena.

During this time, Lena has been keeping her end of the deal and continues to live with Ernesto Martel but, as much as she attempts to diffuse it, its effect has been devastating. She is very depressed. She can hardly hold herself up. Lena's state of mind and how it affects the shooting, makes Mateo feel impotent and guilty.

LENA

(Distressed, maybe she'll cry) I am sorry...

MATEO

Don't worry, it will turn out. (Acknowledges) But I don't know what more direction to give you.

LENA

(Exhausted, hard on herself) You have told me everything, in every way possible...

MATEO

(Somber and guilty) Ernesto is getting just what he hoped. That we make a piece of crap of a movie! I told you not to agree to that deal...

Lena breathes, grasping for a solution and for breath. She attempts to regain her strength.

LENA

We can't let him have his way! (She dries her tears, feeling newly replenished) Every day I arrive worn out and every day I recover, right?

MATEO

(Acknowledges) Yes...

LENA

I ask you only for a bit more patience... And a kiss!

Mateo kisses her as one kisses one shipwrecked, although the one shipwrecked is really him. In any case, the kiss brings life back to both of them.

107. LOFT PINA. REPEAT THE TAKE. 1994

Motor. Action. The clap board indicates that they will shoot take number thirteen. A traveling shot follows Lena as she limps toward the door. She looks through the peephole, behind it, Chon. They are supposed to be good friends, but she's the last person Lena wants to see.

PINA

(Whispers) What a drag! (contemptuous, she greets her) Oh, it's you?

CHON

Listen, if that's how you'll greet me, I'll leave.

PINA

No, c'mon! Come inside!

Pina treats her with a friendly disdain, which plays comically. She has once again recovered her strength and her lightness. Her low spirits have disappeared and she comes off thoughtless and impudent. Her reenactment has an effect on Chon, who also performs much better than in the previous take.

These first few phrases are enough to determine that the two actresses have improved. Lena is now a different actress, light and delicious. Mateo smiles, brimming with admiration.

108. EDITING ROOM. INT. DAY. 1994

Mateo and his editor (and the assistant editor) watch the end of the sequence on the Moviola.

MATEO

She's so much better! Grab this one!

LUIS

Yes.

Mateo smiles, satisfied. On the same table where the Moviola sits, Luis, the editor, has a notebook in which each page corresponds to a

sequence, numbered respectively. The sequences are divided by shots and the shots by the number of takes.

Luis draws a circle around take number thirteen.

MATEO

Let's look at fourteen, it's even better!

Luis, an editing assistant and Mateo, sitting in front of the Moviola, examine the footage.

There is a palpable complicity between Luis and Mateo. Luis has edited all of Mateo's films, they have been colleagues for a long time. As with Judit, despite their differences, one can tell that Luis belongs to Mateo's artistic family.

Cut to.

109. EDITING ROOM. INT. EVENING. 1994

Time passes.

The characters are dressed differently.

As they load the film and sound onto the Moviola, we hear Harry's voice-off.

Only audio:

YEAR 2008. VOICE-OFF OF HARRY SPEAKING TO DIEGO. We hear it over the running Moviola.

OFF HARRY

When we finished shooting, I quickly selected all the takes for the film so that I could rescue Lena as soon as possible from the Martel house. The situation had

worsened, we could hardly see each other, he had practically kidnapped her... They were difficult days for everyone, but Lena insisted that I leave all the takes selected... then, we could leave.

He hasn't finished saying this when we hear the phone ring. The assistant, phone in hand: (to Mateo) "It's for you". He takes it, surprised, he is still staring at the Moviola screen. It's Lena.

OFF

It's Magdalena.

MATEO

Is there something wrong?

OFF

No. I'm downstairs. I've forgotten my money. I have to pay the cab . . .

MATEO

I'll be right down.

He exits the editing room.

**110. CINEARTE [EDITING AND POST-PRODUCTION STUDIO]. STAIRWAY.
INT. NIGHT. 1994**

Mateo descends the stairs of Cinearte at a good clip, he wasn't expecting Lena's visit. He can sense something's happened.

When he arrives at the foyer, he can't find her.

The phone operator (ugly, but polite) at the reception desk tells him Lena is in the bathroom.

111. CINEARTE. COSTUMER'S BATHROOM. INT. NIGHT. 1994

He enters the bathroom and finds Lena, barefoot, wearing only her bra and panties, cleaning wounds she's suffered on her face and legs. The surface of the sink is tainted with blood. Mateo looks at her, horrified. (She is no longer wearing a cast). A man's jacket lies on top of the counter, this is the only piece of clothing that appears in this scene.

MATEO

(Horrified) But . . . what has happened?!

LENA

We have had a brutal fight... At the end, he ripped my clothes off and my shoes and he threw me out naked onto the highway. The jacket belongs to the cab driver. You must give him a good tip, if it weren't for him I don't know how I would have made it here...

Mateo cannot believe his eyes. He hurls insults at Ernesto Senior. Lena's apparent composure is purely hysterical.

112. CINEARTE. EXT. NIGHT. 1994

Mateo and Lena exit Cinearte.

They enter a cab that is waiting for them.

MATEO

(To the cab driver) Take us to the nearest police station...

LENA

No, please...

MATEO

We must denounce him, Magdalena!

LENA

He will turn against you!

The cab begins moving.

Mateo gives the cab driver his address.

LENA

No, not your house.

MATEO

We have to look after you. Let's go to a hotel...

LENA

(Pleads) Let's leave Madrid.

Mateo looks through his pockets, fortunately, he has all his credit cards on him.

113. LANZAROTE. FAMARA BEACH. BUNGALOW ZONE. EXT. DAY. 1994

Mateo and Lena are living in a bungalow zone on Famara Beach, a complex nestled between the beach and the foot of a mountain. It is a special and intimate place, like an enormous grotto, where the sky is its ceiling and the mountains one of its walls.

Lena and Mateo exit a bungalow and get into a rented car, a red Opel Corsa, not in very good shape.

114. EL GOLFO BEACH. EXT. AT DAY'S END. 1994

On the peak of a reddish rock, on Golfo Beach, Mateo takes photographs of the natural wonders surrounding him. Next to him, Lena contemplates the view.

What Mateo sees with his camera:

- a) Wine colored rocks
- b) The yellow-green lake circumscribed by a rope that has become white, against the black sand.
- c) The black sand of the enormous beach, licked by the shimmering foam of the waves.
- d) The rocky walls enveloping the beach, eroded through centuries by the wind on the surface of which it has created peaks and valleys resembling the jugged edge of a watch cog.

One of the images captures part of a wine-colored rock. Below it, the infinite surface of the black beach, licked by the white foam of the waves. In the backdrop, an immense limestone wall, its surface full of pit holes where the wind circulates.

The sequence ends with a close-up of the click of Mateo's camera's shutter, opening and closing like an owl's eye.

115. SOUVENIR AND PHOTOGRAPHY STORE. LANZAROTE. INT. DAY. 1994

Mateo-Harry and Lena pick up their photos at the store's counter. The owner of the shop hands them to him, he is an attractive and bohemian middle-aged man.

Mateo opens the envelope impatiently, he wants to make sure that his photographs are, in effect, the ones inside it.

He looks at the last one closely, the landscape with the rocks, the beach, the foam, etc. Somewhere on the vast black-sand beach one can make out a couple, their size is tiny compared to the immensity of the beach. The two are melded into a tight embrace. The beach is deserted. Mateo had not been aware of them when he took the photograph and is overtaken by his discovery. He shows it to Lena. Half-joking.

MATEO

Look. It's us. (I thought it was empty)

Mateo asks the bohemian Attendant for a larger print.

**116. MATEO AND LENA, INSIDE THE CAR, ON THE HIGHWAY. EXT. DAY.
1994**

They go through various traffic circles. Mateo comments that it is "the island of the useless traffic circles". "That's part of its charm", comments Lena.

**117. TRAFFIC CIRCLE WITH CESAR MANRIQUE SCULPTURE. EXT. DAY.
1994**

They stop on one of the stop signs at the traffic circle. In the center there is a huge mobile sculpture by Cesar Manrique, rocked by the wind.

Mateo and Lena exit the car to take pictures of themselves. Their faces close together, their eyes happy. The sculpture turning around itself produces a strange screeching sound.

118. BUNGALOW. FAMARA BEACH. INT. DUSK OR NIGHT. 1994

Many days have passed. Mateo's hair is longer and he appears more tan, the proximity to nature and the absence of a social life has also affected Magdalena's appearance, now much more savage, but also more serene and more humble. She is dressed in cheap clothing, which she has bought on the island (and which fits her marvelously) and her hair is pulled up into a messy bun.

The photograph, enlarged, presides on top of a small table where Mateo writes. The picture is leaning against the wall. It's the only image inside the bungalow. The photograph is a clear metaphor for the mysterious quality of the island as well as of the isolation of Mateo and Lena and of their fusion.

While Mateo writes, Lena cleans the dishes or she does the laundry in the bathtub. The two wear T-shirts, comfortable and sporty clothes. (On the tape-deck one hears La Lupe singing: ... *"porque hay un hombre para cada mujer y una mujer para cada hombre, y nosotros somos, nosotros somos... la pareja"* [because there is only one man for each woman and only one woman for each man, and we are, and we are... the couple]). Mateo and Magdalena, the couple.

In the bungalow there isn't much furniture; there's a large couch on which they can lie comfortably, a short table, along with the wooden table on which Mateo writes. Some armchair and lamps. And a tape-deck.

Cut to.

119. BUNGALOW. INT. DUSK OR NIGHT. 1994

Engulfed by the couch, Mateo and Lena are absorbed watching, on a small television, a broadcast of "Voyage in Italy" (Roberto Rossellini's).

The scene they are watching is set in a place where a group of men are working on some excavation. The married couple (in the midst of their breakup), played by George Sanders and Ingrid Bergman, is on a tourist trip in that area of Italy and they have gone to visit the excavation. One of the technicians describes the delicate work that is involved in excavating part of a city that had been buried, centuries ago, by the lethal eruption of the Vesuvius.

At that moment, the men who are working on the excavation begin, bit by bit, to uncover a couple, a man and a woman, sleeping in an embrace, whom the eruption had taken unaware, leaving them preserved in this position for centuries.

Ingrid Bergman cannot stand the sight of this couple calcined in an eternal embrace. She compares it to her own marriage, destroyed by their lack of communication and by the absence of generosity between them. She walks away from the place, unable to contain her tears.

The scene affects Magdalena and Mateo as much as it had Ingrid Bergman.

Mateo and Lena instinctively embrace each other, seeking refuge in each other, their posture echoes that of the calcined couple.

Suddenly, Mateo breaks their embrace. He positions the camera on top of the table where he writes, not far from where the image of the other "embrace" sits. He points it toward the couch and he presses the automatic button. And they take a picture together, locked in an embrace.

120. PUBLIC PARK. MADRID. EXT. DAY. 2008

Harry and Diego, now completely cured, are sitting on a bench.

HARRY

Do you want to go back home and return to the "Donate Blood" story?

DIEGO

I am hoping to get back to it, but first tell me what happened in Lanzarote. You can't leave me hanging!

Harry takes a deep breath. At this stage of the narrative, it is only understandable that Diego would want to know everything. But it pains him to think of what is still left to tell.

HARRY

Without realizing, a month had elapsed... I knew that sooner or later we would have to return, but we kept postponing it. I was only worried about you and your mother. I had not even said goodbye and you were still suffering from your allergy problem when we left... I can imagine Judit was furious with me.

DIEGO

You can't imagine how much.

HARRY

I was planning to return soon to finish the editing... and to explain things to your mother. But Magdalena decided she'd wait for me on the island. She couldn't stand the thought of seeing Ernesto again.

121. OFFICE FOR THE FAMARA BUNGALOWS. INT. DAY. 1994

Mateo and Lena are walking toward the office for the bungalow complex.
(Part of the previous dialogue is heard as the couple are approaching the office)

121. A. INTERIOR OF THE RECEPTION HALL, FAMARA BUNGALOWS. INT. DAY. 1994

Behind the counter there are two foreign employees, a man and a woman. Lena addresses them in English, while Mateo keeps himself busy at the other end of the reception hall, next to a table with magazines and newspapers. He grabs a newspaper.

In English:

LENA

Sorry to interrupt... I wanted to ask if there are any employment opportunities available here, with you... You always look so busy... I have a lot of free time...

EMPLOYEE

We could use the help, especially now that the high season is about to start... Do you have experience?

LENA

I have worked as a secretary at M. Capital, a very important finance company.

EMPLOYEE

(Looks at her) You could first work during the afternoons and, then, we could see...

With his back to the counter, at the other end of the reception desk, Mateo reads a newspaper, frozen.

Suddenly, the employee opens a National newspaper and looks for a particular page. He shows it to Lena. On the Entertainment page, an ad for Mateo's movie (Opening Soon). The ad is a close-up of her, in her role as Pina, in the movie. Lena is stunned. She can't believe it.

EMPLOYEE

We were just saying that the girl in the ad looks like you.

Lena looks toward where Mateo is standing and she notices that he is as perplexed as she is, staring at the ad for a soon-to-be-released film in the newspaper.

LENA

(To the employee) No. It's not me.

They exit the office.

122. BUNGALOW COMPLEX. EXT. DAY. 1994

Mateo and Lena walk toward their bungalow as if someone were chasing them. They have just run into the very thing they have been attempting to escape in Madrid.

MATEO

I was wondering how long it would take him to emerge!

LENA

(Disoriented) But they can't release the film so soon, right?

MATEO

No. It's a scheme to annoy us, and a trap to get you to return. The ad is only lacking the words "Missing."

LENA

What are we going to do?

MATEO

Nothing. Fuck them!

123. TWO WEEKS LATER. ON FAMARA BEACH. EXT. DAY. 1994

A TITLE TAKING UP THE WHOLE SCREEN: TWO WEEKS LATER

A few surfers are preparing to go into the ocean. A father and his young son toss their kites into the wind.

Lounging on lounge chairs, on a cobble-stone area before one reaches the sand, Lena and Mateo-Harry are reading the news of the opening of the film in a National newspaper. They only have one copy and Mateo's eyes are transfixed on the news.

The note accompanying the event says, in bold type:

"The financier, Ernesto Martel, has managed to gather all of Madrid for his first film as a producer, missing are only its director and star."

Two pictures accompany the news of the event. Printed next to them, there is a review entitled, "Disaster."

Mateo throws the newspaper away from him, enraged. He refuses to read the review.

The wind dishevels the newspaper pages. Lena rises and chases the pages that fly, like kites, slightly above the ground.

In mid-flight, she catches the Entertainment page and reads it as she approaches Mateo, who watches the ocean, feeling impotent, furious, unable to quite grasp what is happening.

Lena sits down next to him, still reading.

MATEO

(Disconsolate) What does it say?

LENA

That the only intelligent thing we have done has been not to attend the premier, that my acting is pathetic, that you seem like a first-time director and that you lack talent. At the end, it wonders who might have made your first films. Never before has such a resounding downfall been witnessed... How horrible!

Mateo rises and heads quickly for the bungalow, which functions as the office for the complex.

Lena follows him, alarmed.

LENA

What are you going to do?

124. OFFICE FOR BUNGALOW COMPLEX. FAMARA BEACH. INT. DAY. 1994

Cut to, directly to the shot of the telephone. Mateo has just dialed Judit's number. He gets the answering machine, hearing Judit's voice encourages him to leave a message. "Hi. You have reached Judit

Garcia's voicemail. Leave your message after the tone and I will return your call as soon as possible."

Mateo leaves his message.

MATEO

(Dryly) Judit. It's me. I hope you and the boy are OK. I apologize that I left without notice, but terrible things have happened, I will explain. Speaking of which, I need to talk to you, urgently. Please call me! Here's the number... (Asks one of the employees) Oh, and, ask for Harry Caine, I have registered under that name... (said almost as an order) I will be waiting for your call!

He also rings Luis, the editor. He also doesn't answer. He leaves Luis a shorter and more violent message.

MATEO

Luis, I just read in the newspaper that the film has opened and I am beside myself!! I don't know what the fuck is going on there, but I would like to know! OK, I'll ring back!

He looks at Lena, breathless, his face contorted from sheer helplessness.

125. RETURN TO 2008. HARRY'S HOME. DEN. DAY.

Harry is standing, pacing back and forth. Diego stands next to the bookcase. The drawer with the photographs is open.

He looks at the photograph of the traffic circle and at the one of "The embrace" on the black sand of Golfo Beach.

He has taken them out of the large brown envelope. At the bottom of the drawer one can begin to see Luis' (the editor) notebook. Diego is holding a Dymo label machine, (this Dymo has appeared in previous scenes) with all of its keyboard buttons, corresponding to the regular alphabet, in Braille. He is writing, in Braille, "Famara - Lanzarote 94" so that he can stick the raised title onto the old envelope.

DIEGO

And mom, did she call you back?

HARRY

No.

DIEGO

(Can't understand, he's almost indignant) Why?

HARRY

She was pissed, I suppose.

DIEGO

I remember that time, it was while I was undergoing treatment for pulmonary aspergillosis. It was a horrible time for me... Not just because of the illness, my mother was like a crazy woman... I had just seen "The Exorcist" and, for some time, I believed she was possessed...

HARRY

(Smiles pathetically) I was the demon, Diego. And I am sorry. I suppose I behaved selfishly, but I am not sure I had a choice...

Diego thinks about this.

DIEGO

(Emotionally exhausted) No matter how upset she was, she should have alerted you to what was happening.

HARRY

The fact is she never did, and we've never spoken of it. Neither one of us has broached the topic.

DIEGO

(Surprised) And you weren't curious?...

HARRY

(Emphatically) Me? Curiosity was killing me! For two days I called both your mother and Luis non-stop, the editor (says it agitated), but neither of them answered! So I decided to return to Madrid the next day so that I could witness what was happening for myself!

126. RESTAURANT. EL MIRADOR [THE LOOKOUT]. EXT. DUSK. 1994

(Night falls while they dine.)

Mateo and Magdalena dine at "El Mirador," a local restaurant with spectacular views. Their table is beside a long sliding-door window that overlooks the valley. A group of rocks seem to grow next to the window as if they were plants made of stone. The view of the valley is breathtaking.

There are few patrons inside the restaurant. Perhaps a foreign couple, sitting far from Lena and Mateo. A waiter brings their first course. They are drinking wine.

Lena appears melancholic and fearful.

MATEO

How did you meet Ernesto Senior?

LENA

(It's not a topic she likes, but she doesn't hesitate to answer.) I was one of his secretaries.

MATEO

And... how did you end up with him? You fell in love?

LENA

He was very generous with me and my family. My father was dying, I needed to take him to a private Hospital and Ernesto took care of everything... He paid for everything... And he made sure that my parents could return to their home town and that they lacked nothing...

Mateo imagines the situation, it upsets him. He is perturbed by the very idea of Lena's past with Ernesto, but he doesn't want to upset her on the night before his departure. They have gone out to dinner with just the opposite intent.

MATEO

(Lovingly) Pardon me, I have no right to ask you about that time in your life.

LENA

It's only natural that you would want to know. And I don't want any skeletons between us. (Unguarded) I would like to be able to forget all that, but you have the right to ask.

MATEO

(Assuring her) No. I do not have any right. For me, you were born the day you came for the audition. You looked at me, I saw your face and... I was left hypnotized.

Lena smiles. She is both comforted and relived by remembering that moment.

LENA

I remember your face perfectly. I think I fell in love with the way you looked at me. I thought: this man will be my salvation.

Mateo is moved by her use of those terms to speak of their first meeting.

Cut to.

126. A. CIRCULAR PARKING AT "EL MIRADOR." EXT. NIGHT. 1994

They exit in an embrace and head toward their car, parked nearby. They kiss before they get in the car. We notice another car which we will have the occasion to recall in the future, the camera gives it just a passing glance.

LENA

(Childish) It's the first time we part...

MATEO

(Pampering) Either way, I will return next weekend. But if you are going to be worried, you should come with me.

LENA

No... I will be better off here.

And she smiles, as if the worry has already passed, so as not to disquiet Mateo.

127. IN MOVEMENT. THE ISLAND, NIGHTTIME. INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF THE CAR. LANZAROTE. 1994.

View of the sea of lava or of La Geria in an aerial shot with the car moving across the landscape. The full moon allows us to glimpse through the darkness of the landscape.

Mateo's car once again heads for the bungalow complex. Show the highway illuminated by the headlights and the landscape as it appears to its left and right.

From inside the car, one can see the mobile sculpture of Cesar Manrique at a distance.

MATEO

(Very insecure) And did I manage to save you from anything?

LENA

(Enigmatic and unwavering) Yes!

Lena does not elaborate on the dangers that Mateo has saved her from, he doesn't understand them exactly, but he likes to hear her say so.

They approach the traffic circle. A set of lights first betrays the presence of a car that appears from the left. Mateo yields to it, and briefly kisses Magdalena on the lips.

Mateo continues on his way, a short instant later, as he enters the traffic circle, an SUV moving at full speed crashes into them.

Everything happens very fast. From inside the car, without any particular attention to Lena or Mateo, the screen fills up with light, noise and darkness. All the different noises form a deafening magma.

At the center of the traffic circle, Cesar Manrique's sculpture rotates, propelled by the wind.

In any case, we will also shoot the crash from the outside. And although it will not be obvious at first sight, the back side of Mateo's car is illuminated by the headlights of a car that we never quite see, but which has been a witness to the accident.

128. TRAFFIC CIRCLE WITH MOBILE SCULPTURE. LANZAROTE. EXT. NIGHT. 1994.

The huge mobile sculpture by Cesar Manrique continues to rotate with the wind immediately following the collision.

One can hear the screeching wheels of the SUV escaping from the accident scene. One also hears the sound of a second vehicle, which approaches and stops, and something that sounds like a door opening and a moan.

The camera only focuses on the sculpture, swaying in the wind.

129. MATEO-HARRY'S HOME. INT. NIGHT. 2008.

Diego looks at Harry in silence, he doesn't say a word. He is still holding the Dymo. Harry also says nothing.

OFF HARRY

Magdalena's death didn't catch us melded in an embrace,
but sitting on separate seats. It caught me by
surprise, in that of leaving me alive.

When Harry's face once again appears, we begin to hear his voice-off.

130. OUTSIDE A HOSPITAL. LANZAROTE. EXT. DAY. 1994.

The entrance to a Hospital in Lanzarote.

Through one of the windows, we can see Mateo's gaunt and nebulous
figure resting on a bed, his head bandaged.

**131. INSIDE THE HOSPITAL ROOM. LIGHT COMING THROUGH THE
WINDOW. INT DAY. 1994.**

Just as in the beginning, Judit is next to Mateo's bed. She is
holding his hand and begs him:

JUDIT

Mateo, say something!

HARRY

Mateo is dead, Judit.

JUDIT

(Bags under her eyes and tearful) Don't say that!

132. LANZAROTE HOSPITAL. PSYCHIATRIC WARD. INT. DAY. 1994.

A naturalist décor and stage-setting of an island Hospital of that era, located in a very picturesque place. Through the window we can see the local surroundings. The walls are a pastel color, green or blue, an aquatic color, and they have various spots where humidity has seeped through.

Other than the psychiatrist, there is another doctor present, explaining the situation to Judit.

PSYCHIATRIST

We call him by his name, but he doesn't respond to it. He insists Mateo has died.

JUDIT

Images are the source of his work... and to live in the dark, I suppose that's death to him... Is there any chance he will see?

DOCTOR

None. His is what we refer to as a cortical blindness, and it's irreversible. It's the result of a lesion to the occipital lobe, the intelligent part of the brain, which has the role of processing all visual information. In other words, the neurons have died... and that's permanent...

133. HOSPITAL. EXIT. EXT. DAY. 1994.

OFF HARRY

I felt as though I had died with Lena. The Mateo-film-director who had left Madrid would never return.

Days or weeks later.

Judit exits the hospital, with blind-Mateo (he's hidden behind black sunglasses), now without the bandages or very few, and with little Diego (eight years old), holding hands. Mateo walks tentatively and slowly. He will probably be aided by the typical blind man's cane. They get into a car that is waiting for them. Judit instructs the driver to take them to Famara Beach, to the bungalow complex.

134. LANZAROTE. ROUTE TO FAMARA. HIGHWAY. EXT. DAY. 1994.

A CLOUDY AND WINDY DAY.

(This is a good opportunity to show some of the more dramatic landscapes of the island. The lava sea, black and twisted, and the rented car that crosses it through the highway that divides it. Or "La Geria" and its vine stalks buried in half-spheres of black dirt to protect them from the winds. The green palm tree fronds flop around against the backdrop of this black-dirt landscape.)

Inside the car, Mateo asks Judit:

MATEO

Did you visit Lena's mother at her hometown?

JUDIT

Yes.

MATEO

What did she say?

JUDIT

She was very thankful to Ernesto for having taken care of everything...

MATEO

That's it?

JUDIT

Yes, they buried her next to her father.

MATEO

Did you visit the grave?

JUDIT

Yes.

Mateo nods in defeated acknowledgement.

135. FAMARA BEACH. BUNGALOW COMPLEX. EXT. DAY. 1994.

A CLOUDY AND WINDY DAY.

The car stops in front of the bungalow that functions as the "Reception Desk" for the complex.

Judit and little Diego exit. Judit helps Mateo out.

Mateo remains glued to the ground. He can't move. Judit stares at him. Even though Mateo had renounced being Mateo, he has inherited his most painful memories. Being near the RECEPTION bungalow, and thus near the bungalow where he lived with Magdalena, generates some kind of spasm in him that keeps him from moving. He feels an intense heat (inside and outside of him), as if he were approaching a bonfire the flames of which would slowly scorch him, were he to move. (Perhaps we'll have to inlay the image with the flames of an imaginary conflagration). The face contorted.

JUDIT

What's wrong?

MATEO

(Weakened) You go... I can't... I'll wait for you on the beach.

The idea excites little Diego.

DIEGUITO

I also want to go to the beach!

He approaches Mateo and instinctively grabs his hand. Judit watches the couple. The situation unfolds before she can stop it.

MATEO

Do whatever you need to do. We'll wait for you there.

Judit is worried about the wind. She buttons Diego's jacket and wraps his scarf around him. She does the same thing with Mateo.

JUDIT

Bundle up! And don't get too close to the water. (To little Diego) Don't let go of his hand!

Little Diego grabs Mateo's hand. Despite the wind, the boy is excited about the idea of going to the beach. He has just become Mateo's guide and Mateo lets him guide him, like a somnambulist.

136. BUNGALOWS OFFICE. INT. DAY. 1994.

In the offices of the complex, the two employees are in the middle of a brawl. (Consult with the original) In front of the desk, Judit addresses one of them, in English.

JUDIT

I am here to pay Mateo Blanco's bill.

EMPLOYEE

We don't have anyone here registered by that name.

Judit gestures that she doesn't understand.

JUDIT

It's the man who had the accident. He was in bungalow number two.

EMPLOYEE

Oh, you mean Harry Caine.

JUDIT

Yes, of course.

EMPLOYEE

Poor souls! They are not the first to have an accident on that traffic circle! Awful!

137. FAMARA. ROUTE TO THE BEACH. NEXT TO THE BUNGALOWS. EXT. DAY. 1994.

Mateo and little Diego walk only a few meters past bungalow number two, where he lived with Magdalena. At that moment they are walking facing the wind, a fierce wind that threatens to tear off their clothes. It is as if nature itself wanted to keep Mateo from walking away from the bungalow where he loved Lena. From this point on, his life will become just that, an endless battle against the elements and against the memory of Lena.

Little Diego's voice distracts him.

DIEGUITO

Look... There are kites!

At times little Diego forgets that Mateo cannot see. So he points toward the sky of a nearby beach, whose surface is dotted by various kites.

Mateo is grateful for the life-affirming sound of the boy's voice and so he allows himself to be towed.

The wind's violent sweep over all the different elements that compose the landscape creates a symphony of strange sounds.

138. BUNGALOW No.2. FAMARA. INT. AND EXT. DAY. 1994.

Judit, using the key she was handed at the Reception Desk, opens the door to bungalow number two. She enters into what had been Mateo and Lena's love nest. She takes the entire space in with one glance; she is overtaken, as if she has entered an ancestral and sacred space. She imagines Mateo and Lena filling up the space with their presence. (A strange modesty comes over her, but her curiosity is greater).

Lena's spirit (at least in Judit's mind) hangs in the air, but in the material surrounding her absence is absolute. Those who took her body did not leave any trace of Lena. Not a single object, not a single dress. Nothing. Ernesto Senior's cohorts (or Ernesto himself) took all of her things.

Mateo's clothes and things are found piled up in a closet. Yet the table where he sat to write remains intact. On it, the photograph of

the embrace on Golfo Beach still rests, along with his notebook, blank pages and some envelopes.

Judit observes the photograph on Golfo Beach as if it were alive, still palpitating. And she imagines that the two lovers, locked in an embrace, lost in the anonymous vastness of the black sand, are Mateo and Lena.

She opens the desk's drawer and, much to her surprise, finds it overflowing with torn photographs of Mateo and Lena, shuffled in no particular order (one might say they had been thrown violently into the drawer. The violence of the hand that ripped and threw them has left its pulsating mark).

Judit picks up all the pieces, slowly and delicately, and she places them inside a brown envelope that she finds next to Mateo's notebook. Her sense of guilt is so profound that it dries out her throat and the expression on her face.

139. FAMARA BEACH. EXT. DAY. 1994.

At the base of the complex, on one end of the beach, the car that brought them is waiting. Judit places the bags with Mateo's belongings, which she has just carried from the bungalow, inside the trunk. She raises her head, emotionally exhausted. From where she stands she can see little Diego, ecstatic, in front of a group of surfers wearing brilliant colors traversing the waves and a group of kites (around eight or ten) darting through the sky like flying fish. Mateo is motionless, in front of the sea, soaking up its strength.

Judit's pain is at odds with the boy's joy and the overwhelming vitality that the place exudes at that very moment.

She begins to walk toward Mateo and little Diego. Once she is a few meters away, she observes a surfer riding a wave. In the foreground of her line of sight stands Mateo, out of focus. As he comes into focus, Judit yells out to him:

JUDIT

Harry! Harry Caine!

It seems as though she is invoking the wind (a hurricane) which moves the waves along with the expert surfers riding them.

When he hears Judit's voice, Mateo turns to face in her direction and responds:

HARRY

We're here, Judit! (And raises his hand like a child)

Judit approaches them, petrified with emotion. The wind tears tears from her eyes.

JUDIT

We have to go, Harry.

HARRY

(To the boy) Let's go, Dieguito. Give me your hand.

DIEGUITO

(Protests, politely) Can't we stay a little longer?

HARRY

No. We must obey your mother... You've had enough wind for one day...

DIEGUITO

But I'm already all better!

Judit walks in front of the blind man and the boy, her eyes glitter. Mateo has responded to her call, and that has filled her with uncontrollable emotion. At this very moment she decides that she will dedicate her life exclusively to the care of this man. This is how it will be.

140. HARRY'S HOME. INT. DAY. 2008.

Diego is still sitting on the floor, next to the brown envelope. He sticks on the Braille title, "Famara. Lanzarote 94." In front of him, spread on the floor like a puzzle, lie the pieces of various embraces between Mateo and Lena (like archeological finds, like the Minoan paintings in Crete). The pieces begin to join with one another, an order is established and, soon, the better part of the picture is clear. There are four photographs where, regardless of the missing pieces, one can make out the image. Two are of embraces and the rest are of domestic scenes. The scratches on the four photographs reveal the passing of time.

Neither of the two men speak. Mateo remains seated at his desk. Pensive.

Cut to.

141. HARRY'S HOME. INT. NIGHT. 2008.

They prepare to watch/hear a DVD. Diego goes over Harry's collection (even though one would imagine he knows it). On the spines, the titles are written in Braille. He has already asked him what he would

like to watch (he reads off some titles; in general, all the movies are made prior to '94, all classics).

HARRY

Play "Elevator to the Gallows" and take a look at the ending...

While he looks for it...

DIEGO

Do you always watch the same movies?

HARRY

Yes. Since I know them by heart, I can visualize the action.

DIEGO

Is there any new movie you'd want to see...?

HARRY

Yes. But you'd have to describe the action. Your mother used to describe some to me, some time ago.

DIEGO

I wouldn't mind doing so.

HARRY

I would like to "watch" one by Tarantino or Scorsese, and also some Asian cinema...

DIEGO

Done.

They pick a movie (chosen by Mateo). Diego hooks up the television, then inserts the DVD.

142. CONTINUED

Images of Mateo Blanco's last film, "Girls and Suitcases," appear on a random television station, it is the beginning of one of the sequences of which the spectator is already aware.

For Harry it is all a shock, there is not doubt that it is his film. It is the sequence where Magdalena, wearing a cast, opens the door for her friend Chon.

143. WHAT WE SEE ON THE TELEVISION SCREEN. A SCENE FROM "GIRLS AND SUITCASES." PINA'S LOFT. INT. 2008.

Pina limps toward the door. Through the peephole she sees her friend Chon, looking back with an exaggerated look of reproach:

PINA

What a drag! (she opens, not very welcoming) Oh, it's you?

RETURN TO 142. IN HARRY'S LIVING ROOM. 2008.

In front of the television, having heard only those two phrases, Harry jumps up as if propelled by springs.

HARRY

That's "Girls and Suitcases"!

Diego observes him and then looks at the television.

DIEGO

Yes.

HARRY

Turn up the volume!

Sitting on the floor, next to the television, Diego turns up the volume.

Harry focuses on the sounds from the screen and Diego on everything else.

144. ON THE TELEVISION. 2008.

Chon enters. (They are supposed to be good friends). Chon has an endearing appearance, she is a little chubby, well dressed, according to her age (forty) and her profession, a Counselor for Social Affairs. Spontaneous and direct (she is kind of a Bette Midler in her forties), but the actress is lacking grace and her restlessness reveals more about her fear of running into the moving camera, than about the very funny way that the character inhabits her own anxiety. Lena is also quite languid, lacking spark, tired and unenthusiastic. (As a comedy, it's without charm and, as a drama, it's uninteresting, that's what the critics said).

CHON

(Reproachful) I've left you a thousand messages.

PINA

Yes. A thousand from you, and none from Ivan.

As if Ivan's phone call depended on Chon.

145. LIVINGROOM, HARRY'S HOME. INT. NIGHT. 2008.

Harry twitches around in his chair, anxious and impatient. He doesn't like what he hears.

146. ON THE TELEVISION. 2008.

CHON

(Sees the suitcase sitting in the middle of the loft. Looks at it as if it were some strange insect.) And this suitcase?

PINA

It's Ivan's. He's leaving me.

CHON

And the cast on your leg?

PINA

His ex-wife, the crazy one. She pushed me down the stairs and I broke my leg...

All said without any spark. The actresses are reciting the text mechanically and they appear tired of interpreting it.

CHON

Wow! Well, we're in good shape... I also broke up with my husband...

147. LIVINGROOM, HARRY'S HOME. INT. NIGHT. 2008

Diego and Harry are still staring at the television. Harry with his ear turned toward the screen, disappointed and tense. Diego is more indulgent of the scene.

HARRY

(Annoyed) They're terrible!

Each of the men focus their respective senses on the television screen.

HARRY

How could I have thought these takes were the good ones! What was I thinking!

With the same fury with which he had thrown down the newspaper with the bad review of his film onto the sand, he abruptly shuts off the television monitor.

He remains suspended for a few moments, as if trying to find an explanation for what he has just heard. Was he so caught up in Magdalena's problems that he was unable to distinguish when a take was good or bad?

Cut to.

148. HARRY'S HOME. INT. DAY. 2008.

The next morning, Harry wakes up early. He has spent an entire night thinking about the same thing. Dressed in a bathrobe, but not showered yet, he walks over to his desk.

All these scenes take place in the dark. A faint light from the breaking dawn enters through the corners of the drapes that cover the windows.

He opens the drawer with the photographs. (When Diego had opened it before, we had been able to see that along with the photographs there were other objects, for example, Luis' notebook (the editor). Diego had not mentioned any of this to Harry). Harry pokes around in the drawer with his hands, finds the notebook.

He grabs it. He opens it on top of his desk. He touches the different pages. The tips of his finger tips run over the numbers corresponding to the sequences, the shots, the selected takes, attempting to find a message.

149. DIEGO'S ROOM. INT. DAY. 2008.

Harry walks over to Diego's room with the notebook in hand. The boy is naked, drying himself with a towel after his shower.

Harry asks permission to enter.

HARRY

May I come in?

DIEGO

(Drying himself) Yes, come in!

Not giving him time to get dressed, Harry hands him the notebook.

HARRY

Luis, the editor, sent it to me six years ago. At that time I didn't even bother to open it, I didn't want to know anything about him. I am now thinking

that perhaps he had something to tell me. Would you mind seeing if beyond the takes and all of that there is something else written?

Diego looks through it carefully. The last pages are empty. The rest only have the numbers pertaining to the sequences, the shots, and the selected takes, like we have seen in the sequence with the Moviola. Although, there is something written on the last page. "My new number: 91 6994079."

DIEGO

At the end he says this is my new number, a number's written down.

Harry hands him his mobile phone.

HARRY

Call him, please!

DIEGO

Right now? It's too early.

HARRY

It doesn't matter.

Diego dials the number and hands the phone to Harry.

DIEGO

May I get dressed? I'm naked...

HARRY

Oh, I'm sorry.

He turns around and leaves.

150. HARRY'S HOME. DEN. INT. DAY. 2008.

He exits the bedroom and heads for his dark den.

HARRY

(On the phone) Could I speak to Luis, please?

WOMAN'S VOICE

(Surprised) Luis died six years ago!

HARRY

Oh, I am so sorry... I had no idea!

VOICE

It was cancer. I'm his widow. Who are you?

HARRY

Mateo Blanco. Luis edited all my films...

VOICE

(More serene) Mateo Blanco! Luis spoke to me about you. I am his second wife...

HARRY

The one I know is Nieves, the first one.

VOICE

We married twelve years ago.

HARRY

(Sincere and sorrowful) I am sorry to hear about Luis' death. I would have liked to speak to him...

VOICE

He would have liked so too! Once he was quite ill and didn't want to speak to anyone, he would always tell me that, if it was you, I should hand him the phone...

Harry keeps silent.

HARRY

You have no idea how sorry I am!

Cut to.

151. LIVING ROOM, HARRY'S HOME. INT. DAY. 2008.

Diego is in the kitchen. He is preparing breakfast, both for himself and Mateo.

Harry, heavy-hearted, approaches the kitchen, pensive. A half-hearted "happy birthday" escapes Diego's lips. Harry doesn't react, perhaps he hasn't heard him. Noticing the look on his face Diego is not eager to insist.

DIEGO

What's going on?

HARRY

My editor. I just found out he died six years ago..

Diego remains silent and lets Harry continue talking.

HARRY

Not long before he died he sent me this notebook. But I didn't want to know anything about him, I also didn't know he was dying... and I put it away... until today... His wife just told me he would have liked to speak to me, that was the purpose of sending me the notebook... but I didn't give him the chance.

DIEGO

Had you spoken since the accident?

HARRY

No. Never.

Diego places plates with toast and juice on the table. He serves Harry some coffee and adds sugar.

DIEGO

The coffee is in front of you...

Harry finds the cup easily.

DIEGO

Are you OK? Would you like me to stay here?

HARRY

No, no... You're heading out?

DIEGO

My mother arrives today. I would like to be home when she arrives.

HARRY

I didn't know she was arriving...

DIEGO

I didn't either, she left me a message this morning. She's coming to celebrate your birthday, with us...

HARRY

It's my birthday?

DIEGO

It seems so. Today's the (he tells him the day), does that sound right?

HARRY

Yes. A day like today, fifty-one years ago, I entered the world.

DIEGO

Happy birthday!

152. JUDIT AND DIEGO'S HOME. INT. DAY. 2008.

Judit returns from location scouting. She enters her house. She hugs her son, effusively.

She drops a large suitcase, with wheels. (The sequence takes place in various rooms in the house. From the foyer she should move toward the bedroom or the kitchen, where she makes herself some tea, or where she opens bags full of food that she's brought, typical to the region she's just visited. (She looks inside the refrigerator and doesn't find anything). Things like that.

JUDIT

I was dying to see you! Are you OK, my son?

DIEGO

Yes.

JUDIT

I was very worried about you!

DIEGO

Mateo has looked after me day and night...

JUDIT

Mateo? You're not calling him Harry...?

Diego had not realized.

DIEGO

Yes...

JUDIT

Today's his birthday, we must get him something... What have you been up to all this time?

DIEGO

Nothing... Watching movies... and talking...

JUDIT

(As if it were something strange) Talking?

DIEGO

Yes...

JUDIT

What about?

DIEGO

Mom, please!

Judit looks at her son. She finds him different. As if all the confidences shared with Harry had left a physical and visible mark on him. Diego seems to guess what his mother is thinking.

JUDIT

OK. So what happened to you? (Sort of joking) I don't know if I should believe the thing about the stomach flu, you two used that as an excuse in a script...

DIEGO

(Elusive) (I suffered) ... an accident. But I would rather not speak of that right now...

JUDIT

(Irritated, by the surprise) What kind of accident?

DIEGO

It's hard to explain.

JUDIT

(Orders him, annoyed) Try to! I am not that stupid!

DIEGO

Let's leave it for another time, yes? I am all well now.

Judit gets the sense that she can no longer speak to her son in the same way that she could before she left on her trip. Those two weeks have irreversibly changed him.

JUDIT

What's wrong with you, Diego?

DIEGO

Nothing. I'm doing just fine. I'm going to buy a present for Mateo.

JUDIT

(Repeats) For Mateo...

DIEGO

Alright, Harry.

(Offended, she doesn't want her son to think she is a drag, so she makes an effort not to bombard him with questions)

JUDIT

Call him however you wish. That's the advantage of having two names.

Diego disappears and leaves her in mid-sentence.

(Is this his way of avenging himself? Perhaps his reaction is unfair, but he cannot stand to stay there with his mother, answering thousands of questions regarding an "accident" when there has been another "accident" that he is much more intrigued by and that she has kept silent for fourteen years.)

153. MATEO-HARRY'S HOME. INT. DAY. 2008.

(The maid may be around)

Mateo goes to open the door. Judit has the key in one hand and a huge flower bouquet in the other. They greet each other enthusiastically. Mateo-Harry attempts to hug her but his arms collide with the flowers.

JUDIT

Wait, my arms are full...

MATEO

Are those flowers?

JUDIT

Yes! Happy Birthday!

Cut to.

154. MATEO-HARRY'S HOME. INT. DAY. 2008.

Mateo and Judit talk, they are sitting on a sofa, the conversation is already mid-way.

JUDIT

Thank you for looking after Diego... I don't know how to thank you!

MATEO

You've been looking after me for fourteen years now...

Judit brushes his acknowledgement off, with a half-smile.

JUDIT

I've found him somewhat hostile. He left without telling me what it was that happened... Will you tell me?

MATEO

I don't know. It should be your son to tell you.

Judit is upset by both of their evasiveness.

JUDIT

What is wrong with the two of you? Why is it that he suddenly is not calling you Harry but Mateo?

MATEO

(He evades the first question, but responds to the second one.) Two weeks ago, at the place where he D.J.'s, by mistake, he grabbed a friend's drink that had been spiked with G.H.B., liquid ecstasy. He thought it was his drink, both drinks had Coca-cola.

JUDIT

Liquid ecstasy?

MATEO

Yes. It's a very dangerous drug when it's mixed with alcohol and Diego had already had two Cuba Libres before he drank from his friend's glass...

JUDIT

And... what happened... exactly?

MATEO

(Being vague.) He was badly affected. He spent two days in urgent care, after that, I brought him here.

Judit looks at him, horrified. She can't seem to comprehend such a turbulent and simple story.

JUDIT

Diego's a drug addict?

MATEO

No. I've told you, he drank from the glass containing liquid ecstasy by mistake..

JUDIT

But how can one make a mistake with something like that?

MATEO

At first glance one cannot tell the difference. Both glasses contained Coca-cola.. It's not the first time it happens..

Judit sighs, defenseless and horrified.

MATEO

Diego has not told you so that you wouldn't be alarmed..

JUDIT

(That I wouldn't be alarmed?!) Well, he hasn't succeeded. At some point he will have to speak to me, no?

MATEO

He is wanting to do so!

Judit takes a cigarette out of its box and lights it.

JUDIT

Is that so? Because I ask him and he doesn't answer!

MATEO

Then you should try answering him, when he asks you.

Judit smokes in silence, she is curious to know what Mateo and Diego have been talking about in her absence, but she doesn't dare ask Mateo.

JUDIT

The two of you are acting very differently. Both of you. You both have changed.

She laments it, as if she had been put aside and they had not taken her into account.

Cut to.

155. "NO VIEWS" RESTAURANT. INT. NIGHT. 2008.

AT THE BAR BEFORE ONE ENTERS THE RESTAURANT.

Judit and Mateo are having something to drink. Mateo tilts his head subtly in front of Judit.

MATEO

You smell good...

JUDIT

(Insecure) I have put on some makeup and I am dressed as a woman.

MATEO

What's the dress like?

Judit describes it, with few words and almost shyly.

MATEO

And the hair? How are you wearing your hair? It's been so long since I've asked you that I don't even know whether it's long or short.

The fact that Mateo betrays that type of interest flatters and disconcerts her.

JUDIT

I haven't changed much, Harry. I am wearing my hair short.

MATEO

Short like Jean Seberg in "Breathless"? Like Joan of Arc on the bonfire? Like Liza Minnelli in "Cabaret"? Or like Yul Brynner?

JUDIT

Short, or rather, very short, like that of all fortysomethings who want to appear younger.

MATEO

I am sure it looks good on you. Thanks for dressing up for me, Judit...

Diego looks at them, amused. He hands Mateo three DVDs (Scorsese's "Goodfellas" (or the Coen Brother's "Fargo"), Tarantino's "Kill Bill," and Kiarostami's "Taste of Cherry").

Near them, on the bar table, two couples talk excitedly as if they were about to go on a ride at an Amusement Park.

The barman tells them they may now enter.

156. "NO VIEWS" RESTAURANT. INT. NIGHT. 2008.

Once they've crossed the doorway, a man signals them to follow him. He's a blind man that, like Mateo, moves smoothly, he knows the place by heart.

The restaurant is completely shrouded in darkness, all the waiters, men and women, are blind. The one in charge of Mateo, Diego, and Judit introduces himself:

JAVIER

My name is Javier. How many are you?

MATEO

Three.

There is not a single light inside. The following sequences take place in absolute darkness.

JAVIER

Please, grab onto each other's shoulders and follow me in Indian-file. I will guide you to your table. It's number eight.

JUDIT

What is the idea here, Harry?

MATEO

We are dinning in darkness.

JAVIER

You didn't know this, ma'am?

JUDIT

(Anxious, feeling slightly ridiculed) No...

JAVIER

You should have been warned, but don't worry. People get used to it after a few minutes.

157. "NO VIEWS" RESTAURANT. INT. NIGHT. 2008.

They have arrived to their table, as signaled by the waiter. Table number eight. He tells them where to sit.

JAVIER

Imagine that your plate is the face of a watch. Your silverware is at 9h and at 3h. Your glass at 1h. Bread at 11h.

Each of them reaches for the objects as indicated by the waiter around an imaginary clock.

Judit still believes this is some kind of joke and that the lights will come on at any moment and that something spectacular will appear before her eyes.

If she had been able to see, she would have been witness to the very interesting scenes surrounding her. Two couples kissing, with bestial enjoyment. And a well-bred woman performing fellatio on the man sitting next to her. No one sees them except our camera.

JUDIT

Harry, what is all this about?

The waiter responds.

JAVIER

We want our clients to discover that the lack of sight harnesses the other senses. Touch, taste, smell and sound will acquire a special intensity tonight, ma'am. I hope you'll enjoy them.

Judit says nothing. She hides her nervousness in order not to ruin Mateo's night, he seems fascinated with the place and completely unaware of the process she is now living: the discovery of absolute darkness. A bottomless pit.

JAVIER

Will the gentlemen be drinking something?

MATEO

Bring us a bottle of wine, to toast.

The waiter leaves them.

Slowly, Judit begins to walk the plank that will plunge her into anxiety. The evening feels far from a party, but she doesn't want to spoil it for either Mateo or Diego. She hears Mateo explaining to him:

MATEO

I found out about this place in the newspaper and I wanted to check it out.

DIEGO

It's a German idea, there are various restaurant like this one, they're totally in fashion.

JUDIT

(Can't believe what she's hearing.) Darkness, in fashion? I don't understand.

Silence. Judit pours herself some water and drinks. And she gets depressed, in silence.

She lights a cigarette.

158. "NO VIEWS" RESTAURANT. AT THE TABLE. INT. NIGHT. 2008.

Javier, the waiter, arrives with the wine. He tells Judit she can't smoke. She puts out the cigarette. (On the floor?)

To enliven the occasion, Diego proposes a toast.

DIEGO

Let's toast!

JUDIT

Yes. Let's toast.

Mateo pours the glasses. They each grab one. Clumsily, they bring them close until they can hear the sound of the crystal clinking.

DIEGO

Happy Birthday!

JUDIT

Happy Birthday! We must look into each other's eyes.
(She has already said it and it's too late when she thinks of retracting it.)

DIEGO

Well, we're kind of screwed...

JUDIT

Oh, sorry... It slipped.

They attempt to clink glasses. It is not such an easy task. The three glasses head for each other in the darkness, it would have been easiest to have all three meet at the center, but instead each opts to find the other. Only Mateo puts his forward and leaves it in place, waiting for the other two to find his. When this happens, Judit's glass collides with too much force, breaks his glass and wine spills

all over the table cloth. Mateo attempts to make light of the situation, as if nothing had happened. He presses his fingers into the wine that has spilled on the tablecloth and exclaims:

MATEO

Joy! Joy! (to Judit) Bring your ear to me so that I can sprinkle some wine behind it. It's for good luck!

Judit attempts to heed his request, she leans forward, offering her head, parallel to the table. Mateo can't quite find her ear. Judit collapses. Her head topples onto the table, without strength, and she bursts into tears.

Cut to.

159. "THE MIRROR" TERRACE. INT. EXT. NIGHT. 2008.

Show both terraces, the exterior one and the glass-enclosed one. The sequence begins once all three of them (Judit, Diego and Harry) are seated and drinking. Judit's emotional state has not improved. The short sequence of events that she's had to live through since her arrival have been making her increasingly tense and worried. She is trying to combat the letdown by way of gin-and-tonic.

(They are sitting on one extreme of the ellipsis that makes up the glass-enclosed terrace, decorated with cheesy Decó motifs).

At the center, where the bar is located, two or three waiters prepare to clean up the tables. Once in a while, they look over at the only three remaining clients. Once in a while, they are also able to catch Judit's words. And once in a while, the waiters function as the

audience, witnessing a theatrical production. Although on this occasion, the setting is real and so is the drama. Judit sips-down the gin-and-tonic quite rapidly. Mateo and Diego accompany her.

Cut to.

160. CONTINUED. MIRROR TERRACE. INT. NIGHT.

JUDIT

I don't know what you've been talking about these past days...

A topic which they have waited to broach since she arrived from her trip.

Neither of the two men respond, but they are both made uncomfortable by the comment.

JUDIT

But I do know what I haven't talked to you about all these years...

Mateo directs his face toward her, surprised and polite.

MATEO

I've never asked you...

JUDIT

But you must have asked yourself a thousand times. This is my birthday gift, Mateo. (To Diego) The gift is also for you, Diego.

She takes another sip to draw courage, but she's already gathered enough momentum:

JUDIT

(To Mateo) After you disappeared, Ernesto Senior thought only of his revenge. A plan had occurred to him but, to carry it out, he had to bribe, at the very least, both Luis and me. It wasn't an issue, we both sold ourselves without hesitation. Luis and I. With me, he had the courtesy to provide an alibi, he proposed that I leave for a month and a half to the United States, to the Mayo Clinic, so that Diego could undergo a cure for his aspergillosis, that way I wouldn't have to be present while he destroyed the movie (because that was his plan, to make a mess out of the film). I opted to stay in Madrid and have Diego undergo his cure here. I wanted to witness everything. If I was going to betray you, I wanted to pay the full price...

MATEO

What a living hell! For both of you!

DIEGO

You said it!

She takes a deep breath and continues:

JUDIT

Yes. It was torture to watch Ernesto select the worst takes of each shot and Luis edit them together, turning your film into a monster (briefly tears?). The only way of withstanding that was to suffer more.

(Overcome) I sold myself to Ernesto because of my pain and jealousy. I couldn't take it and I couldn't (then) forgive you for having abandoned Cinearte with Lena without saying a word! My betrayal was my revenge against you, against her and against myself... The only innocent one was Diego... (To Diego) Forgive me, my son, for the bitterness that you've had to absorb all these years... no one deserves to grow up like this...

161. CONTINUED. MIRROR TERRACE. INT. NIGHT.

Judit rises. She approaches the bar table. She orders another gin-and-tonic. The waiter doesn't dare to tell her they've already closed, so he serves her.

With the glass in her hand, Judit returns to the table where Mateo and Diego wait, expectantly.

She has observed them whispering, but she hasn't heard what they have said. She sits down with them.

Judit takes a sip.

MATEO

(Interrupts her) Don't continue, Judit! It's not necessary.

JUDIT

Yes. Now that you once again call yourself Mateo, I have no excuse.

Judit takes a sip from her drink, to gather her strength.

JUDIT

No one knew where you were. We had no idea. Ernesto Senior put everything together, the premier, all that ruckus, to see if you'd react. His revenge was pointless if neither of you found out about it. (Pauses) Ernesto asked me constantly if I knew where you were, but I said that I also didn't know anything, which was true.

MATEO

(Somber) That's why I never called you, but even if you don't believe it, I was very worried for you and the boy.

JUDIT

I believe you...

Diego attempts to say that he, too, believes him, but Judit doesn't give him time.

JUDIT

Ernesto hired various detectives to search for you, but before they found you, you called me, two days after the premier. (Slowly, debilitated.) I was too embarrassed to answer, and... too stunned. I still am. When Ernesto Senior asked me again about you, I don't know why, I gave him the phone number for Famara...

Mateo and Diego listen to her, with renewed attention. This new information reveals an unexpected possibility, something that neither of the two men had considered. Their reaction toward Judit's painful declaration changes in character. In Mateo's case, his compassion vanishes and is replaced by doubt, now incited by new suspicions.

JUDIT

Ernesto sent his son to find you in Lanzarote.

(Images of Ernesto Junior, inside a rented car, following the couple across various places on the island, including the highway that leads to Famara, on that last night.)

JUDIT

He was the one who found you after the accident and called the hospital...

DIEGO

Did he have something to do with the accident?

JUDIT

No! But I can't stop thinking that had I not given his father the phone number, perhaps nothing would have happened...

MATEO

(Dryly) Why do you think that?

JUDIT

I don't know...

MATEO

(Categorically) If you don't know, then stop torturing yourself.

He says this with spite and somewhat disparagingly. For Judit it's like a splash of cold water to the face.

The confession, rather than ending as a liberating catharsis, has devolved in its opposite. The silence is weighed down by suspicion and the new abyss between Mateo and Judit.

Never before has Judit felt Mateo this distant and antagonistic. Her dramatic confession, far from liberating her, has opened new wounds

and generated new suspicions. And Judit feels taken over by an arid anxiety, corrosive, unbearable. She almost can't breathe.

Cut to.

162. CASTELLANA STREET. EXT. NIGHT. 2008.

Judit, Mateo and Diego are inside Judit's car. Diego is driving. The three are tense and silent.

163. MATEO'S BUILDING. EXT. INT. NIGHT. 2008.

In silence, they arrive at the entrance of the building where Mateo lives. (Mateo is possibly carrying his umbrella or a blind man's cane). He exits the car. Judit walks him to the front door. She is glad that Mateo can't see her look of embarrassment.

MATEO

Good night.

JUDIT

(Destroyed) Good night. Call me if you need anything...

Mateo doesn't respond. When the entrance door shuts like a resounding "no."

Judit waits until she sees him disappear into the elevator.

164. MATEO'S DOORWAY. EXT. NIGHT. 2008.

From Judit's point of view, Mateo disappears into the elevator, which soon begins to rise.

**165. STREET. IN FRONT OF THE ENTRANCE TO MATEO'S BUILDING.
EXT. NIGHT. 2008.**

Undone, and she no longer pretends otherwise, Judit returns to the car.

Before she opens the door she bends over and retches violently.

Diego gets out of the car and holds her by the waist. He attempts to help her.

Judit's face is contorted. She wipes a thread of saliva still hanging from her lips. Despite the retching, she has not vomited anything other than liquid.

DIEGO

(Touching her forehead) You are sweating..

JUDIT

It's a panic attack... (Takes a deep breath, as if she had lost her wind) Hand me the purse!

Diego finds the purse in the car and hands it to her immediately. Judit searches through the purse, impatiently. She takes the purse and drops all of its contents on the sidewalk. She find a box of tranquilizers. The pill she presses through the aluminum seal comes out with a pop; she places it on her tongue. She leans over the car. Diego looks at her, scared, he has never seen her like this. Articulating poorly, so as to not move her tongue, Judit say to him:

JUDIT

This will pass soon...

166. JUDIT'S HOME. INT. NIGHT. 2008.

Diego hands her a glass of water. Once in bed, Judit takes two sleeping pills. She has overcome the crisis.

Diego looks at her, very concerned. His mother has never shown herself to be so physically fragile. He wants to help her, but it doesn't seem like there is anything more he can do than what he already has.

Judit attempts to smile in order to calm him.

JUDIT

I will sleep well with this...

DIEGO

Do you want me to stay here?

JUDIT

(Surprised) Here? What for?

DIEGO

In case the panic returns, so that you don't feel alone.

Judit eyes swell with tears.

JUDIT

Thank you. I am feeling better... and I'll fall asleep soon.

DIEGO

Call me, if you are not feeling well...

He kisses her twice and exits. The curtains that cover a large window that looks out into an interior terrace are made from the same material as those that Mateo has in his bedroom.

168. HARRY'S HOME. INT. DAWN. 2008.

The next day.

Standing over his desk, Mateo searches the desk drawer under the computer. It's open. There are not many things inside (credit cards, envelopes with money, a jump drive, the MP3, etc.), he goes through it meticulously until he finds the note that Ray X had left him the day he came to ask him if they could write a script together. Ray X has hand-written his own telephone number on the note. He goes over it with his fingertips, as if he could see through them.

He dials a familiar number, Diego's.

169. JUDIT'S HOME. DIEGO'S BEDROOM. INT. DAWN. 2008.

Diego's mobile phone vibrates four or five times. But Diego is sleeping and he doesn't wake up. The mobile phone stops vibrating. In all the scenes where Mateo is alone at home, he never turns on the light. He will be in the dark, lightly illuminated by any light that the cracks in the windows let through.

RETURN TO 168.

Mateo leaves him a message: "I am sorry to call you so early. Tell your mother to call me as soon as she can."

170. HARRY'S STREET. EXT. DAY. 2008.

As usual, Mateo buys his newspaper at the same news-agent. He turns his body toward the Modeling Agency, but no one there enters or exits whose odor or whose clacking heels rings familiar. There are a few people on the sidewalk and those he crosses are all heading, like zombies, to work.

171. BAR ACROSS. 8 IN THE MORNING. EXT. INT. DAY. 2008.

He enters the bar where his Waiter Friend works. The place has just opened. There are very few clients. He greets him.

WAITER FRIEND

Why here so early?

MATEO

I couldn't sleep. Would you mind dialing this number?

He hands him the phone and the piece of paper where Ray X's number is written.

172. KITCHEN, JUDIT'S HOME. INT. DAY. 2008.

Diego is meticulously preparing breakfast for himself and Judit. He works hard to ensure that they both start their day with the help of a generous and varied breakfast, toast, juice, coffee and tea, marmalade, toasted bread spread with oil and tomato, etc..

Judit appears through one of the kitchen doors, calm, with a look of having rested (but also with the hangover of having survived a nightmarish day, the day before). Diego does not hear her approach. The mother takes advantage of this to observe her son with a tender smile. When Diego turns to look, the tenderness disappears a little, more out of modesty and a lack of habit. In any case, Judit enjoys the peacefulness of the moment: her son caring for her after the storm.

Judit looks over the culinary display.

JUDIT

How impressive!

DIEGO

I am specializing in breakfasts. I would do the same for Mateo...

Judit's expression changes, now a bit more somber.

DIEGO

Are you OK?

JUDIT

Yes, (still a bit beaten down) don't worry about last night. It's horrible, but it only happens occasionally and I know how to stop it...

DIEGO

It scared me, it seemed as though an alien would pop out of your stomach.

JUDIT

It's not a bad way of describing a panic attack...
(Changing the topic, one can tell she's made the
decision before she arrived in the kitchen). Diego,
there was one last thing I didn't tell you yesterday.

Assuming it will be painful, he attempts to dissuade her:

DIEGO

About Mateo?

JUDIT

Yes.

DIEGO

You can tell me some other time. Now it's time for breakfast.

JUDIT

If I don't tell you now, I may never do so... At the end
of the eighties, in '77, to be exact.

DIEGO

The year of punk.

JUDIT

Yes, in the year of punk, Mateo and I became involved...

DIEGO

In a love affair?

JUDIT

Yes... We were just getting started in film, and we are
still at it, but our love affair ended, at least on his
side... That didn't keep us from working together...
until now...

DIEGO

I knew all that, or I imagined it...

JUDIT

There's one more thing... Mateo is your father...

Diego looks at her, astonished.

DIEGO

And that fleeting lover, my supposed biological father? You made him up?

JUDIT

No... I... can hide things... but I never make things up... I don't know how to make up... The fleeting lover existed, he was gay and our affair was short-lived. His name was Vicente and it was while I was with him that you were conceived, but your biological father was Mateo, not Vicente.

Still thinking about what he has just heard, Diego places the breakfast on the main kitchen table and serves his mother a cup of tea. Judit begins to drink it, one tiny sip at a time.

DIEGO

(Assimilates the news. He is not displeased) Does Mateo know?

JUDIT

No. At that time, he asked me and I denied it, of course. I didn't want to put pressure on him, I didn't want our relationship to change because of it. After all, I had never asked him if he wanted to become a father.

The pieces begin to fall together.

DIEGO

I see...

JUDIT

If you think I made a mistake, don't tell me now. We have the rest of our lives for recriminations.

Diego remains pensive for a moment.

DIEGO

I will not recriminate you... I think I like being Mateo's son (the son of a bitch) ... Speaking of, he called early this morning...

JUDIT

Who?

DIEGO

Mateo. At 8h.

She looks at the clock and it's 11h.

JUDIT

What did he want?

DIEGO

For you to call him as soon as you could.

JUDIT

(Surprised, tense) That I call him? Why in the world have you not awakened me?!

DIEGO

Because, after what happened last night, you needed to sleep. He didn't say it was urgent. You can call him now.

Judit grabs her son's phone, agitated once again, and dials Mateo's number.

173. ALTERNATING BETWEEN JUDIT'S HOME. INT. DAY. 2008.

174. PUERTA DE HIERRO MANSION. ERNESTO JUNIOR'S STUDY. INT. DAY. 2008.

In the beginning the shot is close up and so we are not aware of where he is. All one can see is a bit of a curtain, out of focus.

Phone conversation.

JUDIT

(Attempts to appear calm, since her confession her voice has a less authoritarian edge and is weaker)
Diego has told me to call you. Are you OK? Do you need anything? (This is what she's most worried about.)

MATEO

(Almost with irony) I am not alright, Judit. And yes, I do need something... The forty thousand meters of negative we shot during my last film in order to edit it... I am at the home of Ernesto Junior and I just found out the material was destroyed in '94. I imagined something like this, I just didn't think it would have happened that soon...

JUDIT

(With urgency) Let me explain...

MATEO

(Cuts her off) No. I am in a hideous mood, Judit, and I don't want to take it out on you!

JUDIT

(Surprised and alarmed) What are you doing at Ernesto's house?

The shot opens up, and we discover Ernesto Junior at the other end of the room, next to a 16mm camera (on a tripod) recording everything that Mateo says and does, while he searches around in some drawers.

MATEO

I think I am going to bribe him. We need money, I don't want Diego back at that damn bar. I want to pay Diego a salary, we need money and he has money to throw...

175. PUERTA DE HIERRO MANSION. ERNESTO'S STUDY. INT. DAY. 2008.

The studio has a different configuration than when his father lived, but we recognize the place nonetheless; when the father was alive the space served a different purpose.

Ernesto looks at Mateo fearlessly, he is still determined to search, urgently, for something inside the drawers of a chest. The place is a pretty big mess.

JUDIT

Mateo, stop talking crazy!

MATEO

It is not craziness. I can't think of anyone else to blame for Magdalena's death.

JUDIT

My God! (She asks Diego to bring her the box of tranquilizers.) Wait a second... I have something to tell you.

MATEO

Let it be, you already said enough last night.

JUDIT

(She takes a pill and yells at him) Listen to me, Mateo! (As she raises her voice, she becomes dominant.) I was the production director, if you want to know anything about the footage, ask me!

MATEO

Since you insist, I will ask you. What do you have to tell me?

JUDIT

In effect, Ernesto Senior asked for it to be destroyed.

MATEO

In '94! Very shortly after the release of that aberration.

JUDIT

Yes. In any case, sooner or later the lab disposes of all the material... and that was many years ago.

MATEO

That's not anything that I don't already know.

JUDIT

As the film's producer I was the only one who had access to the lab... to all the material. After I gave the order to have everything destroyed, I intercepted it. And I kept it. I have all of it at home.

MATEO

You are lying to me.

JUDIT

I didn't tell you this last night because I didn't realize you wanted to edit it. I took everything, all the double takes, the internegative, the sound tapes... Everything! You can have it whenever you want!

The silence on the other end of the line reassures her.

MATEO

That changes everything.

JUDIT

(Begs) Please, get out of that place, leave Ernesto alone. He had nothing to do with this.

Mateo looks over at Ernesto Junior. The camera is still on its tripod, rolling.

MATEO

I am not so sure. He has yet to explain what he was doing in Lanzarote. I'll let you go, it seems he wants to talk... (Hangs up)

Ernesto, finally, finds a DVD. He has it in his hand and brings it toward Mateo. (His hand enters into view on the screen of the 16mm camera).

ERNESTO J.

Here is a copy of "the making of".

MATEO

And why would I want that? I can't watch it! Plus, I'm not interested.

Ernesto takes his hand and places the DVD softly onto it.

ERNESTO J.

Have someone you trust watch it and tell you about it. (This DVD proves that I wasn't responsible for the accident.) Oh, and even if my father had asked me to

harm you, I never would have... You are very important
to me, Mateo...

Ernesto speaks naturally, for the first time, Mateo takes him
seriously.

176. MATEO-HARRY HOME. INT. DAY. 2008

Diego is watching the images of "the making of", while Mateo works out
on his treadmill.

At the last moment, an instant prior to being struck by the SUV, Mateo
and Lena kiss inside the car. They are then distracted by a noise
from the car that is about to hit them. These images have been
recorded from inside a different car, which has been following them
from behind, at a safe distance (Ernesto Junior's car).

Mateo reaches the living room from the other end of the house,
dripping with sweat.

Diego has just watched the kiss and the accident. He rewinds and he
pauses right at the moment when Mateo's and Lena's kiss fills the
whole screen.

MATEO

Is there something new I should know about?

DIEGO

(Surprised and moved) It's a very interesting
documentary... And, yes, in effect, Ernesto followed
you to Lanzarote, until the last moment.

MATEO

The images are there?

DIEGO

Yes.

MATEO

Those of the last night?

They take a look at the images that Ernesto taped at "El Mirador" from the outside. Through the glass of the large window we see Lena and Mateo talking.

DIEGO

Yes. He recorded you at a safe distance, while you were on your way back after dinner. The scene is lit by the light of his headlights. It's not a lot, but enough to see what happened. Not only did he not have anything to do with the accident, he saved your life.

Mateo watches the screen of the television without being able to see it, taking in the information Diego gives him.

DIEGO

And one more thing: When you were at the traffic circle, before the SUV crashed into you, you and Lena kiss...

MATEO

A kiss? I don't remember it...

DIEGO

It was an ordinary kiss, just one more of the many kisses a couple gives each other, almost without thinking...

MATEO

(Pensive) The last kiss...

DIEGO

Yes. Even if it sounds cheesy, someone has to tell you: Lena did not die in your arms, as you dreamed, but the last sensation she experienced in this world was the taste of your mouth..

Mateo watches without seeing the television, he gets close to the screen. With his fingertips, he caresses the surface, literally touching Lena's last kiss.

Shots of Mateo's hand caressing the screen, with the image of the kiss. Shot of Diego observing the entirety of the scene, moved. A shot of everything. The appropriate kind of music accompanies the scene as it begins to fade out, bit by bit, while a sign appears: EPILOGUE.

177. ON THE AVID. INT. 2008

Luis' notebook, open on given sequences, as if Luis were present on this last moment of the definitive editing. An ashtray with a lit cigarette. The hands of the editor powering the Avid, directing the mouse through all the necessary steps until the screen fills with a block of sequences of "Girls and Suitcases," in Pina's loft.

The images fill the entire screen of the main narration. It begins with the same sequence Diego and Mateo watched on television. Everything is the same, but it plays completely differently. The actresses are funny and fresh. The spectator does not know what the difference is, but, unconsciously, he must feel enthralled by the sequences of Pina and Chon, as if spellbound.

178. SCENES FROM "GIRLS AND SUITCASES." PINA'S LOFT. ENTRANCE
HALL. INT. 2008

Pina limps (fed up) toward the door. Looks through the peephole, behind it, Chon. They are good friends, but Chon is the last person Pina wants to see right now.

PINA

(Whispers.) What a drag! (She opens, not the least bit welcoming.) Oh, it's you?

CHON

(Anxious, reproachful.) I have left you a thousand messages!

PINA

Yes. A thousand from you and none from Ivan.

CHON

(Looks at the suitcase as if it were a menacing, strange bug.) What about this suitcase!

PINA

It's Ivan's. He's leaving me.

She notices that Pina is wearing a cast on her leg.

CHON

And that cast on your leg?

PINA

His ex-wife, the crazy one. She pushed me down the stairs...

CHON

Well, we're in good shape! I've also broken up with my husband...

PINA

Oh, sorry to hear it! I will make some coffee, I have spent my entire night looking for Ivan and I haven't gone to bed.

CHON

Neither have I.

On her way to the kitchen Chon notices, through the bedroom door, that the bed has been burnt. She bumps into the phone that has been ripped out of its socket, now on the floor. She says nothing, she doesn't want to pry, but she thinks that Pina's situation must be more complicated than hers.

179. LOFT'S KITCHEN. INT. 2008

The chickens are living large, free to roam throughout the entire place.

PINA

When did you leave him?

CHON

Four days ago. I could see it coming. The thing is that after breaking up, I go out onto the street and I notice there is this "guy" looking at me.

She also discovers the gazpacho on the kitchen table.

CHON

(Voracious.) Oh my, gazpacho! Can I have a bowl?

PINA

No! I've spiked it with an entire box of downers..

CHON

How so?

PINA

In case Ivan arrived, he loves gazpacho.

CHON

(Scolds her.) Pina, my God!

Throughout the conversation Pina makes coffee and prepares a tray of Fornasetti cups and the whole bit.

PINA

And that's not all! Since he wasn't calling, I've torn the phone from the wall, in a moment of rage..

CHON

I've tripped on the thing, but I didn't want to pry...
And the bed? I think I noticed it smoking a bit..

PINA

I dropped a lit match and it began to burn, and I didn't want to squelch it. Fire purifies. I will have to change the mattress, but all for the best! A whole lot of less memories!

Chon looks at her friend.

PINA

But excuse me, I've interrupted you. You were telling me...

She grabs the tray, now full with coffee and pastries.

PINA

Let's have breakfast on the terrace.

The two women head for the terrace, which sits in front of the beautiful backdrop curtain of Madrid.

180. LOFT'S TERRACE. INT. 2008

Chickens and rabbits, running around. Lots of plants, etc. An idyllic and false image. Only the feelings are authentic and the women's happy disposition for living in hysteria.

CHON

(Struggling with what she's about to say.) Yes. I was telling you that I also have a suitcase at home.

PINA

Your husband's?

CHON

No. It's a suitcase with fifteen kilos of cocaine, uncut.

Pina's eyes open wide.

PINA

You've become a dealer, Chon?

CHON

No! How could you think that! I am still a Counselor for Social Affairs in the City Hall! The suitcase appeared in my closet. Imagine the scandal if the police find out. They could put me in jail!

PINA

Certainly!

CHON

I have to get rid of those fifteen kilos as soon as possible. (Thinks.) Because of the hours we keep, politicians consume a lot of drugs. So, between my party cohorts and city hall, I could distribute two kilos, but what do I do with the rest!

PINA

Throw it out!

CHON

Are you crazy? How could I throw it out?! I have to keep the police from finding it in my house... I have to take it some other place, immediately!

PINA

But I don't understand...

CHON

(Interrupts.) Well, it's clear, honey!

PINA

(Finishes her question.) How is it that the suitcase appeared in your closet?

CHON

(Drinks a little coffee, and takes a bite from a pastry.) As I was telling you, after breaking up with my husband, I bumped into this guy on the street who kept watching at me, good-looking, well hung. Summing up, I took him home and screwed him over and over... (Takes another sip of coffee.)

PINA

An how was he?

CHON

In bed? Divine. Look at my arm hair? I've got goose-bumps! (She shows her the hair on her arm,

standing straight up.) He's that kind of guy who knows how to drive a woman mad with pleasure!

PINA

So you lost your mind...

CHON

What else could I do?! So he asked me if he could stay at my place for a few days and I said OK, but I couldn't promise anything. I didn't want him thinking that I was that easy. So (breathes in) he brought the suitcase. He asked me if I cared if he kept it in the closet. He said that he was attached to the suitcase. And, well, why would I care?! (breathes in) By pure chance, I am watching TV last night and I find out that the police have nabbed him in the course of a drug sting operation and that he is one of the most wanted traffickers! I open the suitcase and I discover that it is filled with little bags of cocaine. I ran out of the house and I haven't returned since...

Pina breathes out in solidarity.

PINA

What a story, my God!

CHON

(Concluding.) I was wondering why he was such a good fuck! For men living in such high-stakes conditions, each fuck could be the last! (She reaches her arm out, again.) Look, the goose-bumps!

Once again, she shows Pina her arm, hair standing straight up.

PINA

I've seen them already... They comes easy for you...
(Changing topic.) And the suitcase?

CHON

(Humble.) I was going to ask you... if you didn't mind that I brought it here. If they find it in my house, well, it's not about what could happen to me, but that it's just not an ideal situation for the Counselor of Social Affairs. Imagine how upset the mayor would be, and my party! My party can't take one more scandal!

The doorbell rings:

CHON

The police!

PINA

Shush, how could it be the police?! No one knows you're here!

CHON

I am a woman who attracts attention, Pina. Since I was a little girl...

PINA

Just pretend you're here for coffee...

Pina limps toward the door, uncertain. (Behind it she will find new adventures). She looks back, toward Chon, half-smiling, tired but charming, filled with understanding and a love for life, with all its emotions and its contradictions. It's with this half-smile on Magdalena's face that the sequence arrives at its end.

Mateo, Judit, Diego, and the new editor, somewhat removed from them, are seated in front of the editing table, they are both moved and entertained.

DIEGO

This is hilarious!

MATEO

(Wants to be sure.) It doesn't sound like what we watched on TV, right?

DIEGO

Not at all! This is a whole different thing!

Judit is the one who is most deeply moved. She may cry, but this time her tears will be happy tears, welcome tears.

JUDIT

It's wonderful, Mateo. We should re-release it.

MATEO

The important thing is to finish it. Films must be finished.

Judit keeps crying.

THE END.