

# ***PAIN AND GLORY***

Original script by  
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**1. PARK. EXT. DAY.**

Salvador and Mercedes, standing in front of a hole in the ground, it isn't very deep (about 2 feet). Everything seems to show that it was Mercedes who dug it, or someone who was paid and left as soon as he was finished. Manolo the cat, Salvador's pet, is lying at the bottom, in a wicker basket. Salvador pushes the earth with his foot and it falls on the basket.

Cut.

In the same park. Mercedes is about 50, she has spent half her life at Salvador's side, as his assistant in everything. Even though he no longer works, they keep in touch.

Mercedes is the closest thing to a family that Salvador has. Efficient, warm, loyal, special, intelligent and not at all intrusive. There are no secrets between them or, if there are, they are minimal and the result of respect.

Mercedes and Salvador walk sadly through the park in which the cat's remains now rest.

MERCEDES

Do you want me to bring you a cat from Cedillo? Or two, so they're company for each other.

SALVADOR

No, I can't bend down to stroke them or to put out their food.

MERCEDES

If they want to be stroked, they'll get up on the furniture. And Maya can put out their food, like she did with Manolo.

SALVADOR

No, no. Manolo was the last one.

He says it as if talking about a last love.

They sit on a bench. Mercedes takes a pile of papers from her purse. Salvador sits on the edge of the bench, his torso upright.

MERCEDES

I know that it's almost always no to everything, but they're doing a retrospective of you in Finland and they've invited you to attend. (*Salvador shakes his head.*) And there are exhibitions by Antonio López, De Chirico and Gordillo.

SALVADOR

Mercedes, you have to tell them that you don't look after my correspondence anymore.

MERCEDES

But someone has to reply about the retrospectives, the tributes, the exhibitions. Your films are still alive in the world, Salvador. (And let me remind you that so are you.)

## **2. HOTEL MIGUEL ÁNGEL. SWIMMING POOL. INT. DAY.**

**(The film could start here)**

The heated pool is empty. We discover Salvador totally submerged in the water and completely motionless, his knees slightly bent and his arms outstretched, as if supported by invisible armrests. (Underwater shot.) Weightlessness keeps him in this posture. He just has to control his breathing. It's the most similar sensation to being bodiless.

His head slowly emerges, only as far as his neck, the rest of his body remains motionless in the same posture. He keeps his eyes closed, he breathes steadily.

His head submerges again. In this position his body doesn't suffer any muscular tension. Neck, back, shoulders, knees, the lumbar region, all stiffness disappears. As he doesn't feel his body, his mind, volatile, is like an open window through which the light and the evening breeze enter. Undoubtedly, the most pleasant sensation of the day.

## **3. RIVER. EXT. DAY (EARLY 60S)**

The water in the pool transports us to the current in a river, in the early 60s. Salvador is a child of three

or four who accompanies his mother to wash clothes in the river of his home village. A very bucolic scene.

Salvador sits astride his mother's lumbar region (as if she were a mule) while Jacinta carries on washing clothes on the wooden washboard. She is accompanied by Rosita, Marisol and Paqui, all with their respective washboards in the water. It's hard work which the women do cheerfully. When the sequence starts, they are laughing and little Salvador is overjoyed.

ROSITA

I'd like to be a man so I could swim naked in the river.

JACINTA

What an idea, Rosita!

Little Salvador rides happily on his mother's back.

JACINTA

(To Rosita) Before you jump in, lift him off me, he's breaking my back.

Rosita gets up, takes hold of the child and lifts him off his mother. She puts him at her side, on the river bank. She gives him a stick so he can play with the water. It looks as if the child is fishing, but he likes listening to the women.

#### **4. RIVER. EXT. DAY. (CONT'D)**

When she's on her feet, Rosita asks Marisol to help her hang out the sheets.

ROSITA

Help me hang out the sheets, Mari.

MARISOL

Sing something for us, Rosita.

Each takes a handle of the basin with Rosita's clean clothes and they walk over to some clumps of reeds and pennyroyal. Rosita starts to sing *A tu vera*.

ROSITA

A tu vera, a tu vera,  
siempre a la verita tuya,  
siempre a la verita tuya  
aunque yo de pena muera.

Salvador plays with the stick in the water. Jacinta and Paqui sing the song while they scrub the clothes on the wooden washboards.

Salvador looks at his mother in profile, with her skin gleaming with sweat, a straw hat and a headscarf to tie back her hair and protect her from the sun. Jacinta smiles back at the child as she sings.

The soap, made at home from fat left over from cooking, doesn't produce foam but it leaves (non-contaminating) lumps on the surface of the water. For the little fish, the lumps are delicious and they come up to the surface in little shoals. The child studies that natural fishbowl, fascinated, and chases after them with his stick.

MOTHER

Look, the little soap fish are here.  
Don't you move, Salvita.  
Paqui, will you help me with the basin?

The two women take the basin full of clean clothes and go over to where Rosita and Marisol are singing. They all sing.

The child watches them from the river bank. It's an image full of life and cheerfulness. This is one of the few memories that Salvador will have of his mother cheerful and singing.

At the age of three, Salvador doesn't realize that this will be one of the happiest moments in his life. Everything is perfect, the water in the river, the fish in his hands, the snow-white sheets spread over reeds and pennyroyal, his mother smiling, and the women singing *A tu vera*.

##### **5. HOTEL MIGUEL ÁNGEL. SWIMMING POOL. INT. DAY. (THE PRESENT)**

An underwater shot travels over Salvador's body from the waist up. A large scar divides his back from the sacrum to the dorsal region. When the camera is arriving at his shoulders, the present day Salvador's head emerges to reality. He remains in the hotel pool for a few moments.

## 6. HOTEL MIGUEL ÁNGEL. CAFETERIA. DAY.

Salvador crosses the spacious cafeteria of the Hotel Miguel Ángel with a medium-sized sports bag. He walks in a peculiar way, with his torso rigid and his shoulders slightly slanted forward, but not so much as to attract attention. Sitting at a table is Zulema Goldstein, having a coffee and checking her iPhone. She looks up, pensive, and sees Salvador in the distance. She hesitates at first, but when he is about to pass her table she calls to him, delighted.

ZULEMA

Salva!

Salvador is walking along, distracted. He looks at her. Although he is near the woman, he has trouble recognizing her.

ZULEMA

I'm Zulema!

Salvador goes up to her and gives her a kiss.

SALVADOR

Zulema!

ZULEMA

What a surprise! This is wonderful! Have you time for a coffee or are you in a hurry?

Salvador, with an effort, sits on the edge of the armchair.

Zulema is more or less Salvador's age (60), but she looks younger. Attractive, she takes very good care of herself. They almost failed to recognize each other, but both conceal that. She speaks with a soft Argentinean accent.

Cut.

## 7. HOTEL MIGUEL ANGEL. BAR. INT. DAY

Salvador has his cup of coffee on the little table. Zulema drinks white wine. Their delight at meeting like this is authentic.

ZULEMA

If you don't write or film, what are you going to do?

SALVADOR  
(*Ironic-bitter*) Live, I guess.

ZULEMA  
I can't live without acting. And it's getting harder all the time, but I do almost anything.

SALVADOR  
Do you see Alberto? I think he was in Argentina.

ZULEMA  
No. He was in Mexico. He worked on several soaps but then he came back here. I met him at a Latino Film Festival on the Mayan Riviera. And he was charming, high of course, but it was lovely to meet up with him again. Have you seen him?

SALVADOR  
No, I haven't seen him since the premiere of *Sabor*.

ZULEMA  
(*Surprised by the question and by the passing of time*) But that was 30 years ago!

SALVADOR  
Thirty two. You know, I saw the film again last week.

ZULEMA  
Hadn't you seen it again?

SALVADOR  
Not since it opened, and I shouldn't say this, but it moved me.

ZULEMA  
I've always loved it!

SALVADOR

The Cinematheque has restored the negative and they're going to have several screenings. They've asked me to present it and I thought it would be a nice idea to do it with Alberto.

ZULEMA

I'm delighted you don't bear him a grudge.

SALVADOR

The bastard never did the character that I'd written. At the time I wanted to kill him, but I really don't bear him a grudge.

Zulema nods, she's very familiar with the story. She witnessed it, she was living in Madrid at that time.

SALVADOR

Seeing the film now... his performance is better than thirty years ago.

ZULEMA

It's your eyes that have changed, darling. The film is the same.

SALVADOR

Do you know how to contact him?

Zulema looks on her cell phone.

ZULEMA

He told me he was living in El Escorial, in someone's house. He only works occasionally, but he looks well, without giving up you-know-what.

Zulema drinks from her glass of white wine.

ZULEMA

I'm surprised that you're the one who isn't working. I always thought you were the kind who never retired.

SALVADOR

So did I.



Zulema looks on her phone, searching for Alberto's number, and she writes it on one of the hotel's coasters. She hands it to him.

ZULEMA

Here, I've put my number too, in case you get bored one day and write something that only I can do.

There's a piano in the hotel lobby. The pianist has just sat down. He starts to play a melody.

### **8. SCHOOL. LARGE MULTI-USE GYM. INT. DAY. (1966)**

We continue to hear the same melody, this time played by a priest in the school's large gym. The floor has various geometrical marks (made with different colored strips of adhesive tape stuck to the parquet floor) for practicing different sports. One of the side walls is covered with gym bars.

The priest and the piano are at the far end.

The door opens and a group of young boys in short pants come in. Pupils. They are accompanied by a big-bottomed priest who signals to them to form up in two lines next to the piano. Once the lines are formed, the big-bottomed priest disappears.

The first priest, at the piano, finishes the song he's playing. He shows off happily in front of the boys, but the boys don't feel comfortable.

He turns to them, trying to be jovial. The boys look at him, fearful and rigid.

PRIEST

Good morning, boys. The first thing we're going to do is choose who will be in the choir.

The boys look at each other, not knowing how to take this.

PRIEST

Has anyone sung in a choir before?  
If so, raise your hand.

No one reacts.

PRIEST  
Well, we'll try you out.

He points to the first boy in the line. He has to insist to get him to come up to the piano. The boy looks at him nervously, his arms hanging at his sides.

PRIEST  
What's your name?

RODOLFO  
Rodolfo.

PRIEST  
*(Friendly)* Well, Rodolfo, let's see how you vocalize.

He plays an arpeggio on the piano and repeats it with the letter U.

PRIEST  
Cu cu cu... Repeat it with me.

The boy tries it, he's horribly off key.

Cut.

#### **9. SCHOOL. LARGE GYM. INT. DAY (1966)**

The priest continues the audition with another boy. Evaristo. He plays a piece of a melody on the piano (intervals with Ta ra ra). He makes him repeat it with increasingly higher notes. This way he can check if he has a good ear and also his tessitura. The result is even worse than the previous one, the boys sing off key with impunity, they are unaware of it.

Cut.

#### **10. SCHOOL. LARGE GYM. INT. DAY (1966)**

Salvador has taken Evaristo's place next to the piano. He doesn't seem nervous.

PRIEST  
What's your name?

SALVADOR CHILD  
Salvador.

PRIEST  
A lovely name. Do you like  
singing?

SALVADOR CHILD  
Yes.

PRIEST  
Well, at last, someone who likes  
singing.

The priest tests his vocalization, ear and tessitura. Salvador sings everything without the slightest difficulty. The priest is delighted.

SALVADOR OFF  
That's how I became the soloist in  
the choir.

#### **11. SCHOOL. THEATER STAGE. INT. DAY. (1966)**

The boys who make up the choir, with Salvador in the center, form a group of some fifteen or twenty children. They rehearse on the stage of the school's theater. They are accompanied on the stage by the priest who chose them. He seems happy. He enjoys being on the stage.

PRIEST  
We'll warm up those voices, boys.

The priest makes extreme sounds, a selection of deep, screeching, high pitched or piercing sounds, notes which fall into the abyss or fly upwards, and which the boys repeat like an echo (the sounds that the priest proposes to them). The priest orchestrates the long notes with his arms in a kind of very rich, sonorous polyphony. During this abstract melody we hear Salvador off screen.

SALVADOR OFF  
The priests decided that I  
wouldn't attend geography or  
history classes, or science or  
history of art. For the first  
three years of high school, I  
spent those periods rehearsing.  
And I always passed. They made me  
a total ignoramus who passed every  
subject without taking the exams.

## 12. GEOGRAPHY.

The screen is filled with the word GEOGRAPHY, as the title of the following chapter. A musical theme dialogues with Salvador's off-screen text without interfering with what he says. The same theme will link with ANATOMY.

SALVADOR OFF

With time, I became a film director and I started to learn Spanish geography while traveling to promote the films I directed.

Both Geography and Anatomy function as two clips, whose lyrics are Salvador's monologues. The images are animated and must be illustrative and didactic, in their own way. They are seen as independent pieces of animated drawings, designed by Juan Gatti.

SALVADOR OFF

I traveled because I was successful. My knowledge of geography coincided with my growth as a filmmaker.

## 13. ANATOMY

The caption ANATOMY fills the screen.

(In this case Gatti's animated drawings show the organs that he mentions, the ailments he alludes to, including those of an abstract nature, like panic or depression.)

SALVADOR OFF

I started to get to know my body through pain and illness. I lived the first thirty years with relative abandon, but I soon discovered that my head and what was inside it, as well as being a source of pleasure and knowledge, also carried within it endless possibilities for pain.

SALVADOR OFF

I soon became acquainted with insomnia, chronic pharyngitis, otitis, reflux, ulcer and intrinsic asthma. Nerves in general and the sciatic in

particular. And all kinds of muscular pains, lumbar, dorsal and tendinitis, in both knees and shoulders.

We hear a noise, like a cicada, synthetic-sounding, a continuous, jarring, very unpleasant note.

SALVADOR OFF

This is tinnitus. I have that too.

We hear the so-called bronchial and pulmonary "whistles", very fine, smooth sounds, like a ghostly psychophony, voices of children lost in the darkness asking for help.

SALVADOR OFF

These are wheezes and whistles. I also suffer from them. In addition to the tinnitus and wheezes, my specialty is headaches, migraines, tension headaches or cluster headaches, and back pains. After the spinal fusion operation (which immobilized more than half my back), I discovered that my life would revolve around my spinal column. I became aware of each one of my vertebrae and the number of muscles and ligaments that make up the mythology of our organism and that, as with the Greek gods, our only way of relating is through sacrifice. But not everything is so physical and illustratable. I also suffer from abstract hardships, pains in the soul, such as panic and anxiety, which add anguish and terror to my life. And naturally I've dealt for years with depression.

**14. ROAD TO EL ESCORIAL. ALBERTO'S STREET. TAXI.  
INT./EXT. DAY.**

Salvador is inside a taxi. The voiceover continues over his face.

SALVADOR OFF

On the nights when various pains coincide... those nights I believe in God and I pray to him. The days when I only suffer one kind of pain, I'm an atheist.

When the voiceover ends the taxi arrives.

**15. EL ESCORIAL. ALBERTO'S STREET. EXT. DAY. (THE PRESENT)**

He gets out of the taxi with difficulty. Once outside, he takes a deep breath of the cold air bathed by a transparent sun. Coming from Madrid, he appreciates it. He's holding the coaster where Zulema wrote down Alberto's address and phone number. He puts it back in his pocket.

Salvador checks the street number and buzzes the entry phone.

A voice asks who it is.

SALVADOR  
Alberto? It's Salvador.

ALBERTO OFF  
Salvador who?

SALVADOR  
Salvador Mallo.

Alberto comes down and opens the gate which leads to a kind of garden and lawn. A modest, pleasant place.

**16. EL ESCORIAL. ALBERTO'S STUDIO. LANDING. INT. DAY.**

Alberto wears comfortable clothes, for lounging around the house. His hair is uncombed, his expression isn't very welcoming. Without inviting him in:

ALBERTO  
(Puzzled) What are you doing here?

SALVADOR  
I have to talk to you.

ALBERTO  
About what?

SALVADOR

About *Sabor*. Will you ask me in?

**17. EL ESCORIAL. ALBERTO'S STUDIO. INT. DAY.**

There is a patio with a lawn and some plants. Not much furniture. It's a little detached house that must have known better times. The living area is minimal. You enter through the kitchen which leads to a living room which, in turn, leads to a neutral exterior space. The important thing is that this second exterior patio leads to a grove of fir trees that brighten up the view from the windows. In this second exterior area there is only one old lounge, or two, next to a table, also made of wood.

The interior is simple. Living room, kitchen and bedroom. A metal bookcase for books and DVDs, not very big. Fotogramas Award for Acting. A desk. Few things. Pleasant.

Three posters decorate the wall. *SABOR*, in the kitchen, *HAMLET*, by Shakespeare, and *CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF*, by Tennessee Williams, on different walls of the living room. All featuring Alberto Crespo.

Salvador gestures when they come into the kitchen and he sees *Sabor's* poster. It's a pleasant, opportune surprise that Alberto has it there.

Alberto looks at him, serious, almost hostile and expectant.

ALBERTO

Can I get you anything?

SALVADOR

Whatever you're having.

ALBERTO

I was making some tea.

SALVADOR

That's fine.

He goes over to the poster and lays his hand on it, as if caressing it.

SALVADOR

I love that you've got *Sabor* here.

Without looking at him, as he makes the tea, stony:

ALBERTO

Why have you come?

With his right hand still on the poster:

SALVADOR

It's taken me 32 years to  
reconcile myself with this film.

He goes into the sitting room and looks out the windows  
at the landscape.

ALBERTO

Will you just tell me why you've  
come to see me after 32 years?

He gives him a cup of tea, he has another in his hand.

SALVADOR

*(Charming)* The Cinematheque has  
restored *Sabor*. They've decided  
it's a classic and they've  
programmed it in a season of films  
shot in Madrid. They called me to  
ask if we'd present it together.

ALBERTO

Don't they know we haven't spoken  
since the shoot?

They go over to a couch and a table. Near an ash tray  
there is a metal cannula for sniffing any kind of  
substance. Salvador looks at the object, but doesn't  
remark on it.

SALVADOR

If they do, they didn't say  
anything to me. Gossip grows old,  
like people. Do you mind if we sit  
down?

They sit, one at each end of the couch.

SALVADOR

Thank you.

ALBERTO

And why do you want us to present  
it together now?



SALVADOR

Because you didn't present it at the premiere.

ALBERTO

Because you forbade me!

Salvador speaks with a certain ironic insolence, a little on the defensive.

SALVADOR

That's why I think it's only fair that we do it together now.

Cut.

**18. EL ESCORIAL. ALBERTO'S STUDIO. EXT. DAY.**

An hour later. The change in the light indicates the passing of time.

Salvador and Alberto are in the little garden without any flowers that gives onto a cluster of fir trees. Both are lying on loungers.

They are both drinking something, tea, beer or Coca-cola.

ALBERTO

Who gave you my address?

SALVADOR

Zulema. I met her by chance and we talked about you.

Alberto gets ready to chase the dragon. He takes all the elements from his pocket.

ALBERTO

Listen, I'm going to chase the dragon. If the sight disgusts you, you can leave. We'll talk on the phone about the Cinematheque.

SALVADOR

Will you invite me?

ALBERTO

I don't recognize you, Salvador.

Alberto distributes the dark powder over a piece of aluminum foil. He is about to light it from underneath.

Before helping him with the lighter flame, he rectifies:

ALBERTO  
Is it your first time?

SALVADOR  
Yes.

ALBERTO  
And why do you want to try heroin at this stage?

SALVADOR  
Curiosity.

ALBERTO  
I bet you're doing research for something.

Alberto inhales the smoke coming from the aluminum foil.

Salvador does likewise and falls into a daze.

Cut.

**19. EL ESCORIAL. ALBERTO'S STUDIO. EXT. DAY.**

Close-up of Salvador in Alberto's house, very drowsy from the effect of the heroin he has just smoked. Alberto checks on him and makes sure he's breathing properly. He leaves him lying on the lounge.

ALBERTO  
Are you all right?

Salvador nods.

Over the close-up of Salvador we hear his mother's voice calling him.

JACINTA OFF  
Salvador!

We start to hear the sound of fireworks in the distance.

**20. TRAIN STATION. HALL. INT. NIGHT. (IN THE 60S)**

Salvador-child digs around with one hand inside a wastepaper basket on the station façade. He finds a well-thumbed novel, *Bonjour, tristesse* by Françoise Sagan.

Jacinta (40, pretty, rural style, curt, her faded dress doesn't manage to hide her attractiveness) spreads a blanket on the floor, surrounded by bundles wrapped in paper or pieces of cloth. There are also two suitcases of different sizes and a wicker basket.

JACINTA

Salva, come and help me!

The mother has a blanket in her hand and is about to make up a bed on the floor with it, next to a wooden bench. Salvador comes in, euphoric. Nearby is a ticket booth and a poster for Renfe.

SALVADOR

Mom, I found a novel!

They hear the loud noise of fireworks coming from the nearby village. While they spread the blanket on the floor:

JACINTA

*(Complaining)* How was I to know that it was a holiday here? It isn't a holiday in our village!

**21. TRAIN STATION. WAITING ROOM. NIGHT.**

They are sitting on a wooden bench, covered by another blanket. The mother opens a wicker basket that contains their food. Salvador puts down his novel and picks up an album of trading cards of Hollywood stars. The mother takes out a bar of chocolate.

SALVADOR

Let me open the chocolate.

The mother gives him the chocolate. Salvador takes out two cards from inside the wrapper.

SALVADOR

There are two cards!

The mother breaks off a quarter of the thick bar of chocolate and puts it between two pieces of bread. She gives it to the boy.

MOTHER

Leave the cards for now and eat.

Salvador reads the names on the colored cards.

SALVADOR

Liz Taylor and Robert Taylor. *(He starts to bite the bread and chocolate.)* Are they brother and sister?

JACINTA

I guess so.

The mother has cut a slice of chorizo and bread with a sharpened knife.

She looks around, forlorn.

JACINTA

What a disgrace, dumped here like gypsies!

SALVADOR

I like the station.

JACINTA

You're a dreamer! I don't know who you take after!

Cut.

**22. TRAIN STATION. WAITING ROOM. INT. NIGHT. (CONT'D)**

Salvador is lying on the bench and his mother is on the blanket on the floor. Both lay their heads on bundles which act as pillows. While Jacinta tucks him in, she discovers that the child has an enormous hole in one of his socks.

JACINTA

What a huge hole!

She pulls off his sock.

The mother, sitting under the blanket, opens an old quince jelly tin or a cookie tin turned into a sewing

box. All imaginable objects live side by side in there. To Salvador's eyes, that box is a treasure. Jacinta takes out a wooden egg. She puts it inside the sock and starts darning it.

Salvador-child is fascinated by that object, the wooden egg, and by how his mother is concentrating on her darning. From her expression she's thinking of something else, the future.

SALVADOR

Mom, do you think that Liz Taylor  
sews Robert Taylor's socks?

JACINA

I don't know. In the card she  
doesn't look like she's very  
interested in darning.

**23. EL ESCORIAL. ALBERTO'S STUDIO. PATIO. EXT. DAY.  
(THE PRESENT)**

Salvador opens his eyes, he hears the murmur of the breeze in the trees. Alberto touches his cheek and wakes him.

ALBERTO

Are you all right?

Salvador half opens his eyes and murmurs affirmatively.

He closes his eyes again. His pleasant expression shows that he is still evoking the memory of the journey to Paterna.

**24. PATERNA. SURROUNDING AREA/CAVES. EXT. DAY**

Paterna is a town in Levante. It differs from the rest of the area because it has over three hundred caves, most of them inhabited by families. This and other surrounding areas are home to workers from all parts of Spain and locals who are badly off.

The family (mother, father, Salvador) walk through an area of very uneven ground, where pieces of cement alternate with stretches of earth or plaster. Along the sides of the path, randomly, there are chimneys sticking up (about three or four feet high), whitewashed, and topped with a little roof. The chimneys look like primitive sculptures (menhirs) and they give the esplanade an ancient, Mediterranean air.

On a rope stretched between two poles, two or three sheets and other clothes flap, moved by a slight breeze. An occasional mongrel. Two or three children playing marbles. A woman carrying a basin of water on her head. Salvador looks at everything, fascinated.

The family trio is transporting all the bundles in a wheelbarrow pushed by the father. The mother, Jacinta, is also carrying shapeless bundles in both hands. Even little Salvador is carrying something.

Jacinta and Venancio (the father) talk. She complains.

JACINTA

What a long night! I thought we'd never get here. The whole night in the station!

FATHER

I told you to wait a few days, until I got more settled in.

JACINTA

Your mother was fed up with us.

FATHER

Don't say that...

JACINTA

Three days ago I heard her say "This month my bread bill has gone up so much!"

The father frowns, annoyed.

FATHER

Don't pay any heed to that.

JACINTA

I won't be a burden to anyone! That same day I packed our bags and here we are. Or would you rather be alone?

FATHER

Don't say that, but you could have waited a few days.

Near the chimneys there are also some rectangular shaped openings in the ground, on four little walls

between 20 and 30 inches high. The family stops next to one of these openings to rest.

The mother sees in the distance a group of one or two storied buildings, beyond an imposing Arab tower.

MOTHER  
Is it much farther?

FATHER  
No, we're here.

The mother points to the closest buildings.

MOTHER  
Is that where our house is?

FATHER  
No. We're on top of it.

The mother doesn't understand. The father points to the open surface, 20 inches above the ground and protected by a grille that lets in light and air and keeps out birds, insects and animals. (It's like the parapet of a well, but rectangular instead of circular). The mother looks over the edge, not understanding what her husband is trying to tell her. At the bottom there is a flowerpot with a geranium and an assortment of tiles arranged haphazardly.

MOTHER  
A cave!

FATHER  
I couldn't find anything better.

MOTHER  
For God's sake, Venancio, a cave!

FATHER  
There are three hundred families living in caves here, it's typical of this village. There's no shame in it.

Salvador sees in the distance a boy of eighteen whitewashing a wall. The boy catches his attention. The father, a humble, inscrutable man, feels humiliated by the mother's reaction and he takes it out on the boy.

FATHER

Salvador, come here!

**25. PATERNA. SALVADOR'S FAMILY'S CAVE. EXT. DAY.**

They go through the opening of an underground tunnel that leads to the door of the cave house. Jacinta looks at everything, greatly annoyed. She is a proud woman and it's hard for her to accept that they've left their home village in search of fortune only to end up living in a cave.

FATHER

I swept it as best I could. And we've got light.

**26. PATERNA. SALVADOR'S FAMILY'S CAVE. INT. DAY.**

The mother looks around at the interior. It's like a grotto with low, irregular ceilings. They put down their bundles where they can.

FATHER

It was your idea to leave the village and come here.

MOTHER

*(Somber)* What would they say in the village if they could see us!

FATHER

I didn't have time to whitewash it, that's why I wanted you to wait a while.

There are two amorphous spaces that we'll call rooms, in one of them there is a Singer sewing machine. And a wooden box that acts as a table. On top of the box is a bottle of wine. Jacinta looks annoyed when she sees the bottle but she says nothing. There is also a humble bed, covered by a humble bedspread. However, to Salvador's eyes the cave is a fantastic place. The two rooms are whitewashed. In the area bathed by light from the skylight, the large flaking surfaces are much more noticeable, but they don't detract from the beauty of the place. For the boy's sensitivity, those flaking surfaces are like works of abstract art, although he doesn't know what that is. He just knows that he likes it. He enters the area of light as if it were a sacred place. He hears his mother's complaints and his father's explanations, but they don't affect him. What



matters to him is the light, and living in a cave is like living inside a comic strip.

FATHER

I cleaned it as best I could.

The floor is a mixture of cement and tiles typical of the region, reminiscent of Gaudí, and trims of lime.

The boy looks up and sees the very blue sky around a white cloud. He tries to share this discovery with his mother.

SALVADOR

Mom, look! The sky!

Jacinta walks forward with the feeling that she's going to hit her head on the ceiling. This part is flaking much more than that at the entrance. The walls have an irregular shape, like a grotto, there are no straight lines. There are parts painted white, but mostly the paint has flaked off, revealing rock or brown earth. In one corner there is a brush and dust pan. Near the area that gets most light from the roof, there are two stone benches which suggest that there used to be a kitchen there. The father has bought a hot plate and some trivets.

Jacinta and Salvador are bathed by the light from the skylight. It doesn't seem like sunlight, it's kindlier, softer. The father looks at them from the shadows, ashamed. Jacinta leaves the boy and goes back to her husband. She tries to cheer him up. They go to what will be their room. Finally, tenderly:

JACINTA

Are you happy we're here?

FATHER

Jacinta, I wanted something else for you. Do you think I'm happy bringing you to a cave? But there's nothing else.

JACINTA

I'll fix it up and this will look like a home. But your mother, really, saying that to us about the bread, in front of the child!

She looks round to where the boy is, from force of habit, and shouts.

JACINTA

Salvador! *(To the father)* He loves it.

She looks at Venancio with warm, knowing eyes. And she gives him a kiss.

**27. EL ESCORIAL. ALBERTO'S STUDIO. INT. DUSK. (THE PRESENT)**

Salvador calls a taxi company on his phone. He gives his address in Madrid and that of Alberto in El Escorial. Alberto is beside him and hears the details.

**28. EL ESCORIAL. ALBERTO'S STUDIO. EXT. DUSK.**

Salvador moves as if he were floating. They arrive at the gate that leads to the street.

SALVADOR

Are you clear about the Cinematheque? The 18<sup>th</sup>, in three weeks.

ALBERTO

I've already started thinking about my outfit. We'll talk on the phone before.

Salvador holds out his hand to say goodbye.

ALBERTO

Can't we exchange a kiss, like old friends? We even chased the peace dragon.

Salvador accedes, he barely brushes the other's cheek. And he gets into the car with difficulty while Alberto watches.

**29. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. INT. NIGHT.**

On the way back, night has fallen. Salvador comes into his house. On a sideboard near the door he finds a note from Maya, his maid. "Miss Mercedes rang. Call her as soon as you can."

**30. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. INT. NIGHT.**

Salvador takes his phone from his pocket and calls Mercedes' number.

MERCEDES OFF

Hello?

SALVADOR

It's me.

Mercedes is at her desk in front of the computer. On the wall a poster of Fellini's *8½*.

MERCEDES

Is it true about the Cinematheque?

SALVADOR

Yes.

MERCEDES

Keep me informed. Don't shut me out so much.

SALVADOR

I was going to tell you.

MERCEDES

I'm delighted that they're showing *Sabor* and that you're going out a bit, but are you sure you want a Q&A with people? Because it's going to be full.

SALVADOR

It isn't that I want a Q&A, but I'm curious to see if the film has survived these 30 years.

MERCEDES

You'd better believe it. But if you decide not to go, tell me and I'll sort it out. It's better to cancel now than at the last minute.

**31. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. INT. DAY (THE NEXT DAY)**

Salvador is lying on the bed reading. He is dressed for lounging at home, warm, comfortable, good quality clothes. The bedroom door is half open.

Maya comes up.

MAYA

I'm leaving now. Do you need anything?

SALVADOR

No, Maya, thank you. See you tomorrow.

He's reading *Nothing Grows by Moonlight*, by Torborg Nedreaas. We hear a paragraph in voiceover.

Salvador underlines the paragraph with a pencil.

SALVADOR OFF

"I entered the room where Johannes was. He had rolled over into a ball, so there was no room for me. When I tried to make a space for myself, he woke and we made love, but loneliness stayed with me and I couldn't chase it out of my heart. We were as close as two people can be, but we were in separate worlds".

**32. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. INT. DAY (AFTERNOON, ANOTHER DAY)**

Salvador is lying on the green velvet couch facing the terrace. There isn't much light (a faint lamp that bounces off a wall). He lays his hand over his forehead, the contact with himself eases his headache a little. He hears the doorbell. He waits until it rings two or three times. Then he gets up. In these circumstances it is obvious that he has trouble getting to his feet. He puts his hands on his lumbar region. He is very rigid as he takes the first steps. Then he walks normally.

He is dressed differently so that it doesn't seem like the same day as the previous sequence.

**33. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. INT. DAY. (CONT'D)**

Every time Salvador gets up it has to be seen that he forces himself to walk normally. Generally this is accompanied by a gasp of pain, if he's alone, and by him raising a hand to his dorsal and lumbar region.

These have become automatic gestures. If he is in company, he conceals them.

He looks through the peephole. Alberto waves at him from the other side of the door.

Salvador opens the door.

ALBERTO  
Weren't you going to open the door?

SALVADOR  
I wasn't expecting anyone. And I've got a headache.

Salvador looks worse than two days before.

ALBERTO  
Do you want me to go away?

SALVADOR  
No, no. Come in, now that you're here.

They go to the kitchen.

**34. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. INT. DAY. (CONT'D)**

The house is in semi-darkness. Probably there is no light switched on, if dusk is falling. In any case, there is sufficient light coming through the glass doors that connect the living room with the terrace.

Salvador and Alberto move through the house. Alberto looks at the place, impressed.

ALBERTO  
Do you live like this, in darkness?

SALVADOR  
When I've got a headache, yes.

Alberto looks all around, impressed by the space and the paintings hanging on the walls.

ALBERTO  
Poor thing! But you've got one hell of a house!

They go up to the two paintings by Sigfrido Martín Begué, on the rug.

SALVADOR  
Do you want a drink?

ALBERTO  
Any liquor.

We stay with Alberto looking at the paintings. He starts to hear some dreadful coughing coming from the kitchen.

Salvador is gasping for air, his face is red, his coughs are becoming deeper. Alberto comes into the kitchen and goes to help him. Something must have gone down the wrong way.

ALBERTO  
Breathe through your nose.

Salvador gradually starts to breathe normally again. His face is red, his eyes are watering, it was a very bad choking spell.

Salvador had already taken out the bottle and glasses and left them on the center table.

SALVADOR  
Fuck, I choke on nothing!

Alberto gives him a glass of water.

ALBERTO  
Here, drink it slowly. You scared me! I thought you were going to choke to death.

SALVADOR  
*(Complaining)* I get this from time to time. And it's horrible.

He finishes slowly drinking the water.

ALBERTO  
Listen, about the Cinematheque, were you serious?

SALVADOR  
Of course. I've already told them that we're both going.

Cut.

**35. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. INT. NIGHT. (IN FRONT OF THE TELEVISION)**

A large couch with lots of cushions of different sizes and colors. An exquisitely designed square table full of DVDs and Blurays, a large plasma screen between the two bookcases that fill the wall facing the couch. Lamps at both ends of the couch, one of colored crystals, Memphis style, the other by Lloyd Wright. Above the couch, a large painting of tree trunks, by Abraham Lacalle that is reminiscent of David Hockney, and *The Flower*, by Jorge Galindo, if it fits.

The place overflows with DVDs, Blurays and books.

Alberto is getting ready to chase the dragon. Salvador watches him. The TV is showing *La niña santa* by Lucrecia Martel. Alberto offers him the pipe. Salvador takes a puff and he feels as if he's floating.

**36. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. INT. NIGHT.**

Salvador isn't in any shape for talking a lot, he's out of it.

Alberto looks at him, he decides not to leave him on his own in that state. Salvador is still new to this. Alberto moves unhurriedly towards the desk, at one end of the room, next to a window that is cinemascope-shaped, a rectangle twice as long as it is high and which looks out on the street. From the window, the tree trunks can be seen.

Alberto pokes around on the top of the desk.

**37. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. DESK. BOOKSHELF. WINDOW. INT. NIGHT.**

He looks at the objects and papers that surround the computer. He looks over to make sure that Salvador is still out of it. He sits down in front of the computer screen. On the desk there are several notebooks laid out tidily, stacks of paper, a magnifying glass, a blood pressure monitor, boxes of medicines, a file with cuttings... a great variety of objects, all neatly arranged.

Just to try, Alberto clicks on the mouse and discovers that the computer is connected and the desktop screen offers him lots of documents. He reads the titles in passing: *Detour*, *Parallel Mothers*, *Too Many Gender Changes*, *Strange Life Form*, *Mermaids* and *Replicants*. Attractive titles. But the one that most catches his attention is called *Addiction*. Of course. Alberto supposes that Salvador is writing something about his initiation into heroin, which explains his present curiosity. He doesn't hesitate for a second before diving into the document. And rummaging in it.

**38. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. OFFICE. INT. NIGHT.**

Alberto reads the first sentence: we hear it in voiceover.

"My idea of cinema was always linked to the breeze on summer nights. We only saw films in the summer."

He looks at Salvador who is still drowsy.

**39. SALA MIRADOR (THEATER). STAGE. INT. NIGHT.**

Alberto imagines himself on a bare stage, with just a large screen to one side. In this part of the monologue, the real wall of the stage is painted black, like the whole theater. Some pipes stick out, and a square box with a red fire hose, all protected by a glass screen.

ALBERTO

The films were projected on an enormous, whitewashed wall.

(In his imagination, Alberto goes up to the white screen that represents the white wall in the form of a rectangle.)

ALBERTO

I particularly remember the films in which there was water: waterfalls, beaches, the bottom of the sea, rivers or springs.

The screen is filled with different landscapes with moving water. It ends with a scene by a river, intense colors shot "day for night" in *Splendor in the Grass*, the film by Elia Kazan. Alberto points to one end and the other of the whitewashed rectangle, that is, to the left and right of the base of the screen.



ALBERTO

Just hearing the sound of running water gave all the kids a tremendous desire to urinate and we'd do it right there, on both sides of the screen. In the cinema of my childhood it always smells of piss and jasmine, and of the summer breeze.

(In the scene by the river Nathalie Wood runs along the riverbank in a red dress and high heels. Marilyn Monroe also appears for a moment, singing *Kiss in Niagara*.)

**40. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. INT. NIGHT.**

Insert occasional close-ups of a groggy Salvador on the couch, which will help do ellipses in the reading. It gives the impression that what Alberto is reading (and which he imagines performing) is being dreamed by Salvador.

Cut.

**41. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. INT. NIGHT.**

Alberto finishes reading Salvador's text. He turns his head and looks over at the couch where the author is vegetating. He has just opened his eyes. He starts to waken slowly and heavily, distant, expressionless. Without a headache. For a few moments neither says anything.

SALVADOR

What are you doing there?

ALBERTO

Reading you. I've just read *Addiction*.

SALVADOR

Well, you shouldn't have.

ALBERTO

I had to do something. You were groggy.

Cut.

**42. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. INT. NIGHT.**

On the table there is a tray with an untouched meal. Alberto picks a little at the food.

ALBERTO

May I?

SALVADOR

Yes, yes...

Salvador opens the refrigerator and drinks a liquid yogurt.

ALBERTO

*(Sincere, enthusiastic)* Listen, the story really knocked me out.

Salvador isn't interested in the subject.

SALVADOR

It isn't a story.

ALBERTO

Well, whatever it is, it could be staged just as it is.

Salvador rejects the idea. He speaks with the distance that heroin gives. This isn't the case with Alberto, he's more used to it.

SALVADOR

Thank you, but it isn't a dramatic text.

ALBERTO

It doesn't matter, I could perform it, I really know what it's talking about.

SALVADOR

*(Sarcastic)* You? You're on the opposite side to that text.

ALBERTO

You forget that I'm an actor and that I suffer very well.

Salvador looks at him without saying anything.

Cut.

43. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. TERRACE. (CONT'D.)

Salvador lies on a lounge and Alberto sits on a hassock, leaning back against the wall. The large terrace is full of flowerpots with different plants.

ALBERTO

*(Begging)* I need to act again. I came down from my pedestal a long time ago, eh? I'm in touch with the Sala Mirador. I know it's a small venue, very "off". We're putting on Cocteau's *Le bel indifférent*, with men, to give it that touch. But, to be honest, I'd much rather do your text. Why don't you give me a copy and I'll show it to the people at the Mirador?

SALVADOR

Stop, stop, Alberto!

ALBERTO

I don't understand. Why did you write it?

SALVADOR

I wrote it to forget about its content. But I don't want to talk about it.

Cut.

The two walk to the front door. Salvador takes a 50 euro note from his pocket. He offers it to Alberto.

SALVADOR

Do you mind letting me have what's left of the paper?

ALBERTO

I'm not a dealer.

He takes the paper from his pocket.

ALBERTO

I'll give it to you, but use it with discretion. These late discoveries are the worst. Think

about what I said about the  
Mirador. Is your headache gone?

SALVADOR  
Completely.

ALBERTO  
You see?

On the landing he walks to the elevator.

Cut.

**44. CINEMATHEQUE. SCREENING ROOM. INT. NIGHT.**

Applause. The end credits appear on the cinema screen. We hear the final theme music. The audience continues applauding. The screening room is full, a very varied audience. Many young spectators who hadn't even been born when the film was made. Mercedes is among them, excited and moved by the screening and by the audience's reaction. She looks at her watch uneasily.

With the lights still out, in the area nearest the stage, the director of the Cinematheque is murmuring with two employees who are asking him something. This must be seen from Mercedes' point of view: the director tells them to put three chairs in front of the seats on the main floor, on a little dais on which there is only the microphone on a stand with which he presented the film.

Mercedes, curious, watches them from her seat. The director, looking worried, walks along the central aisle to the door of the screening room, separated by red curtains. The stage curtains are a bluish grey. The director looks nervous, he has his cell phone in his hand, like an appendix of himself. He stops by the red curtains.

Mercedes goes up to him, they obviously know each other. As they talk, they walk to the other door, which leads to a large café with tables, a bar and lots of film posters on the walls (classics of Spanish and foreign cinema, among the former we see the posters for *Arrebato*, *El sur*, *Peppermint Frappé*, *Casa Flora*, *Furtivos*, *Viridiana*, *El espíritu de la colmena*, *Bilbao*, *Magical Girl*, *Tras el cristal*, *La Dama de Beirut*, *Plácido*, *Atraco a las tres*, *Tesis*, *Muerte de un ciclista*, *Tristana*, *El extraño viaje*, *Bienvenido Mr. Marshall*, *El pico* or *Duerme, duerme, mi amor*).

Near the door there are two easels showing two posters advertising the season that includes Salvador's film: *Madrid and the cinema*.

DIRECTOR  
Is he on his way?

MERCEDES  
*(Skeptical)* I don't know. You organized all this yourself.

From where they are we can see the entrance from the street. There is a little group of spectators at the bar counter and others at the tables.

DIRECTOR  
I don't understand. I showed him the restored print and he loved it!

They pass a young spectator.

YOUNG SPECTATOR  
Excuse me, the washroom?

DIRECTOR  
*(Pointing)* There, on your left.

MERCEDES  
Why don't you call him?

A young girl comes out of the cinema and asks the director.

SPECTATOR  
Is there going to be a Q&A?

DIRECTOR  
Yes, yes. The director is on his way.

**45. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. INT. BATHROOM. NIGHT.**

Salvador and Alberto, in front of the bathroom mirror. Salvador's phone rings on the vanity top. The name of the director of the Cinematheque appears on the screen. No one answers the phone. Alberto looks at it, furious.

Both Alberto and Salvador are pale and drugged. Alberto wears a very eye-catching Dsquared jacket. Salvador is

in a maroon suit by Prada and an open necked shirt that matches the suit.

The phone stops ringing. Alberto has seen who was calling.

SALVADOR

Was it him?

ALBERTO

Yes. I can't believe it! You organize all this fuss and then you don't go! You don't know how much it cost me to borrow this jacket!

Salvador takes the phone and puts it in his pocket.

He leaves the bathroom, followed by Alberto.

**46. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. INT. NIGHT.**

They go into the kitchen.

SALVADOR

You go.

ALBERTO

How can I go on my own?

SALVADOR

I don't want them to see me like this!

ALBERTO

See you how? (We're not going to a beauty contest, it's a fucking Q&A!)

SALVADOR

I don't want them to see me drugged up and stammering!

He takes a swig of limoncello straight from the bottle.

ALBERTO

Once you step on the stage, you'll be in control. With what you've been!

SALVADOR

That was before, and without  
having taken heroin.

Salvador calls the the director of the Cinematheque.

**47. CINEMATHEQUE. SCREENING ROOM. INT. NIGHT**

The director is at the front of the screening room talking to a friend about the situation. He's stressed out. The spectators murmur but very few have left. Some have taken the opportunity to go to the washroom or to bring drinks from the bar. The atmosphere is relaxed. We get the impression that all those people have nothing better to do than wait there, sitting, leaning on the backs of the seats or standing chatting. Many of them are busy on their phones. Mercedes has gone back to her seat, uneasy. The director of the Cinematheque has an exaggerated quiff, Jon Kortajarena style. Like a tic, he touches the quiff from time to time. His phone rings, it's Salvador.

DIRECTOR

Salvador? Where are you?

He moves to the center, under the stage, where the chairs are and the mike with which he presented the film.

**48. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. INT. NIGHT. (CONT'D.)**

**49. CINEMATHEQUE. SCREENING ROOM (WITH AUDIENCE).  
INT. NIGHT.**

Sequences 48 and 49 alternate.

SALVADOR

At home.

The people in the front row look at him, they realize that he's talking to the film's director. He's talking very close to the mike he used in the presentation. The spectators can hear what he's saying.

DIRECTOR

Still? The film's over, the  
audience is waiting for you.

SALVADOR

Really?

DIRECTOR

(To the spectators) I'm with Salvador Mallo.

He puts the phone on speaker and holds it up to the mike. Salvador's voice is deeper than usual.

SALVADOR  
We were intending to go. Alberto Crespo is here with me.

DIRECTOR  
(To the spectators) And the leading actor, Alberto Crespo. Do you mind applauding again so they can hear it? It might encourage them.

Salvador and Alberto, perplexed, hear the applause over the phone's loudspeaker. Salvador is amused by the situation and it seems that so is the audience.

SALVADOR  
(Surprised) Is everyone listening to me?

DIRECTOR  
Yes.

SALVADOR  
I want to apologize to the spectators. At the last minute I didn't feel well. I'm with Alberto Crespo, we were intending to go. He stayed to keep me company.

In the screening room one spectator raises his hand.

DIRECTOR  
Just a minute, someone has raised his hand, he wants to ask a question.

A Cinematheque employee hands the spectator a mike.

While they listen to the question, Alberto quickly puts two lines of cocaine on the table. With his lips he spells out to Salvador "c o c a i n e " and he offers him the little snorter. Before the spectator finishes the question, Salvador quickly snorts one of the lines which immediately stimulates him.



SPECTATOR

This is a question for the film's director. What do you think of Alberto Crespo's performance in the film? There are people who say you weren't happy with it and that's why you grew apart.

Alberto and Salvador exchange glances.

DIRECTOR

(To Salvador) Did you hear the question, Salvador?

SALVADOR

Yes.

Alberto looks at him and expects him to go off on a tangent. The spectator insists.

SPECTATOR

I read that after *Sabor* you argued and didn't see each other again.

SALVADOR

Look, time is mysterious. I saw the film again a month ago, and I think that Alberto's performance has gained a lot since we released it.

Alberto looks at him, disconcerted.

SECOND SPECTATOR

What was it that you didn't like back then?

Salvador moves away from Alberto, who is now listening closely, with an amazed expression.

SALVADOR

Its heaviness, its lethal rhythm. I'd conceived a dynamic, daring character, a funny, scathing cocaine addict.

Alberto glares at him.

Laughter among the audience. The director of the Cinematheque is happy, he is finally having a kind of Q&A with Salvador Mallo. Mercedes is listening, very

serious. Apart from Alberto, she is the only person who isn't amused by the situation. Salvador moves a little away from Alberto and only speaks into the phone.

SALVADOR

Alberto didn't have the lightness that I asked for, not because he was incapable, but because he was taking the opposite drug to the character, he was taking heroin. The rhythm of his performance was graver, and the humor in the text disappeared. But I have to be fair, now I think that that gravity goes well with the character, it gives him substance.

**50. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. INT. NIGHT (CONT'D)**

Alberto slaps him on the arm, or pushes him, and Salvador falls into an armchair or stumbles against the wall. He raises a hand to his back in a gesture of pain. The phone falls to the floor. Alberto kicks it, it slides along until it knocks against a wall or a piece of furniture.

ALBERTO

*(Furious)* How dare you!

He grabs him by his shirt front and is about to punch him.

Salvador takes a deep breath. Serious.

SALVADOR

I didn't mean to say it but now it's said.

ALBERTO

Be careful with me, eh? I won't let you humiliate me again! Who do you think you are?

He goes to the door.

SALVADOR

I just told the truth. Before we started, you promised me you wouldn't take heroin during the shoot. That's why I gave you the part. And you lied to me. You did

whatever the hell you wanted. I  
had to tell you some day.

Without looking at him, while he opens the door:

ALBERTO  
You're fucking crazy!

And he leaves the house.

**51. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. BEDROOM. INT. NIGHT.**

Salvador leaves six tablets of different colors and sizes on top of the chest of drawers. When he takes one out of the blister pack (tryptizol, for example) it rolls along the top and falls to the floor. There are no more in the blister.

Alberto takes a pillow from the bed and throws it on the floor. He kneels down on the pillow and picks up the tablet.

He crushes the tablets with a metal lighter. When he has reduced them to powder he pours this into a glass of water. And he drinks it. He goes to bed, he does breathing exercises.

**52. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. MERCEDES AND MAYA IN THE KITCHEN**

Mercedes and Maya, in the kitchen. Maya, standing, is at the white corian worktop peeling fruit to make a shake. Mercedes is sitting at the central table, trimming the stems of a bunch of white roses.

MAYA  
I give him all the messages.

MERCEDES  
He's been avoiding me recently.  
Are you sure he's alright?

MAYA  
He doesn't eat much and he chokes  
a lot.

MERCEDES  
Purée all his food. Does he go  
out?

MAYA

Not that I see, but he walks here,  
through the house, along the  
hallway.

MERCEDES

There are loafers by the door, and  
he's never liked loafers.

MAYA

Well, he wears them, even though  
he's got a thousand lovely  
sneakers.

MERCEDES

Maya, tell him you don't mind  
doing up his shoes or sneakers. It  
must be very hard for him to tie  
his laces.

MAYA

I do tell him, Miss Mercedes. But  
he doesn't want me to. I think  
he's embarrassed. And I don't know  
what to do.

MERCEDES

Always smile at him and take good  
care of him. And if you see  
anything strange, call me.

MAYA

Everything here is strange.

**53. VALLECAS. EXT. DAY.**

Salvador gets out of a taxi in an area of Vallecas  
occupied by drug dealers. He arrives at an almost  
deserted corner. Several young Nigerians talk and  
laugh. On a wall, an enormous graffiti says "I do  
believe in you, sister".

On the sidewalk, Salvador is the only white man, and an  
obvious target. A Nigerian capturer comes up to him. He  
speaks Spanish with an almost incomprehensible accent.

CAPTURER

Can I help you with anything?

SALVADOR

I don't know.

CAPTURER  
What do you want?

SALVADOR  
A dose.

CAPTURER  
Ten euros.

Salvador doesn't fully understand him.

SALVADOR  
Ten euros?

The capturer nods.

SALVADOR  
Don't bring me shit. If it's good,  
I'll come back.

CAPTURER  
Give me the money.

SALVADOR.  
No, no, when you bring the  
material.

CAPTURER  
In cash and now. Wait here.

Salvador gives him the money and the capturer disappears. Salvador looks at the people swarming around him, a mixture of residents and clients who walk quickly.

He hears shouting, he looks over to where it's coming from, in the same street.

**54. THE SAME STREET. EXT. DAY**

Two drug apartment "vigilantes" confront each other, one with a knife and the other with a machete. The man with the machete is heavily built. He has the sheath for the weapon (with a sword hilt) in his left hand. The man with the knife has a jacket rolled around his left arm as a shield. The two threaten each other verbally but we can't understand what they're saying. One shouts "NO" all the time.

The man with the machete forces his opponent to back away. Both rip the air with blows that are easily

avoided. A friend tries to separate them but finally gives up. The man with the machete cuts the other on the leg. It mustn't be very deep because he stays on his feet and keeps attacking the heavily built man.

Among those watching the duel there is a group of four, with haircuts and clothes similar to that of the duelists. They end up getting between the two. And rather than convincing them, it seems that the duelists have got bored with the fight. The one with the machete puts the weapon in its sheath and goes off in the opposite direction to the other, wounded in the leg, but still on his feet and leaving a trail of blood on the ground.

A police car drives up.

Salvador has seen everything from a prudent distance. A neighbor films the duel from his balcony. Salvador is leaving when the capturer appears. He calls him. Salvador takes the merchandise. The transaction takes only an instant.

**55. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. INT. AFTERNOON-EVENING**

Salvador is lying on different colored cushions. He eyes are half open. He ends up closing them and welcoming his childhood in Paterna.

**56. PATERNA. OUTSKIRTS/CAVES. EXT. DAY. 1966**

Salvador-child is sitting on the stairs of the Arab Tower which dominates the area of caves where he lives with his family. He's reading *Bonjour, tristesse*, the book he found in the wastepaper basket in the station, or an encyclopedia.

Eduardo and Conchita, a young couple, pass near the tower and are struck by the sight of a child reading a book. Eduardo is a builder and house painter and is dressed as such. Salvador saw him the first day, from a distance. The couple are young, attractive and very rural looking.

EDUARDO

He's so young and look at how he's reading!

Salvador looks up from the book and smiles at the couple. When they've walked past, the girl turns to him.

CONCHITA  
Hey, can you write too?

SALVADOR CHILD  
Of course...

CONCHITA  
How much would you charge us for  
writing a letter to my aunt in  
Bilbao?

SALVADOR CHILD  
I don't know.

**57. PATERNA. ENTRANCE TO FAMILY CAVE. TOWER. EXT.  
DAY.**

The mother comes out to empty a bucket of dirty water.  
Or she comes with a pitcher of water from the fountain  
on her hip. She goes over to the group.

MOTHER  
What's going on?

CONCHITA  
We wanted your son to write a  
letter for us, because my  
boyfriend is illiterate.

Eduardo thinks that remark is unnecessary. He protests:

EDUARDO  
When can I learn, if I'm working  
all day!

CONCHITA  
(Arguing) If you didn't waste your  
time drawing...

Eduardo looks at his girlfriend, obviously angry.  
They're about to start arguing seriously, but they  
control themselves.

The mother is immediately interested in the builder. So  
is Salvador.

MOTHER  
You're a builder.

EDUARDO

And a painter.

MOTHER

Of course! What a pity, so handsome, and you're illiterate. My Salvador could teach you to read and write, at night, when you finish working.

She looks at the child who seems to agree.

MOTHER

Whenever it suits you.

EDUARDO

*(He nods.)* Could you teach me maths too?

Before his mother can answer, Salvador does it himself.

SALVADOR CHILD

Yes.

MOTHER

Of course, maths, so no one can cheat you. My Salvador can teach you everything. In the world we live in, being illiterate is a handicap. I'll get paper and a pencil so he can write the letter.

CONCHITA

*(Very interested)* How much would you charge us?

MOTHER

Nothing! *(To Eduardo)* You're a builder, you could lend me a hand with the kitchen, and finish painting the walls, when it suits you.

EDUARDO

It would have to be at weekends.

MOTHER

At weekends then, and in exchange my Salvador will teach you to read and write and maths! And today's letter is free.



The girlfriend thinks it's a good deal.

Cut.

**58. PATERNA. FAMILY CAVE. INT. NIGHT.**

Eduardo whitewashes a peeling section of the ceiling and wall, in what would be the dwelling's hallway. He does it with a brush, a pole and a piece of lambskin on the tip. Salvador, sitting on a little chair, looks at Eduardo, concentrating on the lesson.

Eduardo says the ABC out loud. Jacinta is with them, she is preparing the dinner and washing dishes in a basin.

EDUARDO

A B C CH D E F...

JACINTA

Eduardo, when are you going to put in the sink? I have to wash everything in these basins.

She points to some basins full of water.

EDUARDO

I wanted to do the walls first.

JACINTA

I've got used to them peeling, the sink is more urgent.

EDUARDO

Salvador gives me a lot of homework. I don't have time.

Jacinta looks at her son as if he were a stranger. Who can he have taken after? Even she is surprised that he behaves like a real teacher.

SALVADOR CHILD

If he wants to learn to read and write, he has to learn the ABC. Come on, Eduardo, start again.

EDUARDO

A B C CH D E F G J K...

Salvador corrects him.

SALVADOR CHILD

No, Eduardo. F G "H I" J K. You said it right before.

EDUARDO  
There's a lot of letters.

SALVADOR CHILD  
Stop complaining. There is what there is.

JACINTA  
(*To herself*) What a scold!

Cut.

**59. PATERNA. FAMILY CAVE. INT. NIGHT.**

By the light of a bare bulb, at a round table, near the area lit by the skylight (even at night), Salvador continues his lessons. The two boys are dressed slightly differently to give the sensation that time has passed. The mother is making a lampshade. She looks over at the boys from time to time. More of the cave is painted than in the previous sequence, but precisely the wall behind the boys is crumbling, and the flaking paint looks like a map.

On the round table, as well as an encyclopedia there is a child's exercise book with letters at the start of each page. Eduardo holds the pencil clumsily and copies the letter A.

SALVADOR CHILD  
Give me the pencil. You don't hold it like that. Hold it like this.

Salvador gives him back the pencil and helps him place it correctly between his thumb, his middle finger and his index finger. The builder bends over the exercise book. He holds the pencil the wrong way.

SALVADOR CHILD  
Look at how I hold it.

Eduardo imitates him.

SALVADOR CHILD  
That's it.

On the page there are only vowels. Eduardo has to copy the line of vowels at the top of the page.

SALVADOR CHILD

You don't have to hold it so tightly. Let your hand go loose, I'll move it for you.

Salvador lays his hand on the bricklayer's, much bigger than his. He grips it and helps him write the vowels. The bricklayer's hand trembles, intimidated by Salvador's skill and his own clumsiness.

EDUARDO

I'm a bit nervous.

SALVADOR CHILD

That's better. Do you like drawing?

EDUARDO

A lot.

SALVADOR CHILD

Then you'll learn to write very soon. It's like drawing, except with letters. Now you do it on your own.

The mother looks at them, pensive, from the improvised kitchen.

Cut.

**60. PATERNA. FAMILY CAVE. INT. NIGHT.**

The mother is at the sewing machine. The peeling wall that looks like a map is half painted, or totally painted. The exercise book on the table has sentences written at the top. Hanging on the wall is a photo of Jacinta and Venancio under a string of recently made chorizos and blood sausages.

SALVADOR CHILD

Read the sentence.

EDUARDO

One Holy Catholic Apostolic.  
Who's that?

SALVADOR CHILD

Spain, who else could it be! Write it all at once.

Eduardo writes the sentence. He has improved noticeably.

**61. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. DINING ROOM. INT. DAY. (THE PRESENT)**

A close-up of the white table in the dining room. Various envelopes and invitations to exhibitions, premieres and various events come into frame. Mercedes has just put the papers on the table.

Salvador is sitting, he glances at them. From the kitchen, where she is heating water which she then pours into two cups to make tea:

MERCEDES

There's a load of invitations. It wouldn't be a bad idea for you to go somewhere. I'll go with you wherever you want. And the dance season has started. Dimitris Papaioannou and Jan Fabre are coming to the Canal Theaters.

SALVADOR

I'd like to go. But theater seats are the most uncomfortable for me and I don't want to leave in the middle.

Mercedes looks at him, really concerned. She knows that Salvador has made an effort to see her, that he didn't really feel like it.

MERCEDES

Have you gone to see Dr. Galindo?

SALVADOR

No, I'm fed up with doctors.

She joins him at the white table in the dining room.

MERCEDES

And how do you get the oxycodone?

SALVADOR

*(Lying)* A friend gets it for me, his mother is a chemist...

Mercedes doesn't insist. Until that moment she has taken care of everything. But she still feels a great respect for him. For her, he is still her boss, even though neither of them works. Salvador doesn't usually lie, but it's obvious that he's going through a process in which she has no part.

MERCEDES

The Guggenheim has asked us for two of the Pérez Villaltas. They're doing a retrospective of his work.

SALVADOR

Tell them no. Those paintings are my only company.

Mercedes' phone rings. She looks at the caller ID and tuts in annoyance.

MERCEDES

Sorry.

She gets up and walks to the window. Salvador takes the opportunity to go to the bathroom in his bedroom.

**62. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. BATHROOM/SALVADOR'S BEDROOM.  
INT. DAY.**

He takes a puff on a heroin cigarette that he has already prepared. He opens the bedroom window to air the room. Then after one puff he stubs it out.

**63. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. INT. DAY.**

He goes back to the living room.

The sunlight reflects on the waxed wooden floor, and rebounds, transformed into a powerful ray, on a level with Salvador's head as he sits at the table. He puts on dark glasses and looks at some of the invitations.

The figure of Mercedes is silhouetted against one of the large windows that lead out to a terrace.

MERCEDES

I have to hang up. I can't keep talking... It's none of your business where I am...

She puts the phone away and comes back to the table, next to Salvador. He is much more relaxed, she is more nervous.

The phone conversation has changed Mercedes' mood. Even Salvador, half stoned, realizes.

SALVADOR

Is anything wrong?

MERCEDES

Luis and I are separating.

SALVADOR

I didn't know you were having problems.

MERCEDES

I didn't want to bother you. It's been going on for a while, and now that I'm at home so much I can't keep fooling myself.

SALVADOR

I'm sorry.

MERCEDES

I think I'm a better assistant than I am a wife so, if you don't mind, I'd like to carry on taking care of your mail. People like to get an answer.

SALVADOR

But it's always no.

MERCEDES

Well, you should do something. You have too much free time to think about your ailments. Give your brain something to keep it occupied.

SALVADOR

I'd like to do more things too, Mercedes.

MERCEDES

You could write. You have lots of documents full of ideas to be

developed. If you want, I'll make you a list.

SALVADOR

I don't want to write if afterwards I can't film it. And you know better than anyone that I can't film in these conditions. Without filming my life is meaningless, but that's how things are.

**64. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. DOOR. INT. DAY.**

They say goodbye at the door.

He automatically takes off his glasses to give her two kisses on her cheeks. Mercedes sees his eyes. She imagines what has caused the change. Her heart sinks, but she covers up.

MERCEDES

*(Serious)* Call me, for anything.

**65. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. INT. NIGHT.**

Salvador reads in bed, lit by a reading lamp on the bedside table which is piled with books.

**66. PATERNA. FAMILY CAVE. INT. DAY.**

Jacinta, the town's pious woman and Salvador-child are sitting in the sunlit patio, surrounded by plants. The cave is spotless despite the scarcity of furniture. Three chairs and a round table.

The pious woman drinks some fresh orange juice. Jacinta offers her some madeleines from her village. She and the boy are also drinking juice.

PIOUS WOMAN

Jacinta, you've got the cave looking beautiful. (She looks up at the skylight, her face, flooded by the light, is softened.) And this light is priceless.

JACINTA

It rains at times.

PIOUS WOMAN

Jacinta, don't be so selfish. We need the rain. Think of the countryside, the farmers.

JACINTA

Yes, that's true.

The word "cave" rules out the possibility that Jacinta take the remark as a compliment. She's embarrassed.

Salvador, serious, doesn't know why he's at that meeting.

PIOUS WOMAN

*(To Salvador)* Salvador, ever since your mother told me that at the age of nine you were already a teacher, I've thought: That boy must be for God.

Salvador looks at her, thinking she's mad.

JACINTA

He's always been ahead of boys his age.

Salvador is intrigued and bored by the conversation.

PIOUS WOMAN

Do you like teaching, Salvador?

SALVADOR

Yes.

PIOUS WOMAN

And would you like to study?

SALVADOR

Yes, a lot.

PIOUS WOMAN

Why?

SALVADOR

To know more and be able to teach more things.

PIOUS WOMAN

Very good. That's what I call a vocation. I'll speak to Father José María and he'll see to



everything. Salvador, next year you'll enter a seminary to study for your high school diploma. You'll have to behave! Not everyone gets a scholarship to study.

JACINTA

So is the scholarship definite?

PIOUS WOMAN

*(Condescending)* Yes, it is. Don't worry. *(To the child)* And you, don't show me up, Salvador. Think that you're one of the chosen.

The child looks at her, not fully understanding, hostile.

The pious woman stands up.

PIOUS WOMAN

Well, I have to leave, I still have a few visits to make.

JACINTA

Don't you want some more juice?

PIOUS WOMAN

No, thank you, it was delicious.

Jacinta accompanies her to the door. In the hallway:

PIOUS WOMAN

You know something? Really, I envy you, Jacinta.

JACINTA

*(Surprised)* Me?

PIOUS WOMAN

You live in catacombs, like the ancient Christians.

JACINTA

*(Bitterly)* Yes, that's how we live. Shall I go and sew on Sunday?

PIOUS WOMAN

Yes, I'll expect you on Sunday.

Salvador, at the table, watches them say goodbye.

**67. PATERNA. FAMILY CAVE. INT. DAY. (CONT'D)**

Jacinta comes back trying to show a delight that isn't real and ease Salvador's hostility.

JACINTA  
(Sweetly) Salvador, I'm going to  
make a potato omelet, the way you  
like it.

As if he hasn't heard her, surly:

SALVADOR  
Is a seminary a place to become a  
priest?

The mother takes out some potatoes and starts peeling them.

MOTHER  
Yes.

SALVADOR  
(He protests) But I don't want to  
be a priest!

MOTHER  
You don't have to be one.

SALVADOR  
Then why do you want me to go to a  
seminary?!

MOTHER  
Because that's the only way poor  
people can study!

Salvador gets up from the chair and disappears along the hallway. Jacinta calls him but the child doesn't answer. She stops peeling potatoes and leaves the house, furious.

**68. PATERNA. TOWER. EXT. DAY.**

Once outside she looks around for Salvador among the chimneys. She sees him going up the steps of the Arab tower. She goes over there, very Italian. She arrives breathless at the foot of the tower. Salvador has

arrived at the top of the steps. He leans against the wall, his arms folded, in a rebellious attitude.

The mother shouts at him from below:

MOTHER

Salvador, come down from there!

SALVADOR

I don't want to go to the seminary!

From down below, the mother continues shouting, attracting the attention of two women who pass with basins of water on their heads.

MOTHER

When you get your diploma, you can leave. We'll find a way for you to study for a career, so you don't end up like your father.

SALVADOR

I don't want to go to school! I want to stay here!

MOTHER

(*Indignant*) And what will you do here? Kill yourself working in the fields or on a building site, eh?! Is that what you want?

SALVADOR

I don't want to be a priest!

**69. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. OFFICE. INT. DAY.**

Salvador reading from a lectern on his desk, *The Book of Disquiet*, by Pessoa.

SALVADOR OFF

"I find life distasteful, like a useless medicine, and that's when I feel and can clearly picture how easy it would be to get rid of this tedium, if I had the simple strength of will to really want to get rid of it".

He underlines the paragraph with a pencil.

70. EL ESCORIAL. ALBERTO'S STREET. FRONT DOOR. EXT.  
DAY.

A taxi leaves Salvador in front of the door of Alberto's house in El Escorial.

He buzzes on the entry phone.

ALBERTO OFF  
Who is it?

SALVADOR  
It's me.

ALBERTO OFF  
Go away!

Salvador buzzes again.

Cut.

71. EL ESCORIAL. ALBERTO'S STREET. FRONT DOOR.  
(CONT'D)

Alberto appears at the far end of the path leading to the gate. He sees Salvador on the other side of the bars, with a leather briefcase in his hand.

ALBERTO  
If you don't go away, I'll call  
the police!

SALVADOR  
Alberto, I've come to negotiate.  
I'll give you the rights to  
perform *Addiction*.

ALBERTO  
I don't believe you! Go away! I'm  
busy!

SALVADOR  
It's the truth. I've brought you a  
copy of the text. Let me in,  
please.

Alberto comes up to the gate and unlocks it with a rusty key and a very unfriendly expression.

ALBERTO

If this is a trick, you're going to leave here in worse shape than you're in now!

As they walk to the kitchen, Alberto looks at him and sees that Salvador has deteriorated.

ALBERTO

What's going on? Are you on hunger strike?

SALVADOR

(*Ironic*) The bad life.

**72. EL ESCORIAL. ALBERTO'S STUDIO. INT. DAY.**

They come into the kitchen. On the table, there are several sketches on sheets of paper and the text by Cocteau. There are two chairs, one on each side of the table. Salvador sits down, breathing heavily. He puts his briefcase on the table and looks at the sketches. They all show a man, a bed and another man, who is usually on the bed reading a newspaper. *Le bel indifferent*. Cocteau's text is also next to the sketches. Alberto sits across from Salvador.

SALVADOR

Are you still thinking of doing Cocteau in the Mirador?

ALBERTO

Yes, but I've got lots of doubts. The text is beautiful but it's outdated now. If you really give me *Addiction*, I'll go full out on it. I'd have to inform the people at the Mirador, of course.

Salvador opens his briefcase and takes out a block of pages stapled together: the text of *Addiction*. He hands it to Alberto.

SALVADOR

Here it is.

He leaves it on the table. Alberto picks it up, he can't believe it.

ALBERTO

Why the change of heart?

SALVADOR

*(He doesn't answer the question.)*  
I've made a few changes to the text, bearing in mind that it's going to be spoken on a stage, and I'll tell you more if you invite me to a coffee.

Alberto still can't believe it. He starts preparing a Nespresso coffee.

ALBERTO

Anything else?

SALVADOR

I don't want to sign it. And don't say that it's mine. I don't want to appear anywhere.

ALBERTO

Very well. Will you direct me?

SALVADOR

No.

ALBERTO

That would help.

SALVADOR

Give it to the people at the theater, let them read it and decide if they're interested in it, but don't give them my name.

ALBERTO

So who's the author?

SALVADOR

You, or we'll invent a pseudonym.

ALBERTO

*(Puzzled)* No, no! I'll sign it!  
But I don't understand...

SALVADOR

It's a confessional text. I don't want anyone identifying me.

ALBERTO

OK.

**73. EL ESCORIAL. ALBERTO'S STUDIO. KITCHEN. INT. DAY.  
(CONT'D)**

Alberto is puzzled. Salvador drinks his coffee. They get up and go over to the desk, next to the window that looks out on the tree trunks. On the way, Salvador gives him indications, serious.

SALVADOR

About the staging. A screen and a chair if you don't know what to do with your arms and legs.

ALBERTO

I know exactly what to do with my arms and legs.

SALVADOR

*(Critical)* After correcting it, I admit that the text is a bit melodramatic now.

ALBERTO

Don't worry, I can do melodrama. My years in Mexico will come in handy.

They sit on opposite sides of the desk.

**74. EL ESCORIAL. ALBERTO'S STUDIO. KITCHEN. INT. DAY.  
(CONT'D)**

SALVADOR

That's why I'm telling you. You have to avoid any sentimentality. Control the emotion. Don't cry. Actors take any opportunity to cry. The best actor isn't the one who cries but the one who fights to hold back his tears.

Alberto realizes that Salvador can't help directing him. It amuses him and touches him. He stands up.

ALBERTO

Let me give you a kiss!

He takes Salvador's face in his hands and gives him a friendly kiss on the lips, a kiss of gratitude. Salvador, motionless, lets him do it.

Alberto goes back to his seat across from Salvador and dives into the text of *Addiction* with urgency. Without taking his eyes off the text:

ALBERTO

I'm going to start working now, if you don't mind. You can stay, if you like, make yourself at home. *(He points to the social area, the couch and a table covered with magazines.)* By the way, I've got a pile of magazines from the 80s, you're in some of them, dressed as a woman.

Salvador smiles and shrugs.

ALBERTO

You soon forgot those times.

SALVADOR

First invite me. And give me the address of your dealer. Tell him I'll go myself for the material.

ALBERTO

You don't have to. They bring it to your house now, like pizza.

Alberto opens a drawer and hands him the material, the whole set.

**75. EL ESCORIAL. ALBERTO'S STUDIO. INT. DAY. (CONT'D)**

Salvador lights the foil, inhales the smoke and offers it to Alberto. Without interrupting his reading of the text, Alberto shakes his head.

ALBERTO

No. Not yet.

SALVADOR

Why not?

ALBERTO

I'm reducing the doses, just enough so I can work.

SALVADOR

Can you do it?



ALBERTO

How do you think I made it to here?

Salvador looks at him as if to say "You haven't exactly made it very far".

ALBERTO

Going in and out. It's slavery. But this piece is vital for me, and I have to do it as cleanly as I can. I don't want to lose one iota of the emotion you've put into these pages.

Salvador is pensive and he's feeling the effect of the drug. He thinks of the emotion, the pain and the frustration he put down on those pages, and he doesn't understand what it is that attracts Alberto so much.

ALBERTO

Will you come and see me?

SALVADOR

I don't know, I think not.

ALBERTO

This time I'm not doing Shakespeare or Chekhov or Lorca. I'm doing you.

SALVADOR

*(Inexpressive, deep voice)* If you do it badly, I'll feel terrible, and if you do it well... I'll feel much worse.

Alberto reads in a murmur:

ALBERTO

"The cinema of my childhood always smells of piss...

SALVADOR

...and of jasmine...

ALBERTO

...and of the summer breeze."

Cut.

**76. EL ESCORIAL. ALBERTO'S STUDIO. INT. DAY.**

In the social area, Alberto is dozing in a comfortable wing chair. Over his close-up we start to hear, with increasing volume, the long instrumental introduction to *La vie en rose*, in the disco version by Grace Jones.

**77. SALA MIRADOR. INT. DAY.**

The interior of the Sala Mirador, the stage below facing an amphitheater of ten rows of seats.

The images correspond to what Alberto imagines while he reads the text: a rehearsal without an audience. A theater employee in the background. We still hear *La vie en rose*. Alberto dances in front of the white screen. There is a large radio cassette on the floor.

The room is empty. When the musical introduction ends, the actor turns off the radio cassette and continues with the monologue.

ALBERTO

I met Marcelo in a washroom full of people. It wasn't the first time I'd seen him, but it was that night, after casually brushing against each other, when I discovered that I liked that boy. We spent the whole weekend in bed and, by the time I realized, a year had passed and we couldn't live without each other. It was 1981, and Madrid was ours.

Cut.

**78. SALA MIRADOR. INT. DAY. (THE REHEARSAL CONTINUES)**

Empty theater. The wall behind the screen isn't black now, it's red. A large red surface surrounding the white screen.

ALBERTO

One day I found Marcelo looking paler than usual. Recently he had lost weight and was drawn looking. I asked him if he wasn't feeling well and he confessed that he'd started fooling around with heroin. I was surprised because

I'd never taken it. I drank and I snorted cocaine, like everyone, but never heroin. I sensed that it wasn't good and I didn't like it. I was going flat out, I was writing a nighttime chronicle, I was participating in music programs. I prepared my first film, I shot it, it was released, it was a success, I wrote the second, I shot it. I was doing a thousand things, I wasn't sleeping. Meanwhile Marcelo was languishing on the couch at home or shut away in the bathroom...

**79. EMBAJADORES NEIGHBORHOOD. EXT. DAY.**

Federico is a man a little over 50, attractive. He observes everything he sees as he walks along with a nostalgic expression. He doesn't seem like a tourist. In fact, he lived in Madrid a long time ago and he is looking at how the neighborhood has changed.

ALBERTO OFF

...or out of the house, somewhere I didn't know.

He arrives at a building. He looks at it closely, at the windows. With his cell phone he takes a photo of the façade and of one specific window.

ALBERTO OFF

I'd spend the night coming and going to the window, always listening for the sound of the door.

Federico passes next to an alternative theater, the Sala Mirador. It didn't exist when he lived on that street.

He looks at the posters announcing the work that is being staged, *Addiction*, by Alberto Crespo, and also performed by him. Federico knows him, something to do with a past in Madrid which the spectator doesn't know for the moment.

He looks at his watch, the performance is starting in fifteen minutes and it's very short.

**80. SALA MIRADOR. INT. DAY.**

The theater, a very intimate place, about 150 seats, is packed. Although we only see Alberto, we sense that the audience fills the theater. We hear him breathing.

On the stage, there is now a chair (a very light one) and the general shot is more balanced, otherwise it would seem that the screen is floating in space.

ALBERTO

Madrid had become a difficult bullring, as bullfighting fans say, so we traveled continuously, anything so as to get out of Madrid.

The first days were the worst. While Marcelo was recovering from withdrawal symptoms, I looked after him and wrote. I don't know how, but I wrote. Marcelo was very young, the symptoms didn't last long, three or four days. Then we'd go out on the street and have fun, like children.

In the stalls, Federico, amazed, is watching closely what is happening on the stage.

**81. SALA MIRADOR. INT. NIGHT.**

ALBERTO

*(Evoking)* I remember the Ivory Coast. Dozens of muscular, young men, washing clothes in the river on wheel rims, and spreading them on the grass.

Photos are projected on the screen, illustrating the text.

ALBERTO

I remember the Malecon in Havana, by day and night. The women at the windows of peeling buildings, with magnificent pillars holding up decades of scarcity and joy of living. Old Havana, beating softly to the rhythm of unceasing percussions.

Images and the corresponding sound. And among the spectators, Federico, captivated and astonished. Very involved in the content of the monologue.

ALBERTO

I remember Mexico City. Marcelo and I in the hotel room, drunk on tequila, listening to Chavela Vargas singing *The Night of my Love*.

The voice of Chavela Vargas resounds in the space, the theater is too small for it. The spectators listen to it, paralyzed, so does the actor, as if the song has taken them all by surprise.

"I want the joy of a ship returning,  
And a thousand bells of glory pealing  
To toast the night of my love".

Suddenly Alberto gestures to the stage manager to interrupt the song, as if he doesn't have the strength to hold back the flood of tears caused by Chavela's voice. The spectator can't know if that gesture is the result of improvisation or if it's been rehearsed beforehand. Impossible to know, but the effect increases the emotion of the piece.

In the audience, Federico gets a lump in his throat. He can't hold back his tears.

**82. SALA MIRADOR. INT. NIGHT.**

Sitting on the chair, huddled up, tormented, in a soft voice.

ALBERTO

Those journeys, the only reason for which was to escape from Madrid, to escape from heroin, became my best school. On those journeys I found inspiration for the stories I would tell years later and the colors that would illuminate them. But we couldn't spend our lives traveling. Sooner or later we had to go back to Madrid. And Madrid

was a dead end street, a minefield.

Cut.

**83. SALA MIRADOR. INT. NIGHT.**

Alberto gets up, he brings the chair over to the front row to speak more intimately to the spectators.

ALBERTO

I was desperate, I didn't know what to do, except repeat myself. We both repeated ourselves for three long years. I believed that the strength of my love would overcome his addiction. But it wasn't so. Love isn't enough. Love may move mountains but it isn't enough to save the person you love.

He moves again to one edge of the screen.

**84. SALA MIRADOR. INT. NIGHT.**

Alberto, split in two by the light that outlines and projects his shadow on the white screen. The image recalls the beginning of the monologue. He touches the edges of the screen.

ALBERTO

Under the whitewashed wall where the films of my childhood were projected, I prayed that nothing would happen to the leading ladies, but I didn't succeed, neither with Nathalie Wood nor with Marilyn. Then I tried to save Marcelo and save myself. If Marcelo was saved it was far from me. And as for me... I stayed in Madrid. And the cinema saved me.

The lights goes out, only the white screen gives off a very intense light.

**85. SALA MIRADOR. ALBERTO'S DRESSING ROOM. INT. NIGHT.**

Federico knocks on the door of Alberto's dressing room.

ALBERTO OFF

Come in.

Federico opens the door and goes in. Alberto and the visitor study each other mutually.

In the light of the dressing room Alberto seems different, calm, tired. He speaks with the calmness of someone who feels realized. The two men have been affected by the performance, both the actor and the spectator and virtual co-protagonist.

FEDERICO

Good evening.

He doesn't know how to begin.

ALBERTO

Hello. Do we know each other?

FEDERICO

Yes.

Alberto looks him up and down and likes him.

ALBERTO

I don't remember you.

FEDERICO

It was a long time ago, when you were preparing *Sabor*, with Salvador Mallo.

Alberto becomes aware of the situation. He hasn't recognized the visitor but he knows who he is. He lies:

ALBERTO

I don't remember.

FEDERICO

We saw each other two or three times. I'm Federico, the Marcelo from your monologue.

ALBERTO

Did you like it?

FEDERICO

I don't know. "Like" isn't the word. It really affected me.

Alberto offers him a chair across from him, next to the dressing table with make-up and in front of the mirror framed by light bulbs. Stuck in the edges of the mirror are lots of photos of Alberto, unrecognizable because of the respective make-up and costumes. Half of the space in the dressing room is taken up by a mixture of bits and pieces from the theater, remains of other plays. On the walls there is the poster for *Taste* and one for *Hamlet* in its theatrical version.

Federico accepts the invitation and sits across from Alberto, who covers himself with a maroon colored dressing gown.

ALBERTO

Sit down. I imagine you want to ask me some questions.

Federico doesn't sit down.

FEDERICO

Is Salvador alive?

Alberto looks at him, thinking what to answer, and how far he can go with his answers.

Cut.

**86. STREETS AROUND THE THEATER. EXT. NIGHT.**

**87. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. BEDROOM. INT. NIGHT.**

Sequences 86 and 87 alternate.

Alberto walks along the streets around the theater while he calls Salvador on his phone. He's probably walking down the same street where Salvador lived with Federico. Salvador is lying in bed, reading. He sees that Alberto is calling him, he picks up the phone.

SALVADOR

How was the performance tonight?

ALBERTO

A full house. It's a pity the theater is so small.

SALVADOR

It's better like that, you gain in intimacy.



ALBERTO

Today there was a very intimate spectator.

SALVADOR

Who?

ALBERTO

I'll tell you if you promise to come and see me in the theater.

SALVADOR OFF

Who was that very intimate spectator?

ALBERTO

Federico.

SALVADOR

Federico who?

ALBERTO

Federico Delgado. Your Marcelo, he came to see me in the dressing room.

Silence.

SALVADOR

Did he recognize the text?

ALBERTO

Every word. He asked for your number and your address.

SALVADOR OFF

Did you tell him anything else?

ALBERTO

No. I said nothing about you chasing dragons.

SALVADOR

Thank you. I'll go and see you one day.

Cut.

**88. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. INT. NIGHT. (CONT'D)**

The news affects him deeply. He'd expected a call from Federico during, at least, all of the 80s. Now that it is a real possibility, it disconcerts him. He looks at the phone, he has just hung up. And he starts that old waiting, he remembers himself in that same situation, waiting for Federico day after day, night after night, year after year.

For a moment, he has the impression that his life has been a mirage, that time has stopped to wait beside him. He remains sitting on the bed, with the phone in his hand, waiting for Federico's call.

His phone rings. A call from a number he hasn't listed, with lots of figures starting with 5521.

FEDERICO OFF

Salvador?

SALVADOR

Yes.

FEDERICO OFF

Is that you? I wouldn't have recognized you. This is Federico.

SALVADOR

Federico!

He gets up and walks through the house while he talks on the phone.

FEDERICO OFF

I'm in Madrid...

SALVADOR

Oh, and what are you doing here?

FEDERICO OFF

I've come to see some lawyers, about an inheritance. I'm leaving tomorrow night... and I'd like to see you...

SALVADOR

I'd like that too.

He hesitates, disconcerted. He arrives at the window that looks out on the terrace, next to the window full of glass vessels.

SALVADOR

...But I was in bed. Do you mind if we meet tomorrow?

**89. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. INT. NIGHT.**

**90. SALVADOR'S HOUSE/FRONT DOOR. EXT. NIGHT.**

Sequences 89 and 90 alternate.

Salvador is at the window that looks out on the street, next to the terrace. Out of the corner of his eye, he sees a man in the doorway of his building. He can't make out his features, the man is talking on a cell phone.

Salvador gets a lump in his throat. He doesn't see him clearly, but he knows that it's Federico (Marcelo in the monologue). Federico has had the delicacy to call on the phone before turning up at his house. That gesture touches him.

FEDERICO

Would midday suit you? I have a meeting in the afternoon with the lawyer.

SALVADOR

Perfect.

FEDERICO

I haven't asked, how are you?

SALVADOR

Old.

FEDERICO

*(Warmly)* Five years older than me, not one more.

SALVADOR

*(Tenderly)* And how are you?

FEDERICO

*(Relieved)* Better now. When I left the theater I was devastated... I've been seeing *Addiction*.

He says this as if he has just got through a very tough test.

SALVADOR

How did you know it was on?

FEDERICO

By chance, I went for a walk around the neighborhood, to take a look at our street. I was outside our house.

SALVADOR

*(He is delighted and surprised.)*  
Ah...

Salvador is touched, as if he's discovered the coincidence for the first time.

SALVADOR

Of course, and the theater is a bit farther along.

FEDERICO

I went in to pass the time and because I remembered Alberto Crespo from your film.

SALVADOR

And you found yourself, suddenly?!

FEDERICO

Yes. Suddenly!

Brief pause.

FEDERICO

*(Honest, humble)* I don't know how to apologize. I never imagined how you were feeling, all that you suffered.

Salvador looks at Federico in the darkness of the street while he listens to his confession over the phone: a man alone in the night, talking to the door of the building, with his back to the deserted street, asking him for forgiveness.

SALVADOR

It was a good school.

FEDERICO

What?

SALVADOR

Nothing. You don't have to apologize. I didn't do anything I didn't want to do, Federico. I tried to help you as far as I could..

FEDERICO

And I'm grateful to you, and I'd like to be able to prove it to you some day.

SALVADOR

Listen, I don't think I'll be able to sleep after this. Will you give me twenty minutes to get showered and dressed and we'll meet at my place?

FEDERICO

Alright.

**91. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. BEDROOM. INT. NIGHT.**

Salvador goes back to his bedroom. He opens the chest of drawers. He has hidden the paper of heroin at the back, camouflaged among the medicines, perhaps it's in a cassette tape. He prepares a little line of heroin on top of the chest of drawers. He hesitates, he thinks about what he's doing. He thinks better of it and ends up blowing the line away, its contents hang in the air for an instant and disintegrate before they reach the floor.

He chooses the clothes he's going to wear. A shirt and pants. He puts them on the bed.

Cut.

He's dressed now. He puts on some loafers with the help of a shoehorn some 30 inches long that saves him from having to bend forward.

**92. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. INT. NIGHT.**

The house is in semi-darkness, as usual. In any case, there is more light than when Alberto came. Low lights. Only the paintings have their own directional light. The entry phone buzzes.

**93. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. INT. NIGHT.**

We hear the buzz of the entry phone. Empty kitchen. Salvador comes in, dressed, and presses the button on the entry phone. Then he goes out to open the door, nervous, impatient, excited, uncertain.

**94. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. LANDING/DOOR/ELEVATOR. INT. NIGHT**

There's no one on the landing. The elevator arrives giving a little jolt, the door opens and Federico steps out. Salvador is waiting for him with the door open. Both smile. Federico walks to Salvador's door. They both have just enough time to scan each other (in the short distance from the elevator to the door). Both look in the other for some vestige of who they were some 30-odd years before.

**95. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. DOOR (INSIDE). INT. NIGHT**

They embrace. A sincere, intense, unhurried embrace. (Salvador is glad he hasn't taken anything.) The physical contact helps them lose their inhibitions. In the phone conversation both were nervous.

They separate.

SALVADOR  
(Affectionately) It's been so long!

FEDERICO  
Yes.

It's a way of apologizing.

FEDERICO  
Would you have recognized me if you'd seen me in the street?

SALVADOR  
I'd have had to look closely, but yes. Your eyes are the same.

FEDERICO  
I'm sorry I got you out of bed.

Salvador shakes his head, making light of it.

Cut.

**96. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. INT. NIGHT.**

They move into the house. Federico looks at everything with curiosity. He recognizes Salvador's coloristic style.

FEDERICO

*(Admiringly)* This looks like a museum.

SALVADOR

I invested all that I've earned in this house and in these paintings. I'll give you a tour later. What'll you have?

FEDERICO

Anything, coffee, if you have any.  
*(Insinuating, half joking)*  
Tequila? In honor of Chavela? I couldn't hold back my tears when you mention her in the monologue.

SALVADOR

*(Happy)* Tequila! To celebrate our reunion and in honor of Chavela.

Salvador takes a bottle of tequila and two shot glasses from one of the cupboards.

FEDERICO

*(Looking at everything)* I like your house.

SALVADOR

Where do you live?

Salvador pours the tequila, they both drink a toast.

FEDERICO

In Buenos Aires.

SALVADOR

You had an uncle in Buenos Aires, didn't you?

FEDERICO

Yes. I went there in '85.

SALVADOR

*(Calculating)* So soon?

Cut.

97. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. INT. NIGHT.

They drink and talk sitting across from each other in the two Cassina armchairs, near the terrace. On a little auxiliary table, on a tray, the bottle of tequila.

FEDERICO

I'll give you a summary. After... we separated, I stayed with my parents for a year. At that time, the heroin routes didn't pass through Argentina, so I went there to my uncle. I started working with him in his restaurant. I couldn't take heroin because there wasn't any. It was the best way to quit.

He pauses.

FEDERICO

I met Lucrecia, we got married and that's it so far. Now I have my own restaurant. I have two grown sons and I only came back to Galicia to see my parents. This is the first time I've set foot in Madrid... As you say in the piece, Madrid had become a difficult bullring for me, a minefield. It's a pity that you lived here.

SALVADOR

*(Almost apologizing)* I needed Madrid, I needed you too, but not under those conditions.

FEDERICO

"Love isn't enough to save the person you love". You say it in your monologue.

SALVADOR

*(Serious, sad)* Let's not talk about the monologue, it's a very sad text.

FEDERICO



I felt a lot better when you said that while you were looking after me you continued to develop as a writer and filmmaker. Did you really feel like that?

SALVADOR  
*(Almost a declaration of love)* You didn't interrupt anything, Federico, on the contrary. You filled my life like nothing and no one has done until now.

He makes an effort to change the tone, more animated.

SALVADOR  
So you haven't been back in Madrid since then...

**98. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. DINING ROOM. INT. NIGHT.**

FEDERICO  
No. But I followed everything you did. And I was delighted when I recognized a scene that was obviously inspired by us. Every film of yours was an event in my life and I was so proud that you were a success all around the world. You're the only Spanish director my family knows.

SALVADOR  
Your new family..

FEDERICO  
Yes.

SALVADOR  
Do they know anything else?

FEDERICO  
You mean about us?

SALVADOR  
Yes.

FEDERICO  
My wife... Well, my ex-wife, we're separating.

SALVADOR

Ah.

FEDERICO

I told her... She doesn't know it's you... She knows I was with a man in Madrid for three years. And I also told one of my sons... to encourage him... *(He smiles.)*

Salvador nods.

FEDERICO

With time I'll tell him that it was you. He's a real film lover and he'd never forgive me if I didn't tell him.

SALVADOR

And do you have a partner now?

FEDERICO

Yes. And you?

SALVADOR

No. A man or a woman?

FEDERICO

A woman, my experience with men ended with you.

After a brief, intense silence.

SALVADOR

I don't know how to take that.

FEDERICO

Take it as a compliment.

Cut.

**99. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM/VIDEO LIBRARY. INT. NIGHT.**

In front of the television. On a couch and in front of a coffee table. The sequence begins with a close-up of Federico's phone. On the screen we see a picture of one of his sons. We hear Federico off screen saying his name.

FEDERICO

This is Mauro, the younger one.

He slides his index finger over the screen. The older son appears.

FEDERICO

This is Federico. He's 22 now.

SALVADOR

He looks very like you.

FEDERICO

Yes. He's the one I told.

Salvador is moved by the trust and by the resemblance between father and son. It's like finding the Federico who left, the Federico that he knew and loved... He looks at the Federico in the photo and at the one next to him, his father. And indeed they're identical, except for the age difference.

SALVADOR

They're both very handsome.

Salvador pours another two shots of tequila.

FEDERICO

*(More relaxed)* You have to come to Buenos Aires. You'll love the city and I'm sure it'll inspire you. I want you to meet my family and eat in my restaurant. We'll get drunk together.

Salvador appreciates the invitation, but he doesn't commit himself.

**100. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. DOOR (INSIDE). INT. NIGHT.**

Salvador and Federico hug each other tightly near the door.

FEDERICO

For the old days.

He brings his lips to Salvador's and they kiss for a long time.

The kiss and the contact of their bodies arouse both of them. Still embracing, their foreheads touching, each one feels the other's breath on his face.

FEDERICO

Do you want me to stay and sleep  
with you?

SALVADOR

Of course I do, but we're going to  
close our story as God intended.

FEDERICO

We never cared about God. And we  
can close our story just as well  
tomorrow morning.

Salvador shakes his head, he is disturbed by the kiss  
and by what it has kindled in both of them.

SALVADOR

*(He smiles to make light of his  
words.)* I'd delighted to see that  
you still get aroused with me.

FEDERICO

Same here. You got aroused too.

SALVADOR

Yes.

Salvador opens the door.

FEDERICO

I'm going. You're right, as usual.  
But remember that you've promised  
to come to Buenos Aires.

And he goes out.

**101. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. LANDING/ELEVATOR. INT. NIGHT.**

Salvador sees him take the few steps that separate him  
from the elevator.

Federico presses the down button and turns to Salvador.  
He gives him a delighted smile.

SALVADOR

Have a good trip.

FEDERICO

I'll call to remind you.

SALVADOR

Yes.

He gets into the elevator and disappears.

**102. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. DOOR (INSIDE) INT. NIGHT.**

Salvador closes the door, trembling with emotion.

**103. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. BEDROOM AND BATHROOM. INT. NIGHT.**

He comes into his room. Urgently, he takes the paper of heroin from the back of the chest of drawers. He puts it on the top and looks at it with delight.

He takes it, throws it down the toilet and flushes the cistern.

**104. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. INT. NIGHT.**

On the worktop in the kitchen, under the painting by Dis Berlin, Salvador gets ready to crush five different colored tablets. In a close-up we see the tablets, which are already covered by transparent paper. In the same shot, a psychopath-sized knife, the phone and a liter-bottle of liquid yogurt.

Salvador takes the knife and crushes the tablets with the handle. When he has reduced them to a powder, or almost, he calls Mercedes and puts the phone on speaker. He is giving the last blows to the tablets when Mercedes' voice comes over the phone.

MERCEDES OFF

Yes, Salvador?

SALVADOR

Is this a good time?

**105. MERCEDES' HOUSE. BEDROOM. INT. NIGHT.**

Mercedes is in bed, she switches on the light and tries to sound awake.

MERCEDES

Yes, yes. *(She sits up, she looks at the clock.)* Go ahead. Is anything wrong?

SALVADOR

I'd like to see Dr. Galindo as soon as possible.

MERCEDES

*(Puzzled)* What have you taken?

SALVADOR

Nothing. A tranquilizer two hours ago and a few shots of tequila. Now I'm going to have my nightly ration of tablets, crushed up, with liquid yogurt.

However it may be, Mercedes is happy to get his call and she makes the most of it.

MERCEDES

Do you want to see the gastroenterologist too?

SALVADOR

Yes, as soon as possible.

They say goodbye.

**106. HOSPITAL. PAIN UNIT. CORRIDOR. INT. DAY.**

A sign next to the open door of the office says that they are in the Pain Unit. Mercedes and Salvador wait on some chairs. The wall behind them is totally covered by wallpaper showing a very twee spring landscape, with strident colors and without nuances, very digital.

On the ceiling there are four video screens with scenes of white clouds crossing a blue sky. They create a supposedly pleasant atmosphere that raises the patients' spirits.

Salvador looks at the ceiling. He sits for a while contemplating the clouds in a sky of an impossible blue. The spectacle makes him smile. He remembers the first time he entered the cave in Paterna and discovered the sky through the skylight and called his mother to come and see it.

A woman behind the reception desk gestures to them and tells them they can go in.

**107. HOSPITAL. PAIN UNIT. DR. GALINDO'S OFFICE. INT. DAY.**

They go into Dr. Galindo's little office. The three know each other. Mercedes and Salvador sit on the other side of the desk. The doctor is an empathetic man of about 45. He transmits authority without effort. A film lover. He has a photo of John Huston on the wall, during the filming of *The Dead*, sitting in a wheelchair and with a drip or a nose clip for oxygen. He treats them with familiarity.

MERCEDES

Thank you for finding time to see us, doctor.

DR. GALINDO

Well, tell me, Salvador.

SALVADOR

The pains in my back are killing me. The oxycodone does very little for me.

DR. GALINDO

We'll have to change your analgesic. Why didn't you come sooner?

SALVADOR

I was feeling very low.

A gesture from Mercedes confirms Salvador's words.

MERCEDES

He's been very depressed.

DR. GALINDO

What have you done to deal with the pain?

SALVADOR

I've started taking heroin.

A moment of uncomfortable silence. The doctor looks at him, surprised rather than scandalized. He knows that Salvador is being serious. He looks at Mercedes' face. She remains silent. She found out the previous day (although we haven't witnessed this moment).

DR. GALINDO

And... are you intending to keep taking it?

SALVADOR  
No, that's why I'm here.

DR. GALINDO  
How often did you take it?

SALVADOR  
Every two or three days. In the end, every other day, smoked on tinfoil.

DR. GALINDO  
When was the last time you took it?

SALVADOR  
The night before last. Will I have withdrawal symptoms?

DR. GALINDO  
Some, but with a compassionate, controlled detoxification you won't suffer.

SALVADOR  
Compassionate and controlled?

DR. GALINDO  
Yes, that's what it's called. Do you have anyone to help you?

MERCEDES  
Yes. I'll be with him.

DR. GALINDO  
How have you controlled this day and a half without it?

SALVADOR  
With tranquilizers and a will of iron.

DR. GALINDO  
You're going to need that will of iron, because your mind knows the effect of heroin now and that's something you don't forget.

Those last words are engraved in the minds of Mercedes and Salvador. The doctor looks in the computer at the



file with all the clinical information about the patient and his pharmacopoeia.

DR. GALINDO

Are you still taking Patxibi, for your headaches?

SALVADOR

Yes. And all the other things, for asthma, blood pressure, insomnia... But most of all I need you to help me with the back pains and the migraines too. They leave me completely paralyzed.

The doctor nods. He revises the file and takes out a prescription pad. He starts to fill one. He changes his tone, more optimistic.

DR. GALINDO

I understand. Have you any project, Salvador?

SALVADOR

To improve my quality of life.

DR. GALINDO

I'm talking about work. It would do you good to be busy. Don't you miss it?

Mercedes looks at him in silence. She and Salvador have already talked about this on several occasions and she knows the answer. It's a question that always hurts Salvador.

SALVADOR

*(Almost reproaching him)* I think about it every day. But it isn't a question of missing it or not. Filming is very physical work, and unfortunately I'm in no shape to do it. As a matter of fact, that's my biggest problem.

DR. GALINDO

There are people who are much worse than you and they get on with things.

SALVADOR

I know, I know, but I haven't been able to. My mother died four years ago and two years later I had an operation on my back. I think I still haven't recovered from either thing. I'm not good at recovering. I need help, doctor.

DR. GALINDO

Well, I'm going to change the oxycodone for another opiate. You'll think about heroin. Watch out for that. *(To Mercedes)* I'll give you the prescriptions and explain the guidelines.

Salvador stands up.

SALVADOR

Do you mind if I go out to the corridor and move around a little?

Salvador is very uncomfortable in every sense. He holds out his hand to the doctor to say goodbye.

SALVADOR

Thank you, doctor.

Mercedes tries to hide it, but she's upset by the turn the interview with the doctor has taken.

**108. HOSPITAL. PAIN UNIT. CONSULTANCY. INT. DAY.  
(CONT'D)**

Mercedes and Dr. Galindo are alone. He starts to fill out the prescriptions.

MERCEDES

There's something else.

DR. GALINDO

Something else?

MERCEDES

Salvador chokes frequently. An hour ago, when we were coming to the hospital, he had a sip of water and I thought he was going to choke to death. The gastroenterologist did an endoscopy and he found a lump that

is pressing on his esophagus.  
That's why he chokes so easily.  
(*She touches her neck*) And... we  
don't know what that lump is.

The doctor stops writing.

DR. GALINDO

Does he know?

MERCEDES

No. They've ordered a CAT scan to  
be sure. The gastroenterologist  
doesn't rule out that it's a  
tumor... What do I do? Do I tell  
him?

DR. GALINDO

No. Spare him at least two days of  
anguish and call me with the  
results of the CAT scan.

**109. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. GUEST ROOM AND MOTHER'S ROOM.  
INT. DAY.**

The bedroom window has the same curtains as Salvador's.  
A painting of the Virgin of the Rosary by Murillo hangs  
above the headboard. His mother, Jacinta, lived in this  
room during the last months of her life, while she was  
constantly in and out of hospital, four years before.  
(There's no way to know this, or perhaps there is.)  
They open a closet. Salvador tries to take out a set of  
sheets. Mercedes stops him.

MERCEDES

Let me do it.

SALVADOR

Pick the set you like most.

MERCEDES

Sit down, I'll change the sheets.

Mercedes looks at a rosary on top of one of the bedside  
tables, next to a photo of Salvador's parents. Salvador  
sits in his mother's wing chair. He looks at the  
bedside table. There is a rosary spread out  
deliberately, a framed photo of his paternal  
grandparents and also a photo of his mother, Jacinta,  
aged 30. And another of her with his father under  
several strings of recently made chorizos and blood

sausages. On a lower shelf of the bedside table there is a tin box, different from the one we saw in 1960, but the same kind (where the mother kept her personal mementoes).

The sequence ends with an insert of the photos and the rosary on the bedside table.

**110. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. GUEST ROOM AND MOTHER'S ROOM.  
INT. DAY. (FLASHBACK. FOUR YEARS BEFORE)**

The mother, aged 84, in the same room, is sitting in the same wing chair. She looks at the bedside table and then looks up at the bedroom door through which Salvador appears, four years before (fewer grey hairs).

MOTHER

Give me the box, Salvador.

She's talking about the tin box.

Salvador comes in with a snack on a tray. A glass of milk and two dark colored madeleines on a plate. The scene takes place with the natural light coming through the window that looks out on a spacious patio. Salvador leaves the snack on the bed and hands his mother the tin box. It's very pretty, a box of fine confectionary from The Palace Pantry. A very intimate scene.

SALVADOR

Here's your snack.

MOTHER

I'm not eating those black madeleines.

SALVADOR

They're wholegrain, mom.

The eternal battle.

MOTHER

One day you're going to bring me a plate of alfalfa to eat because now they say it's good for you. Come on, sit here, on the bed.

Salvador insists that at least she has to drink the milk. He sits on the edge of the bed, facing her. The

bed is covered with a large hand-crocheted bedspread. Near the wing chair we see the stick on which she leans to walk. (A gift from Salvador. A quality stick.)

The mother has already opened the tin box. All her attention is focused on its interior. The box contains a great variety of objects, religious or pagan, all of great symbolic and sentimental value. There are two entangled rosaries, a little hard-backed book inside which there is a prayer to St. Anthony, several little boxes with religious images containing neck chains with a crucifix or things like that, a few scapulars, a very old pen which Salvador's father gave her. And the wooden egg. There is also a white cloth in which the widow's veil is carefully wrapped.

The mother takes out the two entangled rosaries and starts untangling them.

MOTHER

Do you remember how you have to lay me out?

Salvador looks at her, ever so slightly fed up. They've already discussed that subject many times.

SALVADOR

Yeess.

MOTHER

If we're in the village, call Petra, she's used to it, and if I die here, and I hope I don't, because I want to die in my own bed, Maya and Mercedes will give you a hand.

SALVADOR

Do we have to talk about this now?

MOTHER

Yes.

The mother leaves the rosaries, now separated, on the bedside table and looks inside the box again. She takes a white cloth, a simple remnant of white material, which protects the folded black mantilla. She takes out the black mantilla as if it was a ritual and covers her head with it. Her face is now framed by the black cloth which reaches her waist.

MOTHER

*(As she puts on the mantilla in the traditional way)* On my head, a half mantilla, because I'm a widow.

Salvador helps her finish putting on the mantilla, the ritual affects him more than it does his mother who does and says everything in a totally natural way.

SALVADOR

And the habit of Jesus of Medinaceli, with its girdle.

The mother reminds him of the rest. She takes the more used rosary and leaves the new one on the bedside table.

MOTHER

That's right, with its girdle. Put a rosary between my hands. *(She shows him the one she has in her hand.)* Use this one, the old one. I want you to keep the new one.

SALVADOR

Wouldn't you prefer the new one?

MOTHER

No. And I want to go barefoot. If they tie my feet to bury me, you untie them and say I asked you to. The place I'm going to, I want to go in very lightly.

Even though he has heard it many times, Salvador is always struck by those last words, light footed.

Jacinta takes an old pen out of the tin box. Salvador sees in the box the wooden egg with which he remembers her darning a sock the night they spent in the station.

JACINTA

Your father gave me this pen. With it I wrote all my letters to him when we were courting.

Salvador points to the wooden egg inside the box.

SALVADOR

And the wooden egg, mom?

Jacinta takes it out of the box.

MOTHER

I darned so much with this egg! Of all these things it's the one with least value.

SALVADOR

Then give it to me!

Jacinta hands him the egg. She doesn't understand what it is about that particular humble object that makes Salvador choose it over everything else, the pen, for example.

MOTHER

Here, you've just inherited it.

Salvador holds it in his fingers and looks at it as if it were a magic object.

**111. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. INT. NIGHT (THE PRESENT)**

Salvador takes something creamy, a liquid yogurt or a fine purée. It's Mercedes who is eating a wholegrain madeleine dunking it in her cup of tea. Just as Jacinta liked to do, but with madeleines that weren't wholegrain.

SALVADOR

Recently I've been thinking a lot about her.

MERCEDES

In Dr. Galindo's office you said that you still hadn't got over your mother's death. I didn't know...

SALVADOR

When I'm dozing, which is most of the time, I always end up thinking about my mother and my childhood.

MERCEDES

But you never talked about her or about your childhood in your films.

SALVADOR  
My mother didn't like it.

MERCEDES  
You think not?

SALVADOR  
She told me one of the last times  
she was in hospital.

**112. HOSPITAL. INT. DAY (FLASHBACK. FOUR YEARS BEFORE)**

Jacinta, 84, is sitting next to the bed in an armchair that allows her to stretch out her legs. She is hooked up to a drip. Beside her, sitting on an imitation leather couch, Salvador runs his fingertips delicately over one of her legs. Despite her age, Jacinta's skin is smooth and white, like that of a young woman.

SALVADOR  
Your legs are so clean, mother.

MOTHER  
I took after my family in that.  
There are no varicose veins in my  
family.

She looks at him steadily, as if seeing right through him.

MOTHER  
What a pity, love!

SALVADOR  
Why?

MOTHER  
You'll have a very bad old age.  
You take after your father's  
family.

SALVADOR  
Mom, the things you say! Come on,  
tell me how you slept last night.

MOTHER  
So-so. I was with my neighbor Lola  
all night.

SALVADOR



(Very surprised) Here, in the room?

MOTHER

No, no, in dreams. I dreamed about her all night. (*Tone of someone telling a story*) I had just arrived in the village, and I heard Lola knocking on my door, as always when she heard me arriving back from Madrid. Even though it was a dream, I remembered that Lola was dead, but I opened the door, and there she was, just the same as ever, except that she was a bit transparent. I wasn't scared and I said to her: Lola, I suppose you're not happy and you want me to do something, but you have to tell me what it is and I promise I'll do it. (*She does the two voices in the conversation.*) No, Jacinta, I'm happy, she answered. But how can you be happy?, I said to her. If you were happy, you wouldn't appear... I'm appearing to you because my daughters would be very scared.

Salvador listens to her carefully. He thinks that his mother is starting to lose it (talking to the dead). In any case, he thinks the story is delightful.

MOTHER

But why are you coming to the village when it's so cold? I don't feel cold or heat now, she answered, and there's no better place to be than in your house. You're right about that, I said.

Salvador encourages her to continue talking.

SALVADOR

What else?

MOTHER

Don't get that storyteller look. Don't put this in any of your films. I don't like my neighbors

appearing. I don't like  
autofiction!

Salvador is amused to hear his mother talking about  
autofiction.

SALVADOR  
What do you know about  
autofiction!

MOTHER  
I heard you explain it in an  
interview. My neighbors don't like  
you showing them, they think you  
treat them like rednecks.

Salvador looks at her, astonished.

SALVADOR  
Mom, the things you say! I  
couldn't treat them with more  
respect or devotion! Whenever I  
can, I talk about you and I say  
that you and the neighbors made me  
what I am. I owe everything to  
you.

The mother shakes her head in a gesture that ends up  
being funny.

MOTHER  
They don't like it.

**113. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. INT. DAY. (FLASHBACK)**

The house is almost the same as four years later,  
perhaps there is a different painting in the kitchen.

The mother is sitting at the kitchen table.

SALVADOR  
Let's go for a walk, you haven't  
moved today.

MOTHER  
*(She protests)* I haven't moved  
because I had nowhere to go.

SALVADOR  
Well, now you do. Come on.

MOTHER

Where?

SALVADOR

To the hallway.

Jacinta is not in a good mood.

Salvador leads her by the arm, the mother taking very short steps, down the long hallway (metaphor for time) that crosses the house, where four years later her son will walk from time to time. As well as on her son's arm, the mother leans on a stick.

Suddenly, Jacinta breaks the silence, without acrimony, which makes it even more hurtful.

MOTHER

You haven't been a good son.

Salvador looks at her, stunned.

SALVADOR

No?

MOTHER

No. You never forgave me for recommending you to the pious woman in Paterna. And I think you took revenge for that. I didn't want you to go to the seminary either, but we were poor.

SALVADOR

*(Without getting upset, but hurt)*  
It's true that I didn't want to go, but from that to wanting to take revenge on you... How can you think that?

Cut.

**114. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. ON THE TERRACE. (CONT'D)**

Salvador and his mother continue the conversation sitting on the terrace.

MOTHER

After you got your diploma, you couldn't wait to go to Madrid. And when your father died, I asked if

you wanted me to live with you. You wriggled out of it, you said you were living a life that you couldn't share with me.

SALVADOR

And it was true. But not as you understood it.

Salvador is surprised and upset by Jacinta's restrained cruelty.

MOTHER

I understood it perfectly. (I'm very bad on my feet, but my mind is as clear as a bell.)

SALVADOR

When I wasn't traveling, I was filming. You couldn't have put up with the solitude of an apartment in Madrid. That was no life for you.

MOTHER

I'd have looked after you. I'd have adapted as I've adapted to so many things. But you didn't want it. And that hurt me.

Jacinta is very firm, without raising her voice. Salvador's eyes glisten, he's on the verge of tears.

SALVADOR

Mom, I'm very sorry I was never the son you wanted. When you used to say "Who has that child taken after?", you weren't exactly saying it with pride. And I realized. I failed you, simply by being as I am. And I'm very sorry.

The mother doesn't answer, she maintains a dignified, cruel silence. She doesn't give an inch. It seems that the confession (and the provocation it implied) have unburdened her.

**115. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. GUEST ROOM AND MOTHER'S ROOM.  
INT. NIGHT. (FLASHBACK. FOUR YEARS EARLIER)**

Salvador covers his mother with the eiderdown. Mother and son are closer than in the other sequences.

MOTHER

Pass me St. Anthony.

Salvador takes a holy card of St. Anthony from the bedside table.

SALVADOR

Here.

MOTHER

I'll pray for you tonight.

SALVADOR

Thank you.

MOTHER

Salvador, I brought you into this world and I slaved so you could get ahead.

SALVADOR

I know, mom.

MOTHER

*(Pleading)* Take me back to the village. That's my last and only wish.

An explicit, firm wish that doesn't allow for a common sense answer: that she is sick and that whether in the village or in Madrid she'll be constantly in and out of hospital.

SALVADOR

Very well. We'll go to the village. With Maya, so she can do the housework. I'll look after you day and night. This time I won't fail you, mom.

**116. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. KITCHEN INT. DAY. (THE PRESENT)**

SALVADOR

*(Bitter)* But I couldn't keep my promise. The next day I had to take her back to the hospital.

MERCEDES

You did what you could.

SALVADOR

Yes, but she wanted to die in the village. And I'd promised to take her there. The poor thing died in the ICU of a hospital, alone.

**117. HOSPITAL. RADIOLOGY WAITING ROOM. INT. DAY**

Mercedes and Salvador wait outside the radiologist's office. To kill time (and to distract him), Mercedes shows him the invitations she's brought from her house and some mail.

MERCEDES

You're invited to give a talk in Iceland. It's well paid.

SALVADOR

I don't understand how they can like me so much in Iceland.

MERCEDES

Neither do I.

There is an invitation from a second rate gallery for a group exhibition. The work that illustrates the invitation, on one side, shows a boy, bathed by an overhead light, surrounded by flowerpots, reading a book, on a floor of hydraulic tiles.

MERCEDES

I didn't throw it out because I think the drawing has something.

Salvador looks at it, shocked. He starts to talk but just then he's called.

**118. HOSPITAL. CAT ROOM (COMMUNICATED WITH A LITTLE GLASS WINDOW) INT. DAY.**

Salvador closes his eyes and breathes. He lets his mind wander as he slides inside the tunnel that projects the radiation. The bangs at the beginning (as noisy as if his own brain was provoking them) fade away. His mind connects with Paterna, when he was a happy child, at the start of the '60's. We start to hear Mina's voice singing *Come sinfonia*.

**119. PATERNA. FAMILY CAVE. INT. DAY. (1966)**

The cave in which Salvador lives with his parents is much more presentable than in the earlier memories, although there is still some chipping and peeling. The floor is leveled out with cement which joins up the various patches of hydraulic tiles. There are beds in the two "bedrooms". Instead of doors, there are curtains made with a combination of various scraps of material sewn together. In the little patio, under the skylight, there are several flowerpots with plants, geraniums, etc. And a large earthenware jar, almost three feet high, full of drinking water.

At that moment, the mother has gone to sew at the home of the village's pious woman, and the father is drinking in the bar. It's Sunday.

Eduardo, the young builder, is putting the last touches to a surface of hydraulic tiles, above the two sinks, which are now finished. He is dirty and sweaty, he's wearing short work pants and a white vest. There's an empty cement bag. Salvador-child hears him working. He's sitting in the patio, under a blazing sun that comes through the skylight. On the worktop by the sinks, a little transistor plays a song of the time, *Come sinfonia*, sung by Mina.

Salvador is absorbed in his book and doesn't realize that the sun is beating down on his head and shoulders.

EDUARDO

*(Tapping the tiles gently so they stick to the wall)* Hey, when's your mother coming back?

SALVADOR

At lunch time. When she goes to sew at the pious woman's house she stays there all morning.

Eduardo finishes with the tiles, he wipes his hands on his pants and turns to Salvador who is reading. He looks at the scene in detail: the boy reading, the overhead sunlight, the pots of red geraniums on the floor and hanging on the walls, the hydraulic tiles forming figures on the floor. The whole thing, together with the song, is a composition of Impressionist beauty. He takes a piece of brown paper which had been wrapped around the bags of cement and puts it on a work table, with trestles, on which he had stood to paint the ceiling. He takes some pencils from a bag.

EDUARDO

Don't move...

Salvador doesn't move, he concentrates on the book, obedient. He doesn't realize that his head is burning.

Eduardo draws some lines on the brown paper. He pauses on the boy's eyes. With rapid strokes he captures the oval of Salvador's face, his uncombed hair, the bulrush chair, the flowerpots, the floor... During the process he gives instructions to Salvador, who obeys without objecting. The silence and Mina's song create a very intimate atmosphere. When he finishes the first stage of the drawing, Eduardo gets up and shows it to Salvador.

EDUARDO

What do you think?

The boy looks at the drawing.

SALVADOR

It's lovely.

EDUARDO

I still have to finish it. I'll take it home and do it.

It's the same drawing that Mercedes has just shown Salvador, printed on the invitation.

Cut.

**120. PATERNA. FAMILY CAVE. INT. DAY.**

Near the kitchen, on the floor, there is a basin full of water.

EDUARDO

Do you mind if I get washed? Look at the state I'm in.

He hasn't dirtied just his clothes with the building material, but also his arms, hands, etc. Salvador goes to his parents' room and brings him a bar of soap.

SALVADOR

Here.

EDUARDO



Thank you.

Salvador doesn't feel well. He goes to his room and lies down on the bed while Eduardo undresses. In the half light of the bedroom, Salvador's cheeks, very red, gleam with sweat.

Under the same overhead light which lit the child before, Eduardo, naked, pours water all over his body which gleams palely. He uses a plastic container for this.

From his room, lying on the bed, Salvador listens perturbed to the dull sound of the water against the hydraulic tiles, after sliding over the builder's naked body.

When Eduardo finishes washing, he shouts to him:

EDUARDO  
Salvador! Will you bring me a  
towel?

The boy gets up from his little bed and goes to his parents' room. He takes a towel from a pile of clean clothes piled up on two chairs.

He goes out to the hallway and looks into the patio. Eduardo's naked body is gleaming under the light from the skylight.

Salvador drops the towel. He bends down to pick it up and when he tries to straighten up he feels dizzy and collapses on the floor.

Cut.

**121. PATERNA. FAMILY CAVE. BEDROOM. INT. DAY.**

Salvador lies on the bed. Eduardo is sitting at his side, on a low chair. He touches his cheeks and forehead, worried.

EDUARDO  
You're burning up! You must have  
got sunstroke.

Eduardo's body is damp, his hair is wet and his wet tee shirt is sticking to his torso.

They hear the door.

122. PATERNA. FAMILY CAVE. INT. DAY. (CONT'D)

It's Jacinta, the mother. She comes in, laden with clothes to sew from the village's pious woman, and a bag with some shopping. She drops it all on the floor, alarmed by what she sees, Salvador lying on the bed and Eduardo sitting next to him. From the door:

MOTHER

What's happened? Salvador!

Eduardo is intimidated by the mother's sudden appearance and her tone.

EDUARDO

He got a lot of sun.

The mother comes into the room. Eduardo stands up.

She looks at him, with the wet clothes clinging to his damp body. The mother doesn't like the image of the two boys. That complicity. During the rest of the sequence, she is surly with Eduardo, as if she suspected something.

SALVADOR

I was reading..

MOTHER

*(To Salvador)* Didn't you realize that the sun was shining on you! *(She touches his forehead.)* You're burning up!

SALVADOR

I didn't realize..

MOTHER

*(To Eduardo)* And you... *(She restrains from saying what the hell are you doing here)* What?

Eduardo remains standing, looking at them, not really knowing what to do.

EDUARDO

I'd finished putting up the tiles in the kitchen and, as he fainted, I brought him here. I didn't want to leave him on his own.

MOTHER  
(More alarmed) You fainted?

SALVADOR  
A bit. I got dizzy...

MOTHER  
Don't get up. I'm going to get a  
vinegar poultice for you. I  
suppose your father's in the bar!

SALVADOR  
Yes.

MOTHER  
He told me he'd stay in the house!

The mother is annoyed with the father. She picks up the bag with the shopping and leaves the bag with clothes to be sewn on a chair. She is tired and she doesn't like the situation.

**123. PATERNA. FAMILY CAVE. INT. DAY. (CONT'D)**

She goes off to the kitchen, near the patio, followed by Eduardo.

MOTHER  
What's that basin doing here?

The basin with soapy water is in the same place as when Eduardo was washing.

EDUARDO  
I washed myself a bit.

Jacinta goes over to the kitchen, takes a cloth and starts to soak it in vinegar. Reproachful:

MOTHER  
You could have waited till you got home. It's hard work for me carrying water here.

EDUARDO  
I was really dirty. I'll bring a basin and dry the floor.

MOTHER

No, bring the water. I'll clean this up.

Eduardo goes to take the basin of water. He tries to ease the situation, he's proud of his work and he hopes that will improve Jacinta's mood.

EDUARDO

The tiles turned out very nice!

The woman nods slightly.

MOTHER

Thank you.

EDUARDO

I'll get the water. I won't be long.

Jacinta watches him leave, without changing her expression. She goes to Salvador's bedroom, with the cloth soaked in vinegar. When she passes the builder's table, she finds the drawing of Salvador sitting on the chair reading and surrounded by geraniums. She feels sick to her stomach.

**124. HOSPITAL. RADIOLOGIST'S OFFICE. INT. DAY (THE PRESENT)**

The radiologist is sitting on one side of the desk (we saw her earlier in her cubicle, when she was doing the CAT scan), Mercedes and Salvador are across from her, tense, Mercedes more so than Salvador. A 3D illustration fills one of the walls. There is also a treadmill, the kind you see in gyms.

RADIOLOGIST

First of all, I want to reassure you. There is no tumor. That is totally discounted.

Salvador and Mercedes sigh with relief.

SALVADOR

But there's something wrong with me, because I even choke on purées.

RADIOLOGIST

Yes, what you've got, that dysphagia, is called Forestier's

Syndrome. You can see it more clearly here.

She shows him the CAT scan image on the computer screen.

The radiologist shows him various cervical sections on the computer. The images illustrate precisely the radiologist's words. Salvador and Mercedes look at her, paying great attention.

RADIOLOGIST

You see this white part, next to the vertebra? It's an osteocyte, an ossification. *(She points.)* Here you can see the esophagus, displaced by that ossification. There's practically no room for food to get through, not even liquids. That's why you choke.

Salvador and Mercedes listen very closely.

SALVADOR

Why did that bone grow so much there?

RADIOLOGIST

Forestier's Syndrome is a rare disease and we don't know what causes it. We know it affects the tendons, ligaments and joint capsules, which calcify, but we don't know why. In your case the anterior ligament of the spine has calcified.

Salvador and Mercedes look closely at the X-rays.

SALVADOR

And can anything be done?

RADIOLOGIST

Surgery, that ossification has to be removed as soon as possible. But don't worry, it isn't a risky operation. The gastroenterologist and the surgeon will explain it much more detail.

They go through a large, treeless patio. The gallery is a glassed-in area, with an awning. Almost all the paintings can be seen without going inside. The exhibition is called *Popular Art*.

Salvador and Mercedes go into the glassed-in area. The picture they're interested in is seen immediately. Mercedes and Salvador go up to it. Salvador, hiding his emotion, looks at the watercolor and the glass protecting it reflects him. We can see the two Salvadors, the one who was the child teacher and the present day one.

The person attending to the public comes up to them. The owner, probably. A man with a French accent.

GALLERY OWNER

Are you interested in the watercolor?

SALVADOR

Yes. I'd like to buy it. Who's the artist?

GALLERY OWNER

It's anonymous, almost all the works are unsigned.

SALVADOR

How did it get here?

GALLERY OWNER

I bought it at the Flea Market in Barcelona. It's one of my favorite pieces.

SALVADOR

So you have no idea who the artist could be?

GALLERY OWNER

There's something written on the back. But they are all anonymous artists who probably don't even know that they are artists.

**126. STREET IN MADRID. INSIDE THE VAN. INT./EXT. DAY**

Salvador turns the drawing over. (We suppose that he has previously removed the frame.) There is a

dedication on the back. Salvador recognizes Eduardo's childish writing. We hear the contents off screen in Eduardo's voice.

EDUARDO OFF

Dear Salvador, I'm sending the drawing to your home because I don't have the address of the school. I'm happy to be able to write to you. You taught me and I'm very grateful. I'm working now in Conchita's uncle's store and I'm good at numbers. All thanks to you. It's nice here, but I miss life in the caves. And you, in particular. Every time I write I think of your hand guiding mine. I'm sure you're learning a lot at school, reading lots of books and seeing lots of films. I'm giving you my address in Bilbao. Maybe you can write and tell me. Your pupil. (Signed) Eduardo. (Followed by an address in Bilbao).

Salvador is touched by the dedication. Mercedes looks at him without saying anything.

**127. SALVADOR'S HOUSE. INT. DAY.**

The drawing is part of the desk. We hear the song *Come sinfonia* sung by Mina. The same song as was playing on the transistor when Eduardo drew Salvador, fifty years before.

From the start of this sequence we hear the sound of typing on a computer. Salvador is writing quickly, as if he were short of time. We see the title at the top of the document: THE FIRST DESIRE.

As well as hearing Mina's song, we see it, on the screen of Salvador's cell phone, a YouTube video, in black and white, from that time.

Mercedes comes into the study area. She seems him so deep in concentration that she doesn't want to disturb him. She loves to see him writing.

Salvador is writing very quickly on the computer. He looks at the clock.

MERCEDES

*(Serious, tender, trying to sound neutral)* You have to start dressing in half an hour.

Salvador, without pausing in his writing:

SALVADOR

Remind me just before.

His expression has changed, he's a different Salvador, calm, he writes with ten fingers, he doesn't need to look at the keyboard.

**128. STREET IN MADRID. INSIDE THE VAN. INT./EXT. DAY.**

On the way to the hospital.

Salvador is looking out the window at life in the city. He is serious. A middle-aged father pushing a double pram with a set of twins. A South American woman helping an elderly lady to walk. The shouting of a group of adolescents, several people with dogs, men and women isolated by headphones or talking on their phones.

MERCEDES

What do you think happened with the drawing?

SALVADOR

Eduardo sent it to Paterna, my mother would have received it. I was at the priests' school by then and she didn't send it to me or told me about it.

MERCEDES

Never?

SALVADOR

Never.

Pensive.

MERCEDES

Are you going to try to find him?

SALVADOR

Eduardo?



MERCEDES

It's easier now, with Google. Or going back to Paterna and asking about him.

SALVADOR

Fifty years later? *(He shakes his head.)* It's a good idea for a story and maybe I'll write it, but looking for him would be crazy.

MERCEDES

How on earth did the drawing get to the Flea Market in Barcelona?

SALVADOR

No idea. By chance, but what matters is that it got to the person it was intended for.

**129. HOSPITAL. OPERATING THEATER. INT. DAY.**

Some nurses wheel Salvador in on a gurney. General view of the operating theater.

Dr. Galindo is the anesthetist, he goes over to the gurney. They greet each other amicably. Salvador is reassured by the doctor's presence. The atmosphere is typical of an operation.

DR. GALINDO

*(In a mask and cap)* How are you, Salvador?

SALVADOR

Hello, doctor.

DR. GALINDO

I heard. No wonder you couldn't swallow. But don't worry, we'll get rid of this right away.

Salvador smiles. Despite the fear inherent to the situation, he is calm. The doctor prepares the anesthetic.

SALVADOR

Doctor, I'm writing again.

He says it in the tone of "and I'd like to keep doing it".

DR. GALINDO  
*(Injecting the anesthetic)* Really?  
That's great news! I'm delighted,  
Salvador. Drama or comedy?

SALVADOR  
I don't know. You don't know that...

He is about to say "until the end" but the anesthetic traps him sweetly before he can finish the sentence.

**130. TRAIN STATION. EXT. NIGHT. (1966)**

From that colorless, painless place, we start to see the railway tracks in the train station converging in a knot and spreading out like a cobweb. Salvador's voice says off screen:

SALVADOR OFF  
In the 1960s, many Spaniards had to emigrate in search of fortune. I went with my mother to Paterna where my father was waiting for us.

Cut.

**131. TRAIN STATION. INT./EXT. NIGHT.**

Fireworks explode in the night sky. The boy, standing at one of the doors of the hall/waiting room of the station, is looking, bewitched, at the delight of the fireworks, rockets exploding and spreading out like branches of different colored palm trees.

Jacinta's voice comes from inside the hall, weary, fed up, calling him.

MOTHER  
Salva, come and help me.

The boy goes up to his mother. Outside, the orgy of fireworks continues until it ends in a catharsis that floods the celestial surface.

**132. TRAIN STATION. WAITING ROOM/HALL. INT. NIGHT.**

The mother spreads a blanket on the floor to make a bed. Outside the orgy of fireworks continues. They are surrounded by bundles. The boy lies on the wooden bench, wrapped in a blanket and with a bundle as a pillow. The mother lies on the makeshift bed on the floor. She is staring into space, probably trying to imagine their future. In that relaxed tone that precedes sleep, mother and child talk:

SALVADOR

Mom, will there be a cinema in Paterna?

MOTHER

If we have a house that'll be enough for me, love.

The boy rolls over, turning his back on his mother. Jacinta thinks of the destiny that awaits her family. In her eyes there is uncertainty, fear and hope.

The camera starts to pull back.

**133. TRAIN STATION. WAITING ROOM. INT. NIGHT. (THE PRESENT)**

The backward tracking shot slowly shows us Salvador's past and his future/present, coexisting in the same space.

We see the tracking rails, the sound technician, with his arms raised, holding the mike boom, some LED screens on the floor illuminate the actress playing the mother, Penélope Cruz, absorbed, staring into space thinking of what lies ahead for her character.

On the opposite wall, surrounded by part of the film crew, present day Salvador looks intensely at the video screen with which he controls the shot he's filming. He looks like he's controlling his emotions.

SALVADOR

Cut.

ASSISTANT

We've cut.

Penélope Cruz comes out of her character and recovers her own appearance. As an actress she's aware that destiny, at least that of her son in the story, is

there, in the other half of the waiting room. The represented past and the present coexist separated only by the rails of a little tracking shot.

Sitting on the blanket, Penélope looks over at Salvador, the director. She knows what this scene represents for him and she looks for his complicity and approval. Salvador is wearing sunglasses to protect his eyes from the light and to hide his emotion. Esther appears on one side and stands in the center of the frame to chant the clapperboard she's holding.

ESTHER

38, 5, first. Final clapper.

Among the details usually written on the clapper (name of the camera operator, of the director, etc.) we can see the title of the film Salvador is shooting: THE FIRST DESIRE.

The screen sinks into a long fade to black until the credits start.

THE END.