

KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN

by

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EXT. HARBOR - DAY

The South American harbor is crammed with freight ships. DOCKWORKERS climb the ramps with bags of coffee beans. Cranes unload boxes of Japanese coffeemakers.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAR DISTRICT - DAY

The narrow street is lined with garish bars. Half-nude HOOKERS lean over balconies and call down to passing SHIPMATES. More hookers, escaping the tropical heat, sit in doorways and fan themselves to the Salsa MUSIC from all the bars.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT PATIO - DAY

Tapping to the music are a man's feet in sandals and a gold ankle chain. His linen trousers are rolled up in the heat. Dyed in his silk shirt are small faces of Rita Hayworth.

He is LEWIS MOLINA, 58, an American who has lived here since jumping ship at 19. His hair is tinted to hide the gray. He has the weathered face of a man who has seen it all, and been hurt by most of it.

As the camera moves from his feet to his face, we hear Molina reading in a rather effeminate voice.

MOLINA

He says he can't come back for
Christmas like he promised ... and
he's very sorry he hasn't seen his
new son yet... and he loves you
with all his heart.

Spread across his table are envelopes and stamps. A WOMAN of the district listens to him with quiet dignity. She has a baby on her lap and a four-year-old boy at her side.

WOMAN

So he won't come at all this year.
(MORE)

WOMAN (CONT'D)

(holds back tears)

What about money for the children?

MOLINA

Sorry.

He doesn't say.

(turns to bar)

Gabriel! Did you forget my iced
tea?

(turns to woman)

Do you want to write him back?

The woman is too sad to answer. The boy fiddles with his Star Wars toy. Molina moistens a pen with his tongue and begins to write.

MOLINA

Dear Peter, the boys and I were
delighted to get your thoughtful
card ...

A ship horn BLARES over the music. As Molina writes, we see the interior of his hang-out and 'office.'

The restaurant is divided by a folding partition, painted with jungle leaves and spider webs. One side is a bar with weary dockworkers. The other side is a modest dining room with SHIPS OFFICERS at clean tablecloths.

GABRIEL, 35, a handsome waiter in a tunic, moves through the tables with a tray of dirty dishes. His well-dressed WIFE, waiting impatiently at the kitchen window, resumes her harangue.

WIFE

I told you last week, the deadline
is today. If we don't pay by 5:30,
the girls will miss a whole
semester.

Saying nothing, Gabriel puts an iced tea on his tray.

WIFE

Are you listening!
(MORE)

WIFE (CONT'D)

You know how I struggled to get them accepted by that school!

Gabriel approaches Molina's table on the patio. Molina glances up with a smile.

GABRIEL

Your tea, Molina. Sorry it took so long.

MOLINA

That's okay.

(returns to letter)

Remember, dearest Peter, I am your woman, who misses you more than life itself, who lives only for the blessed moment of your return. I save all my love for you alone. Your beloved --

(looks up)

What was your name, darling?

WOMAN

Please, Senhor Molina. I will sign my own name.

Molina is miffed.

MOLINA

Okay. If you think that's better.

The woman pays the fee and leaves. Gabriel, waiting nearby, looks uneasy as he leans forward.

GABRIEL

Molina, could I ask you a small favor? It's only a hundred. For my kid's school. (indicates wife) She has the money, but she says a father should provide these things.

Molina takes out a hundred, leaving only twenty for himself. Gabriel accepts it with grateful dignity.

GABRIEL

Thank you, Molina. I'll pay you back next month.

Molina watches him approach his angry wife.

MOLINA

Bitch.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAR DISTRICT - NIGHT

Although the bars are closed, the narrow street still swelters in the heat. Molina and Gabriel stroll past hookers lingering in the shadows.

MOLINA

I'll never understand. How can a man with your intelligence work in a dump like that?

GABRIEL

It's life, Molina.

MOLINA

No, it's a shame. With your looks and charm, you should work in a chic restaurant. In a big international hotel. Making three times what you get in that stinkhole.

GABRIEL

You think I haven't tried?

They turn a corner and approach the bus-stop.

MOLINA

Look, when I brought my mother down from Miami, she worked the switchboard at the Copacabana Palace. She still knows the manager. She'll introduce you, and poof. A new life.

GABRIEL

Forget it, Lewis. I can't even speak English.

The bus approaches.

MOLINA

(quickly)

I'll pay for your lessons. We can practice everyday. It's perfect, you'll learn in no time.

GABRIEL

Talk is cheap, eh Molina?

MOLINA

I can afford it. Really.

GABRIEL

(boards the bus)

See you tomorrow.

MOLINA

Goodnight, Gabriel. Kiss the children for me.

Molina watches the bus pull away. Several TOUGH TEENAGERS stand in front of a run-down movie theater. One BOY, 16, stares at Molina. Their eyes meet.

CUT TO:

INT. MOLINA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Molina, exhausted, enters his dimly-lit parlor. The late-night TV broadcasts a test pattern. His MOTHER, 81, wakes up on the sofa. They speak in English.

MOLINA

Mama, you should be in bed. Why don't you listen to the doctor?

MOTHER

What time is it?

MOLINA

Long past your bedtime. Come, I'll help you.

He takes her elbow. She hobbles toward her bedroom with a cane.

MOLINA

Do you know anyone who teaches
English?

MOTHER

Why are you so late, Lewis? Did
something happen?

MOLINA

Of course not, Mama. Just go to
sleep.

EXT. BAR/RESTAURANT - DAY

CUT TO:

Molina sips coffee at his regular "desk" on the patio.
A police car pulls to a stop. A POLICE OFFICER gets out
and approaches Molina's table.

OFFICER

Good morning, Molina. How's it
going?

MOLINA

Not bad.

The officer sits down and fingers Molina's papers and
pens.

OFFICER

How's business?

MOLINA

Slow.

I need more coffee. You want some?

OFFICER

You don't have time.

(points)

Recognize the kid in the car?

Molina squints at the police car. In the backseat is
the 16-year-old boy (from last night) with his FATHER.

OFFICER
His father's been singing your
favorite song. Let's go.

Crestfallen, Molina stands up and gazes back into the restaurant at Gabriel.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRISON - DAY

The old prison is massive. The stone walls are surrounded by slums.

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON - DAY

The corridors are filthy. The floors are cracked. The paint is peeling.

CUT TO:

INT. TORTURE ROOM - DAY

Shadows on the wall show a man being tortured. He suddenly falls to the floor. His boots are spattered with blood.

VOICE A
Is he dead?

VOICE B
No, I'll wake him up.

VOICE A
Forget it, I'm too tired. Just haul him back to the cell.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL - NIGHT

The stark cell door has a steel door and one small window with bars. Molina sits on a prison bed and speaks directly into the camera.

MOLINA

When the tycoon discovers where she is working, he buys the hotel and fires her. Just when she needs to pay for her lover's T.B. treatment.

CUT TO:

INT. FISHERMAN'S SHACK - NIGHT (MEXICAN MOVIE)

We see the MOVIE that Molina is describing. The images look like a cheap Mexican melodrama.

The tubercular YOUNG MAN is asleep on a humble bed in the shanty.

VOICE OF MOLINA

She tells her lover nothing about losing her job. She just wants him to sleep.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL- NIGHT

Now we see that Molina is addressing someone. The CAMERA PANS to the other bed.

His CELL-MATE wears the same blood-spattered boots seen in the torture room. The CAMERA CONTINUES from boots to head. The cell-mate appears to be sleeping, his face to the wall.

MOLINA (O.S.)

She doesn't dare worry him when he's so sick.

The cell-mate rolls over with his eyes open. He is VALENTIN ARREGUI, 32, thin and unshaven. His arms show the marks of torture. He has the intense look of a man who has been hurt in more ways than one.

VALENTIN

Don't bother me. I need to sleep.

CUT TO:

INT. FISHERMAN'S SHACK - NIGHT (MEXICAN MOVIE)

Coughing, the tubercular Young Man struggles to his feet and puts on his coat.

VOICE OF MOLINA

One night her lover is feeling a little better and decides to meet her after work at the hotel.

Leaving, the young man blows out the candle.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOTEL - NIGHT (MEXICAN MOVIE)

The Young Man speaks to the DOORMAN at the large hotel. The Doorman gives him a cigarette and matches.

VOICE OF MOLINA

The doorman tells him that she hasn't worked there for quite a while. He asks for a cigarette even though he knows smoking is suicide for a man with T.B.

CUT TO:

EXT. DARK STREET - NIGHT (MEXICAN MOVIE)

The gaunt Young Man sees several PROSTITUTES under a street lamp, calling out to passing cars.

VOICE OF MOLINA

In desperation he walks street after street until, finally, he sees her on a corner. She is wearing a gaudy outfit and flirting with an old man in a car. He suddenly realizes what she's been hiding from him: she was selling her body to save his life.

The young man, crying, takes a deep drag on his cigarette.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL - NIGHT

Molina, playing the role of the young man, pretends to cry with a cigarette. Valentin struggles to his feet and goes to the shit-bucket in the corner.

MOLINA

Do you like it?

VALENTIN

Leave me alone, man. I need to build my strength.

MOLINA

Just tell me if you like it.

Valentin, exhausted by torture, leans against the wall as he urinates.

VALENTIN

Now that it's over, it seems like the lovers are dead.

MOLINA

It's not over yet, my dear.

VALENTIN

Shit.

CUT TO:

INT. FISHERMAN'S SHACK - NIGHT (MEXICAN MOVIE)

The WOMAN (who was dressed as a hooker) arrives home in normal clothing. Seeing his empty bed, she rushes into the kitchen.

On the table are a plate full of cigarette butts and an empty bottle of rum. Then she sees his note by the window.

VOICE OF MOLINA

Instantly she realizes that he knows her secret. She finds his note by the window.

(MORE)

VOICE OF MOLINA (CONT'D)

Moonlight falls on his tearstained words as she reads: "I love you so much that I cannot go on being such a burden to you. Please don't look for me. If God wants us to meet again, we'll find each other without even looking."

The movie music swells: a sad, romantic BOLERO.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL - NIGHT

Molina is humming the same Bolero. Valentin stares at the ceiling.

MOLINA

Isn't it wonderful!

VALENTIN

It helps pass the time.

MOLINA

Does that mean you like it?

VALENTIN

It doesn't help the cause.

MOLINA

Blessed Mary, is that all you can talk about? You must've studied Political Philosophies in school.

Valentin looks at him with disgust.

VALENTIN

The Phrase is Political Science, and the answer is -- no, I studied Journalism.

MOLINA

Ah! So you can appreciate a good story.

VALENTIN

And easily spot a cheap one.

MOLINA

Don't worry, my dear. Tomorrow morning Mother will show her best. Better than any movie you'll ever see.

VALENTIN

No, I can't be listening to this junk during the day. I've got important things to think about.

MOLINA

Tomorrow night, then. Sweet dreams.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL - DAY

Valentin reads a paperback entitled Third World Economics. Molina, like an actor, uses a mirror and lipstick to apply a light rouge on his cheeks.

MOLINA

Tell me about your girlfriend. You do have one, don't you?

VALENTIN

Leave me alone.

MOLINA

Of course, you do. What's the big secret? Is she involved in a scandal?

Valentin glares up from his book.

VALENTIN

It's none of your business.
(turns away)
That's my problem.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL - NIGHT

Molina is excited to be telling another movie.

MOLINA

Imagine Paris during the Second World War, such a wonderfully heroic time. Proud soldiers march along the broad avenues in a magnificent Parade of Liberation.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARIS - DAY

The Parisian skyline. SOUNDS of crowds, military drums, marching troops.

VOICE OF MOLINA

The air is charged with excitement as they march under the Arch of Triumph.

PAN DOWN the Arch of Triumph to reveal columns of NAZI TROOPS.

VOICE OF MOLINA

Wearing their marvelous uniforms. So perfect, so clean. Battalions of totally blonde, invincible supermen!

Through a series of shots, we move from the parade to an average French working-class neighborhood.

The images look like a slapdash German film of the 1940's. More specifically, a Nazi propaganda movie.

VOICE OF MOLINA

Forget what you read in the history books. The truth is, the French welcomed the Germans with open arms.

As two FRENCHMEN unload a truck at a hardware store, a NAZI CONVOY appears. German troops arrest the two men, and find others hiding in the cellar. One is shot trying to escape, the others surrender. They are Jews.

VOICE OF MOLINA

Oh, there were a few who didn't appreciate them, but for the most part, the French cheered because they were saving France from disaster and starvation.

WERNER, a handsome Gestapo officer, whispers to an AIDE. A neighborhood crowd spits on the smugglers. German troops break open the cargo and distribute the contraband food. A grateful OLD WOMAN kisses Werner's hand.

A pickup truck stops in an alley and watches the crowd.

VOICE OF MOLINA

A small truck watches from nearby. Inside are these two French thugs from the Resistance. The driver is a hulking cross-eyed Flunky. His boss is a grimy little Clubfoot. Their truck is loaded with delicacies like canned meats and cognac. These Resistance goons are shameless black-marketeers. Simply shameless.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL - NIGHT

Valentin sits up.

VALENTIN

You mean the Nazis are the good guys? Are you crazy?

MOLINA

So what, it's a movie I saw.

VALENTIN

Are you saying freedom fighters are bad guys?

Molina, upset, kicks his rather effeminate speech into overdrive.

MOLINA

I don't explain my movies. It
just ruins the emotion.

VALENTIN

(turns away)
This movie's already ruined.

MOLINA

Now, the Clubfoot ...

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY (NAZI MOVIE)

The Clubfoot hobbles from his truck to a phone booth and
dials.

CLUBFOOT

Let me talk to Michelle.

CUT TO:

INT. CABARET - DAY (NAZI MOVIE)

A chorus line rehearses on the stage of a lavish
nightclub. MICHELLE, a blonde chorus-girl, runs offstage
to answer the phone.

BLONDE

Yes?

CLUBFOOT (O.S.)

(curt)

They got Jacob and Bernard. Did
you get the map?

BLONDE

No, there was no time to --

CLUBFOOT (O.S.)

No time! You better come through.
Or else.

BLONDE

Don't worry, I'll get it. After
work I'm going to -

CLUBFOOT (O.S.)
Just get it. Nothing else matters.
Vive la France.

CUT TO:

INT. CABARET NIGHT - NIGHT (NAZI MOVIE)

The Blonde dances in the chorus line. Elegant waiters move along dimly-lit tables of German officers.

VOICE OF MOLINA
Every night, a ravishing young chanteuse takes the stage and sings to an audience filled with the German High Command.

LENI, a stunning brunette dressed in elegant black, appears in the spotlight.

VOICE OF MOLINA
She is Leni Lamaison. A Grace Kelly with the voice of a Piaf.

VOICE OF VALENTIN
Grace who?

VOICE OF MOLINA
Anyway...
(sighs)
The lyrics portray a sweet innocent nightingale, taken prisoner from its nest by a fierce brutal eagle. Can you imagine her courage, singing this in public during the German Occupation? And to top it off, she descends the stage steps and finishes her song right in front of Werner's table. Werner! A man no woman can resist. Totally heartless. But inside, a volcano. My God, so gorgeous, so blonde, and --
(whispers)
the Chief of the Gestapo for all France.

Leni, singing, moves between tables of Nazi brass who fidget at her bold lyrics. Werner whispers and gives an AIDE his name-card engraved with a swastika.

Leni concludes face-to-face with Werner. Their eyes lock. Silent tension fills the cabaret. Werner rises slowly and begins to applaud. The audience bursts into applause.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL - NIGHT

Molina, acting out Werner's applause, is totally immersed in his movie. Valentin lies in his bunk.

MOLINA

(sighs)

Oh, Valentin, this movie is so wonderful, but I've got to get some sleep. Do you mind?

Molina waits for Valentin's reaction. Valentin just stares at the door.

MOLINA

What's the matter?

VALENTIN

Nothing.

MOLINA

Well, something's bothering you.

VALENTIN

I can't understand why they stooped my interrogation. It's been three days.

MOLINA

And Mother thought her bedtime story was helping you feel better.

VALENTIN

Yeah, a big help.

MOLINA

Fine, we'll pick it up tomorrow night. Isn't it romantic?

Valentin gazes at him with tight-lipped anger.

VALENTIN

Your Nazis are about as romantic as the fucking Warden. That bastard's been kicking and sticking me more days than I can count, and now I gotta listen to this crap.

MOLINA

I can imagine.

VALENTIN

No, you can't. You really like those jackboot blondes.

MOLINA

Of course. I'm in love with Werner. And you know why?
(gestures)
He's hung like a horse.

Valentin grimaces and rolls over, his face to the wall.

VALENTIN

Go to sleep.

MOLINA

What's wrong? Afraid to talk about sex?

VALENTIN

You really want to know, Molina? I find you boring. I know you like a book.

Molina, angry, leans forward on his bed.

MOLINA

Darling, you don't know page one. You know I'm a faggot? Well, congratulations. You know I corrupt minors?

(MORE)

MOLINA (CONT'D)

Well, it's even on TV, film at eleven. You know I go for little boys who --

VALENTIN

Okay! Okay, Molina. Your movie is terrific.

With naive hope, Molina picks up a candle to see Valentin's face more clearly.

MOLINA

You really mean it?

VALENTIN

(looks at him)

Sure, it's better than a tampax commercial. Let's mindfuck everybody.

Molina recoils and quickly regroups.

MOLINA

But propaganda is just dandy when it serves your stinking revolution.

VALENTIN

Now could you know anything about revolution? You're just a damn queen.

MOLINA

And how could you know anything if you're so damn prejudiced?.

Valentin rolls back toward the wall.

MOLINA

Now what? Our liberated journalist can't even say "no comment"? Has our freedom fighter run into too many fights or too many freedoms?
(sighs)

Just when my movie made me forget this stinkhole. Why couldn't my cell-mate be Werner?

(MORE)

MOLINA (CONT'D)

(lays down)

Goodnight. Dream about my French
Blonde.

VALENTIN

(curt)

I have my own woman.

MOLINA

Because she fights for your piss-
ass revolution, I'm sure.

VALENTIN

No.

Because I love her.

(pause)

I'd hate to imagine who you dream
about?

MOLINA

The singer, darling. I'm always
the heroine. Sweet dreams.

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON CORRIDOR - DAWN

TWO GUARDS drag a limp p body into a cell and prop the
NEW PRISONER against a bunk. His head is hooded with a
cloth sack. His shirt is blood-stained. SOUND of a
muffled groan.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL - DAWN

Valentin, kneeling by the door, peers through the foodslot
into the cell across the corridor. Molina, drowsy,
squints at him.

MOLINA

What's going on?

VALENTIN

Quiet, they're bringing in someone new.

Valentin SEES: the door being shut and the guards' feet departing.

Molina rubs his eyes.

MOLINA

What time is it, anyway?

As Valentin whispers through the food-slot, a voice echoes down the corridor.

VALENTIN

Hey... Hey..

GUARD (O.S.)

Who's looking for trouble?

(pause)

Then shut up!

MOLINA

(sitting up)

Holy Mary, it sounds like a train station. How do they expect me to get any sleep?

Valentin, deeply disturbed, moves toward the wash basin.

VALENTIN

He's really bleeding.

MOLINA

A political prisoner?

VALENTIN

They don't treat you like that for stealing bananas.

MOLINA

Do you know him?

Valentin begins brushing his teeth.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL - RIGHT

Molina seductively plays the role of Leni.

MOLINA

In her dressing-room, Leni changes into a pink satin gown which makes her look heavenly. Firm breasts. Thin waist. Smooth hips. Her skin smells of fresh lavender --

VALENTIN

What is this, Nazi propaganda or Nazi porno?

MOLINA

Don't be ridiculous. Sometimes I get a little carried away.

(resumes)

All of a sudden, Leni notices a magnificent bouquet of flowers.

VALENTIN

Sent by your Gestapo Loverboy, I suppose.

CUT TO:

INT. CABARET DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT (NAZI MOVIE)

Leni examines the flowers, finds Werner's name-card and tosses it aside. The Blonde enters the dressing room.

BLONDE

What fabulous flowers! Who are they from?

LENZ

Some filthy Kraut.

Leni pats the Blonde's stomach with a sympathetic smile.

BLONDE

Yes , soon I won' t be able to dance. Can you imagine, unemployed and pregnant?

LENI

And pregnant by a German!

BLONDE

What can I do, Leni? Love has no country.

The STAGE MANAGER opens the door.

STAGE MANAGER

Two minutes, Michelle.

The Blonde runs. Leni, alone, picks up Werner's name card and stares at the bouquet.

SUPER-IMPOSE: The eyes of Werner.

VOICE OF MOLINA

Werner's eyes, his beautiful blue eyes, began to burn into her soul. Eyes like the claws of an eagle -- inescapable.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL - NIGHT

Valentin, wrapped in a blanket, shakes his head in disgust.

VALENTIN

How can you just sit there and re-write history like that?

MOLINA

Because this movie is divine, and that's all that counts. If I don't think about nice things, I could go nuts in here -- like Charlotte of Mexico, since I'll end up a queen, no matter what.

VALENTIN

So you're just inventing all this crap.

MOLINA

No, I'm not, I swear. Well, some things, I embroider a little, so you can see them the way I did. But it was showing everywhere before the war was over.

VALENTIN

Jesus, don't you know anything more recent?

MOLINA

Not with such exquisite romance and perfect beauty. They don't make them like that anymore.

VALENTIN

Thank God.

MOLINA

You atheists never stop mentioning God.

VALENTIN

And you fagots never face facts. Fantasies are no escape. Alienating yourself like that can drive you nuts, too, you know.

MOLINA

(points to door)

If you've got the keys, I'll gladly follow. Otherwise I'll escape in my own way, thank you.

VALENTIN

(disgusted)

Then your life is as trivial as your movies. And so are you. I'm going to sleep).

Valentin blows out his candle. Molina, thinking deeply, blows out the other candle. The two candlewicks fade in the darkness.

MOLINA

Goodnight, Valentin. Dream about my French torch-singer.

VALENTIN

Dream about your Gestapo goons.

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON CORRIDOR - DAWN

FOUR GUARDS are conducting the morning bed check. As they open doors, we HEAR prisoners barking out their names. At the fourth door, we SEE the two men standing at attention.

VALENTIN

Valentin Arregui!

MOLINA

Lewis Molina!

The door is slammed shut.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL - DAY

Molina mashes an avocado. Valentin reads in bed. Molina approaches with avocado crackers and two cups of tea.

MOLINA

Have some. Mother's cleaning out her cupboard. It's a long time till lunch.

VALENTIN

No, I can't afford to get spoiled.

MOLINA

Mother of God, I offer you half of my precious avocado, and this is the thanks I get? You spit in my face!

VALENTIN

Don't act like that. You get so damn sensitive.

MOLINA

That's how I am, very sentimental.
(MORE)

MOLINA (CONT'D)

You're so damn smart, tell me what to do about it.

VALENTIN

I don't know, don't be so over-sensitive. You sound just like a ...

MOLINA

Like a what? Say it, like a woman, that's what you meant, isn't it?

(Valentin nods)

What's wrong with being weak like a woman?

VALENTIN

Women aren't weak, that's just your fantasy, and prejudice.

MOLINA

Why do only women get to be sensitive? Why not a man, a faggot, or any poor bastard? If more men acted like women, there wouldn't be so much violence.

Molina gestures at the welts on Valentin's arm.

VALENTIN

You've got a point there.

(looks up)

But what would you do in a world with no men?

MOLINA

Touche.

(sits down)

You're right. Men are mostly brutes, but I love them.

Molina sips his tea and sees Valentin grimace.

MOLINA

Why do you look at me that way? You have no respect for me at all, do you? You think I'm just trash.

VALENTIN

Look, Molina. I'm not feeling well.
(indicates opposite
cell)

Who knows when it's my turn again.

MOLINA

So build your strength. Have some
avocado.

VALENTIN

No thanks.

MOLINA

Do you really think eating this
avocado will make you spoiled and
weak? That much self-discipline
is ridiculous. Relax. Enjoy what
life offers you.

VALENTIN

When you join the revolution,
there's no time for pleasure.
Gratifying the senses becomes
secondary. The only thing I enjoy
is serving a cause that is noble.

MOLINA

What kind of a cause is that? One
that doesn't let you eat an avocado?

VALENTIN

(smiles)

Molina, you would never understand.

MOLINA

Try me.

VALENTIN

Look, in order to live with myself,
things must change in this country.
Working for that is my only
pleasure. And I can get that
pleasure anywhere, right here in
this cell, even during torture. If
you want me to spell it out in one
word, I'm a Marxist.

MOLINA

Marxist, Fascist, Capitalist. Who cares? They're all just fancy ways to hide your fear of pleasure. The only important thing is what you can see and touch. A hot cup of tea, a soft bed, a warm lover.

VALENTIN

I knew you wouldn't understand. Life is more important than a cup of tea.

MOLINA

Well, maybe you're right, but I only have one life. How many do you have?

VALENTIN

(bitter smile)

Touche.

Valentin turns away, deep in thought.

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON CORRIDOR - DAY

Two guards walk down the corridor and open a cell door.

GUARD

Let's go. The Warden wants to see you. Today's your lucky day.

The man who steps out is Molina. He is led away.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRISON COURTYARD - DAY

A massive wall with small barred windows faces the courtyard where prisoners are playing soccer.

At one window, two hands reach up and grab the bars. Between the hands, Valentin's face slowly raises into view.

VALENTIN

(stage whisper)

Rafael. Can you hear me? Rafael!
Are you okay?

RAFAEL (O.S.)

Valentin.

VALENTIN

Are you okay?

The CAMERA PANS along the wall to the window of the next cell. Rafael, 38, has the withdrawn face of a political prisoner.

RAFAEL

They won't let me sleep.

VALENTIN (O.S.)

Who's the new guy across the hall?

RAFAEL

I don't know. I can't take this
much longer. I'm so afraid.

The CAMERA PANS back to Valentin's window.

VALENTIN

We're all afraid.

RAFAEL (O.S.)

No. I mean I'm afraid I'll talk.

Valentin's face fills with pain.

VALENTIN

You'll make it, Rafael. We are
stronger than them.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE: PRISON ROUTINE

--- A new guard enters the watch tower.

--- Prisoners sunbathe in the courtyard.

--- Molina talks to the Warden.

--- Prisoners mop the visiting-room floor.
--- A guard shoves letters inside cell doors.
--- Valentin picks up a letter and opens it.
--- The sun sets behind the prison walls.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL - NIGHT

Two bowls of black-bean stew are pushed through the food slot in their cell door. Molina gets up, but Valentin beats him to the door.

VALENTIN

Great. I'm starving.

Valentin offers one bowl to Molina.

MOLINA

No, you take the big one. It has twice as much as yours.

VALENTIN

No, they want us to fight over it.

MOLINA

(insisting)

But you need your strength.

VALENTIN

Don't fight. That's what they want. Besides, I hate this crap.

Molina, extremely disturbed, accepts the larger portion. Valentin starts to eat and notices Molina toying with his food.

VALENTIN

What's the matter? Not hungry?

MOLINA

No, no.

Molina swallows two spoonfuls of the stew. Valentin opens his letter while eating.

MOLINA

Why won't you tell me who it's
from? Your mother, your sweetheart?
What's the big secret, anyway?

Valentin pockets the letter.

VALENTIN

Why did the warden want to see
you?

MOLINA

I told you. I may be paroled soon.

VALENTIN

A lawyer tells you that. Not the
Warden.

MOLINA

The Warden had just heard the rumor
himself. It's far from definite.
He called me in because my mother's
doctor phoned from the hospital.
She may be dying. I'd rather not
talk about it.

(sighs)

Imagine the shame of having a son
in prison. And the reason.

VALENTIN

Finish your stew. It'll make you
feel better.

MOLINA No, only one thing can help, to tell my movie.
Do you mind?

VALENTIN

(grudgingly)

Sure, man. Go ahead.

MOLINA

Man! Is there a man here? Don't
let him go. Where is he?

VALENTIN

(exasperated smile)

Okay, cut the crap and tell your
dumb movie.

Molina sets down his bowl and stands up.

MOLINA

Waiting in the moonlight behind
the cabaret is Werner's limousine.
Long, sleek, shiny... with two
crisp Nazi flags on the fenders.
Werner's eyes are fixed on the
stage door.

CUT TO:

INT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT (NAZI MOVIE)

Werner sees Leni and the Blonde step outside and wave
goodbye. As Leni approaches the limousine, Werner opens
the door.

WERNER

Thank you for accepting my
invitation.

LENI

(sitting down)

I need a drink.

Werner motions the chauffeur to drive and opens the wine
cabinet in his limo.

WERNER

Nothing is better than Rhein wine.
The finest in all Germany.

LENI

I prefer champagne. It's French.

Their eyes meet, testing each other's determination.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARIS STREET - NIGHT (NAZI MOVIE)

The Blonde hurries along the wet sidewalk. A car follows
her in the darkness.

VOICE OF MOLINA

Meanwhile, the Blonde hurries to meet a German Lieutenant, the father of her unborn child. But the Clubfoot has decided she is a traitor, maybe even a spy, because she cannot get a map to the secret German arsenal. The Blonde looks across the street and sees her lover in a second floor window. She steps off the curb. The car suddenly accelerates, and hurtles toward her. Turning in horror, she sees the Clubfoot at the wheel.

The car races off into the darkness, leaving the Blonde's lifeless body sprawled on the wet pavement.

We see the FACE of the horrified German Lieutenant in the window.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL - NIGHT

Valentin's FACE: He is stunned but quickly hides it. Molina, caught up in his story, does not notice.

MOLINA

The smoke-filled restaurant is small, but extremely elegant...

CUT TO:

INT. CHIC RESTAURANT - NIGHT (NAZI MOVIE)

Werner and Leni sip champagne, staring into each other's eyes.

WERNER

(seductive smile)

This French Resistance of yours can never do us real harm. But if it doesn't stop, it will destroy your country.

LENI

Perhaps. But nothing matters if France cannot be free. And it will be.

WERNER

(laughs)

I'm not offended. I like your arrogance. Everyone loves their country. If it were otherwise, I wouldn't trust you.

(lifts his glass)

Here's to a great artiste.

Leni lifts her glass.

VOICE OF MOLINA

Valentin? Are you listening?

CUT TO:

INT. CELL NIGHT

Valentin is lost in his own thoughts. Molina stands up.

MOLINA

You do this just to spit in my face, and you love it, don't you? Why do you humiliate me so? How can you leave me dangling like this, all alone, flapping my arms like some empty scarecrow.

Molina snaps his fingers near Valentin's face.

VALENTIN

Strange. When the Blonde was killed, I -- . It was chilling.

Molina is elated to discover that Valentin's distraction is a tribute to his story-telling prowess.

MOLINA

It's only a movie, Valentin. Just one of Mother's many stories.

VALENTIN

Yeah. But I keep thinking about my friend. The same thing could happen to her.

MOLINA

Tell me about her. My lips are sealed.

VALENTIN

I'm so helpless in here. With no way to protect her.

MOLINA

So you have a heart after all.

VALENTIN

Sure, like a leaky faucet, a weakness that can't be turned off.

MOLINA

Listen, it's not weakness. Write to her, tell her how you feel, tell her to stop taking chances.

VALENTIN

If you think like that, you'll never change anything in this world.

MOLINA

Climb off your high horse, darling. Really, don't be such a phony.

Valentin displays welts on his arm.

VALENTIN

You call this phony?

MOLINA

No, forgive me.

VALENTIN

Some day the struggle will be won.

MOLINA

Don't worry, you'll have your day, I'm sure.

VALENTIN

No, my days are over. No one knows where I am. I can't remember how long I've been here. And if anyone tries to save me, they'd hide my secret arrest by killing me on the spot.

(looks down)

I'm as good as dead already.

MOLINA

Valentin, please, don't say that. Look at my hands, they're shaking.

VALENTIN

The same thing could be happening to her. Right now.

MOLINA

Your true feelings, at last. You love her very much, don't you? Love should always come first. It's so beautiful when lovers are together for a lifetime. Why is it always so impossible?

VALENTIN

(offended)

What are you talking about? Look how you live. How can someone like you know anything about true love?

MOLINA

Please, you're not the only one who's suffered. I'm no stranger to true love. Do you know how hard it is to find a real man? One who's humble, and yet has dignity?

CUT TO:

EXT. BAR DISTRICT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

A listless Molina ambles the narrow street, his sad eyes filled with emptiness. His companions, three middle-aged HOMOSEXUALS, are cruising the crowd.

Their darting eyes scrutinize the passing teenage boys.

MOLINA (V.O.)

How many years was I searching.
When I jumped ship, I was hardly
more than a boy. How many days
did I write letters for the sad
and lonely. And how many nights
did I look into eyes filled with
scorn and deceit. So many nights,
so many faces. Night after night.
Year after year.

Molina glances into a restaurant and stops in his tracks.
His eyes are riveted on a waiter in a white tunic. It
is Gabriel.

MOLINA (V.O.)

And then, finally -- there he was...

Molina moves toward the Restaurant as if drawn by a
magnet. As his companions continue down the street, the
one named GRETA glances back.

GRETA

C'mon Louisa, your sister's in a
hurry.

MOLINA

(waving him off)

I'll see you tomorrow.

Molina enters the restaurant and sits at a table. Gabriel
approaches with a menu.

GABRIEL

Good evening, Senhor. Would you
care for a menu, or are you ready
to order?

Molina, too nervous to speak, accepts the menu. Gabriel
is called to another table by a woman patron, who is
extremely upset.

MOLINA (V.O.)

My heart was pounding in terror,
so afraid I would be disappointed
(MORE)

MOLINA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
again. But when I saw how he
handled her, I knew I was right.
She cursed him over and over, but
nothing could break his composure.
He refused to be humiliated. Here,
in such a sleaze-hole, among these
bickering sluts, he maintained the
dignity of a Prince.

Gabriel returns to take Molina's order.

GABRIEL
Are you ready for me, senhor?

MOLINA
What do you suggest?

GABRIEL
Perhaps the lasagna and antipasto.

MOLINA
Don't you think lasagna might be
fattening?

GABRIEL
Perhaps senhor would prefer steak
and onion soup.

MOLINA
(returning the
menu)
Sounds wonderful.

Molina watches Gabriel walk to the kitchen window to
place the order.

MOLINA (V.O.)
I went back, night after night. I
began to order three dishes, then
four, then five, just to have him
near me.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - LATE NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Molina is seated at a different table which is covered with several entrees, all partially eaten. Gabriel approaches to remove the dishes.

GABRIEL

Have you finished, Senhor Molina?

MOLINA

You work so hard, Gabriel. It's almost closing time. Why don't you take a break and join me for coffee?

GABRIEL

(curt)

Sorry, I do not fraternize with the clientele.

Molina watches Gabriel leave with the dirty dishes.

MOLINA (V.O.)

But I refused to give up. I went back month after month. Until finally, one night...

CUT TO:

EXT. BAR DISTRICT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

The bars are closed. Molina is walking Gabriel to his bus-stop.

GABRIEL

I'm too tired to talk, Senhor Molina.

MOLINA

Can't you call me Lewis? We've known each other more than a year.

GABRIEL

I'm too tired to talk, Lewis.

MOLINA

Tell me, Gabriel. Why do you always look so unhappy?

GABRIEL

Because I am. I hate my job. I
earn almost nothing.

MOLINA

I have some money. Let me help
you. As a friend.

GABRIEL

(firmly)

No thank you. I only like women.
Women are the best thing in the
world.

MOLINA

I totally agree. Women are the
best thing in the world. That's
why I want to be a woman.

Gabriel laughs affectionately. Molina smiles.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL - NIGHT

Valentin laughs affectionately. Molina smiles.

VALENTIN

You're a real character, Molina.

MOLINA

And finally, after more than a
year, we became friends. That was
three years ago.

VALENTIN

Jesus, did it take another year to
get him in the sack?

MOLINA

(stunned)

Are you out of your mind? Nothing
at all happened. Ever!

VALENTIN

You gotta be kidding.

MOLINA

Don't you understand anything at all? He's straight. He's just very lonely, so I have to satisfy myself with being friends. I wish I could make him not worry about anything at all, nothing except for himself, until he lost all that sadness of his for good. Wouldn't that be marvelous?

VALENTIN

Yeah, but not very realistic. I don't believe this, here I am, staying up all night thinking about your boyfriend. Is he married?

MOLINA

Yes, but not to me. I wish he were, for the rest of my life.

Valentin lays down and looks at the ceiling.

VALENTIN

Sounds like a real bind.
(indicates cell)
I know what you mean. All you can do is take it like a man.

MOLINA

Not me, darling. I take it like a woman. Always. That's why I want a husband who's the boss.

VALENTIN

(grins)
You're just an old-fashioned bourgeois sexist.

MOLINA

What else can I do?
(confiding)
I need to feel danger with man. And it doesn't work unless he's straight.

VALENTIN

I guess you're really fucked. Or rather, not fucked.

MOLINA

Well, if that's your attitude --
(groans)
Oh my God.

Molina grabs his stomach and doubles over in pain.

VALENTIN

What's wrong?

MOLINA

My stomach. Stabbing pains. All over my stomach.

VALENTIN

What is it, appendicitis?

MOLINA

No, I already had mine out.

VALENTIN

You gonna throw up? Maybe it's the food.

MOLINA

No, it feels like my old ulcer acting up again. I just got to keep talking. Let me see, where were we? Oh yes, you were upset when the Blonde got run over. Okay, one hour later...

With great effort, Molina lifts his head and resumes.

CUT TO:

EXT. LENI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (NAZI MOVIE)

Leni stands at the front door, waving goodbye to Werner in his limousine.

VOICE OF MOLINA

Leni lingers at the window, so
sad, so alone, so afraid that she
will fall in love...

Suddenly a hand reaches from the shadows and muffles her
scream. It is the Clubfoot.

CUT TO:

INT. LENI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (NAZI MOVIE)

The Clubfoot sits on the sofa arm. Leni paces nervously.

CLUBFOOT

Your girlfriend was a traitor.
Now she's a dead traitor. And the
same for you, if you don't get the
map.

He suddenly grabs her wrist and embraces her. She does
not resist.

CLUBFOOT

That Kraut can't keep his hands
off you, eh Cheri? Next time he
touches you like this -- (fondling
her) -- and like this, think of
your country. And get the map.

Leni has grasped a statuette of 'Justice' from an
endtable. She hammers his skull and flees.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARIS STREET - NIGHT (NAZI MOVIE)

Leni runs desperately through the dark street. The
Clubfoot hobbles after her, his face streaming blood.
She dashes toward a waiting taxi.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL - NIGHT

Molina sits on the edge of the bed, hunched over, both
arms wrapped around his stomach.

MOLINA

The taxi races into the night.
Leni pulls something from her
pocket. It is Werner's name card.
What can she do? Trapped between
the Enemy and the Killer. And
now, she ... she...

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DOCTOR

That's what they all say. Get going.

MOLINA

But it's important.

DOCTOR

Yeah, it always is.

He motions for two guards to escort Molina away. They do.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL - NIGHT

Molina lies on his bunk, looking much better. Valentin, building his strength, does sit-ups on the floor, but is still too weak to do many without resting.

VALENTIN

One thing I don't understand. How can you pass out from an ulcer?

MOLINA

I'm no spring chicken, darling. I don't have your strength.

VALENTIN

(resumes sit-ups)

Neither do I. But it's coming back.

(pause)

Did the Doctor say anything else?

MOLINA

Forget the Doctor. Would you be happy to see your woman come through this door, in the middle of the night?

VALENTIN

Of course.

MOLINA

So was Werner.

(MORE)

MOLINA (CONT'D)

Leni comes through the door like a goddess, her evening gown revealing her heaving bosom and full-bodied figure...

Valentin stops exercising and stares out the window at the night.

VALENTIN

No. She's thin, with long legs.

MOLINA

Not in this movie. That's all in your head.

VALENTIN

If you can "embroider" it, so can I.

MOLINA

Okay. Her, uh, thin body trembles at the sight of Werner, descending the marble staircase.

CUT TO:

INT. CHATEAU - NIGHT (NAZI MOVIE)

Werner descends from the mezzanine in his baroque chateau. Leni stands next to the BUTLER in the vestibule.

VOICE OF MOLINA

Their eyes meet. Leni says, "My best friend has been killed. I need a place to stay."

WERNER

(to butler)

Prepare the guest room.

Werner takes her hand and leads her into the salon.

CUT TO:

INT. SALON - NIGHT (NAZI MOVIE)

The lavish salon is filled with monumental Nazi sculptures and paintings. Leni gazes at them in the candle-light.
SOUND of "Siegfried" by Wagner.

WERNER

Your hand is trembling. Are you cold?

LENI

This music is magical. I feel like I'm floating on air.

They continue toward an immense portrait of Hitler, flanked by Nazi banners.

WERNER

The waves of violins are like the waters of the German River which is navigated by a Man-God. A man who fears nothing ... because his love for his Motherland makes him as invincible as a god.

Hitler's eyes sparkle in the candlelight, as if alive.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL - NIGHT

Valentin, amused, sits up.

VALENTIN

You got it backwards, Molina. Germans always say Fatherland.

MOLINA

This is Mother's movie, and she'll tell it her way.

CUT TO:

INT. WERNER'S SALON - NIGHT (NAZI MOVIE)

Leni stares hypnotically at Hitler's portrait. Werner stands behind her, as if whispering in her ear. The Wagner music swells.

Propaganda film images are SUPERIMPOSED over their faces: Olympic athletes with massive physiques carrying torches; endless columns of virile youth marching in perfect order; a mass rally standing at rigid attention.

WERNER

The German Resurrection is a masculine endeavor.

LENI

What about the women?

WERNER

A woman who bears five children for the Reich makes a greater contribution than the finest scientist.

SUPERIMPOSE images of Nazi military power: tanks, armored vehicles, marching soldiers, cheering throngs.

WERNER (V.O.)

Our army will liberate the entire world from inferiority and imperfection. From the Jews, from the Communists, from the Vatican. Until everyone worships this god as their rightful Leader.

SUPERIMPOSE a film of Hitler making a speech. Then a film of Hitler kissing a child.

END SUPERIMPOSITION. Leni is entranced. She turns to Werner with a tentative kiss. His eyes brim with tears.

LENI

Oh, Werner. You have the invincibility of a god, but your tears --

They kiss again.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL - NIGHT

Molina sits on his bed in a trance, his arms embracing empty space.

MOLINA
(playing Leni)
Your tears are proof that you have
the feelings of a man...

Valentin, kneeling by the door, peers through the food slot.

VALENTIN
Quiet! I can't hear.

He SEES: Guards returning the Prisoner across the corridor. The Prisoner wears only shoes, blood-stained underpants and the hood. He has the legs of an old man. His skin is covered with welts and cigarette burns.

Valentin bangs on the door with his metal cup.

VALENTIN
Killers! Fascist Killers!

The SOUND of more prisoners joining the protest.

Valentin sees the shoes of one Guard facing his own doorway. Suddenly a stream of urine splashes through the food slot.

Wiping his face, Valentin jumps to his feet and kicks the steel door.

VALENTIN
Motherfuckers!

The SOUND of the guards laughing as they leave.

Valentin, furious, spins around and hurls his metal cup at Molina's head. Molina ducks. Valentin stalks towards him.

VALENTIN
You son of a bitch! They're killing
one of my Brothers, and what am I
doing? Listening to your fucking
Nazi movie!

Molina clutches his pillow to his chest. Valentin rips it from his arms and flings it aside.

VALENTIN

Don't you know anything? Don't you know what the Nazis did to people -- Jews, Catholics, Marxists?

MOLINA

What do you take me for, an even dumber broad than I am? Of course, I know.

VALENTIN

(raises fist)

You don't know shit. And your movie don't know shit. You wouldn't know reality if it was stuck up your ass.

Molina retreats from the fist, his back hitting the wall.

MOLINA

So what? Why should I think about reality in a stinkhole like this? Why should I get more depressed than I am?

Valentin backs away, his anger turning ice-cold.

VALENTIN

You're worse than I thought. You just use these movies to jerk yourself off. And you want to jerk off on me.

Molina retrieves his pillow and clutches it again.

MOLINA

If you don't stop, I will never speak to you again. Not even 'good morning.

VALENTIN

Is that a promise?

MOLINA

How can you treat me like this? I'm just a harmless old woman.

VALENTIN

You're no woman. You're just a
cheap imitation.

Molina throws the pillow at Valentin.

MOLINA

I am a woman. I have everything a
woman has and more.

Molina drops his pants.

VALENTIN

(points)

And what's that? A giant clitoris?

Furious, Molina grabs his genitals and reaches for a
spoon.

MOLINA

This is an accident. Get me a
knife and I'll cut it off.

VALENTIN

Go ahead. you'd still be a man. A
naked man in a prison cell, just
like the homosexuals who the Nazis
shoved in the ovens.

On the brink of tears, Molina scoops up his trousers to
cover his genitals.

MOLINA

Leave me alone.

Molina throws the spoon at Valentin's feet and slumps on
his bunk, his face to the wall. Tears spill from his
eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Tears stream down Molina's face. He is in handcuffs,
following his mother as TWO INTERNS wheel her along a
hospital corridor. Her face is half-concealed by an
oxygen mask.

MOLINA

Mama, forgive me, I know it's my fault. I've given you nothing but sorrow. I'll be out soon, Mama, and I'll take care of you.

She is wheeled into the Emergency Room. The door is shut in Molina's face.

CUT TO:

EXT. MONTAGE OF THE CITY - DAY

The sky is dark with black clouds. Lightning streaks across the skyline. The entire city is drenched in pouring rain.

--- Rain inundates ships at the empty docks.

--- Torrents of rainwater gush along the streets of the Bar District.

--- Backed-up sewers flood a chic avenue.

--- Three women run to a bus with their shoes in their hands.

--- Water cascades down hills covered with slum shacks.

--- Lightning explodes above the Prison.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL - NIGHT

Molina sits on his bunk, his back to the wall, wrapped in his blanket. One plate of food comes through the lot.

Valentin keeps reading while he eats. Molina watches him in silence. Lightning flashes outside the window.

MOLINA

I haven't seen my mother for so long. I wonder how she is. If she died, they'd have to inform me, right?

Valentin keeps on eating.

MOLINA

I can't stand the silence. Say something. Anything.

Valentin says nothing.

MOLINA

Look, Leni didn't want to fall in love with Werner, but she did. Haven't you ever loved someone you didn't want to love?

VALENTIN

Leave me alone.

MOLINA

I can't take this silence anymore. I will tell my movie even if you hate me.

CUT TO:

INT. CABARET DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT (NAZI MOVIE)

The room is empty. SOUND of applause.

VOICE OF MOLINA

Leni finishes her last song to thunderous applause.

She enters and starts to undress. Then she sees the Clubfoot in the dressing-table mirror.

CLUBFOOT

Your time is up. Where's the map?

Leni says nothing. The Clubfoot pushes aside a rack of gowns, revealing a SCHOOLBOY bound and gagged.

CLUBFOOT

You've got 48 hours. Or your cousin will die.

Leni offers the Clubfoot her jewel box.

LENI

Here, take it. Take anything.
Just leave us alone.

CLUBFOOT

You know what I want.

LENI

Why do you do this? You say you
are fighting for France, but
everyone you kill is French!

CLUBFOOT

I didn't start this. They send
our people to the gas chamber every
day. And who puts them on the
train? Your sweet lover!

LENI

That's a lie! He would never do
anything like that.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL - DARK, DAY

Valentin lies on his bunk, his face to the wall. Molina,
wrapped in his blanket, gazes at the back of Valentin's
head.

MOLINA

You see, Valentin? I know who
Werner is.

Valentin rolls over, clutching his stomach. His face is
chalk-white.

VALENTIN

Get me some water.

Molina rushes to kneel beside Valentin's bunk.

MOLINA

What is it? What's wrong?

VALENTIN

I don't know. My stomach.

MOLINA

How does it feel?

VALENTIN

Like a bomb exploding.

MOLINA

Mother of God, the same thing I
had.

Molina goes to pour a cup of water.

MOLINA

But when I had it, you thought it
was a joke.

Molina returns with the water. Valentin sits up.

VALENTIN

I think it's the food.

(groans)

Prison food is crap, but this feels
like dead rats and maggots.

Molina hands him the water and walks to the door.

MOLINA

You must go the Infirmary right
now.

(pounds door)

Guard!

VALENTIN

No! Stop.

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MOLINA
It's okay. Go to sleep.

VALENTIN
What time is it?

MOLINA
Just go to sleep.

Valentin closes his eyes. Molina tenderly adjusts the blanket.

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON CORRIDOR - DAWN

The guards are conducting the morning bed check. The door opens. We SEE Valentin, pale and gaunt, hanging onto Molina's shoulder.

MOLINA
Lewis Molina!

VALENTIN
(whispers)
Valentin Arregui ...

Molina keeps him from falling. The door clamps shut.

CUT TO:

INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE - DAY

The warden's office is a spacious room overlooking the Prison courtyard. The WARDEN, 42, wearing a tropical business suit, watches Molina using the phone on his large desk.

MOLINA
(teary-eyed)
Don't worry, Mama. Soon we'll be home, and it'll be just like before.

The Warden checks his wristwatch.

WARDEN
Enough, Molina. You'll just make her weaker.

MOLINA

Mama, I have to say goodbye.

(pause)

I love you too, Mama.

Molina hangs up the phone and starts to leave.

MOLINA

(wiping his eyes)

Thank you, Warden. God bless you.

WARDEN

She must be happy to hear you might be paroled.

MOLINA

She said she sent me some food.
Do you know where it is?

WARDEN

We haven't seen it. I'm sorry.

MOLINA

Aren't you making a mistake with Valentin?

WARDEN

That's not your worry, Molina.
Worry about your mother.

The Warden motions Molina to leave. He does.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL - NIGHT

A single meal stands near the food-slot. Molina and Valentin stare at the steaming bowl. Despite his pain, Valentin goes to pick it up.

MOLINA

You shouldn't eat that garbage,
while you're sick.

Valentin sniffs the food and examines it closely.

VALENTIN

It looks okay. They've boiled it for hours.

MOLINA

Are you sure?

VALENTIN

(sitting)

I'm famished. I've gotta get my strength back.

MOLINA

What if it make you worse?

VALENTIN

I've got no choice.

Molina, feeling helpless, watches him eat.

VALENTIN

Tastes like dog piss.

MOLINA

So don't eat it.

VALENTIN

If it's another bomb, I hope it blows this pig-sty to bits.

(indicates prison)

I'd like to see the whole damn thing disappear from the earth forever.

Molina leans forward with a smile.

MOLINA

How lucky you are, Cinderella. Here is the fairy godmother who will grant your wish. Her stories can make anything vanish with a poof.

(indicates prison)

Even this, my poor little Valentina.

VALENTIN

Don't call me Valentina. I'm not a woman.

Molina eyeballs Valentin's crotch.

MOLINA

Well, I've never seen proof to the contrary.

VALENTIN

And you never will.

MOLINA

Anyway... the Clubfoot had told Leni that --

VALENTIN

Shit, don't you know any other movies?

MOLINA

Not until I finish this one.

VALENTIN

Then cut it short. This one makes me sick.

MOLINA

Don't worry, you'll like this part.

CUT TO:

INT. WERNER'S BEDROOM - DAY (NAZI MOVIE)

Leni awakes on silk sheets in a giant antique bed. She reaches for Werner and realizes he is gone.

She notices the bedroom phone off the hook. Curious, she steps to the window and picks up the receiver.

VOICE OF MOLINA

The mere sound of Werner's voice makes her smile with adoration. He is giving orders with crisp efficiency. When she is about to hang up, she hears him coldly order the execution of a dozen French freedom-fighters.

Leni drops the phone.

VOICE OF MOLINA

Her smile turns to horror. Her sand-castle dreams are demolished by a tidal wave of agony. The sad beauty of her reflection in the window is distorted by the raindrops which resemble her tears. Suddenly, Werner embraces her and proposes marriage. Although she agrees, her heart knows she can never love a cold-hearted butcher. As he wipes away her tears, she decides to avenge her country by stealing the map.

CUT TO:

INT. WERNER'S CHATEAU - DAY (NAZI MOVIE)

Werner hosts a gathering of German OFFICIALS and WIVES in the glass-enclosed garden.

Leni is alone in Werner's adjacent office, singing at the grand piano. As she concludes, the Germans applaud for an encore.

Leni puts a record on the phonograph. The Germans, again enraptured, are unaware that her performance is now a recording. Quickly, Leni finds a key and unlocks Werner's desk.

As she rifles through papers, Werner's old BUTLER approaches the office. As he stops to adjust his watch, Leni finds the map. She slips back to the piano and resumes singing, just as the Butler enters the office.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL - NIGHT

Molina, acting the part of Leni, kneels at the foot of Valentin's bed. As if playing a piano, he runs his fingers along the metal frame.

MOLINA

As she plays the sad song, her tears spill onto the piano keys.

(MORE)

MOLINA (CONT'D)

The song grows more heart-breaking
as her hands tremble with the agony
of betraying the man she loved.

Valentin suddenly curls up with pain, then relaxes.

VALENTIN

Oh God... it's like nails being
hammered into my guts.

(pause)

That's better. Do me a favor and
stop all this crap about traitors
and betrayal.

Molina, shifting gears, opens his shirt in an effort to
make him laugh.

MOLINA

Leni's heart was beating so fast
that her swelling breasts popped
out of her low-cut gown. Like
luscious hors d'oeuvres on a silver
platter.

Molina uses his lipstick to draw a pair of breasts on
his chest. Valentin chuckles.

VALENTIN

Don't make me laugh. It hurts.

On his knees, Molina scoots around the bed to Valentin's
face.

MOLINA

Help yourself to a nice juicy tit,
senhor. Please have another. The
best places serve them in pairs.

Valentin breaks into laughter. Suddenly, his eyes snap
open in pain. He clutches his pants and nods at the
shit bucket in the corner.

VALENTIN

The bucket! Quick!

Molina dashes to get the bucket. Valentin struggles to
his feet and tugs at his zipper.

Diarrhea fills his trousers. Valentin collapses on the floor, covering his face in shame.

VALENTIN

Oh no -- !

MOLINA

Are you okay? Holy Mary, what a smell.

VALENTIN

(groaning)

I'm sorry. You can't imagine how it hurts.

MOLINA

Of course, I can. Just let it all out. It can't smell any worse than it does already.

VALENTIN

(clenched fists)

God, I can't stand this.

Valentin trembles on the floor. Molina, seeing his anger, stays a few steps away.

MOLINA

You've been through much worse, my boy. You're the one always saying take it like a man.

VALENTIN

But the shame. I hate it. I hate myself.

Valentin unclenches his fists to hide his tears.

MOLINA

What's done is done. Just take off your trousers and clean up.

Kneeling down, Molina slides off Valentin's soiled trousers and underpants. He tosses them beside the shit-bucket and grabs the short stack of folded toilet paper.

MOLINA

Here. Clean yourself.

Valentin struggles to remove the glob from his buttocks. Molina wipes the brown liquid from his ankles.

Despondent, Valentin stops straining to reach behind his back. Molina, taking over, cleans his thighs and buttocks with maternal concern.

VALENTIN

(covering his
face)

Jesus, aren't you disgusted?

MOLINA

No, it breaks my heart to see you
like this. We're almost finished.
There. Now take off your shirt.
The shirrtails are soiled.

Sitting up, Valentin removes his shirt. His back is covered with black-and-blue welts. Molina pulls the sheet from his own bed and moves to wrap it around Valentin's naked body.

VALENTIN

No, it'll stink.

Tenderly insistent, Molina helps him struggle to his feet.

MOLINA

Don't worry. My weekly shower is
tomorrow. I'll have everything
washed by noon. There you are,
just like a papoose.

Molina wraps the bed sheet around him like a toga and helps him crawl back in bed.

MOLINA

Feel better?

VALENTIN

Yes, but I'm so cold.

MOLINA

I'll get you some tea.

Valentin, deeply touched, watches him pour a cup.

VALENTIN

You're very kind, honestly, I don't know what to say.

MOLINA

This'll work wonders. Here.

Valentin takes the tin cup and points to the letter protruding from his book.

VALENTIN

Thanks. Go ahead and read it. I know you've been curious.

MOLINA

No, I detest politics. I only read love letters.

VALENTIN

They've already censored the Politics. It's from my girlfriend.

Molina scans the envelope and unfolds the pages.

MOLINA

Her name is Elsa?

VALENTIN

No, that's a false name.

MOLINA

Is her name Marta?

VALENTIN

Why do you say that?

MOLINA

That's what you mumbled in your sleep.

VALENTIN

(worried)

What else do I mumble?

MOLINA

Nothing.

VALENTIN

Can you read her writing? She's an architect. Pure bourgeoisie. I'm such a bastard. I think I only fell in love with her because she's upper-class.

MOLINA

Love makes its own laws.

VALENTIN

So does the revolution. We could only meet when there was a lull in the struggle. Whenever I was forced to leave, she suffered every day until I got back. The same as I am now.

CUT TO:

INT. MARTA'S APARTMENT - DAY (FLASHBACK)

MARTA, 28, is in bed, her face radiant in the sunlight. The CAMERA PANS slowly down her nude body. Valentin is kissing her side. As his hand slides down, her legs slowly open.

VALENTIN (V.O.)

She wanted me to leave the movement. But how could I do nothing when my friends were disappearing, and the military was destroying the last freedoms we had left?

The lovers embrace. SOUND of the doorbell.

CUT TO:

INT. MARTA'S APARTMENT - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The front door is open with the safety chain locked. Marta, in a bathrobe, addresses someone in the hall.

MARTA

No, we broke up. He never comes here anymore. Please don't bother me again.

As Marta closes the door, Valentin suddenly appears and opens it.

VALENTIN

Rafael, is this really important?

RAFAEL

Yes.

It is the same Rafael from the next-door cell.

CUT TO:

INT. MARTA'S BATHROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Valentin is brushing his teeth. Marta steps from the shower and brushes her hair beside him. Valentin stops and stares at her reflection.

CUT TO:

INT. MARTA'S LIVING ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

They are eating breakfast on a glass coffee table. Marta begins crying softly and tries to conceal it. Valentin, deeply distressed, steps onto the terrace with his coffee cup.

VALENTIN (V.O.)

We were trying to build a relationship without exploitation. But once again I made her suffer. Once again, we argued. She, to forget her fears. Me, to forget my guilt.

Marta wipes her tears and joins him on the terrace.

VALENTIN

Come here. Kiss me. Things are what they are. I'll be back in a few days.

Marta moves forward to accept his kiss, then stops.

MARTA

Today I am crying, but never again. I can't take any more of this.

Valentin embraces her.

MARTA

If you leave, don't come back.

AS they embrace, she begins crying softly on his shoulder. Valentin's eyes brim with tears.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET -DAY (FLASHBACK)

Valentin walks through rush-hour crowds and approaches a train station.

VALENTIN (V.O.)

I had to leave, but I knew she was right. I didn't know how many more days I would walk these crowded streets ... Or how much longer I could see these sad faces, all these honest people plodding to work in their worn-out suits.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAIN - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The CAMERA PANS across the tired faces of the COMMUTERS.

VALENTIN (V.O.)

I wondered why I was born in this land where everyone became weak and weary...

Valentin stares out the window at the passing slums.

VALENTIN (V.O.)

I wondered why our land was doomed to so much misery and death. I wondered if it would ever end.

THROUGH the train window: Beyond the slums are giant factories. Xerox, Goodyear, Petrobras, Volkswagen, Votorantin, Remington.

VALENTIN (V.O.)

As a journalist, I was always hearing about the illegal arrests and leaking this information abroad. Although I no longer believed in violence, my assignment was to meet one of the last remaining members of the armed opposition. His code name was "Americo." He needed my passport to leave the country.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Valentin steps onto the platform, looks around and approaches an older man. AMERICO, 62, wears a worn-out suit. They shake hands warmly.

VALENTIN

Are you okay?

AMERICO

A little tired.

VALENTIN

You should have left long ago, Doctor Americo.

AMERICO

I don't know how to live anywhere else.

(points down)

This is where I'm needed.

VALENTIN

I keep wondering if it's all worth it -- when nothing changes.

AMERICO

My son, the main thing is to keep trying. Or it will never change.

VALENTIN

But what have your guns accomplished? Maybe our struggle is just an impossible dream.

AMERICO

Maybe so. Maybe not. The only thing that matters is never be satisfied with things the way they are.

A train enters the station. Valentin takes a brown envelope from his pocket.

VALENTIN

Well, good luck. Here's the passport. Take care of yourself.

They shake hands and Americo boards the train. As it leaves, Valentin gets on the escalator.

VALENTIN (V.O.)

I wondered what kept him going. I thought he was wrong, but I had to respect him. I could see a candle burning inside him that nothing in the world could put out. I was glad I could help him.

Reaching street level, Valentin steps from the station. Parked nearby is a black car. Plain-clothes AGENTS jump out with guns. Valentin tries to run but MORE MEN with guns emerge from another car.

He stops and raises his arms. Grabbing him, they handcuff his wrists behind his back and push him toward a truck.

Across the street, he SEES: Marta, Rafael and another MAN are being pulled from a black car and shoved toward the truck. Agents place a hood over Rafael's head and shove him inside the truck.

Valentin, grief-stricken, gazes at Marta. As she returns his gaze, Agents approach Valentin with a hood and put it on. The SCREEN turns black.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL - NIGHT

Valentin lays in his bunk, wrapped in Molina's bedsheet. He looks exhausted and depressed. Molina leans forward from his own bed.

MOLINA

What happened to her?

Valentin stares at the ceiling in silence.

MOLINA

Where is she now?

Valentin covers his eyes with his hand.

VALENTIN

The letter doesn't say. I haven't heard another word since that day.

(deep breath)

She's probably in prison. Totally innocent. Her only guilt is loving me. Loving this half-dead bastard who made her suffer. I should just go ahead and die.

MOLINA

Valentin, don't even say that.

Valentin covers his eyes with both hands.

VALENTIN

(tight-lipped)

Since my interrogation began, there's been another kind of torturer inside me, who keeps saying this agony after agony is the last thing I'll ever feel.

(chokes back tears)

I don't deserve to die in this cell. I only confessed some code names they already knew.

MOLINA

Just let it out.

VALENTIN

I can't take being a martyr, it infuriates me. I don't want to be a martyr...

(muffled sob)

I'll never see her again ... never touch her, hold her ... my whole life, a mistake.

Valentin finally uncovers his moist eyes. He looks at Molina and extends his hand.

VALENTIN

Hold my hand.

Molina takes his hand and sits on the edge of the bed.

VALENTIN

I don't want to die, Molina. Don't let me die.

MOLINA

You won't die.

VALENTIN

But look at me. What can I do?

MOLINA

Write her a letter. Tell her you love her.

(standing up)

I'll get some paper. Tell me what to say.

VALENTIN

"Dear Marta. Even if you never receive this letter, please forgive me ... " No, start over. "I have no right to ask you to forgive me, I love..." Start again.

(begins to cry)

I can't do it. I smell like a sewer, my guts are on fire, my skin itches all over.

MOLINA

You should take a bath. I'll warm some water.

TIME CUT: The water basin is being heated on the small kerosene burner. Molina's hands pick it up.

He brings it to Valentin's bed. Like a mother bathing her child, Molina dips a cloth in the water and washes Valentin's chest.

Valentin gazes at the shadows cast on the wall by the burner. The camera pans to the flickering shadows.

VALENTIN (V.O.)

Look at the shadows on the wall.

MOLINA (O.S.)

Mmm, aren't they beautiful? I always watch them.

VALENTIN (O.S.)

I'd never noticed.)

CUT TO:

INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE - DAY

The Warden leans back in his chair and watches the smoke rise from his cigar. Molina stands in front of the large desk.

WARDEN

Try to answer the question, Molina. Have you heard anything at all?

MOLINA

No, sir. I can't rush it. If I'm not careful, he'll get --

WARDEN

Don't worry, Molina. He'll never get suspicious. That's why we chose you.

Seated by a window is PEDRO, 26, an Undercover Agent dressed like a grad student. He is the same Agent who out the handcuffs on Valentin.

PEDRO

You're hiding something, aren't you?

MOLINA

Me? Why would I do anything to risk the pardon you promised me?
(almost in tears)
I nearly died of diarrhea.

(MORE)

MOLINA (CONT'D)

That wasn't our arrangement. You said the poison would be in the new bowl, but the other bowl was half-empty and he insisted I take the full one. If I refused, he would've become suspicious and --

The Warden pushes a Kleenex box across the desk.

WARDEN

We know, Molina. We're sorry it happened. Have a seat.

Sitting down, Molina uses several tissues to wipe his nose and dab his eyes.

MOLINA

How can you accuse me when you know I almost died for you?

WARDEN

Cheer up, Molina. Your mother's feeling a lot better since hearing about your pardon. They told me she's practically a new person.

Molina has to wipe his nose again. Pedro approaches.

PEDRO

What did Valentin say about his cadre?

MOLINA

(puzzled)

His what?

PEDRO

His group. The movement. Who they are, where they meet.

MOLINA

Nothing, sir. Not a word.

PEDRO

What does he talk about?

MOLINA

Almost nothing. He gets weaker every day. If eats gets any more poison, I don't know what will happen.

WARDEN

That's our business. Here.

The warden slides him a cup of coffee.

PEDRO

Did he show you the letter he got?

MOLINA

Yes, sir. It was personal. A love letter.

PEDRO

Did you read the part about his Uncle Americo?

MOLINA

Yes. He went to visit a farm or something.

PEDRO

That's a code phrase, telling him Americo has disappeared. How did he react?

MOLINA

Nothing, sir.

(sips coffee)

So he was right. He knows that you'd read it first. He told me.

PEDRO

Of course, you idiot. What did he say about the new prisoner? The one across the hall.

MOLINA

The one who's all messed up? He went on and on about it. He says no crime in the world justifies that kind of treatment.

PEDRO

Did he tell you his name?

MOLINA

(puzzled)

Of course, sir. Valentin Arregui.

PEDRO

No, you idiot! The name of the new prisoner!

MOLINA

(frightened)

Of course not. He's always wearing a hood.

Pedro, furious, glares at the Warden.

PEDRO

Who put a hood on him?

WARDEN

(worried)

The guards. It's routine. He's political.

PEDRO

Dammit, how do you expect him to talk if he can't even see the bastard's face?

WARDEN

It won't happen again.

Turning, Pedro sees Molina distracted by the remains of last month's Christmas tinsel. Again it is difficult to tell if Molina is really a fool -- or if, always an actor, he sometimes plays the fool.

PEDRO

Molina. You remember when they kidnapped the American Ambassador?

(Molina nods)

We looked like idiots in the foreign press. We gotta know everything they're planning. No matter how small.

Pedro lifts Molina's chin and glares into his eyes.

PEDRO

As soon as he recognizes the old
guy across the hall, he'll spill
his guts. Remember every damn
word he says.

MOLINA

Yes, sir.

PEDRO

The quicker he talks , the quicker
you get out.

(steps back)

Now get back to work.

Molina stands up to leave, then hesitates.

MOLINA

One thing, Warden. He heard the
guard say my mother was visiting,
and I'd told him she always brings
me a bag of groceries.

The Warden checks with Pedro, then picks up his pen.

WARDEN

Okay, Molina. What does she bring?

MOLINA

Ah, wonderful. Let's see, two
roast chickens in butter, potato
salad, canned peaches, condensed
milk. Two boxes of tea -- one
regular, one chamomile -- uh, four
bars of toilet soap, a jar of
pickled herring. What else?
Blessed Mary, my mind's a blank.
Let me think ... æ°ß=8ß=

CUT TO:

INT. CELL DAY

A blanket, spread out on the floor, is covered with
culinary delicacies. Molina and Valentin are having a
picnic.

VALENTIN

(between bites)

I'm sure glad she's feeling better.

MOLINA

Yes, you mustn't eat prison food anymore. At least not until you're better.

Valentin keeps eating. Molina, beaming with delight, hides something behind his back.

MOLINA

And now, la piece de resistance!
Close your eyes. Try to guess.

Valentin complies with a smile. Molina reveals a pastry.

VALENTIN

I have no idea.

MOLINA

Open your eyes.

VALENTIN

(beaming)

Baba au rum! I forgot such things
still exist.

Molina pulls it back, shaking a maternal finger.

MOLINA

Not so fast, young man. You can't
eat anything so rich until you're
better. I'll save it for you.

Valentin lights a cigarette and leans against the wall, placing his face in the rectangle of sunlight from the window. Molina slides beside him, leans back and rubs skin cream on his sun-lit face.

MOLINA

(singing)

Wrinkles, wrinkles, go away.

VALENTIN

Ahhh. Good cigarettes, good food.

(MORE)

VALENTIN (CONT'D)

I can't remember when I felt so good. Only one thing is missing.

Molina, hands on hips, affects a theatrical pose.

MOLINA

Really! And they call me the degenerate around here!

VALENTIN

(smiles)

No, I meant to wander the streets and find a good movie.

MOLINA

Of course! Why didn't I think of that!

VALENTIN

Your Nazi movie, how does it end?

MOLINA

I thought you hated it.

VALENTIN

Yeah, but I want to know how it turns out, to study how they made their propaganda.

MOLINA

Oh, stop complaining. Now, Leni arranges to meet the Clubfoot in an enormous museum filled with dinosaur skeletons and...

CUT TO:

INT. MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY - DAY (NAZI MOVIE)

The Clubfoot, the Flunky and the hostage cousin wait near a large window. As Leni approaches, her cousin screams.

COUSIN

No, Leni! It's treason!

The cousin grabs the Flunky and leaps out the third floor window. People rush forward. In the confusion, Leni flees with the map.

VOICE OF MOLINA

See what a good boy her cousin is?

CUT TO:

INT. CELL - DUSK

The sunlight is gone, but they still sit side-by-side against the wall.

MOLINA

A real hero, huh?

VALENTIN

He double-crosses the freedom fighters and you call it heroic? The little shit is a Nazi collaborator.

MOLINA

It's a movie. Don't take it so seriously.

Valentin gets up and lays on his bed. Molina, acting out Leni's role, reaches for his metal cup.

MOLINA

Racked with shock and guilt, Leni returns to Werner's chateau. During dinner, as he is noticing her cold distance, she impulsively hurls her wineglass across the room.

Molina flings his tin cup at the wall.

CUT TO:

INT. WERNER'S DININGROOM - NIGHT (NAZI MOVIE)

Molina's cup turns into Leni's broken goblet. She and Werner sit at a majestic table.

LENI

(crying)

I refuse to love a man who is the
butcher of my country.

WERNER

Come with me and you'll understand.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL - NIGHT

Molina's FACE. He spins his tale in the candlelight.

MOLINA

Werner takes her to a government
archive of photos and documents
about famine throughout the world.
He shows her how the elite create
false shortages to enslave the
masses.

CUT TO:

EXT. NAZI HEADQUARTERS - DAY (NAZI MOVIE)

SUPER-IMPOSED on Molina's face: Leni and Werner exit
the headquarters, flanked by massive Doric columns and
Nazi flags.

MOLINA

From that moment on, Leni understood
Werner's mission to liberate
humanity from injustice and
domination.

END SUPER-IMPOSITION Molina's face. Leni and Werner
stand alone above the marble steps.

VOICE OF MOLINA

Leni begs him to forgive her and
promises to help ensare his enemies.

They embrace passionately. Nazi flags flap in the breeze.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRENCH FARMHOUSE - DAY (NAZI MOVIE)

The Clubfoot's car drives through the rain to a small farmhouse in a forest. He and Leni get out and enter the house. Werner's limousine stops nearby.

VOICE OF MOLINA

Leni arranges a secret meeting with the leader of the Resistance, by insisting she will give the map only to him.

CUT TO:

INT. FRENCH FARMHOUSE - DAY (NAZI MOVIE)

The LEADER studies the map in his upstairs office. Smiling, he turns and violently slaps her face. She lands on the sofa.

LEADER

This map is a fake.

As the Leader approaches, Leni shoves a small revolver into his chest and fires point-blank. He drops to her feet. She rushes down the narrow stairway.

From the top of the stairs, the Clubfoot shoots her in the back. Werner appears at the foot of the stairs and shoots the Clubfoot who topples forward.

Leni, gripping the railing, staggers down the stairs and collapses in Werner's arms. His eyes fill with tears.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL NIGHT

Molina is in a trance. Valentin lights a cigarette with the candle.

MOLINA

The last scene is in Germany, in the magnificent Pantheon of Heroes. Leni appears in a vision to Werner and sings like never before.

VALENTIN

Yeah, in German.

MOLINA

She sings of her eternal love for him and begs him not to cry, because her sacrifice was not in vain.
The End.

(turns)

Well? Did you like it?

VALENTIN

No, but you're a pretty good storyteller. Next time tell one I like. I'm going to sleep.

Valentin blows out his candle. Molina smiles and blows out the other candle.

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Two guards drag a limp body along the corridor. Making excessive noise, they prop him against the wall and open a cell door.

It is the tortured old man again, but without the hood.
It is Americo.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL - NIGHT

Valentin is on his knees at the food-slot. He SEES: The guards' drag the old man into the cell and leave him on the floor.

MOLINA

What's going on?

VALENTIN

(standing up)

That guy is Americo.

MOLINA

Who?

VALENTIN

The man with my passport.
(turns away)
They don't know he's here.

MOLINA

Who doesn't know?

Valentin, depressed, leans back against the wall.

MOLINA

Please, Valentin. Maybe I can help.

Valentin gazes into his eyes. Molina moves closer.

MOLINA

Next time my mother visits, maybe I can get her to take out a message for you.

(no response)

Tell me what to do. Don't you trust me?

Molina waits. Valentin looks at the floor.

INT. PRISON CORRIDOR - DAY

A prison WORK CREW cleans out Americo's cell.

INT. CELL - DAY

Valentin wakes up. Molina is making tea.

MOLINA

Morning. Sleep well?

Valentin sits up and stretches.

VALENTIN

Great! Thanks to that food of yours.

(glances down)

Turn the other way, will you?

MOLINA

Why?

VALENTIN

Because you'll laugh.

MOLINA

At what?

VALENTIN

Something on any healthy man, that's all. Especially when he first wakes up and is getting stronger

MOLINA

A hard-on, well that's healthy.

(turns)

Should I close my eyes too?

Valentin grabs his trousers and tugs them on, then reaches for his shoes.

VALENTIN

My legs are hardly weak at all.

MOLINA

Do you still have any dizziness?

VALENTIN

No, not a bit.

(looks up)

Hey, I missed breakfast. Why didn't you wake me?

MOLINA

I told the guard not to bring anything as long as our food holds out.

VALENTIN

(stands)

Dammit, Molina, stop messing up my life. I need my morning coffee, even if it's made with dog piss.

Valentin kneels by the door and peers through the foodslot. He SEES: prisoners tossing Americo's clothes and effects in the trash cart.

VALENTIN

He's dead.

MOLINA

They already took him away. I
didn't want to wake you. I'll
make you some tea.

Valentin stands up, his face expressionless. Molina
takes a package from his grocery bag.

MOLINA

And now we open the little secret
I've been saving for our tea.
Marble cake!

VALENTIN

You eat it. I'm a prisoner, I'll
eat prison food.

MOLINA

Come on, let me spoil you a little
bit.

VALENTIN

Back off, Molina.

MOLINA

Don't take it out on me. It's not
my fault they killed your friend.

VALENTIN

You dam faggot! Shut up!

Valentin kicks the shit-bucket, which bounces off Molina's
arm and topples the small burner. Spilling kerosene
sends flames across the floor. Valentin grabs his blanket
and quickly puts them out.

VALENTIN

Jesus, I nearly ruined our stove.
(approaches)
Sorry, Molina. Did I hurt your
arm?

MOLINA

Don't touch me. Don't worry about
my arm. Understand?

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON CORRIDOR - DAY

Two guards escort Molina down the hallway and open his cell door. He carries a new bag of groceries.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL - DAY

Molina puts down the bag and takes out a heart-shaped box.

MOLINA

Look at the wonderful things Mama brought me. Glazed fruit!

Valentin, watching him, remains silent on his bunk.

MOLINA

What's this? You don't like candy?

VALENTIN

About this morning... about my temper, I'm really sorry.

MOLINA

Nonsense.

VALENTIN

It wasn't even you I was mad at, but now I've been thinking maybe I am mad at you.

MOLINA

Why?

VALENTIN

Well, because you're so kind. I don't want to feel obligated to treat you the same way.

Molina approaches and opens the heart-shaped box of candy. Valentin motions for him to stop.

MOLINA

(sing-song)

"Unable to take, unable to give."

(MORE)

MOLINA (CONT'D)
(offers candy)
Just save me the pumpkin ones.
They're my favorite.

As Molina watches Valentin choose one, we hear Molina's voice but his lips do not move.

VOICE OF MOLINA
Everyday he opens up more and more
with me.

NOTE: We leave and return to the candy in the cell as Molina recalls his latest meeting with the Warden.

CUT TO:

INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE - DAY

The curtains are drawn. Molina faces the large desk.

MOLINA
(continues)
Just give me a few more days. I'm
sure I'll get the information.

The Warden and Pedro approach.

PEDRO
If you don't, he'll have to be
interrogated again, and thoroughly.
You understand my meaning?

MOLINA
Yes, sir.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL - DAY

Valentin and Molina sit on Valentin's bed with their backs against the wall. The heart-shaped box is between them.

MOLINA
Well, that anyone involved in a
struggle the way you are, you're
(MORE)

MOLINA (CONT'D)

not supposed to become attached to any friends.

(Valentin nods)

See, sometimes I really do understand what you tell me.

VALENTIN

(indicates cell)

But in this case, there is no struggle, no fight to win. The oppressors are out there.

(indicates door)

In here, no one oppresses the other. So there's no reason for us to be controlled by all the things wrong with the world, all the things I want to change.

MOLINA

(nibbling candy)

I don't follow you.

VALENTIN

Look, here we are, two of us locked up all alone, so when it comes to our relationship, how should I put it? we could make any damn thing out of it we want.

INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Molina faces the Warden and Pedro.

MOLINA

He's too weak to be tortured, and if he drops dead, we all lose out.

WARDEN

So make him talk.

MOLINA

Well, there might be a way to speed this up... it's hard to say... it's just a hunch...

WARDEN

(exasperated)

Say it straight, Molina! If we're not straight with each other, we won't get anywhere.

MOLINA

You know inmates, sir. When a cell-mate leaves, they feel all sentimental and helpless. Well, he's gotten a bit attached to me, so if he thinks I'm being released, he's bound to open up and talk. Get a few things off his chest.

WARDEN

(to Pedro)

What do you think?

CUT TO:

INT. CELL - NIGHT

The heart-shaped box is almost empty. The dim lightbulb is on. They are still seated on Valentin's bed.

VALENTIN

Like I said, the problem for me is that -- through exhaustion or conditioning or whatever -- I can't take someone being nice to me without asking anything in return.

MOLINA

Well, if I'm nice, it's because I want your friendship, and, why not say it?... your affection. The same as I want to be good to my mother who's never harmed anyone, and who takes me for what I am and loves me. It's like a gift from heaven, and the only thing that keeps me going, the only thing. And you too are a very good person, very selfless and devoted, risking your life for a noble ideal, ready to die even in here for what you

(MORE)

MOLINA (CONT'D)
care about. Am I embarrassing
you?

VALENTIN
Yeah, a little.

MOLINA
So that's why I respect you and
like you, and hope you feel the
same way about me. I really admire
you, so I want us to always be
friends.

VALENTIN
Sure.

MOLINA
The reason I wanted to get this in
the open is that I might be leaving,
because I just heard that I may be
paroled.

VALENTIN
When?

Molina puts his hand on Valentin's shoulder.

CUT TO:

INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Pedro paces the room, then approaches Molina's chair.

PEDRO
Okay, do it. Tell him you're up
for parole, so we're changing your
cell in 24 hours.

MOLINA
Yes, sir.

WARDEN
I'll tell you something
confidential, Molina. We're being
pressured right from the top.
From the Ministry itself.

MOLINA

Blessed Mary, what a responsibility.

WARDEN

That's right, and this is your last chance, so get going. You got 24 hours.

MOLINA

One thing, sir. You can't catch a fish without bait. I need more food to set the hook.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL - NIGHT

Molina still has his hand on Valentin's shoulder.

MOLINA

They'll probably move me to another cell in 24 hours. My lawyer says that's the procedure.

Valentin turns away. Molina goes to his grocery bag.

MOLINA

I don't want to get my hopes too high. You want a baked apple?

VALENTIN

No, I've lost my appetite. I guess I should be happy, but uh -- I don't know.

Molina sits on his own bed.

MOLINA

Yes, all I wanted in life was to get out of here and take care of my mother. Everything else came second, but now that my wish might be granted...

Valentin sits up on the edge of his bed.

VALENTIN

Be happy, dammit. I'd give anything to get out.

MOLINA

But is it fair?

VALENTIN

What?

MOLINA

That I always end up with nothing. That I don't have anything truly my own in life.

VALENTIN

You've got your mother.

Molina gets up and sits beside him.

MOLINA

Listen, though. She's already had a life and lived it. She had a husband and a son, but I'm still waiting.

VALENTIN

At least she's still alive.

MOLINA

But so am I. When is my life supposed to begin? When do I strike it lucky and have something for my own?

VALENTIN

Right now. You just got lucky, you're probably getting out. Take advantage of it.

MOLINA

And do what? Hang out with my friends, a bunch of silly old queens like me? Have a few laughs until I can't stand the sight of them, because they're a bunch of mirrors that send me running for my life?

(MORE)

MOLINA (CONT'D)
(almost in tears)
My life of waiting for nothing.

The lights are turned off. They sit in the darkness
SOUND of Molina choking back his sobs.

VALENTIN
Maybe you'll feel better if you
tell a movie.

No answer. The camera moves toward Molina's face in the
darkness. He finally clears his throat and begins.

MOLINA
Once upon a time, on a tropical
island far away, there lived a
strange woman ...

CUT TO:

EXT. TROPICAL ISLAND - DAY (SPIDER MOVIE)

A narrow beach stretches between the ocean and the dense
Jungle.

VOICE OF MOLINA
She wore a long sleek dress of
silver lame that fit her like a
glove. But the poor thing couldn't
move through the jungle forest,
because she was caught in a giant
spider web which grew from her own
body.

The camera slithers past lush plants and exotic creatures
until we SEE, barely visible in the dense foliage, the
SPIDER WOMAN in her web.

VOICE OF MOLINA
One day a shipwrecked man drifted
onto the beach.

The SHIPWRECKED MAN topples out of a water-logged rowboat
onto the sandy beach.

CUT TO:

INT. TREE HOUSE DAY (SPIDER MOVIE)

The Spider Woman kneels beside the man who is sleeping on a bed of palm leaves.

VOICE OF MOLINA

She fed him and cared for his wounds. She nourished him with love and nursed him back to life.

The man awakes and looks up at her. The Spider woman wears a mask.

VOICE OF MOLINA

When he awoke, he gazed up at the Spider Woman and saw a perfect tear slide from under her mask.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL - NIGHT

The lush jungle foliage blends with Valentin's face in the darkness. Only one candle is lit.

VALENTIN

Why is she crying?

Molina, playing the Spider Woman, is on the brink of tears.

MOLINA

I don't know. Why do you always need explanations?

(sad sigh)

I'm tired, Valentin. Tired of suffering. You're not the only one they've hurt. You don't know, I hurt so much inside.

VALENTIN

Where does it hurt you?

MOLINA

In my throat and shoulders. Why does the sadness always jam up in the same spot?

Valentin moves closer to massages his shoulders. Molina tightens up.

MOLINA

Please.

Don't touch me.

VALENTIN

Can't a friend even pat your back?

MOLINA

It makes me feel worse.

VALENTIN

Why?

Molina, dropping his many masks, speaks with stark vulnerability.

MOLINA

I've fallen in love with you. I'm sorry, Valentin. I wish it hadn't happened.

VALENTIN

I understand, Molina. Don't be ashamed.

Both are silent. Valentin finally speaks with difficulty.

VALENTIN

Can I touch you?

MOLINA

if it doesn't disgust you.

(pause)

I'd like you to.

Valentin wraps his arm warmly around Molina's shoulders.

MOLINA

Can I touch your scar?

VALENTIN

Sure.

Molina gently caresses the scar near his eyebrow.

MOLINA

You're so kind to me.

VALENTIN

No, you're the one who's kind.

Valentin stands and removes his shirt, then moistens his fingers and squeezes out the candle.

The cell is dark. The camera lingers on the candle-spark amid whips of smoke.

MOLINA (O.S.)

I'm squeezed against the wall a little that's better.

(pause)

No, wait, let me lift my legs.

(pause)

I can't see at all, not at all.

VALENTIN (O.S.)

It's better if it's quiet.

MOLINA (O.S.)

For a moment I felt so strange, like I wasn't me anymore. As if somehow... I was you.

The spark has faded. The screen is BLACK.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL - DAY

Valentin sips tea in bed. Molina is making breakfast.

MOLINA

My friends and myself, we don't put much faith in each other, because we're so easily scared and wishy-washy, and we're always waiting for a more serious friendship. With a man, of course. We're normal women. We sleep with men.

VALENTIN

And all homosexuals are that way?

MOLINA

No, some fall in love with each other, but that's strictly for homos, not queens

(pause)

Let's not discuss this. Let's not talk about anything. Just for this morning I'm asking.

VALENTIN

Why?

MOLINA

Because I feel happy, really happy, and I don't want to spoil it. The best thing about feeling happy is that you think you'll never feel unhappy again.

VALENTIN

I don't understand this very much, but there's something I want to say.

MOLINA

I'm listening.

VALENTIN

If you enjoy being a woman, well, you shouldn't feel any less because of it.

MOLINA

You say the nicest things.

VALENTIN

(firm)

I mean it. Don't let yourself be scared or exploited.

CUT TO:

INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE - DAY

A bright lamp shines on Molina's face. The rest of the office is dark.

PEDRO

(seething)

You shit-face motherfuck. Talk!

MOLINA

(terrified)

He's not human ... he's like a
graveyard ...

Pedro grabs Molina's shirt and shakes a fist in his face.

PEDRO

Graveyard? If you don't talk,
you'll be a graveyard. I'll bury
your pussy under six feet of chicken
shit.

Molina's mouth begins to tremble, then his whole body.
The warden pulls a chair beside him in the circle of
light.

WARDEN

Let me handle him.

(leans close)

Look at me, Molina. Are you afraid
his group will shoot you? Is that
it?

MOLINA

No sir. I want to help you.

WARDEN

So what did he say?

MOLINA

Nothing.

(wipes tears)

Wouldn't it be worse if I made up
something that wasn't true?

WARDEN

I'll have to move you to another
cell, Molina.

The warden steps out of the circle of light.

MOLINA

Please, sir. Don't do that. As long as I'm with him, there's still hope that he'll talk.

Pedro, with a sudden kick, sends Molina and the chair sprawling on the floor.

PEDRO

You faggot piece of shit! You fell in love with that motherfucker!

WARDEN

Okay, Molina. You can go.

Molina struggles to his feet and wipes his eyes.

WARDEN

Get your things ready. You're leaving today. Here, the Ministry approved your parole.

The Warden hands him the document and leads him to the door. Molina kisses the Warden's hand.

MOLINA

Oh thank you, sir. Thank you.

WARDEN

And no more hanky-panky with the little boys.

MOLINA

Oh no, sir. I swear.

Molina leaves. The Warden shuts the door.

PEDRO

You watch, that stupid cunt will lead us right to the bastards.

WARDEN

I hope so. You never know what those damned queers will do.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL - DAY

Molina is packing his small suitcase. Valentin hovers nearby.

VALENTIN

But there's no risk at all.

MOLINA

Don't be crazy. I can't do it.
I'm too weak, Valentin.

VALENTIN

All you have to do is give them a
message. From any public phone.

MOLINA

No! Please. Don't tell me any
names, phone numbers -- nothing.
I'm terrified of the police.

Valentin thinks a moment.

VALENTIN

You're right. It's not fair to
drag you into this. Forget it.

MOLINA

I swear to you, Valentin, my only
desire is to stay here with you.

Molina closes the suitcase.

VALENTIN

Take care of yourself, Molina.

MOLINA

Valentin, the only two people I've
ever loved are my mother and you.

VALENTIN

It's gonna be hard to fall asleep
without your movies.

MOLINA

And every time I see glazed candy,
I'll think of you.

Molina places the suitcase on the floor.

MOLINA

Valentin. I want to ask you for something you've never done. Aside from the fact that we've done much more.

(pause)

A kiss.

Valentin is taken by surprise.

VALENTIN

Okay. But first promise me something.

MOLINA

I told you, I can't. I'm sorry.

VALENTIN

No, no. Promise that you'll never let anyone humiliate you again, that you'll make them respect you that you never let anyone exploit you. No one has the right to do that to anyone.

MOLINA

(deeply moved)

I promise. Thank You.

(pause)

Valentin?

VALENTIN

What? The kiss?

MOLINA

No. The phone number

VALENTIN

You're wonderful, Molina.
Wonderful.

(moves closer)

Wait a few days. Dial two times and hang up. The third time, tell them...

Valentin whispers in his ear. Molina nods twice.

Valentin looks in his eyes, then kisses him tenderly on the mouth, then passionately. They lock in a warm embrace. SOUND of guards approaching.

VALENTIN

Good luck, Molina.

The door opens. Molina picks up his suitcase and the heart-shaped box, then steps into the corridor and glances back. The door is slammed shut.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRISON GATE - DAY

The electronic gate opens. A guard with a machine-gun escorts Molina across the courtyard and through the final check-point to the street. Molina lingers for a last look at the massive prison walls.

CUT TO:

EXT. CELL - DAY

Valentin, gripping the window bars, pulls his face into view.

VALENTIN

Rafael! Can you hear me?

The camera moves to the next window, revealing that Rafael has hung himself.

VALENTIN (O.S.)

Rafael! Are you okay?

CUT TO:

EXT. PRISON GATE - DAY

Molina boards a bus. As it drives away, a BLACK SEDAN pulls out of an alley and follows.

CUT TO:

INT. BUS - DAY

Molina, sitting among kids and housewives, stares out at the slum neighborhood. A samba band of costumed dancers is rehearsing for the Carnival.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - DAY

Molina nervously crosses a tree-lined avenue of fast-moving cars and is nearly run over. Safe on the sidewalk, he stares at a red phone booth, then notices the black sedan parked behind him and walks on.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Molina follows a nurse through the hospital corridor to a 60-bed charity ward. He slowly approaches his mother, then sits on the bed and holds her hand.

MOLINA

Mama. I told you the time would
fly. I'm back, Mama.

He kisses her lovingly on the forehead. She finally recognizes him and smiles weakly.

MOLINA

Now everything will be like before.
You'll be better soon, and we'll
go home.

She touches his face.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAR DISTRICT - NIGHT

Molina, dressed in his best, strolls past the bars and prostitutes. He sees the black sedan reflected in a bar window. He enters a neon-lit cabaret.

CUT TO:

INT. CABARET - NIGHT

Molina crosses the smoke-filled room to a table of MIDDLE-AGED HOMOSEXUALS near the tiny stage. They explode with elation, embracing him with campy flair and showering him with gossip.

GROUP VOICES

-- Louisa, darling!
-- Miss thing, where have you been?
-- I hate to dish, but you've put
on weight.
-- Wait till you hear who Carmen's
living with.

The commotion causes the Transvestite on stage to stop singing. It is Greta. He uses the microphone to address the crowd.

GRETA

Dearest fans, I'd like to welcome
home a cherished sister, who
sacrificed lordknows-how-many
precious nights to pay a stupid
debt to a hypocritical society.

Molina, embarrassed, sits among his friends.

GRETA

Now that she's back with us, I
dedicate my next song to her.

Loud cheers and applause. Molina timidly half-rises in acknowledgment. As Greta begins to sing, Molina appears touched.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOLINA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

The black sedan is parked across the street. Seated beside the driver is Pedro. His lips do not move, but we hear him filing a police report. He lifts his binoculars and stares at Molina in the window.

PEDRO (V.O.)

Subsequent surveillance reveals that the suspect has left his residence only once since release. Suspect has answered no phone calls, has not returned to work, and has seen no one, with the exception of a single visit to his mother in the hospital. He seems withdrawn and depressed, and spends approximately one hour each afternoon staring out a window facing south.

Molina remains motionless at the window. His sad eyes gaze across the city rooftops at the distant prison.

CUT TO:

EXT. RESTAURANT PATIO - DAY

Molina, unshaven and unkept, sits at his regular table on the patio. Gabriel serves him coffee.

GABRIEL

You sure you won't eat something?

MOLINA

Just coffee.

GABRIEL

Do you want to talk? Is something wrong?

Molina sips his coffee and glances at the black sedan nearby.

MOLINA

No, I just can't see you for awhile. I'm going away.

GABRIEL

When will you be back?

MOLINA

(glances at sedan)

I don't know.

(MORE)

MOLINA (CONT'D)

Just leave me alone.

CUT TO:

INT. MOLINA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Molina gazes out the window from his armchair. The phonograph plays the same sad BOLERO from his Mexican movie. He checks his wristwatch, then gets up and leaves, locking the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Molina enters a Phone booth. Twice he dials a number, lets it ring and hangs up.

Swirling around the booth is a mob of Carnival merry-makers in phantasmagoric costumes. The third time, he speaks into the phone.

MOLINA

I have a message from Valentin Arregui.

(pause)

Yes, a pay phone

(glances around)

I think I lost them in the crowd.

(long pause)

Is that necessary?

(short pause)

Okay. I'll be wearing a red scarf.

He hangs up and disappears in the mob.

CUT TO:

INT. BANK - DAY

The BANK TELLER looks askance at Molina's appearance.

TELLER

You don't have to close your account. There's no Penalty if you maintain a minimum balance of --

MOLINA

(leaving)

Thank you.

He slips the money in a brown envelope.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Molina meets Greta by the duck pond.

GRETA

Darling, what's happened to you?
I've called five million times.
Carnival is finally here, and look
at you! And now you feed me this
dish about a trip?

MOLINA

Greta, darling, I trust you. Please
trust me. I know what I'm doing.

(hands brown
envelope)

For Mama. This will take care of
her while I'm gone. Please.

GRETA

All right, I'll handle it. Wherever
you're going, it's probably for
the best. But please, Louisa, at
least take a bath.

CUT TO:

INT. MOLINA'S BATHROOM - DAY

Molina steps from the steamy shower, checks his wrinkles
in the mirror and dabs shaving cream on his face.

CUT TO:

INT. MOLINA'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Molina, dressed in his finest, scrutinizes himself in a
full-length mirror. He is clean shaven and immaculately
groomed. He carefully adjusts a red scarf around his
neck. Finally satisfied, he leaves his apartment.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Molina sits beside his sleeping mother.

MOLINA

Mama, you look so beautiful.

(whispers)

You remember, Mama, when I was little and you'd come into my room to kiss me good-night.

(kisses her cheek)

I always pretended to be asleep, but I was waiting for your kiss. Although you're sleeping now, I know you understand me.

(touches her face)

It's time for me to take care of my own life. You do understand, don't you, Mama? Please don't be sad.

A NURSE approaches.

NURSE

She's been in a coma for two days.

MOLINA

I know. Leave us, please.

He kisses his mother on the forehead.

CUT TO:

INT. BLACK SEDAN - DAY

The black sedan creeps through dense carnival throngs. Pedro, straining, watches Molina thread his way through the crowd.

PEDRO (V.O.)

Subsequent surveillance reveals the suspect has engaged in a number of erratic activities. One, suspect executed a power-of-attorney to a homosexual cabaret singer known as Greta, who is now under investigation.

(MORE)

PEDRO (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Two, suspect sent a letter to a waiter, Gabriel Montes, who has been picked up for interrogation. Three, suspect closed out his bank account...

PEDRO

spots Molina turning into a shopping arcade.

CUT TO:

EXT. ARCADE - DAY

Molina runs along the mall and ducks into a boutique. Looking in a display mirror, he SEES: the black sedan stops at the arcade entrance; one MAN gets out; the car drives away.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

The street is a cacophony of fire-crackers and Samba bands. Molina pushes through dancing throngs in their exotic costumes. A costumed STREET PEDDLER tries to badger him.

PEDDLER

Take home a Grate-All for the little lady! The great Grate-All grates anything -- cheese, soap, potatoes, even your mother-in-law.

Molina pushes an to the edge of the plaza.

CUT TO:

EXT. PLAZA - DAY

Molina sees a young woman step from a car across the plaza. He hurries forward. She kisses the driver who pulls away.

Molina stops at the plaza fountain, wipes the sweat from his face and scans the crowd.

A taxi stops near the fountain. The two passengers are a YOUNG MAN and YOUNG WOMAN. They smile and wave for him to approach.

Molina stens forward nervously. He leans toward the window and sees the Young Man holds a pistol.

YOUNG MAN

Who are you?

MOLINA

I have a message from Valentin.

YOUNG MAN

Get in. Quick.

Molina grabs the doorknob. But the Street Peddler, leaping forward, plows him aside and thrusts a revolver in the window.

The Young Man fires two quick shots, twisting the Peddler sideways and slamming him to the pavement. Molina stumbles into the stunned crowd.

The taxi bolts away. Undercover Agents rush forward and shoot rapid-fire at the taxi careening through horrified merry-makers.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Molina, limping, hurries along the dark alley. Pedro and three Agents round the corner and chase him with their guns drawn.

PEDRO

Stop! Molina!

Bystanders scatter. Molina keeps moving. Pedro rapidfires three shots. Molina blasted twice in the back, plunges to his hands and knees. Pedro dashes to catch up.

Molina, gasping, struggles to his feet and staggers along the dark wall to the sun-lit street.

Pedro's Agents swarm forward and hustle him into the backseat of a black sedan. As Pedro jumps in, the car lurches away.

CUT TO:

INT. BLACK SEDAN - DAY

Molina moans on the backseat floor. Pedro straddles his waist and shouts in his ear.

PEDRO

The phone number. Tell me the number and you go to the hospital
I As Pedro shakes him, Molina spits up foamy blood.

PEDRO

The number! Talk, you fucking fag! Tell me that number!

Molina looks calm. All NOISES fade away. The only SOUND is his sad bolero and his quiet voice.

VOICE OF MOLINA

What have they done to you, Valentin?

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET CORNER - DAY

A dog sniffs a pile of slum rubbish. Tires screech; a car door flings open; a body tumbles onto the rubbish.

The car roars away. The dog returns and sniffs the corpse. It is Molina.

VOICE OF VALENTIN

What have they done to you, Molina?

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON INFIRMARY - DAY

Valentin, delirious, lies on a cot in the small first aid room. His face is swollen with bruises. His chest is disfigured by third-degree burns.

A male INTERN approaches with a hypodermic needle.

INTERN

It's morphine. It'll make it hurt less, so you can get some rest. Nod your head if you want it.

(Valentine nods)

Okay, count to forty. Listen, don't tell about this or I'll lose my job. God, the way they worked you over, it's barbaric.

(finishes)

There. It'll ease the pain in just a minute and you'll be able to sleep.

VOICE OF VALENTIN

Twenty-nine, thirty, thirty-one, thirty-uh... thirty...

Valentin smiles slightly. His arm, folded to hold the cotton-ball, slumps down. His hand is clasped by a woman's hand.

VOICE OF MARTA

Valentin, don't be afraid.

VOICE OF VALENTIN

Marta.

Her hand tugs his toward the door.

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON CORRIDOR - SURREAL

The prison corridor, like a long tunnel, is strangely dark with a door of glowing light at the end.

The shadowy nude silhouettes of Valentin and Marta move toward the light.

VOICE OF MARTA

Come, Valentin, come with me. Don't be afraid. You won't wake up in a cell.

The light is filtered through dense jungle plants. Marta leads him out the door into the foliage.

CUT TO:

EXT. JUNGLE BEACH - DAY

Their silhouettes push through the shadowy leaves. It is the same jungle that was in Molina's movie about the Spider Woman.

VOICE OF MARTA

Hurry, Valentin. They won't find you here.

VOICE OF VALENTIN

But Molina is dead.

VOICE OF MARTA

Don't be sad, my love. Only he knows if he died sad or happy.

Still holding hands, they emerge from the jungle and see the beautiful sun-lit beach with the water-logged rowboat.

Their silhouettes run across the beach into the ocean. They embrace in the water.

VOICE OF VALENTIN

Don't leave me.

VOICE OF MARTA

Nothing can separate us now.

VOICE OF VALENTIN

Oh how much I love you. That's the one thing I've never said, because I'm so afraid of losing your love forever.

VOICE OF MARTA

That will never happen here. This dream is short, but this dream is happy.

They kiss again, then gaze at the sparkling horizon.

THE END