

A CEMETERY RISING

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. LA ESPERANZA CEMETERY - DAY

Memorial Park entrance.

A seemingly peaceful cemetery on a glorious summer day.

Sapphire skies. Evergreen trees. Manicured flower-adorned lawns marked by ornate monuments, statues and tombstones. Waterfall features in a wooded glen.

Through open iron gates, the pale figure of a man materializes. An imposing gentleman in an expensive suit. RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III speaks in a sonorous voice.

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III
Hello, brave soul. I am Rutherford
Harrington III. The richest man in
this ironically-named cemetery.

The apparition wavers. He holds up one hand, as a warning.

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III (CONT'D)
Before you choose to intrude, I
ought to let you know... we're not
all accepting of outsiders here. I
personally do not welcome
diversity. But, that said, the
decision is yours.

He steps aside. We enter. Slowly. Harrington glides with us, staying just out of reach.

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III (CONT'D)
By now, you must surely realize
that I am, indeed, dead. Deceased.
The late, great Rutherford
Harrington III. Larger than life,
and larger than death.

He becomes transparent and begins to fade.

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III (CONT'D)
I sense your curiosity. There is
not much to say about me that
hasn't already been told. Except...
everyone believes I merely suffered
a heart attack.
(beat)
They are sadly mistaken.

Rutherford Harrington III dissipates.

MUSIC plays -- pretty, instrumental, with Spanish guitar.
[TRACK 1: OVERTURE/LA ESPERANZA]

A road meanders through the cemetery, past a lake, a quaint chapel, and three mission bells hanging under three adobe arches.

We ascend a hill to the top of the cemetery and find ARCADIO, 17, perched on the grass at Valor Ridge. This is where deceased military service members are buried. A flag at half-mast FLAPS in a gentle breeze.

Arcadio is at the grave of his UNCLE CABANO.

The inscription on the gravestone says: "In Loving Memory
 Lt. Miguel Cabano USA 1982-2017"

Arcadio wears a brightly colored patterned shirt, Panama hat, and a happy-go-lucky smile. He hums along with the cheerful tune.

From here we can see the Sunset Estates, the resting place of dearly departed wealthy people. Large, impressive burial plots set this section apart. The privileged are on higher ground.

This is where MAXIMILIANA, 16, sits on a stone bench in front of a dignified family mausoleum. It is made of marble, with Corinthian columns and stained glass windows.

MUSIC changes -- becomes more gothic. This mashup is Arcadio and Max's song. It highlights their differences.

Maximiliana is dressed in black, a stark contrast to her blonde waves of hair. She wears earbuds and moves her arms to the Depeche Mode-like instrumentation.

Arcadio and Maximiliana see one another... from afar... but make no acknowledgements.

MUSIC segues into a sample of Chopin Piano Sonata No. 2 in B-flat minor.

SPIRITS, that are ghosts of the cemetery's dead, appear out of nowhere. At first, it is difficult to make out exactly who or what they are. It is most of the cemetery cast.

One of the spirits is a Native American boy. We will meet him later as KUMEI.

The spirits dance around Arcadio, but he does not see them, or hear them.

Maximiliana watches. She does see.

-- the spirits SING. [**TRACK 2: SHADOWS IN THE DARK OF DAY**]

SPIRITS
WE'RE SHADOWS IN THE DARK OF DAY.

Arcadio speaks to Uncle Cabano's grave marker.

ARCADIO
 Something feels strange.

SPIRITS
ARCADIO, BOY, LOOK THIS WAY.

ARCADIO
 My dear Uncle Cabano, I miss you so much.

SPIRITS
OVER HERE. OVER THERE.

Arcadio feels a chill.

ARCADIO
 Who? What? Where?

SPIRITS
NO PULSE. NO BODY. NO HOPE.

ARCADIO
 Did I hear a sound?

SPIRITS
DID HE? DID HE?

ARCADIO
 I don't think so.

SPIRITS
NOPE.

ARCADIO
 Must be my imagination.

SPIRITS
*IT'S AN ENDLESS WINTER IN SUMMER,
 IT JUST WON'T GO AWAY.
 WE'RE PHANTOMS, SPECTERS,
 SHADES OF SOULS,
 SHADOWS IN THE DARK OF DAY.*

ARCADIO
 What to do?

KUMEI
 SET US FREE.

SPIRITS
 MAXIMILIANA, GIRL, PLEASE,
 MAKE HIM SEE.
 WE'RE SHADOWS IN THE DARK OF DAY.

KUMEI
 AFTER ALL THESE YEARS,
 SET US FREE.
 EVER AFTER AND ONCE AND FOR
 FOREVER,
 SET US, SET US FREE.

SPIRITS
 INEVITABLY, INEXORABLY,
 HERE WE ARE AND HERE WE STAY.
 SPOOKING, HAUNTING, SCARING STIFF,
 WE'RE SHADOWS IN THE DARK OF DAY...
 BOO!

The sky clouds over. Back into Chopin Piano Sonata No. 2.

-- Arcadio and Maximiliana SING.

ARCADIO	MAXIMILIANA
PRAY FOR THE DEAD AND THE DEAD WILL PRAY FOR YOU...	PRAY FOR THE DEAD AND THE DEAD WILL PRAY FOR YOU...

A black Cadillac limousine arrives to take Maximiliana home.

Arcadio scales the cemetery's surrounding wall and disappears into the canyon beyond.

The ghost of Rutherford Harrington III shows up and looms over the spirits.

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III
 Back to your plots everyone! That
 little Mexican boy can't save you.

A frightening CRACK of THUNDER.

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III (CONT'D)
 Dark force... ascend and emanate.

We feel a grim, unseen presence. A melancholy.

The spirits disperse.

FADE OUT...

EXT. LA ESPERANZA CEMETERY - DAY

MONTAGE:

- Sunny summer days pass uneventfully.
- Visitors come and go.
- Arcadio and Maximiliana visit their respective areas daily.
- Groundskeepers mow, and trim, and blow leaves.
- They take away wilted flowers.

END MONTAGE

Then one day...

A hearse-led funeral procession snakes its way through the park. Somber family and friends gather to put a loved one to rest.

The service takes place halfway between Valor Ridge and the Sunset Estates. Halfway between Arcadio and Maximiliana.

They both walk slowly toward the ceremony... and one another... they meet.

MAXIMILIANA
(to Arcadio)
You.

ARCADIO
Yo. Fancy meeting you here.

A MINISTER speaks, while Arcadio and Maximiliana stand at the back of a crowd gathered around the fresh grave.

MAXIMILIANA
You don't see the spirits... do you?

ARCADIO
Uh... no. You mean ghosts?

MAXIMILIANA
Well... some people are more in tune than others.

ARCADIO
OK...

MINISTER
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust.

Maximiliana squints at Arcadio's loud shirt. It's an orange flowered print with palm trees.

MAXIMILIANA

I'm sure the spirits can't miss you wearing that.

Arcadio laughs.

ARCADIO

You look good in black.

MAXIMILIANA

(rolls her eyes)

You know... you're cute, but obviously not my type.

ARCADIO

I could be.

(beat)

We're both spending our summer in a cemetery.

MAXIMILIANA

Maybe when you see the dead we can talk about it.

Arcadio looks around...

MAXIMILIANA (CONT'D)

You need to really focus.

Arcadio searches for ghosts... desperately...

MAXIMILIANA (CONT'D)

Now you're trying too hard.

ARCADIO

I'd give anything to see my Uncle Cabano... just one more time. I never got to say goodbye. He was like a father to me.

MAXIMILIANA

Just let it happen naturally.

She walks away...

The funeral ceremony concludes. The mourners disperse, still murmuring condolences. The hearse drives off.

Arcadio is left standing there, staring at the mound of dirt on the grave... still trying unsuccessfully to see a ghost.

He is conflicted... but decides to run after Maximiliana.

ARCADIO

Hey!

Maximilian turns back, reluctantly.

Arcadio catches up with her.

MAXIMILIANA

What.

ARCADIO

Why do you come here?

MAXIMILIANA

I find it inspiring, and artistic.
For my paintings. Anyway... that's
what I tell my family.

ARCADIO

(impressed)

Oh. I'm interested in your art.
Maybe I've seen it somewhere.

MAXIMILIANA

I am having a show at the
Contemporary Museum. You're not
invited.

She turns to walk away again.

ARCADIO

What's your name?

She keeps walking and calls out over her shoulder.

MAXIMILIANA

Max.

ARCADIO

Arcadio here. Nice to meet you,
Max.

Maximiliana gives no reply... but we see her smile for the
first time.

FADE OUT...

INT. CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM - EVENING

Posh. Uptown atmosphere. Large abstract paintings. Champagne.

Conservative well-dressed PATRONS appraise the art. We overhear their comments.

PATRON 1
Oh, my.

PATRON 2
Vibrant...

PATRON 3
A bit dark.

PATRON 2
Dramatic.

Arcadio enters. He hears the patrons gossiping.

PATRON 1
The girl is troubled.

PATRON 2
But, talented. She's got her own show.

PATRON 3
Thanks to daddy's money.

PATRON 1
She'll be off to boarding school in no time.

This piece of information concerns Arcadio. He spies Maximiliana talking to a group of WOMEN.

WOMAN 1
So intense, darling. My, what a vivid imagination you have.

Maximiliana sees Arcadio from across the room.

WOMAN 2
Quite unique and original.

Maximiliana is distracted by Arcadio, and she no longer hears what the women are saying.

Arcadio admires the art.

WOMAN 1
Your mother must be so proud.

Maximiliana's mother, ELIZABETH, 40s, joins the women. She looks like an older version of Maximiliana.

ELIZABETH

We've had a lot of feelings to express... I suppose. You know, the loss...

Elizabeth wears black. She dabs her eyes with a black lace handkerchief.

This catches Arcadio's attention. He is puzzled.

A distinguished man comes over to comfort Elizabeth. This is GERALD, late 40s, head of the museum trust.

GERALD

Oh, dear, Elizabeth. Let's brighten the mood, shall we?

ELIZABETH

I'm fine, Gerald. And, I thank you for hosting us this evening.

Just then, there is a commotion on the other side of the room. It is a woman who has obviously had too much champagne. This is AVA, late 30s, tall and striking.

AVA

Oh, boo hoo. It's like a never ending obituary with these people.

Maximiliana comes over and stands beside Arcadio.

We begin to faintly hear Arcadio and Max's song playing.

MAXIMILIANA

Well, since you're here... save me. This is so annoying. None of these people could possibly understand what I'm trying to express.

Arcadio is fascinated with one particular painting.

ARCADIO

I'm no expert, but I like this... landscape? It's evocative. It makes me feel something.

MAXIMILIANA

Who let you in here, anyway?

ARCADIO

I happen to know the artist.

MAXIMILIANA

I mean... wearing that shirt. Are those bananas?

ARCADIO

What? You don't admire the artistry of tropical trees?

MAXIMILIANA

Not a fan of yellow.

ARCADIO

I can tell by your painting.

MAXIMILIANA

What else do you see?

MUSIC segues into **[TRACK: 3 ART!]**

ARCADIO

(singing)

*LIFE... A BEATING HEART...
BRILLIANT... DEEP... ART!*

Everyone in the museum joins in to dance, and SING about how they see Maximiliana and her art.

PATRONS

*TRUTH BE TOLD,
A BIT TOO BOLD.
SPLENDID, CANDID,
COMPLEX... LIKE SEX!*

THE WOMEN

OH, NO!

AVA

SO WHAT? WATCH ME STRUT.

Ava dances wildly.

PATRONS

*IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU,
IT'S NOT ABOUT US.
LEAVE THE GOTHIC GIRL ALONE,
DON'T MAKE SUCH A FUSS.*

ARCADIO

*SHE'S BEAUTIFUL AND SMART.
YOU DON'T APPRECIATE HER... ART!*

MAXIMILIANA

YOU DON'T KNOW ME. NO ONE DOES.

ARCADIO
I LIKE IT ANYWAY. JUST BECAUSE.

THE WOMEN
*AUTHORITATIVE FATHER,
 GONE TOO SOON.
 LEFT ALONE,
 AND PAINTING A SAD TUNE.*

AVA
 (drunkenly)
GET OVER IT!

PATRONS
GET LOST!

THE WOMEN
BYE, AVA!

PATRONS
HAVE HER TOSSED!

Ava stumbles out.

THE WOMEN
*OH, THE IMAGE THE SHE PORTRAYS,
 REBELLIOUS, UNFRIENDLY,
 AND GAUDY, NOT GAY.
 TAKE IT AWAY... ART!*

MAXIMILIANA
YOU DON'T KNOW ME. NO ONE DOES.

ARCADIO
I LIKE YOU ANYWAY. JUST BECAUSE.

The group singing concludes with Elizabeth shushing everyone. She shakes a finger at her daughter.

ELIZABETH
 Stay away from that boy!

Arcadio is bothered. He shrugs it off, and goes back to contemplating the art with Maximiliana.

MUSIC change to instrumental.

ARCADIO
 I see... opposites attracting.

MAXIMILIANA
 Maybe you're not as dense as I
 thought.

ARCADIO

I'm the first in my family to go to college.

MAXIMILIANA

What are you studying?

Arcadio looks her over. He likes what he sees.

ARCADIO

Anatomy.

ELIZABETH

Get him out of here!

MUSIC comes to a solid close. Arcadio exits.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF THE CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM - CONTINUOUS

Arcadio sits at a nearby bus stop, with a dreamy expression on his face.

Maximiliana comes out of the art gallery, and walks over to him.

MAXIMILIANA

Arcadio... I have to thank you for coming to my show. Everyone else there was insufferable.

ARCADIO

My pleasure. You're very gifted.

Maximiliana's limousine is waiting nearby. The chauffeur starts the engine, and pulls up to the bus stop.

MAXIMILIANA

Will you let my driver take you home?

ARCADIO

Oh, no. I couldn't. That's not necessary. I always take the bus.

MAXIMILIANA

I insist.

ARCADIO

Well...

The chauffeur gets out of the limo. This is CLAUDE, 50s, with a regal bearing, wearing a formal suit. Tall and thin.

Multiracial. Attractive. Hair graying at the temples. He speaks with a fake-sounding British accent.

CLAUDE
M'lady.

MAXIMILIANA
Please take my friend home, Claude.

Claude looks down his nose at Arcadio.

CLAUDE
Very well then.

He opens the door to let Arcadio into the back of the limo.

ARCADIO
Goodnight, Max.

MAXIMILIANA
Night.

INT./EXT. LIMOUSINE - CONTINUOUS

Arcadio is awkward in such a luxurious car. He breathes in the smell of the leather interior, and runs his hand over the wood-paneled door.

He puts the window down to gaze at Maximiliana as they drive away, watching until she is out of sight. Then, Arcadio looks out of the open sunroof.

CLAUDE
Don't even think about it.

ARCADIO
I've always wanted to do that.
Stick my head out... just like in
the movies.

The sunroof closes.

CLAUDE
Where to?

ARCADIO
The southeast side.

Claude harrumphs.

CLAUDE
Aren't you the lad from the
cemetery?

ARCADIO

Yes, sir.

They leave the affluent neighborhood, and get on the freeway.

ARCADIO (CONT'D)

If you don't mind me asking... who is buried in the fancy crypt?

CLAUDE

The Harrington mausoleum?
Rutherford Harrington III.

ARCADIO

Oohhh. That's why Max's mother is in mourning.

Claude harrumphs again.

Arcadio is not sure what to make of the response.

ARCADIO (CONT'D)

Is that why Max is being sent off to school?

CLAUDE

Not your business. Not mine either. One would do well to stay out of that family's affairs.

ARCADIO

Uh, alright... sorry... you can take the Market Street exit. It's coming up.

They ride in silence for a few miles. Claude steers the limo off the freeway, and onto a dark street. The headlights shine on an old wall mural celebrating the Chicano community.

ARCADIO (CONT'D)

I'm sorry for your loss, though, Sir.

(beat)

And I feel for Max, that's all. How did her father die?

CLAUDE

Heart attack. And, not my loss. The world is better off without Rutherford Harrington, if you ask me. I'm surprised he had a heart.

ARCADIO

Oh.

(beat)

Well, this is my neighborhood. I can get out at the next light.

CLAUDE

As you wish.

Claude pulls the limo over, across the street from a taco shop. Arcadio tries to open the door, but it is locked. Claude gets out to come around and open it.

ARCADIO

OK, this is a little ridiculous.

Claude lets Arcadio out, with a curt nod.

ARCADIO (CONT'D)

Thank you.

Claude harrumphs one last time.

EXT. ON THE STREET - CONTINUOUS

As the limo drives off, Arcadio hears someone hooting from the taco shop. It is his cousin, DIAMANTES, 25, suave, in club attire. Arcadio cringes at this chance encounter.

DIAMANTES

Arcadio! Oye... *primo!*

ARCADIO

Nevermind. Pay no attention to the limo, cousin. It's no big deal.

DIAMANTES

It's just funny because... that chauffeur looked familiar to me.

ARCADIO

The driver? That's hard to believe. Considering...

DIAMANTES

What? I have legit business too.

ARCADIO

Do you think you might have... sold him something? No way.

DIAMANTES

Maybe... *es posible*... I can't be sure. Here, have some *carnitas*. Isn't your *mami* feeding you?

ARCADIO

She's got a job and nine other kids. I'm pretty much on my own now, you know.

DIAMANTES

You're too skinny. I told my *papi* I'd look out for you.

ARCADIO

No, I told your *papi* I'd look out for you. I visited his grave at the cemetery today.

DIAMANTES

I don't understand how you go there every day. It's difficult for me.

ARCADIO

I like it that place.

DIAMANTES

As long as you're keeping up with your studies.

ARCADIO

I am.

Someone calls out for Diamantes. This is OLIVIA, 30, from Mexico. She speaks in broken English.

OLIVIA (O.S)

Dia-MAAAN-tesss...

ARCADIO

Who is that?

DIAMANTES

Just Olivia, a waitress from the club.

ARCADIO

I can smell her perfume from here.

DIAMANTES

I'm trying to help her get some papers.

ARCADIO
Oh. Undocumented.

DIAMANTES
Shhh...

Olivia comes around the corner of the taco shop. Scantily dressed. Long, dark hair. Beauty mark on her upper lip.

She wraps her arms around Diamantes' neck, and then runs her fingers through his dark curls.

OLIVIA
Let's go to party.

DIAMANTES
Give me just a minute. Wait in the car.

OLIVIA
(obediently)
I go.

Hardly noticing Arcadio, Olivia wanders back behind the taco shop.

OLIVIA (O.S) (CONT'D)
Extra salsa, por favor!

Diamantes' order is ready. He gets the bag of food and savors its aroma. He pulls out a taco and hands it to Arcadio.

DIAMANTES
Here, take one. And, tell me where you've been tonight.

ARCADIO
An art show.

DIAMANTES
Ooh, fancy. Not... a girl?

ARCADIO
Yes.

DIAMANTES
Ah, I thought you didn't have time for that.

ARCADIO
This one is different.

Diamantes raises his eyebrows suggestively.

ARCADIO (CONT'D)
I've never felt this way before.

FADE OUT...

INT. ARCADIO'S BEDROOM - LATER

The room is small and simple, almost a closet, with no decorations. It is furnished with just a cot and a nightstand. On the nightstand is a reading lamp, a pile of textbooks and a laptop.

Arcadio lies on the bed. Smiling. Thinking about his evening with Maximiliana. He is smitten.

It is noisy outside and we hear VOICES speaking Spanish. There is a RUSTLING at the open window.

A black cat appears. This is KIKO.

ARCADIO
Kiko! What's up, gato?

Kiko leaps into the room and onto the bed. He lets Arcadio stroke his fur.

ARCADIO (CONT'D)
Oh, Kiko. What a day I've had. What a wonderful day. I finally talked to her. Maximiliana... Max. She said to call her Max. I'm in love with her already. But, don't tell anyone.

Kiko purrs.

ARCADIO (CONT'D)
She could never be with a guy like me... even if she wanted to. But, I think she might like me... just a little bit.

Kiko snuggles up next to Arcadio and goes to sleep.

ARCADIO (CONT'D)
Oh, Max...
(beat)
There was just something odd about all the people around her tonight. Her mother was so melodramatic. The drunk lady had a problem.
(MORE)

ARCADIO (CONT'D)

And, I actually thought the limo driver wasn't as snobby as he pretended to be.

Arcadio yawns.

ARCADIO (CONT'D)

I may not be able to see the ghosts, but I do sense things.

Arcadio falls asleep.

FADE OUT...

EXT. LA ESPERANZA CEMETERY - DAY

Arcadio is on Valor Ridge. Maximiliana is at the Sunset Estates tomb. He waves to her. She ignores him, much to his dismay.

Then, suddenly...

Finally...

When he is least expecting it...

Almost imperceptibly... it happens...

A mist begins to swell around Arcadio. And, much to his disbelieving eyes...

The mist becomes his dead Uncle Cabano. He wears a military uniform, and looks just like Arcadio remembers him.

ARCADIO

(astounded)

Ay -- ay mi... mi tio! Uncle!

Arcadio jumps up to embrace him, but there is nothing there. His arms flail through the air.

The ghost of Uncle Cabano laughs and begins to dance. Salsa. We hear the happy Spanish guitar music.

ARCADIO (CONT'D)

I can see you! Is it really you?

He dances in step with his uncle, joyfully snapping his fingers.

UNCLE CABANO

Yes, my favorite nephew. It is I.

ARCADIO

Oh, I have missed you so much. So,
so much.

Suddenly, Arcadio stops dancing. He wants to cry.

ARCADIO (CONT'D)

I really thought you would come
home from the war.

UNCLE CABANO

It's alright... it was my time.
And, it all happened so fast... I
didn't feel a thing.

Arcadio is relieved. He holds his hands to his heart.

ARCADIO

I thank God you did not suffer.

UNCLE CABANO

Just a flash of light... and then I
was here... with a new battle to
fight.

-- they SING. [**TRACK 4: DIVISIONS**]

Uncle Cabano sings/Arcadio raps. The MUSIC has a Latin/trap
feel.

ARCADIO

*I CROSS MYSELF, I SEE YOUR FACE.
HOW ARE YOU STILL IN THIS PLACE?*

UNCLE CABANO

*I CAN'T GO YET, I MUST RECTIFY...
DIVISIONS, RESTRICTIONS,
ESCALATIONS... AS TIME GOES BY.*

ARCADIO

*IT FEELS LIKE FOREVER.
BOOM, YOU WERE GONE.
LOST YOU, WITHOUT WARNING,
LEFT ALL ALONE, TO CARRY ON.
NO MONEY, NO GOLD CHAINS.
RICH MEMORIES.
REFLECTIONS OF YOU,
ARE ALL THAT REMAINS.*

Uncle Cabano points to Maximiliana's limo pulling up to the
Sunset Estates. Claude the driver gets out to let her in.

UNCLE CABANO
*THE WEALTHY ONES,
 ARE OVER THERE.
 IN DEATH AND IN LIFE,
 NOTHING'S FAIR.
 IN SPITE OF ALL THE
 INJUSTICE AND PAIN...
 YOUR EVER LOVING UNCLE,
 I REMAIN.*

ARCADIO
*I CROSS MYSELF, I SEE YOUR FACE.
 THANKFUL FOR THIS MOMENT,
 US TOGETHER IN THIS PLACE.*

UNCLE CABANO
*I CAN'T GO YET, I MUST RECTIFY...
 DIVISIONS, RESTRICTIONS,
 ESCALATIONS... AS TIME GOES BY.*

The limousine moves slowly past on the road below. A tinted window opens, and Maximiliana peers out, knowingly.

ARCADIO
 That's Max. Maximiliana. Isn't she lovely?

UNCLE CABANO
 Her father is connected to a dangerous energy here.

ARCADIO
 I always thought the cemetery was beautiful.

UNCLE CABANO
 In the light of day, it is a nice place. At night, tensions are rising.

ARCADIO
 Can I help? You know I'm here because of you.

UNCLE CABANO
 You're a good boy... so young and so courageous.

ARCADIO
 I don't feel brave. Not at all. But, I want to help. You must let me help.

UNCLE CABANO
No. You should leave before
nightfall.

ARCADIO
I will return tomorrow.

UNCLE CABANO
Go and enjoy your life. Arcadio,
the moments... they go fast.

Uncle Cabano dissolves into the dusk.

Arcadio shouts out to the empty cemetery.

ARCADIO
La Esperanza! I see! I finally see!

Arcadio races over to the Sunset Estates. He goes right up to
the Harrington mausoleum.

The inscription says: "Rutherford Harrington III 1963-2019"

ARCADIO (CONT'D)
He died this year.

Arcadio knocks on the stained glass entrance.

ARCADIO (CONT'D)
Hello... Sir? Mr. Harrington?

Nothing happens.

ARCADIO (CONT'D)
Show yourself. I know you're here.

Nothing happens. Arcadio waits. It is getting dark.

ARCADIO (CONT'D)
La Esperanza means hope. And, I
feel hope.

Then...

Rutherford Harrington III emerges behind Arcadio.

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III
That is a paradox.

Arcadio jumps. He whirls around and sees the ghost. He tries
to speak, but no words come out.

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III (CONT'D)
You asked for me. Here I am.

Arcadio regains his composure.

ARCADIO

Sir. Are you part of what is keeping this cemetery divided?

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III

I am certainly not against keeping the... lesser souls... in their respective places.

ARCADIO

What about the evil spirit here?

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III

I am in control.

ARCADIO

Are you sure?

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III

You're rather insolent.

ARCADIO

Why don't you let everyone move on?

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III

Not until my killer is exposed.

ARCADIO

Killer!?

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III

A personal grudge.

ARCADIO

What? Who?

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III

I doubt a little boy like you can figure it out.

Another apparition pops up. A skinhead. Meet SYD. White. Punk. Neo-Nazi. Tattoos. Sneer.

SYD

Want me to get rid of him? I could kick his teeth in.

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III

Not yet, Syd. But, keep a watch on him. He's getting close to my daughter.

ARCADIO
I would never hurt her.

SYD
(imitating Arcadio)
I would never hurt her.

ARCADIO
What are you doing here?

SYD
Enforcing.

ARCADIO
You need to leave.

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III
Not one soul leaves here before I
do!

A CRACK of THUNDER. Harrington and Syd vanish. Arcadio is left alone, and bewildered.

We get another hint of a grim aura, a bleakness, pervading the cemetery.

FADE OUT...

INT. ARCADIO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Arcadio is on his bed, with Kiko the cat. He attempts to focus on a book. It is a library book about segregation. He reads aloud.

ARCADIO
Segregation. A means of maintaining superior status of the dominant group, practiced by various conquerors throughout history.

He thumbs through the book.

ARCADIO (CONT'D)
Most public cemeteries in the U.S. employ racial restrictions. Segregation of the dead, with whites in the more attractive plots.

He SINGS--

ARCADIO (CONT'D)
I WILL FIGHT IT...

KIKO

Meow.

ARCADIO

I will try.

KIKO

Meow.

ARCADIO

Kiko, if Max's father was murdered,
who could have done it?

Arcadio closes the book and opens his laptop. He searches on Rutherford Harrington III.

ARCADIO (CONT'D)

Wow. A very rich man. Landowner.

(beat)

Most of Harrington's fortune was left to the museum trust. Huh, that museum head seemed very close to Max's mother.

Arcadio reads off the internet.

ARCADIO (CONT'D)

Harrington leaves behind a wife, daughter, and son. I wonder where the son is.

Arcadio closes the laptop and thinks.

ARCADIO (CONT'D)

Claude the limo driver made quite a show of not approving of Harrington. His former boss. And, why did he look familiar to my drug dealing cousin Diamantes?

KIKO

Meow.

ARCADIO

Could Harrington's heart attack have been induced? I think I should get more information, and then talk to Max about this.

Arcadio sighs and closes his eyes.

ARCADIO (CONT'D)

I have to tell her. Max... *mi princesa*...

As he goes to sleep, the skinhead ghost, Syd, appears at the window.

SYD
(imitating Arcadio)
Mi Princesa...

Kiko stands up and arches his back, hair raised.

SYD (CONT'D)
I could reach in and stop his
heart.

Kiko hisses. Arcadio wakes. Syd is no longer there.

ARCADIO
Bad dream...

FADE OUT...

EXT. LA ESPERANZA CEMETERY - DAY

Arcadio is back at the cemetery. Maximiliana is not.

The memorial park is a new world for Arcadio, enlightened to its mysteries. He explores beyond Valor Ridge on the Veteran's Vista, and the Terrace Estates of the wealthy.

He goes down the hill, to the Greek Orthodox lawn and chapel, across from Freedom Terrace. He visits the Catholic Madonna Garden, Mount Sinai, and the Asian Vista Pacifica.

Children's graves are in the Garden of the Innocents near Memory Lake. Here where the grave markers tell stories of youth barely begun, he says a silent prayer.

At Mount Shalom, near the cemetery entrance, grave markers are vandalized with anti-Semitic graffiti. Arcadio's attempts to wipe it off fail.

ARCADIO
Who did this? So much hate. What is
wrong with people?

It's the ghost of the Native American boy. Kumei presents himself.

KUMEI
Same story as when I was alive.
It's the influence of racist
spirits.

Kumei has black hair, worn in two long braids, with a decorated headdress. He wears a fibrous skirt over pants, and moccasins. His body is wrapped in beads.

ARCADIO
Woah. Cool feathers.

KUMEI
I carry on the traditions of my tribe, even here, under the mission bells. Most of the Spanish Franciscans saw us as inferior savages. They took away our culture and our beliefs.

ARCADIO
And your land...

KUMEI
Stolen. We signed a peace treaty under duress.

A wind picks up around him. Kumei listens, intently.

KUMEI (CONT'D)
A change is coming. Through you... a divine revelation.

ARCADIO
Me?

KUMEI
I have waited for you. You and the girl. The prophesy must be heeded.

Kumei disappears.

Arcadio goes back up the hill to the Sunset Estates. The ghost of Rutherford Harrington III is there waiting for him.

ARCADIO
Sir.

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III
I see you've been fraternizing with the lower class.

ARCADIO
Intolerance is the problem here. And everywhere.

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III
I own half this town. I probably
own the neighborhood where you
live.

ARCADIO
Owned...

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III
A landlord is what I am.

-- he SINGS. [**TRACK 5: I RULE**]

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III (CONT'D)
*I RULED THE WORLD,
WITH AN IRON FIST.
MY SUCCESS KNEW NO BOUNDS,
AND NOW I AM MISSED.
MEN BENT TO MY WISHES,
MY WIFE COMPLIED.
MY DAUGHTER, MAXIMILIANA,
DISAPPROVED UNTIL I DIED.*

ARCADIO
Where is Max?

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III
I do not know. She is the one
person immune to my domination.

He raises his arms... hands spread...

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III (CONT'D)
*WATCH ME WIELD MY POWER,
WATCH ME RULE.
ABOVE ALL, I TOWER.
I RULE. I RULE.*

A wind whips up.

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III (CONT'D)
*ABOVE THE REST,
IS WHERE I STAND.
I AM NOBLE,
DARK FORCES AT MY COMMAND.
AVENGE MY DEATH,
ENEMY... PAY THE PRICE.
NOTHING LESS THAN JUSTICE,
WILL SUFFICE.*

ARCADIO
I disagree with your ideas.

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III
 WATCH ME WIELD MY POWER,
 WATCH ME RULE.
 ABOVE ALL, I TOWER.
 I RULE. I RULE.

ARCADIO
 You've got my attention. Now, if
 I'm going to help you... for the
 sake of Max and this cemetery... I
 need to know what happened the
 night you died.

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III
 I went to a nightclub at the
 request of my son. I had not seen
 him for many years.

ARCADIO
 How did you connect with him?

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III
 He contacted me through my
 chauffeur.

ARCADIO
 Claude. The British guy.

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III
 Ha. Black and Paki.

ARCADIO
 So what? What club did you go to?

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III
 City Jazz Club. I went alone. I sat
 at a reserved table in the lower
 balcony. I was served a drink that
 killed me. I never saw my son.

ARCADIO
 Tell me about the drink.

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III
 Whiskey. Neat. I had an immediate
 reaction. A cold sweat, and then a
 rush of heat. My heartbeat
 erratic... and that is the last
 thing I remember.

ARCADIO
 Who served you?

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III
A girl. I assumed she was a
waitress. She looked Mexican, like
you. Long dark hair.

ARCADIO
I'm actually half Italian, but
whatever.
(beat)
Have you ever been discriminated
against?

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III
That's not the issue.

ARCADIO
Open your mind. Sir. How did you
get to the club?

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III
I got a ride from the museum
trustee, Gerald. We had a meeting.

ARCADIO
I saw him at the art exhibition.
What did you talk about?

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III
I was changing my will.

ARCADIO
On the day you died?

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III
I decided to include my son. To
make amends. With conditions, of
course. He has to stay sober.

ARCADIO
So, Gerald didn't join you at the
club.

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III
We do not socialize. That's my
wife's doing.

ARCADIO
Oh. How were you getting home?

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III
Claude was picking me up.

ARCADIO

So... Gerald, Claude, and your son
knew you were there that night.
And, the waitress. Sounds like
Olivia. With a beauty mark?

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III

A mole.

ARCADIO

Anyone else?

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III

Not that I am aware of.

ARCADIO

Were you having legal problems?

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III

Nothing out of the ordinary. Tenant
claims. Evictions. Pay up or get
locked out.

ARCADIO

That sounds harsh.

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III

I detest weakness.

Ominous black clouds roll in... a murder of CROWS circles
above. We feel an evil atmosphere again. Stronger this time.

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III (CONT'D)

*WATCH ME WIELD MY POWER,
WATCH ME RULE.
ABOVE ALL, I TOWER.
I RULE. I RULE.*

A BOOM of THUNDER. Harrington dematerializes.

FADE OUT...

EXT. LA ESPERANZA - DAY

Another day. Arcadio sits alone on Valor Ridge.

A limousine enters the cemetery. Not Maximiliana's.

Curious, Arcadio follows it over to the Sunset Estates. Ava
gets out of the limo.

ARCADIO

That's the drunk lady from the art gallery.

She strides up to the Harrington mausoleum with a small, sad bouquet of flowers. She is emotional, falling to the ground and weeping. Arcadio approaches. Ava does not recognize him.

ARCADIO (CONT'D)

Ma'am, are you alright?

AVA

Buzz off, kid. It's my dead lover's birthday.

ARCADIO

OK. I'll be over here if you need anything.

(beat)

The famous Rutherford Harrington III... I've heard he was a vibrant man. A terrible loss.

AVA

A wonderful man. Not that anyone but me cared.

ARCADIO

No one else?

AVA

Ha. Not that wife of his, with all of her illicit affairs.

ARCADIO

Oh.

AVA

Who could blame me for comforting Rutherford?

ARCADIO

Not I.

AVA

His wife and that chauffeur. And that duplicitous museum trustee... they all took everything.

(sobbing)

I'm left with nothing but a broken heart.

Arcadio hands her a handkerchief. He looks around, wondering if the ghost of Rutherford Harrington III will appear.

ARCADIO

I... ma'am...

AVA

Ava.

ARCADIO

Ava. I hope that time will help you heal. It's sad when someone dies suddenly. It doesn't seem right.

AVA

It's all very suspicious. His widow should pay for this.

ARCADIO

And the rest of his family?

AVA

A weird daughter and an illegitimate son.

ARCADIO

What about associates?

AVA

Why are you asking so many questions?

More tears.

AVA (CONT'D)

He was never mine. That's what drove me crazy. Please leave me alone. I'll get past it.

Arcadio steps away to give her some space. A Mercedes arrives.

ARCADIO

Who could this be?

Gerald gets out of the car.

ARCADIO (CONT'D)

The man from the museum. Gerald.

He brings a scented silk flower bouquet to the Harrington mausoleum. Ava and Gerald look at one another accusingly.

AVA

(sniffing)

Smells like she's outdone me again.

(MORE)

AVA (CONT'D)
The wife couldn't bring them
herself?

GERALD
She's not up to it.

AVA
Oh well. At least she has you to
comfort her.

GERALD
I fear that I'm at fault.

Ava softens a bit.

AVA
I know the feeling.

GERALD
I should have stayed with
Harrington that night. I should
have gone into the jazz club.

AVA
No. I should have been there.

GERALD
We couldn't have known.

AVA
Then why do I feel so guilty?

-- they SING. [**TRACK 6: THE OTHER ONES**]

AVA (CONT'D)
THE OTHER WOMAN.

GERALD
THE OTHER MAN.

AVA
COUNTERFEIT PLEASURE.

GERALD
SO IT BEGAN.

AVA
*ACTING HAPPY,
FEELING LEFT OUT.
NOT-SO-SECRET,
LOVE IN DOUBT.*

GERALD (CONT'D)
*ACTING HAPPY,
FEELING LEFT OUT.
NOT-SO-SECRET,
LOVE IN DOUBT.*

AVA (CONT'D)
 A FALLEN WOMAN,
 LIKE VIOLET TO HIS MARY.

GERALD
 A BROKEN DOWN MAN,
 SHOULDA, COULDA BEEN MORE WARY.

AVA
 CHECKS CASHED,
 ALL I NEEDED.
 HOPES DASHED,
 DOUBTS UNHEEDED.

GERALD (CONT'D)
 CHECKS CASHED,
 ALL I NEEDED.
 HOPES DASHED,
 DOUBTS UNHEEDED.

GERALD (CONT'D)
 THE OTHER ONES.

AVA
 OF THE SENSUAL SORT.

GERALD
 NEVER ENOUGH.

AVA
 A MELODY CUT SHORT.

FADE OUT...

INT. ARCADIO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Arcadio is on his laptop. Kiko the cat is curled up on the bed with him.

ARCADIO
 I've got to work this out, Kiko.
 Mr. And Mrs. Harrington were both
 having affairs. I think that's
 common knowledge.

Kiko stretches.

ARCADIO (CONT'D)
 So, who profited from Harrington's
 death? The museum. And, the
 family... they can still afford to
 send Max off to an expensive
 school. Ugh.

KIKO
 Meow.

ARCADIO

Horrible. And, summer is almost over. I'll try a search for the son... Rutherford Harrington IV, maybe?

Arcadio is staring intently at his laptop when someone TAPS on the open window of his room. Arcadio and Kiko both leap up. Kiko darts under the bed.

Diamantes climbs into the room.

DIAMANTES

Hey, it's only me, cousin. A little jumpy are we?

ARCADIO

There's a killer on the loose.

DIAMANTES

Ha ha. Good thing I'm here then. My *papi* would appreciate it... rest his soul.

ARCADIO

I'm working on that.

(beat)

And, uh, he didn't suffer when he died, by the way. I talked to him at the cemetery.

DIAMANTES

Okayyy... man... I still can't believe he left us.

ARCADIO

Well, at least not like my dad did. I barely even remember him.

DIAMANTES

Why don't you stay away from that depressing cemetery. Come to the *futbol* match with us.

ARCADIO

I can't. I've got a mystery to solve. Besides, I don't like your friends. You've changed since Uncle Cabano died.

DIAMANTES

Well, things got more difficult in the neighborhood. I almost lost our dump of an apartment.

Diamantes peers at Arcadio's computer and sees a photograph. It's an older photo of a clean-cut boy.

The caption says: "Rutherford Harrington IV"

DIAMANTES (CONT'D)

Hey, that's a familiar face.

ARCADIO

You think that about everyone. Funny, he doesn't look at all like Max.

DIAMANTES

I get around. What can I say? I think I've seen him at the club.

ARCADIO

He could be a suspect. Someone was drugged or poisoned, and I will figure it out.

DIAMANTES

Who?

ARCADIO

Rutherford Harrington.

DIAMANTES

Tirano! My tyrant of a landlord. I know I wanted him dead for treating us like dirt.

ARCADIO

No.

DIAMANTES

Yes.

ARCADIO

He died at the club.

DIAMANTES

I wasn't there, but I heard. Olivia was very upset about it.

ARCADIO

Why?

DIAMANTES

I don't know. You should not be involved in this.

ARCADIO

Keep an eye out for Harrington's son.

As Diamantes climbs back out the window, he turns to warn Arcadio.

DIAMANTES

Be careful. You're looking for trouble.

FADE OUT...

EXT. LA ESPERANZA - DAY

A rare cloudy day. Light rain falls. Maximiliana has not returned to the cemetery. Arcadio is on Valor Ridge with the ghost of Uncle Cabano.

ARCADIO

I'm so confused. I wonder where Max is. I want to solve her father's murder for her... for you, and for all the stranded souls here.

UNCLE CABANO

You don't have to.

ARCADIO

It's hard because everyone in Harrington's life has issues.

UNCLE CABANO

Rich people problems.

ARCADIO

Uncle Cabano, isn't everyone equal in the afterlife?

UNCLE CABANO

Only in the eyes of God.

ARCADIO

I know that every wrong cannot be made right, but... now more than ever... I feel like I must try to make a difference.

VOICES come out of nowhere. They are the spirits of SOLDIERS.

SOLDIERS (O.S)

Here, here!

Arcadio is surprised.

ARCADIO
Who is that?

As he looks around, shadowy figures come to light. Soldiers in uniform stand at attention under the American flag.

-- they SING. [**TRACK 7: FIGHT IT**]

This is a song like Fight the Power, with militaristic choreography.

SOLDIERS
RACISM IN AMERICA,
APARTHEID, OPPRESSION.
ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS,
MEN AND WOMEN SEPARATED.
DEPRESSION.

ARCADIO
I WILL FIGHT IT.

SOLDIERS
MUSLIMS, NATIVES, REFUGEES.
FAMILIES AT ODDS. HELP US, PLEASE.
BEHIND REAL AND IMAGINARY WALLS,
UNSUNG HEROES FORGOTTEN.
UNTIL BIGOTRY FALLS.

ARCADIO
I WILL FIGHT IT.

SOLDIERS
THIS IS THE COUNTRY,
FOR WHICH WE GAVE OUR LIVES.
DEATH IN THE DESERT,
NO SALVATION ARRIVES.
LOSING MORE THAN LIFE,
WHAT CHANCE NOW?
JUST ENDLESS STRIFE.

ARCADIO
I WILL FIGHT IT.

SOLDIERS
DARKNESS WILL STAND IN YOUR WAY.

The illusion of the soldiers fades away.

ARCADIO
I WILL FIGHT IT. COME WHAT MAY.

The mission BELLS of La Esperanza TOLL.

FADE OUT...

INT. MAXIMILIANA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Maximiliana cannot hear the bells, but she feels their call. She turns her head from side to side. Listening.

Her room is fine. Old-money expensive. In contrast, the decor is teenage goth, with a Robert Smith poster.

There are many paintings leaning up against the walls. All are uncovered, except for one. We wonder why.

Maximiliana paints at an easel, with dark, undecipherable splashes. She is having a realization.

-- she SINGS. [**TRACK 8: THE CALL OF THE THE DEAD**]

It's a Cure-like song.

MAXIMILIANA
MUFFLED VOICES,
FROM SIX FEET DEEP.
UNDER A GREEN GRASS BLANKET,
IT'S TIME THAT THEY KEEP.

She throws black paint on the canvas.

MAXIMILIANA (CONT'D)
I HEAR THE DEAD,
THE DEAD ARE CALLING.
I HEAR THE DEAD,
THE DEAD CRY OUT.

Her painting becomes frenzied as she sings.

MAXIMILIANA (CONT'D)
BETWEEN A HARD PLACE AND A ROCK,
FATHER... WE NEED TO TALK.
I SEE THE LIFELESS,
BUT I DON'T SEE YOU.
LET THEM MOVE ON,
AND START ANEW.

She stops... and gets very still.

MAXIMILIANA (CONT'D)
I HEAR THE DEAD,
THE DEAD ARE CALLING.
I HEAR THE DEAD,
(MORE)

MAXIMILIANA (CONT'D)
THE DEAD CRY OUT...
THE DEAD CRY OUT.

There is a KNOCK at the bedroom door.

MAXIMILIANA (CONT'D)
 Who is it?

ELIZABETH (O.S)
 It's your mother, of course.

MAXIMILIANA
 Come in.

ELIZABETH
 (looks around)
 Have you even started packing?

There is a suitcase in the corner, spilling over with black clothes, black shoes and black accessories.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
 Really, dear, it's time to lighten it up. For me too. We have to move on with our lives.

MAXIMILIANA
 Is that why you want me to leave?

ELIZABETH
 I do not. I just want what's best for you and your future. If I were you...

MAXIMILIANA
 You're not me. I like black. And, I'm sick of having to tiptoe around here anyway.

ELIZABETH
 (hurt by that)
 I don't see how you could tiptoe in those combat boots.

MAXIMILIANA
 Seriously, mother?

ELIZABETH
 Oh, forget it. I know. I was young once. Don't stay up too late.

MAXIMILIANA
 Goodnight, mother. Shut the door. Love you.

ELIZABETH

I'll keep it shut while you're at school. It will be just like you left it. Everything I've done, I've done for you. And your brother, wherever he is. No matter what happens, please remember that.

She closes the door.

FADE OUT...

EXT. LA ESPERANZA CEMETERY - DAY

Maximiliana returns to the cemetery. The limousine drops her off at the Sunset Estates, and then heads back out. Arcadio flags it down. He comes to the window to speak to Claude the driver.

ARCADIO

Claude, is Max OK?

CLAUDE

(unhappily)

She could use a companion.

ARCADIO

What about you?

Claude answers him with a distant stare and a long silence. He drives away.

As soon as the limo is out of sight, Maximiliana heads over to Valor Ridge. Arcadio is elated to see her.

Arcadio and Max's song plays...

ARCADIO (CONT'D)

You're back.

Maximiliana looks out over the cemetery.

MAXIMILIANA

I like the view from here.

They stand for a while, taking in the panorama. CROWS CAW from high in the trees, the flag FLAPS, its ropes CLANG against the flagpole.... all to the beat of the MUSIC.

Arcadio is anxious. Maximiliana is cool and collected.

ARCADIO

I have to tell you something...
first of all, I finally see what's
happening here. You were right
about the spirits.

Maximiliana SINGS--

MAXIMILIANA

*I HEAR THE DEAD... THE DEAD ARE
CALLING...*

Arcadio joins in--

ARCADIO

*I HEAR THE DEAD... THE DEAD CRY
OUT...*

ARCADIO (CONT'D)
THE DEAD CRY OUT.

MAXIMILIANA
THE DEAD CRY OUT.

MAXIMILIANA (CONT'D)

A reckoning is waiting.

ARCADIO

For us?

MAXIMILIANA

I might need your help after all. I
have an idea about how we can bring
the spirits together. Tonight.

ARCADIO

Tonight?

MAXIMILIANA

My mother is sending me away
tomorrow.

Arcadio is clearly affected by this news.

ARCADIO

Tomorrow?? No. I don't want you to
go.

MAXIMILIANA

At least the school has a good art
department. I don't have a choice
in the matter.

ARCADIO

Listen. I saw the ghost of your
father.

Arcadio reaches out to Maximiliana. She pushes him away.

MAXIMILIANA

Why didn't you tell me?

ARCADIO

This is the first time I've seen you since it happened. And, there's more.

MAXIMILIANA

What did he say?

ARCADIO

He thinks someone murdered him. He won't move on until the killer is revealed.

MAXIMILIANA

What? How?

ARCADIO

There are ways of causing a heart attack. Do you have any idea who might have wanted him dead?

MAXIMILIANA

To say that a lot of people didn't like my father would be an understatement. He also had a weak heart, so it wouldn't take much. But, how will we ever figure this out in time?

ARCADIO

I'm already working on it. I'm with you. What do you propose?

MAXIMILIANA

Well, I think... along with the innocents... we can save the burdened souls here.

Arcadio stands taller... at the ready.

ARCADIO

I would like to free the spirit of my Uncle Cabano.

MAXIMILIANA

There are shadows of evil to contend with... much worse than my father, even. It won't be easy.

ARCADIO
Tell me what to do. Anything.

MAXIMILIANA
It's a wild plan...

Maximiliana leans in close and whispers in his ear... while he nods...

She starts to leave.

MAXIMILIANA (CONT'D)
See you tonight then?

ARCADIO
It's a date.

MAXIMILIANA
No, it's not.

ARCADIO
It kinda is...

He turns her around... they dance... they move well together.

-- they SING. [**TRACK 9: ARCADIO AND MAX'S SONG**]

ARCADIO (CONT'D)
*DARK AND LIGHT,
BROWN AND WHITE.*

MAXIMILIANA
*THE ODDS ARE AGAINST US,
ALL DAY, ALL NIGHT.*

ARCADIO
*I'M FROM THE BARRIO,
YOU'RE ON THE HILL.*

MAXIMILIANA
*THAT'S NOT WHAT MATTERS,
IF MY DREAMS YOU FULFILL.*

ARCADIO
THEN I'LL BE YOUR BABY.

MAXIMILIANA
AND, I'D BE YOUR GIRL.

ARCADIO
YOUNG LOVE, LAST FOREVER.

MAXIMILIANA
GIVE ME A WHIRL.

He swings her.

ARCADIO
DARK AND LIGHT,
BROWN AND WHITE.
THE ODDS ARE AGAINST US...

MAXIMILIANA (CONT'D)
DARK AND LIGHT,
BROWN AND WHITE.
THE ODDS ARE AGAINST US...

ARCADIO (CONT'D)
FOR YOU I WILL FIGHT.

MUSIC sting.

Silence. Then...

Again, we sense a dark foreboding. We can almost see a malicious black cloud pulsating in the air, with tendrils like long arms and curling fingers.

Arcadio and Maximiliana are oblivious to it, but the trees and everything else shirks away from the supernatural effect.

FADE OUT...

INT./EXT. IN A MONTE CARLO LOWRIDER - EVENING

Arcadio drives out of his barrio in a tricked-out 1974 lowrider. Turbo-Fire V8. Green, with rainbow tape, lights in the wheel wells and a bird on the front.

He goes to the rich side of town, and up into the hills. Sedate mansions and architectural masterpieces are nestled in lush gardens. Their vast windows overlook the ocean.

He motors to the top, turns the car around, then cuts the engine to coast quietly down past the entrance to an impressive, modern manor. He waits...

He watches, until...

Maximiliana slips out of the grounds, undetected, and undercover in a black velvet hooded cape and Doc Martens. She slides into the Monte Carlo.

MAXIMILIANA
Ready for action.

ARCADIO
You're amazing.

Maximiliana looks curiously at the furry interior of the car, complete with dice hanging from the rear-view mirror.

MAXIMILIANA

Are we back in the 70s?

Arcadio laughs and starts the engine.

ARCADIO

My cousin Diamantes' car.

He strikes a pose.

ARCADIO (CONT'D)

At least I toned down my outfit.

Maximiliana nods her approval of his dark pants and khaki utility jacket. We see the collar of a printed shirt peeking out, but it is also dark.

MAXIMILIANA

Who are you? And, what have you done with Arcadio?

ARCADIO

You look great. As always. In black.

MAXIMILIANA

My second favorite color.

ARCADIO

And, your favorite?

MAXIMILIANA

Purple.

She takes down her hood. It has a purple lining.

MAXIMILIANA (CONT'D)

What's yours?

ARCADIO

Blue. The blue of your eyes.

Maximiliana tries not to show how much she likes this.

ARCADIO (CONT'D)

Why do you paint in black?

She has to think about it.

MAXIMILIANA

I guess... if I'm honest... I started with the black because no one paid much attention to me.

(MORE)

MAXIMILIANA (CONT'D)
It was how I felt. The fact that
everyone hates it is a plus.

ARCADIO
Not everyone.

Maximiliana reaches over and turns on the radio. There is a
lot of STATIC.

-- they SING loudly.

ARCADIO (CONT'D)	MAXIMILIANA
<i>WE CAN BE HEROES, IF JUST FOR ONE NIGHT...</i>	<i>WE CAN BE HEROES, IF JUST FOR ONE NIGHT...</i>

Arcadio and Maximiliana are friends now. They enjoy the ride
down the hill, until...

ARCADIO (CONT'D)
Max, I know that your father was at
the City Jazz Club when he died.

The mood changes.

MAXIMILIANA
Yes.

ARCADIO
That's strange.

MAXIMILIANA
I know. He liked classical music.

ARCADIO
He was there to see your brother.

MAXIMILIANA
Axe.

ARCADIO
He goes by the stage name Axe Ford.

MAXIMILIANA
Because he plays guitar and bass.
We were Axe and Max. So long ago.
Why didn't I know he was here?

ARCADIO
He invited your father to meet him.

MAXIMILIANA
I can't believe this.

ARCADIO

I was thinking... would you want to stop by the club on our way to the cemetery? Axe might be there. Would you be alright with that?

MAXIMILIANA

Um. I guess so. Can we even get in?

ARCADIO

Yeah. My cousin has connections there.

MAXIMILIANA

Alright. I can do it. Sure.

Arcadio makes a turn, and they head downtown.

EXT. CITY JAZZ CLUB - MOMENTS LATER

Arcadio pulls the lowrider up to the club. Diamantes is at the door. He runs over to the car.

DIAMANTES

Hey. Everything A-OK? I didn't expect to see you so soon...
(he notices Maximiliana)
oh... who is this beautiful girl?

ARCADIO

(proudly)
This is Max.

DIAMANTES

Now I know why you've been so distracted lately.

ARCADIO

We're stopping by to check something out. You can get us in, right?

DIAMANTES

Of course. I'm just surprised because you never come out. Hi, Max.

Diamantes opens the car door to let her out. He whistles for the valet.

MAXIMILIANA

Hi.

Arcadio guides her ahead with a light touch on the arm.
Diamantes ushers them to the front of a long line.

DIAMANTES

V.I.P. coming through. V.I.P. Very
important *primo*...

ARCADIO

Thanks. I owe you one. Or two.

DIAMANTES

We are family. Drinks are on me.

ARCADIO

No drinks. We have a long night
ahead of us.

INT. CITY JAZZ CLUB - CONTINUOUS

The club is dark. The vibe eclectic. The jazz cool. The band
is a five-piece ensemble.

Arcadio and Maximiliana blend in with the hipster crowd. They
stand together, adjusting to the atmosphere. He gives her a
meaningful look.

ARCADIO

Is it too much? I mean, your
father...

MAXIMILIANA

I'm glad I'm seeing this place.

ARCADIO

We can leave anytime you want.

MAXIMILIANA

I still need closure. Maybe this
will help.

Arcadio glances to his side. He sees the waitress, Olivia.
Then, he does a double take because right behind her...

The ghost of the skinhead, Syd, is standing there.

ARCADIO

Wha??

SYD

(imitating him)

Wha??

Syd enjoys Arcadio's shocked reaction.

SYD (CONT'D)
I could body slam you.

ARCADIO
What are you doing here?

SYD
I said I'd be watching.

No one else notices Syd.

SYD (CONT'D)
You're getting warmer.

Syd is gone.

The band segues into a bluesy number. The audience applauds.

A spotlight finds the bass player. This is AXE FORD, 25, lanky, unshaven, with long and stringy black hair.

Maximiliana is stunned to see him. Her reaction is immediate.

MAXIMILIANA
Oh my gosh.

ARCADIO
Your brother?

MAXIMILIANA
It's... oh my... I... almost don't recognize him with... the hair.

ARCADIO
My cousin saw on old photo of him when I was researching online. He thought he looked familiar, then figured out he was in the band.

MAXIMILIANA
That's him.

ARCADIO
And, because your father's heart attack happened here, I thought maybe...

MAXIMILIANA
Maybe what, though? Did my brother have something to do with it? He doesn't look well.

Axe Ford steps to the microphone, with some difficulty. Swaying.

-- he SINGS. [TRACK 10: A BAD THING]

AXE FORD
 I DID A BAD THING,
 I DID YOU WRONG.
 NOW YOU'RE A SAD THING,
 SO SWEET, SO STRONG.

He sounds intoxicated. We feel the heartache. In spite of his anguish, he has an outstanding voice. The audience loves it.

AXE FORD (CONT'D)
 I SHOULD GIVE IT UP,
 'BOUT TIME TO CONCEDE.
 JUST ONE MORE ROUND, ONE HIT,
 LOST IN MY GREED.

Maximiliana starts moving toward the stage.

Arcadio notices something bulging in Axe Ford's pocket. It looks like it could be a gun.

AXE FORD (CONT'D)
 A LIFE SPENT RUNNING,
 FROM THE TRUTH.
 ONE MORE MARTINI,
 HOLD THE VERMOUTH.

Maximiliana stands right in front of the band, staring her brother down. Arcadio stays protectively by her side.

AXE FORD (CONT'D)
 I DID A BAD THING,
 I WAS UNTRUE.
 SUCH A MAD THING...

He stops singing when he sees her. The band fills in, improvising. The audience notices, but goes with it too.

Axe Ford can't move, can't react.

MAXIMILIANA
 What did you do?

AXE FORD
 It's... it's just a song.

MAXIMILIANA
 You know I've always listened to
 you. You can tell me.

AXE FORD
 I don't know...

Axe Ford drops his bass. He stumbles away. Exits, stage right.

Maximiliana has no idea what to do next. Arcadio helps her through the crowd and out of the club.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF CITY JAZZ CLUB - CONTINUOUS

The police are at the club. Diamantes has the Monte Carlo ready for a quick escape.

DIAMANTES

You guys go. I'll find that fool
Axe Ford.

ARCADIO

We'll be at the cemetery.

DIAMANTES

At night?

Arcadio and Maximiliana take off, leaving the chaotic scene and the flashing lights behind.

INT./EXT. MONTE CARLO LOWRIDER - CONTINUOUS

Arcadio and Maximiliana ride in silence. He waits for her to speak.

MAXIMILIANA

I just can't believe my brother
could be involved in anything...
awful. He was a such sweet boy
once.

ARCADIO

He did seem confused about it.

MAXIMILIANA

Who else had motivation to kill my
father? Maybe an enemy hired a thug
to go to the club that night...
there has to be another
explanation.

ARCADIO

Your father thought it was someone
close to him.

MAXIMILIANA

Not my mother. She was always angry
with him about something, but they
did love each other. I know it.

(MORE)

MAXIMILIANA (CONT'D)

In spite of her indiscretions.

ARCADIO

Gerald visited the mausoleum. I checked him out and found nothing incriminating. That lady, Ava, also visited.

MAXIMILIANA

Really?

ARCADIO

I remember how bizarre she acted at the art gallery.

MAXIMILIANA

I always suspected something between her and my father.

ARCADIO

She was on holiday the night he died.

MAXIMILIANA

You've really been wonderful.

(beat)

I've never known anyone like you.

The car has a bench seat, and Arcadio pats the space next to him, trying to lighten the mood.

ARCADIO

Why don't you sit a little closer then?

Maximiliana scoots over a few inches.

ARCADIO (CONT'D)

I'm really going to miss you this fall.

(beat)

But, maybe I'll get some studying done.

MAXIMILIANA

I'll think of your tropical shirts every time I see a banana.

ARCADIO

Bananas are good for you.

MAXIMILIANA

Ha ha. Yes. So are you.

ARCADIO

It's great to hear you laugh.

Arcadio parks the car in a lot at the edge of the canyon behind the cemetery.

ARCADIO (CONT'D)

We're here.

They both take a deep breath, steeling themselves.

ARCADIO (CONT'D)

Are you ready for this?

MAXIMILIANA

Let's do it. I do trust you, by the way. Arcadio.

ARCADIO

Good to know. Max.

EXT. CANYON BEHIND LA ESPERANZA CEMETERY - CONTINUOUS

Arcadio and Maximiliana stand at the edge of the canyon.

ARCADIO

We'll have to cut across, but there's a trail.

MAXIMILIANA

So, that's how you get in and out.

ARCADIO

Well, I don't always have a limo to pick me up...

They hike through the canyon, Arcadio leading the way by flashlight.

ARCADIO (CONT'D)

So... Max... you've never seen your father here?

MAXIMILIANA

Never. I feel the strength of his spirit, but he does not communicate with me.

ARCADIO

Why not? Do you know?

MAXIMILIANA

Maybe I've shut him out. I was just so disappointed in him. For the way he treated... people. Not me, but people I care about.

Arcadio stops. He looks at the hairs standing up on his arm.

MAXIMILIANA (CONT'D)

What is it?

ARCADIO

I just got a weird sensation.

MAXIMILIANA

I never talk about this, but... I was devastated when my father died. It left something missing from my life. I haven't let him go.

Arcadio wants to comfort her. She waves him off.

MAXIMILIANA (CONT'D)

I'm fine. In fact, being on this mission, with you... it's the first time I've felt like I have a purpose in a long time. Let's keep going. We only have tonight.

ARCADIO

Yes. And, I'm here for my Uncle Cabano.

MAXIMILIANA

The soldier.

ARCADIO

Killed in Iraq. Roadside bomb.

MAXIMILIANA

I am sorry for your loss.

ARCADIO

Thanks. Same to you.

They reach the other side of the canyon. Arcadio cuts the flashlight. The night is dimly lit by a waxing crescent moon.

ARCADIO (CONT'D)

Valor Ridge is just on the other side of this wall. I could help you over...

He locks his fingers together to give her a boost. She nods her acceptance.

MAXIMILIANA

Such a gentleman.

Maximiliana scales the wall easily. Arcadio follows.

As they disappear into the cemetery, the gloom of the gruesome force that awaits drops down over them, like a black veil.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND THE CITY JAZZ CLUB - CONTINUOUS

Axe Ford is on the ground, back against a wall, and freaking out. Diamantes is trying to calm him down.

DIAMANTES

I thought you were going to be alright. You finished the set and it was great.

AXE FORD

I'll probably get kicked out of the band. Again. But, who cares. I need a fix.

DIAMANTES

You're not getting any more drugs.

AXE FORD

How else can I face Max?

DIAMANTES

What happened the night Harrington died?

The back door of the club opens. Olivia comes out.

AXE FORD

We need to get our stories straight.

DIAMANTES

I wasn't even at the club.

AXE FORD

So you say.

DIAMANTES

Would you even remember?

OLIVIA
He was not there.

AXE FORD
You keep your mouth shut, or get
deported.

DIAMANTES
Woah.

AXE FORD
You know what? I only returned home
to get back at my father.

DIAMANTES
Why would you even do that?

AXE FORD
Because I was never good enough. He
hated the way I look. But... I
changed my mind.

DIAMANTES
What did you do with the Special K
I sold you?

AXE FORD
I... I'm not sure.

DIAMANTES
You did this on your own?

OLIVIA
He was wasted that night.

AXE FORD
I told you to shut up.

DIAMANTES
Somehow we're all involved in this
now.

-- they SING. [**TRACK 11: A BAD THING - PART 2**]

AXE FORD
*WE DID A BAD THING,
WE DID SO WRONG.*

Diamantes and Olivia dance.

DIAMANTES
PART OF A SAD THING...

OLIVIA
PART OF A SAD THING...

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
SO WEAK.

DIAMANTES
NOT STRONG.

AXE FORD
WE SHOULD GIVE IT UP.

DIAMANTES
SILENCE IS LYING.

DIAMANTES (CONT'D)
WOULDN'T BE SO BAD,
IF NOT FOR THE DYING.

OLIVIA
WOULDN'T BE SO BAD,
IF NOT FOR THE DYING.

AXE FORD
WE DID A BAD THING,
THAT MUCH IS TRUE.

DIAMANTES
SUCH A MAD THING...

OLIVIA
SUCH A MAD THING...

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
COVER ME.

DIAMANTES
I'LL COVER YOU.

AXE FORD
WE DID A BAD THING,
TO A BAD GUY.

OLIVIA
(to Diamantes)
NOT YOUR FAULT...

DIAMANTES
I DIDN'T ASK WHY.

MUSIC fade.

DIAMANTES (CONT'D)
My cousin is with your sister.

AXE FORD
I need to talk to her.

DIAMANTES
They went to the cemetery.

AXE FORD
Shit.

DIAMANTES
I'm going there.

AXE FORD
Then, I'm coming too.

OLIVIA
I'm sorry, Diamantes.

DIAMANTES
Go home, Olivia.

Axe Ford has trouble getting to his feet. Diamantes helps him up, and drags him out to the street.

Diamantes flags down a cab. They get in, and the car speeds away.

A familiar black Cadillac limousine follows them at a safe distance.

CUT TO:

EXT. LA ESPERANZA CEMETERY - CONTINUOUS

Arcadio and Maximiliana stand on Valor Ridge.

It is deathly quiet.

The massive trees that form billowing shapes in the dark are unnaturally still. Unreadable gravestones erect stark outlines against the night sky.

ARCADIO
(sotto)
Uncle Cabano?

MAXIMILIANA
He's here. All of the soldiers are here if we need them. I hope we don't. Come on. Let's head down the hill.

Arcadio is watchful... he looks over his shoulder, and then the other shoulder... spooked by the deserted cemetery.

ARCADIO
You took care of the night guard?

MAXIMILIANA
He has been well paid to leave us alone.

ARCADIO

It's creepy here at night.

We are scared too. We see the ghost of Rutherford Harrington III, at a distance, surrounded by the gloom... observing.

ARCADIO (CONT'D)

I really feel a chill.

MAXIMILIANA

Come on. Keep up.

They walk down the road to the main chapel. Near Memory Lake, they stop on the lawn of the Garden of the Innocents, below the mission bells.

MAXIMILIANA (CONT'D)

This is where the children are buried.

Maximiliana reaches her hand out to Arcadio.

He moves his hand toward hers...

They touch. Then... fingers intertwine.

MAXIMILIANA (CONT'D)

Let them come to us.

They wait...

Until...

A faint trace of a haze begins to rise from the grass, and it gathers in a soft, gray fog full of shapes that form radiant childlike figures. These are THE SPIRIT CHILDREN.

The Native American spirit, Kumei, is the first to become fully visible, shifting his feet, gaining his balance, getting his bearings. He recognizes Arcadio.

KUMEI

Ho. Hello, friend.

Maximiliana smiles. She drops Arcadio's hand and reaches out to Kumei... both arms wide open... her pale skin glowing. Her countenance is radiant.

MAXIMILIANA

Thank you for joining us.

Kumei carries a ceremonial pipe that he holds out as a symbol of peace.

KUMEI
They call me Kumei.

MAXIMILIANA
I feel our energies connecting.

ARCADIO
Welcome. I am Arcadio. And, she is
Max.

KUMEI
You are fine looking, Max.

More cemetery children, of all creeds, colors, beliefs and
backgrounds materialize... they gather behind Kumei.

A tiny CHINESE SPIRIT GIRL timidly raises her hand.

CHINESE SPIRIT GIRL
Hi. Are you a celestial being, Max?

MAXIMILIANA
(laughs)
No. I'm just an ordinary girl.

ARCADIO
She is special.

KUMEI
I see that, clearly. And, I know
that you have come to help us.

MAXIMILIANA
How long have you been in the
cemetery, Kumei?

KUMEI
About two hundred years longer than
everyone else. Since our tribal
land was occupied and my people
were massacred.

A tall, BLACK SPIRIT GIRL emerges.

BLACK SPIRIT GIRL
My ancestors have also suffered at
the hands of the white man.

A MUSLIM SPIRIT BOY in an ankle-length robe steps forward.

MUSLIM SPIRIT BOY
We now stand together against
racism.

KUMEI

All of us have been awakened for
this noble cause.

All of the spirit children cheer their support in unison.

THE SPIRIT CHILDREN

We are one!

KUMEI

Each of you must call on your own
people to follow. All must tear
down the barriers, break the chains
of hatred. Only then can we move
on.

A WHITE SPIRIT CHILD, not clearly a boy or a girl, raises one
fist in the air.

WHITE SPIRIT CHILD

Let us unite as one!

KUMEI

One love!

THE SPIRIT CHILDREN

(chanting)

One love! One heart! A better
world... a new start!

The chanting grows louder... arousing every soul in La
Esperanza.

THE SPIRIT CHILDREN (CONT'D)

One love! One heart! A better
world... a new start!

Resistance comes first from the zealots.

A group of supremacist spirits appear, led by the skinhead,
Syd. The ghost of a POLITICIAN steps forward.

POLITICIAN

We do not approve of radical ideas.

THE SPIRIT CHILDREN

We protest!

POLITICIAN

Maintain the status quo.

SYD

We must secure the existence of our
people and a future for white
children.

THE SPIRIT CHILDREN

One love! One heart! A better
world... a new start!

An ALTAR BOY SPIRIT defies the supremacist spirits.

ALTAR BOY SPIRIT

You are grounded here because you
have not learned the ultimate
lesson. You must shake off your
earthly prejudice and accept that
all souls are equal in the kingdom
of heaven.

SYD

(threateningly)
Give it up, kid.

Syd brandishes a knife. Kumei opposes him.

KUMEI

There is a dark fury in this
cemetery, and your hate is feeding
it. But, you can't hurt us.

Syd turns on Arcadio and Maximiliana.

SYD

I can hurt the Mexican... and the
goth girl... they're still alive.

Arcadio stands protectively in front of Maximiliana.

ARCADIO

You'll do no such thing.

SYD

(imitating him)
You'll do no such thing.

Syd pushes Arcadio with an unseen force. Arcadio doubles
over, like the air has been knocked out of him.

Maximiliana stands firm.

MAXIMILIANA

No, he won't harm us... because he
doesn't want to be stuck in this
limbo forever.

Syd continues to torment Arcadio, causing him pain.

ALTAR BOY SPIRIT

One may not rise with the burden of
hate. Free yourselves to pass
through the proverbial eye of the
needle. Only then will your sins be
forgiven.

A RABBI SPIRIT from Mount Shalom joins the throng.

RABBI SPIRIT

Wisdom from the mouths of babes. I
am humbled... and willing to give
it a try.

The rabbi spirit stands with the Muslim boy.

SYD

Stop this rising tide of color.

The tiny Chinese spirit girl bravely confronts Syd.

CHINESE SPIRIT GIRL

We will all march together.

SYD

You don't stand a chance.

CHINESE SPIRIT GIRL

Cease the antagonizing.

Syd laughs maniacally, then shrugs, and backs down.

Arcadio can breathe again.

SYD

We'll see how far you get.

THE SPIRIT CHILDREN

One love! One heart! A better
world... a new start!

KUMEI

Onward and upward!

Arcadio, Maximiliana and Kumei lead the way. All of the
spirits ascend the road toward Valor Ridge. They gather lost
souls along the way.

Until...

On Freedom Terrace, they meet unexpected conflict...

A hostile force. An angry spirit rises.

A gigantic, malicious presence. A terrifying wind whips up.

As if it is the devil himself, a MALEVOLENT GHOST roars.

MALEVOLENT GHOST

Go back to your places! Back to the
sections where you belong... each
in your own plots!

Glowing red nuggets shine where the smokey beast's eyes
should be.

Like pure evil, reanimated, the demented shadow casts an
overwhelming alarm in every direction.

Cemetery crows fly in circles above, riding the updraft
created by the monster. The crows appear to grow in size, and
then descend, swooping down over the spirits.

Arcadio struggles against the intensity of the attack. He
falls.

ARCADIO

Brutal.
(he gets back up)
We knew it wouldn't be easy.

Enveloping terror. A rush of icy air.

Arcadio and Maximiliana shiver. They stand side by side.

ARCADIO (CONT'D)

We got this.

MAXIMILIANA

I know.

The darkness unleashes a fury that pulls them apart.

The earth stirs. Dirt flies up. Maximiliana is swept aside,
and tossed at the base of an angel statue. A white angel with
massive wings.

Maximiliana is lightheaded from the impact. She overcomes it,
to stand and spread her own wings, holding her cape out, her
hair blowing wildly in the wind.

MAXIMILIANA (CONT'D)

Everyone! Together! Believe in our
cause!

Arcadio is heartened to see Uncle Cabano appear on Valor Ridge, with the spirit soldiers, armed and ready for a fight.

They march.

The malevolent ghost is caught between the spirits on one side, and the soldiers closing in on the other.

MALEVOLENT GHOST

(undaunted)

Such weapons are of no use against
the dead.

MAXIMILIANA

You are outnumbered, demon!

The malevolent ghost bellows, and scatters the soldiers, propelling them in every direction.

Men and women from the group of spirits back away in fear.

The spirit children stand their ground.

-- they SING. [**TRACK 12: CEMETERY RISING**]

THE SPIRIT CHILDREN

*BEFORE ALL CREATION,
WE STAND AS ONE.
TO RIGHT THE WRONGS OF THE PAST,
BEFORE THIS NIGHT IS DONE.
STRONGER TOGETHER,
WE SEEK, WE FIND,
ETERNAL REST.
BREAKING THE TIES THAT BIND.*

Their singing grows in intensity and volume. Even the howling wind cannot drown them out.

THE SPIRIT CHILDREN (CONT'D)

*A CEMETERY RISING,
TAKING BACK OUR SOULS.
A CEMETERY RISING,
UNTIL THE MISSION BELL TOLLS.*

The malevolent ghost starts to shake...

And, contort...

THE SPIRIT CHILDREN (CONT'D)

*THIS IS IT,
THIS IS OUR FIGHT.
AGAINST THE EVIL WRAITH,
WE ARE RIGHT.
BAD BEAST BE GONE,
(MORE)*

THE SPIRIT CHILDREN (CONT'D)
*THIS TIME WE WIN.
 WITH THE END OF MALEVOLENCE,
 LET THE AFTERLIFE BEGIN.*

The monstrosity twists and writhes uncontrollably...

THE SPIRIT CHILDREN (CONT'D)
*A CEMETERY RISING,
 TAKING BACK OUR SOULS.
 A CEMETERY RISING,
 UNTIL THE MISSION BELL TOLLS.*

The purity and resounding joy of the innocents overwhelms the malevolent ghost.

THE SPIRIT CHILDREN (CONT'D)
*END THE NIGHTMARE,
 STOP THE HATE.
 BANISH THE MONSTER,
 TO ITS FATE...*

The grotesque force of evil explodes into the air, in a million serpentine wisps of sooty vapor and a shower of hellfire.

THE SPIRIT CHILDREN (CONT'D)
A CEMETERY RISING... RISING UP.

The malevolent ghost is extinguished.

Arcadio is lost in the cloud of blackness, looking around for Maximiliana, to celebrate the victory. She is gone.

ARCADIO
 (panicked)
 Max! Where are you? Max!

CUT TO:

EXT. CANYON BEHIND LA ESPERANZA CEMETERY - CONTINUOUS

Diamantes and Axe Ford are out of the cab, arguing, when they see the explosion at the cemetery.

AXE FORD
 What the... where did that come from? I thought you said we were going to a cemetery.

DIAMANTES
 That's what's over there. On the other side of that canyon. It's closed, so we're going in this way.

AXE FORD
Go ahead. I'll follow.

DIAMANTES
No. You're going ahead of me.

AXE FORD
No. You.

DIAMANTES
Move it. Down that trail.

AXE FORD
Where? It's dark, I can't see a
thing.

Diamantes leans in to the canyon.

DIAMANTES	AXE FORD (CONT'D)
Right there...	Go on...

Axe Ford shoves Diamantes... he tumbles down... hits his
head...

He's out cold.

Axe Ford rushes to pat him down. He finds a gun.

He scrambles down the hill.

CUT TO:

EXT. LA ESPERANZA CEMETERY - CONTINUOUS

The smoke from the destruction of the malevolent ghost has
cleared. Arcadio still can't find Max.

ARCADIO
Max! She was right here...

KUMEI
She is there.

Kumei points toward the Sunset Estates.

KUMEI (CONT'D)
Her battle is not yet won.

Arcadio takes off running. He stops short when he sees
Maximiliana at her family tomb, confronting her father.

MAXIMILIANA

Why didn't you stop that malevolent ghost?

The once proud and powerful man winces at Maximiliana's words.

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III

I could not control it.

MAXIMILIANA

But, you let it work in your favor. To keep the souls here. What made you so much better than everyone else? Fortune? Fame? All of that means nothing now.

Rutherford Harrington III shakes his head.

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III

You're right, it doesn't. Tonight, thanks to you, I have witnessed what love can do. And, I'm ashamed. Maximiliana. My daughter...

His figure remains stoic, but fades in and out.

MAXIMILIANA

I'm not your daughter. You're not my father. We're just two souls... saying goodbye. I hope there is no more darkness in your heart.

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III

I am sorry. I have struggled to accept my fate.

MAXIMILIANA

There is no need to forgive. Just move on.

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III

I'm still not leaving until my killer is exposed.

MAXIMILIANA

So it wasn't a heart attack.

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III

It was not.

ARCADIO

A heart attack caused by a deadly drink.

Maximiliana holds her head in her hands, unsteady. Arcadio cannot hold himself back from coming over to wrap his arms around her. She needs him.

ARCADIO (CONT'D)

With your permission, sir... I'd like to marry Max. I mean, someday.

MAXIMILIANA

You're doing this now?

ARCADIO

I said someday. And, I'll never have this chance again. Sir?

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III

Ha. I will admit, I underestimated you. I challenged you to find out who murdered me, and you rose to the occasion. Now, who is it?

MAXIMILIANA

Who else, besides my brother, could have done such a thing?

ARCADIO

My instincts told me something was suspicious the night of your art show... when Diamantes thought he recognized your limo driver, who looks a lot like Axe Ford.

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III

A dead ringer.

MAXIMILIANA

Claude? He would never...

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III

Surely not Claude. Not any of your mother's lovers. I knew about them.

MAXIMILIANA

Daddy!

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III

Sorry, dear.

Suddenly, there is a commotion on Valor Ridge. A dark figure falls over the cemetery wall and tumbles down the hill.

Uncle Cabano shouts a warning.

UNCLE CABANO
 Lookout! Arcadio!

The figure bounces up and runs toward Arcadio and Maximiliana, oblivious to the ghosts. It is Axe Ford, strung out, and deliriously angry. He charges at Arcadio.

AXE FORD
 You should have stayed out of this!

Axe Ford waves the gun. Arcadio stands in front of Maximiliana and puts his hands up.

ARCADIO
 Take it easy. We can work this out.

AXE FORD
 You already ran your mouth off. You and that narco Diamantes.

ARCADIO
 (stalling for time)
 So, Mr. Harrington... may I marry Max?

AXE FORD
 Who are you talking to?

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III
 He doesn't see me.

ARCADIO
 I promise I'll take care of her.

AXE FORD
 You're nuts.

MAXIMILIANA
 Stop it, Axe.

There is another disturbance on Valor Ridge. Another person drops over the wall.

UNCLE CABANO
 Diamantes! *Mi hijo*. To the rescue.

DIAMANTES
Papi. Dios mio. You are here.

UNCLE CABANO
 Help them!

Maximiliana is still trying to reason with Axe Ford.

MAXIMILIANA

Axe, give it up. We can get you into rehab. Everything will be OK.

Axe is having trouble thinking straight.

AXE FORD

I don't want to, but now I'm going to have to kill again.

MAXIMILIANA

I love you. I don't understand how you can do this. And, drugging father...

AXE FORD

I... I don't remember. But, I wished him dead.

MAXIMILIANA

Don't make it worse.

Arcadio sees that Diamantes is coming.

ARCADIO

We all love Max. You couldn't harm her.

AXE FORD

Max... no.

ARCADIO

I'm listening and I hear you, Axe. Tell me why you feel this way.

AXE FORD

My father never loved me as much as he loved her.

ARCADIO

Put the gun down and we can work it all out. I don't believe you're capable of murder.

Just then, Diamantes comes running into the Sunset Estates.

He tackles Axe Ford. They both hit the ground.

They fight, rolling around on the grass.

Arcadio tries to stop them, but it's too late...

Axe Ford's gun goes off.

EVERYTHING GOES BLACK.

ARCADIO (V.O.)
Diamantes! Max! Are you OK?

MAXIMILIANA (V.O.) DIAMANTES (V.O.)
I'm fine. Fine.

MAXIMILIANA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Axe?

Arcadio shines his flashlight on Axe's face. Maximiliana kneels beside him.

MAXIMILIANA
Axe!

Axe slowly realizes he is in pain, grabbing his thigh. Blood oozes through his pants. He gasps.

AXE FORD
Ow. I'm hit. Ow. It hurts.

Maximiliana stays calm. She examines the wound.

MAXIMILIANA
I think you'll be alright. Oh, Axe,
killing is not the answer. What
were you thinking?

There is yet another commotion at the edge of Valor Ridge.

This time, it's Claude the limo driver, having trouble scaling the cemetery wall. He tumbles over. Finally gets up... and then limps to the Sunset Estates, gasping for breath.

DIAMANTES
What are you doing here?

CLAUDE
I followed you idiots.

He sees Axe lying on the ground with his eyes closed.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
Axe! Son! Oh, how could this all go
so wrong?

MAXIMILIANA
You're not his father.

AXE FORD
 (wincing)
 My father is dead. I killed him.

CLAUDE
 No.

AXE FORD
 Yes.

CLAUDE
 Yes. I am your father. And, no you did not kill anyone.

ARCADIO
 That's right. You did, Claude.

DIAMANTES
 You were at the club that night.

ARCADIO
 Axe bought the drugs because you told him to.

Claude breaks down. He is unhinged.

CLAUDE
 I wanted my son. I lived a lie all these years. I was so angry for so long. Harrington was a terrible father to him. Look how my Axe turned out. My son. My only son.

AXE FORD
 So... I really didn't do it? You let me think I did.

CLAUDE
 I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. I love you and I failed you. But, we had a bond, Axe. We were both alienated.

AXE FORD
 You knew about my father's will.

CLAUDE
 Your so-called father never would have left you money if he knew you were... mixed. I gave up my life to work for that racist just to be close to you, son. My son. Just to know you.

This is too much for Axe Ford. He blacks out.

Claude leans over his body. He tries to revive him. Takes his pulse. Puts his hands on his chest. Holds him, sobbing.

Then... he feels something in Axe Ford's pocket. A gun.

Before anyone can react...

Claude grabs the weapon.

The ghost of Syd appears next to him.

SYD

Do it.

ARCADIO

No!

Claude points the gun at himself...

A flash of resolve crosses his face.

Time stands still...

Claude's head jerks back as it takes the bullet.

He is dead.

THE GHOST OF CLAUDE rises up to face the ghost of Rutherford Harrington III.

THE GHOST OF CLAUDE

Harrington.

(beat)

There. How's that? There's your justice.

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III

It doesn't feel like I thought it would.

THE GHOST OF CLAUDE

Now we're even.

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III

It's a hollow victory, but probably what I deserve. You will face judgement, but not from me.

SYD

(to Claude)

Good luck at the pearly gates.

ARCADIO
 (to Syd, imitating him)
 Good luck at the pearly gates.

Syd glares at him. The ghosts of Syd and Claude float away, and over to the group of other souls waiting on Freedom Terrace.

MAXIMILIANA
 It's almost morning.

ARCADIO
 We have to finish what we came here
 to do.

He turns to Diamantes.

ARCADIO (CONT'D)
 Come with me. Let's say a proper
 goodbye to Uncle Cabano, cousin.

DIAMANTES
 (hugging him)
 Call me brother.

Arcadio and Diamantes return to Valor Ridge, to Uncle Cabano.

UNCLE CABANO
 Diamantes. *Mi hijo*. Please, heed my
 words. You are a man now. You are
 smart. And, you need to change your
 ways.

DIAMANTES
 I will. You have my word, *papi*. I
 promise.

ARCADIO
 He did save my life.

UNCLE CABANO
 I'll be watching over both of you.
 Now, let's complete our mission.

DIAMANTES
 I'll go get Axe Ford some help, and
 contact the police.

ARCADIO
 Thank you.

DIAMANTES
 Goodbye, *papi*.

UNCLE CABANO

Goodbye, my son.

Back at the Sunset Estates, Maximiliana and her father reconcile. The ghost of Rutherford Harrington III is repentant, at last.

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III

I see now what hate can do.

MAXIMILIANA

Your closed-mindedness is what got you killed. It's time for you to leave here, father.

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III

I trust my legacy with you, my dear Maximiliana. The museum is yours when you turn eighteen. It's your turn now. Make me proud.

(gets choked up)

And... support your brother. He was a son to me.

MAXIMILIANA

I will. Mother can take care of him while I'm away. We'll be a closer family from now on.

RUTHERFORD HARRINGTON III

Oh yes, Elizabeth... I know we grew apart, but she was always my rock. Please tell her.

MAXIMILIANA

I love you, daddy.

FADE OUT...

EXT. LA ESPERANZA - CONTINUOUS

Freedom Terrace.

All of the souls in the cemetery are gathered together in a circle. Arcadio, Maximiliana and Kumei are in the middle.

Kumei begins to dance.

Arcadio locks eyes with Uncle Cabano. He kisses his fingers and holds them up in a salute. Uncle Cabano holds out his arms.

UNCLE CABANO

You are my champion, Arcadio.

They pray.

ARCADIO

Our Father, who art in
heaven, hallowed be thy name.

UNCLE CABANO (CONT'D)

Our Father, who art in
heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Kumei dances, bent over, with bouncing bird-like movements,
stepping, walking, and turning.

Other spirits join in prayer, some in different words and
different languages, but all together.

SPIRITS

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

MAXIMILIANA

Everyone! This is your moment to
cross over into the splendor of
love.

SPIRITS

Forgive us our trespasses, as we
forgive those who trespass against
us.

Maximiliana looks to the sky. The clouds part.

MAXIMILIANA

See it in your mind's eye. Enter
the portals of light that stretch
to infinity.

SPIRITS

For thine is the kingdom, and the
power, and the glory...

(beat)

forever.

A blinding illumination appears...

Then, darkness.

It happens in an instant.

Our focus adjusts, and only Arcadio, Maximiliana and Kumei
are left standing on Freedom Terrace.

ARCADIO

Amen.

MAXIMILIANA

Oh, no. Kumei! You didn't go into
the light!

KUMEI

Not yet.

MAXIMILIANA

We must leave here before dawn.

KUMEI

Centuries have passed since I have
seen the land of my people. I need
one last look.

SIRENS sound. The police are on their way.

ARCADIO

Come on. Let's go.

Together they run through La Esperanza, where no lost souls
remain. They scale the wall to the canyon... back into the
outside world.

The mission BELLS TOLL.

FADE OUT...

INT./EXT. MONTE CARLO LOWRIDER - MOMENTS LATER

Arcadio, Maximiliana and Kumei are in the front seat.
Maximiliana in the middle. The car ride thrills Kumei. He
hangs out the window.

Arcadio and Max's song plays on the radio.

KUMEI

Whoop! Whoop! Ahhh, the wind! The
music! The music is playing out of
nowhere. How the world has changed.

Arcadio slowly, hesitantly, puts his arm around Maximiliana.
She lets him. She moves in a little closer.

Arcadio drives them to Maximiliana's rich neighborhood on the
hill. Kumei is incredulous at what civilization has become.

KUMEI (CONT'D)

This is how people live now?

ARCADIO

The one-percent. Not everyone. Life
is still unfair.

Arcadio takes them all the way to the top, to a lookout point. He stops the car. They get out.

EXT. LOOKOUT POINT - CONTINUOUS

Arcadio, Maximiliana and Kumei stand at the edge of the precipice. They can see for miles.

They are blessed with an epic sunrise. The last sunrise of the summer. The outline of mountains emerges in the distance against an orange sky. The orange deepens, and then melds into blue. A new day dawns.

KUMEI

(searching the horizon)
Our lands are gone.

ARCADIO

Far to the east, past those mountains, your people live on... still fighting for rights... to be heard and to be seen. It's a struggle for your heritage, but all is not lost.

KUMEI

I believe in the good of man.

ARCADIO

We will advocate for you. We'll keep trying to do what's right.

MAXIMILIANA

Yes. And, we will inspire others.

KUMEI

That's all I could ask. I thank you, noble warriors.

MAXIMILIANA

Thank you for showing us the way.

KUMEI

I am both happy and sad to leave you now.

ARCADIO

Goodbye, friend.

KUMEI

You fulfilled the prophesy.

Kumei raises both hands, palms forward, then directs them gently toward Arcadio and Maximiliana. They acknowledge this, and then leave Kumei alone.

As Arcadio and Maximiliana walk back to the car...

A brilliance ignites the sky...

Kumei goes into the light.

FADE OUT...

INT./EXT. MONTE CARLO LOWRIDER - MOMENTS LATER

Arcadio drives down the hill, and stops the car just past Maximiliana's mansion. All is quiet.

MAXIMILIANA

You know, if it wasn't for you...

ARCADIO

We did it.

They sit in silence for a few minutes.

Arcadio gets nervous.

ARCADIO (CONT'D)

So... you're going away to school, and I'm staying here. But... will I see you for the holidays?

MAXIMILIANA

Yes.

ARCADIO

Really?

MAXIMILIANA

I wouldn't miss a chance to see your ugly Christmas sweater.

ARCADIO

Oh, I have one. You can be sure of that.

MAXIMILIANA

And, you were doing so well with the dark attire tonight.

Arcadio hesitates. Still nervous.

ARCADIO
I'm thinking I should kiss you
while I'm still wearing this.

MAXIMILIANA
It's about time.

Maximiliana closes her eyes, awaiting the touch of his lips.
They share their first kiss.

ARCADIO
Not a goodbye kiss.

MAXIMILIANA
Do it again so I can be sure.

She leans into him. Another sweet kiss.

Maximiliana looks at Arcadio like she is seeing him for the
first time.

ARCADIO
What is it?

MAXIMILIANA
Just making sure I got you right.

ARCADIO
You've got me alright.

He switches on the radio. Not too loud. It's daylight, but
the neighborhood has not woken up yet.

An upbeat version of Arcadio and Max's song plays.

MAXIMILIANA
Wait here for a minute. I have
something for you.

Maximiliana gets out of the car. Arcadio watches her run
across the street and disappear behind the estate wall.

ARCADIO
Please come back. Please come back.

She comes right back. She gets in the car holding a canvas
wrapped in cloth.

MAXIMILIANA
This is for you.

She presents the gift to a Arcadio. He unwraps it reverently.
It is a painting. Colorful. Lots of yellow. With her
signature.

ARCADIO
Is... is this me?

MAXIMILIANA
Yes. How I see you.

ARCADIO
I love it.
(hugs it)
I'll hang it in my room and think
of you every day.

-- they SING. [TRACK 13: ARCADIO AND MAX'S SONG/REPRISE]

ARCADIO (CONT'D)
DARK AND LIGHT,
BROWN AND WHITE.

MAXIMILIANA
THE ODDS ARE AGAINST US,
ALL DAY, ALL NIGHT.

ARCADIO
I'M FROM THE BARRIO,
YOU'RE ON THE HILL.

MAXIMILIANA
THAT'S NOT WHAT MATTERS,
IF MY DREAMS YOU FULFILL.

ARCADIO
THEN I'LL BE YOUR BABY.

MAXIMILIANA
AND, I WILL BE YOUR GIRL.

ARCADIO
YOUNG LOVE, LAST FOREVER.

MAXIMILIANA
LET'S GIVE IT A WHIRL.

ARCADIO	MAXIMILIANA (CONT'D)
DARK AND LIGHT,	DARK AND LIGHT,
BROWN AND WHITE.	BROWN AND WHITE.
THE ODDS ARE AGAINST US...	THE ODDS ARE AGAINST US...

ARCADIO (CONT'D)
TOGETHER. TONIGHT...

Arcadio reaches out and gently pulls the velvet hood of Maximiliana's cape over her head.

ARCADIO (CONT'D)
Beautiful. This has been the
greatest summer of my life.

Maximiliana grabs Arcadio's hand and squeezes it.

MAXIMILIANA
Who knows what the future may hold.

Maximiliana gets out of the car and heads to her estate.

Arcadio goes back to his barrio on the other side of town.

FADE TO BLACK...

THE END