

H E R R O

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*(based on a story by
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V. 4.2

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EXT. NARROW HIGHWAY - NIGHT

A LIZARD, motionless on the asphalt.

The lizard is in the middle of the narrow highway, under a streetlamp that throws a circle of light on the pavement around it. Beyond the circle of light, everything is very dark.

Suddenly, a sound approaches. The roar of a motor. Headlights.

When the CAR is very close, the lizard disappears along the shoulder of the road.

The car speeds by.

INT. SMALL CAR - NIGHT

A BOY'S FACE, looking back toward the highway, as if he had seen the lizard.

The boy is MATEO, four years old, blue eyes. He's riding in the seat next to the driver, kneeling and looking back. He seems frightened.

The motor of the car roars as it speeds along narrow highways illuminated by its headlights.

Mateo looks at his mother, who is driving; her name is JULIA, and she is pushing forty; she has freckles and long, light brown hair.

Julia drives with a tense expression, her jaws closed tightly, rings under her eyes. She casts a fleeting glance at the rear-view mirror. A look filled with fear.

JULIA

Turn around and sit right.

Mateo turns around and sits.

MATEO

Where are we going?

Julia doesn't answer. She looks at her son.

JULIA

Come on, I'll buckle your seat belt.

Julia stretches toward him: with one hand, she tries to strap Mateo in while the other hand controls the steering wheel.

She has trouble getting the belt and buckle under control. Besides, the dark interior of the car prevents her from seeing clearly.

Mateo looks out at the highway, which is becoming increasingly sinuous. Julia is distracted for a moment and swerves when she looks at the road again.

Suddenly: CLACK! The buckle finally snaps closed. Julia looks at Mateo with relief. He watches her with a worried look in his eyes.

When Julia looks again at the highway, it's too late. A guardrail.

EXT. CURVE - NIGHT

The car smashes through the guardrail and flies off the road and upward.

It turns over in the air and falls heavily on some black rocks close to the sea.

A few seconds later, only the sound of the motor can be heard as it sputters and finally conks out.

Silence. Smoke and oil.

FADE OUT

INT./EXT. SMALL CAR / CURVE - DAWN

Julia opens her eyes. She is in pain. Half of her body is out of the car. Her legs are inside, with a piece of car body steel going through one of her thighs. She has difficulty breathing. She can't move.

She turns toward the car, looking for Mateo.

JULIA

Mateo....

Mateo is not inside the car. Julia tries pushing her body with her arms, but she's trapped and her pain is very intense.

JULIA (cont'd)

Mateo!

Tears cross her cheek. She is alone. There is no sign of her son.

FADE OUT

INT. AQUARIUM - DAY

CREDITS BEGIN

An undefined mass. Tiny particles that shine and sparkle. They are moving. They flow. They float.

It is water. Dark water.

A strange fish, which seems to belong to another time, slips by sinuously, its belly brushing the sandy bottom. The fish fiercely devours bits of food. A few meters above the bottom, a DIVER floats with agility among other fish, dropping the food.

Near her a YOUNG DIVER, in a short suit, is also going about her work. They look at each other. They make signs to communicate with each other. The Young Diver swims away.

The Diver leaves the last bits of food floating on the water and turns toward...a sheet of plate glass.

It is an aquarium.

The Diver stares out at the exterior of the aquarium and swims closer. She smiles as she places her hand on the glass.

END OF CREDITS

INT. AQUARIUM LOCKER ROOM - DAY

The two divers skillfully remove their diving suits in a changing room furnished with lockers and long benches. The diver with the short suit is ELENA, who is somewhat younger than MARIA, who is just a few years over thirty.

MARÍA
(searching for something)
Where is it?

ELENA
What are you looking for?

MARÍA
The key to my locker. I can't find it.

ELENA
(pointing to the floor)
There it is.

María picks it up with a sigh. She opens her locker.

MARÍA
I've left all the samples on your
desk; you've also got the latest
reports on tank three, in case you
need them.

Elena gives her a scolding look.

MARÍA (cont'd)
All right, all right.

ELENA
You know very well that I can only
stay a week.

MARÍA
Yes, I know.

They dry themselves off with towels.

MARÍA (cont'd)
Anyway, call me if you need
anything.

Elena looks at her with a smile on her face.

ELENA
I can't wait for you to leave.

María smiles, accepting the joke.

INT. AQUARIUM - DAY

The silhouette of a boy sitting on the floor, before the glass wall of the aquarium. On the other side of the glass, a LARGE FISH seems to threaten Diego, as if it were going to attack him....

A few meters behind him, María is taking pleasure in watching him, spellbound. She notices every detail of the boy, his hands, his hair, his little ear.

The boy is DIEGO; he is about four years old. He is dressed in a school work coat, and is playing with a Plasticine ball.

MARÍA
Diego.

Diego raises his eyes and smiles a wide, luminous smile.

DIEGO

Mama!

On the other side of the glass, the strange fish makes a turn and changes direction. Diego gets up and runs to his mother. They hug each other.

DIEGO (cont'd)

I'm making a Plasticine fish.

MARÍA

Really?

DIEGO

Yes.

MARÍA

Where's aunt Laura?

LAURA (O.S.)

Aunt Laura has been looking for the ball for ten minutes.

LAURA, somewhat older than María, walks up with a small BLACK BALL in her hand. She is eight months pregnant and is carrying Diego's knapsack and overcoat in her other hand.

LAURA (cont'd)

Here you are, dear.

Laura gives the ball to Diego and then kisses María on the cheek.

MARÍA

How did things go?

LAURA

I almost missed picking him up because of the traffic jam I ran into. And then we nearly arrived late at the dentist's office.

Laura gives María the little knapsack.

LAURA (cont'd)

I put the date of the next checkup inside; it's at the end of the year.

María nods. Then she points to Laura's belly.

MARÍA
Don't you dare have it before I get
back.

LAURA
I'll do what I can.

The two of them smile. María bends down to Diego, who is
picking up the Plasticine, and she caresses his head. Laura
watches the way María softly CARESSES the boy's little ear.

MARÍA
Has he had his afternoon snack?

LAURA
He didn't want to.

MARÍA
He didn't want to?

María looks at Diego.

MARÍA (cont'd)
Who didn't want to have his snack?

Diego smiles at her.

MARÍA (cont'd)
(with a hoarse voice)
Who didn't want to have his snack?

DIEGO
(laughs)
I don't know....

MARÍA
Well, I do!

María grabs Diego and tickles him.

INT. LIVING ROOM OF MARÍA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Diego is alone in the living room, up on stool with his
little knapsack on his back, facing a LIGHTED FISH BOWL with
TWO GOLDFISH.

DIEGO
(in a whisper)
Don't be afraid.

Diego is feeding the goldfish.

DIEGO (cont'd)
I'm leaving you some food so that
you'll be all right. Mama and I are
going to be back very soon.

Then he brings a SMALL PLASTIC DOLL up to the fish bowl and places it on the edge.

DIEGO (cont'd)
And I'm leaving Mica with you so
you won't be lonely.

MARÍA (O.S.)
Diego!

Her voice startles Diego a bit; he turns toward the living room door. When he does this, Mica, the doll, falls into the water.

MARÍA (O.S.) (cont'd)
Are you ready?

Diego gets down from the stool and walks away from the fish bowl, in which Mica slowly sinks to the bottom.

INT. BEDROOM, MARÍA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

María tries to close the suitcase she has placed on the bed, but she doesn't succeed. Diego, standing, watches her in silence, smiling.

MARÍA
Have you got your knapsack?

Diego nods and turns around showing her the knapsack on his back.

MARÍA (cont'd)
Good.

María returns to her suitcase, trying to close it. Diego comes up and points to one of the sides of the case, where a piece of shirt is sticking out: that's why it won't close. María sighs, pushes the shirt inside and, finally, it closes. She smiles at her son.

MARÍA (cont'd)
We're going now.

María goes to the bedside table and takes a HAIRPIN off of it; the hairpin is decorated with a striking silver fish.

She goes to put in on her bangs, but the hairpin falls to the floor, bounces off her foot and disappears beneath the bed.

MARÍA (cont'd)

Not now....

María gets down and peers under the bed, but she doesn't see it. Suddenly, Diego slides agilely across the floor.

MARÍA (cont'd)

Did you see it?

María watches as Diego goes to the back of the bed and squeezes behind the bedside table, into a small SPACE where he disappears.

MARÍA (cont'd)

Diego, come out of there.

She listens to Diego searching....

MARÍA (cont'd)

We're going to be late.

And, a few seconds later, Diego comes out of his hiding place with the hairpin in his hand.

DIEGO

Here it is.

Surprised, María gets up and sits on the bed, with Diego between her legs. She is about to put the hairpin on again.

DIEGO (cont'd)

Will you lend it to me?

MARÍA

What?

DIEGO

That.

Diego looks at the hairpin. María smiles and tries to put it on the boy.

MARÍA

We've got to wait until your hair grows. If we try to put in on you now, it'll fall off.

Diego looks at her pleadingly; no one can resist a look like that.

MARÍA (cont'd)

Look...

María puts the hairpin in Diego's lapel; he smiles.

MARÍA (cont'd)

Do you like that?

Diego nods. She caresses his head. Spellbound, hypnotized, she looks at him. She affectionately CARESSES HIS DELICATE EAR.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Mother and son ride down in a spacious elevator.

MARÍA

Are you anxious to get on the boat?

DIEGO

It's not a boat.

MARÍA

It isn't?

DIEGO

It's a 'fery'.

This surprises María.

DIEGO (cont'd)

My aunt told me.

MARÍA

That's right, it's a ferry. Are you anxious to get on board?

DIEGO

Yes.

MARÍA

This is the first time you're going to ride on one.

Diego nods pensively.

DIEGO

But I've drawn a lot of them.

EXT. SEA, FERRY - DAY

An ENORMOUS FERRY plies the water.

The color of sea is an extraordinary deep blue. The ferry pulls away from the camera, leaving a stain of white foam in its wake, and waves that diminish as they move to the sides.

EXT. PLATFORM / FERRY DECK - DAY

The wind buffets Diego's face. María pushes her hair off her face. They both look at the water from a railing that directly overlooks the sea.

MARÍA
And so who lives in the sea?

DIEGO
The fish.

MARÍA
Yes, but which fish?

Diego plays with a little black ball that he has in his hand.

DIEGO
Whales.

MARÍA
What else?

DIEGO
Dolphins.

MARÍA
Yes.

DIEGO
Orange fish.

The black ball falls to the deck. María bends down to pick it up while steadying herself with the railing, which teeters unsafely.

DIEGO (cont'd)
And sirens.

From her bent down position, María sees her son's UNTIED SHOELACES; she starts tying them.

MARÍA
Soon I'm going to have to show you
how to tie your shoelaces.

DIEGO
How soon?

María finishes the last knot and gives the ball back to Diego. She watches him, spellbound.

MARÍA
Very soon.

INT. FERRY - DAY

María and Diego are walking down an alleyway of the ferry.

DIEGO
When are we going to swim?

MARÍA
When we get there.

DIEGO
When will we get there?

MARÍA
In a little while.

Diego looks at her, annoyed.

MARÍA (cont'd)
But you've got to put your rubber ring on.

DIEGO
Yes.

They reach their seats.

DIEGO (cont'd)
Do you have a rubber ring?

MARÍA
No. But I know how to swim.

The boy observes a tiny playground at the end of the alleyway, where there are TWO CHILDREN playing.

DIEGO
Can I go play?

MARÍA
Aren't you tired?

Diego shakes his head.

MARÍA (cont'd)
Well, go on then.

Diego runs toward the play area. María seems tired.

CUT TO

María holds a glass of water in her hand while crossing an area where there are scarcely any passengers. She reaches her seat and settles herself in. She takes a deep breath. She takes a sip from the glass and leaves it on the armrest.

She looks at Diego playing at the end of the alleyway. She wants to enjoy the moment. She has a tired but serene look; she's happy. Her eyes close, although she opens them again, looking at Diego playing with the other two children. Her eyelids fall closed again, but María reopens them to look at Diego; she feels increasingly tired. The third time she can no longer reopen her eyes. She falls asleep.

INT. FERRY - DAY

The ferry carpet is wet. The water glass is tipped over at María's feet; her knee is a little wet from the spilled water.

María wakes up completely when she notices the water; she dries her knee. She raises her gaze to the playground: it's empty.

She stretches; she doesn't know whether her nap has taken three minutes or three hours. She looks around, seeking Diego.

CUT TO

María observes the empty playground. When she's on the point of leaving the area, she finds the black ball on the floor. She picks it up.

CUT TO

María walks among the seats, looking every which way, seeking her son. She walks by a MARRIED COUPLE with their son. She walks away from the camera to the end of the room, where and ELDERLY COUPLE is seated. Seen from a distance, María speaks with them, and they shake their heads.

CUT TO

María looks in another alleyway. She is moving faster.

CUT TO

María stops and looks at the door leading to the outside platform. She hesitates....

EXT. PLATFORM / FERRY DECK - DAY

María walks onto the open air platform. There's no one there. She approaches the railing. Inevitably, she look out at the sea, at the vast, distressing sea....

INT. FERRY - DAY

María climbs up some stairs and enters the first class area, where there are also very few passengers. She walks among the seats, but still can't find a trace of Diego.

CUT TO

A BLONDE HOSTESS talks to María with soft gestures. We can't hear them, but the hostess' words seem to calm María down a little.

CUT TO

The ferry loudspeakers crackle. Someone's breathing is heard over the public address system.

PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM (V.O.)
(in Spanish)
Aviso a todos los pasajeros. Se
ha perdido un niño de cuatro
años, moreno.

The monitors on board the boat show the same message in text form.

PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM (V.O.)
(cont'd)
(In Spanish)
Si lo localizan pónganse en
contacto con cualquier miembro de
la tripulación.

CUT TO

Several HOSTESSES look for the boy in the restrooms.

PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM (V.O.)
(cont'd)
(In Spanish)
Es un niño de cuatro años, de
nombre Diego.

CUT TO

The Hostesses look under the seats....

PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM (V.O.)
(cont'd)

(In English)

A four-year-old boy with dark hair and eyes is lost. If found, please contact any of the crew members.

CUT TO

HOSTESSES and CREW MEMBERS look in restricted areas, along narrow passageways and under the stairs....

PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM (V.O.)
(cont'd)

(In German)

Er heit Diego. Wer ihn sieht, mag sich bitte mit einem Besatzungsmitglied in Verbindung setzen. Der Junge ist vier Jahre alt...

CUT TO

Several crew members look in the engine room.

PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM (V.O.)
(cont'd)

(In German)

...und sein Name ist Diego.

INT. ALLEYWAY / FERRY CONTROL CABIN - DAY

María walks beside the CAPITAN, a man in his forties. He speaks gravely. She is nervous, she tenses her jaw muscles.

CAPTAIN

Do you think that Diego might have gone out to one of the outdoor areas at some point, such as the smoking area, or...?

MARÍA

No, I don't think he would've gone out without me.

They climb some stairs.

CAPTAIN

We'll reach the island in no time.
Once we get there, we'll empty the
boat so that we can search for your
son thoroughly.

MARÍA

Are you going to let everyone leave
the boat?

They enter the engine room, an enormous raised control
station, from which the imposing sea can be seen.

CAPTAIN

It'll be easier to look for him
that way. In any case, all the
passengers will leave under our
supervision; don't worry about
that. If your son doesn't show up
on the boat, we'll notify the sea
rescue team--

MARÍA

My son didn't fall overboard.

Through the windows, THE ISLAND can be seen in the
distance.

EXT. PORT - TWILIGHT

The ferry docks in the little port.

INT. FERRY - NIGHT

María walks anxiously along the alleyways of the ferry. She
goes down some stairs so energetically that she pushes TWO
PASSENGERS. María continues decisively down the stairs.

INT. FERRY HOLD - NIGHT

Many PASSENGERS are already in their cars, and others are
about to enter theirs. Several ferry WORKERS are seen
walking among the lights of the cars, searching with flash-
lights.

María is also looking for her son in the hold when a loud
sound attracts her attention: it is the great door of the
hold beginning to open, lowering itself until it becomes the
ramp that enables the cars to leave the ferry.

María searches frantically among the columns, among the cars. There are also a couple of trailers.... The headlights of the cars blind her. On the other side of the car windows, the passengers' faces watch her.

The cars are now leaving the boat. Next to the door is a CIVIL GUARD controlling the exit. Her eyes full of tears, María runs until she places herself in front of a small car, leaning on the hood to stop it. A ferry EMPLOYEE pulls her to one side, trying to calm her.

INT. FERRY - NIGHT

The empty ferry, with no passengers. Several EMPLOYEES are searching under the seats, inside cabinets, in the restrooms, in the bar...

CUT TO

María is looking for Diego in the first class section of the boat. She reaches the last row of seats, whose backs are placed against a wall. She bends and leans in: she finds nothing.

But she sees a small door in the wall against which those seats are placed. She slides over to it and forces it until it opens: cables.

EXT. PORT - NIGHT

Trembling fingers. Fingernails that repeatedly scratch a metal screen. A fingernail breaks.

The metal screen is part of a bench on which María is sitting. She is in an open air area that is used by people who are waiting for the ferry. Her eyes are red. Her gaze moves to... a SIGN posted on a nearby column: the word MISSING is emblazoned on it in red, with a telephone number and a PHOTOGRAPH OF MATEO.

Several meters away from her, the ferry captain is speaking with TWO CIVIL GUARDS and with ANTONIO, a Civil Guard dressed in plain clothes, who is approaching the age of 40.

Day begins to break.

EXT. SEA - DAWN

A large orange rescue MOTOR LAUNCH plies the waters, moving away from the port.

EXT. PORT - DAY

A helicopter flies over the port and heads out to high sea.

EXT. SEA - DAY

Two DIVERS jump into the water and submerge.

EXT. ROCKS - DAY

Two inflatable Zodiac boats approach an area of black rocks on which the waves break. On the rocks, on solid ground, several rescue OFFICERS can be seen.

INT. PORT OFFICES - DAY

A LARGE MAP of the island. Antonio and two other police OFFICERS are looking at the map, which is dotted with COLORED PUSHpins marking the search areas.

Next to the door, standing apart from the officers, María observes them. She is tense, very tense. As time goes by, the pushpins gradually fill the map until they completely cover the coasts.

EXT. ISLAND - DAY

The helicopter flies over the water, near the coast.

EXT. SEA - DAY

A DIVER surfaces several meters away from some rocks.

EXT. ISLAND - SUNSET

The sun disappears below the island's strange horizon.

EXT. PORT - TWILIGHT

THREE WORKERS get off the rescue motor launch while taking off their life jackets. They look tired.

INT. PORT OFFICES - NIGHT

María's back is turned to the map full of pushpins. She is looking for something in her wallet. She finds it: she pulls out a photo of Diego and hands it to a GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE.

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE

Thank you.

María's eyes are damp. Her facial expression is discomposed.

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE (cont'd)

What telephone number shall we put down?

(pause)

The one on the card?

María nods.

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE (cont'd)

Would you like us to add another number, just in case? Your husband's, or...

MARÍA

I don't have a husband.

The government employee looks at her: she appears to be looking off into space, her mind absent.

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE

That's all right. One number is fine.

María looks at her hands, which are trembling slightly. One of her fingernails is broken, with a few small bloodstains.

She does not feel well. She gets up and leaves the office, entering a CORRIDOR. María tries to breathe deeply as she leans against the wall of the dark corridor. A NOISE attracts her attention; it is a printer, which is spitting out SHEETS OF PAPER WITH DIEGO'S FACE printed on them in large dimensions, with a telephone number beneath it.

Tears overflow María's eyes while Diego's face comes out of the printer again and again. Her face looks increasingly shaken until she opens her mouth, on the verge of crying out and beginning to weep uncontrollably.

INT. BATHROOM OF MARÍA'S HOUSE - DAY

María opens her mouth forcefully...

She vomits into the bathroom sink.

OVERPRINTED: "6 MONTHS LATER"

María looks at herself in the mirror; she looks bad, she has rings under her eyes, her hair is disheveled.

INT. MARÍA'S HOUSE - DAY

María sitting on her bed. In silence.

INT. INDOOR SWIMMING POOL - DAY

A pair of bare feet on damp floor tiles.

María is in a bathing suit, a few meters from the edge of the pool. There's no one else there. Only an oppressive silence. She approaches the water. She sees tiny waves brushing against the edge of the pool; the water is moving strangely.

She moves her foot toward the water...but is incapable of getting in. She feels slightly dizzy. She bends over and sits on the floor so as not to lose her balance. Suddenly voices and noises are heard and we see that she is not alone: there are several people swimming in the pool.

María moves away from the pool, upset.

INT. PEDESTRIAN TUNNEL - DAY

María walks distractedly, carelessly through a poorly lighted pedestrian tunnel, carrying a handbag, her gaze lost at some point a few meters ahead of her.

INT. AQUARIUM - DAY

A WOMAN DIVER is seen under the water.

She moves smoothly inside the aquarium while feeding a strange fish. On the other side of the glass wall of the aquarium, María watches the diver, who turns toward her. She makes a sign to her, indicating a spot to one side of the aquarium.

INT. AQUARIUM GRANDSTAND - DAY

Elena, whose hair is still damp, walks across the aquarium grandstands with María.

ELENA

No, it's perfectly adapted now.

In fact, they're thinking about bringing in two more of them.

MARÍA

Oh really?

ELENA

That's what they say.

MARÍA

I'll have the annual summary ready tomorrow.

ELENA

Great.

MARÍA

All I have left to do is to compile last month's data.

They both stop in front of a smaller tank of water. Elena looks fleetingly at a small digital screen. Then she turns toward María.

ELENA

Have you been to the pool today?

MARÍA

Yes.

ELENA

And?

María shakes her head.

ELENA (cont'd)

Don't push yourself. There's no hurry.

You know they're going to wait for you here.

MARÍA

I know. But if I go on not working and not sleeping, I'm going to go crazy.

ELENA
But you are working.

MARÍA
I fill tables with data. I'm a
biologist;
(looking at the tank)
I need to be in there.

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT

María is jogging along a dark street. She is sweating, breathing hard, she's red in the face, the veins in her neck are standing out. She is forcing herself. She is getting things out of her system.

A few meters further on, after turning a corner, she stops, exhausted. She bends over and puts her hands on her knees while she gets her breath back.

Then her eyes light on a SMALL METAL DOOR. It is in the lower part of the wall; its size and position remind her of the little door she saw in the ferry. María anxiously examines the rusty padlock that secures it.

Until she abruptly resumes her run and quickly leaves the wall with its door behind her.

INT. HALL OF MARÍA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The empty hall, with the living room in the background. In darkness. The sound of the door of the house, which opens. Then the sound of the door slamming.

María appears in the hall dressed in her jogging clothes, still sweaty.

INT. LIVING ROOM OF MARÍA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

María sees a RED LIGHT on her telephone. She picks up the receiver and keys in three digits. She listens to a voice message.

VOICE MESSAGE (V.O.)
Good afternoon. We're calling from
Dr. Alpuente's office with regard
to Diego Vara. We remind you that
Diego has an appointment on Monday
at 6 PM for a dental checkup.
(MORE)

VOICE MESSAGE(cont'd)
If you have any problem, please get
in touch with-

Upset, María hangs up. Her gaze drops, her expression is sad.

¡CLACK!

A sound coming from the hall alerts María. She gets up and walks toward it.

INT. HALL, MARÍA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

María is walking down the hall and suddenly... CLACK! She stops, startled. She turns toward a door midway down the hall. She considers going in, hesitates.

CLACK! The sound comes from inside the room. She opens the door slowly.

INT. DIEGO'S ROOM, MARÍA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

CLACK! It's the wardrobe door.

The window of the room is open and the wind comes in and bangs the wardrobe door against the frame, making the sound. Opposite the window, on the desk, there are some BOXES.

María goes to the wardrobe and closes it. There are also boxes next to it. Then she closes the window; she shuts it hard, twisting the handle-which is half broken-tightly into the closed position. She turns from the window and...

CLACKCLACK!

The loud noise startles her. With her elbow she has knocked one of the boxes off the desk, scattering things on the floor. Diego's things...

She bends down and picks up a block of Plasticine and a couple of drawings in which there is a boat, as well as a large fish in the water. María stops to look at one in which a boy holds his mother's hand. Suddenly, a drop falls on the drawn boy's head. María raises her hand to her face, and realizes that the drop was a tear. The face in the drawing has been distorted by the teardrop, creating a grotesque form.

María quickly puts everything back into the box and places it on the desk again. She looks at the windowpane: she sees herself reflected in it.

And then she sees something strange in the reflection, something very small on the floor of the room behind her. She turns and, in the middle of the room, sees THE BLACK BALL.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Laura, pushing a shopping cart, and María are walking down the aisle of a supermarket.

MARÍA
I don't want pills.

LAURA
At least you'd sleep for several hours straight.

MARÍA
When I do that I wake up in worse shape than before.

They turn toward another aisle.

MARÍA (cont'd)
It would be good for me to be able to work.

They turn into an aisle full of products for babies: diapers, towelettes, bibs, special types of milk, baby food, soaps....

LAURA
You just need a little more time.

Laura calms her down with a serene look, with a slight smile.

LAURA (cont'd)
Be patient.

Then JAIME, in his late thirties, approaches them pushing a stroller containing a BABY. Jaime draws the cart close to Laura.

JAIME
I'll trade you; I'm going to pick up some soil for the plants.

Jaime takes the shopping cart and moves away.

JAIME (cont'd)
I'll come for you in a bit.

Jaime disappears while Laura looks for something on the shelves.

LAURA
Where's the...?

Laura looks toward the beginning of the aisle.

LAURA (cont'd)
I'll be right back.

While Laura moves away, María looks at the baby and bends down to take it out of the stroller, placing it on her chest.

At the beginning of the aisle, Laura searches among the containers of powdered milk. She turns briefly and sees her sister with the baby in her arms, caressing its tiny ear with great affection. Laura sees María WHISPERING something in the baby's ear.

Laura takes a container off the shelf and walks back toward her sister, looking at her with some concern.

INT. BEDROOM IN MARÍA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A crack. Narrow. A crack that runs across the ceiling. María studies it while lying face up in her bed, with her eyes riveted to the ceiling. Raindrops strike the windowpane softly.

María changes position in a routine manner. She takes a deep breath. She sits up and seats herself on the edge of the bed, holding her head in her hands with her elbows on her knees. Tired.

INT. LIVING ROOM OF MARÍA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Images of cells on the television screen.

DOCUMENTARY FILM VOICE OVER
-is the ability of cells to capture
substances from their environment.

Meanwhile, a cell's ability to change its shape, generally by shortening, is known as contractility. María changes channels. Her face shows sleepiness and weariness. She zaps out of a news channel and stops at one showing musical video clips.

This channel is broadcasting a STRANGE SONG with a disturbing tone. The images in the video clip capture María's attention: a blue sky, a hillside carpeted in flowers, a highway wet from rain, a house at the top of the hill...

María's eyelids are half closed. The song increases in intensity. Remains of an accident on the asphalt, an empty water glass, an island, a dried up, brown plant, an ant hill, a child's ear, a scar on a neck, a bloodstain in a swimming pool.

Suddenly, María wakes up on the sofa, scared. Confused. Sweaty.

The TV is off.

INT. BATHROOM IN MARÍA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

María standing in her bathtub under the hot water from the shower. The bathroom is filling with steam. The shower screen is becoming opaque with steam. The steamy screen distorts what is on its other side, creating strange forms...

Then she notices something. She brings her hand to her nose: BLOOD. Worried, she rinses away the blood with the water, but she's bleeding profusely. Suddenly she feels very dizzy. She supports herself on the screen. But she's unable to stay on her feet, and she falls down in the tub, coiled up in something like the fetal position.

The water keeps falling. Steam fills the entire bathroom. The water keeps falling on her, and its level rises, nearing her mouth. Her blood is staining everything red.

María cannot recover her strength, and the water reaches her mouth. She coughs. Little by little, she sits up, but clumsily. She closes the tap. She breathes hard, frightened, with remains of blood on her face.

INT. HALLWAY, MARÍA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Wrapped in a towel, and with her hair still wet, María walks down the hall. She stops before the closed door of Diego's room. She hesitates.

María stares at the door in complete silence...

¡RIIIIIINNNG!

The telephone rings loudly, startling her.

INT. LIVING ROOM, MARÍA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

María picks up the phone.

MARÍA

Hello?

As she listens, María's eyes gradually fill with fear. With panic.

EXT. ISLAND - DAY

THE ISLAND. In the distance. From the air.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

The safety belt symbol lights up with a 'CLINK'. María stares at the light. Sitting next to her, Laura looks out the window.

LAURA

We're arriving.

Laura turns toward María.

LAURA (cont'd)

(softly)

How are you doing?

María nods.

EXT. AIRPORT LANDING STRIP - DAY

María and Laura get down from the small airplane and walk up to ANTONIO, who awaits them beside a PATROL CAR, with a CIVIL GUARD at the wheel.

It's a small, lonely landing strip surrounded by sea and mountains; a strong wind is blowing. The two sisters walk, carrying their travel bags, to the car.

EXT./INT. HIERRO HIGHWAY / PATROL CAR - DAY

The Civil Guard officer drives while Antonio rides shotgun. The two sisters are sitting in the back seat, in silence, each looking out her window.

María notices that Laura's eyes are tense; she is straining to keep her nerves under control. She takes her hand and rests her head on her shoulder. Laura smiles tensely and gives María a caress in return.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

The Medical Examiner, a man close to 60, has large, light eyes. He has a steady gaze and a patient expression.

MEDICAL EXAMINER

The age of the body matches up, as well as the approximate date of death. In any case, that is never a definitive factor. To confirm the identity of the corpse, we need a DNA test or, as in this case, recognition by a relative.

María's eyes are damp. But she doesn't cry. She doesn't want to.

Laura puts her arm around her sister's shoulders. Two steps behind them, Antonio waits.

MEDICAL EXAMINER (cont'd)

We're very grateful to you for coming. We know it's not easy. Besides, it's-

MARÍA

Where is he?

The Medical Examiner looks at her for a few seconds. Then he turns toward the door behind him and opens it.

María sees the white light that emerges from that room. The Medical Examiner takes two steps inside.

María takes a breath, under Laura's tense gaze, and follows the Medical Examiner.

INT. EXAMINING ROOM / HOSPITAL - DAY

The Medical Examiner closes the door. María looks around the room: it is rectangular, filled with white light; on a side wall there are square metal doors and, at the back, two gurneys. One of the gurneys is empty. The other is not.

María rivets her eyes on the gurney bearing a sheet of BLACK PLASTIC covering an object.

It is cold in the room. María is motionless. She seems not to want to move forward. El Medical Examiner observes her a few steps ahead of him.

María begins to approach the gurney. She can't take her eyes off the object: it is something covered with a sheet of black plastic. The Medical Examiner reaches out to remove the plastic, but María grabs one of his hands.

MARÍA

Wait.

The Medical Examiner releases the plastic. María inhales. She does not want to cry. Under the plastic is a puddle of salt water. And from there the water is dripping onto the floor.

The noise of the air conditioning stops; María turns toward the ventilation louvers. She gazes at them, momentarily lost in thought.

Silence. The Medical Examiner waits patiently. María looks at the black plastic, concentrating. She grasps the plastic...and pulls it back.

María's eyes are wide open. Her facial features are frozen. The Medical Examiner looks at her expectantly. María's facial muscles slowly relax.

MARÍA (cont'd)

It's not him.

The Medical Examiner looks at her with surprise.

MARÍA (cont'd)

It's not him.

A tear runs down her cheek. She smiles.

MEDICAL EXAMINER

Are you sure?

MARÍA

What do you think?

(She gives him a stern
look.)

It isn't Diego.

CUT TO

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Laura's eyes are filled with tears; she is embracing María.

LAURA

I knew it.

Behind them, the Medical Examiner speaks to Antonio in a low voice. He is upset. Laura and María separate, but continue to look at each other.

MARÍA

Now what?

LAURA

Let's get out of here.

The Medical Examiner comes up to them.

MEDICAL EXAMINER

We have a little problem with the declaration.

MARÍA

What's wrong?

MEDICAL EXAMINER

We assumed that the declaration would be positive; we didn't expect that--

LAURA

And why did you assume that?

ANTONIO

The mistake is entirely ours. We're terribly sorry.

MEDICAL EXAMINER

The fact is, we've got to take DNA samples, both from you and the corpse. And that requires the presence of a judge.

LAURA

And?

MEDICAL EXAMINER

He won't be here until Monday.

LAURA

Until Monday? Our plane leaves tomorrow Friday.

MEDICAL EXAMINER

I imagine...

ANTONIO
We're deeply sorry. But we hope
you'll understand that the judge
couldn't have been here today in
any case.

Nobody knows what to say. Laura shows her displeasure.

MEDICAL EXAMINER
I'm very sorry.

EXT. HOTEL - NIGHTFALL

The patrol car stops at the entrance to a small hotel. It is built of black rock, and extends out over the ocean on a dike.

María and Laura get out of the car with their travel bags and walk toward the hotel.

INT. HOTEL BAR - NIGHTFALL

The two sisters enter the hotel through its bar, which is completely empty. They pass some stairs and see MATÍAS standing ahead of them, with his back turned to them, PINNING A PHOTO TO A CORK BOARD where there are other photos, snapshots, poorly composed, some out of focus. Matías turns around when he hears their footsteps.

INT. HOTEL RECEPTION - NIGHTFALL

Matías is just over forty, but appears older. He is thin, tanned and wrinkled.

MATÍAS
How long are you going to stay,
then?

María looks at Laura, who returns a look of resignation.

LAURA
In principle, until Monday.
Matías checks some papers.

MATÍAS
Fine...there's no problem.
Matías gives them key on a key
ring.

MATÍAS (cont'd)
It's room 4.
(he gestures toward the
floors above)
It's halfway down the hall.

María and Laura nod as they pick up their bags.

MATÍAS (cont'd)
Welcome.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The travel bags rest on the beds. María is looking out of the window into the dark.

LAURA (O.S.)
Of course... Don't forget to take
his temperature every two or three
hours... Yes....

María listens to the sea. The moon illuminates some small clouds.

LAURA (O.S.) (cont'd)
All right, I send you a kiss.

María takes a deep breath while looking outside. Laura approaches her from behind while she puts away her cell phone.

MARÍA
Everything all right?

LAURA
All normal. The baby has a slight
fever.

Laura places herself next her sister in the window, looking out. She offers María blister pack of pills.

LAURA (cont'd)
Here. Let's see if you're lucky
tonight.

María takes them gratefully. They remain quiet for a moment.

MARÍA
Thank you for being here.

LAURA
Where else could I possibly be?

MARÍA
You know what I mean.

Silence. Only the lapping of the waves is heard.

MARÍA (cont'd)
One second before seeing the
body...I wanted it to be Diego.

Laura listens attentively.

MARÍA (cont'd)
At least that way I would've known
where he was.

INT. HOTEL BAR - DAY

Steaming hot coffee. María drinks from a cup while looking out window at the intensely blue sea. She is alone. Or she thinks she is-a creaking noise makes her turn around and she sees Matías, at the opposite end of the room. He has just taken a photo of her from a distance.

Matías smiles and disappears. Laura comes up to the table. She has seen Matías take the photo and makes a face at her sister as if to say, "What's he doing?" María shrugs her shoulders, playing the incident down.

LAURA
You're up early.

She sits down and pours herself coffee from a little ceramic jug.

LAURA (cont'd)
This is good...

Now it is Laura who looks out the windows.

MARÍA
As long as we have to stay, it
would be good to get out a bit,
wouldn't it?

Laura nods pensively.

MARÍA (cont'd)
Perhaps the best thing would be to
rent a car.

LAURA
Mm hmm.

Silence.

LAURA (cont'd)
Didn't you hear anything last
night?

MARÍA
What?

LAURA
I don't know... There were noises
in the hall. I woke up a couple of
times.

MARÍA
I hadn't slept so well in a long
time.

EXT. HOTEL - DAY

Matías, María and Laura walk alongside the hotel toward a
small parking area, also close by the sea.

MATÍAS
We always have guests who ask, so
I've got couple of cars to rent.

MARÍA
We wanted one until Monday.

MATÍAS
No problem.

They walk up to a small, old, white four-wheel-drive
vehicle, a LADA NIVA.

MATÍAS (cont'd)
It's not a new car, but it's just
come out of the shop.

LAURA
Fine.

MATÍAS
The tank is full.

LAURA
And we've got to return it full.

Matías nods while spreading out a MAP OF THE ISLAND on the
hood of the car.

MATÍAS
Look, there are two gas stations on
the entire island
(he points them out on
the map)
and they both close at night.

Matías marks the service stations with a ballpoint pen on the map.

MATÍAS (cont'd)
So that you can orient yourselves,
here's the airport.

While he speaks, he makes little circles on the map.

MATÍAS (cont'd)
The port. These two beaches are
nice and they're very quiet.
(he smiles)
Well, here they're all quiet.
(he turns back to the
map)
There's another beach here,
although you have to take kind of
a bad road to get there. And...
we're here.

EXT./INT. ISLAND HIGHWAY / CAR - DAY

The sun is shining. The strange vegetation, the black and red earth, the blue of the sky... all of the elements make the landscape very special.

An empty highway. A roaring noise that slowly comes closer. It's the motor of the little four-wheel-drive vehicle, which appears coming down the highway.

Inside the car, Laura is driving. María looks out the open window at the beautiful island with its intense blues and black soils. Her facial expression is serene.

The wind tousles her hair. The car moves away as it crosses this strange place.

EXT. BLACK SAND BEACH - DAY

The little Lada is parked near a black sand beach which is deserted. The highway is narrow, with no lines painted on the asphalt, and ends at that very spot.

It is clear that this is an isolated place. There is absolutely no one else there. The only signs of civilization are an abandoned HOUSE and a TRAILER.

María's bare feet sink into the black sand. She looks out at the sea. Laura walks past her and approaches the shore. She removes her shoes and rolls up her pant cuffs. She puts her feet in the water.

María sits down on the sand. She seems to be savoring the moment. She lies down on her back. The blue of the sky. Laura looks at her sister from the shore.

CUT TO

Sitting on the sand, Laura is reading a book. María is lying down, half asleep. The only things that can be heard are the wind, María's breathing and the pages of Laura's book. Laura brings her mouth close to María's ear. She whispers.

LAURA

I'm going to buy something and
we'll eat here.

María partly opens her eyes.

MARÍA

I'll go with you.

LAURA

There's no need. Rest.
María breathes deeply.

Laura goes off along the beach. María, with her eyes still half closed, hears her walking away. Then the car is heard starting and driving away until it disappears.

Then a dog's bark is heard. María opens her eyes fully, but from her position she can see no animal. María sits up slowly. She looks at the house and the trailers. The horizon.

CUT TO

Again, María's bare feet in the sand. A wavelet dies a few centimeters away. María is standing, facing the shore. She looks at the water. She seems to be concentrating. She lets herself be carried away by the sound of the wind.

After a few seconds, she decisively takes a step, until...
THE FOAM TOUCHES HER FEET.

María watches the water moving between her toes, with a smile on her face. She hesitates an instant...

CUT TO

María's dress on the sand. She has both feet in the water. She takes a step toward the sea. Then another. And then one more. The water is now up to her knees.

Excited, she takes another step. And then another. She enters the ocean. She gets excited. She touches the water as if it were the first time. She lets herself go. María moves in the water as if she were taking part in a strange baptism. She is enjoying this moment to the utmost.

She takes a deep breath. SHE DIVES UNDER THE WATER.

Under the water, María enjoys the feeling of being submerged, of having the water surround her entire body. She stays under for a few seconds, and then surfaces to take in some air.

Slowly, she starts to come out of the water, with a serene smile. She looks toward the highway: her sister hasn't returned.

María remains standing on the sand, next to her dress, letting the breeze dry her. The dog's bark is still heard from time to time, far away. She closes her eyes as she turns her face to the sun.

Suddenly...

THE TINY VOICE OF A BOY.

María opens her eyes suddenly.

Everything remains deserted. There is only the wind and the irregular bark of that dog that she can't see. While she puts on her dress, María walks toward the sound of that dog, back from the beach, closer to the house and the trailer.

Again... A TINY VOICE. Just a couple of words that are lost in the wind. Surprised, nervous, she comes to some rocks. On other side of those rocks, the same beach continues a little more, it's a sort of sandy corner, half hidden.

There A BLACK DOG can be seen playing with the waves and barking. María moves in closer, and sees...

A BOY sitting on the sand, his back to her, several meters away. María turns pale. The boy seems familiar... She starts walking toward him. Slowly.

She stops a couple of meters from the boy, who still has his back turned to her, and is playing with something in the sand. But he seems to have heard her, because he begins to turn his head. María's eyes become damp. The boy looks at her.

IT'S DIEGO, her son, with a welcoming smile.

María faints.

She falls on the sand like a sack of potatoes.

CUT TO

EXT. BLACK SAND BEACH - DAY

María is face down in the sand. The tide is bringing the water to her face. Water enters her mouth. She begins to move, she tastes the salt in her mouth. She awakens as if she'd taken a beating. She sits up.

The first thing she does, instinctively, is to move away from the water by taking a couple of steps back. She looks around her: the same solitude, the same wind that whips the house and the trailer in the background. She looks down at the ground: no marks or tracks are perceptible because the sand is very loose.

Confused, disturbed, María crosses the beach. She goes up to the door of the house. It's unquestionably abandoned: broken windows, peeling paint, dust and sand. María approaches the TRAILER. It has a neglected look, although she can't tell whether it's abandoned or not. She stands there looking at a BOX with a padlock that is joined to the back of the trailer. The wind moves a tin can, making it strike one of the wheels. María thinks she hears a strange sound.

LAURA (O.S.)

Hello.

María starts upon seeing Laura suddenly next to her.

MARÍA

(relieved)

Laura.

Her sister laughs. She is carrying a bag containing food.

LAURA

What are you up to?

MARÍA
I didn't hear the car.

LAURA
Shall we eat?

The two sisters turn around to go, but they are frightened when they encounter the BLACK DOG in their path. The dog barks and moves off a few meters.

LAURA (cont'd)
Shit.

They walk away from there. Walking back, Laura takes notice of María. She stops her.

LAURA (cont'd)
Your hair.

MARÍA
What's wrong with it?

LAURA
It's wet.

Laura touches her hair, which is still quite damp.

LAURA (cont'd)
Did you go swimming?

MARÍA
A little.

LAURA
(happy)
A little?!

The sisters move away toward their towels.

LAURA (cont'd)
What do you mean "a little"? Are you serious? This deserves a celebration.

While she walks away, María turns around to look furtively toward the trailer.

EXT./INT. HIGHWAYS/CAR - DAY

The Lada Niva rolls down a narrow highway, surrounded by black and red earth. In the car María, pensive, is driving. After a long silence...

MARÍA
After I went swimming, I... got
scared.

LAURA
Scared?

MARÍA
I'm sure you're going to think this
is silly, but I had a sort of...

Laura gives her a questioning look.

MARÍA (cont'd)
I don't know what to call it.

Laura's cell phone rings. María motions for her to answer
it.

LAURA
Hello.
(she listens)
What? To the pediatrician?
(she listens)
But what's wrong with him?
(she listens)
Uh huh... Fever?
(she listens)
No, of course it's not normal...

Laura and María exchange worried glances.

INT. HOTEL RECEPTION - DAY

Laura is talking on her cell phone next to a window of the
hotel. Several meters away, María waits, distractedly
looking at the cork board with photos pinned to it; she
notices one that shows Antonio.

Laura walks up to her.

LAURA
All this week's flights are full.

The only choice I've got left is the ferry tomorrow morning.
María nods.

LAURA (cont'd)
I don't know if it's worth it.

MARÍA
Of course it is.

LAURA

The pediatrician says the fever could be normal. But he wants to do the tests to be sure.

MARÍA

Seriously, don't do it for me. I'm just fine. If you stay, you're going to get more nervous.

Laura becomes pensive.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Laura is sound asleep. In the twin bed beside her, María is looking at the ceiling, with her eyes wide open. She changes position, but she's too restless. She gets up and moves toward the open window. She watches the black sea and listens to the waves.

Then she believes she hears LAUGHTER... María looks at her sister, who is still deep in sleep. Trying not to make noise, she crosses the room. Through the crack of the door, a little light comes in from the hall. A light that seems to move.

The laughter sounds strange... It's coming from the other side of the door. María slowly approaches the door. Very carefully, she moves close and places her eye next to the peephole; it's dirty, and it blurs slightly what it shows, which is a piece of hallway.

María stares at the hallway through the peephole. The laughter disappears. Complete silence ensues. María turns around to look for a moment at her sister, who has moved in her bed. Then she looks through the peephole again.

A GIRL.

María starts when she sees her. She takes a step backward. She looks at the door. The laughter is heard again. She looks out again through the peephole: there's no longer anyone there. María goes away from the door.

EXT. PORT - DAY

María and Laura get out of the car in the port parking area. While Laura takes out her small bag, María remains standing, watching the great ferry, which is docking.

Laura closes the car door and begins walking, but stops when she realizes that her sister has remained motionless. María reacts and catches up with Laura.

LAURA

There's no need for you to come with me.

MARÍA

Of course there is. Come on.

LAURA

Seriously, it's not necessary.

María smiles to convince her sister and walks toward the ferry. Laura follows her.

CUT TO

The cars slowly enter the belly of the ferry. The screaming gulls flutter around. Off to one side, Laura and María hug each other next to a gangway.

MARÍA

I'll be fine, don't worry. I'll be back in a couple of days.

LAURA

I know.

They separate, looking at each other.

MARÍA

Call me when you get there.

Laura nods with a smile and steps onto the gangway. María watches her disappear, and begins walking back.

CUT TO

María walks up to her car. But then she notices something: she sees a GIRL of about nine who is playing by herself, among some jardinières in the parking lot, gathering sand and putting it into a bucket.

María watches her at length: the Girl seems to be talking to herself, having a good time with her simple game. Then the girl stands up and walks with her bucket toward the cars that are entering the ferry. María watches her as she goes.

The Girl runs around among the cars, getting closer to the ferry.

María observes the scene almost as if it were a fantasy.... The Girl walks with her bucket, smiling, and reaches... A TRAILER.

The door of the trailer opens and SOMEONE offers a hand to the Girl and helps her inside. The door of the trailer closes.

María is motionless. She is tense, nervous, as if she had contemplated something revealing. There is hope in her eyes.

EXT. ISLAND HIGHWAYS - DAY

The Lada Niva moves forward through the strange, extra-terrestrial island landscape. The sun shines intensely on the hood. A mosquito explodes against the windshield.

EXT. BLACK SAND BEACH - DAY

María gets out of the car, which she has parked as close to the beach as possible. The first thing that attracts her attention is the absence of the trailer. Everything else remains unchanged: the abandoned house, the wind tousling her hair, the silence.

She crosses the beach and approaches the place where the trailer was: TIRE TRACKS on the ground. There are also gnawed bones, probably licked clean by a dog.

She goes to the little stretch of beach where she fainted. It's all deserted.

INT. HOTEL RECEPTION - DAY

A hand closes a wooden drawer. Matías talks while rummaging around in his desk, opening other drawers.

MATÍAS
I think I had a card around here
somewhere.

Matías goes through dirty papers, old notebooks, he opens drawers filled with photos....

MATÍAS (cont'd)
Because that area is full of
trailers, but I don't know if any
are for rent.

Anyway, the car isn't equipped to hook up a trailer.

MARÍA
Don't worry.

MATÍAS
What I mean is, if you can manage
to rent one, you won't be able to
use it with that car. Here it is!

Matías pulls a wrinkled card out of a little notebook.

MATÍAS (cont'd)
This is it.

MARÍA
Thank you.

María looks at the card: "CAMPING DE CARAVANAS HIERRO"
(*"Hierro trailer campground"*).

EXT. TRAILER CAMPGROUND - DAY

Trailers. Dozens of trailers. There are no people, no children, no noises. In fact, it's as if we were visiting a trailer cemetery. All lined up in orderly rows with aisles separating them.

Standing next to a HUT, María looks the place over. There's an old sign that says "RECEPCIÓN" (*"Reception office"*), a soft drink vending machine by the door, a garbage container and another sign that indicates the restrooms.

INT. TRAILER CAMPGROUND RECEPTION OFFICE - DAY

The reception office seems to have been frozen in time: a counter, a yellow pencil, a fan, the electric buzzing of the white neon lights, a peanut vending machine with a crank but bereft of peanuts.

In addition to a reception office, the place is a small convenience store selling basic necessities and utensils that are useful to trailer dwellers.

MARÍA
Hello?

There's no response. María is standing in the middle of the reception office. She steps up to the counter and looks behind it: there is a box with keys and, to one side, THREE MONITORS connected to security cameras. The monitors are small and the images they show are in black and white.

MARÍA (cont'd)

Hello...

María centers her attention on the monitors. One shows her the center aisle; in another she can make out an area full of trailers, and in the last she sees the reception where she is standing. María fixes her attention on the last image: it's a shot taken from above in which she can SEE HERSELF, leaning on the counter. Suddenly the monitor displays SOMEONE WHO IS APPROACHING HER FROM BEHIND. Startled, María turns around, stifling a cry.

MANAGER

Good morning.

The manager is an unsociable man wearing a very worn short-sleeved shirt; his appearance suggests that he is undernourished. María catches her breath.

MARÍA

Excuse me...

MANAGER

What can I do for you?

MARÍA

I was... I'm looking for a trailer.

The Manager looks at her without turning a hair.

MARÍA (cont'd)

Do you know if a trailer came into the campground yesterday or today?

MANAGER

No one has left or come in for a week.

María thinks. The Manager steps behind the counter and sits down, closing a drawer that was open.

MARÍA

Do you rent trailers?

MANAGER

No, I'm sorry.

MARÍA

Thank you...

María knows that there's nothing more to be done here. She is about to leave...

MANAGER

But all the trailers on the island
come through here sooner or later.

María gives him a questioning look.

MANAGER (cont'd)

This is the only place on the
island where they can get gas
canisters.

María nods.

EXT. TRAILER CAMPGROUND - DAY

María comes out of the reception office and stops to look
again at the trailers....

CUT TO

María is walking among the trailers, overwhelmed by the
inhospitable atmosphere of the place. She approaches a
trailer, looking for the padlocked box that she saw on the
beach, but this trailer has none. She looks at the next one:
no box.

Suddenly, the door of one of the trailers closes. A shadow
can be seen on the other side of the window. María anxiously
turns her gaze toward it. Through the window of that trailer
she can see an OLD MAN moving around inside, as if he were
picking things up. But that's not the trailer she saw on the
beach.

María turns into another corridor. There are too many
trailers, and they're too much alike. It's easy to become
disoriented in that place. Just then, a SOUND attracts her
attention... Chk, chk, chk... It's repetitive.

She turns around and sees an old lawn sprinkler. In its
circular path, the water from the sprinkler wets a SIGN
affixed to a post. The sound of the sprinkled water on the
paper sign is what has attracted her attention.

Then María focuses on the sign. Her eyes fill with tears. It
is the sign bearing the photo of DIEGO, with the word
"MISSING" and her phone number beneath it. It's the same
image she saw coming out of the photocopying machine in the
port. The sprinkler water wets the sign again... wetting
Diego's face.

María rips the sign off the post. When she does so, she exposes what was underneath it: another sign with another photo. It's the image of MATEO, WITH THE TELEPHONE NUMBER BENEATH IT, and emblazoned with the same word: "MISSING". María looks at Mateo's eyes; she is about to burst into tears. The sprinkler water now wets Mateo's face. She tears that sign off the post too.

CUT TO

Standing next to her rented car, now outside the campground with her cell phone in her hand, María dials the number printed on the sign showing Mateo's photograph. The ringing tone begins to sound.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

An isolated apartment building whose walls are painted a dull, dirty white. Its windows are dark, like black holes.

Behind the building there is a hillside covered with rubble and garbage. There's an entrance on that side, and María is walking toward it.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

A long, deserted corridor, in total silence. The place has a disturbing atmosphere because of neglect and the stifled sounds that can be heard.

María walks crosses the corridor and comes to some stairs. She climbs up two floors. The steps are dirty. She turns into another corridor. She passes a rusty WASHING MACHINE that was abandoned there. She looks at it without stopping....

She walks down to the last door on the corridor. She rings. A slight creaking sound can be heard coming from the other side of the door. The door opens and Julia appears, leaning on a CRUTCH. She looks slovenly, she has rings under her eyes, and one of her legs is surrounded by a metal armature with pins that pierce her skin to the bone.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

María is sitting in the living room of Julia's apartment, which is sparsely decorated and in very poor taste. The place is rather dirty. Julia comes up, walking with the aid of her crutch. In her free hand she carries a glass of cloudy water.

JULIA
The took me to identify the body
too.

María takes the glass of water. Julia sits down on the sofa
with difficulty.

MARÍA
Thank you.

JULIA
But I knew it wasn't him.

María drinks and notices a somewhat unpleasant taste.

JULIA (cont'd)
Somebody took Mateo away.

Julia speaks harshly, letting her sentences fall like
tombstones. María notices her hand, which bears the mark of
the crutch. She also observes the armature attached to her
leg, with the thin metal pins piercing the skin...

JULIA (cont'd)
It's impossible for someone to
disappear in a car accident.

MARÍA
What did the police say?

JULIA
They spent three days looking for
him.

María nods, upset.

JULIA (cont'd)
That's what the law stipulates,
they told me. Three fucking days.

MARÍA
I know...

JULIA
There was only one suspect: my
husband.

INT. ROOM / APARTMENT - DAY

María and Julia are standing at the door of the boy's room.
There is a dirty window with a crack crossing one of the
panes.

JULIA
We separated on the same day of the
accident. In fact....
(it's hard for her to
say it)
We were running from him.
(pause)
He's a creep.

María looks sadly at the place. There are drawings,
photos...things of Mateo's that remind her of Diego.

JULIA (cont'd)
They questioned him, but they let
him go right away.

María is staring at a LARGE CRATE that is underneath the bed.

INT. HALL / APARTMENT - DAY

Julia is walking down the corridor with her crutch. María
is following behind her. Suddenly, as she walks by the
bedroom door, she SEES A PHOTO OF DIEGO on the bedside
table. Disconcerted, she stops. She takes a step backward
to look again: IT'S A PHOTO OF MATEO. María follows Julia
toward the door of the apartment.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

María looks at Julia as she stands by the apartment door,
which is open.

JULIA
I don't know who took him away or
what happened, but I know Mateo is
alive. I can still feel him.

María gives an understanding nod.

JULIA (cont'd)
When Mateo dies, I'll know it. I'm
sure.

María takes her hand affectionately.

MARÍA
Thank you very much for everything.

Julia squeezes María's hand: she looks at her intently.

JULIA
Be strong.

María nods and leaves.

JULIA (cont'd)
And don't trust anybody.

She looks at her one last time.

MARÍA
Does your husband still live on the
island?

JULIA
(nods)
He'd never leave his shitty
greenhouse.

EXT./INT. HIGHWAY / CAR - DAY

The Lada Niva moves along a narrow highway. María concentrates her gaze, looking straight ahead. After climbing a low hill, the sea appears, the coast with its black rocks and a striking GIGANTIC PLASTIC SURFACE.

EXT. GREENHOUSE - DAY

María closes the door of her car and walks toward the door of the greenhouse. There is another car parked outside. And the wind.

MARÍA
Hello?

María looks at the door, made with sheets of white plastic, like the greenhouse. She can't see what's inside.

INT. GREENHOUSE - DAY

María pushes aside the sheets of plastic and goes in. She immediately sees that the place is an enormous pineapple plantation under plastic, with very long aisles. There is no one there.

MARÍA
Hello?

Something moves in back. A black shadow. María decides to walk toward it. She moves forward among pineapples, feeling like an extraterrestrial. The wind shakes the plastic walls and roof. María foot bumps something. She stops and looks down at the ground: there's something buried there.

She bends down. It looks like a bone. She digs it up: perhaps it's a stick...

Suddenly there's a noise. She turns. SOMETHING STRANGE disappears among the pineapples. Something... small. María stands up again and looks for whatever it is. She does not want to make noise or breathe. The noise is heard again. And SOMETHING hides in another aisle.

It's a sort of strange animal that she can't manage to identify. She hears it again in the aisles. Partly frightened, partly hypnotized by what she sees and hears, María follows the noises and shadows with her gaze... Until suddenly she sees, coming out of the distant door, A MAN CARRYING A SACK on his back; it's a small sack, the size of a knapsack.

MARÍA (cont'd)

Hello!

The Man disappears.

EXT. GREENHOUSE - DAY

María quickly leaves the greenhouse. The car that was parked outside is already speeding away on the highway.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

María drives her little white car along deserted highways. On the straights, she sees the other car far ahead; when the highway curves, she loses sight of it.

EXT./INT. CURVE / CAR - DAY

On a narrow highway, María sees the other car brake until it comes to a halt on a curve. María also stops her car, at a prudent distance. She stays there, motionless, waiting. The other car is stopped. Nothing happens.

A few seconds later, the other car takes off again and accelerates. María also takes off and follows it. She gets to the CURVE where the other car had stopped; she drives by slowly and sees that there is a crumpled guardrail and, a few meters beyond, a WRECKED CAR (it's Julia's car). Very close to the highway, on some rocks, is a BOUQUET OF FLOWERS which are beginning to wither.

María speeds up so as not to lose the other car, moving away from the place.

EXT./INT. SEMI-ABANDONED HOUSE / CAR - DAY

In front of an unfinished house, the MAN gets out of his car bearing the sack. María has stopped quite a few meters away. She could swear that the little sack is moving, but she can't be sure. The Man goes into the house.

María takes a breath. She gets out of the car. She approaches the house. The door is partly open. She presses the button to ring the doorbell, but there's no sound. She presses again: nothing. She pushes the door lightly and looks in.

INT. SEMI-ABANDONED HOUSE - DAY

María goes into the house. A dirty stove, a rusted sink, a patterned plate, a piece of bitten chocolate. And pineapples.

She goes down a hall. Oppressive silence. She enters a living room. There's no one there. But... on the floor, in the middle of the room...

...is the sack that the Man was carrying.

A small, dirty brown sack. María fixes her gaze on it. She approaches it slowly.

THE SACK MOVES.

María stops, frightened, without taking her eyes off the sack, which is now motionless. Again she starts moving closer. The sack doesn't move. She bends down. Slowly. She reaches out... María opens the sack. She peers intently into its dark interior...

Suddenly SOMETHING JUMPS OUT OF THE BAG AND RUNS AWAY.

María falls backwards. It's a lizard. María gets up nervously. She gets her breath back. She can still hear the lizard running away down a hall.

¡RING!

A cell phone. María puts her hand into her pocket and takes it out. On the screen, "LAURA" is displayed. But suddenly, from the corner of her eye, she sees SOMETHING COMING TOWARD HER. She turns and sees the Man, who moves resolutely toward her.

MARÍA

It was open--

Before she can finish her sentence, the Man puts his big hand over her mouth and neck and pushes her up against the wall. The cell phone falls to the floor and shatters.

The Man brings his face very close to María, who can smell his fetid breath. He is big, rangy, dark-skinned and red-eyed.

MAN

What the fuck are you looking for!

The lizard, from a corner, watches what's going on. María can scarcely breathe with the man's hand covering half of her face.

MARÍA

Let me go.

MAN

Now you're going to catch the goddam lizard.

María tries unsuccessfully to get loose.

MAN (cont'd)

Now tell me what you're looking for.

MARÍA

I only wanted to ask you...

MAN

Ask me what?

MARÍA

Let me go.

The Man does not release her.

MARÍA (cont'd)

I've talked with your ex-wife.

The Man pushes María's head against the wall.

MARÍA (cont'd)

Let me go!

The Man pushes her; the inertia takes her several meters away, toward the door.

MAN

Go to hell.

The Man moves toward her. Threatened, María goes out of the door, and the Man slams it shut.

EXT. SEMI-ABANDONED HOUSE - DAY

María is standing before the door of the house, motionless. Her neck and face are red and her fast breathing denotes her fear. In front of her is the closed door.

EXT. CIVIL GUARD HEADQUARTERS - DAY

María and Antonio come out of a gray building and walk down a street in Valverde.

ANTONIO

We questioned him, but we didn't
get anything out of him. I doubt
very much that he was involved.

Worried, María nods.

ANTONIO (cont'd)

You won't accomplish anything by
reporting him...

MARÍA

But he attacked me...

Antonio stops next to his car; he looks at her sternly.

ANTONIO

Let me remind you that you entered
his house; you trespassed on
private property.

María listens with resignation.

ANTONIO (cont'd)

He's the one who could report you.

INT. HOTEL RECEPTION - NIGHT

María talks on the hotel's public telephone, near the reception desk.

MARÍA

It happened when you called me; I
was going to answer and the phone
fell to the floor.

(she listens)

So the boy is all right...

(MORE)

MARÍA(cont'd)
(she listens)
I'm glad.
(she listens)
Nothing, everything's fine.
(she listens)
Yes, yes. Don't worry.
(she listens)
All right, I send you a kiss.

She hangs up.

INT. BATHROOM / HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Quite late at night, in a massive silence, María washes her face in the bathroom. She looks at herself in the mirror. She touches her skin. She touches her neck, which is painful. She draws closer to the mirror to see herself better: she bears the marks of the man's hands....

A BURST OF LAUGHTER.

María comes out of the bathroom. She turns toward the door. She hears it again. It came from outside the room. María slowly approaches the peephole... She brings her right eye up close. She looks at the hall.

THE GIRL IS STANDING IN FRONT OF HER DOOR, looking at her.

María moves back a half step. She hesitates, then decides to open the door:

THERE'S NO ONE THERE.

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

María comes out into the corridor, and on her right, at the end of the hall, she can see THE GIRL DISAPPEAR as she turns the corner. She hears her little footsteps.

FATHER (O.S.)
Come here right now!

María turns and sees the FATHER who, embarrassed, runs after his daughter.

FATHER (cont'd)
I'm going to end up getting angry!
(to María, whispering)
Sorry.

MARÍA
It's all right.
(she points)
She's over there.

FATHER
Thank you.

The Father quickens his pace and disappears at the end of the corridor. María looks at the empty corridor. To the side, an old lamp blinks on and off.

EXT./INT. TRAILER CAMPGROUND / CAR - DAY

A container. An old container, closed.

María stares at it. She is pensive. She's inside the car, looking through the window, parked several meters away from the entrance to the trailer campground, quite near the RECEPTION hut. She settles into her seat, ready to spend hours there.

CUT TO

An OLDER MAN observes María with surprise and enters the campground. María takes a breath and gets out of the car. She remains standing there, observing the place, with the wind caressing her hair.

She hears a motor. She turns and sees a car towing a trailer approaching. María takes a step backward, as if she wanted to hide a little. The vehicle reaches the campground and drives in. María examines the trailer carefully; it doesn't have the metal box.

CUT TO

María obsessively opens and closes the ashtray of the car. Hours have gone by, and she's getting desperate. She drinks water from a bottle. She raises her eyes and sees an OLD FOUR-WHEEL-DRIVE vehicle, a PICKUP TRUCK (of the type that has the back open), which is approaching. María watches it without interest, since it is not pulling a trailer. The pickup enters the campground and stops next to the reception office.

María sees a WOMAN with long black hair get out of the pickup. She is carrying TWO SMALL GAS CANISTERS. Then she sees a BLACK DOG get out of the truck. María opens her eyes very wide. It's the same black dog that she saw on the beach. The one that was loitering around the trailer the day she saw her son.

For a few seconds, María and the dog seem to exchange looks. Then the woman and the dog disappear into the reception hut. Nervous, María gets out of her car. She hesitates. She walks toward the pickup truck. She reaches the pickup. She examines it carefully: the license plate, the dents, the nearly treadless tires... and A BALL for hooking up trailers.

She looks cautiously at the door of the reception hut. Then she examines the interior of the truck through its dirty windows: a little bouquet of dried plants that hangs from the rearview mirror, the worn steering wheel, the sunken seats, the dust...

María goes to the rear of the pickup. In the open back there is a sort of tarpaulin covering various objects; one of them looks like a plastic tricycle. María turns toward the reception shed: everything is wrapped in silence.

She looks at the tricycle again. Almost by instinct, she tries to move the tarp, but it is tied down at the ends. She tries again, this time applying more force. She checks to see that there is no one watching her, and decides to climb into the back of the pickup. María crawls over the tarp, untying the cord used to secure it.

When she gets it untied, she discovers what's underneath: a tricycle and other objects, such as a fruit crate full of plastic jars, an old spare tire, a couple of boxes... María examines the boxes carefully.

Then, a CREAK: the door of the reception hut slams shut. María catches a fleeting glimpse of the Woman coming out with a couple of new gas canisters and a plastic bag. Instinctively she crouches down and hides as best she can among the objects. There's no way she can escape.

María hears the Woman opening the door of the pickup. Suddenly, the dog appears and jumps into the back of the truck, where María is hiding. The dog smells her and begins barking. María holds her breath. The dog barks louder.

GERMAN WOMAN

¡Komm hier!

The black dog jumps down and disappears. María hears the door of the pickup close and then the motor starting.

EXT./INT. HIGHWAY / PICKUP TRUCK - DAY

The pickup moves along a sinuous highway that goes down toward the sea.

In the back of the truck, María can see the blue sky from where she is. The Woman drives in silence, with the sun making her black hair shine.

EXT. PICKUP TRUCK / RED BEACH - DAY

María stays with her face pressed against the floor of the pickup. Suddenly, the truck stops. The motor is turned off. María hears the Woman get out and close the door. Footsteps moving away until they disappear. A very distant bark. She waits a few seconds...

Finally, María gradually sits up and peeks over the edge of the pickup body: black rocks. And the resounding sea. She slowly gets down from the truck. Her legs and arms are stained from their contact with the junk in the back of the truck. Before her is a scarcely perceptible footpath. She walks along it, stained, tired, confused.

After a few meters, she crosses a rock and sees a hidden beach, dark, reddish and beautiful. It's a cove with an iron-colored stone wall that boxes it in against the sea. But María has stopped looking at the sea. Her eyes are fixed on...

A TRAILER.

The same trailer she saw on the beach where her son was. She moves in slowly, trying not to make noise with her feet. The place is completely silent. The wind is blowing strongly. There's a punctured ball and a dish of food for dogs. María examines the trailer, approaching it slowly: she sees the small box with its padlock on the back.

She reaches the door. Before she can decide what to do, the door opens suddenly, startling her. It's the Woman. Now María can see her up close: she has thin lips, wrinkles and wide open, disturbing eyes. She doesn't smile.

GERMAN WOMAN

¿Was möchten Sie?

María recovers her composure. The German Woman looks at her in surprise, suspiciously.

MARÍA

Hello... Ah... Could I talk with you for a minute?

The German Woman shakes her head.

GERMAN WOMAN
Nein...Ich spreche Ihre Sprache
nicht.

MARÍA
A couple of days ago I saw your
trailer on another beach...

The German Woman notices that María's face and clothing are
stained.

MARÍA (cont'd)
I thought I saw a boy.

GERMAN WOMAN
Ich verstehe Sie nicht.

The German Woman sees María's trembling hands.

MARÍA
Don't you speak Spanish?

GERMAN WOMAN
No español. Es tut mir sehr leid,
ich kann Ihnen nicht helfen.

The German Woman seems gradually to become agitated.

MARÍA
Do you live alone?

GERMAN WOMAN
Entschuldigung.

The German woman closes the door. María hesitates. She
feels intimidated. And out of place. She looks at the area
around the trailer: an old pair of woman's shoes next to
the door, a dish of dog food on the ground, a clothesline
with clothes that are moved by the wind....

María walks around the trailer; she still hopes to find
something. But she notices that she's being watched: she sees
the German woman on the other side of the dirty window,
observing her. She decides to leave. She walks away from the
place leaving the pickup behind. She turns around one last
time to see the trailer sitting there by the beach.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

María walks uphill along a sinuous highway. Alone. Her legs
and hands are stained. She is tired.

CUT TO

The highway is a little narrower now, with no painted lines. María turns around to see if any cars are coming, but the place is deserted.

EXT. CURVE IN THE ROAD - DUSK

From a curve, María sees a small house in the distance, on a hill, with light in its windows. Dusk is falling, there aren't many hours of light left. Between the place where María is and the little house there is a small wooded area, a hillside covered with trees in which fog has begun to gather. María leaves the highway and begins to walk cross-country toward the wood.

EXT. WOOD - DUSK

María walks among the trees. Their branches are dripping with condensation. The failing light and the fog make it nearly impossible for her to see. A noise attracts her attention. Something seems to be moving among the trees. She observes the trunks. Another noise.

She sees a shadow again. María is frightened. From where she stands she can see only trees. Her eyes become damp. She's alone in the middle of a wood. And she is afraid. Then...

A LIGHT in the distance, among the trunks.

It's coming from the highway: it's a car. María runs toward the highway among the trees, always about to trip and fall. The sound of the motor is getting closer and closer. As she comes out onto the highway she trips on a root, falls and rolls across the shoulder and onto the asphalt. She has hit her head.

The car has stopped several meters away, illuminating her with its headlights. María is dizzy, her mind seems absent; she can't move. Her eyes are half closed, her cheek rests on the pavement. From that position, she sees the door of the car open. The sound of the radio reaches her: STRANGE MUSIC...

A SILHOUETTE gets out of the car. It's a man. María sees him approaching. She's listening to that music, which sounds familiar to her. The man bends down to look at María. It is at that moment that she recognizes him: IT'S THE GREENHOUSE MAN. María's eyelids fall closed.

OVER BLACK

The music is still playing. It's the song from the video clip that María listened to at home.

VIDEO CLIP IMAGES

The images from the video clip that she saw on television: blue sky, a hill carpeted with flowers, a highway made wet by the rain, a house atop the hill... And also a bloodied mouth, a dark, boomerang-shaped puddle, a rotten pineapple, a lizard, a trailer.

A boy with his back turned.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Startled, María opens her eyes. She is perspiring. She breathes deeply. She is lying in a bed in a neutral room, with a small bandage on her forehead. There is a NURSE with her back turned to María, doing something on a small table.

María looks at her hands: she has small scratches and a bandage on a forearm. She feels her face, noting pain in some areas. The Nurse turns and see that she's awake. She smiles slightly and leaves the room.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

María and Antonio are sitting on a bench halfway down the corridor.

ANTONIO

He was the one who brought you to the hospital.

María nods.

ANTONIO (cont'd)

And he was also the one who called me.

Antonio looks at her sternly.

ANTONIO (cont'd)

Where were you going at that time of night on the highway?

She doesn't answer.

ANTONIO (cont'd)
(skeptical)
How did you get there? Because I
saw your car parked on the edge of
town.

Silence.

ANTONIO (cont'd)
Look... if you prefer, we can
forget the whole thing. But be more
careful. Something could have
happened to you.

MARÍA
Do you know a foreign woman who
lives in a trailer?

Antonio wasn't expecting that question.

ANTONIO
Why?

MARÍA
Do you know her? She's dark-haired.

ANTONIO
I know who she is, yes. We all know
each other here.

MARÍA
She seemed a bit strange to me.

ANTONIO
Strange?

María is about to say something, but he speaks first.

ANTONIO (cont'd)
Look, tomorrow the judge will come
and they'll be able to take the
samples they need from you.

María looks at him, confused.

ANTONIO (cont'd)
Then you can go back home.

María tenses her jaw muscles, holding back the tension.

ANTONIO (cont'd)
I'm sure you'll feel better there.

Antonio gets up.

ANTONIO (cont'd)
Come on, I'll take you to your car.

EXT./INT. TRAILER CAMPGROUND / CAR - NIGHT

María gets out of Antonio's car and walks to her little four-wheel-drive vehicle. There is no light in the campground reception hut. While Antonio is driving away, María climbs into the Lada Niva and puts the key into the ignition. She pauses for a few seconds, pensive...

Until she bursts into tears. María sobs inside the car, alone in the middle of the night.

INT. HOTEL RECEPTION - NIGHT

María crosses toward the stairs. Matías is behind the reception counter.

MARÍA
Good evening.

MATÍAS
Good evening.

María continues on her way.

MATÍAS (cont'd)
You're leaving tomorrow, right?

MARÍA
Yes.

MATÍAS
Wait a second.

Matías looks for something behind the counter. Uncomfortable, María waits.

MATÍAS (cont'd)
I'll just be a second.

Matías straightens up and shows her a photo.

MATÍAS (cont'd)
Look.

María looks at the photo: it's her having breakfast and looking out the window. It's the photo that Matías took of her the first morning.

MATÍAS (cont'd)
You can keep it, if you like.

MARÍA
No, thanks.

MATÍAS
Don't you want it?

MARÍA
You keep it.

MATÍAS
Are you sure?

María nods, trying to be pleasant.

MATÍAS (cont'd)
(indicating the cork
board)
Well... it's going up there with
the rest.

Matías takes the photo over to the cork board.

MARÍA
Good night.

María walks toward the stairs, passing close to Matías.
Then... She sees something that stops her.

Looks at the cork board, where Matías is tacking her photo
up with thumbtacks. The rest of the photos are of anonymous
guests, although María sees one showing a smiling
Antonio... WITH THE GREENHOUSE MAN.

María then sees another photo: it's THE GERMAN WOMAN, albeit
a bit younger.

MARÍA (cont'd)
Do you know her?

MATÍAS
Who?

María points to the photo.

MARÍA
This woman.

MATÍAS
Yes... Her name is Tania. She's a
little bit off...

Matías points to the head.

MATÍAS (cont'd)
She lost her head a long time ago.

María listens to Matías with great interest.

MATÍAS (cont'd)
They say it was because her husband
left her and she found herself all
alone, living in her trailer... I
haven't talked with her in a long
time, but everybody says she's
crazy.

MARÍA
I see...

MATÍAS
Why, she even lost her job because
of it.

MARÍA
What did she do?

MATÍAS
She was the school teacher.

MARÍA
(surprised)
Teacher? ¿Of German?

MATÍAS
No, no. Of everything, I don't
know. She was the teacher.

MARÍA
But... she doesn't speak Spanish.
Matías nods, surprised.

MATÍAS
Of course she does.
(he smiles)
Better than I do.

María's eyes fill with terror.

EXT. RED BEACH TRAILERS - NIGHT

María walks along the little footpath, toward the beach.
Behind her in the dark is the Lada Niva. Stepping softly, she
walks until she sees the trailer, which has light inside.

Something draws her attention: the pickup truck is hooked to the trailer.

María sneaks up to the rear of the trailer. She observes that that clothes no longer hang on the line. Everything seems neater, picked up. Then she hears PANTING.

She turns and sees the black dog, who remains motionless, watching her. A second later, the dog disappears.

María goes to the lighted window of the trailer. She gets up on her tiptoes to peek in, and she sees part of the interior: a kitchen sink and part of a sofa.

Suddenly, the GERMAN WOMAN BOBS UP FROM UNDER THE SINK, startling María, who nearly lets out a cry. The dog looks at her. María peers into the window again: the German Woman has put something on the burner and is moving around inside the trailer.

Then the door of the trailer opens. The German Woman steps out and starts walking, while the dog runs toward her. The German Woman is carrying a GARBAGE BAG, walking in the dark toward a DUMPSTER placed on a high spot.

María, hidden, watches her until she can no longer see her. Then she makes a decision and goes toward the trailer door. She looks all around; she's very nervous. Making as little noise as possible, she reaches the door. She turns the handle. The door is open. She goes in slowly.

INT. TRAILER - NIGHT

María closes the door behind her. She looks around the trailer: there's a living area with a U-shaped sofa and a folding table. A tiny kitchen, where there is a FRYING PAN ON THE BURNER, with potatoes frying. Pineapples in the sink. A narrow door. She opens it slowly: it's a bathroom.

In different places inside the trailer, in corners and shelves, there are strange objects, useless things that appear to have been found... A dirty little glass jug, a rusty tricycle wheel, a traffic signal indicating a reserve, an empty flower pot...

A noise. Something that has fallen. María looks toward the back of the trailer: there's another door. She goes toward it. IT'S BOLTED SHUT. She slides the bolt open.

Very slowly, María opens the door a crack. There's not much light inside. Toys on the floor. Lego parts.

AND A PAIR OF FEET.

A child's feet. She opens the door all the way.

IT'S DIEGO.

A chill runs along María's spine and up her neck. She feels dizzy; she has to steady herself on the door so as not to fall.

Diego is playing on the floor with a little ball. He looks at her. She stifles a cry. Her eyes fill with tears. She feels slightly faint.

MARÍA

Diego...

She runs to her son and hugs him tightly.

MARÍA (cont'd)

Diego... Diego...

María looks at Diego while she holds him by the shoulders. He observes her with surprise, frightened by her nervousness.

MARÍA (cont'd)

What happened?

María laughs between sobs.

MARÍA (cont'd)

It's me. Mama.

María can't stop touching the boy's face, caressing him, hugging him.

MARÍA (cont'd)

Don't you recognize me? I'm your
mama.

María looks into Diego's eyes. He's a little confused. And he has a runny nose; he appears to have a cold.

MARÍA

What have they done to you?

María hugs him again, crying.

MARÍA (cont'd)

It's me.

Diego looks at her anxiously. María takes her son in her arms and heads for the door.

DIEGO

They don't let me go out.

María is about to open the trailer door, but suddenly she hears footsteps, very near. María withdraws to the other end of the trailer. She thinks as fast as she can. She looks around her, seeking something.

The door opens. The German Woman enters. The first thing she sees is the open door in the rear of the trailer. She goes to it and sees that there is no one in the room.

Surprised, the German Woman turns around and sees that, at the opposite end of the trailer, in the area where the sofa is, Diego and María are standing. She is startled.

GERMAN WOMAN

What are you doing here?!

Diego is next to María; she stands a step ahead of him, protecting him. The German Woman moves quickly toward Diego.

MARÍA

What are you doing with my son?!

The German Woman approaches Diego, but María grabs the boy by the arm. When she sees this, the German Woman goes for María, but María defends herself and pushes her away.

MARÍA (cont'd)

(glancing briefly at
Diego)

Get out of here! Go!

GERMAN WOMAN

No!

The boy runs between the two women and leaves the trailer. The German Woman throws herself upon María, scratches her face and grabs her hair. María defends herself as best she can.

María pushes the German Woman, throwing her against the sofa. She runs toward the door and opens it, but before she can get out, the German Woman grabs her feet and drags her back. Then she gets on top of her, hitting her head from behind.

María turns around and gropes for something with her hands, until she grasps a small gas canister. With one hand, she lifts it with difficulty and throws it at the German Woman, who turns away in order to avoid it; it hits her in the side.

While the German Woman seems a bit stunned, María gets up. Her cheek is bleeding. The German Woman attacks her again. They grab each other, both colliding with the bathroom door. María hits her. The German Woman retreats and leans on the kitchen sink, feeling the pain of the blow. The dog's barking is heard.

During a brief pause, María, frightened, looks at the German Woman. The two are tired; they're panting.

Then the German Woman grabs the first thing she has at hand: a pineapple from the sink, and she brings it down on María's head. The pineapple creaks, but does not break. María bends double with pain. The German Woman lifts the pineapple with both hands and slams it down on María's head. María falls to the floor. The pineapple disintegrates in a thousand pieces.

María drags herself along the floor. HER CAR KEYS FALL FROM her pocket. The German Woman leaps on top of her. The keys disappear in the struggle. The two scratch each other, leaving pieces of their fingernails in their opponent's skin, they hit each other...

María bites the German Woman's arm hard. The German cries out in pain, moving backwards. She accidentally bumps the frying pan, which tips over, spilling hot oil. A powerful FLAME bursts out of the frying pan and begins burning a small curtain.

María gets up. The two look at each other. Their eyes are full of fury and rage. Full of hate. The German Woman gropes about with her hand until she finds some kitchen scissors among the junk.

The German Woman menaces María with the scissors. María steps backwards toward the door at the rear of the trailer. The German Woman moves in on her. María enters the little back room... and trips over the toys.

She falls to the floor, face up. The German Woman takes advantage of the situation, charging her with the scissors. María tries to avoid her, but SHE SINKS THE SCISSORS INTO HER HIP.

María cries out in pain. She twists and turns and, with all her remaining strength, shouting, she hits the German Woman. The force of the blow throws the German Woman backward. She loses her balance. Her neck strikes the edge of the bed heavily. SOMETHING HAS CRACKED. The German Woman's head falls to the floor, and her face squashes the Lego pieces.

María heads for the door without looking back. The curtains are still burning; the trailer is beginning to fill with smoke.

EXT. RED BEACH TRAILERS - NIGHT

María leaves the trailer. She pants in exhaustion and pain. The wound in her hip is staining her clothes. The dog stops barking when he sees her. Nervous, she looks around for Diego.

MARÍA
(whispering)
Diego...

María goes all around the trailer. There is no sign of the boy. But the sound of breathing makes her turn around. There is Diego, curled up underneath the trailer in the dark.

María can only see his little feet and the ball that he grips with his small hands.

MARÍA (cont'd)
Diego!

María runs and crawls under the trailer to hug him.

MARÍA (cont'd)
It's over. That's all.

Diego seems to be in shock, with a confused look on his face. His eyes are red; he appears to have been crying.

MARÍA (cont'd)
It's all over...

María takes the boy to get him out of there, but Diego turns and twists out of her grasp, starting to cry again.

MARÍA (cont'd)
Honey, we have to go...

Diego cries and doesn't let her hold him.

MARÍA (cont'd)
Let's go.

Diego doesn't let her take him.

MARÍA (cont'd)
Diego! That's enough!

Suddenly the boy is quiet. María glares at him with the expression of a very angry mother. A desperate mother.

María finally grasps the boy and takes him out from under the trailer.

CUT TO

With Diego in her arms, María reaches her car. She opens the door with difficulty and lays him down in the back seat. María goes to the front seat. She sits down and goes to start the car. But the keys are not there. She searches for them nervously

MARÍA (cont'd)

Shit.

María looks on the floor of the car. For a second she exchanges looks with Diego, who seems frightened. Then she gets out of the car, looking in the area around it. She looks into the back seat, where Diego is lying.

MARÍA (cont'd)

I have to go get something, okay?
Will you wait here for me?

Diego nods.

MARÍA (cont'd)

It's very important for you not to
get out of the car. It's dangerous.

Diego nods. María runs back toward the trailer.

INT./EXT. TRAILER / RED BEACH TRAILERS - NIGHT

María goes to the trailer door. She can see the light of the flames from outside. Slowly, fearfully, she opens the door little by little. She looks in. The German Woman's feet.

María goes all the way in. The trailer is full of smoke. She sees the German Woman lying just as she left her: her neck is in an unnatural position. Her open eyes are expressionless. SHE'S NOT BREATHING.

Terrified, María pulls away, coughing from the smoke. A pair of tears run down her cheek. The entire trailer is in chaos as a result of the fight, and the flames are gradually spreading. María gets her breath back little by little. She finds it hard to look at the German Woman's corpse.

She takes a deep breath and begins searching for the keys all over the trailer. She looks on the kitchen counter, in the bathroom, on the floor, on the sofa.

Then she approaches the German Woman. She looks around her body. She moves the corpse to see if the keys are beneath it. She finds nothing.

Then she sees something on the floor. Something shiny under the sofa. She bends down. It's the keys. She grabs them. She runs out into the darkness. Behind her is the trailer lighted up by the fire, with its door open, letting out the smoke that rises toward the black sky.

EXT. RED BEACH TRAILERS - NIGHT

María reaches the car, looks into the window and sees Diego, who remains motionless, lying on the back seat. She gets into the car and starts it.

EXT./INT. HIGHWAYS / CAR - NIGHT

A strange, one-lane tunnel. The car moves forward in solitude, almost ghostlike.

María, very tense, drives on. She glances briefly into the back seat at Diego, the sound of whose breathing confirms his cold.

CUT TO

Another highway. There are no signs of life. Only the headlights of María's car, which light up the asphalt. She takes several curves as the car climbs, until it reaches a flatter area. Suddenly, the car jerks forward. Worried, María looks at the dashboard: she's out of gas.

MARÍA

Oh, no...

The car gives a few more jerks, sputters out and finally comes to a stop. María turns around to look at Diego: his eyes are half closed; he's about to fall asleep. Her hands resting on the steering wheel, she thinks. She doesn't know what to do. She gets out.

María looks around: she's in the middle of a dark highway. There are no other lights anywhere besides the headlights of her car. There are no houses in sight, no cars, nor anything else that could be of help. Just darkness. She looks at Diego through the window. Then...

SOME HEADLIGHTS.

A car is approaching. María watches it hopefully; she waves it to a stop. The car has stopped about five meters away. Now there are four headlights piercing the darkness.

The driver gets out. That driver is nothing more than a silhouette. María looks at her son, asleep, and decides to approach the silhouette before it reaches her car. It's Antonio.

ANTONIO

Good evening.

María looks at him with surprise.

ANTONIO (cont'd)

Is everything all right?

María looks at her car out of the corner of her eye. For an instant, she hesitates.

MARÍA

Yes... Well, no. I've run out of gasoline.

Antonio walks up to her.

MARÍA (cont'd)

Would you mind driving me to a service station?

ANTONIO

Don't worry, I've got a jerry can in the trunk.

Antonio turns back toward his car.

MARÍA

No, but don't spend it on me.

Surely if we go to a gas station...

ANTONIO

The only two on the island are closed at night.

Antonio takes the jerry can out of the trunk of his car and walks toward Maria's car. She tries to hide her nervousness... and the wound in her hip.

ANTONIO (cont'd)

We're always prepared.

María has no choice; she lets Antonio open the tank. He starts pouring in gasoline. A very tense silence is created. María hesitates; she doesn't know whether to say something or not.

Antonio looks at the car, but the darkness prevents him from seeing anything.

ANTONIO (cont'd)
Did you get lost?

MARÍA
No...

María looks nervously inside the car, to the place where Diego is.

ANTONIO
Are you going to the hotel?

MARÍA
Yes.

Silence.

ANTONIO
With this you'll have more than
enough until tomorrow.

MARÍA
Thank you very much.

Antonio closes the tank and wipes off his hands. He looks at María.

ANTONIO
Are you sure everything's all
right?

María is not sure what to answer.

MARÍA
Yes. Everything's fine.

Antonio holds her gaze.

A CRACKLING NOISE.

It's the Civil Guard radio in Antonio's car. He turns around. The radio is heard again. It's difficult to understand. Only the odd word or phrase can be made out.

VOICE ON THE RADIO (V.O.)
 3-5-1... We have a report...
 smoke... Verodal beach... 3-5...
 Report... smoke...

ANTONIO
 I've got to go.

María nods, trying to seem nice. Antonio walks toward his car.

VOICE ON THE RADIO
 3-5-1... Fhggs... fsen
 Verodal. Fire... fghg...
 ...railleurs.

While María gets into her car she listens to Antonio answering the radio call.

ANTONIO
 I'm on my way.

Antonio starts his car and passes by María, driving away toward where she has come from, disappearing in the darkness.

EXT./INT. AIRPORT / CAR - NIGHT

María's car stops in the airport parking lot. María gets out of the car and goes to the back. She takes Diego carefully in her arms, trying not to wake him. The boy moans in his sleep.

María walks with Diego in her arms toward the entrance to the little airport.

INT. AIRPORT - NIGHT

A monitor displays the few flights that leave the island, which won't be taking off for several hours. María stands looking at the screen, in the middle of a small hall, with Diego in her arms.

Diego begins to open his eyes little by little. María glances at the counters: there are only a few and they're empty.

A YOUNG WOMAN, dressed in an airline uniform, installs herself behind one of the counters. María watches her. The Young Woman turns on the computer and places a sign on the counter: "POR FAVOR, PREPARE SU PASSPORT O DNI" (*"Please have your passport or ID card ready"*).

María looks at Diego... She realizes that he has no documentation. She turns to go, but TWO SECURITY GUARDS are entering the building at that moment.

María walks in a different direction, carrying Diego in her arms. The Security Guards enter in a routine manner and head toward a corridor. María sees the door of a restroom and goes in.

INT. AIRPORT RESTROOMS - NIGHT

María seats Diego on the washbasin; the boy's T-shirt is stained by her blood. María sees her reflection in the mirror: her hip is covered with blood. She lowers her waistband a little and sees her wound: it shows the marks of the two scissor blades, one a little larger than the other. It hurts.

The boy looks at her and gets a bit scared. María covers the wound.

MARÍA
Don't you worry. We're going back
home, all right?

Diego looks at her in silence.

MARÍA (cont'd)
We're going home. To your real
home, remember?

DIEGO
What home?

MARÍA
The home where your room is, with
your bed.

Diego is not sure whether to nod...

MARÍA (cont'd)
And your toys. Your room full of
toys. Don't you remember, dear?
Your garage for cars.

Diego smiles slightly.

MARÍA (cont'd)
And your fish.

DIEGO
Fish?

MARÍA
Your fish bowl, remember?

Diego smiles. He seems to like the idea.

MARÍA (cont'd)
I don't know what they've done to
you,
dear...
(pause)
But now we're together.

María looks at him with tears in her eyes.

EXT. AIRPORT - NIGHT

María leaves the building with Diego by the hand, walking toward her car.

INT./EXT. CAR / HIGHWAYS - NIGHT

The car speeds along a highway, down a hill. María concentrates fully on her driving; she is tense. Her wound is hurting her. On the dashboard, a light comes on; it's the RESERVE LIGHT.

In the distance, down below, the LIGHTS OF THE PORT can be seen, and a FERRY that is moored there.

EXT. PORT - NIGHT

The little port has a ferry berthed in it. There is a gangway that is the side entrance for passengers. At the foot of this set of stairs are a PAIR OF EMPLOYEES and a HOSTESS, who are talking.

The stern of the ferry, which opens into its great belly, is open, prepared for two rows of cars and trucks that are waiting to enter. Before the line of cars there is a TICKET BOOTH with an EMPLOYEE who sells the tickets and operates the barrier to let the cars in.

Beyond the ticket booth is the port parking lot, where the Lada Niva is parked. With María and Diego getting out. María approaches the ticket booth. She watches a CAR that is passing by the ticket booth and getting into the second line.

María sees that, at the side entrance, the Hostess is controlling the access to the ferry.

María then looks carefully at the two lines of cars that are waiting to get in. She notices a SMALL TRUCK that is in the last place in one of the lines. Then María crouches down next to her son.

MARÍA
I've prepared a game.

DIEGO
A game?

MARÍA
Do you want to play?

DIEGO
Yes.

MARÍA
Do you see that truck over there?

María points out the small truck to Diego.

MARÍA (cont'd)
We have to walk over to that truck
without anybody seeing us, and hide
inside it.

Diego looks at the truck with his eyes wide open.

MARÍA (cont'd)
Okay?

DIEGO
And who wins?

MARÍA
The one that doesn't make any noise
wins.

DIEGO
Okay.

María takes Diego by the hand.

MARÍA
Don't let go of my hand.

María starts walking toward an unlighted area, away from the ticket booth. Diego follows her, holding her hand tightly.

María and Diego come to a dark area where there is a chain that impedes access to the lines of cars.

María grasps Diego under the armpits and raises him over the chain. Then she passes through.

Mother and son are now walking toward the line of cars. María moves forward slightly bent over, taking stealthy steps. At that point something attracts her attention: in the distance, a Civil Guard car is coming down the side of the hill toward the port with its BLUE EMERGENCY BLINKERS ON AND SIRENS WAILING.

María hurries up. They get to the truck and position themselves behind it, crouching down. María can see the DRIVER reflected in the left rear-view mirror. In the other rear-view mirror, on the right side, no one can be seen.

The truck has an old tarpaulin covering the entire platform. María opens the tarp and sees that there is no space inside; it's full of big boxes.

DIEGO
Shall we hide now?

MARÍA
Yes, now.

María seeks another solution...She comes around to the right side of the truck and sees a large metal box that is anchored to the chassis. It is a rectangular box with a lock... María examines it just as she did other corners, other holes before...

María takes Diego around to the right side of the truck. The driver can't see them there. She opens the metal box. She removes several dirty cables she finds in it and tosses them to the floor. She notices briefly that the Civil Guard's blue blinkers are quite close to the port.

MARÍA (cont'd)
This will be your hiding place.

María grabs little Diego and lifts him. She puts him into the metal box. He just barely fits inside. The boy looks at her from inside the box.

DIEGO
Don't make noise.

María's eyes are damp.

MARÍA
No, dear.

DIEGO
When do I come out?

MARÍA
When I come and get you.

María grasps the metal lid.

MARÍA (cont'd)
You've got to wait until I come
back.

María places the lid over Diego's head; he remains inside.
She stares at the metal box... Tears are about to spill out
of her eyes.

SECURITY GUARD (O.S.)
Hey!

María turns around, startled, and sees a SECURITY GUARD,
about 30 years old, approaching her.

SECURITY GUARD (cont'd)
You have to get into your car.

María glances briefly at the box.

MARÍA
I don't have a car.

SECURITY GUARD
What? If you don't have a car, you
must use the gangway to get on
board.

The Security Guard points to the side entrance.

SECURITY GUARD (cont'd)
That's the entrance for
pedestrians.

MARÍA
Thanks very much.

María heads for the lateral entrance. The security guard
walks past the box and continues his round.

EXT. PORT - NIGHT

María buys her ticket at the ticket booth. The blinking blue
lights of the Civil Guard car are now in the port parking
lot. María walks past the SIGN ANNOUNCING MATEO'S
DISAPPEARANCE with the telephone number, the same one she saw
the first time.

CUT TO

The cars start entering the ferry. Diego's truck moves toward the boat. María approaches the side gangway. She sees how the lines of cars move forward slowly. In the parking lot, two CIVIL GUARDS are speaking with the ticket booth Employee.

Then another car drives up and stops next to the Civil Guard office; it's Antonio, who gets out and talks with them.

Diego's truck is now near the entrance. María sees Antonio talking with the Employee. Diego's truck continues to roll forward slowly. Now almost all the cars are inside the ferry.

Antonio, the Employee and the two Civil Guard officers walk toward the boat. Diego's truck is now the only vehicle left waiting to drive on board.

María sees the truck enter, disappearing from sight. She breathes nervously. She approaches the Hostess quickly, trying to hide her blood-stained hip. She gives the Hostess her ticket. She climbs up the narrow metal gangway without looking back.

Day is already breaking.

INT. FERRY - NIGHT

María walks quickly along the ferry alleyways. She comes to a room full of seats. Some people are settling in, but most of the passengers are trying to go to sleep.

María looks about in search of windows, and when she finds one she goes to it and looks out. She sees that Antonio and the Employee are talking with the Hostess who was at the entrance. After a few seconds, the Hostess shakes her head and it appears that Antonio is giving up. The Hostess makes a gesture and they STOW THE GANGPLANK.

Somewhat relieved, but still very nervous, María goes to a somewhat isolated seat. She sits down and waits for something to happen... She suddenly notices a trembling in the armrests. It's what she was waiting for: the ferry is starting to move. Through the window, María sees the landscape moving. She relaxes a little. Put only a little.

EXT. PORT - NIGHT

The ferry slowly moves out of the port. The sky is now completely blue.

INT. FERRY - NIGHT

María walks around the ferry while hiding her intentions, looking for a way to get down into the hold. She sees a door, but TWO HOSTESSES passing by force María to wait. When they've gone, María comes back and goes out the door.

INT. FERRY ALLEYWAYS - NIGHT

María goes down some stairs. She opens a door, but it leads to an engine room. She turns into an alleyway. She attempts to open another door, but it's locked. She continues walking, looking for the hold.

She's lost. And increasingly nervous.

María goes through another open door with a sign on it: "acceso restringido" ("*restricted access*"). She finds another set of stairs and goes down them. At the bottom is another door. She opens it. It's the hold.

INT. FERRY HOLD - NIGHT

Nervous, nearly hysterical, María runs among empty cars in search of the truck. All we can hear are the creaking of the ferry and María's footsteps resounding on the metal floor of the hold.

She sees the truck in a corner. She runs to it. María reaches the metal box. Nervous, she opens it.

MARÍA

Diego...

The box is empty. María can't believe what she sees. She looks hysterically around her. She pushes aside the tarp covering the back of the truck, but there's no one there.

MARÍA (cont'd)

Diego!

His voice makes a metallic echo in the hold. Her eyes are filling with tears. María moves about among the cars, on the verge of bursting into tears. Suddenly she sees something: In an aisle between cars, several meters away, is the silhouette of a boy with his back turned toward her, sitting on the floor. It's Diego's silhouette. It is highly reminiscent of the figure she saw on the beach the first time.

MARÍA (cont'd)

Diego?

María runs to him. She turns him around and sees that it's him, and that he has tears in his eyes.

MARÍA (cont'd)

Honey.

DIEGO

I don't like this game.

MARÍA

It's finished. That's it.

DIEGO

I don't want to play with you any more.

MARÍA

We're not going to play any more.
We're going home, do you want to?

Diego says nothing. María picks him up and holds him in her arms.

MARÍA (cont'd)

Do you want to go home?

Diego nods.

DIEGO

Yes.

MARÍA

We're not going to play any more.

María takes Diego in her arms to the door by which she entered the hold.

INT. FERRY - NIGHT

María and Diego enter the passenger zone through the door by which María had left earlier. A HOSTESS sees them and comes out and approaches María.

HOSTESS

That's a restricted area. You can't go in there.

MARÍA

I'm sorry, we got lost.

INT. FERRY - NIGHT

María and Diego settle into some seats that are somewhat isolated from the rest, at the back of the room.

She is exhausted, she's got multiple wounds, her hip hurts, she's sleepy, sweaty, dirty and bloodstained...

But she has Diego.

She looks at him. She notices that one of his shoes is untied. She starts tying it for him. But suddenly Diego takes the shoelaces from her and finishes tying them himself. María looks at him in surprise, but she doesn't think anything of it. She looks at Diego's sleepy face.

MARÍA

Are you sleepy?

DIEGO

No.

María she takes her son's hand and holds it tightly. She smiles. Dead tired, the boy closes his eyes and opens them again. María continues to hold his hand.

MARÍA

We'll be home very soon.

The two relax gradually. María's scissor wound hurts her. Diego closes his eyes. He doesn't open them again. María's eyes also close. But she doesn't want to fall asleep, and she opens them again to see Diego. But she's too tired to resist, and finally her eyes close. She goes to sleep, almost in a faint, holding Diego's little hand tightly.

FADE OUT

OVER BLACK

Soft sound of the sea.

INT. FERRY - NIGHT

María opens her eyes.

A ray of sunlight coming from one of the windows dazzles her.

Some strange voices attract her attention. She awakens little by little. She looks at her right hand: Diego's hand isn't there. She sits up a little. She looks around for Diego.

Her eyes are still awakening, dazzled by the sun. María toward the back of the room, at the little playground, where there is a GROUP OF PEOPLE, among them an OFFICER and TWO HOSTESSES.

María rises and goes up to them. The group of people is gathered around a boy. A Hostess is talking with the boy.

María sees that it's Diego with his back turned.

BUT THERE'S SOMETHING STRANGE ABOUT HIM.

María gets closer, slowly. The Hostess bends down next to the boy. The boy looks like Diego with his back turned. It has to be him, he's wearing the same clothing... The same bloodstained T-shirt.

BUT SOMETHING IS NOT RIGHT.

No one looks at María, who is close enough to be able to hear the Hostess.

HOSTESS

Did you come with your mommy?

The boy shakes his head. María bends to be able to see his face.

It is not Diego.

IT'S ANOTHER BOY.

IT'S MATEO.

María doesn't understand; she is perplexed. She takes several steps back, moving away from the group and the boy. Her eyes fill with terror.

FLASHBACK

María with Mateo in a ferry alleyway.

CUT TO

María hides Mateo in the box on the side of the truck.

INT. FERRY - NIGHT

María moves away while looking at that boy, leaving him with the group of people...

María sees the Officer using a walkie-talkie while he looks at her. Her eyes fill with tears.

FLASHBACK

María and Mateo reflected by the mirror in the airport restroom.

INT. FERRY - NIGHT

María walks with an absent look along the alleyways of the ferry. Little by little, she moves away... The hostesses look at her with surprised expressions; they see her bleeding hip, which has stained her entire leg. The Officer walks toward her...

FLASHBACK

María opens the door of the back room of the trailer and discovers Mateo. She embraces him.

INT. FERRY - NIGHT

María is about to burst into tears. Deeply shaken, broken inside, María now understands everything that has happened as she reaches the door leading to the deck.

FLASHBACK

María sees Mateo on the beach, playing on the sand, with the black dog barking nearby.

EXT. PLATFORM / FERRY DECK - NIGHT

María crosses the platform to the railing. The wind moves her hair. Tears run down her cheeks.

FLASHBACK

In the hospital, María removes the black plastic from the corpse. She looks at the remains of that dead boy.

THE SHIRT ON THE CORPSE IS THE SHIRT THAT DIEGO WAS WEARING.

In his lapel is THE HAIRPIN SHE HERSELF PUT THERE.

EXT. PLATFORM / FERRY DECK - NIGHT

María weeps as she stands before the sea, falling apart inside.

INT. FERRY - NIGHT

A Hostess takes Mateo in her arms and talks to him to calm him down while taking him away from there. Through a nearby window we can see María's silhouette. She is still standing outside on the deck.

EXT. PLATFORM / FERRY DECK - NIGHT

The wind, the tears and the pain on María's face. She closes her eyes.

EXT. SEA - NIGHT

A submarine image in a dark blue, deep, overwhelming sea. María plunges into the water, releasing foam and bubbles. The blood from her wound discolors the water.

María lets herself sink to the bottom. Moving away from the light on the surface. Her eyes are partly open. Silence and calm envelop everything. It's a moment of strange harmony.

Then, smoothly, softly, a BOY'S HAND appears and approaches María's hand.

She opens her eyes fully and her facial expression is relaxed; it is the hand of Diego, her son.

María stretches her arm out to grasp her little boy's hand, to be reunited with him. Their fingertips are nearly touching. María finally smiles as her hand softly touches Diego's.

Suddenly, around María, some lights filtered by the water burst into the darkness and a sudden tug shakes María's body. The silence is broken by vague sounds resembling human voices. An abrupt force drags her toward the surface.

María struggles, kicks. She tries to get away from the arms that tug at her... But she's exhausted, and she lets herself be dragged out. Her eyes close again. The mother's and son's hands separate.

FADE OUT

EXT. PORT - DAWN

María opens her eyes slowly.

She is lying on a stretcher, breathing with the aid of an oxygen mask. Dazed, she cannot see clearly.

Around her, there are people observing her; an ambulance waits nearby with its lights flashing.

Despite her hazy vision, she can see Mateo, who is quite a few meters away from her, on the port breakwater, covered by a small blanket. He looks fragile, disoriented.

Two of the ferry HOSTESSES accompany him and take care of him. A short distance away, near the ferry entrance ramp, there is a Civil Guard vehicle. Antonio opens the back door and... Julia appears.

María watches as Mateo lifts his gaze and sees his mother. She sees Julia, deeply moved, approach him with difficulty. Mother and son are reunited in an intense embrace. María's eyes cloud over, become damp, cannot stay open any longer.

FADE OUT

INT. CITY HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

From the window of the room, the narrow, gray buildings of the city can be seen. The room is small and well lighted.

Laura and María, who is attached to an intravenous serum drip, are standing next to the windows. Although it reflects the suffering she has endured, María's face is more relaxed, more serene.

LAURA

This room is better. It's not as noisy.

MARÍA

Yes... I sleep better here.

(with half a smile)

Although the window is also sealed.

LAURA

You're not missing anything.

María smiles.

CUT TO

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Laura signs out on an access list handed to her by a SECURITY GUARD in a small reception area near the elevators.

María, with her serum drip on a stand, waits next to her.

LAURA
Call me if you want me to
bring you anything.

MARÍA
All right...

LAURA
Anyway, I'll call you tonight.

María nods gratefully. The two sisters gaze at each other intensely. María tries to convey tranquility to Laura.

MARÍA
Don't worry.

They embrace very emotionally. Tightly. They separate just when the elevator doors open.

MARÍA (cont'd)
I'm going to be fine.

LAURA
I know.

Laura enters the elevator. María says good-bye to her with a look as the doors close. With a calm expression, at peace, María walks back down the corridor with her serum drip.

It is visitors' day and there are people going in and out of the rooms. In one of them, more racket than usual can be heard... María can't keep from looking in from the corridor: she sees a couple with two children.

The YOUNGER CHILD, in his MOTHER's arms, cries incessantly while she whispers into his ear. The OLDER CHILD, whose FATHER is holding his hand, is stiller, quiet. María takes a long look at this family portrait.

The older boy seems to sense María's look... Because he turns around to see who is watching from the corridor.

María sees that boy's face... IT'S DIEGO'S FACE.

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María remains motionless as she looks at him. The boy watches her curiously. María then walks away down the corridor, with a calm expression on her face.

FADE OUT