

**IN ENGLISH**

ROMA

Written and Directed by

Alfonso Cuarón

Dates in RED are meant only as a tool for the different departments for the specific historical accuracy of the scenes and are not intended to appear on screen.

Thursday, September 3rd, 1970

INT. PATIO TEPEJI 21 - DAY

Yellow triangles inside red squares.

Water spreading over tiles. Grimy foam.

The tile floor of a long and narrow patio stretching through the entire house: On one end, a black metal door gives onto the street. The door has frosted glass windows, two of which are broken, courtesy of some dejected goatee.

CLEO, Cleotilde/Cleodegaria Gutiérrez, a Mixtec indigenous woman, about 26 years old, walks across the patio, nudging water over the wet floor with a squeegee.

As she reaches the other end, the foam has amassed in a corner, timidly showing off its shiny little white bubbles, but -

A GUSH OF WATER surprises and drags the stubborn little bubbles to the corner where they finally vanish, whirling into the sewer.

Cleo picks up the brooms and buckets and carries them to -

THE SMALL PATIO -

Which is enclosed between the kitchen, the garage and the house. She opens the door to a small closet, puts away the brooms and buckets, walks into a small bathroom and closes the door.

The patio remains silent except for a radio announcer, his enthusiasm melting in the distance, and the sad song of two caged little birds.

The toilet flushes. Then: water from the sink. A beat, the door opens.

Cleo dries her hands on her apron, enters the kitchen and disappears behind the door connecting it to the house.

INT - GROUND FLOOR - TEPEJI 21 - DAY

Cleo crosses the dark, antique wood breakfast room, then the modern light and angled wood dining room and goes up the stairs, reaching the hall.

Beyond the hall there are two living rooms, one with heavy green velvet sofas and antique cabinets with records and a stereo. There's a piano next to the wall.

CONTINUED:

The other living room, with its light sofas and cocktail tray and siphon attempts to look more modern.

There's a giant painting in red and purple hues of a woman leaning on a clay pitcher.

In the other living room, there's another painting, also large but more somber: In a dark stone cell, a monk brings solace to a shackled prisoner who covers his face with his hands in desperation.

INT - UPPER LEVEL - TEPEJI 21 - DAY

The stairs go up to a central hall surrounded by four bedrooms and an enormous bathroom.

Cleo makes up the bedroom: the double bed is already made, it has an ornate mahogany headboard that matches the night tables.

She collects the dirty clothes from the floor and carries them out to the hall where she piles them up onto a growing mound of laundry.

The upstairs hallway doubles as a TV room. The bathroom is yet to be cleaned but two out of three bedrooms are completely done.

Cleo walks into a room with two small beds for the kids. She picks up the clothes first, and then puts away the boy and girl toys spread across the entire floor.

She's started making one of the beds when she hears someone calling from downstairs -

ADELA (O.S.)  
*Manita! It's almost one...!*

Startled, Cleo exclaims -

CLEO  
Ay, chicú...!

She exits the bedroom carrying dirty laundry.

In the hallway, she gathers the pile of clothing and carries it, hurrying down the stairs.

INT - DOWNSTAIRS - TEPEJI 21 - DAY

Cleo heads down the stairs, carrying the pile of clothes.

She crosses the hall and dining rooms and disappears behind the door that opens to the kitchen.

After a beat, through -

THE WINDOW

We see her exit to the small patio.

She leaves the clothes at the foot of the metal stairs that lead to the roof and hurries out to the street.

EXT - HOUSE - TEPEJI 21 - DAY

Tepeji street spans barely two blocks, halved by Monterrey Avenue, its tired homes built in the 1930s.

Sad and defeated, Tepeji 21 sits in the middle of the block resting on its solid ground, which blends with the grey concrete of the sidewalk.

The house is all white save for an almost-maroon red strip running along its facade and for the black wrought iron over the windows and doors.

Next to the upper left hand corner of the door there's a ceramic tile number: 21.

The door opens and Cleo exits.

She hurries out to the Avenue and once she reaches the corner, she turns right.

EXT - STREET - MONTERREY AVE. - TLAXCALA - DAY

Cleo leaves Tepeji and walks down the avenue where there's a considerable amount of traffic.

As she reaches the corner, she crosses the avenue and continues on -

TLAXCALA STREET -

She passes a pharmacy, a convenience store, a bakery and a beauty salon.

EXT - CONDESA KINDERGARTEN - DAY

A small crowd gathers by the kindergarten entrance. It's pickup time. Cleo arrives and goes into the school. After a moment, she comes out with PEPE, a 5 year-old boy carrying a barely dried "work of art".

EXT - TLAXCALA STREET - DAY

Cleo walks next to Pepe, who carries his "work of art": just a little kid in shorts and t-shirt.

Pepe walks, skipping around not to step on the line. Cleo carries his lunch box.

Suddenly, Pepe stops and sits down. Cleo keeps walking a few steps, then stops, turns around -

CLEO (CONT'D)  
What's wrong?

PEPE  
I'm tired.

CLEO  
Well, let's go then so we can get home. As soon as we get there you can go straight to bed!

PEPE  
I can't.

Cleo pretends to keep walking.

PEPE (CONT'D)  
Mom!

Cleo stops and turns around -

CLEO  
Of course you can! Come on! Let's go!

PEPE  
I said I can't!

CLEO  
If I went to bed every time I thought "I can't", I would live in bed!

PEPE  
I'm not in bed.

Cleo takes his hand -

CLEO  
Come on, there's pasta soup...

Pepe gets up -

PEPE  
Ooooooooooh!

CONTINUED:

And he starts with heavy and lazy steps.

PEPE (CONT'D)  
Mooooooooooooooooom!

CLEO  
C'mon little soldier, 1, 2, 3, 4...  
march!

The two march hand in hand.

EXT - PATIO - TEPEJI 21 - DAY

Cleo and Pepe walk in: he's carrying his "work of art" while she carries the lunch box. They listen to Adela calling her -

ADELA (O.S.)  
(In Mixtec)  
Hurry up, *manita*! Fermín is on the  
phone!

Cleo hurries and goes inside the house to answer.

INT - DOWNSTAIRS HALL - TEPEJI 21 - DAY

CLEO  
Hello?

INT - KITCHEN - TEPEJI 21 - DAY

Adela is cooking: pots simmer on the stove. Cleo walks in, leaving the lunch box on the table.

ADELA  
(In Mixtec)  
So, what did he say?

CLEO  
Nothing! He just called to say hi!

Cleo picks up dishes and glasses, carries them out.

Adela stirs the soup.

Cleo comes in again and opens the silverware drawer.

ADELA  
Sure... Now you've stolen my  
boyfriend, right?

CLEO

What? You crazy? Fermín is only my friend. Plus, you're the one who introduced us.

ADELA

Ay, *manita*! Look at you! I'm just messing with you. I only went out twice with him and didn't even let him kiss me.

We hear the street door opening and with it a commotion of kids.

CLEO

They're here...

Cleo exits to -

EXT - PATIO - TEPEJI 21 - DAY

Cleo reaches the patio just as -

Two children run in -

TONO, 12 years old and PACO, 11. The two rush into the house and we hear them go up the stairs.

Soon after, SOFI, an 8 year-old girl comes in. She's very pretty although her brothers constantly pick on her, calling her fat.

Trailing behind, comes SEÑORA TERESA, a 65 year-old widow, hair completely white, walking with a limp.

IGNACIO, the 45 year-old driver, follows her, carrying a grocery bag.

INT - BREAKFAST ROOM - TEPEJI 21 - DAY

Cleo cuts Pepe's meat with a knife, she cuts ever-smaller pieces, until only tiny squares of steak remain. She douses them with lemon.

SOFI impatiently waits her turn.

PACO eats his meat while he talks -

PACO

A friend told me that a kid in his cousin's school was killed by a soldier because he threw a water balloon at him.



CONTINUED:

Toño listens skeptically -

TOÑO

Says who?

PACO

Says Flores. If you don't believe me, ask him. He says he was in Chapultepec, near the new one, and that he was with his brother, throwing water balloons down at the passing cars and so an army Jeep passed and they threw one and the soldier got off and shot him.

CLEO

Jesus! And what happened to him?

PACO

What do you mean, what happened? He got shot in the head, he's dead.

CLEO

Horrible!

SEÑORA SOFÍA enters through the hallway door, carrying a backpack and a bunch of papers from the dining room table -

SEÑORA SOFÍA

Hello children, what are you eating?

SOFI AND PEPE

Mom!

Señora Sofía kisses each one hello. Pepe shows her his "work of art" -

PEPE

Look, mommy...

SEÑORA SOFÍA

Beautiful! Did you make that all by yourself?

PEPE

Yes, and look: there's pasta soup!

SEÑORA SOFÍA

Yummm, delicious!

She sits -

SEÑORA SOFÍA (CONT'D)

Cleo, please don't let the kids  
touch those papers-they're exams I  
have to grade.

TOÑO

Is there any watermelon?

CLEO

No, love. Strawberries and cream.

PACO

I want some!

Cleo gets up, taking some dirty dishes with her-

CLEO

What about you, Toño?

TOÑO

I guess so.

Cleo goes to -

INT - KITCHEN - TEPEJI 21 - DAY

Cleo comes in with the dirty dishes, puts them in the sink.

Ignacio and Adela eat at a small table.

Cleo takes a clean bowl and starts pouring soup -

CLEO

*Ándali*, the *señora* is here. Sofía  
and Toño want their strawberries...

Adela gets up, slowly, and puts some plates, spoons,  
strawberries, sugar and cream on a platter. She looks at Cleo  
with a question and smiles.

Cleo blushes and leaves, carrying her platter.

INT - BREAKFAST ROOM - TEPEJI 21 - DAY

Señora Sofía eats her soup.

Cleo fixes the strawberries and cream on plates.

SEÑORA SOFÍA

Cleo, could you please send the  
*señor's* two suits to the dry  
cleaners. It has to be today  
because he's leaving on Friday and  
has to pack them.

CLEO  
Don't worry, ma'am, I'll take them.

PEPE  
Is dad going on a trip?

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
He's going to Quebec for a conference.

SOFI  
Where's that?

PACO  
How come you don't know, silly?

SOFI  
I don't. So what?

TONO  
It's in Canada.

PACO  
Is he flying Eastern?

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
I don't know. I think it's Panam.

Cleo serves Sofi a plate of strawberries and cream.

SEÑORA SOFÍA (CONT'D)  
No sugar for Sofi, or she'll get fat.

EXT - ROOF- TEPEJI 21 - AFTERNOON

Cleo washes clothes, occasionally humming to a song coming out of a yellow radio.

The metallic creak of the stairs announces the arrival of Paco, followed by Pepe.

CLEO  
You know you can't come up here.

PACO  
I looked after him the whole way up.

CONTINUED:

CLEO

Your mom is going to be angry.

But Paco has started his game, pulling Pepe along with him.

PACO

I'm going to come out of here and you come over here, and when I get to here you'll shoot me, but I'll shoot you first and you'll fall dead... Like this... with your arms wide open...

Paco takes bullets like Sonny Corleone against the wall of the neighboring house.

CLEO

Just don't play next to the edge.

PACO

C'mon...

Paco moves away on the roof while Pepe hides behind the water tank.

Paco comes back, but now hiding like an enemy spy all the way to the water tank. He tries to go around it, with his gun held high, but -

Pepe comes at him from behind, with murderous intent.

Paco reacts and turns around, tries to point with his gun but Pepe sprays him with sure shots and hides behind the water tank leaving Paco confused at first, then furious-

PACO (CONT'D)

You were supposed to die!

From behind the water tank, Pepe defies him -

PEPE

Why aren't you the one who dies?

PACO

Cause it's my game.

PEPE

Then I don't wanna play anymore.

CONTINUED:

PACO

Well, then I don't want you to  
play, sissy.

He walks off, angry. He goes down the staircase, each step resonating with metallic moans.

Pepe walks over to see him go and stops in the middle of the roof, clearly disappointed.

He stays there for a long time, until suddenly -

A spray of invisible bullets shoots through him and Pepe falls dead, his arms spread open, like Paco said. And he stays there, lying down motionless on the ground.

Cleo dries her hands and walks over to him. She stops and watches him -

CLEO

What happened to you?

Without opening his eyes, Pepe answers from the ground.

PEPE

I'm dead.

CLEO

Well, let's go down then.

PEPE

I can't. I'm dead.

CLEO

Then come back to life, we have to  
go down!

PEPE

If you die, you can't live again.

CLEO

Now what am I going to do without  
my Pepe!?

Cleo sits on the ground next to Pepe, who remains motionless.

CLEO (CONT'D)

I can't live without my Pepe!

Cleo lies down next to Pepe, arms also extended, and closes her eyes -

CONTINUED:

CLEO (CONT'D)  
I'm also dead.

And so she remains still, Pepe next to her. A DC 8 flies overhead.

Pepe opens an eye to see Cleo. She's not moving and seems not to be breathing at all. Pepe reaches his hand and takes Cleo's.

PEPE  
Cleo...?

But Cleo's not moving. Pepe sits up -

PEPE (CONT'D)  
Cleo...?

CLEO  
I'm dead.

PEPE  
No! C'mon, get up!

CLEO  
Didn't you say that was impossible?

PEPE  
Cleo, stop it!

But Cleo doesn't answer.

PEPE (CONT'D)  
Cleo!

She remains still.

PEPE (CONT'D)  
Cleeeoo!

Pepe's starting to get scared -

PEPE (CONT'D)  
Cleeeeeeeeeooooooooo!

Cleo opens her eyes and smiles at him.

CLEO  
I'm playing your game. Let's see...  
shall we play a little longer?

Pepe lies down next to her, arms outstretched.

CONTINUED:

CLEO (CONT'D)  
Close your eyes.

They both close their eyes.

CLEO (CONT'D)  
I like being dead.

Pepe holds her hand.

The two of them lie dead on the roof -

The afternoon quiet hours have begun. Church bells ring in the distance.

All around them, a landscape of roofs mushrooming in all directions.

In many of them, other women wash or hang laundry. The wind carries the hum of different radios and dogs barking.

The whistle of a sweet potato cart.

The quiet universe.

INT - MAIN BATHROOM - TEPEJI 21 - NIGHT

Cleo bathes Sofi and Pepe in the bathtub.

Sofi's hair is full of soap and she plays at making different hairdos in the mirror.

Pepe has a submarine but isn't playing with it. He's pensive.

PEPE  
Cleo, if you died right now, would you go to heaven or hell?

CLEO  
And why would I die?

PEPE  
I'm just saying... Heaven or hell?

CLEO  
You're killing me all the time...

Pepe is getting annoyed.

PEPE

Well, it's a game! Tell me  
already... heaven or hell?

Cleo fills a small bucket with water and tells Sofi -

CLEO

Let's see, close your eyes...

As she pours water to rinse her hair.

CLEO (CONT'D)

I'd fly straight up to heaven with  
my little wings.

PEPE

Paco told me that in his religion  
class they had a sli-ding show...

CLEO

Sli-ding...?

Sofi laughs -

SOFI

Slide show.

PEPE

That thing. About hell.

Cleo pours another bucketful on Sofi.

CLEO

(uninterested)  
Hell?

PEPE

Yep, paintings and photos....

CLEO

Photos?

PEPE

Yeah. He said there was fire on all  
sides... and that while they burn  
you, there's some real ugly devils  
poking you, like this, with  
irons... and others that bite you  
or eat your arms....

CLEO

Ay *chicú!* horrible! Stop talking  
about that...!



CONTINUED:

PEPE

Yeah but it doesn't matter...!

CLEO

What do you mean it doesn't matter?  
What about all the fire?

Pepe laughs -

PEPE

He says it doesn't matter cause  
that's where he wants to go!

CLEO

What? But didn't you say they burn  
people there?

PEPE

Yes, but Paco says everyone there  
is naked!

His laugh is now roaring -

PEPE (CONT'D)

And that you can see all the  
girls... naked!

Pepe is laughing hard, Sofi spits out water and laughs with him.

EXT. - PATIO - TEPEJI 21 - NIGHT

The frosted glass panels light up and we hear -

A horn honking -

Ta-ta ta-ta ta-ta ta-taaaaaaa!

Behind the door, the powerful and tantalizing hum of a V8.

From inside the car, booms XELA radio station playing "Un bal" from *Symphonie Fantastique*.

BORRAS immediately starts barking at the door.

Cleo and Adela rush to the patio-

ADELA

Well, he's in early.

Cleo grabs Borrás and drags him to the back of the patio.

CONTINUED:

CLEO  
Don't you know he's leaving  
tomorrow?

Adela begins to open the door.

Pepe and Sofi peek out from the hall. Holding Borrás, Cleo orders them to -

CLEO (CONT'D)  
Wait there!

The V8 impatiently purrs behind the door and finally -

Adela opens the door to reveal -

The front of a 1970 2-DOOR BLACK GALAXIE 500. Its powerful headlights flood the patio all the way to the back, lighting Cleo who holds Borrás.

The Galaxie 500 slowly pulls in but it's too large for the space, leaving only about an inch on each side of the doors.

The front of the car is in, then it breaks -

The left side is about to touch the door frame.

The tires turn right accompanied by the SCREECH of rubber against tile.

The Galaxie 500 moves further in but then breaks again -

The right side is about to touch.

The black power steering wheel turns and -

The wheels veer left, SCREECHING.

It echoes through the patio, syncopated with the waltz emanating from the radio.

Señora Sofía comes to the hall door next to Sofi and Pepe.

SOFI  
Dad's home early!

The car moves forward a couple of inches and stops.

The gear shifts to R -

The Galaxie 500 backs up a few inches, breaks.

CONTINUED:

The gear shifts to D -

The car inches forward slowly, free of the door frame. It's almost halfway in when it stops.

The wheels veer right and -

SCREECH.

And the waltz picks up its rhythm.

The car moves forward half a yard and breaks.

The tires line straight up and -

The Galaxie 500 has made it through the door frame and is now entirely inside the patio -

As the waltz reaches its grand finale...

The car parks right next to the hall entrance door -

The engine shuts off, and with it, the music -

Sofi and Pepe lunge through the door -

SEÑOR ANTONIO

There, there, there.... Let me get out.

Señora Sofía pulls the children to her and -

SEÑOR ANTONIO comes out of the car, he's 40 years old with a few white hairs in his beard. He's still wearing his white doctor's coat.

The children jump on him immediately -

SEÑOR ANTONIO (CONT'D)

Who? Who? Who are these kids?

Señora Sofía touches his shoulder. The family comes in.

Adela closes the street door and Cleo sets Borrás free. He immediately sniffs at the Galaxie 500's tires.

INT - UPSTAIRS HALL - TEPEJI 21 - NIGHT

Gordolfo Gelatino exits his bedroom wearing a robe, stretching his arms lazily -

(CONT'D)

GORDOLFO GELATINO (ON T.V.)

*Ya se despertó tu rorro,  
mamacita... (your baby's up, lil'  
mama)*

Doña Naborita welcomes him enthusiastically -

DOÑA NABORITA (ON T.V.)

*My angel of the mornin'! Si a penas  
son las dos de la tarde! Ya  
descansaste de descansar? (It's  
barely 2 pm! Have you rested from  
resting?)*

The entire family is seated in front of a 1970 ADMIRAL  
TELEVISION SET.

Sofi is perched on Señor Antonio and Pepe's on Señora Sofía's  
lap, Paco leans on her, cuddling. Toño, always more distant,  
sits in an armchair.

Cleo serves Señor Antonio strawberries and cream. She picks  
up a plate with the remains of a *concha* and beans and head  
towards the stairs when -

Laughter explodes, courtesy of Los Polivoces. The kids are  
laughing hard in their seats.

Cleo stops and turns -

ON TV -

Gordolfo is sitting on the couch, admiring himself in the  
mirror, while Doña Naborita irons a pile of clothes.

DOÑA NABORITA (ON T.V.) (CONT'D)

*Ora sí, mi cerecita de jaibol, el  
edificio me dió toda su ropa a  
lavar y voy a poder comprarte ese  
reloj que tanto te gusta...!  
(That's right my little highball  
cherry, the entire building gave me  
their laundry to wash so I'm going  
to buy you that watch you like so  
much...!)*

GORDOLFO GELATINO (ON T.V.)

*No me gusta verte trabajar tanto,  
mi cabecita blanca adorada! Así que  
por favor vete al otro cuarto.*

(MORE)

GORDOLFO GELATINO (ON T.V.) (CONT'D)  
 (I don't like to see you working so  
 hard my beloved little white  
 head... so please go to the other  
 room.)

Cleo sets aside the plates and sits down on the floor next to the sofa to watch T.V.

Paco holds out his arm to hug her.

Pepe tries doing the same but he can't reach. Cleo extends her arm and hooks it with his.

ON T.V. -

A bump announces the Wash and Wear, who, minutes later enters his boss El Mostachón's office. He will exploit him, immune to the insults and truths that the Wash and Wear dishes out.

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
 Cleo?

Cleo immediately stands up -

CLEO  
 Yes, ma'am?

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
 Would you bring the doctor some  
 chamomile tea?

CLEO  
 Yes, ma'am.

She picks up the plates from the floor and heads downstairs.

INT - KITCHEN - TEPEJI 21 - NIGHT

Adela is washing the dishes. Cleo comes in and leaves the dirty dishes next to the dishwasher.

CLEO (CONT'D)  
 Move over!

She bumps Adela with her hip.

ADELA  
*Órale!*

CLEO  
 Make some chamomile tea for the  
*señora* and get going.

CONTINUED:

Adela obeys with mock-resignation and dries her hands with a rag -

ADELA  
Just don't take too long...

She grabs a pot and pours water from a carboy on the floor.

INT - UPSTAIRS HALL - TEPEJI 21 - NIGHT

Cleo walks in with a steaming cup of tea, places it on a table next to Señora Sofía. Pepe sleeps in her arms.

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
Can you take him?

Cleo takes Pepe and carries him into his room. Sofi follows her. Cleo pauses before going in to watch -

ON T.V. -

Chano and Chon reveal their faces under their hats. Chano starts asking Chon about penguin sizes. Chon answers and Chano starts howling at the answer.

SEÑORA SOFÍA (CONT'D)  
Off to bed, children...

Toño and Paco grudgingly get up and kiss their parents good night.

INT - SOFI AND PEPE'S ROOM - TEPEJI 21 - NIGHT

Sofi is lying down on her bed. Cleo sits next to her, taking her hand -

CLEO  
*Angelito de la Guarda, mi dulce  
compañía, no me desampares ni de  
noche ni de día. No me dejes sola  
que me perdería... (My guardian  
angel, sweet company, don't leave  
me alone day or night. Don't leave  
alone because I'd be lost...)*

She strokes her face -

CLEO (CONT'D)  
Night-night, beautiful Sofi...

And she gives her a kiss.

CONTINUED:

SOFI  
Good night, Cleo.

She closes her eyes. Cleo gets up and turns off the light.

She exits to -

INT - UPSTAIRS HALL - TEPEJI 21 - NIGHT

It's empty. Paco and Toño's door is closed but Señor Antonio and Señora Sofía's is still open. Señor Antonio sits on the bed, taking off his shoes.

Señora Teresa's snores echo through the walls.

Cleo picks up the teacup, intact and still full, and goes down the stairs.

INT - DOWNSTAIRS - TEPEJI 21 - NIGHT

Cleo goes down the stairs carrying the tea cup and when she reaches the hall, she goes into the living room to turn off all the lights. She leaves one on, next to the window.

She keeps going till she reaches the kitchen door. She walks in.

INT - KITCHEN - TEPEJI 21 - NIGHT

Cleo enters the kitchen, pours out the tea and rinses the cup. She turns off the light and goes out to the small patio, climbing the metal staircase to her room.

INT - MAID'S QUARTERS -TEPEJI 21 - NIGHT

Cleo walks into the room. Adela is already in her nightgown -

ADELA  
You took forever!

Cleo takes off her dress, rushing.

CLEO  
Turn the light off already! Señora  
Teresa gets angry if she sees the  
light on!

Adela shuts the light and the room is dark although the window is big and lets the moonlight in. Cleo lights a candle and puts it on the floor.

CONTINUED:

The two of them lie down, lined up in such a way that one's feet touch the other one's feet and -

ADELA  
Ready?

CLEO  
Go...

The two of them push the upper parts of their bodies together and try to touch their toes -

ADELA  
(groaning)  
One...

And they work on their abs, one after the other -

ADELA (CONT'D)  
(groaning)  
Two...

Between grunts and groans.

### **Sunday, September 20th, 1970**

EXT - INDEPENDENCIA AVE - DAY

The festive bustle of a Sunday in downtown Mexico City: families and street vendors everywhere.

Cleo and Adela walk in step, hurrying down the sidewalk in a moving obstacle race.

Adela is faster but Cleo is more agile and tougher.

Adela takes the lead but runs into a bus stop with families getting off. Cleo manages to slip through the crowd and keeps going.

The sidewalk is a little less full, So Adela takes advantage of this and catches up just as they arrive to -

EXT - TORTA STAND - INDEPENDENCIA AVE - DAY

They stop, exhausted, catching their breath. One leans on a car, the other one on a lamp post.

Between deep breaths, Cleo lifts a hand, index pointing at the sky -



CLEO  
(breathless)  
...I won...

ADELA  
(breathless)  
...No...we're...tied...

Cleo simply shakes her head no.

INT - TORTA STAND - INDEPENDENCIA AVE - DAY

Hand-painted illustrations on the wall advertise the different kinds of tortas available. On the other wall, a mirror cut into diamond shapes reflects the already abundant clientele.

Cleo and Adela sit at the bar, enjoying their *tortas cubanas*, spilling over with each bite.

ADELA (CONT'D)  
And then Moisés... remember Moisés,  
from the village?

Cleo nods, giving her torta a giant bite, overflowing with avocado.

ADELA (CONT'D)  
So he was there, boom, boom, boom,  
and...

CLEO  
(laughing)  
Boom, boom...boom?

ADELA  
No silly! Boom, boom, sending me  
letter after letter...

Every time she speaks, Cleo puts her hand over her mouth -

CLEO  
(curious)  
What all was he writing about?

ADELA  
Well, that he couldn't stop  
thinking about me... about how much  
he missed me... wanted to see me...

CLEO  
Aaaaaaayyyyyyy...!

(CONT'D)

ADELA

That he felt so alone without me...

CLEO

Poor guy!

ADELA

That he couldn't take not seeing me  
no more...

CLEO

Aaaaaaay...

ADELA

And so my cousin, he comes over  
from the village to run some  
errands and brings me another  
letter from Moisés...

CLEO

And?

ADELA

And so he pulls out the letter and  
gives it to me... But the letter  
was there with a bunch of other  
letters, and as he's pulling it  
out, they all spill onto the floor.  
And so I see one with Moisés's  
handwriting, and so I just take it  
and I open it...!

Following the story, Cleo has stopped chewing -

ADELA (CONT'D)

And sure enough, it was Moisés's. I  
can't stop thinking about you... I  
want to see you.... I feel so alone  
without you... I miss you so...

CLEO

*Pobrecito!* Such a nice guy!

ADELA

Sure. Except the letter was for  
another girl!

CLEO

Noooooo!

She's floored, mouth wide open, a half-chewed piece of torta  
still in her mouth.

CONTINUED:

ADELA

That bastard sends the same letter  
to all the girls!

The both explode in laughter, covering their mouths with  
their hands.

Other diners turn around and they both hide their faces,  
trying to repress their laughter.

AT THE ENTRANCE -

Two men walk into the torta stand and look around. They see  
Cleo and Adela sitting at the bar and walk towards them.

RAMÓN, 27, affable, a little overweight and with sideburns is  
wearing a purple shirt with four buttons open down the front.

FERMÍN, 26, is shy and a little sullen, with the sculpted  
body of an athlete over which he sports a t-shirt and a  
leather jacket.

RAMÓN

Why so alone eating your  
tortitasssssss...?

He startles the two women. Adela gets up immediately and -

ADELA

Ramón!

The two hug and kiss luxuriantly.

Fermín walks over with a shy smile. Cleo gets up and they  
awkwardly kiss hello.

ADELA (CONT'D)

You want a torta?

Timidly, Fermín points to his stomach -

FERMÍN

Thanks, I already...

RAMÓN

If you're done eating, let's go, I  
love watching the previews!

EXT - METROPOLITAN CINEMA - AFTERNOON

The entrance to the movie theater is a bazar of STREET VENDORS hawking their wares, reciting lists over and over like a litany, like mantras in a chant.

And old woman seated on the floor offers her candies spread out on a piece of fabric in front of her -

CANDY VENDOR  
...Cigarettes-gum-chocolates-  
mazipan-muéganos-peanuts-gum  
drops...

Behind his makeshift table, another vendor offers "japanese" peanuts -

PEANUT VENDOR  
Japaneeeeeeeeeeeeeeese peanuts!  
Japaneeeeeeeeeeeeeeese peanuts!  
Japaneeeeeeeeeeeeeeese peanuts!

A short, chubby lady walks around, a box of Adams gum in hand-

GUM VENDOR  
One peso for Adams chewing gum!  
Mint flavor, spearmint, cinnamon,  
tutti-frutti...!

A meringue vendor, in his short shirt -

MERINGUE VENDOR  
...Merengues-merengues-have a  
delicious merengue!...

Magazine vendors, yo-yo and cheap toy vendors... a cacophony of cries accompanied by a barrel organ on the sidewalk.

Cleo, Adela, Ramón and Fermín line up at the ticket booth.

ADELA  
What movie are we watching?

RAMÓN  
Who knows.

Fermín asks Cleo -

FERMÍN  
You sure you wanna go to the  
movies...?

CLEO  
Sure. I like movies, don't you?



Behind the open bathroom door, a single bulb lights the sink and a rusty mirror. Fermín exits the bathroom carrying a pair of nunchaku. He's completely naked.

Cleo waits in bed timidly, her slip still on. She blushes as she sees Fermín. In front of the bathroom, Fermín presents his nunchaku -

FERMÍN  
*Jodan Tsuki!...*

He begins his nunchaku routine. It's an elaborate and studied choreography, the chained up sticks spinning like helixes around him.

The effect is both poetic and a little ridiculous, but Cleo hides her smile behind the sheets.

Fermín finalizes his routine by striking different positions -

FERMÍN (CONT'D)  
*Jodan Tsuki! Chudan Tsuki! Mae  
Geri!*

And he bows. Cleo represses a laugh.

FERMÍN (CONT'D)  
What?

Cleo covers her smile, asking -

CLEO  
So, do you train every day?

FERMÍN  
I have to. I owe my life to martial arts. I grew up with nothing, you know?

Outside, the crowd's hustle and bustle seems distant. Fermín leaves the nunchaku on a shelf and walks towards the foot of the bed -

FERMÍN (CONT'D)  
When I was a kid and my ma died...

He crosses himself -

FERMÍN (CONT'D)  
My aunt took me in... Over there in Neza. And between my cousins who beat me up and the bad influences, I started drinking...and then huffing...I was dying...

CONTINUED:

He pauses -

FERMÍN (CONT'D)  
But then I found out about martial  
arts. And so then those things...  
well, you know, suddenly everything  
seemed, well... focused?

Fermín pauses for a beat, looks at Cleo -

FERMÍN (CONT'D)  
I don't really like telling people  
about my stuff, but with you  
it's... different.

He pulls his face close to hers and their lips meet and kiss,  
softly. But soon Cleo moves her head, bumping Fermín on the  
nose.

CLEO  
Oh! Sorry...!

Fermín pulls her in again and kisses her intensely and with  
his mouth locked on Cleo's he lies down slowly on top of her.

They make love.

**Wednesday, November 11th, 1970.**

INT- MAID'S QUARTERS - TEPEJI 21 - DAWN

The alarm bell rings. Cleo wakes up and turns it off. She  
sits up on her bed.

The early morning light comes in the window and the house is  
quiet. Adela sleeps placidly in her bed.

Cleo gets up in a rush, takes her clothes from the chair,  
puts on her shoes and hurries out the door.

EXT - SMALL PATIO - TEPEJI 21 - DAWN

Cleo rushes down the stairs and into the small bathroom.

INT - MAID'S BATHROOM - TEPEJI 21 - DAWN

Cleo vomits.

The bathroom is clean but has had zero upkeep for a long time. The tiny shower is curtainless and the toilet has no seat and no lid on the water tank.

In the sink, two toothbrushes and a squeezed tube of Colgate. On a small shelf, a jar of Nivea and an unlit votive candle.

INT - MAID'S BATHROOM - TEPEJI 21 - MOMENTS LATER

Cleo takes a shower, the tiny bathroom immediately clouding with steam.

INT - DOWNSTAIRS - TEPEJI 21 - DAWN

Cleo comes out of the kitchen and walks across the house, still in gloom although behind the patio windows the first light of day is already warming.

Cleo reaches the stairs and walks up.

INT - UPSTAIRS HALL - TEPEJI 21 - DAY

Through the younger children's bedroom door, we can see Cleo whispering to Sofi -

CLEO  
My little girl... my beautiful  
little one...

She tickles her midriff -

CLEO (CONT'D)  
Rise and shine... wake up, wake  
up... it's a new dawn, it's a new  
day...

The tickling inches up Sofi's torso like an army of ants. Sofi smiles but pretends to sleep.

CLEO (CONT'D)  
Up, up, up little by little...

Sofi finally breaks into laughter and drowsily moves her arms.

CLEO (CONT'D)  
Good morning, my little princess...

Sofi hugs her neck.



CLEO (CONT'D)  
*Andali!* Get up...

Sofi gets up -

SOFI  
Bathroom...

CLEO  
Get going already!

Sofi leaves the room and crosses the hall sleepily while Cleo places a clean school uniform on the bed.

Señora Teresa walks out of her bedroom and sees Sofi about to enter the bathroom -

SEÑORA TERESA  
Good morning, Sofi.

Sofi goes in without turning back -

SOFI  
Good morning, grandma...

She closes the door. Señora Teresa walks down the stairs.

Cleo goes to Pepe's bed and gives him a quick kiss, making sure not to wake him, then leaves the room.

She turns the light on in the hall and goes to Toño and Paco's room. They're deep asleep.

She crouches down next to Toño, caressing his head and whispering -

CLEO  
Toño, Toño my love, it's time to  
wake up...

Without even turning around, Toño slaps her hand off -

TOÑO  
I'm up...

Cleo puts her hands up in the air -

CLEO  
Oh, so he's already awake! Oh, so  
no one should touch him!...

Toño gets up, grouchy, and leaves the room.

CONTINUED:

CLEO (CONT'D)  
Sofi's in the bathroom...

In the hall, he knocks on the bathroom door -

SOFI (O.C.)  
Busy!

Toño knocks louder.

TOÑO  
Hurry up! I gotta go!

SOFI (O.C.)  
Coming!

Cleo sits at the foot of Paco's bed and pulls one of his feet out of the covers and puts his socks on without waking him. She sits him up, leans him against her, and takes off the top of his pajamas.

In the hall, Toño keeps knocking on the bathroom door -

TOÑO  
Get out!

The bathroom door opens, and Sofi comes out -

SOFI  
You can go in now!

Toño walks in straight away and as he closes the door -

TOÑO  
Fatty...!

Sofi walks back into her bedroom.

Cleo has managed to put Paco's t-shirt on. He's now sitting on the bed.

CLEO  
Come on, finish getting dressed.

Paco takes off his pajama pants and Cleo walks out to the hall and in to help Sofi.

INT - BREAKFAST ROOM - TEPEJI 21 - DAY

Señora Teresa and Sofi have breakfast at the table. Cleo is putting away waxed paper packages into the backpacks on the floor next to each chair.

Through the windows, Ignacio is taking the cars out to the street.

A portable radio on the table plays XEQK HASTE'S OBSERVATORY HOUR -

HASTE HOUR

*Chocolates Turín! Ricos de principio a fin! Maestro Mecánico Marcos Carrasco garantiza vigoroso control de calidad en la rectificación de motores...* (Turin Chocolates! Delicious from beginning to end! Mechanic Marcos Carrasco guarantees quality control when rectifying motors...)

Paco comes out of the kitchen with a *Gansito* and puts it in his backpack, except Sofi sees him -

SOFI

I want a Gansito too!

PACO

They're mine.

SEÑORA TERESA

I bought them for everyone.

PACO

But I put them in the freezer.

SEÑORA TERESA

Come on, give one to Sofi and I'll buy you a big box just for you.

Paco weighs the offer and goes back into the kitchen.

Señora Teresa has finished her *pan dulce* dunked in coffee with milk and gets up.

SEÑORA TERESA (CONT'D)

Hurry up kids, it's seven twenty already.

Paco's voice pipes in from the kitchen -

PACO (O.C.)

It's seven seventeen!

The Haste Hour recites -

## HASTE HOUR

*XEQK proporciona la hora del observatorio, misma de Haste. Haste, la Hora de México. Siete de la mañana diecisiete minutos. Siete diecisiete... (a beat)... BIIIP (XEQK gives you the time at the observatory, same as Haste's. Haste, Mexico's time. Seven in the morning and seventeen minutes. Seven seventeen...)*

Paco triumphantly exits the kitchen. Señora Teresa pulls out her tongue at him and walks off to the door. Paco throws Sofi her Gansito.

## PACO

For you to get fatter...

Toño walks in.

## CLEO

Your juice, Toño.

Toño sits down -

## TOÑO

Turn that thing off.

## PACO

No, why?

Señora Teresa is already calling them from the door -

## SEÑORA TERESA

Let's go!

Sofi gets up and walks towards Señora Teresa who is heading out towards the patio -

## SEÑORA TERESA (CONT'D)

Cleo, hold the dog so I can open the door.

Cleo immediately gets up and runs out to the patio.

Toño also gets up and turns the radio volume all the way up before leaving.

Paco turns it off with a slap -

## TOÑO

Haha! Sissy!

CONTINUED:

Before reaching the patio, Paco cries out -

PACO  
Shotgun!

Toño downs his juice and follows them.

EXT - HOUSE -TEPEJI 21 - DAY

The Valiant is parked in front of the house, engine idling, Haste Hour on the radio.

Cleo waits on the sidewalk, holding Borrás from the collar, while Señora Teresa and the kids scramble messily into the car.

TOÑO  
Move it!

SOFI  
I'm moving!

When Señora Teresa has managed to get in the car, Ignacio closes the door behind her, waiting for everyone else to close their doors before getting in.

TOÑO  
Put La Pantera on!

Paco turns the dial and the radio station switches to La Pantera right in the middle of a Beatles vs. Creedence vote -

RADIO LA PANTERA  
*...Por quién votas campeón? Por los Beatles... Un voto más para el cuarteto de Liverpool que van atrás por 18 votos del Cuarteto del Bajou. Por quién votas? Creedence... (Who do you vote for, champ? For the Beatles... One more vote for the Liverpool quartet, trailing 18 votes behind the Bajou quartet. Who do you vote for? Creedence...)*

Ignacio steps on the clutch letting Paco, who is sitting next to him, put the hand gear next to the steering wheel in first.

The Valiant drives off and down the street. Cleo sees it turn the corner and she walks back into the house pulling the dog inside. She closes the door.

INT - DOWNSTAIRS HALL - TEPEJI 21 -DAY

Cleo comes in, closing the patio door. She crosses the hall and walks up the stairs.

INT - SOFI AND PEPE'S ROOM - TEPEJI 21 - DAY

Cleo hides her face in Pepe's belly. He laughs.

PEPE  
I was already up!

CLEO  
Oh goody! So you're already dressed!

PEPE  
Not yet.

CLEO  
C'mon! Get up, let's get you dressed!

Pepe gets up and Cleo dresses him while he talks -

PEPE  
You know what I remembered in my dream?

CLEO  
No, what did you remember?

PEPE  
I remembered when I was older.

CLEO  
When you were older?

PEPE  
Yes, you were also there, but you were different. Do you remember?

Cleo pulls his shorts up.

INT - BREAKFAST ROOM - TEPEJI 21 - DAY

A spoon delicately taps on the dome of an egg, cracking it slowly.

CONTINUED:

Cleo takes off the shell and empties out the soft-boiled egg onto a cup. She puts in salt and little bits of bread.

She gives Pepe the cup. He eats. Cleo gets up and takes the dirty dishes into the -

INT - KITCHEN - TEPEJI 21 - DAY

Cleo comes in at the same time as Adela, her hair wet, through the small patio door.

CLEO  
Good night!

ADELA  
Why didn't you wake me?

CLEO  
Well, God forbid you get tired later.

Adela looks at her with a crooked smile. Cleo spreads marmalade on a piece of bread and places it on another.

They hear Señora Sofía walk into the Breakfast Room -

PEPE (O.S.)  
Mom!

SEÑORA SOFÍA (O.S.)  
How's your egg, my love?

Cleo puts the sandwich in a wax paper baggie -

CLEO  
The Doctor is leaving. Tie Borrás up so he can go.

Cleo takes the sandwich and a glass of orange juice and heads to the breakfast room. Adela goes out to the patio.

INT - BREAKFAST ROOM - TEPEJI 21 - DAY

Señora Sofía is sitting next to Pepe, Cleo comes in with the juice.

CLEO (CONT'D)  
Your juice...

(CONT'D)

(CONT'D)

SEÑORA SOFÍA

Pepe can wait to say goodbye to his dad. It doesn't matter if he's late.

CLEO

Yes ma'm.

At the back of the hall, Señor Antonio has come down the stairs, carrying two bags. Cleo rushes to help him.

CLEO (CONT'D)

Leave them there, please, sir...!

Señor Antonio leaves the bags on the floor.

SEÑOR ANTONIO

Thanks, Cleo.

He walks to the Breakfast Room -

SEÑOR ANTONIO (CONT'D)

Good morning, Pepón!

PEPE

Daddy!

Señor Antonio gulps down the whole glass of orange juice.

Cleo heads over to the luggage: she carries the bags and exits -

EXT - PATIO - TEPEJI 21 - DAY

Military drums and trumpets echo inside the patio. Cleo carries the bags to the door where Adela is holding Borrás by the collar. Cleo pauses only to open the door and walks out to -

EXT - HOUSE - TEPEJI 21 - DAY

A Jr. High marching band marks each step as they file down the street, sounding drums and trumpets.

A 1966 cream colored VW SEDAN waits in front of the house.

Cleo walks out with the bags and leaves them next to the car. She opens the door and puts one bag in the rear seat then opens the mechanism in the glove compartment.



She gets out of the car and carries the second bag to the front of the car, opens the trunk and puts it in the tiny space.

She walks back into the house but sees Señor Antonio already walking out through the patio. Señora Sofía follows him, carrying Pepe.

Señor Antonio steps on dog shit and stops, disgusted -

SEÑOR ANTONIO  
Well I'll be...

He rubs the foot on the floor trying to clean it off and keeps walking. On the street, he scrapes the sole of his shoe against the edge of the sidewalk.

Señora Sofía puts Pepe down on the as they reach the street and walks over to Señor Antonio, hugging him from the back.

Cleo moves back a few steps, Pepe walks over to her and holds her hand.

Señora Sofía starts crying. Señor Antonio turns around and hugs her, uncomfortable.

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
We'll be here...

SEÑOR ANTONIO  
It's just for a few weeks...

He disentangles from Señora Sofía who heads over to give him a **snotty** kiss which he accepts before sitting at the wheel and closing the door.

Señora Sofía puts her hand on her husband's shoulder while he turns on his four cylinder engine.

SEÑOR ANTONIO (CONT'D)  
Bye, Pepe...

He shifts into first gear and starts off slowly, forcing Señora Sofía to lift her hand, then drives off to the end of the street.

The VW idles at the corner where it waits for the back of the marching band to leave the street taking its martial airs with it, then disappears to the right.

Señora Sofía is frozen, her hand held up in the air. Cleo waits.

CONTINUED:

Finally, Señora Sofía turns, her face upset -

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
Goddamnit! Clean up that dog shit!

She walks up to Pepe and takes his hand -

SEÑORA SOFÍA (CONT'D)  
I'll take Pepe.

She walks with Pepe to the end of the street, heading in the opposite direction as Señor Antonio.

Cleo comes into the house and closes the door.

EXT - PATIO -TEPEJI 21 - DAY

Cleo pushes the shit onto a dustpan with a broom.

She moves on to the next one, while Borrás walks around the patio, oblivious.

One by one, she picks them all up.

EXT - SMALL PATIO - TEPEJI 21 - DAY

Cleo opens the trash and throws in the shit. She closes it.

EXT - PATIO - TEPEJI 21 - DAY

A smeared stain on a red and white tile is all that remains of Borrás's shit. Pale dust falls on the stain until it's entirely covered.

Cleo crosses the patio, dusting soap on each one of the remaining stains. She reaches the street entrance, fills two pails of water, pours them on the floor and -

One by one, she brushes every single dusted stain in the patio.

**Sunday November 29, 1970**

INT - METROPOLITAN CINEMA - AFTERNOON

MOVIE

The theater is almost full, but emptier towards the back. In the last row, Cleo and Fermín sit next to each other, making out intensely, their hands rubbing each other's genitals while they kiss.

FERMÍN

Suck it...

Cleo moves back briefly and tries to tell him between sighs -

CLEO

It's just that... I haven't gotten my period this month...

But she succumbs, trying to repress a groan of pleasure. She kisses and caresses Fermín with greater intensity as he explores her more deeply with his hand.

MOVIE

Finally, Cleo manages to overcome her desire to tell him -

CLEO (CONT'D)

I'm telling you. I haven't had my period all month.

But Fermín quiets her with a kiss on the mouth. When he goes to her neck, Cleo tries to talk between convulsions of pleasure -

CLEO (CONT'D)

I think I'm with child.

Fermín pauses briefly, then keeps kissing her -

FERMÍN

Oooohhh, well that's OK, right?

CLEO

That's OK?

FERMÍN

Yeah...

Cleo smiles and kisses him on the mouth. She lowers her head and gives him a blow job. Fermín holds her head down pushing her to a rhythm.

FERMÍN (CONT'D)

Like that... Just. Like. That...

MOVIE

CONTINUED:

Fermín reaches his arms out to grab onto the backs of the neighboring seats and starts moaning.

FERMÍN (CONT'D)  
Yes, yeeeeees, yeeeeeeeees,  
yeeeeeeeeeeeeees!

He opens his mouth and muffles a cry by biting down on his hand and when the explosion is over, Cleo comes up, hand on her mouth, face splashed with semen.

She opens her purse and pulls out a couple of Kleenex. She wipes her mouth and face, then her hands, and cuddles on Fermín who is still breathing heavily. The two watch the movie. Cleo is in love.

MOVIE

Fermín moves softly to get up -

FERMÍN (CONT'D)  
I have to go to the restroom...

CLEO  
Shhhh... It's almost over.

FERMÍN  
I gotta go now. Gimme a sec, I'll  
be right back...

He gets up, walking through the empty seats to the aisle and then to the exit.

Cleo waits till he's left to look for some gum in her purse. She puts it in her mouth. Pulls out another Kleenex, wets it with her tongue and wipes her face.

The MOVIE reaches the end and the CREDITS roll. Cleo looks to the exit.

PEOPLE start to leave.

The LIGHTS COME ON in the theater, SECTION BY SECTION,  
SLOWLY...

Cleo gets up and looks to the exits, leaning onto the seats in front of her.

Credits keep rolling with the names of the Stage Crew.

The theater is now empty except for Cleo and the screen showing the sound credits.

CONTINUED:

The velvet curtain closes, interrupting the unfinished credits.

Cleo finally heads to the exit.

INT - LOBBY METROPOLITAN CINEMA - AFTERNOON

New spectators enter the theater, some heading directly to the candy store, where the lines are still short.

Cleo wanders through the lobby looking for Fermín but there's no sign of him.

She walks towards the entrance, heading the opposite direction as the newcomers.

EXT -ENTRANCE -METROPOLITAN CINEMA - AFTERNOON

Cleo exits and walks to the middle of the entrance where she stops, engrossed between the STREET VENDORS hawking their wares, reciting their different mantras.

Her legs seem to fall out from under her and she leans on the marquee advertising the upcoming releases. Slowly, she sits on the ground between -

An old lady selling her sweets

SWEETS VENDOR

...cigarettes-chewing gum-  
chocolates-mazipan-muéganos-peanuts-  
gum drops-...

And a man peddling his magic trick: a small plastic skeleton that dances on the ground -

SKELETON VENDOR

No tricks, no ruses, it dances on  
its own! No strings, no cheating,  
Don Carlangas dances...

Cleo stays still in the midst of a sea of voices -

VENDORS

...Japaneeeeeeeeese peanuts! ...  
Herbie stickers for sale!...  
Merengues-merengues-get your  
delicious mereeeeeeeengues!... Mint  
flavored, spearmint, cinnamon,  
tutti-frutti flavored Adams  
chiclets!...

CONTINUED:

Next to Cleo, the small skeleton jumps, shimmies and suddenly stops -

SKELETON VENDOR

What happened, Don Carlangas? You  
tired? And what are we gonna do  
about that?

The skeleton sits on the floor -

SKELETON VENDOR (CONT'D)

Aha! Mister Carlangas is resting!

**Tuesday, December 8th, 1970.**

EXT -STREET - DAY

And old Purépecha indigenous man, hunched and with a straw hat carries an enormous and bulky cloth sack, which almost covers his frail figure from the back.

He walks down the street at a steady step, stopping only to rearrange the heavy sack on his back.

He walks past a convenience store, a pharmacy, a bakery, a dime store, a stationary store and turns onto -

EXT - TEPEJI STREET - HOUSE - TEPEJI 21 - DAY

Without losing his rhythm, the old man walks in front of the old houses built in the 1930s, hunched over, the enormous bulk resting almost vertically on his back. Some houses have renovated, some are in desperate need of a new coat of paint.

He arrives to Tepeji 21 and stops in front of the door. Slowly he takes the giant load off his back and puts it on the ground. He rings the bell.

Inside, we hear Borrás running to the door, barking furiously. The old man waits.

Borrás doesn't let up, his barks grow ever louder. Cleo approaches -

CLEO (O.S.)

Who is it?

OLD MAN WITH ORANGES

Oranges!

Borras answers, furious.

CLEO (O.S.)

Coming...! Borras, shut up!

The old man picks up the sack while the door opens just enough for Cleo to peek out while grabbing the dog's collar.

The old man finishes putting his sack back up on his back -

OLD MAN WITH ORANGES

You got the dog?

CLEO

Yes.

OLD MAN WITH ORANGES

You sure?

CLEO

I got him. Come on in.

The door opens and Borras immediately lunges for the old man, but Cleo holds tugs at collar with all her strength. The dog barks, aggressive, standing on its hind legs.

The old man comes into -

EXT -PATIO -TEPEJI 21 - DAY

Cleo holds Borras and steps to the side while the old man comes in. The dog's mouth sprays slob with each bark.

OLD MAN WITH ORANGES

Hold him tight.

Cleo wrestles with the dog -

CLEO

Come in, come in...

The old man walks cautiously next to Cleo, who is still holding Borras. She closes the door and follows in after him, keeping her distance. At the far end of the patio, the old man goes into the -

EXT - SMALL PATIO - TEPEJI 21 - DAY

The old man stops in front the kitchen and slowly deposits the heavy sack on the floor. Adela comes out of the kitchen carrying a wooden crate, which she places on the floor -

CONTINUED:

ADELA  
Good morning, sir...

OLD MAN WITH ORANGES  
Morning... How many'll it be?

ADELA  
Thirty.

The old man takes his hat off to cool his straight white hair damp with sweat. His Indigenous face is furrowed by deep wrinkles. He bends over, puts his hands in the sack and pulls out -

OLD MAN WITH ORANGES  
1...2...3...4...5...6...

Cleo holds Borrás who won't stop barking.

EXT - PATIO - TEPEJI 21 - AFTERNOON

Pebbles of ice bounce off the ground after falling from the sky. Hail covers the patio.

INT - KITCHEN - TEPEJI 21 - AFTERNOON

Drowned out by clouds, the afternoon light fights to pierce through the windows. Behind the window: hail over the small patio.

Adela pours coffee in a pot and puts it on a tray that already has a sugar bowl, a little milk pitcher, a spoon and a napkin. Next to her, Cleo waits nervously.

ADELA  
C'mon *manita*, you take it.

Cleo takes the platter and walks towards the living room. Adela walks with her but stops at the door.

INT - LIVING ROOM - TEPEJI 21 - AFTERNOON

Cleo exits the kitchen. Adela waits next to the door and watches her cross the hall carrying the coffee tray. Behind the windows, hail pours down.

The afternoon light barely mottles the living room curtains and already some lamps are on. In a corner, a Christmas Tree shows off its many colored lights over a handcrafted nativity scene with moss, hay and cardboard landscapes.



CONTINUED:

In the modern living room, the children sit at the sofa around Señora Sofía.

Cleo places the platter on the coffee table next to some sheets of paper and envelopes and pours the coffee. She is about to add some cream, when -

SEÑORA SOFÍA

That'll be fine, Cleo...

Cleo places the cup in front of Señora Sofía. She takes the cream and pours it while Cleo starts to leave. She stops -

CLEO

Pardon me, Señora Sofi?

Señora Sofía adds two sugars to her coffee.

SEÑORA SOFÍA

Yes?

CLEO

It's just that... when you have a minute, would you mind if we talk for a little bit?

SEÑORA SOFÍA

Yes, just wait a sec. I need to say something to the children.

Cleo nods and steps back a few steps, ready to wait.

SEÑORA SOFÍA (CONT'D)

Feel free to sit down and wait over here.

Cleo timidly sits on the sofa. Señora Sofía tastes her coffee, the children grow restless.

PACO

What?

TOÑO

I gotta go buy balsa wood to build a model.

Señora Sofía sips her coffee and good-humoredly says -

SEÑORA SOFÍA

You'll go later. There's something I want to tell you...

CONTINUED:

PACO  
Are we going to Disneyland?

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
No, we're spending Christmas at my  
brother Pablo's.

PACO  
It's so boring there!

SOFI  
Not true! My cousins are there!

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
And for New Year's we'll go to the  
Zavaleta's hacienda.

PACO  
Will the Richards be there?

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
Yes and the Matos and the Larsons.

TOÑO  
When's dad coming?

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
That's the other thing I wanted to  
talk to you about. His research is  
delayed and he'll have to stay in  
Quebec a little longer.

TOÑO  
Will he be back by January?

Señora Sofía pauses for the briefest instant and when she  
takes up the conversation again her tone seems to have  
changed.

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
He doesn't know. But that's why I  
brought you the paper. So you can  
each write him a letter.

She hands out the paper and envelopes to the children -

SEÑORA SOFÍA (CONT'D)  
Tell him how much you miss him, to  
come back soon please...

Her good humor masks her nervousness.

CONTINUED:

SEÑORA SOFÍA (CONT'D)  
Pepe, you draw him something...

PEPE  
I know how to write too.

PACO  
Sure...

Toño gets up -

TOÑO  
Well, first I'm going to go get my  
balsa wood.

Señor Sofía yells at him -

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
You're not going anywhere until  
you've finished writing your  
letter!

Toño grabs his papers and rushes off angrily towards the  
stairs.

SEÑORA SOFÍA (CONT'D)  
Where are you going?

TOÑO  
To my room. What? Can't I write the  
letter in my room either?

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
Sure, that's fine.

Paco grabs his paper and follows Toño -

PACO  
I'm going up too.

Señora Sofía gives the rest of the paper to Sofi.

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
Sofi, take this to the dining room  
and help Pepe with his letter. Let  
me just talk to Cleo for a minute  
and I'll come join you.

Sofi takes the papers -

SOFI  
C'mon Pepe.

CONTINUED:

SEÑORA SOFÍA

Make lots of pretty drawings, Pepe.  
Sofi, help him write "I miss you a  
lot, daddy."

SOFI

Sure. Let's go Pepe.

Sofi and Pepe go off with their papers to the dining room  
table.

PEPE

But I'll write it, OK?

Señora Sofía watches the kids trail off into the dining room.  
She turns to Cleo.

SEÑORA SOFÍA

OK, Cleo. What do you need?

Cleo looks at her like a deer in the headlights. She can't  
speak.

SEÑORA SOFÍA (CONT'D)

Didn't you want to tell me  
something?

CLEO

No, well, yes. It's just that...

But her words fail her. In the back, next to the kitchen  
door, Adela pretends to clean while she tries to listen -

SEÑORA SOFÍA

Yes?

Cleo's eyes fill with tears. Señora Sofía worries -

SEÑORA SOFÍA (CONT'D)

What's wrong, Cleo?

Cleo just sobs.

SEÑORA SOFÍA (CONT'D)

Is your mother all right?

Cleo nods -

CLEO

It's just that... Señora Sofi...

SEÑORA SOFÍA

Yes?

CLEO

It's just that... I think I'm expecting.

Señora Sofía wasn't **expecting** this at all -

SEÑORA SOFÍA

What do you mean, you think?

CLEO

It's just that I haven't gotten my period.

SEÑORA SOFÍA

Since when?

CLEO

I don't know...

She starts sobbing. Señora Sofía sits next to her and hugs her.

SEÑORA SOFÍA

Oh you silly, silly girl. And who is the dad?

CLEO

Fermín. Adela's boyfriend's cousin.

SEÑORA SOFÍA

Does he know?

Cleo shakes her head -

CLEO

He's disappeared.

SEÑORA SOFÍA

Silly, silly, silly...!

CLEO

You're going to fire me, aren't you?

SEÑORA SOFÍA

What do you mean fire you? We have to take you to the doctor to get checked.

Pepe comes in with his letter -

CONTINUED:

PEPE

Look, ma. I drew a plane.

SEÑORA SOFÍA

Very good. Now put some hearts on it...

(Calling out to Sofi)

Sofi! I told you to help your brother write "I miss you."

Sofi answers from the dining room -

SOFI

He won't let me help him!

PEPE

Why is Cleo crying?

SEÑORA SOFÍA

For no reason. She's got a stomachache. Let's see, come over here. Let's write your letter.

Señora Sofía walks over to the dining room but Pepe walks up to Cleo and hugs her. He rubs her belly -

PEPE

*Sana, sana colita de rana. Si no sanas hoy, sanarás mañana...*  
(Nursery rhyme to heal boo-boos)

Cleo laughs and hugs Pepe, hiding her tears.

**Thursday, December 10, 1970.**

INT/EXT - GALAXIE 500 - BAJA CALIFORNIA AVE - DAY

Señora Sofía drives silently, hands on the stirring wheel, but her index fingers moves as if acquiescing at the intense argument going on in her head.

Cleo rides next to her. Hair freshly done. She's changed her dress. She is nervous.

They come to a cross-street where cars wait for the green light. Señora Sofía tries to squeeze into the space between a moving truck and an old jalopy.

CONTINUED:

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
Pío, pío, pío, pío...

Impossible. The inevitable happens. The Galaxie 500 scrapes on both sides, but this doesn't seem to bother Señora Sofía who keeps inching up slowly, despite the crush of twisting metal -

SEÑORA SOFÍA (CONT'D)  
Pío, pío, pío, pío...

EXT - BAJA CALIFORNIA AVE - DAY

The Galaxie 500 moves forward between the truck and the jalopy, scraping its moldings, twisting them, and ripping off the side mirror to boot.

The Galaxie lurches on amidst the crush of metal sheets until the space is too tight to keep going.

The light changes to green and they drive on, except for the truck and the jalopy whose irritated drivers exit their vehicles to assess the damage.

EXT. - MEDICAL CENTER - CUAUHTEMOC AVE - DAY

The modern building site glows proudly with its promise of progress.

The Galaxie 500, with its dented sides and dragging a molding enters a parking lot reserved for the doctors.

EXT. - OB/GYN - MEDICAL CENTER - DAY

Señora Sofía and Cleo walk in front of a building displaying beautiful murals with Prehispanic motifs and cross the entrance indicating Obstetrics and Gynecology.

INT - LOBBY - OB/GYN -DAY

Señora Sofía and Cleo cross the enormous marble lobby until they reach the elevators resting under a mural of patriotic heroes.

INT - 8th FLOOR LOBBY -OB/GYN -DAY

Señora Sofía and Cleo walk out of the elevator to a nurse station at the center of the lobby. Señora Sofía approaches the head NURSE -

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
Good day, I have an appointment  
with Doctor Vélez.

NURSE  
Under what name?

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
It's Doctor Roldán's wife.

The nurse picks up a phone.

INT. - HALLWAY -OB/GYN - DAY

Wall to wall picture windows run all along the hallway and the exam rooms.

Señora Sofía waits with Cleo, who looks out the window onto the city stretching out to the west.

DOCTOR VÉLEZ walks in with all the conviction that comes with experience. She is 40 years old and wears glasses.

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
Hello, Margarita. Thank you for  
seeing us.

DOCTORA VÉLEZ  
Of course, Sofía. With pleasure.

They kiss hello.

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
Remember Cleo?

Doctor Vélez turns to Cleo -

DOCTORA VÉLEZ  
Of course! Hi Cleo, how are you?

Cleo suffers from a mix of shyness and fear.

CLEO  
Fine, thank you, doctor.

DOCTORA VÉLEZ  
So, let's see how you're doing,  
Cleo.

(MORE)



DOCTORA VÉLEZ (CONT'D)  
Come with me and tell me all about  
it... Sofía, you want to come as  
well?

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
Thank you, Margarita. I'll just go  
over to say hi to Doctor Zavala.

DOCTORA VÉLEZ  
Well, Cleo and I are going to have  
a chat. Why don't we meet in the  
lobby in **forty minutes** or so?

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
Sure. I'll be back then.

She holds Cleo's hand -

SEÑORA SOFÍA (CONT'D)  
Go on Cleo, go with the doctor.

She walks back to the lobby. Cleo and Doctor Vélez head to  
one of the exam rooms.

INT - EXAM ROOM - OB/GYN - DAY

Cleo is sitting in a gynecological chair. She looks at the  
instruments on a tray off to the side. They look like  
medieval torture instruments.

The door opens and Doctor Vélez comes in. She sits on a chair  
between Cleo's legs and starts to put on latex gloves -

DOCTORA VÉLEZ  
All right then. Cleo, tell me.

Cleo hesitates -

CLEO  
It's just that.... That...

DOCTORA VÉLEZ  
It's OK Cleo, you can talk to me...

CLEO  
It's that I haven't gotten my  
period.

DOCTORA VÉLEZ  
Since when?

CLEO  
About two months maybe?

DOCTORA VÉLEZ  
OK. And you've been sexually active  
for how long?

Cleo blushes and cannot bring herself to answer.

DOCTORA VÉLEZ (CONT'D)  
Have you had many partners?

CLEO  
Oh no! Never!

DOCTORA VÉLEZ  
Do you use protection?

Cleo apparently doesn't understand the question.

DOCTORA VÉLEZ (CONT'D)  
Do you use condoms?

Cleo's tears are the only answer. Doctor takes the speculum  
and smears Vaseline on it.

DOCTORA VÉLEZ (CONT'D)  
When was the last time you got  
checked?

CLEO  
Probably three or four years ago  
when I came to see you.

DOCTORA VÉLEZ  
That's not good, Cleo. You have to  
get checked twice a year.

CLEO  
Yes, doctor.

DOCTORA VÉLEZ  
Well, let's see how you're doing.  
This is going to feel a little  
cold...

Doctor Vélez slides the speculum in between Cleo's legs.  
Cleo's face confirms it's not only cold, it's also painful.

INT. - 8TH FLOOR HALLWAY -OB/GYN - DAY

Cleo walks down the hallway with Doctor Vélez. At the far end  
of the lobby, they can see Señora Sofía talking with Doctor  
Zavala, 45 years old.

CONTINUED:

When she sees Cleo, Señora Sofía interrupts her chat with Doctor Zavala. Cleo is crying and is still disturbed.

Doctor Vélez and Doctor Zavala kiss hello -

DOCTORA VÉLEZ  
Hi, Mario...

DOCTOR ZAVALA  
Doctoress...

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
How's Cleo doing?

DOCTORA VÉLEZ  
Cleo is ten weeks pregnant. She's very healthy and very strong and so is her baby. One thing: she has to get an iron shot every two weeks. I've given her a prescription.

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
When's she due?

DOCTORA VÉLEZ  
Sometime around the end of June.

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
Oh Margarita, thank you so much for seeing her.

DOCTORA VÉLEZ  
It's nothing! I missed her, right Cleo? OK, I'm off...

She kisses Señora Sofía goodbye -

DOCTORA VÉLEZ (CONT'D)  
Bye, Cleo. See you next month for your check up.

CLEO  
Yes, doctor. Thank you.

Doctora Vélez walks off down the hallway. Señora Sofía turns to see Cleo -

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
Cleo, why don't you go down to the third floor to see the new-born babies while I finish up here with Doctor Zavala?

INT. - MATERNITY WARD - OB/GYN - DAY

Dozens of cribs in a row, each one with its own new-born baby rolled up in a blanket.

Cleo watches them through the window.

Some sleep and others cry anxiously.

Four cribs project strong lights on babies with masks, and to one side -

In an INCUBATOR -

A premature baby, tiny and fragile is plugged into tubes that barely bind him to life.

Cleo watches, fascinated. Suddenly -

A great block of plaster falls off the ceiling and lands on the incubator, covering it completely.

**Thursday, December 31st, 1970.**

INT/EXT - '64 VALIANT - PUEBLA FREEWAY EXIT - CERRO LA CALDERA - DAY

Señora Sofía drives, her index finger in its eternal argument. Cleo rides next to her, and between them, Pepe. Toño, Paco and Sofi are in the back seat. The radio plays Radio Éxitos.

Pepe looks through the rearview mirror off into the distance -

PEPE

Why does the mountain spell **LEA**?  
(READ)

SEÑORA SOFÍA

So that you kids read. See? Even the mountain is asking.

TOÑO

It's the initials for Luis Echeverría Álvarez, dummy.

SEÑORA SOFÍA

Don't call him that. He's 5. He doesn't have to know who Echeverría is. Explain it to him.

CONTINUED:

TOÑO  
He's the president!

SOFI  
Isn't it Gustavo Díaz Ordaz?

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
Not anymore, Sofi. It's now Luis  
Echeverría, since December 1st.

SOFI  
Ooooooh...

PACO  
Cleo really likes Echeverría. Yuck!

CLEO  
Well, yeah. His wife Doña Ester is  
always dressed in *huipiles* and  
Oaxacan clothing. He likes us  
Indians.

TOÑO  
But my uncle **Alberto** says he's the  
one who ordered the students killed  
two years ago.

CLEO  
Noooooo!

TOÑO  
He was the Minister of the  
Interior.

SOFI  
Why did he kill the students?

TOÑO  
'Cause they didn't do their  
homework.

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
Enough, Toño. No, Sofi, Toño is  
just messing with you.

PEPE  
Well I don't like him. Why does he  
write on the mountain? It's not  
his!

EXT. - PUEBLA FREEWAY - CERRO LA CALDERA - DAY

The Valiant plows on eastward. In the background the Cerro La Caldera, longing to be a mountain, delineates the boundary of the city as it melts into the slums.

The west slope of the hill has been desecrated by three immense white letters extending almost all along and across its dry surface - LEA.

Like a curse.

EXT. - ZAVALETA HACIENDA - DAY

A great adobe wall surrounds an immense property in the middle of fields. The Valiant crosses an enormous gate into-

EXT. - ENTRANCE - ZAVALETA HACIENDA - DAY

A road crosses the enormous walled esplanade. In the background, the beautiful wall of the hacienda, a monument to Profirian estates.

The Valiant reaches the Big House. A dozen cars are parked in a row to one side of the road. All large luxury cars of the year: LTDs, Impalas and Country Squires.

The '64 Valiant parks between an LTD and a Country Squire, making its mileage and its peeling paint very obvious. They get out of the car.

Señora Sofía opens the trunk and Cleo starts to pull out the luggage, her belly barely noticeable.

A group of people comes out of the Big House to greet them: three adults, some kids and several servants. CLAUDIA DE LA BÁRCENA, 38, SAMANTHA LARSSON, also 38, a high-class Mexican with died blond hair and MOLLY EDWARDS, an affable blond Welsh woman, 37, all throw their arms up in the air -

MOLLY

Comadre!

EXT/INT - CORRIDOR - HACIENDA - DAY

BENITA, 55 years old, the Hacienda housekeeper, guides Cleo down a long corridor. Both carry several bags some in their hands others hanging from their shoulders.

BENITA

You sure you can carry that?

CONTINUED:

CLEO  
Yes, I'm with child, not sick.  
What? You tired already?

Cleo hurries forward. Benita does the same, following her.

BENITA  
As if!

CLEO  
I haven't seen you for six months  
and you got old on me.

The two women race hurriedly, buried under bags like ants carrying several times their own weight.

Benita catches up with Cleo, who hurries on and overtakes her. But Benita stops -

BENITA  
Where you going?

Cleo stops. Benita is standing next to a door -

BENITA (CONT'D)  
You've gone too far. What? Since  
you're pregnant you forget  
everything?

Cleo smiles and walks back.

INT. - CHILDREN'S ROOM - HACIENDA - DAY

A hall full of bunk beds, rudimentary but functional. There are several bags next to the beds and there are toys on top of some already.

Lined up along all the walls there are stuffed dog heads.

Cleo leaves the luggage next to a bunk bed and looks at the heads.

BENITA  
Señor José had the room  
redecorated. They're the Hacienda  
dogs. Look... They were all in  
storage.

They look at a German Shepherd's head with glass eyes.

CONTINUED:

BENITA (CONT'D)

Look, that there is Pirata. He  
lived here in 1911.

A small plaque confirms this. It also indicates his name -  
Pirata. Cleo looks on, impressed.

CLEO

Pirata...

BENITA

And do you remember Canela?

CLEO

Yeah, where's she at?

BENITA

Look at her.

Cleo looks at an Irish Setter's head.

CLEO

Yikes!

BENITA

She died during the summer.

Cleo looks at Canela, horrified.

CLEO

They say she must have eaten a  
poisoned rat. But I think it was  
the villagers who are bothering Don  
José again about the land...

Canela looks at them with her glass eyes.

EXT - SMALL CLEARING IN THE WOODS - HACIENDA - DAY

The winter light filters through the trees and reflects on  
the great puddle stretching between the clearing and the  
woods.

Children run between the trees throwing firecrackers, two  
dogs follow them, jumping in the puddle. Adults are  
practicing shooting bottles lined up on tree stumps with .22  
caliber pistols at the other end of the clearing.



With the exception of nannies and servants looking after the younger children, everyone is white and, except for Señora Sofía and her children, they're dressed in imported clothing.

The sound of shots fuses with the firecrackers.

Toño plays "tochito" flag-football with PEPE DE LA BÁRCENA, 13, EDUARDO LARSSON, a 12 year-old redhead, and RICKY EDWARDS, 11.

Cleo looks after Pepe and keeps LUPE, 30, company as well as YOLA, 22, who look after JORGE DE LA BÁRCENA, 7, who suffers from intellectual disability, and partial paralysis in a leg and arm, and his brother MEMO, 5, who has autism spectre disorder. They're sitting on a tablecloth, playing with Matchbox cars.

A little further back, GLORIA, 34, who works as a nanny with the Edwards', sits on another tablecloth with a toy china set, probably more expensive than a real one, and looks after Sofi who is playing with JULY EDWARDS, 7, VERO MATOS, 8, and ANDREA, a girl whose blond hair is almost white, also 8. GERARDO LARSSON, 10, a flamboyant chubby redhead plays with them too.

Paco, along with RODRI DE LA BÁRCENA, 10, ALEX MATOS, 10 and ANDY EDWARDS, 8, appear from behind the trees and throw firecrackers at the girls. They scream. Some even cry.

CLEO (CONT'D)

I saw you, Paco! Get out of here!

The boys run off, laughing and splashing across the puddle.

LUPE

Rodri! Don't run in the water!  
You're soaking wet!

Dr. ALEJANDRO MATOS, 40, with a goatee, shoots while smoking his pipe.

Next to him, RICARDO EDWARDS, friendly, 39, OVE LARSSON, a towering redheaded shy Norwegian, 41, and LESLIE MATOS, a blond American, 38 also shoot while DR. JOSÉ DE LA BÁRCENA, 41, waits his turn and CELSO, the hacienda foreman, 35, reloads the guns.

DR. JOSÉ DE LA BÁRCENA

Celso, do you still have bullets or  
should I send Lupe to get the ones  
in the chest?

CELSO

CONTINUED:

A few yards away, Sofía, Claudia, Molly and Samantha sit in folding chairs, chatting.

Señora Sofía sees the boys running through the trees. She gets up and yells -

SEÑORA SOFÍA

Don't run over there, you could get shot!

Molly seconds her, with her thick accent -

MOLLY

Boys! Vayase! Andy, get back!

FLOR, 17, a servant from the Hacienda, stands at a table with a cooler, pouring the adults drinks,

LOLA, 12 going on 19, made up, dressed in a tiny mini-skirt and platform shoes, takes advantage of the adults' distraction to pour whisky into her Coca-Cola. Next to her, CLAU DE LA BÁRCENA, 11, seems amused, but her curiosity does not yet supersede her obedience.

ON THE CHILDREN'S TABLECLOTH -

The interaction with Jorge and Memo is difficult so Pepe is bored and watches the shooting party. He gets up and walks over there.

CLEO

Wait, Pepe. Where are you going?

Pepe just points and keeps walking. Cleo follows him and they reach the -

SHOOTING PARTY -

Where Dr. Alejandro Matos has fired his eight rounds and goes to Celso to recharge his gun. He calls to the women on the folding chairs -

DR. ALEJANDRO MATOS

What? Don't ladies shoot?

The women decline with their hands -

MOLLY

Leslie is our representative!

DR. ALEJANDRO MATOS  
 Leslie doesn't count, she's a  
*gringa*.

The women laugh. Claudia gets up -

CLAUDIA  
 Coming!

SAMANTHA  
 (In English)  
 Yes, Claudia. You show them, girl!

Celso gives Alejandro the reloaded gun while Leslie arrives with hers. Celso takes it and quickly reloads it. Pepe picks up the empty cartridges off the ground. Cleo helps him.

Celso gives Alejandro a loaded gun, who gives it to Claudia -

DR. ALEJANDRO MATOS  
 (in English)  
 Leslie, could you help Claudia?

LESLIE  
 Come. Point the gun to the floor  
 when you're not using it.

Cokes in hand, Clau and Lola mingle with the adults. They come upon Leslie -

LESLIE (CONT'D)  
 (In English)  
 C'mon, Lola. You really have to  
 wear a miniskirt and platform  
 shoes? We're in the woods.

Lola keeps walking and pays no attention to her mother.

CLAUDIA  
 Forget her. You look great, Lola.

Lola and Clau reach the shooting party and its male acceptance.

DR. JOSÉ DE LA BÁRCENA  
 Let's see Lola, you want to shoot?

LOLA  
 Sure.

Lola walks up to José who gives her the gun while he hugs her from the back, to "help" her shoot.

CONTINUED:

DR. JOSÉ DE LA BÁRCENA  
Don't close your eyes when you  
shoot...

Cleo looks at Alejandro walking over to the drink table  
tended by Flor.

DR. ALEJANDRO MATOS  
Can you pour me a whisky with two  
ice cubes?

Flor fixes his drink.

AT THE SHOOTING PARTY -

Everyone celebrates Claudia's nailing two bottles. She shoots  
four more shots in a row and pops off four more bottles.  
Everyone celebrates -

RICARDO EDWARDS  
Be careful Pepe, your wife is like  
a guerrilla fighter!

Everyone laughs.

Flor hands Alejandro his whisky and, taking advantage of the  
confusion, he spansks her. Flor runs away, terrified.

More bottles explode.

INT - PARLOUR- HACIENDA - NIGHT

Dozens of floor lamps and table lamps light an immense nave  
with an enormous chimney guzzling up thick logs facing a  
broad living room with huge leather sofas decorated with  
furs.

Adults converse, some sitting on the couches, others  
standing, all are drinking and some are smoking. Pepe is on  
Sofi's lap, and Gerardo is next to his mother.

Yvonne Elliman's voice rings through the air, singing "I  
Don't Know How to Love You." The girls play cards in a long  
table in front of the French window that opens to a terrace.  
Outside, the boys throw firecrackers and rockets.

Other boys play "Trominos" on the floor and in a smaller  
living room, Lola, drink in hand, gossips with Clau.

Cleo is with Yola, who looks after Memo, who is obsessively  
turning a plate on the floor, and after Jorge, who plays with  
a little car.

CONTINUED:

Pepe, July Edwards and Andrew Larsson come in from the terrace howling and laughing, chased after by a strange monster. It's a scarecrow with a straw body and long furs, a wooden mask covering its face.

Something like a **pagan spirit**, rum and coke in hand, now chasing after the younger children, who flee happily.

Cleo sees Flor walk in with a tray carrying too many milks and milkshakes. She hurries to help her -

The milk glasses dance perilously on the platter while Flor loses her balance, but Cleo rushes just in the nick of time.

Together they walk over to the table and serve beverages to the girls.

The scratch of a needle on a record as the metals of an orchestra blast a mambo rhythm: the tune changes to Perez Prado's "Corazón de Melón."

Samantha jumps up with a cry and starts to dance -

SAMANTHA

Come on, *comadre*!

Sofía and Molly get up and dance with her. Ricardo Edwards in his Ricky Ricardo impersonation, walks by yelling -

RICARDO EDWARDS

*Co-ra-zón de melón, de melón melón!*  
*Corazón!*

He joins in the dancing. Alejandro follows and dances with Sofía. Lola and Clau also join, Gerardo dances with his mother. Ove with July.

Benita comes into the living room and looks around. Molly is trying to get Vero and Andrea to go to bed, but they don't want to.

Cleo and Flor look on, amused, sucked in by the Mambo. Cleo sees -

Pepe, joining the dance and going up to his mother, who pays no attention since she's too busy dancing with Alejandro.

Benita walks up to Cleo.

BENITA

Come her for a sec.

CONTINUED:

Cleo looks at her, confused -

BENITA (CONT'D)  
Just come over for a sec.

Cleo looks around -

CLEO  
But... what if?

BENITA  
What? Is a kid going to cry because  
he lost at marbles or his brother  
stepped on him?

Cleo looks at her, amused, and follows her. They cross the  
room to the entrance.

RICARDO EDWARDS  
Co-ra-zón de me-lón, de me-lón, me-  
lón, co-ra-zón!

EXT. - CORRIDOR - HACIENDA - NIGHT

Benita guides Cleo, who follows amused and curious down the  
corridor lit with candles. They leave the MAMBO behind and go  
down -

INT. - STAIRS - HACIENDA - NIGHT

The stone staircase leads down to an internal patio that  
doubles as storage.

A couple of men chat, lit by the light from a kitchen window.  
Inside there's a racket around an accordion exhaling a  
*ranchera*-style polka.

Three dogs meander about the patio, waiting for a New Year's  
gift.

Benita and Cleo walk into -

INT. - KITCHEN - HACIENDA - NIGHT

A hall with a vaulted ceiling lit by bare light bulbs hosts  
an enormous ancient kitchen with wood burning stoves, a giant  
table, a Mabe stove and two 1961 refrigerators.

CONTINUED:

The Hacienda WORKERS celebrate New Year's. Benita guides Cleo to the table.

Women are serving plates of food from large clay pots. A 65 year-old man plays the accordion and some spontaneous guy improvises a *quebradita* dance with Gloria, who is clearly drunk. She sees Cleo -

GLORIA

What? They finally let you out?

Cleo laughs. At the table, everyone drinks, some eat, some are dressed for the occasion, many are not. A 1959 television set transmits Channel 2's New Year's special.

BENITA

What'll you have?

CLEO

Nothing, thank you.

BENITA

What? You're not going to toast the New Year with us? What, you only speak English now?

CLEO

It's just that... the baby...

BENITA

A drink on New Year's will do it good. Celebrate while you can. See that guy with the hat?

Cleo sees a man with a hat talking somberly with two other men -

BENITA (CONT'D)

They killed his son in August. The villagers did. Because of a land dispute.

Cleo looks at him, moved.

BENITA (CONT'D)

You got life?

CLEO

Sure...

BENITA

I mean liquor.

CONTINUED:

Benita pours her a shot of moonshine.

CLEO  
I'd rather just have a little  
pulque.

BENITA  
That's the spirit!

She pours pulque into a jar and hands it to Cleo. The two toast.

BENITA (CONT'D)  
Here's to a beautiful 1971 and to  
your baby's health!

CLEO AND BENITA  
Cheers!

Benita takes the jar to her lips and Cleo draws her pulque close to hers when Gloria trips dancing her quebradita and bumps into Cleo.

Before even touching her lips, the pulque jar falls to the ground and shatters into a million pieces.

GLORIA  
Sorry, manita!

BENITA  
No sweat. You dance, we got plenty  
more where that came from!

She pours pulque into a new jar. Gloria keeps dancing. Cleo holds the other pulque but looks worriedly down at the shattered jar on the floor.

INT. - INTERNAL PATIO - STAIRS - HACIENDA - NIGHT

Cleo exits the kitchen. She's a little tipsy. The patio is empty except for the dogs who follow her until she reaches the stairs that lead up to -

EXT. - CORRIDOR - HACIENDA - NIGHT

Cleo walks down the candle-lit corridor and back into the living room where "Mummy Blues" is playing on the stereo. She sees a silhouette resting on the balustrade: it's Señora Sofía.



CONTINUED:

Alejandro Matos comes out of the parlour and comes close to Sofía, hugging her from behind. Sofía reacts, turning around in surprise.

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
What are you doing?

Alejandro tries to kiss her, but she rejects him.

DR. ALEJANDRO MATOS  
Come, now... You know you want  
to...

Sofía struggles to free herself.

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
No, Alex! Leave me alone! You're  
drunk!

She pushes him. Alejandro holds his hands up, resentful and resigned -

DR. ALEJANDRO MATOS  
Fine. Fine! I just wanted to  
comfort you, but...

He begins to walk back into the parlour.

DR. ALEJANDRO MATOS (CONT'D)  
It's not even like you're that hot,  
*comadre...*

Señora Sofía leans into the balustrade, confused and agitated. She looks in Cleo's direction, but Cleo hides behind a column.

Señora Sofía walks back into the parlour, Cleo waits for her to leave before coming out of her hiding spot. She leans on the balustrade and looks out at the night.

When her eyes get used to the darkness, she can see the darker silhouettes of the trees in front of a sky that seems to be lit from within.

The cricket song melts into "Mummy Blues", ending on a scratch, and the accordion which seems to be playing a mazurca. The wind blows softly.

Through the darkness in the woods, a pale light appears, almost blending into the night. Cleo watches in fascination.

CONTINUED:

The Shocking Blue's "Venus" starts to play. The dogs start barking.

The shining starts to spread out in a warm, attractive pulsing, like a will o' the wisp or an apparition.

Cleo watches, hypnotized. But what started off as a soft glow begins to rip through the night in an intense gleam that dances in the trees.

The barks become more insistent. Someone screams -

SCREAMING

Fire! Fire! In the woods!

A racket. More screaming. More barking.

In the garden, Celso runs, carrying a bucket. Other workers follow after him, carrying buckets and pots overflowing with water. They run towards the woods in flames.

EXT - SMALL CLEARING IN THE WOODS - HACIENDA - NIGHT

The giant puddle reflects the flames dancing over the rocks on the ground. The fire licks the trees and spreads into the branches.

The flames push forward, devouring the clearing grass, that very same place where just this afternoon they were all shooting.

Celso runs to the fire and empties out his bucket. The workers do the same. They come back for more water and cross paths with yet other workers carrying various containers.

Dr. José arrives carrying two buckets, followed by Ricardo Edwards, with one. Further behind, Dr. Alejandro Matos and Leslie carry a heavy washbasin.

Gloria, Flor, Yola and Cleo all bring their containers. Even the kids. Everyone runs, comes, goes... the dogs keep their distance.

A human chain starts to form: buckets pass from hand to hand, everyone trying to put out the fire.

The pagan monster with his drink in hand arrives. He looks at his watch -

CONTINUED:

OVE  
(In English)  
23...22...21...20...19...18...17...

The monster takes off his mask, revealing a sweaty and drunk Ove -

OVE (CONT'D)  
16...15...14...13...12...11...10...

The human chain begins to work efficiently. Pepe even puts out a few blades of grass with his little cup.

OVE (CONT'D)  
...7...6...5...4...3...2...1...  
HAPPY NEW YEAR!

But no one pays attention. Everyone is working, trying to control the fire.

OVE (CONT'D)  
Happy New year!

Ove starts singing in Norwegian. It's an emotional *Nyttarbygg* song.

OVE (CONT'D)  
Pkmfsl1 apdkfn alosnm...

The children go to the puddle and fill up their little containers. The dogs follow them, splashing. The reflection is disarticulated in waves that bump into each other.

OVE (CONT'D)  
Pkmfsl1 apdkfn alosnm...

Ove sings with conviction. His eyes fill with tears.

**Friday, January 1st, 1971.**

EXT. - SMALL CLEARING IN THE WOODS - DAWN

Dew makes the woods shine, though they're still dark and smoking. The first rays of the new year sun filter through the trees.

Four folding chairs rest the middle of the clearing, charred.

EXT. - FIELD - HACIENDA - AFTERNOON

The Iztaccíhuatl sleeps, immense, behind the hills and dusty crops. The afternoon light filters through rain-leadened clouds.

A group of children run and explore.

Toño, Pepe de la Bárcena, Ricky, Paco, Rodri, Alex and Eduardo lead the front throwing each other football passes. Paco, Rodri, and Alex chase after chameleons in the furrows.

Lola and Clau walk next to them. Vero, Sofi, Gerardo, Andrea and July are further back. Pepe and Andy walk with Yola.

Cleo walks with Benita. The dogs run everywhere. Alex chases after a chameleon, Rodri and Paco follow.

BENITA

Don't run too far. We'll just reach  
to the outskirts and come back!

Paco stops-

PACO

What skirts?

BENITA

The hillside.

Paco laughs.

PACO

You mean the hill has skirts?

BENITA

The outskirts... well, the slopes  
then!

PACO

Alex, the hill has a skirt!

Alex stops.

PACO (CONT'D)

If we lean over we'll be able to  
see its panties.

Paco pretends to lean and Alex does the same. Lola and Clau catch up to them -

CLAUDIA

What are you guys doing?

CONTINUED:

PACO  
Looking up the hill's skirts to see  
its panties.

LOLA  
Hills don't have underwear.

Paco leans under her and lifts up her miniskirt.

PACO  
And neither do you!

Lola screams and pats down her skirt -

LOLA  
Asshole!

PACO  
Ooooooh!

Alex lifts up Clau's dress. She screams.

GLORIA  
Alex! Paco! Leave the girls alone!

The boys run, amused.

Cleo and Benita stop. A gust of wind conjures dust devils. A low thunder rumbles and rain falls in the distance.

Cleo looks at the landscape dreamily. Her hands rest on her belly.

CLEO  
It's like my village. Without the  
mountain, of course, but it looks  
just like this...

She enjoys the moment while she rubs her belly. She closes her eyes -

CLEO (CONT'D)  
This is how it sounds...

The church bells ringing and the bleating of goats get lost in the distance.

CLEO (CONT'D)  
Just like this...

She breathes. Breathes deep. She smiles -

CONTINUED:

CLEO (CONT'D)  
This is how it smells...

Cleo is somewhere else.

**Friday, January 29, 1971.**

EXT - TEPEJI 21 - DAY (RAIN)

The Valiant is parked in front of the house, next to the Galaxie 500.

The Valiant overflows with the children. One more comes out: Toño's friend, BETO PARDO, 12, with glasses and good-boy looks. He's come for lunch.

Paco shows off the black Galaxie, its scrapes and bent moldings recently repaired -

PACO  
Look, they fixed it all up. Just  
like new, right?

Beto barely looks at it. He keeps going and goes into the house after Toño.

INT - BREAKFAST ROOM - TEPEJI 21 - DAY

Cleo's belly is starting to show. She cuts Pepe's meat.

Señora Teresa eats in silence. The children talk while they eat -

TOÑO  
The Cowboys won only because  
Baltimore was overconfident.

BETO  
What are you talking about? We  
scored three touchdowns in the  
second half. One after the other!

Señora Sofía comes down the stairs and into the breakfast room.

CONTINUED:

TOÑO

I'm telling you. Baltimore was overconfident. How can you root for the Cowboys?

SOFI

I like the Cowboy's cheerleaders. In my school...

PACO

Who cares about cheerleaders?

Señora Sofía comes into the breakfast room. Her face is drawn. Señora Teresa looks at her, worried.

TOÑO

Ma? Can Beto and I go to the movies?

Señora Sofía is absent -

SEÑORA SOFÍA

What are you going to see?

TOÑO

*The Red Tent*, at The Americas theater.

PACO

I want to go too!

TOÑO

No, just Beto and me.

PACO

How come?

TOÑO

Get yourself your own friends!

SOFI

I want to go to the movies too!

TOÑO

I said no! It's just me and Beto.

Señora Sofía explodes -

SEÑORA SOFÍA

Either everyone goes or no one goes!

CONTINUED:

TOÑO

They can go to a different movie!

PACO

I want to go to Las Americas!

TOÑO

You don't even know what *The Red Tent* is!

SEÑORA SOFÍA

I said, either everyone goes or no one goes!

The telephone rings, Señora Sofía gets up and walks to the hall to answer -

TOÑO

It's not fair!

Señora Sofía comes back -

SEÑORA SOFÍA

If you don't like it you can go live somewhere else!

She walks over to pick up the phone, leaving Toño furious. Paco smiles impertinently.

PEPE

Is it a cartoon?

Señora Sofía answers -

SEÑORA SOFÍA

Hello? Oh, yes, hold on a minute...

She calls to the breakfast room -

SEÑORA SOFÍA (CONT'D)

Cleo! I'm going to get this upstairs, would you mind hanging up here!

She goes upstairs. Cleo walks to the phone and she hears Señora Sofía calling -



CONTINUED:

SEÑORA SOFÍA (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
There....!

Cleo is about to hang up the phone when she overhears...

MOLLY (V.O.)  
How are you feeling, *comadre*?

Cleo hangs up.

INT. - DOWNSTAIRS HALL - TEPEJI 21 - AFTERNOON

Everyone's ready to go to the movies. Señora Teresa is going too, because she worries and because she loves going to the movies. She calls up to the children -

SEÑORA TERESA  
We're late! You coming down or what?

Paco and Sofi are already by her side.

PACO  
Let them stay. Let's go...

SEÑORA TERESA  
We're leaving!

Señora Teresa goes out to the Patio with Cleo, Paco, Sofi and Pepe.

EXT. - PATIO - TEPEJI 21 - AFTERNOON

The group reaches the street entrance and Señora Teresa opens the door. Borrás takes advantage of the situation to run out despite Cleo and Paco's attempts to stop him.

Paco runs out.

EXT. - TEPEJI 21- AFTERNOON

He chases the dog down and drags him back into the house where the group is waiting outside the door.

Paco leaves the dog inside and is about to close the door when Toño and Beto come out.

TOÑO  
What are you waiting for?

CONTINUED:

The two hurry up to the corner heading towards Insurgentes. Everyone follows them.

EXT. - TEPIC STREET - AFTERNOON

Toño and Beto are at the front. Cleo and Señora Teresa look after Sofi and Pepe who is talking to Paco about planes.

PACO  
...Braniff planes may be different  
colors but they're all 727s...

They're on Tepic street, near Insurgentes when Toño and Beto, take off in a well planned strategy.

TOÑO  
See you at the movies!

The pair run off.

SEÑORA TERESA  
Toño!

Señora Teresa asks Cleo to follow them.

Cleo embarks on her mission. She hurries without losing Toño and Beto from sight, their two little mischievous figures already half a block away. They ring doorbells and run away.

Cleo shortens the distance with each step, getting closer, but not too close. And so, she follows them.

When they reach Insurgentes the boys run off, and turn, disappearing at the corner. Cleo hurries and turns the corner to -

EXT. - INSURGENTES AVENUE - LAS AMERICAS CINEMA - DUSK

Cleo reaches the bustling avenue, brimming with its early Friday night energy. People walk in all directions and the street lights, the cars, the shop windows and the ads are all lighting up.

CONTINUED:

She sees people crossing to the other side of Insurgentes, where the marquee announces *Melody*, but she doesn't see the boys. She worries and walks to the following corner, searching.

She's almost made it to the newspaper stand in the next corner when she turns and looks to -

THE OTHER SIDE OF INSURGENTES

And there, amongst the crowd coming out of the theater and spilling onto the sidewalk, she sees Señor Antonio. He looks light and happy and dances a silly step to the great delight and laughter of the YOUNG WOMAN who holds his hand.

And that's when she also finally spots Beto, hiding on one side of the news stand, lost in the pages of *Caballero* men's magazine.

Beyond, Toño is also holding a magazine, but he's not looking at the naked women in its pages. He's looking at the other side of the street: people are coming out of the theater and his dad is playing Fred Astaire to a Ginger Rogers that is not his mother.

In his silly dance move, Señor Antonio trips with an OLDER COUPLE who is annoyed. Señor Antonio and the young woman laugh and hurry off.

OLDER COUPLE

So rude...!

Señor Antonio stops, turns and to sprays bullets at the older couple with his make believe machine gun, escaping with the young woman, Bonnie & Clyde, hand in hand.

**Wednesday, March 24th, 1971.**

INT/EXT - PUBLIC BUS - CALZADA IGNACIO ZARAGOZA - DAY

Cleo's riding a bus full of people.

EXT. - DIRT AVENUE - CIUDAD NEZAHUALCÓYOTL - DAY

Cleo climbs down the bus, her six-month belly is obvious and the contrast with the Roma neighborhood is evident too -

CONTINUED:

The dirt avenue is flanked by large electric towers and riddled with pot holes where stagnant water pools.

The houses are made of cement brick, corrugated cardboard and asbestos sheets. There's lots of trash and plastic.

Cleo shows a piece of paper to a PEDESTRIAN who points to a street up the avenue.

Cleo heads up the street.

EXT.- STREET- HOUSE - CIUDAD NEZAHUALCÓYOTL - DAY

Cleo walks on. Misery is palpable, there are children and stray dogs everywhere and a stream of raw sewage running down the street.

Different music booms out of each house.

Three dogs block her way and bark. Cleo crouches, pretending to get a rock and the dogs run off.

She reaches a house and double-checks the address on her paper. She comes to the door and knocks.

Impertinent dogs answer her knocking next to the entrance.

Cleo knocks again as the door opens.

It's Ramón.

INT/EXT - DATSUN - OCEANÍA AVE - DAY

Cleo rides alone in the back seat. In front, Ramón is in the driver's seat, and his friend CANCHAS, is in the passenger seat, smoking pot. He gives the joint to Ramón, who takes a drag and passes it to Cleo, who refuses.

EXT. - PARKING LOT - EMPTY LOT- SAN JUAN DE ARAGÓN AND CUCHILLA DEL TESORO - DAY

NEXT TO THE FIELD -

About a hundred young men in uniformed t-shirts and tennis shoes are in resting position, supervised by three instructors with martial airs, pants and sweat-shirts.

They pay attention to a man in sweat pants and a sleeveless t-shirt who makes an exercise demonstration -

CONTINUED:

The man does push-ups with his index finger only.

A young man standing next to Cleo says with admiration -

YOUNG MAN  
It's Zovek.

CLEO  
(in disbelief)  
No...! Zovek?

YOUNG MAN  
Look at 'im...

CLEO  
Is that really professor Zovek?

YOUNG MAN  
He's done over a hundred push ups  
by now!

CLEO  
What? Does he always come here?

YOUNG MAN  
No, not always, but sometimes he  
comes to train them.

PROFESSOR ZOVEK counts to 150, pushes hard on his fingers and  
in one swift move is on his feet, crossing his wrists over  
his head.

The young men applaud.

PROFESSOR ZOVEK  
You too can be a Kombateka! Every  
human being holds great potential  
he must develop through physical  
conditioning and through mental and  
spiritual evolution.

Zovek walks amongst them.

PROFESSOR ZOVEK (CONT'D)  
You too can develop your potential.  
But don't expect any miracles, the  
only miracle lies in your own will.

Zovek stops -

CONTINUED:

PROFESSOR ZOVEK (CONT'D)  
This is why mental development is  
the true motor of physical  
development.

He stretches his arms, taking his audience in -

PROFESSOR ZOVEK (CONT'D)  
And next up... an act!

A strip of bandage hangs from one of his hands, swaying in  
the dusty breeze -

ON THE EDGE OF THE FIELD -

Cleo and the small audience call out in surprise -

SMALL AUDIENCE

Ooooooh!

Zovek exclaims -

PROFESSOR ZOVEK  
This is a routine that requires  
absolute physical condition! Only  
martial arts masters and a few  
great athletes can master it!

Professor Zovek extends the bandage to a YOUTH in the first  
row.

PROFESSOR ZOVEK (CONT'D)  
Yes... You... please bandage my  
eyes.

The youth walks up shyly to Professor Zovek and takes the  
bandage, starts to bandage his eyes -

PROFESSOR ZOVEK (CONT'D)  
Make sure they're totally covered.  
You've got plenty of bandage there.

The youth has completely covered Professor Zovek's eyes.

PROFESSOR ZOVEK (CONT'D)  
Thank you, you may return to your  
place.

The youth walks back to his spot.

PROFESSOR ZOVEK (CONT'D)  
And now...!

Professor Zovek flexes his biceps and puts the fingers in both of his hands together in a diamond shape over his head. He inhales deeply and -

PROFESSOR ZOVEK (CONT'D)  
(Exhaling)  
Huuuuuuuh!

He is quiet.

The young people look on, expectantly.

AT THE EDGE OF THE FIELD -

Cleo and the small audience look on in awe.

Professor Zovek is standing, motionless, with his diamond over his head and slowly, very slowly starts to lift his left foot.

Time has stopped.

The left foot lifts up, folding at the knee until the thigh is at a 45 degree angle, and he remains motionless in that position.

The young people await in confusion for something to happen.

AT THE EDGE OF THE FIELD -

Cleo and the small audience are also waiting, a boy crouches down.

Professor Zovek continues on, motionless -

PROFESSOR ZOVEK (CONT'D)  
Are you disappointed? Were you  
expecting me to lift a jet or an  
elephant?

The audience laughs.

PROFESSOR ZOVEK (CONT'D)  
You are witnessing an incredible  
feat! You don't believe me? Try it.

Professor Zovek talks but remains motionless -

PROFESSOR ZOVEK (CONT'D)  
Just close your eyes and lift up a  
foot.

(MORE)

PROFESSOR ZOVEK (CONT'D)  
You don't have to lift your leg to  
a forty-five degree angle like me  
or put your arms up. Just close  
your eyes and lift a foot.

IN THE ROWS -

The young men close their eyes and try lifting one foot. They quickly lose their balance.

The instructors also try it without succeeding.

AT THE EDGE OF THE FIELD -

Cleo and the small audience also tries it out, some child lasts a little longer but they all fail.

Professor Zovek explains -

PROFESSOR ZOVEK (CONT'D)  
True mental preparation is the path  
to physical realization.

The small audience begins to notice that -

Cleo is on one foot, forming a diamond with her fingers over her head.

Her eyes closed, placid.

EXT - FIELDS - EMPTY LOT - LATER

A trainer blows his whistle and the formation breaks up. The young men pick up their belongings at the edge of the field and walk over to the parking lot.

Cleo watches them walk by, and in a small group she finds -

Fermín, who walks talking, animated.

Cleo wants to call him, but is anxiously silent. Fermín and his group walk right past her.

Cleo finally calls to him -

CLEO  
Fermín!

Perhaps a little too loud. Fermín turns and when he sees her, he stops. Others in his group stop with him

FERMÍN  
What's up my Cleo?



CONTINUED:

CLEO  
Can you talk for a minute?

The group surrounding Fermín make fun of him -

GROUP  
Wooooooooooooooooo!

Fermín smiles and walks towards Cleo gesturing good bye to his group.

Cleo and Fermín walk one toward the other in the emptying lot.

IN THE BACKGROUND -

An Eastern Airlines Boeing 727 takes off and flies over the couple approaching in the middle of the lot.

FERMÍN  
Long time no see, Cleo!

CLEO  
Hi, Fermín...

They meet and kiss hello.

FERMÍN  
What are you doing around these parts?

CLEO  
Well, I have left you so many messages and I've been looking for you but I can never find you so...

Fermín starts heading toward the parking lot -

FERMÍN  
I'm sorry my Cleo, but the training got real hard core and they even brought in a gringo trainer and another one from Korea. Well, the American had been here already, but the Korean one is new.

CLEO  
Is it for the Olympics?

CONTINUED:

FERMÍN  
Something like that. Who told you I  
was here?

Cleo hesitates -

CLEO  
It's just that a neighbor's brother  
in law trains with you so...

FERMÍN  
(interrupting)  
It was Ramón, right?

CLEO  
No, no, no!

Fermín stops -

FERMÍN  
Son of a... Fucking Ramón. I'll get  
him when I see him -

He makes some pretend impressive aikido movements -

FERMÍN (CONT'D)  
Jodan Tsuki!... Chudan Tsuki!...  
Mae Geri!...

Flash blows, precise kicks and body contact with the air.

CLEO  
It's just that... I'm with child...

Fermín stops mid-punch. He keeps walking to the parking lot.

FERMÍN  
What's it to me?

Cleo follows him -

CLEO  
Well, the little one's yours.

Fermin walks faster.

FERMÍN  
No fucking way!

CLEO  
But it is, Fermín!

CONTINUED:

Fermín stops completely and turns to Cleo -

FERMÍN

I told you already, there's no  
fucking way! So if you don't want  
me to fuck you up real bad, you and  
your "little one" too, don't ever  
fucking say it again and don't ever  
come looking for me again!

He does some aikido movements culminating in a mortal blow to  
Cleo, stopping less than half an inch from her face and then  
walks off.

FERMÍN (CONT'D)

Fucking cunt!

He leaves Cleo alone in the empty lot.

**Friday, May 14th, 1971.**

EXT. - SMALL PATIO - TEPEJI 21 - DAY

Borras barks like crazy. Cleo holds his collar but is lost in  
her own sadness. Her almost-eight-month belly is very large.

The old man with the oranges puts three more oranges in the  
crate on the floor. It's almost full.

OLD MAN WITH ORANGES

...20.

The old man gets up and Adela pays him with a crumpled 20-  
peso bill.

Further back, Cleo holds on to Borras, who tries to lunge at  
the old man with each bark.

The old man slowly carries the immense sack of oranges and  
puts it on his back. He starts walking towards -

EXT. - PATIO - TEPEJI 21- DAY

Where Cleo is holding Borras who pushes up on his hind legs  
to attack the old man who walks past them on his way to the  
street.

CONTINUED:

The old man is halfway down the patio when Borrás tugs hard, surprising Cleo, who is lost in thought and lets go.

Borrás runs down to the old man who hurries to the door as he feels the dog coming. Borrás chases him.

CLEO

Borrás!

Borrás lunges at the old man and sinks his teeth into the enormous sack.

Dozens of oranges fall out rolling all over the patio.

The old man lets go of the sack and runs to the door while Borrás is trying to finish off the sack.

Cleo runs up to Borrás on the orange-covered floor. The old man is almost at the door when the dog realizes this and runs after him.

The old man reaches the door and opens. Borrás is about to sink in his teeth when the old man exits and shuts the door. Borrás can't stop and smashes against the door.

Cleo is standing in the middle of the patio, surrounded by an ocean of oranges.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS - TEPEJI 21- DAY

The midday light bounces off the patio walls and slides in through the great windows, softly caressing the modern mahogany table.

Cleo polishes the surface with a rag. She rubs the rag over and over the same spot, as if she wanted to wipe her own reflection.

The house is quiet. Only the rumor of a conversation is heard. The phone cable extending all the way into the bathroom under the stairs disappears inside the door.

Señora Sofía is inside, talking. Her voice echoes in the small space and filters through the doors. Only a few words can be clearly heard.

Paco comes down the stairs slowly. Stopping in the middle, he leans over the railway, trying to hear better.

Cleo keeps polishing the same area of the table and finally realizes Paco is coming down the stairs.

CONTINUED:

Paco's in the hall and walks slowly to the bathroom door, leaning on the wall next to it.

Cleo stops wiping her reflection and sees Paco, who -

Slides and sits down on the floor. He leans against the wall and tries to move his ear closer to the door.

From the dining room, Cleo shoos him away, gesturing, but Paco ignores her, concentrated on listening to the conversation distorted by the bathroom echo and muffled by the door.

SEÑORA SOFÍA (O.C.)  
...he wrote them letters from so-called Vancouver...

Cleo walks up to Paco, gesturing. When she reaches the hall she stops at a respectful distance from the bathroom and its conversation. She stops and shakes her rag vigorously, calling Paco.

SEÑORA SOFÍA (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
...he doesn't even have enough of a pair to tell the children...

He sees her but shakes his head no repeatedly. Cleo comes a few steps closer, still keeping her distance, and speaks by mouthing the words but almost without a single sound.

CLEO  
(articulating)  
G-e-t o-u-t- o-f h-e-r-e

Paco is about to shake his head no but a cry punctures the echoes and the walls - a deep desperate wail.

Paco and Cleo freeze, scared, when suddenly -

The bathroom door opens and Señora Sofía comes out, carrying the phone. She sees Paco running away and grabs him -

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
And you? What are you spying on?...

Her face is gaunt from crying, from all the pain and frustration that explode in a -

Giant slap that throws Paco down on the floor.

Señora Sofía immediately realizes what she's done and crouches down next to her son, holding him, crying -

CONTINUED:

SEÑORA SOFÍA (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry, I'm sorry, Paco! Why  
were you eavesdropping? Why were  
you eavesdropping?

The two of them cry on the floor, Señora Sofía sees Cleo,  
only a few steps away -

SEÑORA SOFÍA (CONT'D)  
And you! Why did you let him?

She hugs Paco tightly -

SEÑORA SOFÍA (CONT'D)  
Don't say anything to your brothers  
and sisters. Don't say a thing.  
Promise me... Promise...

To the side, Cleo is motionless, wishing she could join in  
the hugging and the crying.

INT. - SOFI AND PEPE'S ROOM - TEPEJI 21- DUSK

Cleo brushes Sofi's hair. They're sitting on the bed. Sofi  
reads a letter. Cleo is lost in thought.

SOFI  
It has so many drawings. Look, I  
think this little girl is me and I  
think this is my daddy...

The letter is done exclusively in blue ink drawings with no  
color or highlights.

SOFI (CONT'D)  
And this is a heart, look, with an  
S for Sofi and a P for Papa... and  
this here is a dog... or is it a  
fish?

Pepe comes in and sits down next to them, leaning over to see  
the letter.

CLEO  
Maybe it's a dolphin, I think?

SOFI  
A dolphin? No. It's like a  
doggie...

CONTINUED:

PEPE

It's a seal! In the fourth letter  
my dad sent Paco, he said he can  
see the ocean from his hotel room  
and that there are a lot of seals.

Sofi considers the drawing -

SOFI

Yes. It's a seal! Like the ones in  
his hotel!

PEPE

You had said dolphin. It looks  
nothing like a dolphin!

CLEO

No?

SOFI

No!

CLEO

So it's not a dolphin? What do you  
think it is?

Sofi and Pepe answer in a chorus -

SOFI AND PEPE

A seal!

And they also laugh in chorus. Distracted by her own sadness,  
Cleo turns to Pepe and does a surprise tickle attack,  
prolonging the laughter.

When they've calmed down, Pepe is lying on the bed and fixes  
his eyes on Cleo.

CLEO

What you looking at?

PEPE

When's your baby coming out?

Sadness washes over Cleo again -

CLEO

Next month.

SOFI

It is a girl?

CONTINUED:

CLEO  
I don't know...

SOFI  
Oh, please let it be a girl!  
Pleeeeeease! What's her name?

CLEO  
I don't know.

SOFI  
If it's a girl can her name be  
Tabitha like *Bewitched*?

CLEO  
(Absently)  
Maybe...

Pepe gets up and looks at her, serious.

PEPE  
And will she live here?

SOFI  
If she's a girl yes!

CLEO  
I don't know. Would you like her to  
live here?

PEPE  
No way! Yuck!

Cleo smiles, trying to hide her pain. She changes the topic -

CLEO  
Let's see! Put your pajamas on!

**Saturday, May 15th, 1971.**

INT. - SENORA SOFIA'S ROOM - TEPEJI 21- DAY

The room glows softly in the light that filters in through the curtains.

Cleo folds freshly washed clothes in the closet drawers. As she opens one she looks down at Señor Antonio's underwear.

She can hear the children fighting downstairs.



CONTINUED:

Cleo closes the drawer. She looks at the men's suits hanging. The yelling grows more intense and in the middle, Señora Teresa -

SEÑORA TERESA (O.C.)  
Children! Stop it, Toño! Stop!

Sofi comes running into the room.

SOFI  
Cleo! Toño and Paco are fighting!

Cleo comes out to -

INT. - UPSTAIRS HALL - TEPEJI 21- DAY

With her 8-month belly, Cleo slowly goes down the stairs with Sofi. When they come down they see -

IN THE HALL-

Toño who is holding Paco by the hairs. Paco is screaming furiously and attempting to kick Toño.

Señora Teresa is in the living room yelling at the boys. Pepe is standing, paralyzed, next to her.

SEÑORA TERESA  
Stop it! Now!

But Paco manages to free himself and hits Toño on the face. Toño grabs his arms.

IN THE STAIRCASE -

Cleo stops. Sofi takes her hand -

CLEO  
Boys!

IN THE HALL -

Paco spits in Toño's face, leaving him space to give him a good slap.

SEÑORA TERESA  
Toño!

And Paco throws himself against Toño once again, while Toño speedily escapes.

CONTINUED:

IN THE STAIRCASE -

Cleo is still walking down.

CLEO

Boys! I'm going to tell your mom  
when she comes back!

IN THE HALL -

The boys don't pay any attention to her at all. Paco takes an  
trinket from the table, a stone egg, and -

HE THROWS IT TO TOÑO -

It flies straight to his head.

SEÑORA TERESA

Paco!

Toño ducks just as the speedy egg projectile, flies exactly  
over where his face was, following its trajectory through the  
open doors, out the patio and -

CRASHING against the door of the Valiant, parked just  
outside.

Señora Teresa runs towards Paco and grabs him hard, shaking  
him -

SEÑORA TERESA (CONT'D)

What are you doing! Paco!

PACO

He hit me first!

TOÑO

Because you pushed me!

Cleo walks into the hall with Sofi, towards the living room.

SEÑORA TERESA

How could you throw that thing!?  
You could have killed your brother!

Paco stops wrestling, remorseful. Cleo comes to Pepe, hugs  
him and Sofi is with her. Señora Teresa lets go of Paco -

SEÑORA TERESA

You could have killed him!

CONTINUED:

Scared, Toño looks at the car door where the egg has left an enormous dent in the metal.

INT. - KITCHEN - TEPEJI 21- NIGHT

The house is quiet again.

Cleo washes dishes. Adela puts them away on the shelves.

ADELA  
You head up, *manita*, I'll finish up  
here...

The Galaxie 500 honks its horn -

Ta-ta Ta-ta Ta-ta Ta-taaaaaaaaa!

ADELA (CONT'D)  
I'll go.

Adela goes out the small patio and to the patio. Cleo walks to the breakfast room.

INT. - DOWNSTAIRS - TEPEJI 21 - NIGHT

Cleo walks across the breakfast room and the dining room and goes out to the hall. She peeks out the door that opens to the patio.

EXT. PATIO TEPEJI 21 - NIGHT

Ta-ta! Ta-ta! Ta-taaaaaaaaa!

Adela walks to the street door, lit from the outside by the car's headlights.

Ta-ta! Ta-ta! Ta-taaaaaaaaa!

Adela opens the door, revealing -

The mighty Galaxie 500 headlights lighting the patio.

The car pulls in slowly but -

Kkkkkkkjjjjjjjjk!

Its left side scratches against the door frame.

CONTINUED:

The car brakes and moves back a couple of inches. Adjusts its trajectory and pulls forward again -

Krrrrrrajjjj!

Now its right side hits the frame.

The car stops and veers its wheels left. Moves forward.

Kkkjjjjjkkk!

The left molding catches the frame and begins to bend. The car stops.

Backs up.

Goes forward again and now the right side molding is the one that's caught. The car stops.

Backs up.

It starts forward again and the right side molding is ripped from the metal, but now the car doesn't stop. It just heads straight in, ripping the entire left side molding too.

It adjusts its course once more. The side mirror catches and is ripped off.

The Galaxie 500 stops only momentarily to follow its course with even greater conviction, hitting and denting both sides, its molding bent in strange shapes.

Finally, the Galaxie stops in front of the door that opens to the hall.

INT. - DOWNSTAIRS HALL - TEPEJI 21 - NIGHT

Cleo is next to the patio door. Outside -

The Galaxie door opens and Señora Sofía comes out. She stumbles as she walks and comes into the house without closing the car door. She is obviously drunk.

Cleo moves aside to let her through. Señora Sofía looks at her, amused -

SEÑORA SOFÍA

We're alone. Always. Even though  
they say we aren't.

She laughs and Cleo looks at her, confused.

CONTINUED:

Señora Sofía walks on and staggers up the stairs.

**Thursday, June 10th, 1971.**

INT/EXT - VALIANT - STREET - AFTERNOON

Ignacio is driving. Cleo is sitting in the front and Señora Teresa rides behind, alone. They drive slowly in heavy traffic.

A parked car tries to come out onto the street. Ignacio stops and lets it through -

IGNACIO

Maybe if we park over here, far  
away, because there's a student  
protest.

There's a bustle of young people on the sidewalks and walking up the street. Some carry pickets and painted slogans.

SEÑORA TERESA

I hope they don't get them again...

The parked car frees up a space and Ignacio tries to park.

EXT. - STREET NEAR MEXICO-TACUBA - AFTERNOON

The Valiant parks, Señora Teresa and Cleo come out with Ignacio accompanying them. Cleaning trucks are parked along the block.

They walk amongst the students heading up the street to the corner which is surveilled by police vehicles, and they pass in front of a group of young men dressed in T-shirts, waiting.

EXT. - CALZADA MEXICO-TACUBA - AFTERNOON

Ignacio accompanies Teresa and Cleo, who walk slowly. Cleo on account of her belly, and Señora Teresa due to her limp. The storefront metallic curtains are all shut.

They walk in front of a long row of riot police trucks, lines of police officers while a group of young men carrying bamboo canes gathers at the corner.

They reach Calzada México - Tacuba and it's closed off. The beginning of an enormous march passes next to them, walking from north to south on the Avenue.

Señora Teresa, Cleo and Ignacio are forced to cross in the middle of the march. They melt in with the crowd - some have pickets, others sing slogans.

They manage to make it to the other side of the avenue and head towards the entrance of a building advertising a furniture store on the second floor, letters painted on its windows.

Señora Teresa and Cleo walk in. Ignacio waits outside.

INT. - FURNITURE STORE - CALZADA MEXICO TACUBA - AFTERNOON

The afternoon sun lights the MUEBLERÍA sign painted all along the windows, staining the floor with its upside-down letters.

A handful of clients walks around the store, which sells cheap and functional furniture. The din of the march fills the place with chanting and slogans.

Cleo and Señora Teresa walk through the nursery section. They see a crib -

SEÑORA TERESA

You like that one?

CLEO

It's so beautiful.

Señora Teresa sees the price tag and calls a YOUNG SALESWOMAN over. She comes immediately -

SEÑORA TERESA

What's your best price on this crib.

The saleswoman looks at the tag.

SEÑORA TERESA (CONT'D)

With my faithful old time customer discount, eh?

SALESWOMAN

Let me ask the manager.

The saleswoman walks up to the counter. The outside din turns into a chorus roar of terrified screams.

It is five o' seven p.m.

CONTINUED:

Ignacio runs through the door, panic in his eyes. Everyone in the store looks at him, confused.

The outside roar intensifies. Ignacio runs to the window and looks out. Other clients do the same. Terror in their eyes.

Cleo and Señora Teresa slowly approach and they join Ignacio to look out the window -

CALZADA MÉXICO - TACUBA

The giant line of students is attacked frontally by more than 100 young men in tennis hoes, T-shirts and short haircuts, armed with 6 foot bamboo canes, clubs and metal rods administering electric shocks.

They are the HALCONES.

The paramilitary group attacks furiously.

The multitude runs, but more Halcones have surrounded them from the back and come out of the surrounding streets.

Shots are heard and a cloud of gunpowder begins to form. People fall. Women, old men. Children.

INSIDE THE FURNITURE STORE -

Steps can be heard up and down the staircase and a STUDENT comes in, bleeding from the head. He's not even 20 years old.

The clients cry out in alarm. The student looks at them imploringly and, scared, he turns to hear the noise in the staircase.

The STORE MANAGER signals for him to come in quickly and calls the young saleswoman over.

MANAGER

Put him in the closet.

The young woman rushes the student in to the closet at the back of the store, when -

Three HALCONES appear.

People are terrified. A woman starts crying. Ignacio walks protectively in front of Cleo and Señora Teresa.

The Halcones see the young woman closing the closet door. Two head over, one stays in the middle of the store, controlling the people.

CONTINUED:

The young woman places her body in front of the closet door. The first Halcón hits her and throws her on the floor, opens the door and the second Halcón -

SHOOTS THREE TIMES.

The student falls out of the closet, and to the floor where -  
THE HALCÓN SHOOTS HIM TWO MORE TIMES.

People scream and the Halcón at the rearguard surveils them menacingly.

Shielded by Ignacio, Cleo sees the Halcón at the rearguard.

The Halcón also sees her.

THEY RECOGNIZE EACH OTHER.

It's Fermín.

Cleo starts hyperventilating.

The two other Halcones begin retreating and Fermín follows them. The three leave the store.

Cleo watches them go. Her breathing is fast.

A puddle forms at her feet. Her water has broken.

EXT. - STREET - VECINDAD ENTRANCE - NEAR MÉXICO -TACUBA -  
AFTERNOON

Ignacio holds Cleo and helps her walk. Señora Teresa walks next to them.

Terrified people run in all directions. Shots are fired and there is a lot of smoke in the air.

Students run towards them, terrified, chased after by Halcones with bamboo sticks.

Ignacio pulls Cleo to the entrance of a *Vecindad*, taking shelter and Señora Teresa follows after them.

In front of them, on the street, the Halcones catch up with a student and beat him to a pulp. They keep going.

Ignacio peeks out at the street, pulls Cleo out and they leave the doorway to continue on their way. Señora Teresa follows after them.



CONTINUED:

They walk down Mexico - Tacuba. On the ground, men, women, old and young, lie dead. Some surrounded by pools of blood.

A YOUNG WOMAN cries kneeling on the floor. She holds a young man's head. Halcones come up and beat her violently.

INT/EXT - '64 VALIANT - STREET- AFTERNOON

At the wheel, Ignacio weaves through traffic finding any empty spot he can slide into.

CLEO  
Aaaaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhgggg!

In the back seat, Cleo suffers contractions. Next to her, Señora Teresa holds her hand.

INT - MEDICAL CENTER - CUAUHEMOC AVE. - AFTERNOON

The '64 Valiant rushes down Cuauhtemoc Avenue and turns into the Medical Center entrance.

EXT. OB/GYN - MEDICAL CENTER - DUSK

The building and ramp lights are on against the purple sky wanting to become night.

Ignacio helps Cleo walk. Señora Teresa, slower, follows behind.

On the esplanade, pregnant woman walk around, some accompanied, waiting for their imminent deliveries.

Ignacio and Cleo walk into the building.

INT. - LOBBY - OB/GYN - DUSK

Chaos.

Pregnant woman walk around the lobby while some wait with their family members in the waiting room. Names are called on the loudspeaker and pregnant women are admitted.

CRIES AND MOANS from women going through contractions.

In the reception, nurses efficiently tend to the long line of patients.

CONTINUED:

Ignacio enters the lobby holding Cleo. They immediately walk to the reception area. When they arrive, he tells Cleo -

IGNACIO  
Wait for me here. Just a sec.

He leaves Cleo and tries to talk to a hurried NURSE -

IGNACIO (CONT'D)  
Excuse me...

But the nurse doesn't pause, she only points -

NURSE  
Line is over there...

Ignacio sees the line and Cleo has another contraction, standing.

CLEO  
Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaahhhaa!

Ignacio yells out to make himself heard on top of the racket of questions, orders, complaints and cries -

IGNACIO  
(screaming)  
Doctor Vélez! Doctor Vélez!

No one seems to hear him. Ignacio insists -

IGNACIO (CONT'D)  
(screaming)  
Doctor Vélez! Doctor Vélez!

Doctor Vélez comes in through the medical team and patient door. She hurries to Ignacio -

DOCTOR VÉLEZ  
Here, here, here....

Ignacio takes her to Cleo while Doctor Vélez lifts an arm and emphatically calls out -

DOCTOR VÉLEZ (CONT'D)  
Nurse! Nurse!

A nurse runs to them, pushing a wheelchair. Señora Teresa has finally arrived. She is completely breathless.

Doctora Vélez reaches Cleo-

CONTINUED:

DOCTORA VÉLEZ  
Hi, Cleo. How are you feeling?

Cleo looks at her: fear is her only answer. The nurse comes in and helps Cleo sit down on the wheelchair. Ignacio helps too.

DOCTORA VÉLEZ (CONT'D)  
I'll take it from here. You can wait out there.

Rosary in hand, Señora Teresa and Ignacio look at Cleo being wheeled off through the door leading to -

INT - HALLWAY WITH ELEVATORS - OB/GYN - DUSK

Cleo is in the wheelchair, scared. She is surrounded by Doctor Vélez and the nurses. They reach the elevators and wait.

The elevator doors open and they walk in. The doors are about to close when Señor Antonio, dressed in his white coat, walks up to them and goes in as well.

INT. - ELEVATOR - OB/GYN - DUSK

The doors close.

SEÑOR ANTONIO  
Hi Cleo, how are you feeling?

Cleo looks at him, surprised -

CLEO  
Doctor...!

Señor Antonio tries to encourage her -

SEÑOR ANTONIO  
You're in good hands... How many babies have you delivered, Doctor Vélez?

Doctor Vélez smiles -

DOCTOR VÉLEZ  
Hundreds!

Cleo has a strong contraction -

CONTINUED:

CLEO  
Aaaahhhhggg!

Señor Antonio holds her hand and leans down to bring his face closer to Cleo's -

SEÑOR ANTONIO  
Breathe Cleo... Like this...

Señor Antonio begins inhaling and exhaling and blowing. Cleo tries to imitate him by looking at his face.

INT. - 6TH FLOOR LOBBY - OB/GYN - DUSK

The elevator opens its doors and Cleo's chair is wheeled out by the nurses. The sixth floor has no windows.

They pass the nurse station and reach the door that leads to the Birthing room. Señor Antonio leans in to Cleo -

SEÑOR ANTONIO  
Doctor Vélez will only let me come  
up to this point....

Doctor Vélez interrupts -

DOCTOR VÉLEZ  
Don't mind me. Come in if you like.

SEÑOR ANTONIO  
No, uh... I have a patient...

His excuse hangs in the air and he puts a hand over Cleo's shoulder -

SEÑOR ANTONIO (CONT'D)  
You're going to be just fine,  
Cleo...

And he scurries down the hallway. Frightened and confused, Cleo has barely registered the exchange.

The nurses wheel her into -

INT. - ADMISSION CUBICLES - OB/GYN - DUSK

A cubicle, separated from other cubicles by a curtain and screens, the gynecological bed is in the middle. The nurses help Cleo to get up and out of the wheelchair -

CONTINUED:

DOCTOR VÉLEZ  
Take off all your clothes and put  
on this gown, OK?

Cleo undresses. She doesn't have much privacy and, behind the poorly closed curtains she can see other women being examined. Doctor Vélez asks her questions to which she answers in confusion.

DOCTOR VÉLEZ (CONT'D)  
When did you last menstruate?

CLEO  
September?

DOCTOR VÉLEZ  
Do you have a due date?

CLEO  
June 21st...

DOCTOR VÉLEZ  
Were there any complications during  
the pregnancy?

Scared, Cleo shakes her head no.

DOCTOR VÉLEZ (CONT'D)  
How long ago did your water break?

CLEO  
About an hour and a half ago. We  
couldn't get out of where we were  
and...

DOCTOR VÉLEZ  
Was it clear?

CLEO  
Huh?

DOCTOR VÉLEZ  
The water. Was it transparent?

CLEO  
No. A little thick. Like soup.

Cleo is about to close her gown when she suffers a very painful contraction. Doctor Vélez orders -

CONTINUED:

DOCTORA VÉLEZ  
Don't push Cleo, blow. Help her get  
on the bed...

The nurses help Cleo lie down on the gynecological bed.  
Doctor Vélez touches the top of her belly -

DOCTOR VÉLEZ  
Check dilation.

A RESIDENT examines her and declares

RESIDENT  
Seven or eight centimeters...

DOCTOR VÉLEZ  
Frequency?

The RESIDENT checks on the cardiac rhythm with a Pinard  
stethoscope while a nurse fills out papers.

RESIDENT  
I can't hear the foetal focus...

NURSE  
Blow, ma'am!

RESIDENT  
She's full. She's in second  
plane... expulsive with full  
dilation and there is four cross  
meconium and asystole.

Doctor Vélez gives a round of instructions -

DOCTOR VÉLEZ  
Plug in mixed solution at 5% and  
wheel her into Labor immediately.  
Alert pediatrics. Prepare a  
laryngoscope, reanimation equipment  
and an ambu.

The nurses quickly bring a gurney up to the gynecological  
table. The resident asks Cleo -

RESIDENT  
Can you climb onto the gurney for  
me?

DOCTOR VÉLEZ  
Let's get your baby out.

CONTINUED:

The nurses help Cleo move onto the gurney.

INT. - HALLWAY - LABOR ROOMS - 6TH FLOOR - OB/GYN - DUSK

Fluorescent lights in a hallway with half-open frosted doors. The cries of a woman giving birth filter out from one of the labor rooms.

A nurse comes out of one of the rooms and goes into another.

At the end of the hallway we also hear a door opening, and soon after, Doctor Vélez and her team of nurses and residents appear pushing Cleo on her gurney.

When they reach the end of the hallway, they turn and enter -

INT. - BIRTHING ROOM - OPERATING ROOM - OB/GYN - DUSK

Nurses and residents work around Cleo who moans in pain. They put her on the birthing bed while Doctor Vélez washes her hands.

INTERN

Rubén Leñero's colleague is telling me that they've hospitalized injured students and some Halcones came in to kill them off inside the very hospital.

A nurse fixes Cleo's feet onto the braces. Doctor Vélez sits in front of her legs to deliver the baby.

Cleo has a strong contraction -

CLEO

Aaaaaaaahhhhhh!

DOCTOR VÉLEZ

Don't blow, Cleo. Push!

Cleo tries blowing in the middle of her cries of pain. A doctor comes in the door accompanied by a nurse who wheels in a cart with medical equipment. It's the PEDIATRICIAN.

Cleo breathes, agitated. And from between her legs, the baby's crown appears, like a rising sun.

DOCTOR VÉLEZ (CONT'D)

Almost there... Push!

CONTINUED:

Cleo screams.

CLEO

Aaaaaaaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!

It's a deep cry. A primeval scream from time immemorial.

CLEO (CONT'D)

Aaaaaaaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!

The baby is expelled between Cleo's legs and onto the hands of Doctor Vélez, who receives it. The baby doesn't cry or breathe. It is flaccid and hangs like a rag. It's completely smeared in green liquid.

Doctor Vélez cuts the umbilical chord and passes the baby over to the pediatrician who places it softly on his pediatric table and checks on it with a Pinard stethoscope.

Cleo follows all the action, the pediatric table only a yard away from her face.

PEDIATRICIAN

No heart beat. We'll try  
reanimation.

The pediatrician places the baby in hyperflexed position and puts the laryngoscope down its mouth. He begins aspiration with a catheter.

Cleo sees her baby. From its mouth, through the catheter, meconium comes out, a green dense liquid like pea soup.

The pediatrician pulls the catheter out of the baby's mouth and places the "ambu", a manual resuscitator, on the baby's mouth and nose. Doctor Vélez is working on the placenta expulsion.

Cleo watches the baby on the table. The Pediatrician pumps the "ambu" balloon repeatedly, attempting to animate the baby.

Cleo looks at the baby, its face almost entirely covered by the "ambu" and finds out it's a girl.

The Pediatrician stops pumping the "ambu" and checks for a heartbeat with the stethoscope -

PEDIATRICIAN (CONT'D)

Still asystole...

And he walks over, softly, to Cleo



PEDIATRICIAN (CONT'D)

Ma'am. I am afraid you're baby is stillborn. She had no amniotic liquid. And the green liquid blocked her lungs. I am so sorry, *señora*.

Cleo listens in silence, unable to take her eyes off her baby. The nurses start cleaning off its tiny body.

DOCTOR VÉLEZ

I am so sorry, Cleo...

PEDIATRICIAN

Would you like to say good bye to your baby, ma'am?

Cleo nods. The nurses carry the baby and place it quietly on Cleo, who hugs it, her gaze lost. Doctor Vélez keeps working between her legs, cleaning her.

PEDIATRICIAN (CONT'D)

Who are you with? Can we call someone?

DOCTOR VÉLEZ

She's with family. They're outside.

Cleo whispers something.

DOCTOR VÉLEZ (CONT'D)

Did you say something, Cleo. I couldn't hear you...

CLEO

(whispering)

Señora Sofía... Señora Sofía...

DOCTOR VÉLEZ

Yes, Cleo, I will give her a call...

The nurses come to take the dead baby -

NURSE

May I? Ma'am?

Cleo nods and the nurse takes the baby over to a small table where they wrap her in a cloth.

Cleo watches as her baby girl disappears under the sheath, and when she is completely wrapped, the nurse seals the cloth with adhesive tape.

CONTINUED:

The nurse takes a marker and writes on the sheath -

NEWBORN - CLEODEGARIA GUTIERREZ.

**Friday, June 11, 1971.**

The light of a new day floods the room. Beds in a row along the walls, mothers who have recently given birth are resting.

Some women carry their babies. Others breastfeed. Some sleep. There are bows, envelopes, flowers.

Cleo is awake, lying in bed. Her gaze is absent.

A nurse carries a baby up to a bed. A woman holds it, excitedly and begins to breastfeed. The nurse helps her, both of them whisper effusively, interrupting the peace in the room.

Cleo doesn't turn to look at them, or perhaps she can't hear them, her gaze is lost.

Señora Sofía comes to the door and stops for a moment. She watches Cleo, who is motionless, surrounded by the low hum of barely awakened traffic from Avenida Cuauhtémoc and the breastfeeding woman's effusive whispers.

Señora Sofía comes into the hall and walks towards Cleo. She sits on the bed and holds her hand. Cleo looks at her, and attempts a feeble smile.

Señora Sofía squeezes her hand as her wounded heart tries to offer solid support that Cleo can't find in the void.

INT/EXT - GALAXIE 500 - BAJA CALIFORNIA AVE - URES AND HUATABAMPO CROSSTREETS - TONALÁ - DAY

Señora Sofía is driving. Next to her, Cleo. They are silent. They turn right, leaving Baja California Ave behind and with it, the sun.

They drive down Ures, both look straight ahead, surrounded by the purr of eight cylinders changing gears automatically.

They turn left, onto Huatabampo streets. They continue in silence under the shade of the houses until they reach the corner with Tonalá, where a car waits its turn to turn.

CONTINUED:

Señora Sofía breaks behind the car and waits. The two women look ahead in silence. Señora Sofía holds Cleo's hand and starts bawling.

It's a quiet and prolonged wail that breaks into a long and articulate lament. She hugs Cleo who is still silent.

The car in front of them has moved and now the GALAXIE holds up the traffic, three cars waiting behind it already. A HORN honks.

Señora Sofía cries while hugging Cleo. She cries out all the impotence, all the fear, all the uncertainty, and all the humiliation. She cries, ignoring the chorus of horns that has joined her lament.

EXT.- CORNER OF HUATABAMPO AND TONALÁ - DAY

The Galaxie 500 is motionless and stops traffic at the corner. Impatiently, cars go around it on the left, some of them protesting rudely.

The two women inside the Galaxie continue to hug.

**Wednesday, June 23, 1971.**

EXT- PATIO - TEPEJI 21 - AFTERNOON

Littered with dog shit, the patio is empty except for a red tricycle, a football and Borrás, enjoying the last few rays of sun.

A mysterious WHISTLE filters in from the distance. Alert, Borrás lifts his head.

The sad and solitary whistle invokes a presence, invading the walls of the house.

In the patio, Borrás begins to bark.

EXT. - TEPEJI STREET - TEPEJI 21- AFTERNOON

The whistle pierces through the afternoon quiet and seems to bounce off the facades of the houses.

Sad and defeated, Tepeji 21 rests on its solid ground, which blends with the grey concrete of the sidewalk.

The Galaxie 500 and the Valiant are parked in front of the house.

A KNIFE SHARPENER crosses on his bike, blowing on his whistle, suffusing the air with its ominous lament.

EXT - SMALL PATIO - TEPEJI 21- AFTERNOON

The parakeets seem to want to imitate the whistle with their song. Adela's voice calls from the second floor -

ADELA (O.C.)  
Move it!

INT. - KITCHEN - TEPEJI 21- AFTERNOON

Cleo is sitting next to the window, wrapped up in her own pain.

ADELA (O.C.)  
It's the sharpener! Move it! Cleo!

But Cleo remains motionless.

The fateful whistle fades away slowly and disappears.

Borras and the parakeets calm down.

Everything is in silence.

The afternoon light abates.

Cleo doesn't move.

TA-TA TA-TA TA-TA TA-TAAAAAAA...!

A car's nasal horn resounds on the street and Borras replies with his barks.

TA-TA TA-TA TA-TA TA-TAAAAAAA...!

Cleo does not recognize the sound of the horn but its rhythm -

TA-TA TA-TA TA-TA TA-TAAAAAAA...!

Cleo gets up and slowly walks out the door to the -

SMALL PATIO -

She crosses out onto -

EXT. - PATIO - TEPEJI 21 - AFTERNOON

Cleo watches Adela open the street door while she grabs Borrás by the collar. She discovers -

A PALE YELLOW RENAULT 21 parked in front of the door. It revs and pulls in, easily crossing the doorframe and continuing its way up to the hallway door.

Paco and Pepe peek out from the hall and see their mother at the wheel of the Renault. Paco cries out -

PACO  
Toño! Sofi! Come!

PEPE  
Mom bought a new car!

Paco comes out to examine the car's body. Pepe joins his brother. Cleo comes closer while Adela closes the door that leads to the street.

Señora Sofía pokes her head out of the car window -

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
You like it?

PACO  
How fast can it go?

Señora Sofía opens the door and comes out -

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
You check.

Paco hurries to sit in the driver's seat. Pepe runs around to the other side and sits in the passenger seat.

Toño and Sofi come out to the patio to see the new car.

TOÑO  
Why not a Maverick?

From the driver's seat, Paco protests -

PACO  
It only goes to 145! The Galaxie  
goes up to 200!

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
Because they're very expensive and  
I want a small car. I've had it up  
to here with that Galaxie!

CONTINUED:

Sofi sits in the back seat -

SOFI  
I like the new car, mommy.

PACO  
What about the Galaxie?

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
I sold it. They're coming to pick  
it up next week.

Sofi comes out of the car -

SOFI  
Does dad know?

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
No, it's a surprise.

Señora Sofía looks at Cleo -

SEÑORA SOFÍA (CONT'D)  
Hi, Cleo. Do you like the new car?

Cleo barely nods.

SEÑORA SOFÍA (CONT'D)  
And speaking of surprises, we're  
going on a trip this weekend and  
we're taking the Galaxie on its  
goodbye ride.

Paco and Pepe come out of the car and follow their mother and  
siblings into the hall.

SOFI  
Where to?

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
Tuxpan.

PACO  
Where's Tuxpan?

TOÑO  
I have practice!

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
You'll skip it. Tuxpan is in  
Veracruz.

CONTINUED:

From the patio and through the window, Cleo watches the lights of the house switching on and Señora Sofía crossing the hall up to the stairs. Paco and Pepe cross the hall following their mother.

PACO  
It's the beach?

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
Yes.

TOÑO  
The beach in Veracruz is so ugly.

Señora Sofía climbs the stairs, the four children follow her.

Out on the patio, Cleo watches the family disappear into the upper floor.

**Saturday, June 26, 1971**

EXT. TUXPAN FREEWAY - DAY

Palm trees, ceibas and banana plants give way to multicolored houses competing with tropical flowers and foliage and more palm trees, ceibas and banana plants.

The Galaxie 500 drives past a turn.

INT/EXT - GALAXIE 500 - TUXPAN FREEWAY - AFTERNOON

Cleo watches the landscape in silence, Pepe snuggles against her.

The radio's looking to tune into a station, going through tropical music, cumbias, and advertisements for a local dance.

TOÑO (O.C.)  
La Pantera doesn't get all the way here.

PACO (O.C.)  
I heard it for a little bit.

SEÑORA SOFÍA (O.C.)  
Look! The sea!

PACO  
Stop, stop, stop! Ma!

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
Why don't we go drop the bags off  
at the hotel first?

TOÑO  
By the time we get there it'll be  
dark.

PACO  
Let's go! Just for a little while.

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
OK. Only for a little bit though.

EXT. - ROADSIDE BEACH - AFTERNOON

The Galaxie pulls up next to the sands of a long grey overcast beach, empty except for the stunted skeleton of a brick building.

The family comes out of the car.

Toño and Paco immediately run to the shore taking off their shirts and pants and throwing them on the sand. Sofi and Pepe follow behind.

Señora Sofía takes off her shoes and follows her children, picking up the clothes strewn about on the sand.

Cleo walks to the shore where the children splash around. She is absent.

A gust of wind drags the breeze over to caress her face. Cleo breathes in the sea and closes her eyes. She breathes in, as if wanting to cleanse something very deep.

EXT. - GARDEN - BUNGALOWS -TUXPAN - DUSK

The fading light of day strokes the garden with soft coolness. An orchard surrounds the bungalows built in the 1940s their paint now nibbled on by time and saltpeter.

A RECEPTIONIST, carrying keys, guides Señora Sofía, Cleo and the children through the garden. They all carry bags. The receptionist opens the door.



INT. - ROOM - BUNGALOW - TUXPAN - DUSK

The sky's last light attempts to paint the windows but is defeated by the lightbulb inside a wicker lamp, which lights the small room with two beds.

Cleo, sits on one of the beds and putting Pepe's T-shirt on as he stands in front of her with his arms up in the air. When his head pokes out the collar, Pepe looks at her, surprised -

PEPE

Cat got your tongue?

Cleo shakes her head no.

PEPE (CONT'D)

Then why don't you talk.

Cleo smiles, with a smile that holds back tears, and walks him out of the room to a -

INT. - LIVING ROOM - BUNGALOW - TUXPAN - DUSK

Another wicker lamp hangs in the middle of the little dining room and two lamps on each side of the sofa, one without a shade, light the room.

Toño is tying knots with a string while Señora Sofía is applying vinegar on Paco's back with a cotton ball.

PACO

Ay! Ay ! Ay...!

SEÑORA SOFÍA

I told you to put on your T-shirt.

PACO

But it was cloudy!

SEÑORA SOFÍA

That's why! The glare is worse than the sun!

Next to him, crying and crying, Sofi waits her turn.

SEÑORA SOFÍA (CONT'D)

Are you dressed Pepe?

PEPE

Yes, but the cat got Cleo's tongue.

CONTINUED:

Señora Sofía smiles. Cleo sits on the sofa and grabs a cotton ball, douses it in vinegar, comes close to Sofi and starts applying it on her back.

Cleo and Señora Sofía swab wet cotton balls over Sofi and Paco's backs. Sofi won't stop crying but Cleo's gaze is absent.

INT. - RESTAURANT - TUXPAN - NIGHT

Hand-drawn illustrations of each dish and a stuffed sailfish decorate the walls of a family restaurant. Romantic music pours out of a rockola, accompanying the hum of the fluorescent lights.

The family's finishing dinner. Cleo cuts Sofi and Pepe's meat. They're wearing pajamas already. Toño has finished and is tying his knots.

SEÑORA SOFÍA

Children?

But the children are distracted.

SEÑORA SOFÍA (CONT'D)

Children?

She finally gets her children's attention.

SEÑORA SOFÍA (CONT'D)

Pay attention! I have something to tell you.

The children look at her expectantly. Señora Sofía hesitates, gathers her courage and -

SEÑORA SOFÍA (CONT'D)

Your dad's not in Ottawa.

SOFI

Is he back?!

SEÑORA SOFÍA

No. Your dad never went anywhere.

The children look at her, she's seems confused.

SEÑORA SOFÍA (CONT'D)

Well, yes. But he only went for a week and... your father's not coming back home.

CONTINUED:

The children watch her in silence. Toño and Paco are interested, Sofi and Pepe are confused.

The song ends and the rockola digests another coin, expelling a new lament.

SEÑORA SOFÍA (CONT'D)

We came on this trip so he could come get his things from the house.

PACO

What things?

SEÑORA SOFÍA

His things. Or what he says are his things. His clothes, the bookshelves...

PACO

Are you getting a divorce?

SEÑORA SOFÍA

He says he doesn't know.

Sofi starts to cry.

SOFI

He doesn't love us anymore?

SEÑORA SOFÍA

Dad loves you very much. He says he wants to see you.

TOÑO

When?

SEÑORA SOFÍA

He says he doesn't know when... Soon.

Sofi muffles her cries in Cleo's breast, Toño looks at the fan and Paco plays with his beans. Only Pepe is still looking at his mother, still confused.

SEÑORA SOFÍA (CONT'D)

There will be many changes, but we'll be together and it'll be an adventure.

Pepe rests his head on Cleo.

CONTINUED:

SEÑORA SOFÍA (CONT'D)

I'm starting a new full time job in publishing next week.

TOÑO

Publishing? But you're a chemist.

SEÑORA SOFÍA

I know, but your father hasn't sent any money yet and teaching high school is not enough. Plus, I love books and I never liked chemistry. It'll be another adventure.

But the children don't look very convinced. They still don't know this but this moment will be etched into their memories as fragments of images, smells, sounds and textures -

The food stains on the table, the paintings on the walls, the landscape of beans smashed by the fork on a plate.

The song ends.

EXT. - STREET - TUXPAN - NIGHT

The family roams around the streets. Quiet. Lost in thought.

**Sunday June 27, 1971.**

EXT. - PALAPA - TUXPAN BEACH - DAY

The sun bears down on the afternoon, beaming down on the waves and the burning sand on the empty beach. The waves follow one after another, incessantly, dragging their foam till they caress the sand without ever breaking.

A palapa shelters the family under its shade and its cool sand.

Paco and Pepe bury Sofi in the sand, sculpting long legs to which they add tennis shoes instead of feet.

Señora Sofía reads a book sitting on a folding cloth chair and Toño reads a Flash comic lying down on a hammock, swaying in the wind.

At the edge of the shade, Cleo is sitting on a chair, hypnotized by the rhythm of the waves and the foam melting as it touches the sand.

Time trickles by slowly.

EXT - TUXPAN BEACH - AFTERNOON/DUSK

The yellow end-of-the-afternoon light dances with the wind, caressing surfaces softly.

Paco and Sofi play in the waves, jumping over them, swimming under them, or resisting heroically on foot.

In her dress, Cleo stands next to Pepe who is digging holes, tunnels and roads in the sand too.

Señora Sofía comes in to the edge, followed by Toño who stops halfway. Paco and Sofi come out of the water running -

PACO

Are you going to come in?

SEÑORA SOFÍA

I have to go check on the tires  
since we're leaving tomorrow early.  
You coming?

PACO

No. It's our last day at the beach.

SOFI

I'm staying too.

SEÑORA SOFÍA

But if I leave, you can't go in. If  
something happens, Cleo can't swim.

PACO

But it's so mellow.

SEÑORA SOFÍA

I don't care. If you want to stay,  
those are the rules.

PACO

Not even by the edge?

SEÑORA SOFÍA

By the edge is fine. But just here,  
understood?

PACO AND SOFI

Yes...

CONTINUED:

PEPE

Me too?

SEÑORA SOFÍA

Yes, but right by the shore.

Señora Sofía looks at Cleo.

SEÑORA SOFÍA (CONT'D)

Can I leave them with you? I won't  
take long.

Cleo simply nods and watches Señora Sofía walk back with Toño to the Galaxie 500 parked behind the palapa.

In the background, the sun has lost its shine and peeks out, red and roundly from between the clouds.

Paco and Sofi go back to the water, Pepe follows.

CLEO

Just right by the shore.

Paco and Sofi run to the edge, splashing around with their feet, getting Pepe wet.

PEPE

Aaaah!

Paco and Sofi kick more water around to get Pepe wet, he runs away but falls on dry sand. Cleo runs to him and picks him up, he's crying. She tries to brush off the thousands of grains of sand sticking to his damp skin.

Paco takes advantage of the distraction and goes in deeper. Sofi begins to follow in after him when Cleo sees them -

CLEO

Paco! Just in the shallow water!  
Sofi!

Sofi obeys, Paco comes back to the shore too.

Cleo takes Pepe's hand and they walk back to the palapa together. As they step on warmer sand, Pepe stops, holds his arms up.

PEPE

Carry me.

CONTINUED:

CLEO

No way. You can do it alone. It's  
not hot anymore.

She looks to the shore -

CLEO (CONT'D)

Paco! I see you! Back to the shore!

PACO (O.C.)

But we're at the shore!

CLEO

Come closer! You heard your mother,  
if you don't come in, you have to  
get out!

She waits and when she's satisfied, she keeps walking.

Arms still up in the air, Pepe watches her go and throws  
himself on the sand.

Cleo barely looks -

CLEO (CONT'D)

Suit yourself. You're just getting  
more sand on you and I was going to  
clean you up in the palapa.

She keeps walking. Pepe gets up, crusty with sand, and  
hurries to catch up.

They reach the palapa and Pepe sits on a chair. Cleo starts  
dusting him off with a clean towel. She looks to the sea -

CLEO (CONT'D)

Hey! I'm watching you guys!

Cleo waits for the children to come back to shallow water and  
keeps cleaning Pepe.

PEPE

Did you know when I was grown up I  
was a sailor?

CLEO

Mmmhmmm...

PEPE

Yes, and I drowned in a storm.

CONTINUED:

CLEO  
Mmmhmmm...

She gets up and looks out to sea -

CLEO (CONT'D)  
Paco and Sofi! Closer!

Cleo keeps watching -

PEPE  
But the waves were so big....

CLEO  
Get back!

She walks to the edge of the palapa and stops to wait next to a post -

CLEO (CONT'D)  
Closer!

PEPE  
And it was night and there was so much lightning... and I didn't know how to swim...

Without taking her eyes from the waves, Cleo starts walking towards the shore.

CLEO  
Stay there Pepe.

The sun has vanished behind the mountain and the purple sky is laden with black clouds. The wind picks up the sand and makes new waves that crash arrogantly into the old ones.

Cleo stops -

CLEO (CONT'D)  
Help your sister!

Behind her, Pepe comes closer. Cleo sees him -

CLEO (CONT'D)  
Pepe! I told you to stay there!

Chided, Pepe goes back to the palapa.

Scared now, Cleo looks at the sea and looks around but the beach is deserted. Only a man on a horse far away and some people walking in the distance. She hurries to the shore.



As she reaches the edge, she walks fearfully in the water that moves back and forth and crashes around her legs, soaking her polyester dress.

She looks impotently at the waves, which Paco and Sofi wrestle, insignificant in a fierce and indifferent ocean that drags them further in.

Cleo tries to move closer to the children, fighting to keep her balance in the choppy waters reaching her waist.

The wind plays with the crests of the dark waves and the dense clouds are charged with tension in an ever darkening sky.

Cleo looks out to the beach but the man on the horse and the people are still very far away and she resigns herself to going deeper.

A wave crashes over the children's heads. When it passes, Sofi reemerges but she can barely take a breath when another waves comes crashing over her.

Other waves cross and crash up to the sky.

Cleo fights desperately to stay on her feet in the midst of the cross-current chaos enveloping her without failing to look straight in front of her-

Where the waves crash, rising up, and yet others take their place, the little heads don't emerge.

Another wave powers up and a little head bobs up in front of her, it's Sofi taking up air, and Paco resurfaces too.

He turns to look and sizes up the wave, grabs his sister and swims with the break to the beach, but the wave catches up with them, pulling them down.

Cleo comes close but is pushed back by the waves. In front of her, the little heads reemerge. Paco tries to repeat the move and pushes Sofi to the front, but the water envelops them.

It also envelops Cleo, but doesn't drag her out. She pushes towards Sofi, who tries to swim to her. Cleo reaches her body out to get her and as she pulls her in, her feet lose contact with the bottom and the two go under.

Another wave galloping with foam. And behind it, Cleo emerges carrying Sofi. Paco swims behind them.

At the beach, a group of people gathers, and with them the man on the horse.

CONTINUED:

Cleo carries Sofi and finally manages to reach shallower waters, Paco follows a little further behind. A couple of young guys run towards them but they don't help, they just look.

Carrying Sofi, Cleo reaches the shore and collapses on the beach, Paco next to her. Sofi coughs and Cleo hugs her on her lap.

Curious onlookers surround them and behind them, Señora Sofía, followed by Toño come running from the palapa.

Cleo cleans sand off of Sofi's face and starts crying. She cries and hugs Sofi who is also crying, and rocks with her. Cleo hugs her as if her life depended on it.

Señora Sofía throws herself on the sand next to Cleo and yanks Sofi from her. Sofi hugs her mom. Paco comes to them and hugs them both.

Toño watches, next to the bystanders, and next to him Pepe looks scared.

Señora Sofía checks on Sofi -

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
Are you OK, my love?

Sofi nods -

SOFI  
Cleo saved us...

The recent emotion pushes more tears. Señora Sofi looks at Cleo who is crying inconsolably. It's a deep and painful cry, a cry that washes it all away.

Señora Sofía hugs her mightily -

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
Thank you, thank you, thank you  
Cleo...

But Cleo can't stop crying -

CLEO  
I didn't want her... I didn't want  
her...

Señora Sofía tries to calm her -

CONTINUED:

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
Shhh, shhh, shhh... They're OK. The  
kids are OK....

But Cleo insists amidst tears and snot -

CLEO  
I didn't want her... I didn't want  
her to be born...

She breaks down completely -

CLEO (CONT'D)  
Poor little girl! ... I didn't want  
her to be born! ... I didn't want  
her to be born!...

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
It's going to be all right, Cleo...  
It's going to be all right...

The two women cry, hugging. It's a shared cry, with sobs like  
retching, and long silences exploding in prolonged vocals.

The children close in on the women, hugging them. Only Toño  
watches, standing by.

The onlookers scatter. The rider pulls the reins and the  
horse continues its way down the beach.

The furious sea and its restless waves reflect the last  
glimmers of the day.

**Monday June 28, 1971.**

EXT. - PUEBLA FREEWAY - AFTERNOON

Fields spotted with clouds spread out between green hills.  
Further behind, the volcanos show off their snowy peaks.

The Galaxie 500 drives on, tiny, on the road crossing the  
landscape.

INT/EXT - GALAXIE 500 - PUEBLA FREEWAY -AFTERNOON

Señora Sofía is driving, and her index finger is calm. Next to her, Toño looks out the window without looking at the landscape. In the rear, Paco also lets the landscape slide by his lost gaze.

Sofi is hugging Cleo, who carries a sleeping Pepe on her lap. The family rides in silence.

EXT. - FREEWAY ENTRANCE TO THE CITY - AFTERNOON

Mexico City extends out to the distance.

The Galaxie 500 drives on, heavy with uncertainty.

EXT. - HOUSE - TEPEJI 21- AFTERNOON

The house rests patiently, resigned to enjoy the last rays of sun.

The Jr. high marching band turns the corner and heads into the street with its martial drums and trumpets.

The Galaxie 500 pulls into the street and follows the band's rear guard until it parks in front of the house. Toño immediately opens the door and stretches out on the street.

Pepe comes out after him, running to the door, holding his privates and ringing the doorbell. Borrás answers by barking.

Señora Sofía comes out of the car and opens the trunk, Sofi comes out after her. Cleo comes out last and heads to the trunk as well.

Adela opens the door holding Borrás by the collar. Pepe runs through the door and rushes in.

INT. - DOWNSTAIRS - TEPEJI 21 - AFTERNOON

The afternoon sun still pierces the windows obliquely and streaks the living room shadows with its light. Outside the family is on the sidewalk -

CLEO

Tie the dog ...

SEÑORA SOFÍA

You too, kids. Don't play dumb and come help us with the things.

CONTINUED:

The children who were already walking up to the house stop and come back to help begrudgingly.

Inside, the skylight lights the stairs but barely touches the tiles in the hall. Pepe bursts in from the patio and runs to the bathroom that is under the stairs, goes in, shuts the door.

Adela crosses through the windows that open to the patio, dragging Borrás by the collar. She listens to the jet in the toilet.

Inside, the house waits. It seems to have grown larger. The absence of the bookshelves has left towers of books piled on the floor and a seeming emptiness.

Toño comes in, carrying his things. He's rushing but stops in the middle of the hall, surprised by the space—it seems new. Paco comes in right after and stops next to his brother.

Señora Sofía walks in with Sofi. The toilet flushes and Toño reaches his verdict -

TOÑO

It's horrible. It's horrible  
without the bookshelves...

PACO

I like it better this way...

Toño runs up the stairs...

TOÑO

It's awful.

Paco follows after him. Pepe comes out of the bathroom and follows his mother and Sofi up the stairs -

SOFI

What's so horrible mommy?

SEÑORA SOFÍA

He doesn't like the hallway without  
the bookshelves.

SOFI

What bookshelves?

SEÑORA SOFÍA

The ones that used to be in the  
hall.

CONTINUED:

SOFI  
Oh! You're right!

PEPE  
Wow! It looks bigger!

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
What did you think about our  
adventure?

SOFI  
I liked it a lot.

Señora Sofía and the children disappear upstairs, where the television is already on.

Outside, on the patio, Cleo walks, carrying three bags and runs into Adela who is back without the dog.

ADELA  
I'm going to the store, there's no  
ham. How was it then?

CLEO  
Real pretty. Go. I'll tell you  
about it later.

Adela continues on her way out. Cleo comes into the hall. Crosses and goes up the stairs carrying the luggage.

From upstairs Pepe exclaims -

PEPE (O.S.)  
The desk is gone too!

INT. UPSTAIRS HALL - TEPEJI 21- AFTERNOON

Cleo makes it up to the hall and leaves the luggage on the floor. The family has begun to take over the spaces -

Pepe sits next to Paco who is already in front of the television.

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
And we'll have other adventures.  
And we'll travel a lot.

PACO  
We'll go to Dinseyland?

CONTINUED:

Toño puts stuff away in a drawer in his room and Sofi goes to her room to grab a doll. Señora Sofía goes to Cleo, takes one of the bags and puts it in her room -

SEÑORA SOFÍA

We don't have enough money...

Cleo takes the other bag to Toño and Paco's room. Toño comes out and sits in the armchair in front of the television.

SEÑORA SOFÍA (CONT'D)

But we can go on adventures in the car. What if we went to a ghost mining town in the desert?

PEPE

And there's ghosts?

Paco gets up, following his mother into her room -

PACO

No, silly. That's what you call towns that are abandoned. And what's over there?

Cleo comes out of Toño's room carrying a load of laundry and drops it next to the stairs.

Señora Sofía comes out of her room followed by Paco. The phone rings.

SEÑORA SOFÍA

Nothing. Just the town and the abandoned mine. Or we could go to the Lacandon jungle, or Oaxaca...

SOFI

Oaxaca, Yes! And we could visit Cleo's village.

Señora Sofía comes back to the hall and sits in the couch next to Pepe and Sofi who takes up the other spot.

PACO

I was there.

SOFI

Finders keepers...

Cleo picks up...

CONTINUED:

CLEO  
Hello? Yes, thank you ma'am... Yes  
just a moment...

She lowers the phone and calls out -

CLEO (CONT'D)  
Señora Sofi? It's señora Molly  
calling.

Señora Sofía gets up, calming the children -

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
Don't fight. You sit here, Paco.

She goes up to the phone -

SEÑORA SOFÍA (CONT'D)  
Hello, *comadre*. How are you? I'm  
just back from Tuxpan...

Cleo gathers the dirty laundry into a pile. Pepe calls from  
the couch -

PEPE  
Cleo? Can you bring me a banana  
milkshake?

SOFI  
Me too?

Cleo picks up the pile of clothes -

CLEO  
Sure. Just lemme take these clothes  
up to wash. Do you want something,  
Paco?

PACO  
Any Gansitos?

CLEO  
I'm not sure, but if not, I'll go  
get some later.

Cleo starts to go down the stairs. Señora Sofía continues her  
phone conversation -

SEÑORA SOFÍA  
Yes, it was wonderful... Yes, the  
kids are all right... No... lovely!  
.... good...  
(MORE)



SEÑORA SOFÍA (CONT'D)  
Well Paco and Sofi scared the  
living daylights out of me...

INT - DOWNSTAIRS - TEPEJI 21 - AFTERNOON

Cleo goes down the stairs carrying her pile of clothes, the family conversations and television filter down from upstairs.

As she reaches downstairs, she crosses the empty hallway and the breakfast room. She goes into the kitchen and out the back.

EXT. - SMALL PATIO - TEPEJI 21 - AFTERNOON

The patio, in shadows now, floats in the afternoon quiet. Borrás sleeps and the parakeets are quiet. Only the hum of the city in the distance.

Cleo comes out of the kitchen carrying her load of dirty laundry and crosses the tiny patio to go up the metal staircase that leads to the roof.

Her steps reverberate throughout the bony structure in a metallic moan that echoes through the tiny patio, waking the caged birds.

Cleo reaches the step in front of her room and keeps walking upwards. A sweet potato vendor lets out his sad howl in the distance.

Step by step, Cleo ascends.

Yet further up, beyond the roof, the sky is pure.

Pietrasanta, September 23, 2016.