

Spanish Lessons

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Original Screenplay

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EXT STREETS OF MONTEVIDEO MORNING

A quiet summer morning on the streets of Montevideo. The sun is still low but it is already apparent that the day is going to be hot and noisy. There is nobody on the streets yet: neither people nor cars. Absolute stillness. There is even no hint of a wind. The flowers and tree branches are motionless. There are a few empty taxicabs in the street, parked in front of houses. All the shops are closed. The fruit stands are waiting for early bird customers, and the salesman dozes by the piles of colorful exotic fruit.

It seems in a few more moments this enchanted slumber will be lifted and everything will start moving and functioning.

An equestrian statue of the founder of the nation, Jose Artigas adorns the center of a small park. Far off in the background, the silhouette of a landing plane crosses the vertical of the monument from right to left. Most probably it is nearing the airport. The roar of its engines is the only sound breaking the overwhelming silence. The plane disappears from view. Artigas remains motionless. Stillness and quiet again.

INT. CARRASCO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT MORNING

Meanwhile, the airport is noisy and crowded. MARK stands in the arrivals area (a 40 year-old energetic brunet in a formal sleeveless blue shirt and black trousers) and intently eyes the passengers pouring out of the terminal. He is obviously nervous.

Finally he sees the person he was waiting for: JIM (58, grey haired, with a noticeable bald patch and small beard, he looks a little shy. Dressed in a white T-shirt, shirts, sneakers, and white knee-highs, he holds a student-type backpack unsuitable for his age.) Mark and Jim meet at the end of the rail and shake hands.

MARK

Hi, Jim. How was the flight?

JIM

Fine, I liked it because I slept the whole flight.

(Laughs)

MARK

Good for you! I am so glad to see you! Wait, you do not have any luggage? Only this backpack?

(CONTINUED)

JIM

Yep! I carry all I need - swimsuit and camera. Did I miss something? You think I had to bring something else?

Jim and Mark laugh.

MARK

Lets go to the car. I am sure you will like it here. I do not think you have been to Latin America before?

They start moving towards the exit.

JIM

It depends. If you consider LA Latin America, I've been.

MARK

Hahaha.. You have not changed a bit.

(Gazes at Jim intently)

Let's just say you look more mature. You better rest today, and tomorrow morning I will show you the house. It is very old but very big and after renovation it can easily become a landmark of the whole coast. It will be easy to sell it for at least 50% more than it costs now. Well, you'll see yourself.

JIM

Judging by the photo, in its current condition it may interest only one type of buyer - a ghost.

Mark opens the door letting Jim out first.

EXT. CARRASCO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT. MORNING.

Jim and Mark exit the doors of the airport and head to the parking lot in search of Mark's car. They continue talking. As they walk through the parking lot, a wide shot of the airport comes into view behind them.

MARK

Everything ok in the company?

(CONTINUED)

JIM

Well yes, not too much movement this season in the real estate stuff but we are ok. Finished some good projects lasts month so I can travel a bit on my own and at the same time invest some money, which is a pleasant thing to do. And you, already settled here?

MARK

Ah, yes, after our last project together in New York I almost never left this country... For 5 years already I think. And never been to the States ever since. And you know they here also have houses, apartments and a wish to buy and sell them, ha-ha-ha. So I am OK.

JIM

Ah sure. Well I noticed that everyone tends to live in some place, in any country or city people are the same. You got married?

MARK

Me? Married? No, too young! Ha-ha. You? I mean, have you re-married?

JIM

No, if you are too young I am too old for this.

(He stops walking and looks at Mark, who also stops)

How strange! We spoke so much over the email but only about work and do not know even if we are married or not!

MARK

Ah! You are right. But it's because business is the most important thing for us both! No?

(They continue walking)

JIM

Ah, sure it is. So, you've chosen the company that will do the repairs and renovation?

They approach Mark's car. It is a neat, silvery car.

(CONTINUED)

MARK

Sure, I worked with them twice.
They mean business and work fast.
Dump your backpack into the trunk.
(Opens the trunk). Lets take the
rambla, you'll see the city.

JIM

I am all for it. After all, you've
lived here for so long. You know
how to wow a newcomer. What is a
rambla?

(Puts his backpack into the
trunk)

MARK

It means seashore in Spanish. The
sea is so beautiful today! Let's
get moving!

JIM

If we'll be riding along the
seashore I need my camera.

Jim takes a camera out of his backpack and hangs it around his neck. Mark closes the trunk. They get into the car, and it leaves the parking lot.

INT. JIM'S HOTEL MORNING

Photos of the sea and palm trees flash across the screen. A wider shot shows Jim sitting on the bed in his hotel room and going through the pictures in his camera. Every succeeding picture shows the airport building closer and closer and the last photo in the series shows a close view of the airport from the car window. The next photo clearly belongs to a different batch taken in the States, as Jim is photographed in his American office, wearing a blue shirt, and talking to his colleagues at a business meeting. A district's miniature is on the table. They discuss some particular building in this miniature.

The next set of pictures shows him in the front garden of his house with his large ginger dog. On some of the pictures taken by Jim we can see the person who previously took Jim's pictures. It is one of his colleagues, seen before on the office pictures. At this point Jim languidly puts the camera on the bedside table and throws himself on the bed. He lies on his back, looking at the fan, which rotates clockwise right above his head on the ceiling. Jim closes his eyes.

EXT. OPEN AREA IN FRONT OF THE OLD HOUSE MORNING

At first the scene looks like it is a dream that Jim is seeing at the hotel. The picture is blurred, dreamy pastel colors, soft sounds. We see old grey walls covered in moss and ivy. Flowers hang from the walls. The cracks on the walls create an intricate pattern. The sun shimmers through the leaves creating the feeling that we are under water. Slowly the picture comes into focus and the image becomes real. A large decayed two-story house possibly deserted for a long time. There are still some random pieces of cracked furniture in some of the rooms.

The vegetation around the house is in abundance. The house is situated high above the sea with a beautiful view on the water. The shoreline is obscured by the leafy treetops. With no clouds in the sky, the open space in front of the house is bathed in sunlight. The floor of the platform is paved with black and white large tiles forming a chess pattern. The tiles are cracked in places. Jim, Mark, and two real estate agents are standing on the platform deep in conversation. The two agents are a man and a woman in their 30s-40s, in unseasonably stuffy formal attire, feeling obviously uncomfortable. Mark translates the conversation in Spanish to Jim. He is holding a briefcase.

MALE AGENT (SP.)

Honestly, it is an excellent investment! You can turn it into a palace with very small funds.

MARK

(Nodding to Jim sarcastically)
They are saying that is a very good investment.

FEMALE AGENT (SP.)

(After a short pause waiting to see if Mark adds something else)

Exactly, especially since the owner is selling it for so little. It has been abandoned for many years, as she never comes over from Argentina. Her aunt used to live here.

MARK

The price is really low.

FEMALE AGENT (SP.)

(Side eyeing Mark again)
Most importantly, look at this sea view!

(CONTINUED)

(She points at the sea with both hands almost physically turning her listeners towards the sea)

Jim looks at the sea and notices a colorful kite that somebody is flying from the shore. The owner of the kite remains invisible behind the trees. He can only hear excited childish screams and laughter. Jim smiles at something while Mark observes the sea with a bored look. Jim looks at Mark and nods slightly.

Mark, immediately encouraged by this sign, raises his head, straightens the shoulders, and after a short pause, approaches the agents. They look at him in surprise. He lifts his right arm in the manner of an orchestra conductor, and starts talking while swiftly lowering his arm. Agents stop talking.

MARK (SP.)

All right. We are buying the house.

The agents start talking in agitation while going through their papers.

MALE AGENT (SP.)

Excellent! We will move all of the remaining furniture today, and you can start the repairs as soon as tomorrow.

The male agent loosens his tie and unbuttons the collar of his shirt. The agents relax and their poses become more natural. The female agent takes off her coat and hangs it over her arm.

FEMALE AGENT (SP.)

It will take a few days to finish the paperwork but you can start working in the house now if you want.

Jim enters the house. Mark and the agents stay on the platform in front of the house.

INT. THE HOUSE MORNING

An old piano with flaking polish occupies the center of the room. Jim opens the cover and brushes his fingers over the keys. He pushes several of the keys and chords to make sure that the piano is still tuned and yells to Mark who is still discussing the details with the agents.

(CONTINUED)

JIM
Can the piano stay?

Mark looks uncomprehendingly at the piano, then at Jim. His eyes flash momentarily with displeasure.

MARK
I am sure it is not going to be a problem.
(Approaching the agents)
(SP.) Can you leave it here for now?

FEMALE AGENT (SP.)
The piano? Sure, we won't move it out today then.

Jim slowly shuts the cover of the piano and smiles at Mark and the agents.

JIM
(Addressing the female agent)
Thank you!

The female agent shouts in return in English and in the manner of a vegetable seller, forgetting her official tone.

FEMALE AGENT
Not at all, thanks to you!

MARK (SP.)
(Addressing the agents)
Fine, we meet tomorrow then at a notary public to sign the papers. Till tomorrow.

THE AGENTS (SP.)
At your service, Senores! See you soon!

Jim and Mark exit the house. The agents remain within, watching after them. Then they turn to each other with victorious, conspiratorial smiles.

EXT. STREET NEAR THE HOUSE THAT IS BEING BOUGHT DAY

Mark and Jim walk along the sloping street after their meeting with the agents. There are glimpses of the seashore behind the houses and trees to the right.

(CONTINUED)

MARK

It really is a palace, only nobody knows about it yet. I've spent five years researching the real estate market of this country from top to bottom.

JIM

It is indeed a good house. Great sea view. A lot of work on renovating and designing, but it will pay off in the end.

MARK

When it comes to all that you can rely on me completely!

Jim and Mark notice a garbage man with his horse and cart beside the road. The garbage man is riffling through the garbage tank. As they pass him he turns his head and gazes at them.

GARBAGE MAN (SP.)

Any small change, Senores?

MARK (SP.)

No, nothing.

When they pass, the garbage man looks after them with a smile.

JIM

What did he say?

MARK

Nothing, begged for money. Never give money to these people. The government is trying to deal with them but they'll never leave the streets. Walk around collecting garbage.

Mark stops suddenly, puts the case down and starts looking for something in his pockets.

MARK (CONT'D)

By the way, if you want to understand what they say to you... and participate in conversations with more than a head nod, you have to take some Spanish lessons. I found something suitable for you. Where did it go...

(CONTINUED)

Finally he finds what he is looking for - the business card of a Spanish language school, and gives it to Jim.

MARK (CONT'D)

It's an excellent school. I know from the people who studied there that one starts to speak at least a little bit of Spanish in only a week. Something like "bring me a glass of beer", for example or "I love you"!

Jim takes the card and carefully puts it into his wallet.

JIM

These two expressions will be more than enough for me. Well, I probably have nothing else to do while they do the renovation. It's better than frying on a beach.

Two beautiful girls in bikinis pass by them laughing. Mark follows them with his gaze. Jim watches too but then shifts his eyes in embarrassment.

MARK

What's wrong with the beach? You do have swimming trunks.

(After a short pause)

I almost forgot, all the papers relating to the house, its purchase, renovation agreements, etc. should go into this briefcase. I'm giving it to you, keep it.

(Lifts the case and gives it to Jim)

JIM

Why me?

MARK

Who else? Who is the boss? You are buying the house, not me. The documents are yours. Plus, it is not an ordinary briefcase. I bought a GPS tracker for it, connected to my mobile phone. It means the phone's GPS always shows me its location. It would be a disaster to lose important papers in a foreign city.

(CONTINUED)

JIM

Yes, you are right. All right I'll go for a walk and then back to the hotel.

MARK

All by yourself? You're not going to get lost?

JIM

I can hardly get lost with the hotel building visible from everywhere. Besides, with this GPS stuff... Bye!

MARK

Bye, Jim. See you later.

Jim leaves. Mark remains in place. The smile vanishes from his face as he looks at Jim. He takes the phone out of his pocket, activates the GPS and looks at the screen with its moving red dot. He looks at the dot with an unkind smile.

EXT. CASH MASHINE DAY

Hands take a golden credit card from a wallet and insert it into a slot in the cash machine. The inscriptions that appear on the screen are in Spanish and Jim is tries to decipher them. Jim stands in front of the cash machine in a small glass cubicle. The briefcase is on the floor.

JIM

Well... "Tarjeta de credito"...
What could that be? A target?
"Credito"... Credit card, yes.

Jim presses buttons on the screen almost at random, shrugging his shoulders in confusion. Finally he hears the sound of the money disperser counting cash and sighs with relief. He takes a thin stash of thousand peso banknotes and holds one of them up to the light. He clearly likes the imagery on the banknote. He nods in approval.

JIM (CONT'D)

Nice. Really nice.

It is obvious that Jim not only likes the design of this banknote, but is fond of money in general.

EXT. STREET DAY

Jim walks with the briefcase through the Old City of Montevideo with its grey crumbling buildings, laundry hanging on laundry lines in the courts, people sitting by the entrances to their houses on folding stools.

Suddenly a screaming crowd of boys not older than 6-8 years old surrounds him.

BOYS (SP.)

Friend! We have women for you! Only
\$100 an hour!

Jim does not understand anything and only smiles shaking his head negatively while continuing to walk down the street.

EXT. SQUARE DAY

On a small square, Jim runs into an candombe orchestra with drums and watches them, intrigued. At one point he realizes that he is tapping along to the music. He continues walking.

EXT. IN FRONT OF A STORE DAY

Jim turns a corner and sees a tiny store in a small deserted street. After some hesitation he enters.

INT. STORE DAY

The store is tiny with a space of not more than four square meters squared between three display cases. Various products are displayed on the shelves and in the display cases, which stand in a semi-circle around the door. A bored SALESMAN (40 45) behind the counter jumps when he sees Jim.

SALESMAN (SP.)

What can I do for you?

Jim greets the salesman with a nod and looks for something in the display case. Finally, he points at a milk package.

JIM

Milk, milk, please.

Salesman looks at Jim then on the milk package with mild curiosity. Then he smiles broadly. He hears the word "mil" which means "thousand" in Spanish.

(CONTINUED)

SALESMAN (SP.)

Why a thousand? No, in Uruguay milk does not cost a thousand, mate! It is only 25 pesos. Ha-ha, he says a thousand!

JIM

Yes, milk, please.

The salesman opens the display case. He takes out a milk package and puts it in front of Jim.

SALESMAN (SP.)

25 pesos is your total.

Jim takes the milk, takes a wallet from his pocket and hands the salesman a thousand peso banknote. Salesman looks at it for a while and then takes it.

SALESMAN (SP.) (CONT'D)

I'll go bring your change!

The salesman disappears in the back rooms of the store. Jim meanwhile opens his case, puts the milk right on top of some documents. He closes the case and watches after the salesman. Jim does not understand that the salesman left to collect change.

Concluding that the salesman is not coming back as he does not hear any sounds, Jim looks around, shrugs his shoulders, and leaves the shop. When the salesman returns with the change, his customer is gone.

SALESMAN (CONT'D)

Senor?

The salesman runs out from behind the counter, opens the door of the shop, and runs into the street.

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF THE STORE DAY

The salesman runs into the street grasping a bunch of money in his hand and looks around. Jim has disappeared. The street looks completely deserted. The sea is visible at both ends of the street. Only crumpled papers are moving along the street, slowly carried by the wind.

SALESMAN

Senor? Senor?

No answer. The salesman looks at the bunch of banknotes shrugging his shoulders.

INT. JIM'S HOTEL. DAY.

Jim sits down on a bed in his hotel room and turns the TV on with a remote control. His briefcase is on a bedside table. He is holding a glass of milk. Jim switches from channel to channel, but everywhere he hears incomprehensible Spanish speech. Finally he gets a channel with Spanish animation and watches it for a while. He cannot understand anything and switches the channel in irritation. He hits an American news channel. He happily puts the remote control on the bed and watches the news while sipping his milk.

The program starts with the hottest headlines, then politics, the economic crisis, lack of oil, and unemployment. Jim watches for some time.

At some point he gets bored, rapidly switches back to animation, and after a while starts laughing although he does not understand anything. Suddenly he remembers something, gets his wallet out and finds the business card of the Spanish language school. He reads it holding it in his hand.

JIM
Spanish School. Escu-e-la de Es-pa
nol.

He is clearly amused with the sounds of this strange language.

EXT. IN FRONT OF THE SPANISH LANGUAGE SCHOOL DAY

Jim is walking along the street without his case. He is holding the business card in his hand, looking for the address. Finally he sees the door of an old colonial two story building. The sign at the entrance says "Clases de Espanol. Spanish lessons". Jim finds the intercom button and is about to push it when the door suddenly opens. One of the school's teachers, ALVARO (35, fit, energetic, closely shaved, with bleached blond hair) exits the building. He is clearly in a rush. He looks at Jim inquisitively, sees that he is a foreigner, and chooses to speak English.

ALVARO
Hi, are you OK?

JIM
I'm fine, I'd like to take some
Spanish lessons.

(CONTINUED)

ALVARO

OK, just ring the bell and somebody
will open the door. Good luck.

JIM

Thanks!

Alvaro hurries away. Jim remains in front of the door for a while, then pushes the button on the intercom.

INT. SCHOOL DAY

Jim is visible on the black and white intercom screen from a high angle. A beautiful female hand pushes a button, and a female voice asks:

VOICE

Hi, how can I help you?

Jim on the screen shifts from side to side uneasily, unsure where to speak.

JIM

Well... err... I would like to take
some Spanish lessons, you know...

The hand immediately presses the button of the intercom and the door opens. Jim looks at the door suspiciously, but comes inside.

INT. SPANISH LANGUAGE SCHOOL. DAY

Jim sits at a table in a room with a high ceiling and dark brown walls with white molding. There is a vase of faded flowers on a large brown table. A window is visible in the far end of the room. Jim is looking at a white dry-erase board on the wall to the left. The teacher's chair is standing near the board. The room is quiet. Jim looks around nervously. There is nobody else in the room. A high door with matte glass opens and CLAUDIA enters (she is 35, charming, lively, moves quickly, very talkative, dresses officially and inexpensively but elegantly). Claudia is holding a bunch of books and papers. Jim gets up hastily and observes Claudia with curiosity and a smile. He makes a step or two towards her. Claudia walks with an extended hand from the door and shakes Jim's hand looking gaily into his eyes.

CLAUDIA

Hi, my name is Claudia. We are
going to study Spanish together.
What is your name?

(CONTINUED)

JIM

Jim.

Claudia circles the table, puts the books down by her seat, but remains standing. Jim sits down slowly. Claudia picks up the remote control from the air conditioner.

CLAUDIA

Do you want me to turn the air conditioner on? I mean, isn't too hot for you in here?

JIM

For me? No, no... It's just perfect, thank you very much.

CLAUDIA

OK, great. Jim, we will start right away with the expression of introduction. My name is Jim in Spanish will be "Me Ilamo Jim". Please, repeat.

JIM

(Is trying to imitate but not very successfully)
Me Ilamo Jim.

CLAUDIA

Good! One more time. Me Ila-mo Jim.

JIM

Me Ilamo Jim.

Claudia seats herself at the table and looks at Jim with great curiosity and joyfulness in her gaze.

CLAUDIA

Bien! "Bien" means good. Where are you from, Jim?

JIM

I am from the States.

CLAUDIA

OK, In Spanish you say "soy de America" Repeat, please.

JIM

Soy de America.

(CONTINUED)

CLAUDIA

"Soy" is a verb like "am" in English. When did you arrive?

JIM

Well, I arrived today, actually.

CLAUDIA

Ah, great! The first thing to do in a foreign country is to learn its language! Ha-ha, OK lets do some writing.

(She gets up and sees that there is no marker)

Ah, falta el marcador! There is no Marker here. I will be right back.

JIM

Sure, no problem.

Claudia gets up and walks towards the door. Jim watches after her with poorly concealed interest touching his beard. Claudia exits. Jim sits with his elbows on the table then notices her books and notebooks on the table and tries to read something. He half rises from the chair but at this very moment Claudia enters with the Marker and Jim swiftly sits back in his place.

CLAUDIA

I am back. Ok let's write "My name is Jim" in Spanish. "Me llamo Jim".

Writes in print on the board.

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)

Please, repeat "Me llamo Jim".

She points with the edge of her palm at the words as she pronounces them. In addition, when Jim reads the phrase, she mouths it with him.

JIM

Me llamo Jim.

EXT. STREET EVENING

Jim walks energetically along a small, quiet street. To the right of him is a road, to the left - houses with plants and flowers hanging down over the fences from the yards.

It is getting dark. Jim holds two books and a notebook, which he was given in the Spanish language school.

(CONTINUED)

He sees unusually beautiful flowers hanging over the fence and stops. He looks around to make sure that nobody sees him and carefully reaches for the flowers to smell them. Suddenly his phone rings. He jumps away from the flowers, drops the books and the notebook and searches his pockets for the phone. Finally he finds it and answers the call.

JIM

Hi, Mark. How is it going?

MARK (V.O.)

Hi, I am calling to say that the workers have begun the work. All the designs have been discussed. The work will take about two months. Everything is going according to our estimation.

JIM

OK. Thank you. Keep me informed.

MARK (V.O.)

Sure. How are you doing? Haven't got lost in the town yet?

JIM

No, everything is fine. By the way, I started taking Spanish lessons at the school you recommended.

MARK (V.O.)

Really? How is your progress?

JIM

Me llamo Jim!

MARK (V.O.)

Bien! Me llamo Mark! Nos vemos entonces!

JIM

Si, si, chau!

Jim puts the phone into the pocket. And realizes that he is not holding his books. He looks down and sees his books and the notebook he dropped earlier. A small black dog is sniffing them. Jim shakes his head slightly and smiles.

INT. ANA'S ROOM DAY

The curtains in the room are drawn. Only the bright light shining through the gaps between the curtains shows that it is day outside. Posters of rock bands occupy the walls. A electric guitar and a speaker stand in the corner.

ANA (26, cute, with black hair, the upper part of her ear is pierced, and she is dressed in a black turtleneck. She looks like a rock fan), is sitting at her work table and working on a rock band flyer in an image editing program. The concert date on the flyer is August 24, place - Spanish Language School in the Old City. The concert will be on the day of the school's graduation party. The doorbell rings. Ana gets up to open the door. The visitors are Claudia, with a purse on her shoulder, and her son DIEGO (6, very energetic). Claudia and Ana kiss each other on the cheek.

CLAUDIA (SP.)

Hi, how are you?

(Notices the activated
computer)

Working as usual?

ANA (SP.)

Yes, I am designing a poster for that band. I mean my band. Everything is OK, Diegito? How is it going?

Ana bends down and kisses Diego.

DIEGO (SP.)

Fine.

Diego unceremoniously enters Ana's room and gets comfortable on the sofa. He coughs a few times.

CLAUDIA (SP.)

Honestly, not so great, he got a cough again. I will leave the medicine here on the table. Give him one spoon-full every hour.

Claudia walks towards the table in Ana's room and gets a bottle of cough mixture from her purse. Ana follows her.

ANA (SP.)

Sure. No problem.

CLAUDIA (SP.)

Sorry for this inconvenience but with this lesson in the middle of

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CLAUDIA (SP.) (cont'd)
the day, I have no idea what to do
with my son. When I had morning
lessons he was at the school at
that time. My mother lives far away
as you know.

ANA (SP.)
Not at all. It isn't a problem.
What are you talking about! I will
be sitting doing my work and he
will not bother me at all!

CLAUDIA (SP.)
Thank you so much! You are helping
me a lot. Honestly I will not be
able to leave him with you for much
longer. Our landlady wants to raise
the rent once more. This time it
will be double. We have no choice
but move to the suburbs.

ANA (SP.)
Wait, if you want, you can live
here. I live alone. What do I need
two bedrooms for? One of them is
deserted!

Ana points at one of the doors.

CLAUDIA (SP.)
No, you have done so much for us
already, but thank you anyway, Ana.
(Suddenly lively)
Ah, by the way! I've got a new
student. He is very funny but nice.
His name is Jim. He is around 60
but looks good. You can give him
50.

ANA (SP.)
Really! You will have to tell me
all about it.

CLAUDIA (SP.)
Sure! What about Mauricio? The one
who sings in your band? He is still
trying to seduce you? Ha-ha-ha.

ANA (SP.)
No, I don't know. Honestly, I fancy
him but... I don't know.

CLAUDIA (SP.)

OK. You have time to figure it out.

(Looks at her watch)

Oops, I have to run, I'll be late for the lesson. Thanks again, Ana. I do not know what I would do without you!

(Kisses Ana in the cheek, goes to Diego and kisses him)

Bye, Diego! I'll be back soon!

DIEGO (SP.)

Bye!

ANA (SP.)

Not at all! See you soon!

CLAUDIA (SP.)

See you soon!

Claudia leaves. Diego sits on the couch.

ANA (SP.)

Do you want anything, Diego?

Diego shakes his head.

ANA (CONT'D)

All right. I will do some work. Let me know when you need anything!

Ana goes back to her computer and continues working. Diego sits on the couch picking at his nails.

INT. CLASSROOM AT THE SCHOOL DAY

The faded flower arrangement has disappeared. Claudia's outfit is less formal and more elegant than before. Jim sits in his previous place, across the table from Claudia. His briefcase is next to his chair. On the table in front of Claudia is a mug of MATE (a sort of Uruguayan tea) and a thermos. She constantly drinks from the mug and adds more hot water. Jim looks at it in light bewilderment.

CLAUDIA

OK. Our topic for today is "My family". En Espanol you say "Mi Familia".

Claudia writes the lesson's topic on the board: "Mi Familia".

(CONTINUED)

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)

OK. Let me tell you about my family first. In Spanish, of course. (SP.) My name is Claudia. I am 35 years old. My family is not so big. I have a six-year-old son, Diego, and my Mother who lives in a small city in the center of the country. So, my son recently started school. He likes walking, football, going to the beach, and apples. (ENG.) That's it. Now, Jim, It is your turn to tell me about your family. (SP.) Do you have a family?

JIM (SP.)

Hmm... No.

CLAUDIA (SP.)

(Laughing)

How is that possible? You do not have a family? Nobody?

JIM (SP.)

No. My name is Jim. I am 58 years old and I do not have a family.

The laughter disappears from Claudia's face. She looks at Jim and wants to say ask something else, but stops herself. Then she looks the board with the lesson topic written on it. She looks at Jim and shrugs her shoulders giggling foolishly.

CLAUDIA (ENG.)

Well... Let's say... Do you have any pets?

JIM

(ENG.) Ah sure! Sorry, Espanol... Solo Espanol! Ha-ha. (SP.) Si claro, tengo un perro en los United...

CLAUDIA (SP.)

Estados Unidos.

JIM (SP.)

Estados Unidos. His name is Jefferson.

CLAUDIA (ENG.)

How cute! Jefferson! Like the President? Is he a big dog?

(CONTINUED)

JIM
Yes, quite big.
(Shows the size of the dog)
I even have some photos.

Jim finds his phone, looks for the dog's pictures and shows them to Claudia.

CLAUDIA
Oh, he is very big indeed! How did you leave him home alone?

JIM
I left the keys with my friend from work. He comes and feed him. Everything is OK.

CLAUDIA
Your friend's name is not George by chance?

JIM
Hmm... Yes, he is George... But how do you know?

CLAUDIA
I just thought that if the name of your dog is Jefferson, the name of the second president, your friend's name should be George as in George Washington, the first president! Ha ha.

JIM
I cannot believe it! His name really is George. Ha-ha! It is so funny! Oh, but by the way Jefferson is the third president.

Claudia stops laughing for a moment looking at Jim.

CLAUDIA
Really? Oh, then all this is even more interesting! Don't you think so?

They laugh for some time.

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA DAY

Cafeteria for the teachers and students of the school. Lunch break. All the teaches and students are there for lunch. There are about 10 people all together. They all sit around a rectangular table in awkward silence. There is nothing to talk about as they all have different levels of Spanish, different native languages, and different professions. In the cafeteria are Jim, Claudia and Alvaro (sit next to each other eyeing each other constantly), the school coordinator, MIGUEL (40, curly), the receptionist and financial administrator in one person, MARIA (30, round faced, nice and funny), two German women, NORA and HELGA (seated next to each other) (25, blond, both with sharp facial features), one Brit, JOSH (20, Arabic appearance), one Norwegian woman, INGRID (25, masculine and big), one Bulgarian woman, BOZHANA (30, plump, a lot of make-up, nice to everybody, came here for fun.)

FIRST GERMAN WOMAN
 (Speaking to the second one
 softly)
 Gib mir das Salz bitte.

The second German woman passes her the salt without turning to her.

FIRST GERMAN WOMAN (CONT'D)
 Danke.

Everybody eats in silence. Alvaro and Claudia exchange glances, smile at each other, and raise their eyebrows.

ALVARO (SP.)
 (Unnaturally loudly for this
 quiet room)
 So Josh, Before Uruguay you managed
 to visit Argentina?

Josh jumps, as he was obviously lost in thought about something else, and looks at Alvaro.

ALVARO (SP.) (CONT'D)
 Remember, you told me before that
 you travelled through all the Latin
 American countries. What
 Argentinean cities have you seen?

JOSH (SP.)
 (Humbly and with trepidation)
 Yo fue a Buenos Aires...

(CONTINUED)

ALVARO (SP.)
(Correcting his grammar) Yo fui.

JOSH (SP.)
Yes, I traveled to Buenos Aires,
Cordoba, Jujuy...

Suddenly Bozhana sniggers and starts laughing hysterically covering her mouth with a napkin. Everybody looks at her in surprise. Josh's eyes are beginning to pop. He looks even more scared than before. Claudia smiles.

CLAUDIA (ENG.)
What has happened, Bozhana?

Bozhana looks down, covering her mouth, and cannot say anything, so she just waves her hand. Finally she gets up a making excusing gestures with her head and hand and runs away hastily still laughing and holding a napkin to her mouth.

The German women never change their facial expressions and continue eating quietly, not paying attention to anything happening around them. The rest of the people look at each other in surprise. Josh is really scared and sweating. Alvaro continues the interrupted conversation with Josh.

ALVARO (SP.)
So, you have been to Buenos Aires,
Mendoza...

JOSH (SP.)
No...

ALVARO (SP.)
What do you mean, no? (Smiling
unpleasantly)

JOSH (SP.)
(Guiltily) Not in Mendoza, only in
Cordoba and Jujuy...

ALVARO (SP.)
Ah. Sorry. My mistake.

Suddenly Ingrid puts her fork down on her plate roughly. It makes a loud ringing sound of metal over porcelain. Everybody jumps.

INGRID
Excuse me!

CLAUDIA

Yes, Ingrid?

INGRID

Is it absolutely necessary to speak Spanish? I mean I am the first day here and do not understand a single word, except "Argentina".

Josh giggles nervously but stops rapidly and assumes the same scared look. Everybody is somewhat surprised. Even the German ladies have raised their eyebrows in surprise and are watching Ingrid and the teachers' reaction.

CLAUDIA

Well... It is a Spanish school you know... The students try to show their knowledge, practice the language. But you can speak any language you want.

INGRID

To tell you the truth I would like to speak Norwegian but no one knows it here, ha-ha-ha. Well no problem, just wondering.

Ingrid continues eating. Short uncomfortable pause.

CLAUDIA

If you want you may tell us something about yourself, Ingrid, in English.

INGRID

About myself? Ha. Well, I am Ingrid, 25, this year I am going into the army.

ALVARO

Sorry?

INGRID

Into the army. Something wrong with that?

CLAUDIA

No, no, everything is OK. It is just not so common to serve in the army for women in Uruguay.

(CONTINUED)

INGRID

It is not very common for Norway
either. For now.

Nobody knows what to say. They nod their heads expressing understanding. Bozhana comes back flushed, but already quiet. She walks through the room in silence and sits at her place breathing loudly.

CLAUDIA

Now, Jim, please tell us about
yourself! Why are you so silent?
You may speak Spanish if you want.
I will translate it to Ingrid
later.

(Looks at Ingrid and laughs))

Ingrid smiles falsely. Jim looks down not knowing what to say.

JIM (SP.)

OK... My name is Jim. I am 58 years
old. I have no family.

Then he takes his glass of orange juice and drinks half of it. After that he continues eating without looking at the others.

CLAUDIA

Hm... Thank you, Jim!

Alvaro raises his glass.

ALVARO

OK, we do not have any wine but I
would like to raise my glass to the
most beautiful teacher in our
school, you Claudia!

Claudia is slightly but pleasantly surprised. It is a bit unexpected for everybody else but they raise their glasses of juice. The financial clerk and school coordinator are the only ones who are not surprised and raise their glasses, smiling complacently. The German ladies raise their glasses slightly not looking at anybody. Josh is scared that his glass is almost empty but still raises it covering the bottom of the glass with his palm. Ingrid does not understand anything but also raises her glass.

Jim seems livelier, although he not comfortable with the fact that something is going on between the teachers, but also raises his glass looking at Claudia.

(CONTINUED)

JIM
Yes! To Claudia!

Everyone drinks.

EXT. MONTEVIDEO STREET EVENING

It is already dark but the center of Montevideo is full of lights and people. The open restaurants are full. People are sitting and talking. Jim and Mark walk out of the restaurant where they just had dinner. Jim is not carrying his briefcase.

MARK
Montevideo is a beautiful city and very friendly. Wherever you ask for help, they will not only tell you where to go, but will take you there even if they are going in the opposite direction. Women are the only exception! You cannot flirt with them openly here.

JIM
Really? Who could have known.

MARK
A woman here is a queen! You are supposed to keep your distance. The woman rules. Although... in the Old City they do not cost much, ha-ha ha! By the way, you have not fallen in love with some Latin chick, have you? They are dark eyed and hot!

Jim giggles looking uncomfortable.

JIM
No, no. It is a business trip and I am leaving soon, anyway. No time for this! (Laughs)

MARK
Stop it! Two months is enough to get married and divorced! Ha-ha-ha. Most importantly, learn the language so you could tell them what you want from them!

Jim is giggling and clearly wants to change the subject. A young couple passes by. Each holds a thermos and a mug of mate.

(CONTINUED)

JIM

By the way, what are these mugs
with straws that everybody is
holding?

MARK

Ah this? It is a drink called mate.
It's very bitter, but they say it
helps cure a lot of things. Want to
try?

JIM

Yes, one of these days I should try
it I suppose.

MARK

Why one of these days? Have it now!
There are mugs and mate being sold
over there. Wait here.

Mark walks towards the street stands, looks at the mugs and argues with the vendor for a long time.

Jim looks at him, then looks around, and suddenly walks away without waiting for Mark. Mark has finally finishing bargaining with the vendor and buys a mug for mate. Smiling he returns to the place where Jim was supposed to wait for him and does not see him. He stands holding the mug, looking around and watching people passing by. Finally he drops his arm and swears.

MARK (CONT'D)

Ha, I cannot believe he ran away!

He raises his hand with the mug and looks at it uncertainly. He does not know what to do with it, he himself hates mate.

INT. JIM'S ROOM EVENING

In a small window on a computer screen, with a list of email messages in the background, we see a low quality video. There are 7 persons in official office clothes with an office with computers in the background. The people in the first row are sitting on their hunkers, the ones from the second row are standing. One of them is holding colorful balloons, one of the men in the first row is holding a guitar and is playing it violently but without skill.

Everyone is cheerful and playful. One of the men of the first row is George, Jim's friend from the photos.

Jim sits in front of his laptop and looks the video smiling.

(CONTINUED)

The people on the video sing "Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you, happy birthday, dear Jim, happy birthday to you".

ONE OF THE COLLEGUES

Come back soon Jim! We are waiting
for you!

Everyone raises the hands and yells as if confirming this point.

INT. CLASSROOM SPANISH LANGUAGE SCHOOL DAY

A grey day without any sun but without rain either. Jim stands alone in the classroom, to the right from the large window, and looks out at the street. The lesson is about to start. He has already put his books on the table, the briefcase stands near the chair. Jim is waiting for Claudia.

He watches as a shabby black Fiat stops in a small street, perpendicular to the street of the school building, and Alvaro gets out from the side of the passenger seat. Alvaro's friend, CARLOS (35, shaved head) gets out from the driver's side. They continue their conversation and then part in a very friendly manner. Alvaro enters the building of the school and his friend disappears in the nearest small street.

Jim hears the sound of the closing door downstairs and the steps of Alvaro walking up the stairs. Jim turns towards the door as he hears somebody else's footsteps. Through the matte glass of the door he sees the silhouette of Claudia with books under her arm. She approaches the door and starts opening it. Jim goes to his place but sees through the door that Alvaro has hastily approached Claudia and is whispering something into her ear. Claudia closes the door. Jim stands and waits for a while looking at the door.

ALVARO (SP.)

Yes, but how about today?

CLAUDIA (SP.)

(Softly)

Not now, I have a class. Lets talk later.

ALVARO (SP.)

Just tell me in advance what you are thinking.

(CONTINUED)

CLAUDIA (SP.)
Stop it, not now. Let me go.

Claudia tries to push Alvaro away to get into the classroom. Jim hears whispers and sounds of a struggle. He walks towards the door and opens it sharply.

INT. PASSAGEWAY OF THE SPANISH SCHOOL DAY

Claudia and Alvaro straighten themselves out. Jim smiles and speaks in an intense and commanding voice that is uncharacteristic of him.

JIM
By the way it is already ten
minutes into the lesson. Please!

He invites Claudia into the classroom with a gesture of his hands. She gives Alvaro a guilty look and enters hastily. Jim stays a little longer by the door and looks at Alvaro with a slight smile and raised eyebrows. Alvaro returns a surprised and hostile look. Jim enters the classroom and closes the door.

INT. CLASSROOM DAY

Claudia stands for some time near the door in front of the table holding her books in lowered hands. Then she comes back to life and approaches the table. When she starts talking it is clear that she feels disturbed. She is breathing heavily and rearranging her hair.

CLAUDIA
Thank you Jim! Are you OK? It does
not matter, we will stay ten
minutes longer after the class. Are
you ready with the text we
discussed? Read it to me, please.

It is obvious that she is not yet ready to teach the lesson and is asking Jim to read to give herself a little more time.

JIM
Sure! Give me a second!

Jim opens his notebook and starts reading slowly and with an effort.

(CONTINUED)

JIM (SP.) (CONT'D)

Montevideo without a doubt is an exception among the other capital cities of the Latin America. It is a nice and quiet city with safe streets and a lot of interesting and safe tourist sites. The Old City is the place that stands out...

Suddenly they hear a shot and screams from outside. They rush to the window. They immediately see Carlos, who runs towards his car and hastily drives away. Another man runs into the picture, looks at the departing car and disappears.

Jim and Claudia notice that that they are standing at the window too closely, with their shoulders touching. They look at each other and Jim politely moves away.

CLAUDIA

This is horrible! This is really a very quiet area but anything may happen even in very peaceful places. Don't worry. At least here at the school you will not find any criminals!

(Smiles)

JIM

Hope, not! But how can you be sure that you are not a drug dealer? Ha ha.

CLAUDIA

Naaw, what are you talking about! By the way what particular drug would you like me to deliver today? Ha-ha-ha.

They laugh then turn towards the window again and look out.

INT. RESTROOM THE SPANISH SCHOOL DAY

Jim forcefully opens the door of the restroom and sees Alvaro by the sink. Alvaro is washing hands and face. His shirt sleeves are rolled up to the elbows. Jim notices a tattoo on Alvaro's arm. Alvaro covers it rapidly pulling the sleeve down. Jim stands at the next sink.

JIM

Is your friend OK?

(CONTINUED)

ALVARO

What friend?

JIM

The one who drove you to the school today? I got the impression that he was attacked on the street.

ALVARO

(Smiling)

You are mistaken. I came in a taxicab, as I was late.

JIM

Really? In a taxi? Today, only a couple of hours ago?

ALVARO

I always walk or take a cab. You took somebody else for me... How are your Spanish lessons? Everything is OK?

JIM

Great! I speak much better and understand much better.

ALVARO

Happy to hear it!

Jim nods and leaves the restroom closing the door. The smile disappears from Alvaro's face. He gives the door a concerned look.

EXT. SEASHORE MORNING

Morning, around 8. The sun has already risen, but the shadows are long. We see the shadow of a running man. This is Jim, in athletic shorts and a light grey t-shirt, running along the boardwalk from left to right. He is wearing small headphones, and he is obviously listening to music. There are not many people on the boardwalk. Most of them are here for a healthy walk. Some are jogging or biking.

It is apparent that Jim does not usually jog. He is breathing heavily and the front and back of his t-shirt are damp with sweat. Jim leaves the boardwalk and runs on the grass. He passes random curved trees, the sea is seen behind him. Suddenly he feels unwell. He presses his hand to the region of his heart slowing down his step. Jim approaches an isolated, dried-up tree and leans on it with his left hand as the other hand grasps his heart. He is breathing heavily.

(CONTINUED)

Jim winces in pain, but apparently the pain is not very strong. Jim takes his headphones off.

He raises his head and sees a young couple with a child, who is about 5. They are walking towards the sea, away from Jim. The child is wearing a bright red jacket. Jim looks at them for a while, smiling slightly, breathing heavily, and wincing with pain at the same time. Sweat is dripping from his forehead and going into his eyes. His vision blurs. He turns his gaze and then his head slightly to the right, and focuses on the sea waves. We hear his very fast heart beat and see the waves slowly rolling over the shore. Gradually, the heartbeat becomes slower and almost matches the rhythm of the waves.

FADE OUT

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM DAY

On a wall in the hospital we see a picture of a seashore. Jim sits in a hospital waiting room on a fabric upholstered chair. The surroundings are minimalist, cold, and stern. Jim reads one of the newspapers from the magazine table.

NEWSPAPER (SP.)

The murderers are free!

(Subtitle)

The murderers of 35 year old Cesar Fravega, a bank security officer who worked for a bank in the center of Montevideo, are still free a year after the robbery, despite photos from surveillance cameras! Cesar is survived by his 7-year-old daughter, who is being brought up by her 80-year-old grandmother.

Lower down on the page, we see the surveillance camera photos, from which a face with a beard is visible. There are also photos of Cesar himself, smiling, mustached, and stout, with his little daughter on his lap. The girl is about 7-8 years old with her hair in two braids.

Jim nods his head in compassion. Then he brings the newspaper page close to his eyes and looks at the photo of the man with the beard, frowning. His face looks vaguely familiar, but the resolution of the photo is very low and looks unclear.

He hears a voice coming from a speaker under the ceiling.

(CONTINUED)

VOICE (SP.)
Senor James White, room number 6.

Jim hastily puts the newspaper down on the table and walks along the corridor looking at the labels on the doors. He finds room number 6, knocks on the door and opens it slightly.

INT. OFFICE OF A CARDIOLOGIST DAY

In the office, the CARDIOLOGIST gets out from behind his desk (45, skinny, jolly, the face is completely red). The office is white with a table in the middle. The table is placed with its side to the window. A patient cot stands against the wall opposite to the window. The cardiologist speaks English to emphasize his education.

CARDIOLOGIST
Come on in! Everything is OK,
James?
(Extends his hand)

JIM
Everything is fine. You can call me
Jim.

CARDIOLOGIST
(Sitting down at his small
desk)
James and Jim is the same name?
Seriously? I did not know! So what
happened to your heart James? Well
I want to say - Jim!

JIM
Nothing serious. Well I hope so. I
was jogging on the boardwalk and it
started aching here.
(Points at his chest)

CARDIOLOGIST
(Taking notes)
Fine. Sit over there.
(Points at the cot, covered in
tissue paper, as he continues
writing)

Jim walks over to the cot and lies down. The cardiologist writes, looks at Jim rapidly, and talks while writing.

(CONTINUED)

CARDIOLOGIST (CONT'D)

No, no, do not lie down. Sit down
and straighten your back.

Jim sits on the sofa. The cardiologist stops writing, gets up, and walks towards Jim. He sits down on a small stool next to Jim.

CARDIOLOGIST (CONT'D)

OK. Lift your t-shirt.

Jim lifts the t-shirt and the cardiologist listens to his heart with a stethoscope.

CARDIOLOGIST (CONT'D)

Everything looks fine. Breathe
deeper!

(Jim breathes deeply)

Good. One more time! Excellent. You
can pull your t-shirt down.

The cardiologist gets up and moves to his desk.

CARDIOLOGIST (CONT'D)

Honestly I do not see anything that
could have been aching in the heart
itself. A lot of things in this
area could have been aching such as
the lungs, or a pinched nerve. You
have the heart of a young man! You
can make... at least...

(Counts in his mind)

five more children. Ha-ha-ha. Do
you drink?

Jim is surprised by the rapid change of topic.

JIM

Do I drink? Occasionally, not very
often.

CARDIOLOGIST

Good. But drinking is OK if you do
not overdo it. I always keep a
bottle of vodka in my refrigerator.
Vodka is good when it is cold!

Jim looks at the cardiologist in disbelief.

CARDIOLOGIST (CONT'D)

Personally, I love vodka... I had a
friend who worked in Russia. Once
he brought a whole box of vodka! He

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CARDIOLOGIST (CONT'D) (cont'd)
invited everybody and I drank 20
small glasses. I turned off
completely! Can't remember
anything! Ha-ha-ha! Honestly if
you know your boundaries and drink
it cold, vodka is a must! It is
even good for you. Your heart will
just push the blood through with
more energy you know!

JIM
Oh, I see...

CARDIOLOGIST
So your heart is fine, Jim. Are you
from the States?

JIM
Yes.

CARDIOLOGIST
Are you traveling, working, or living
here?

JIM
I am sort of traveling and working
at the same time. Well and living
also, for now.

CARDIOLOGIST
Any plans to stay?

JIM
Honestly, it never crossed my mind.

CARDIOLOGIST
Good.
(Getting up)
OK, Jim, good luck to you. At least
your heart is working fine! I do
not know about the rest, you have
to see the other doctors to find
out! Ha-ha. Bye!

JIM
(Shaking his hand)
Thanks a lot. You made my day. All
the best.

Jim leaves the office mildly confused. The cardiologist
remains standing for some time thinking about something with
a serious face. Then he walks towards his desk, sits down,

(CONTINUED)

opens the drawer, gets a flask and a small glass, pours something, drinks it, and puts the flask and the glass back into the drawer. Then he pulls over his list of patients, reads it, brings the microphone closer and says the name of the next one.

CARDIOLOGIST (SP.)
Pablo Verreira, room number 6.

INT. CORRIDOR OF THE SCHOOL DAY

A large announcement on the board: "Tomorrow! Trip to Colonia Del Sacramento. Gather at 9am by the school building!" Jim is standing at the board with his briefcase and reading the announcement. To his left, Claudia and Alvaro walk up the stairs talking gaily. Jim hears shreds of the conversation.

CLAUDIA (SP.)
...but on the last trip we forgot
our sandwiches. See you later!

Alvaro walks straight to the teachers' room giving Jim a fast glance. Claudia comes over to the stand. cheerful and lively as usual. She looks at the announcement, then at Jim's reaction.

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)
Hi, Jim. How are you?

JIM
Fine, and you? So there will be no
classes tomorrow?

CLAUDIA
Sure there are but right during the
trip! We are going to Colonia. It
is a magical place. Therefore our
topic today is "Geography". Lets
go.

She opens the door, lets Jim in and closes it.

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF JIM'S HOTEL

Jim is walking down the street by his hotel, returning from the school. He is holding his briefcase. Near the hotel, he sees the same garbage man as before, with his horse and cart. He is rifling through the garbage. Noticing Jim, the garbage man addresses him.

(CONTINUED)

GARBAGE MAN (SP.)
Do you have any change?

Jim first walks past the beggar but then stops, looks at him, and after a short pause starts checking his pockets.

JIM (SP.)
Yes, sure.

He finds a 50 peso banknote and gives it to the garbage man who takes it with surprise.

GARBAGE MAN (SP.)
Oh! Thank you Senor! Are you traveling or working in Uruguay?

JIM (SP.)
Both, to tell you the truth.

GARBAGE MAN (SP.)
That's great! You will like this country, it is very natural! If you ask me it is a paradise on Earth! I am serious. OK, I am always at your service.

JIM (SP.)
All right, thank you, thank you, all the best to you!

GARBAGE MAN (SP.)
So long, Senor!

The garbage man slowly moves away. Jim compassionately looks at his poor small cart.

JIM
Huh, paradise. But who knows... maybe, maybe.

Jim enters the hotel.

INT. POOL SHOWER EVENING

A man washing his hair is standing under the shower. He is visible down to his waist. The tattoo on his arm betrays the identity of Alvaro. He washes off the shampoo from his hair and then stands under the stream of water for a long time. His hands are pressed against his face. Water, already not soapy, pours down his head and shoulders.

INT. POOL EVENING

A loud splash of water in the pool after somebody jumped from the diving board into the right lane. The water calms down slowly. Now it visible that there are only three people in the pool. The diver does not reappear on the surface for a long time.

INT. POOL LANE EVENING

Ana is in the pool. She is holding on to the wall of the side lane and looking into the water, expecting something with a slight smile. Suddenly Alvaro comes to the surface, opens his eyes and sees Ana, right in front of him.

ANA (SP.)

Hi Alvaro!

ALVARO (SP.)

(Not inspired)

Hi, Ana. How is life?

Alvaro is holding on to the lane divider. They are hanging in the water across the lane.

ANA (SP.)

Everything is OK. How are you?

(Pause)

How is your new life?

ALVARO (SP.)

Fine. Everything is fine.

ANA (SP.)

Listen, I had a problem today...

Anyway, can you stop by tonight and help with something?

(Says with a silly smile)

Alvaro looks around and sees his friend Carlos entering the pool. He waves at him.

ALVARO (SP.)

Ha-ha, here is Carlos. What were you saying? I will swim to him. I need to talk to him. I'll give you a call later, OK?

ANA (SP.)

OK, Alvaro.

Alvaro is swimming towards Carlos. Carlos is standing by the middle lane, warming up. He still does not see Alvaro.

(CONTINUED)

ANA (SP.) (CONT'D)

Alvaro?

Alvaro turns towards Ana rapidly changing his facial expression from irritated to pleasant.

ALVARO (SP.)

Yes?

ANA (SP.)

No, nothing. I just want you to remember that you owe me the Spanish school. I just want you to remember it.

Alvaro looks at her for a long time then swims over and stops very close holding on to the wall like her.

ALVARO (SP.)

I remember. I have not forgotten, Ana. I am very, very grateful. But there are things... You know it was not my fault. It just happened. And I needed this job at that time, and I enjoy it still. You helped me a lot with it... You know it is impossible to change our past but you must understand that I am not guilty of anything. Do you understand? We already talked about it a lot.

ANA (SP.)

Yes, Alvaro. That is why I am helping you as much as I can. I do not expect anything in return and I am not accusing you of anything.

ALVARO (SP.)

Nice! By the way you can expect anything you want in return, I will do anything for you, and you know about it. Well and now I need to be going, see you!

They turn in different directions and prepare to swim away.

ANA (SP.)

See you, Andres!

In the distance, Carlos dives with a big splash. Alvaro jumps and rapidly turns towards her, looking around nervously to check if anybody heard. There is almost nobody else in the pool.

(CONTINUED)

ALVARO (SP.)
What's wrong with you? It is
Alvaro, only Alvaro.
(Smiles crookedly)
Well I like this name more.

ANA (SP.)
No, just kidding. Good luck!

Alvaro swims towards Carlos, who is already waiting for him in the water at the beginning of the middle lane. Ana swims to the end of her lane, then gets out of the water and walks along the edge of the pool towards the exit.

INT. POOL EVENING

Alvaro swims to Carlos.

CARLOS (SP.)
Hi! She is here again?

He nods towards Ana, who is walking away to the exit.

ALVARO (SP.)
As always lately. You know, I am probably incapable of finishing relationships. Well it is much more difficult than to start them! But her case is different, need to be tender with her. Knows too much. That is why it lasts, and lasts, and lasts. Can't get rid of her. Everything is OK?

CARLOS (SP.)
Yes, the tickets are booked. Your new passport is ready.

ALVARO (SP.)
Thank you, Carlos. I owe you a lot.

CARLOS (SP.)
Do not mention it.

ALVARO (SP.)
By the way. That shop at the center of the city, what happened?

CARLOS (SP.)
Everything is OK. I had to threaten them a little. Now they will be under our control.

(CONTINUED)

ALVARO (SP.)
(With displeasure))
Why did you shoot? I am leaving,
but you can put the others into a
difficult position.

CARLOS (SP.)
What else could I do to threaten
them? Shooting speaks volumes.

Carlos smirks, Alvaro also smiles despite his displeasure.

EXT. HIGHWAY MONTEVIDEO - COLONIA MORNING

A small bus passes by at a high speed from left to right
past a road sign that says "Colonia del Sacramento".

INT. BUS MORNING

Inside the bus everybody is dispersed in small groups. There
is no feeling of unity or desire to communicate. The school
coordinator, Miguel, and financial clerk Maria, are in the
back. Miguel is holding a guitar and he touches the strings
softly playing something lyrical and relaxing. Maria is
almost dozing while listening with pleasure. Her sleepy face
is turned towards the guitar.

Almost at the end of the right-hand row, if looking from the
back of the bus, Josh sits by the window with Bozhana next
to him. She is out of spirits and wearing a lot of make up.
She keeps glancing at Josh who stares right in front of him
in trepidation.

In the same row, but closer to the front of the bus are the
two German ladies. They are sitting in similar poses and
reading their books the same way.

In the left row of seats (looking from the back of the bus)
sit Claudia and Alvaro. They occupy the second seat from the
front. Claudia is by the window. They are discussing the
upcoming graduation evening of the Spanish school students,
Claudia's outfit, and the planned entertainments. The
conversation is very light. Alvaro jokes all the time.
Claudia laughs gaily and loudly.

Right behind them in the third row, sit Jim and Ingrid (by
the window). Ingrid is gloomy as always and is listening to
heavy music pouring from her headphones. Jim is looking at
Claudia through the gap between the seats. He sees the curve
of her neck and shoulders and her laughing lips. Jim does
not hear anything but Claudia's laugh. He looks at Claudia
and sees and hears only her.

(CONTINUED)

He is eager to attract her attention.

Jim gives Ingrid a light nudge with his elbow. She turns to him in surprise. Jim makes a gesture showing her that he wants her to take off the headphones. Ingrid does so unwillingly.

INGRID

What?

JIM

Ingrid, do you want to hear a riddle?

Ingrid is still holding on to her headphones ready to put them on at any moment. She is not very enthusiastic about the riddle.

INGRID

A riddle? OK.

JIM

What did the hurricane say to the coconut tree?

Ingrid is still holding on to the headphones and pretends to be lost in thought.

INGRID

Hurricane to a coconut tree? I don't know. What?

Jim leans towards Ingrid and whispers something in her ear.

Ingrid looks at Jim in disbelief, then smiles and starts laughing in an unexpectedly low male voice. She lets go of her headphones and covers her face and mouth with the palms of her hands. Miguel stops playing his guitar and looks at Ingrid in surprise. Maria wakes up and looks around. The two German ladies do not react at all, and continue to turn the pages of their books simultaneously. Josh is more scared than usual and looks at Ingrid in horror. Bozhana looks at her in melancholy.

Claudia and Alvaro stop talking and turn to Ingrid. Alvaro turns away immediately. He does not see anything intriguing and wants to continue his conversation with Claudia. Claudia on the other hand, rises in her seat to look over the back. She smiles.

CLAUDIA

What happened, Ingrid?

(CONTINUED)

INGRID

No, nothing. Everything is fine.

Ingrid calms down and is about to put her headphones back but then looks at Jim and starts laughing loudly again. Jim smiles cheekily. Claudia seems to understand what is going on looks at Jim and shakes her head in disapproval. Jim winks gaily.

Alvaro sits with a dumb expression. He wants to appear jolly, but his face is clouded by concern and irritation. He pretends that he has nothing to do with what is going on.

EXT. COLONIA ANCIENT RUINED WALL

A small group of students and teachers of the school are gathered around Claudia who tells them about the history of the town. Beside them is an ancient ruined wall. Jim looks at her in admiration. Alvaro looks at her without any expression but shoots disapproving glances at Jim.

CLAUDIA (SP.)

Colonia is a very old city. As you see the architectural styles are mixed. This is the result of the its three hundred year history, first under Portugal, then Spain, and later Uruguay. Colonia was founded in 1680 by the Portugese as an important strategic point and played a significant role in Spanish wars.

(Glances at Jim)

For more than a century, Colonia was in the hands of Portugal but its allegiance was constantly under dispute.

(Looks at Alvaro meaningfully)

Finally, a century later it was lost forever by the Portuguese crown and changed hands from its founders and lawful owners to the Spanish conquerors.

INT. FLAT OF THE GRANDMOTHER AND HER GRANDDAUGHTER

An OLD WOMAN (70-80, tall, obese) sits in an armchair in a small studio apartment. Her shoulders are wrapped in a grey shawl. The furniture is old and shabby. The apartment has not been renovated in a long time.

(CONTINUED)

At the table, in the same room, sits CECILIA (7-8, with two braids, looks similar to the girl from the newspaper photo Jim saw in the hospital). She is concentrating on her homework. The grandmother holds nothing in her hands. She is sitting, looking in front of her. Through the window to the kitchen, one can see the shabby kitchen.

A knock at the door.

OLD WOMAN (SP.)

Open!

She remains in her armchair. Ana enters the room with a big shopping bag. Her loud entrance brings some energy to this sleepy apartment.

ANA (SP.)

Hi, how is life?

She first kisses the grandmother in the cheek and then kisses Cecilia.

ANA (SP.) (CONT'D)

How are things, Cecilia? How is school? Look, how interesting...

Ana reads something in a school textbook in front of Cecilia.

ANA (SP.) (CONT'D)

Good girl! I see you are doing great.

Ana turns towards the grandmother.

OLD WOMAN (SP.)

Everything is all right. Thank you.
(Nods her head quietly.)

ANA (SP.)

(Looking around the room)
What do we have today... Dishes,
vacuum cleaning, laundry...
(She spots a pile of laundry
in a plastic basket near the
door)
Ah! I also brought some candy for
Cecilia!

Cecilia comes back to life, stops doing her homework and looks at Ana with a broad smile.

(CONTINUED)

ANA (SP.) (CONT'D)
No, no, not before you finish your
homework. OK?

The girl nods disappointedly and turns back to her books.

ANA (SP.) (CONT'D)
Excellent!

Ana smiles complacently, lifts her bag and goes into the kitchen. No one else in the room moves.

EXT. BOULDERS ON THE SHORE OF COLONIA DAY

The shore of Colonia, with large gray boulders. The weather has begun to worsen, and the sun is gone. Clouds cover the sky. A cold, piercing wind is blowing. Everyone who had extra warm clothing has put it on. The journey is nearing its end. Everyone is waiting for the bus. The official part of the tour is finished.

The students and staff of the school have dispersed across the boulders of the shore. Some are sitting on the rocks, some are standing, and some are strolling along the shore. Several are smoking in solitude, while a few people are conversing casually. All in all, they are all not as introverted as before. Bozhana is standing and talking to Josh, who is looking somewhat less frightened. The two German women are sitting on the seashore, tossing pebbles into the water. Miguel and Maria are seated together, his guitar to one side, simply talking about something. Ingrid is sitting alone on the rocks, listening in her headphones to lighter music than on the bus, and humming something lyrical as she gazes out at sea. Alvaro stands furthest from the sea, by the roadside, smoking a cigarette and watching for the bus.

Claudia and Jim walk slowly over the stones, deep in conversation. Claudia holds a bowl of mate in her hand, a thermos under her arm.

CLAUDIA
Yes... So they plan to kick us out
any day now... you know I rent my
apartment. They're going to raise
the rent. I'll have to move out
soon. And anyway...

She sees a large rock that seems like a comfortable seat, and smiles at Jim.

(CONTINUED)

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)

So anyway, do you want to sit down?

Jim nods and they sit. Jim is to the left and Claudia the right, if looking from the sea. Claudia sips her mate.

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)

What was I saying? Oh yes, I just wanted to say, honestly, that I really do like my job. It is actually quite prestigious by local standards. Ha-ha. Prestigious. Well, at least the pay is good, almost like in some kind of bank. But really, I have wanted to go to Spain for a long time now.

JIM

To Spain? Why there, specifically?

Jim's phone rings. He looks to see who's calling and doesn't take the call. Claudia waits politely for Jim to deal with the call.

CLAUDIA

Well, the language first of all - that should not be underestimated, and the salary is higher. We'll see. I probably won't get around to it any time soon.

(She drinks mate)

Well as you know I have a son. And it is a big risk, going somewhere with your child, without knowing where exactly you are going. So maybe some day I will go alone, for a month, just to see what's happening there. Leaving Diego with my mother.

Claudia opens her thermos, pours some hot water into her mate, and hands the bowl to Jim. Jim looks at it uncomprehendingly at first, then takes the cup and drinks. He wrinkles his nose and looks enquiringly at Claudia.

JIM

But it's bitter!

CLAUDIA

(Seems very pleased and happy)

Oh yes!!! At first mate does seem bitter, but then it kind of grows on you. So how is it with you?

(CONTINUED)

JIM

With me?

CLAUDIA

Well yes, you said in class that you had no family at all. Is that true or are you hiding something?
Ha-ha-ha!

(Winks at Jim)

JIM

Oh no, it's true. They all died.

Jim calmly drinks his mate. He doesn't cringe as much, and it seems like he is even beginning to enjoy it. The laughter disappears from Claudia's lips.

CLAUDIA

Died?

JIM

Yes, my wife and two children... In a car accident, six years ago. They were on their way to a shopping mall.

CLAUDIA

Oh, sorry, I didn't know...

JIM

No, no, it's OK. Too tired of feeling any pain after all these years. Need to continue living.

A pause. Suddenly Jim raises his eyes and looks intently at Claudia. He makes a last, noisy gulp, quickly places the cup on the rock, springs up, and stands before Claudia.

JIM (CONT'D)

(Cheerfully)

So tell me... as a teacher! What is it about me that most gives me away as a foreigner? In my clothing, I mean? What do I have to change?

Claudia looks at him uncomprehendingly. Then she understands, looks him over head to foot, and adopts the same playful intonation.

CLAUDIA

Well... it all looks good to me! Shorts... no, they're fine, they wear those here too... so. What

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CLAUDIA (cont'd)

else? Okay, the knee-highs with the sneakers, that needs to be changed. The sooner the better!

Jim stares at his white socks and sneakers in surprise.

JIM

My socks? What's wrong with them? They're clean.

CLAUDIA

No, that's not the problem! They're just so long! Just looking at them, anyone can tell that you're American. Here they wear special, shorter socks with sneakers, or just sandals.

Claudia takes Jim's mate bowl and fills it with hot water from her thermos.

JIM

Now I understand! I didn't know that. I'll buy myself a pair tomorrow. Meanwhile, I'll just roll these down.

Jim folds over his socks to half their length.

JIM (CONT'D)

Good enough for now. So let's imagine the following situation!

He sits back in his former place.

CLAUDIA

Okay, what situation?

JIM

I will dress appropriately tomorrow without these horrible socks. I might even put on a shirt and trousers.

CLAUDIA

(Squints gleefully)
Yes, and...

JIM

I'll comb my hair, straighten myself out, and invite you to a classical music concert!

(CONTINUED)

CLAUDIA
Just like that?

JIM
Yes. Just like that. Would you go
with me? It is a good concert.

CLAUDIA
(Once again playfully looking
him over)
Well, I don't know... Maybe without
those awful, long socks... Possibly
I might! Ha-ha-ha!

Alvaro sees the approaching bus, turns to everyone else, and glaring angrily at Jim and Claudia, although he didn't hear their conversation, shouts, cupping his hands around his mouth.

ALVARO
The bus is here! Everyone over
here, let's leave before we freeze
to death!
(Pauses)
I don't want to die young!

The people start to rise from the rocks. Alvaro turns to the approaching bus and waves. The bus pulls up. People start to board it.

INT. APARTMENT OF GRANDMOTHER AND GRANDDAUGHTER DAY

Ana fishes washing the dishes, turns of the water, and wipes her hands with a towel, looking through the kitchen window at the grandmother and granddaughter in the other room.

ANA (SP.)
Well, I see Cecilia still hasn't
finished homework, isn't that
right, Cecilia?

Cecilia shakes her head, not lifting it from her work. She continues with her homework. Ana puts her shopping bag on the kitchen table, and begins to unpack it. She takes out rice, pasta, bread, tomato sauce, candy, and fruit.

ANA (SP.) (CONT'D)
I bet you want that candy, right?

(CONTINUED)

Cecilia nods with a smile, still intent on her homework. Ana takes out her change, a 20 peso bank note and handful of coins, and places it next to the groceries. She opens the bag of candy and takes out a few candies. After that, she heads into the room.

ANA (SP.) (CONT'D)

What am I going to do with you!

Cecilia turns, still smiling, and takes the candy from Ana's hands. She puts one in her mouth and continues to work. Ana ruffles her hair, then turns sharply to look over the room.

ANA (SP.) (CONT'D)

Alright, that will be it for today,
then. I'll be back tomorrow at 4.
Don't miss me! Oh, my bag!

Ana goes to the kitchen to pick up her bag. She takes it and returns.

OLD WOMAN

Ana!

Ana enters the room with her bag and looks inquiringly at the old woman.

ANA (SP.)

Yes? Have I forgotten something?
Ah, yes, I wanted to vacuum! I'll
do that now!

Ana puts her bag down and goes over to the vacuum cleaner, which is in the corner of the room.

OLD WOMAN (SP.)

No, no, you can that later...
Tomorrow... I just wanted to ask,
have been wanting to ask for a long
time... Why are you doing this?

ANA (SP.)

Doing what? Vacuum-cleaning?

Ana slowly raises her bag from the ground.

OLD WOMAN (SP.)

No! I mean, yes, this also. I
mean... helping us. You come over,
bring groceries that I can't carry
myself because I can hardly walk
anymore. You clean. Why are you
helping us?

(CONTINUED)

Ana seems momentarily lost, her expression changes, but she gets a grip on herself.

ANA (SP.)

But it's so natural, you are such nice people, and in such a difficult situation. Besides, I have so much free time, since I work freelance at home. I'm a designer. And Cecilia is such a clever girl, and a good student. See her sitting there, even candy can't distract her from her studies. It's hard for her, without parents. Anyone in my place would have helped!...

(She sees that the Grandmother does not believe her, but Ana pretends not to notice.)

Alright, I'll get going then. Till tomorrow.

Ana comes over to the Grandmother, and kisses her on the cheek. Then she goes over to Cecilia and kisses her.

OLD WOMAN (SP.)

Thank you, Ana.

Ana gestures with her hand to say "don't mention it". She leaves, carefully closing the door behind her, glancing back with pain in her eyes. The grandmother sits in her chair, looking at Cecilia who is busy with her homework. Tears are noticeable in the grandmother's eyes.

INT. CONCERT HALL EVENING

Jim, in a white shirt and a jacket, is sitting to the left of Claudia, who is wearing a glamorous evening gown. They are at a classical music concert in a large concert hall. The hall is full, and music is playing. Jim is absorbed in the music. After a while, Claudia notices that Jim's fingers are instinctively moving through the air as if he is playing an invisible piano. Claudia observes Jim's hands with interest.

INT. CLASSROOM DAY

Jim and Claudia are sitting as usual around the table across from each other. Claudia is pronouncing the words "Pero" ("but") and "Perro" ("dog") in Spanish, several times so Jim would repeat after her and hear the difference in

(CONTINUED)

pronunciation between a single and double "r" in Spanish. There are two words on the board, one under the other - "Pero" and "Perro". As she pronounces each word, she indicates it on the board with the edge of her palm.

CLAUDIA

Pero.

JIM

Pero.

CLAUDIA

Perro.

JIM

Pero.

CLAUDIA (SP.)

No, there are two "r"s there.

JIM

Pero.

CLAUDIA

Perro.

JIM

Pero.

CLAUDIA

Perrrrrrro!

JIM

(Jokingly imitating her, but more correctly because of that)

Perrrrrrro!

CLAUDIA (SP.)

Oh, that's much better! Let's continue.

(She picks up the eraser and wipes the words from the board)

Yesterday we began a new subject, as far as I remember?

JIM

Yes... Claudia! I need to speak to you. I will speak English, as it will be easier for me to express myself in my native language...

(CONTINUED)

Claudia turns to him, and sits down slowly, expecting something strange, still holding the eraser in her hand.

JIM (CONT'D)

You... from the first day I came to this school... no, that's all wrong. I don't know if this may seem presumptuous, but I would like to ask you out to dinner tonight. Are you available?

CLAUDIA

(Flattered and resigned) Jim...

JIM

No, no, if you can't go today, we can do it tomorrow, it's not a problem. Or next week.

CLAUDIA

No, Jim, that's not the point. Teachers at this school are categorically forbidden from dating their students. I could get fired. But I think everyone has already noticed that... well, we speak with each other too much for a teacher and student, let us put it so.

JIM

Ha-ha, what kind of silly rules do you have here? We'll only go for dinner. Let's just go. Nobody will fire you for that.

(Laughs)

CLAUDIA

(Abruptly and confidently)

No! Jim, please understand, there can only be a professional relationship between us now. I already went to a concert with you yesterday, which I shouldn't have done. The concert was lovely, by the way, but we really can't have any kind of relationship.

Jim gets up and begins to wander around the room, gesturing.

JIM

But who made this up?! No relationships! How could that be harmful?... And have they

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JIM (cont'd)
considered that a woman may be 35
years old, that she may have a
child, and that in her regular life
she is surrounded by alcoholics or
bleached losers, and that maybe her
only chance is to meet someone in
the Spanish School?! To settle her
life, so to speak?!

Jim looks at Claudia and freezes, suddenly understanding
that he has said something wrong. Claudia is sitting and
looking at him with a calm expression. There is bitterness
in her eyes.

CLAUDIA
Jim, I think today's lesson is
over. Please go now.

JIM
Claudia, no... I didn't mean it
like that - as if you... You're...

CLAUDIA
Just go, Jim.

Jim looks at her a while longer, then does a dismissive hand
wave.

JIM
Ah, I see. All right then - I guess
I'd better go.

Jim is disappointed and downcast. His movements are awkward
and too fast. Picking up his briefcase, he puts his books
into it - after a few tries - and heads for the door.

CLAUDIA
Jim, the next lesson will be our
last.

Jim turns back to her, questioningly.

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)
I just mean it's the last one
scheduled.

JIM
Really?... So soon?

CLAUDIA
Yes, our two months of classes are
nearly done. And we're having a

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CLAUDIA (cont'd)
party that night, a dance for the
students.

JIM
Like a prom? Heh. I never thought
I'd go to a prom again... And as
for it being the last class...
Well, maybe that's all for the best
- given some of the latest
developments. Take care!

Jim jerks open the door and walks out into the corridor.

Claudia remains sitting at the table. She notices that she's still holding a sponge - and squeezing it so hard that her fingers have turned white. Slowly, with difficulty, she unclenches her hand and lays the sponge on the table. She is very tense. Claudia looks broken and lost. She lets out a long, loud breath.

INT. HOUSE UNDER RENOVATION DAY

In the fixer-upper that Jim bought to resell, the renovations appear to be nearly done. The walls have been repainted, new linoleum has been laid, and the window glass has been replaced. The house has been transformed - it looks lovely and bright. The only signs of renovations still under way are the rolls of linoleum on the floor, along with cans of paint and paintbrushes, and bags of cement. The old piano stands in its usual place, right in the middle of the room. The real estate agents kept their promise to leave the piano. Judging by the balcony door on the right, looking out on the terrace, and the presence of the piano, this is the same room where Jim and Mark were talking to the real estate agents earlier.

Jim is at the piano, playing something that sounds sad, mysterious, and majestic. He plays very well. He's alone in the house - the workers seem to have the day off. Jim's briefcase stands next to the piano seat. The music resonates from the bare walls, not blocked by any furniture, and carries through all the empty rooms. The large house seems to be listening closely to Jim's music, vibrating its walls in response and solidarity.

INT. ANA'S APARTMENT - DAY

The music from the previous scene continues.

In Ana's room the curtains are drawn tightly shut, as usual. Ana sits at her computer, looking hopeless and lost. She goes to the Spanish school's web site - opens up the Photos section - and finds a group shot of the school's teachers and managers. It shows Claudia and Alvaro standing next to each other. Everyone in the photo is smiling. Ana looks at the photo uncertainly for a moment. Then she copies it and opens the file in an image editing program. Another photo, already open in the program, shows a happy family at the local pool: father, mother, and two kids aged five or six.

Ana selects Alvaro's head from the school group photo and pastes it onto the father in the family pool photo. Then she works on the image for a while to make it look convincing. When she's done, she reaches out for a glass of water next to the monitor - not taking her eyes off the screen - and drinks. She puts the glass back, and for a moment her hopeless expression shifts to a look of satisfaction with the results of her work.

INT. COUNTRY RESTAURANT - DAY

Inside a spacious country restaurant, all decorated in wood - big wooden tables, wooden ceiling beams - Jim and Mark are meeting with three representatives of the company hired to renovate Jim's house: RICARDO (45, very tall and fat, dark beard - company boss, with an air of authority); SANTIAGO (35, skinny, quick movements - Ricardo's deputy); GABRIEL (40, short and overweight - assistant/secretary). They're dressed in the kind of clothes that builders wear when they want to look nice: checked or denim shirts. Ricardo's tie is the wrong color and clumsily tied.

The table shows that their lunch is nearly done: all three of the building company representatives have had quite a bit to drink. Jim appears subdued, hardly looking at anyone. When Ricardo speaks, it's clear that he considers himself the leader among his colleagues.

RICARDO (SP.)

Yeah... You know, at one point we thought we'd never get it done in two months.

SANTIAGO (SP.)

What? When was that?

(CONTINUED)

RICARDO (SP.)
When Manuel got sick, remember?

SANTIAGO (SP.)
Oh well, that was an emergency.

Gabriel nods in agreement, turning to Jim and Mark to explain the situation.

GABRIEL (SP.)
Two weeks in, one of our top workers got sick. Well, sort of sick...

Gabriel gives Ricardo a questioning look - is it okay to tell clients things like this? Ricardo nods in confirmation, taking another drink from his glass.

Gabriel (SP.) (CONT'D)
What happened was, he began to drink. He does that sometimes - goes on a bender, and that's it - won't answer his phone or anything. So we went in through his balcony door and brought him round in a day. After that, he worked double hard. And he's still working like a maniac. Can't get him off the scaffolding!

RICARDO (SP.)
Yes. That's right.

Everyone chuckles. Mark looks at his watch. Then he stands up, slowly, holding a wine-glass.

MARK (SP.)
I shouldn't really be drinking, since I'm driving today - still got to take all of you home. But I'll have a drop of this very fine wine, anyway. I'd like to thank your company for doing an excellent job - everything done on time, and top quality work. And it's worth noting that we found a buyer on the very first day of showing the house - which only goes to prove how professional your company is.

Mark glances at Jim. Jim nods.

MARK (SP.) (CONT'D)
Thanks a million, and I hope we'll
get a chance to work together
again.

He raises his glass and drinks. The others readily follow
his example. Mark sits down and turns to Jim.

MARK (SP.) (CONT'D)
So maybe the client has something
to say too?

Jim continues to stare at the table-top, toying with his
glass. He hasn't realized that "client" means him. But the
sudden silence around the table gets his attention, and he
looks around - to find everyone looking at him. Then he
realizes what's happening, picks up his glass, and rises to
his feet.

Jim
Yes, of course. May I speak
English?

MARK
Sure, I will translate your words
to them.

When Jim speaks Mark translates his words in low voice to
the workers.

JIM
I just am not very good at Spanish
yet. To express myself you know.
Well, personally, I find it all
quite miraculous: there was this
old, dilapidated house that no one
could live in. No one could make a
home there. But now, all of a
sudden, the house has changed
completely. You might call it a
different house - a new house. It's
livable, it's cosy, it's
beautiful... So I would like to
propose a toast to its new
residents: may they have a good
life there, and may they be happy.
Yes, happy. Isn't that what our
work is all about?

Mark at some point stops translating, looking at Jim
strangely.

(CONTINUED)

JIM (CONT'D)

We might not be able to guarantee happiness, but we do our part and we do it well. The rest depends on them. So let us hope our work hasn't been done in vain.

A long pause, while Jim stares into his wine-glass. The others exchange glances, thinking he'll keep talking - but Jim drinks quickly and sits down. The others get the picture and drink up as well.

Ricardo (SP.) (With authority, but no enthusiasm)
Well said.

He drinks his wine rapidly like a shot of whisky.

Mark looks at Jim with thinly-veiled irritation and incomprehension. He'd expected a different kind of toast - less weird and more on topic. He fakes a smile for the company representatives.

INT. MARK'S CAR - DAY

Mark is driving his car along a road that runs past lovely green fields. He's on his way back from the country restaurant to Montevideo. Jim is in the front passenger seat, looking out the window with interest.

The company representatives are in the back of the car. Ricardo sits in the middle, asleep, head tilted back and mouth open - leaning on his assistant, who sits behind Mark and looks straight ahead. Gabriel sits on the left, looking out the window. No one is talking. Mark looks gloomy.

Suddenly there's a bang that wakes Ricardo - the car lurches to the side and starts slowing down. Mark tries to accelerate, but fails. The car finally comes to a stop by the side of the road.

MARK

(ENG.) Oh no, not now... (SP.) But hey, not to worry! These things happen. I keep forgetting to get it serviced, that's all.

Mark tries to restart the car, but the engine dies every time. Jim looks out the window - and suddenly livens up when he sees some sheep grazing in a field next to the road.

(CONTINUED)

JIM

Oh, look at that! How delightful!

He unfastens his seat-belt, opens the door, gets out of the car and walks toward the sheep. Giving Jim a funny look, Mark quits trying to start the engine and gets out of the car. He lifts up the hood and tries to figure out what's wrong. The company representatives stay in their seats, blankly watching Jim through the windows.

Jim (CONT'D)

Mark, look! Aren't they beautiful?

Jim walks up to the sheep and crouches down to pet a couple of them. Mark, under the hood, turns to glance at Jim, nods, and goes back to staring at the engine.

JIM (CONT'D)

How about that! You won't see anything like these in New York. Then again, I've seen plenty on Broadway - but these are so much more beautiful and natural! Ha-ha.

Mark closes the hood with a loud thump. He doesn't have a clue what might have broken down inside there. Getting back into the driver's seat, he tries to start the car again - and fails three times. But on the fourth try, the car suddenly starts. Mark is happy.

MARK

Finally! Okay, Jim, that's enough - let's get going.

Mark is clearly displeased with Jim's behavior. Jim gets up, gives the sheep a nudge, gazes at them for a few more seconds, then walks back to the car and gets in. He looks back at the sheep.

JIM

What a beautiful sight they are.

Jim glances at Mark, who doesn't respond to his words. Mark silently starts driving. Jim turns to the company representatives, who are staring at him in some surprise, eyebrows raised. Only Gabriel gives him a polite smile. Jim smiles, turning away from them with an amused shrug. He watches the road.

INT. REHEARSAL ROOM EVENING

The rehearsal room's walls are draped in dark fabric. The band practicing there is the same band for which Ana used her image editing program to make a poster. The vocalist, MAURICIO, is at the mike, singing and playing his guitar: he is 25, thin, somewhat feminine (a good complement to Ana's masculinity), with a pleasant high voice. Ana plays rhythm guitar. The band also has a bass player and a drummer. They are playing a slow-ish pop ballad.

Ana looks tired and sad. Her thoughts are obviously miles away, and her guitar-playing is off. She gradually starts playing some chords that aren't in the song. The other band members notice this and trade glances. Though Ana corrects herself quickly at first, she keeps making mistakes, more and more intensely.

Finally, Mauricio the vocalist can't stand it any more. Raising a hand to interrupt the song, he takes off his guitar and walks over to Ana. She gives him a guilty look. He puts an arm around her shoulders.

MAURICIO (SP.)

Is everything all right, Ana?
You're looking strange today.

He speaks in a soft quiet voice.

ANA (SP.)

Oh no, I'm fine! Just a bit tired,
that's all. I'll keep going.

Mauricio nods and returns to the mike. He puts on his guitar and they start playing the same song again. Ana doesn't seem to be making any more chord mistakes.

EXT. MARK'S BALCONY - DAY

Large sunny balcony, high up on an apartment building in an upmarket suburb of Montevideo. Mark, wearing only a pair of shorts, is lying face down on a deck-chair. Many potted plants - shrubs and flowers - around the balcony create a back-to-nature effect. A small table next to the deck-chair holds a glass of orange juice and a few luxury home magazines. Mark's girlfriend, LUCIA - voluptuous, wearing a swimsuit - is rubbing suntan lotion onto his back. A CD system on the balcony floor is playing some light electronic lounge music.

Mark lifts his head, as if hearing something.

(CONTINUED)

MARK (SP.)
Lucia, is that my cell ringing?

LUCIA (SP.)
(continues rubbing his back,
not even trying to listen)
No, I don't think so.

MARK (SP.)
Hold on, it really is ringing -
hey, bring it out here.

A bit annoyed, LUCIA sets the suntan lotion on the table, goes inside the apartment, and returns with Mark's cell-phone - which is indeed ringing.

MARK (SP.) (CONT'D)
Turn the music down, will you?

LUCIA goes over to the player and turns down the volume. Then she picks up the suntan lotion from the table and continues rubbing it onto Mark's back. Mark checks his cell-phone screen to see who's calling, then takes the call quickly, with a big smile on his face.

MARK (CONT'D)
Hey Jim, how are you? Ready to meet
the buyers tonight?
(He winks at LUCIA, who smiles
back at him)

JIM (V.O.)
Hi Mark - and that's just what I'm
calling about. Look, I've decided
that I won't be selling the house.

MARK
Oh yeah, ha-ha... What? Hold on,
what do you mean, not selling?!

Mark gets up from the deck-chair, brushing LUCIA aside without looking at her. She stares at him in surprise. Mark starts pacing up and down the balcony.

JIM (V.O.)
Exactly what I said. The deal's
off.

MARK
Jim, what's going on?! Are you
kidding? We've just spent two
months fixing it up - and you spent
even more money to buy it - and now
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MARK (cont'd)

we're - you're set to make a few hundred grand on this deal - so what's your problem? Yeah, I'm getting a cut too, but so what? We've got a buyer lined up, everything's going great - so let's close the deal already! Say, is this some kind of joke? What's up with you lately?

JIM (V.O.)

It's not a joke, Mark. I don't want to sell the house yet, that's all. I'll explain later. Don't worry, I'll pay part of your commission anyway - you've done an excellent job. But that's the situation, you see.

MARK

This is just crazy... I mean... Okay, catch you later, Jim.

JIM (V.O.)

Bye, Mark.

Jim hangs up. Mark stares at the phone, stunned. LUCIA is looking at him with a serious expression and a hint of contempt. She puts the suntan lotion on the table and goes inside. Mark follows her with his eyes, still looking baffled.

Then he remembers something, turns on the phone's GPS locator, and sees Jim as a red dot moving through the Old City. Mark watches this dot - then raises his eyes and stares straight ahead, unsmiling: frowning in intense concentration, as if plotting something nasty.

Then, suddenly relaxing, he puts down the phone, picks up a luxury home magazine from the table, and slowly lies down on the deck-chair - on his back, covering his face with a magazine with a beautiful white house on the cover.

LUCIA, now fully dressed, walks out onto the balcony. She looks like she wants to say something, but when she sees Mark lying there with the magazine over his face, she turns around and leaves without speaking.

INT. REHEARSAL ROOM - EVENING

The band is playing something more upbeat now. The musicians are a bit more relaxed, moving more, getting into the music. Ana seems to be unwinding too, but after a while it becomes clear that she is playing wrong chords again. Finally, she can't stand it any more. She puts down her guitar and walks out quickly, making apologetic gestures at the other band members. They keep playing, not breaking off the song, just trading glances.

EXT. SHOP EVENING

Jim comes slowly to the same shop where he bought milk the first day of his visit.

INT. SHOP EVENING

Jim enters the shop. The shop assistant jumps up seeing Jim with a wide smile.

ASSISTANT (SP.)

Hey, hello senor, I owe you the change! You paid a thousand pesos for a package of milk!

He counts the money and hands it to Jim. Jim takes the money.

JIM (SP.)

Oh, do not worry, everything is ok. I just did not understand anything that day, and now I even speak a bit, as you see.

ASSISTANT (SP.)

Oh, you speak perfectly! What will you take, milk? By the way I think you noticed that milk is perfect in Uruguay. It is natural.

He opens the window of the display case and takes out a package of milk.

JIM (SP.)

Ah, thanks, no, today I will take some other thing. That one!

The salesman looks in the direction of Jim's finger, and sees a bottle of vodka.

(CONTINUED)

ASSISTANT (SP.)
Ah! Yes? This?

JIM (SP.)
Yes, please.

ASSISTANT (SP.)
Sure! You should not mix milk and vodka. Ha-ha. So today vodka! OK. It is not made here, so I do not know if it is good or not!

He puts the bottle in front of Jim. Jim pays.

JIM (SP.)
Well hopefully it is good. At least it is very good for the heart. It will just pump your blood through the heart you know, like an electric pump. Sometimes your heart is empty and needs more blood in it! Thank you! Good bye.

ASSISTANT (SP.)
Good bye senor!

Jim goes to the door. The salesman looks at his back a bit startled.

INT. CLAUDIA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Claudia's apartment isn't lavish, but she keeps it neat and tidy. Claudia is standing in front of some open closets and packing her clothes into big tall boxes (half her height). Her son Diego is next to her, helping out as best he can.

CLAUDIA (SP.)
Diego, could you pass me that sweater, please?

Diego hands Claudia the sweater. She folds it neatly and places it in a box. The sweater barely fits in; the box is nearly full.

The phone rings. Claudia goes over to a small table where the phone usually stands, but all she can see is the cord. She follows the cord until she can dig out the phone from under a pile of clothes on the floor.

CLAUDIA (SP.) (CONT'D)
Hello?

(CONTINUED)

CALLER (SP.)
Could I speak to Claudia, please?

CLAUDIA (SP.)
Yes, that's me.

CALLER (SP.)
Good evening. My name is Gonzalez -
I'm a notary.

CLAUDIA (SP.)
Oh, I don't believe this... Look,
I've already told them I'm moving
out the day after tomorrow! We're
packing our stuff right now! We
can't just stand up and vanish in
an hour, you know. We need to get
our things together and move. So
why are they calling in a notary?
What for? We'll move out, no
problem - just give us time till
the day after tomorrow!

CALLER (SP.)
Hmm... Excuse me, Claudia, but you
might be confusing this with
something else. I'm calling with
regard to a gift deed in your name.
You'll need to come over and sign a
few papers.

CLAUDIA (SP.)
A gift deed? Somebody's giving me
something? Ha-ha - but hey, that's
nice.

Claudia looks obviously pleased and cheerful. Her gestures
are now wider and faster.

CLAUDIA (SP.) (CONT'D)
So, am I allowed to ask what the
gift is?

CALLER (SP.)
I'm sorry, but I'm unable to
discuss that over the phone. It
would be best for you to call in at
our office.

CLAUDIA (SP.)
Oh yeah? And what if it's a bomb or
something - shouldn't I know in
advance? Ha-ha-ha. But can't you

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CLAUDIA (SP.) (cont'd)
tell me who it's from, at least? I
can't recall having any generous
relatives.

CALLER (SP.)
The gift deed in your name is from
Senor James White.

Claudia's expression changes, turning tense, and her good mood fades. There is a brief silence. When Claudia speaks, her voice has gone flat, metallic.

CLAUDIA (SP.)
Jim? Oh, I see. All right then -
but do I have to come in tomorrow?
Tomorrow is a busy day, we're
having a dance. How about the day
after?

CALLER (SP.)
Hmm, of course - all right, let's
make it the day after tomorrow.
Here's the address: 411A Gaboto
Street. See you then.

Claudia hangs up without saying goodbye. She looks at her son, then at the box. When she speaks, there is irritation in her tone.

CLAUDIA (SP.)
Right, that one looks full - go get
the next one.

She quickly shuts the box.

INT. ROOM IN BASEMENT EVENING

In a poorly lit room in the basement of a building, with low ceilings and a lot of cigarette smoke Alvaro and Carlos sit on a sofa. In front of them there is a small low table. On the opposite sofa there are three more friends of Alvaro. There are some open cigarette packs on the table, an open bottle of whiskey, and several plastic glasses. Also there is a gun on the table. The men in the room smoke and talk.

ALVARO (SP.)
Well I hope you won't miss me here.
I will be in contact with you. Also
you by now should trust Carlos not
less than myself. I leave you with
him as the boss without any doubts.

(CONTINUED)

ONE OF THE FRIENDS (SP.)

Are you sure you need this
Barcelona?

ALVARO (SP.)

I have already explained
everything. I have managed to hold
on for a year. But it is dangerous
for me to be here. I would surely
prefer to stay here with you than
go to Barcelona. But I think you
noticed that for about a year I do
not participate in anything in any
case.

ONE OF THE FRIENDS (SP.)

Oh yes, got too much interested in
the ling... lingus... how the hell
is it spelled? Linguistics?

Everyone laughs.

ALVARO (SP.)

Hey, hey! It was not a choice that
I would have made if I had any
other!

There is a knock at the heavy iron door. Alvaro looks at
everyone questioningly.

ALVARO (SP.) (CONT'D)

Everyone is present, no? Are we
expecting someone?

Carlos looks at the gun on the table and takes it. Alvaro
stands up and goes to the door.

ALVARO (SP.) (CONT'D)

Who is this?

VOICE FROM BEHIND THE DOOR (SP.)

It's me, Ana.

Carlos puts the gun back on the table.

ALVARO (SP.)

(Whispering)

Oh no... Her again. Hey, you sit
quiet, do not mention my journey. I
will get rid of her rapidly.

(CONTINUED)

ONE OF THE FRIENDS
(Sucking on a cigarette
philosophically)
Ha. It's love!

Alvaro opens the door putting a smile on his face in
advance.

ALVARO (SP.)
Hello Ana!

ANA (SP.)
Hello! Hello to everyone there!
(Looking in through the door)

CARLOS AND FRIENDS (SP.)
Hello Ana!

ANA (SP.)
(To Alvaro)
We need to talk.

ALVARO (SP.)
Is this urgent? Because we have
some things to discuss in here...

ANA (SP.)
It is urgent.

ALVARO (SP.)
OK, lets go out to the stairs.

Alvaro goes out and closes the door.

INT. BASEMENT NEAR THE STAIRS

ALVARO (SP.)
What's happened, Ana?

ANA (SP.)
Claudia told me that you are going
to quit the job one of these days?

ALVARO (SP.)
I quit the job? Claudia said?

ANA (SP.)
Exactly. You go away?

ALVARO (SP.)
What? Why would I go away? Yes I
quit this job because I found
another one.

(CONTINUED)

ANA (SP.)

Which one?

ALVARO (SP.)

Ana I am very busy now, can we speak some other time?

ANA (SP.)

What job, Alvaro? You are going on the same road again?

(She nods in the direction of the door)

And you understand what consequences this may have? Because so much has been done already not to make the same mistakes.

ALVARO (SP.)

No, Ana, I will tell you later. I need to go. Really.

ANA (SP.)

I understand that you do not have the same feelings towards me, for a long time. But can you think about yourself? And about other people? I will find everything out in any case.

ALVARO (SP.)

No it's not what you think. Yes you are right, the relationships we used to have have already gone, but we are good friends and I am grateful to you for a lot of things. I really need to be going, we have an important talk in there.

ANA (SP.)

OK. See you later.

Ana turns and goes up the stairs. Alvaro looks at her for some time and enters the room.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Claudia is running down a street toward Jim's hotel. She is wearing the same indoor clothes that she had on while packing her things. The weather is cold and windy; she holds her top closed across her chest to keep warm. The streets are empty. Plastic bags and scraps of newspaper are blown around by the wind. Claudia is talking to herself in a loud whisper.

(CONTINUED)

CLAUDIA (SP.)

Don't need any gifts from you...
Don't want it... Be fine without
it...

The wind and the cold gradually overcome Claudia. She is slowing down - running less confidently. Pretty soon she is walking. Near one house she notices a woman and her daughter, sleeping on mattresses. She looks at them, breathing hard, turning her head toward them in passing.

After a while, she stops walking and starts crying helplessly. She squats down on her heels, rests her head on her arms, and cries in the empty street.

INT. CHEAP BAR IN THE CENTER OF TOWN - NIGHT

Claudia, still wearing the same clothes, is having a drink with Ana. The bar is furnished with small yellow wooden tables. Ana looks sleepy. A few of the male patrons keep giving the two women interested looks. Claudia's face shows that she has been crying. She is smoking a cigarette, and sipping from a glass of something strong.

CLAUDIA (SP.)

I liked him right away, you know?
He's kind of different from
everyone else. Special. It's our
last class tomorrow... And then
there's the dance. I was too hard
on him, I think. Should have found
some other way to tell him we're
not supposed to have relationships
at the school. And he's lost his
whole family... I just wasn't
thinking, that's all. Could have
said something else, something more
sensitive... And now there's this
gift... It's wrong, isn't it?
Accepting gifts, just like that.
But it's so nice, damn it! It's
been about four years since anyone
gave me anything at all.

ANA (SP.)

Hey, calm down. What makes you say
it's wrong? He just wants to give
you a present. You shouldn't turn
it down. That would be rude. And as
for the age thing... He's not that
old, and with a good person, age
doesn't really matter.

(CONTINUED)

CLAUDIA (SP.)

I don't know, I don't know... It's all so complicated... Nothing's ever simple with me, is it? And on top of it all, he's a foreigner - he lives in another country.

ANA (SP.)

Well, so what? If the two of you do get serious, he'll take you over there or he'll stay here. What's he do for a living?

CLAUDIA (SP.)

Him? Actually... I don't know. Ha ha. They've cut the "My Job" topic from the syllabus this year, for some reason. People don't seem to like talking about all that so openly. I think he's a lawyer or something. Or a music critic, maybe. He is really good at music. He showed me some really great concert not long ago.

ANA (SP.)

Well, there you go. Don't worry - things will work out all right. You can talk to him tomorrow.

CLAUDIA (SP.)

Oh, it's all so hard... Do you really think it'll work out?

ANA (SP.)

Yes, I'm sure of it - absolutely.

Ana gives Claudia a hug and strokes her hair.

INT. CLAUDIA'S ROOM - MORNING

The room is flooded with bright white sunlight. Nearly all the furniture has been moved already. The boxes are stacked against the wall in a neat row. Claudia, wearing an attractive light-colored outfit, is standing in front of a mirror on the wall, putting on lipstick. She has done her hair in a pretty style, and her makeup is light but becoming. She is in a festive mood, humming to herself.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE JIM'S HOTEL - DAY

Jim comes out of the hotel's front doorway and walks along the street past the hotel wall, at an easy pace, carrying his briefcase. He looks toward the sea, smiling, and takes pleasure in the sight of houses and trees in the sunshine. At the corner, Jim turns left. A car is parked there: dark blue with tinted windows, about 15 years old. Suddenly two men jump out, grab Jim, and shove him inside the car.

Jim finds himself in the back seat, on the passenger side. He is surprised to see Carlos - a friend of Alvaro's - scrambling into the seat next to him, while Alvaro himself gets behind the wheel and drives off fast.

At first, nobody speaks. Alvaro drives in silence. He is obviously very worked up. Jim, by contrast, is calm. Resting his briefcase on his lap, he glances at Alvaro without speaking. Finally, Alvaro can't take any more of Jim's irrational silence: so Alvaro speaks first.

ALVARO

How you doing back there, Jim?
Comfortable?

JIM

Perfectly, thank you - but I admit, your way of getting me into the car did seem a little strange. Do you have a tradition of doing this to people before the last class?

ALVARO

Ha-ha, no - it's an innovation. Seriously, though, we aren't going to the Spanish school.

JIM

Well, well... Where are we going, then?

ALVARO

To a house in the country.

JIM

A house in the country.
(He looks at Carlos, who sits there in grim silence, looking through the window.)
How nice... And why are we going to this house in the country?

(CONTINUED)

ALVARO

We're going there so you can take a break, relax, find yourself... The thing is, Jim, I need you to be away from the school today. Far away. Totally gone. Get it?

JIM

To be honest, not really. I mean, that's rather an odd thing for a Spanish teacher to say.

ALVARO

Ha-ha. You're in my way, Jim. Get it? Big day today... I don't want you anywhere near Claudia, so you don't get in our way.

JIM

Ah. Now I'm starting to understand this a little. But have you asked Claudia?

Their car is in the second lane. Jim looks through the front window and sees an expensive red car ahead of them in the first (right-hand) lane.

ALVARO

Listen, I know what Claudia needs. It's like - what do they say in the movies? She's mine, Claudia is. Get it? There's this dance tonight, and I've got to be there with her, and by tomorrow morning the two of us will be on a flight to Spain.

JIM

To Spain? The two of you? Ha-ha-ha. So you're going to shove her on the plane just like you got me into this car? She has a child - she's a mother - she won't go.

Jim sees that Alvaro has nearly drawn level with the red car and is preparing to overtake it.

ALVARO

She'll go, she'll go. Unless you get in my way, she'll go. So she'll leave the kid with her mother... You're just hanging around all the time, getting in my way. What's in it for you, anyhow? You're an old

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ALVARO (cont'd)
 man. Now you're giving her some kind of present - Ana told me today. Well, what are you giving her? What's the point? See, here's some free advice, from me to you: go back to America tomorrow. Better for everyone that way. Get a car to the airport tomorrow afternoon, and in a few hours you'll be home, all safe and warm.

Alvaro's car has drawn level with the red car. Suddenly Jim lunges forward and across the car to Alvaro - grabs his right arm and tries to turn the steering wheel sharply to the right, so as to cause an accident. Alvaro's car swerves. The red car honks its horn at them. But Alvaro manages to avoid a collision - his car slips ahead past the red car, without touching it. Carlos grabs Jim's shoulders, cursing, and pushes him back in his seat. Carlos then watches Jim closely for a while, surprised and wary.

ALVARO (CONT'D)
 Hey! Hey! Don't do that!

Jim acts as if nothing happened, though his rapid breathing gives away how hard this is for him. He looks visibly disappointed. Alvaro is silent, shooting satisfied glances at Jim in the rear-view mirror. Then they continue their dialogue as if the disruption hadn't happened.

JIM
 Oh no, it is not very warm there. It's winter in New York now. Much colder than here.

ALVARO
 That's not what I meant. You just sit back and read today, and fly out tomorrow. Or stay, if you want. Won't make any difference by then.

JIM
 Yes, I do like reading - but what you're trying to do is slightly illegal, don't you think? I mean - kidnapping, false imprisonment, and so on.

ALVARO
 False imprisonment... Hey, don't you even think about going to the police. Who's going to listen to

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ALVARO (cont'd)
you there? Not as if you're some hot chick worth kidnapping, right? Not beaten up, are you? And where's your proof? Look, let's not make a big deal of it - we can part as friends. But if you are going to do some funny things... Anything can happen down here in Latin America - right, Carlitos?

Carlos gives Alvaro a questioning look. All he understood in their English dialogue is his name. Then, as if remembering something, he silently pulls out a hand-gun - examines it, opens it up to check the bullets, and puts the gun back in his pocket, looking satisfied - without so much as a glance at Jim during all this. Then he calmly goes back to looking out the window. But Jim doesn't seem too impressed by what he's seen.

JIM
Well, how about that... They're right - it really is a Third World country!

Alvaro chuckles.

ALVARO
Yeah, yeah.

Alvaro wipes the sweat from his upper lip with the back of his hand, keeping his eyes on the road.

EXT. STREET, IN FRONT OF A SMALL WHITE HOUSE - DAY

The car pulls up in front of a small run-down white-painted house. A few dogs are happily running around outside it. The house seems to be somewhere in the poor district of Cerro. There are no other houses nearby. Alvaro and Carlos get out of the car, open the door on Jim's side, and lead him out. They lead him over to the door of the house, open it, and bring Jim inside.

INT. FRONT ROOM OF HOUSE IN THE COUNTRY - DAY

They enter a small front room with scuffed white walls, poorly furnished. A frosted-glass door leads from this room into a larger room. The only furniture in the front room is a small table by the wall, to the right of the door leading to the second room, and one chair. Alvaro reaches for the light switch. A small naked bulb hanging from the ceiling lights up.

(CONTINUED)

ALVARO

Hang on, Jim, we've got to search you.

Jim places his briefcase on the table and stands in the middle of the room, arms raised. Alvaro opens the briefcase and examines the contents; meanwhile, Carlos frisks Jim. Alvaro doesn't find anything suspicious in the briefcase. He takes out a "Spanish Lessons" textbook, and laughs.

ALVARO (CONT'D)

Sorry, Jim - can't give you a lesson today - you've got another teacher.

JIM

That's all right. I'll study on my own today.

Alvaro puts the book back in the briefcase and closes it. Carlos has finished frisking Jim, and hands Jim's cell-phone to Alvaro. Alvaro takes the phone and puts it in his pocket, while handing the briefcase back to Jim

ALVARO

I'll take the phone for now - you won't be needing it. You can have it when I get back. Carlos, show our guest through.

Alvaro points to the door leading to the other room. Carlos prods Jim forward, and Jim walks through into the other room. Carlos shuts the door behind him and turns the key in the lock.

CARLOS (SP.)

Any mate in the kitchen?

Alvaro nods, while concentrating on searching for something in his pockets. Carlos leaves the room. Alvaro finds what he was looking for: a small greeting card.

ALVARO

Here it is! Hey, Jim - mind if I write Claudia a card from you? Just to say everything's okay, so she won't worry! About you disappearing all of a sudden, I mean.

Silence from Jim on the other side of the door. Alvaro leans over the table, takes a pen from his pocket, and writes something on the card. Carlos comes back with a thermos and the mate, places everything on the table and sits down on

(CONTINUED)

the chair to the right; then starts making some mate for himself. Alvaro finishes writing, puts the pen back in his pocket, and silently reads over what he's written. Having finished reading, he puts the card in his pocket, nodding in satisfaction.

ALVARO (CONT'D)

All done! No need for you to read it, Jim - it's nothing much, just saying you're okay and so on. All right, I'm off! Don't get bored, you two. Back soon. Carlos - if anything comes up, call me.

Carlos nods, not speaking - he's drinking mate. He gets up from the table and goes to shut the front door behind Alvaro, taking a bunch of keys from his pocket.

INT. SECOND ROOM OF HOUSE IN THE COUNTRY - DAY

The second room is furnished somewhat better, with several cupboards, a footstool, a table and chair by the window. Jim is sitting on the chair, looking around, still holding his briefcase. After a while, he sets the briefcase down on the floor, gets up, goes over to the window through which some white wall can be seen and tries to open it. The window won't open.

INT. CLASSROOM AT THE SPANISH SCHOOL - DAY

Claudia, with her pretty hairdo and make-up, enters the room and half-closes the door behind her. She walks over to her usual place, takes out her books and puts them on the table. Then she notices the card on the table. Uncertainly, she picks up the card and reads it. While reading, she sits down without looking at the chair. Having finished reading, she returns the card to the table. Then she places her arms on the table and slowly leans forward to rest her head on her arms - and freezes in that position.

INT. SCHOOL CORRIDOR - DAY

Alvaro is walking past the classroom with a cup of coffee. He glances through the half-open door and halts, spotting Claudia inside, her face buried in her arms. Alvaro approaches the door and reaches out to open it fully, but changes his mind. With a "not yet" expression, he takes his hand off the door-knob. Stands back and keeps watching Claudia with intense and serious interest, as if she were a picture painted by himself. Then, taking a satisfied sip of his coffee, Alvaro walks away.

INT. FRONT ROOM OF HOUSE IN THE COUNTRY - EVENING

Carlos is no longer drinking mate. He sits playing Tetris on his cell-phone. The game is accompanied by the characteristic Tetris sound-effects. Carlos yawns.

INT. SECOND ROOM OF HOUSE IN THE COUNTRY - EVENING

Window view shows that it is dark outside. Jim sits at the table, leafing through his Spanish textbook, holding it up in front of him. Then he sets the book aside, without closing it, and listens to the sounds from the other room. Realizing that Carlos is playing some kind of game on his phone, Jim gets up and quietly goes over to the window.

Jim cautiously feels the window handle and figures out that the window is locked. Then he notices a fair-sized gap between the window and the window frame, around where the lock's latch should be. He tries prying it with a fingernail, but his nail is too short. Going over to the table, he carefully tears a page out of the book, folds it, and tries to slip it into the gap. The paper goes in - the window handle starts to turn - but the paper turns out to be too soft: it crumples. Jim takes it out of the gap and puts it in his pocket.

Jim looks around for something solid and thin enough to fit into the window gap. Not seeing anything suitable, he starts digging around in his pockets: takes out his glasses case, opens and shuts it, puts it back to the pocket; takes out his wallet, goes through it, takes out a coin and tries fitting it into the gap - but it's too thick. Jim puts the coin away. Then he opens the wallet's credit card folder. After a moment's hesitation, he quickly takes out a gold-colored card and sticks it into the gap. The window handle starts to turn - but at a certain point it makes a loud noise.

Immediately after that, Jim hears a brief creak from the chair in the other room.

INT. FRONT ROOM OF HOUSE IN THE COUNTRY - EVENING

Carlos stands up and has a good stretch. Then he looks at the door of the room where Jim is being held, and walks over to it. He unlocks the door with his key and peers inside.

INT. SECOND ROOM OF HOUSE IN THE COUNTRY - EVENING

Jim is back in his seat, intently leafing through the Spanish textbook.

CARLOS (SP.)

You okay in there? Want some mate?

Jim nods at his open book, smiling.

JIM (SP.)

No, thank you - I'm still only learning Spanish. Drinking mate is for those who already know it.

CARLOS (SP.)

Uh, yeah... all right then.

Carlos shuts the door and locks it again. Jim keeps leafing through the book for a while, then puts it on the table. The smile disappears from his face. Judging by the sounds from the other room, Carlos is over by the table in there, making some more mate for himself. Jim takes a quick look at his watch, then sits there nervously rubbing at his chin, glancing at the door and the window.

INT. HALL AT SPANISH SCHOOL - EVENING

To celebrate the end of classes, the Spanish school has been temporarily transformed into a night-club. Its largest hall has been chosen as the setting for the main event: the lights are dimmed, students and staff are sitting at small square tables, drinking alcohol and talking. There are more people than usual, since some ex-students have turned up, as well as management staff who aren't usually present at the school. Mauricio's band is over by one of the walls, playing some slow, soft music. Along a wall at right angles to that one, to the band's right, there is a large window facing the street in front of the school. Ana is not among the musicians. The band is performing as a trio.

Claudia, in the same dressy outfit, sits alone at one of the square tables, with the band on her left. She is drinking a cocktail from a glass. Her expression is sad and thoughtful.

Alvaro approaches the table, looking upbeat and cheerful. He gives Claudia a kiss on the cheek and sits down across the table from her. Claudia doesn't look at him - she is watching the play of liquid in her large glass.

(CONTINUED)

ALVARO (SP.)
Hi, Claudia! How's the party?

CLAUDIA (SP.)
It's good. Good music!

ALVARO (SP.)
Yeah! They always play well. Though
I don't see Ana with them tonight.
And you're a bit down, huh?

CLAUDIA (SP.)
No, no, I'm fine.

ALVARO (SP.)
You look great, by the way - real
pretty dress!

CLAUDIA (SP.)
Thanks.

ALVARO (SP.)
So, why do I get the feeling you're
not glad to see me? What's wrong?

Claudia looks up at him for the first time.

CLAUDIA (SP.)
Listen, Alvaro, aren't you tired of
this?

ALVARO (SP.)
Tired of what?

CLAUDIA (SP.)
You're a married man - so maybe
you'd better think of your kids,
you know? Why do you keep trying to
start something with me?

ALVARO (SP.)
Me? Married? Ha-ha. Married to who?
(He looks around)
To Ingrid? Where'd you hear that
story?

CLAUDIA (SP.)
Look, I know all about it. Small
town, right? I've even seen photos
of you with your family.

ALVARO (SP.)

Photos?!

CLAUDIA (SP.)

Well, yes. You take your whole family to the pool, don't you, right out in the open.

ALVARO (SP.)

To the pool? Ah... Ha-ha, that's funny. Listen, enough of that. I don't have a family. And you know how I feel about you. And it's time you decided if you want to get involved with me or not. I haven't even told the boss how you're carrying on with a student - that's how much I respect you. And people get fired for that. Remember what happened to Jorge.

CLAUDIA (SP.)

With a student?! Me?!

ALVARO (SP.)

Oh, don't start! Even the janitor couldn't have missed it - there's been something going on between you and Jim. And I've had to take it, watching all that.

CLAUDIA (SP.)

(Suddenly calm, not looking at him)

Jim's gone. He went away today - without coming to the last class or the dance. Left a card to say goodbye.

ALVARO (SP.)

Really? Hey, how about that. Looks like it didn't work out for you. Well, never mind - chalk it up to experience. So that's why you're down in the dumps, huh?

Claudia thaws a little, outwardly, toward Alvaro.

CLAUDIA (SP.)

No, no, why would you think that? I've just got a lot of problems - with moving house and all. I'm a bit tired. Sorry.

(CONTINUED)

ALVARO (SP.)

That's okay, these things happen.

(Long pause)

Hey, haven't you been wanting to move to Spain for ages now?

CLAUDIA (SP.)

What's Spain got to do with anything? But yes, I've had that idea - especially in light of what's been happening lately. All these evictions. Scams everywhere. I'm just sick of it all.

ALVARO (SP.)

Listen, I've got a proposal for you - though it might sound strange and too rushed...

Claudia looks at him questioningly.

ALVARO (SP.) (CONT'D)

I've got two tickets to Spain, for 7 o'clock tomorrow morning, in my name and yours.

CLAUDIA (SP.)

What... I mean, what are you trying to say here? Where did you get them?

ALVARO (SP.)

Just bought them, the usual way. At the airport. Claudia, I want you to come with me. To Spain. Tomorrow.

Claudia continues looking at Alvaro questioningly - then suddenly bursts out laughing, quite sincerely.

CLAUDIA (SP.)

Oh, Alvaro... You're too much. Too weird. You've bought tickets! Is this some sort of joke? How can I go anywhere - I'm in the middle of moving house! And what about my son? You want me to go off without him?

ALVARO (SP.)

My friends will take care of moving your stuff. And you can leave the kid with your mother for a while. You're going to check things out,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ALVARO (SP.) (cont'd)
after all - take a look around, see
if you like it there. It's not as
if you're moving there forever,
right away.

CLAUDIA (SP.)
Ha-ha, what a story. Flying to
Spain, just like that! Well,
Alvaro, I don't know... all this is
so sudden. Just taking off like
that.

ALVARO (SP.)
Sudden or not - what's the
difference? Sometimes you've got to
be decisive - take action! Come on,
what have you got to lose?

Claudia turns serious and thoughtful. There is a pause in
the conversation.

CLAUDIA (SP.)
That's true, too. All right then,
can I think it over a bit?

ALVARO (SP.)
Of course.

CLAUDIA (SP.)
I'm thinking, I'm thinking!

Claudia raises an index finger, jokingly, and smiles
broadly, looking into Alvaro's eyes. The impression is that
she's almost ready to agree. The cocktail has left her drunk
enough.

INT. FRONT ROOM OF HOUSE IN THE COUNTRY - EVENING

Carlos is asleep, leaning back on his chair, legs under the
table. He is snoring softly. His mate gourd, thermos, and
phone are on the table in front of him.

INT. SECOND ROOM OF HOUSE IN THE COUNTRY - EVENING

Carefully, so as not to make any noise, Jim uses his credit
card to Jimmy the window latch through the gap. The handle
turns, slowly. Right at the start, he pulls the card out of
the gap and sees that this procedure has damaged its
magnetic strip - the card is no longer usable. Looking at it
with some regret, he nevertheless resolutely sticks it back

(CONTINUED)

into the gap. At last, the lock gives a soft click and the window opens slightly. It is no longer locked. Jim sighs in relief. Slowly, he starts to open the window wider.

Right at that moment, someone starts banging on the front door. Startled, Jim jerks the window closed - so it's locked again - and dashes back to his seat.

CARLOS (V.O.)(SP.)
That you, Alvaro? Must have been a
fast party...

INT. FRONT ROOM OF HOUSE IN THE COUNTRY - EVENING

Carlos gets up, yawning, and fumbles for the keys in his pocket as he heads over to the door. He unlocks it, takes the key out of the lock, then opens the door - and immediately gets a powerful punch in the face. He is knocked backward, dropping the keys, overturning the table - his mate gourd, thermos, and phone go flying across the room. The mate gourd bounces off a wall and spins around to settle by the door of the room where Jim is being held. Carlos is lying on the floor, unconscious, with his head to the right of the door. The table lies on its side, between the door and Carlos.

Meanwhile, Mark bursts into the room. He glances around and takes stock of the situation.

MARK
Jim, are you here?

JIM (V.O.)
Mark?! Yes - the door's locked -
there should be a bunch of keys
somewhere out there.

Mark looks around, finds the bunch of keys that Carlos dropped on the floor, quickly picks out the right key, and unlocks the door. Mark enters the second room.

INT. SECOND ROOM OF HOUSE IN THE COUNTRY - EVENING

Mark sees Jim standing by the table, looking back at him in delighted surprise.

JIM
Hey, really good timing there!

(CONTINUED)

MARK

Yeah - good thing you had the
briefcase with you. Great
invention, that GPS locator.

Jim directs a surprised look at the open briefcase on the
floor by his chair. He points at it.

JIM

Ah, so that's how you found me? The
locator?

MARK

Well, yeah. I kept calling and
calling, and you weren't picking
up. I looked at the locator, and
saw you in the worst part of town.
And you were still there an hour
later. Either you or the briefcase,
that is. It could have been stolen.
(Mark looks around the place,
breathing loudly)
So I thought I'd better come over.
Still got your papers okay?

JIM

Papers? Oh, but I was using it to
carry my schoolbooks.

MARK

Seriously? Schoolbooks! At 59! How
about that! Ha-ha. So, what
actually happened? Are you okay?
They seem to have treated you all
right.

Mark again looks around the room.

JIM

Well, yes - can't complain. They
gave me a separate room of my own.

Remembering something, Jim glances at his watch and starts
hastily packing books into his briefcase.

JIM (CONT'D)

No time to chat - we need to get
going. I'll explain on the way.

MARK

Hmm, all right, let's go. I'm
getting used to rushing around
today.

Jim picks up his briefcase and walks out quickly into the front room. Mark follows - pausing by the door to take another look around the room where Jim has spent several hours, to see if Jim has left something there.

INT. FRONT ROOM OF HOUSE IN THE COUNTRY - EVENING

Jim enters the front room and heads for the front door. Hearing a noise to his left, he turns his head to see Carlos aiming a gun at him. Carlos is lying on the floor behind the upturned table; his face is blood-streaked. Just then, Carlos fires - and Jim falls to the floor, crying out. There is blood on his left shoulder, close to his heart.

Mark, seeing this happen, notices the mate gourd on the floor by the door, at his feet. He quickly picks it up and hurls it at Carlos's head, with all his strength. The pain shocks Carlos into dropping the gun. The gun flies into a corner. Mark jumps over the upturned table and starts wrestling with Carlos. At first, Mark is winning - but as the fight continues, Mark loses the advantage and Carlos ends up on top. He starts choking Mark. Mark struggles to breathe.

Jim tries to get up, but fails - he is too badly hurt. His view of the fight is blocked by the table, so he can only guess what is happening. He is on the verge of passing out.

INT. HALL AT SPANISH SCHOOL - EVENING

Claudia is even more drunk than she was before. There is now a Martini bottle on the table, helpfully purchased by Alvaro. He keeps topping up Claudia's glass. A similar glass stands in front of Alvaro, but it's empty.

CLAUDIA (SP.)

But anyway... Anyway, no, Alvaro. I can't go. Not now. All this is just so strange, you know?

ALVARO (SP.)

What's so strange about it, Claudia? You said it yourself - you've got nothing to lose.

CLAUDIA (SP.)

There's always something to lose, Alvaro. I can't do this. I need to be here, for now.

(CONTINUED)

ALVARO (SP.)

Why? Come on, quit that - tomorrow you'll wake up in Spain - and hey, no more sad face!

Claudia turns resolute.

CLAUDIA (SP.)

Why are you hassling me? I said I'm not going. That's it. Not now. I need some time. It would be strange to take off so fast - I've got the feeling that something isn't over yet. Just don't push me, you know?

ALVARO (SP.)

Pffft... Well, okay, okay. You're right. Hey, why do we keep fighting all the time? Let's not fight. Let's just sit here for now, have some more wine, go outside for a smoke, have a chat in the fresh air. Oh, look - your glass is empty...

Acting considerate, Alvaro tops up Claudia's drink.

INT. FRONT ROOM OF HOUSE IN THE COUNTRY - EVENING

Carlos is on top of Mark, trying to strangle him. But Mark, struggling fiercely, gradually manages to weaken Carlos's grip and pull his arms down. Then, summoning his last strength, Mark slams his forehead into Carlos's nose. Carlos is stunned for a moment - enough for Mark to throw him off and punch him in the face a few times.

Carlos is practically unconscious, with blood all over his face. Muttering curses, the annoyed Mark gets up, takes off his belt, turns Carlos over onto his stomach, and ties his hands behind his back. Then he quickly drags Carlos past the table - with a concerned glance at Jim - and into the second room, where he leaves Carlos lying on the floor.

MARK

Be right with you, Jim.

Mark takes the bunch of keys out of his pocket, locks the door, and puts the keys back in his pocket. He notices the gun lying in the corner, picks it up, examines it quickly and curiously - and puts it in his pocket as well, just in case. Then he hurries over to Jim. All his actions, starting with dragging Carlos into the other room, are accompanied by an emotional monologue.

(CONTINUED)

MARK (CONT'D)

Goddamn country... That's it, I'm getting out of Latin America. Haven't sold the house, haven't had a real holiday - just adventures all the time. Okay Jim, hold on, let's get you to a hospital. Don't seem to be bleeding too much... Or maybe it's internal bleeding? Sure hope not.

Mark half-lifts Jim, who is trying to walk but can hardly stay on his feet. Mark leads him out the front door.

EXT. STREET, IN FRONT OF A SMALL WHITE HOUSE - EVENING

Mark's car is parked in front of the house Mark opens the front passenger door, supporting Jim with his left arm and leaning him against the car, while he pushes the back of the seat down with his right hand. Then he deftly maneuvers Jim into the car and lays him down, reclining on the passenger seat. He closes the car door, jumps into the driver's seat, starts the car and drives off.

INT. MARK'S CAR - EVENING

Mark is driving, with the occasional concerned glance at Jim, who is lying in the front passenger seat on his right. Jim keeps passing out and waking up again.

MARK

How are you doing there, Jim?

JIM

All right... Though my shoulder hurts a bit.

Jim passes out again. After a while he is semi-conscious, and seems to be delirious.

JIM (CONT'D)

Claudia... Where's Claudia...

And Jim passes out again. Mark is at a loss - he keeps looking at Jim, then at the road, and back at Jim.

Jim wakes up again - and suddenly seizes Mark's arm.

JIM (CONT'D)

Mark... the Spanish school... drive over there... you know where it is, in the Old City...

(CONTINUED)

MARK

Yeah, on Rincon. But why there?!
You want a special Spanish cussing
lesson, so you can make a speech to
the guys who grabbed you?

Mark glances at Jim with a grin, but Jim has passed out again already. Mark turns away, even more baffled. His grin fades.

Suddenly there's a bang from under the hood, and the car starts slowing down. Mark struggles with the gear-box and the gas pedal.

MARK (CONT'D)

Oh no, no, no! Not again... And I
forgot to take it into the shop...
And no cabs around...

The car slowly rolls to a stop in a deserted area, with empty streets and hardly any buildings. Nervously, Mark tries to restart the car, but the engine dies every time. Mark casts a horrified look at Jim, who is no longer regaining consciousness. Mark is trying desperately to start the car, but the engine keeps sputtering and dying.

INT. STAIRCASE AT SPANISH SCHOOL - EVENING

Alvaro is slowly leading Claudia down a steep staircase. The lighting on the stairs is very dim. Music can be heard from upstairs, with a few human shadows and silhouettes visible. A couple - a young man and a girl - are standing by the banister at the stairway entrance on the top floor. They are barely visible. There is a view of the open door leading to the hall, with bright yellow light shining out. Claudia is fairly drunk by now - she is having trouble staying upright.

ALVARO (SP.)

Right, come on... hey, watch your
step there...

CLAUDIA (SP.)

Hang on... Why are we going
downstairs?

ALVARO (SP.)

You've forgotten already? You want
to smoke inside the Spanish school?
Some teacher you are! And there's
fresh air out there - you could do
with some of that.

Alvaro opens the door and they step outside.

(CONTINUED)

MIGUEL, the school coordinator, comes out of the hall door and looks around the stairwell and landing. He notices the couple in the shadows.

MIGUEL (SP.)
Haven't seen Claudia, have you?

MAN'S VOICE (SP.)
She went downstairs already.
Probably gone home.

MIGUEL (SP.)
So early? That's strange. Oh,
well...

A new song starts up in the hall - one of MIGUEL'S favorites, apparently. He tilts his head, listening - then nods, throws up his hands, and half-dances his way back inside the hall.

INT. ANA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Complete silence in Ana's apartment. The computer is on and the image editing program is running, but no image files are open. Ana sits on the couch, staring at the wall in front of her, holding a glass of water. The glass is half-full.

After a lengthy interval, Ana suddenly lets out a wild desperate shriek and hurls the glass at the wall. The glass shatters. Water splatters over the wall and some of the posters of Ana's idols.

I/E. MARK'S CAR - EVENING

Mark is trying in vain to start the car. Realizing that it just won't start, he jumps out and proceeds to kick the car, swearing at it.

MARK
What am I meant to do now? What?

Mark glances at the hood of the car - runs over there and opens it - but just like the last time, he doesn't even know where to start looking for something to fix. He peers under the hood for a while. Then, hearing a noise, he looks up and around the open hood.

Mark is startled to see a horse's face almost right in front of him. Disoriented, he can't take it in at first - can't figure out whether it's real or he's stressed out and seeing things. But then he sees a cart behind the horse, and the garbage collector's familiar figure - and realizes that this is everyday reality, not a hallucination.

(CONTINUED)

GARBAGE COLLECTOR (SP.)
What's wrong, Senor?

MARK (SP.)
Move along, move along... I don't
have time for this.

Then Mark has a sudden realization. Wide-eyed, he slowly steps out from behind the hood, staring at the garbage collector. He shuts the hood without looking at it. He walks over to the cart and grabs the garbage collector's arm. Mark's appearance scares the garbage collector.

MARK (SP.) (CONT'D)
Wait! You can help me! I'll pay
you. Give us a lift in your cart -
my car won't start! It's not far
from here.

GARBAGE COLLECTOR (SP.)
Hold on... who's that in the car?

The garbage collector leans down in his cart, trying to make out the reclining figure in the car's front passenger seat.

GARBAGE COLLECTOR (SP.) (CONT'D)
Hey, that's the Senor from the
hotel - what's up with him?! Looks
like he needs the hospital!

MARK (SP.)
That's what I'm trying to tell
you!!! Come on, hurry up, give us a
hand here...

The garbage collector jumps down to help Mark carry Jim to the cart and lay him on his back. The garbage collector gets up on the cart and pulls Jim, while Mark pushes from below. Then Mark hesitates, not sure how to climb up on the cart himself; seeing this, the garbage collector pulls him up as well.

The garbage collector urges his horse forward, and it races through the completely deserted streets of nighttime Montevideo, with a song playing in the background. To an outside observer, all this might seem like a scene from a movie about the 18th Century. The horse looks beautiful in the neon lights of stores closed for the night. Its hooves strike sparks from the road.

Street-lights and the illuminated windows of closed stores sail past. The few pedestrians on the streets at this time of night stop to stare in surprise at the cart flying by.

(CONTINUED)

The cart runs red lights at every intersection, easily, since there are no cars around at all. At each tight turn around a corner, garbage flies off the top of the cart and scatters in spectacular trails across the streets.

Homeless people sheltering against walls sit up and look at the cart, smiling. One homeless guy hands a bottle of water to another, still staring at the cart.

A gang of burglars is robbing a home appliances store - they have formed a chain to pass the loot to their getaway car. The burglars pause in amazement to stare at the racing cart. Their chain breaks down: one burglar is so enthralled that he loses his grip on the DVD player being passed to him, and it smashes to pieces on the pavement. But none of the burglars notice this - they all keep watching the cart.

The cart is reflected in window glass as it passes a fashion boutique. There is a dummy in the window, wearing a knitted cap; the dummy's wide-open eyes make it seem to be surprised by events as well.

Jim is waking up: he opens his eyes, but sees only tree-tops and street-lights passing overhead in a beautiful, mysterious parade - with only the horse's hoof-beats breaking the silence. Jim doesn't understand what is going on or where he is. He loses consciousness again.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE THE HOSPITAL - EVENING

The cart rattles to a noisy halt in front of the hospital's brightly-lit main entrance. The garbage collector and Mark jump down and carefully lift Jim from the cart. Jim is in bad shape, but alive. Mark, supporting Jim, quickly pulls out a 500 pesos bill and offers it to the garbage collector. Mark is peering through the hospital's glass doors and jerking his head nervously at the guy on duty in there, who has noticed them and is already waving at someone further inside.

The garbage collector looks at the money and shakes his head in refusal. Mark stares at him in surprise and tries to force the bill into his hand.

MARK (SP.)

What's wrong with you? Take the money!

GARBAGE COLLECTOR

(Imitating Mark)

(ENG.) "Never give them money!"

(SP.) That's what you said.

(CONTINUED)

Chuckling, the garbage collector climbs back on his cart, but doesn't drive away. He stays, watching with concern. He clearly cares about what happens to Jim. Mark stares at him, baffled, still clutching the money in his outstretched hand.

Meanwhile, two ORDERLIES run over to them, wheeling a gurney, and a doctor follows (forty-ish, lean features, clean shaven). They all look at Jim, the garbage collector, and the money - which Mark hastily shoves back in his pocket when he notices them staring.

DOCTOR (SP.)
What happened to him?
(to the ORDERLIES)
Over here, bring it closer.

MARK (SP.)
Gunshot wound.

The doctor and the ORDERLIES lay Jim on the gurney.

DOCTOR (SP.)
Careful with his arm - there,
that's it. How long since it
happened?

INT. HOSPITAL - EVENING

Jim is wheeled through the hospital's glass doors and along the corridor. Mark walks beside the gurney. The garbage collector is seen driving off slowly, his eyes still following Jim.

MARK (SP.)
About half an hour, I think. Or
less.

DOCTOR (SP.)
Hmm, that's not good - looks like
some internal bleeding there, and
we don't know how much blood he's
lost. We need to operate, urgently.
You keep going - I'll just make a
quick call.

Mark and the ORDERLIES continue along the corridor. The doctor stops at the empty reception desk and phones somebody, all the while glancing at Mark. Mark walks beside the gurney, gazing at Jim with a concerned expression. Jim is unconscious and very pale.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE THE SPANISH SCHOOL - EVENING

Alvaro and Claudia stand by the wall near the doors of the school. Claudia is smoking, though she obviously isn't tasting the cigarette. She might not even be aware that she is holding a cigarette. She is drunk. Alvaro is not smoking.

ALVARO (SP.)

See, you're feeling better
already... so we'll have a smoke,
and then we'll go to my place...
And tomorrow, if we feel like it,
we'll be off to Spain, eh?

CLAUDIA (SP.)

Not going anywhere with you... I'm
going back upstairs. Something's
not right, I think - he can't have
taken off just like that... I think
he might still come to the party...

Claudia throws away her cigarette.

ALVARO (SP.)

What?! Who'll come? Who do you
mean? Are you still going on about
that old man of yours?! God, I
can't believe this...

CLAUDIA (SP.)

Hang on - oh, silly me! I can just
give him a call. First I thought he
flew away so I did not call, but
now I already do not know
anything...

Claudia takes out her cell-phone and fumbles around with it, trying to find Jim's number. Alvaro suddenly realizes that Jim's phone is in his pocket - so Claudia will hear it ringing and recognize it. He clutches at the phone through the fabric of his clothes. Alvaro looks scared.

ALVARO (SP.)

Hey, wait - stop, what are you
doing that for? Come on, the guy's
gone. You don't need him.

He reaches out and tries to take the phone from Claudia.

CLAUDIA (SP.)

Ah, here's his number now.

She pushes the dial button and brings the phone to her ear.

(CONTINUED)

ALVARO (SP.)
Right, that's enough.

He grabs Claudia by the hand that's holding the phone and starts dragging her toward his car. Claudia's phone falls to the pavement and breaks, but its screen is still lit up.

CLAUDIA (SP.)
Hey, what are you doing?!

ALVARO (SP.)
Shut up, if you know what's good for you.

Just then, Jim's phone starts ringing in Alvaro's pocket.

CLAUDIA (SP.)
Are you crazy?! Don't touch me!
What's that? Hey, that's Jim's ring tone! You've got his phone?! You stole his phone?! What's with you today???

Alvaro no longer bothers to explain anything. He opens a back door of his car and shoves Claudia inside. She is struggling and kicking; she seems to have sobered up fast. Alvaro slams the door, straightens up, and takes a quick deep breath, exhaling loudly, leaning back against the car door. Realizing that Jim's phone is still ringing, he takes it out of his pocket, switches it off and puts it back. He watches the light go out on Claudia's broken phone.

Alvaro then moves quickly around the car and gets into the driver's seat, slamming the door behind him. Claudia is in the back seat, on the opposite side of the car, watching him fearfully.

INT. HOSPITAL OPERATING ROOM - EVENING

Jim's gurney is wheeled into the operating room, stopping next to the operating table. The two ORDERLIES quickly transfer Jim to the table. Mark walks up to the head of the table and sees that Jim has regained consciousness while being moved. Jim has difficulty recognizing Mark, but finally manages to give him a small smile.

JIM
Mark... You're here... Get over to the Spanish school... Claudia... she might be in trouble... Alvaro's dangerous... He's a criminal...

(CONTINUED)

The doctor enters the operating room and starts prepping for the operation.

DOCTOR (SP.)
Get the anesthetic ready.

MARK
Alvaro who? What are you talking about, Jim? I'm staying here, to see you'll be all right.

JIM
No... Please, please go...

DOCTOR (SP.)
You aren't allowed to be here.
Please wait in the corridor.

Mark turns to the doctor, nods, and looks back at Jim.

MARK
Okay, okay, I'll go. You hang in there, Jim. Back soon!

Mark gives Jim's hand a squeeze and sees that it falls to hang limp. Jim is smiling at him only with his eyes. Mark can barely restrain his tears. He nods at the doctor and walks quickly to the operating room door. The doctor gives him an odd look and walks over to Jim. A breathing mask is placed over Jim's face, and he goes under.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - EVENING

Mark runs down the long hospital corridor toward the exit. Just before he reaches the doors, two policemen enter - one from either side - and spread out their arms to block his way. The older policeman starts talking to Mark.

SENIOR POLICEMAN (SP.)
Wait, wait, Senor. Your papers, please.

Annoyed, Mark reaches into a pocket for his wallet, takes out his ID, and hands it over.

SENIOR POLICEMAN (SP.) (CONT'D)
So it was you who brought in an injured man just now?

He returns the ID to Mark.

(CONTINUED)

MARK (SP.)

Yes, but I'm in a real hurry - can I go now?

Mark puts his wallet back in his pocket.

SENIOR POLICEMAN (SP.)

I'm sorry, but we'll have to detain you until the circumstances are clarified.

MARK (SP.)

What do you mean... detain me? I've got to go now - but I'll be back in an hour, you can detain me then. Besides, I'm an American citizen.

The junior policeman chuckles. Further down the corridor, the doctor peers out of the open door of the operating room, then goes back inside, shutting the door behind him so he won't hear any more of this conversation. Mark gazes around in confusion at the doctor and the policemen. Then he suddenly realizes something, and looks scared.

MARK (SP.) (CONT'D)

Oh yeah, I get it - are you kidding? I'm his friend - it wasn't me who shot him!

SENIOR POLICEMAN (SP.)

It's a gunshot wound, Senor. A serious matter. Come along, please.

The senior policeman points at a door near the reception desk. Mark looks at the door, sizing things up, then looks back at the policemen. His expression turns resolute.

MARK (SP.)

Get lost.

He suddenly starts walking quickly toward the front doors, pushing aside the senior policeman - who trips and hits his face on a corner of the glass door. He clutches at his nose, which has started bleeding.

SENIOR POLICEMAN (SP.)

Stop him!

The junior policeman jumps Mark from behind, twists his arms roughly behind his back, and shoves him up against the wall by the doors.

(CONTINUED)

JUNIOR POLICEMAN (SP.)
Freeze! Hands on the wall, legs
apart!

Mark complies, standing still. The junior policeman frisks him - immediately finding Carlos's gun in his pocket. Grinning, he shows the gun to the senior policeman, who is tilting his head up and trying to stop the nosebleed. He keeps touching his nose and checking the blood on his fingers. The senior policeman calmly looks at the gun and takes hold of it with two fingers of his free hand, not looking at it very closely.

SENIOR POLICEMAN (SP.)
A friend, you say? Right, get him
in the car.

The junior policeman handcuffs Mark, who remains grimly silent, and leads him out the door into the street. The senior policeman calmly follows, busy with his nose, still carrying Carlos's gun. Mark walks on, grimly staring straight ahead. He is pushed inside the police car.

The policemen stay outside the car. The junior policeman lights a cigarette and hands it to his partner, lighting another for himself.

JUNIOR POLICEMAN (SP.)
Nose hurt much? Strong bastard,
that one.

SENIOR POLICEMAN (SP.)
Ah, it'll be all right. Let's wait
here a while before we head back.
Might find out right away if we're
charging him with assault or
murder.

They stand there, leaning on the car, smoking calmly. It's a lovely peaceful summer night.

INT. HALL AT SPANISH SCHOOL - EVENING

The band is playing a cheerful, upbeat song. Two German women, BOZHENA and JOSH are dancing energetically and happily.

EXT. ALVARO'S CAR - EVENING

Lights shine from the Spanish school's open windows, and the band's music can be heard in the street. Alvaro's car is parked close by the school. From the outside, there is no sign of anything unusual happening inside the car.

INT. ALVARO'S CAR - EVENING

Alvaro sits behind the wheel in silence, staring straight ahead, not starting the car. Claudia is on the opposite side of the car, in the back seat. Her nervous breaths are clearly audible. The windows of the car are completely closed so almost no sound of the music enters the car.

CLAUDIA (SP.)

Listen - let me out. Open the door.
Or I'll scream!

ALVARO (SP.)

What's the use of screaming? You can hear how loud the music is. They're celebrating in there. Celebrating what? They don't even know.

Alvaro is in a melancholy, reflective mood - he's even turning poetic. Claudia looks around, pushing at the locked door.

CLAUDIA (SP.)

I've got to go! Let me out!

ALVARO (SP.)

And I was thinking we might have a relationship. We understood each other so well, we talked so much. For nearly a year. What happened to all that?

CLAUDIA (SP.)

We talked. And now I'm leaving. Open the door!

ALVARO (SP.)

That old man, he hooked you with his presents, his money.

Claudia twitches, and glares at Alvaro in outrage.

(CONTINUED)

CLAUDIA (SP.)

He did not! But if you really want to know, he's a thousand times more sensitive and interesting than you!

ALVARO (SP.)

(Calmly and thoughtfully)

Oh, really... And I thought you were interested in me...

(He thinks about something for some time)

So you want to go?

CLAUDIA (SP.)

Yes! Enough of the drama for today. Open the door!

ALVARO (SP.)

All right. Whatever you say.

Alvaro gets out, shuts the driver's door behind him, and goes to the back door. He unlocks it with a key, but instead of letting Claudia get out, he suddenly pushes her deeper into the car and climbs on top of her, ripping at her clothes. Claudia fights back hard and fiercely.

CLAUDIA (SP.)

You... What are you doing? You're crazy!

ALVARO (SP.)

Shh, shh... All right, so you don't want to go to Spain... Well, I'm going anyway. So how about I give you something to remember me by? That's okay, right? Shh, shh...

INT. HOSPITAL OPERATING ROOM - NIGHT

The doctor is operating. With a concerned look in his eyes, he glances at the cardiograph. Jim's heart is beating, but very weakly.

DOCTOR (SP.)

Get some adrenalin ready.

Beneath the mask, Jim's face is absolutely white.

INT. ALVARO'S CAR - NIGHT

Alvaro has torn off Claudia's jacket and is pulling off her fancy blouse. Sound of ripping cloth. Claudia is left in her skirt and bra, but continues fighting him off with all her strength. Alvaro starts unbuckling his belt.

All of a sudden, the car's windows are lit up by the headlights of two cars arriving nearby. Police sirens are heard, switching off when the cars stop. Alvaro raises his head fearfully to peer out of the window, still holding on to Claudia.

EXT. ALVARO'S CAR - NIGHT

Complete silence. Two police cars have just pulled up: one to the side of Alvaro's car, the other in front of it. Two policemen get out of the car to the side and take up combat ready positions behind their car, guns drawn. Two more policemen and Ana get out of the car in front. These policemen also get into position, gesturing at Ana to move to a safe distance. Ana walks a little way toward the doors of the school and stops there, staring at Alvaro's car.

I/E. HALL AT SPANISH SCHOOL - NIGHT

The musicians are no longer at their microphones. Complete silence. Empty tables. Everyone is crowding around the windows, peering out with concerned expressions at what is happening below. The police sirens outside grabbed the attention of everyone at the school party.

EXT. ALVARO'S CAR - NIGHT

POLICEMAN FROM THE FRONT CAR (SP.)
 Andres Santiago! Out of the car,
 hands on your head!

No response. Silence in the car. The policemen trade glances.

POLICEMAN FROM THE FRONT CAR (SP.)
 (CONT'D)
 Out of the car, hands on your head!

A few moments later, the back door of the car opens slowly - but it isn't Alvaro who gets out first. It's Claudia, in her skirt and bra. Behind her, holding a gun to her temple, is Alvaro. They stand by the car, facing away from it.

(CONTINUED)

ALVARO (SP.)
Everybody move back!

The policemen move back a half-step.

ALVARO (SP.) (CONT'D)
Don't come any closer - or she
dies! And now I'll get behind the
wheel, slowly, and drive off with
her, and nobody gets in my way! You
hear me?

Alvaro prepares to walk around his car slowly, but then
hears footsteps to his left and turns in that direction. Ana
is approaching him.

POLICEMEN (SP.)
(In loud whispers)
Get back! Get back! Where are you
going?

Ana doesn't listen to them. She halts just a couple of steps
away from Alvaro and Claudia.

ANA (SP.)
Hi, Andres! You look tired.

ANDRES (ALVARO)(SP.)
What are you doing here? Get back!

ANA (SP.)
You look pathetic, even... I should
have forgotten you, back then, when
you dumped me. But I couldn't.
Tried, but - no luck! All that
pain, over this loser - ha-ha.

ANDRES (SP.)
Get back, Ana.

ANA (SP.)
Back where? I'm the one who brought
the cops here, Andres! And they
know everything. You hear me? They
know EVERYTHING.

Andres twitches and stares at Ana, wide-eyed.

ANDRES (SP.)
You... No!!! It can't be true...

Worked up, breathing hard, Andres now aims the gun at Ana.
The barrel shakes, distinctly, as his hand trembles.

(CONTINUED)

ANA (SP.)

That's right. Me! I just got sick of fighting myself - loving my best friend and being jealous of her too, all over such a worm of a guy. And it's just plain dangerous for Claudia to have anything to do with a guy like you. She's not the type. And now you've decided to go off to Spain. With Claudia. I managed to find it out, your friends already do not have any reasons to keep your secrets. What would happen to her there, with you in charge? I kind of thought you'd be of more use to the cops. Because if you rot in jail, everyone's better off. So I'm going now - the cops can have you. But I think you really should give up. And, Claudia? Don't be scared of him. He can't do anything.

Ana turns and starts walking away - then comes back, right up close to Andres.

ANA (SP.) (CONT'D)

Oh yeah, I forgot. I still owe you something.

Ana slaps Andres's face, hard. Shaking with anger, Andres shoves the gun up against Ana's forehead. Ana glances up at his hand, then calmly pulls the gun away from her face, like an annoying mosquito.

ANA (SP.) (CONT'D)

What's the point of this circus, Andres? I know you always carry an unloaded gun, ever since that time with the bank security guard. No bullets, ever. Just in case. You play it safe now! But that won't bring back little Cecilia's dad, will it? Oh, and sorry about ruining your trip to Spain.

Ana slowly walks away.

Andres stares after her, stunned - then glances at the policemen, slowly lowers the hand holding the gun, and releases Claudia. The gun falls to the asphalt. Claudia runs over to the policemen, who support her and quickly throw a police jacket over her shoulders. Andres covers his face with his hands and hunches over, in tears.

(CONTINUED)

ANDRES (SP.)

God knows, I didn't want... It just happened... I never robbed a bank before that time... I didn't think anyone would be there, that late at night...

The policemen jump Andres and push him up against the car to search him. Andres continues crying. One policeman picks up the gun and checks to see that it really isn't loaded. Another policeman looks inside the car and hands Claudia the rest of her clothes. She gets dressed.

POLICEMAN (SP.)

What about the four robberies before that? Lucky you didn't kill anyone in those. So, how was it, working as a teacher? Working right under our noses - right next to our station. Nice going. Though you were braver in the surveillance camera photo, with the beard. And now you're crying, going soft... What's happened to you?

The policeman empties Andres's pockets, taking out a wallet, Andres's phone, and then Jim's phone. Claudia, putting her jacket on, notices the phone.

CLAUDIA (SP.)

Hey, that really is Jim's phone! Not just the same kind of ring tone. What's happened to Jim?! Where is he?!

ANDRES (SP.)

Who? Oh yeah... He's okay. He's at my old house in Cerro. Just dropped in for a visit.

POLICEMAN SEARCHING THE CAR (SP.)

No, he's not okay. He's got a serious gunshot wound - he's in intensive care.

Andres stares in shock at the policeman.

ANDRES (SP.)

He got shot? How? Hey, I had nothing to do with it!

(CONTINUED)

CLAUDIA (SP.)
You really are a bastard!
(To the policeman)
Is he on Avenida Italia?

POLICEMAN (SP.)
Yes - second ward.

With a glance of contempt at Andres, Claudia walks away. Andres calls out after her.

ANDRES (SP.)
But, Claudia! I really didn't do
anything to him!

POLICEMAN (SP.)
Come on, move it - we'll sort that
out along with everything else.

The policemen lead Andres off to the front police car.

All this time, Ana has been waiting and watching near the school door. The door opens and Mauricio comes out, looking scared. He walks up to Ana, who stands by the wall looking tired but at peace emotionally. Mauricio is rather uncomfortable talking to her.

MAURICIO
Are you all right, Ana? I saw it
all from the window.

ANA
Yeah, everything's great.

She stares into space, thinking about something. Then she seems to wake up: looks at Mauricio and smiles.

ANA (CONT'D)
Yeah, and I'll be there at
tomorrow's rehearsal, for sure!

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Mark sits on a bench in a cell, resting his forehead on his hands. Hearing the creak of a key in the lock, he raises his head. The junior policeman opens the door.

JUNIOR POLICEMAN (SP.)
Come with me, please.

Mark looks at him for a few seconds, then gets up and walks out of the cell. The junior policeman points at the door of another room and steps aside to let him pass. Mark walks into that room.

INT. POLICE STATION ROOM - NIGHT

As Mark walks in, the senior policeman gets up from behind a desk to greet him. His injured nose is only slightly red now. The junior policeman stays back by the door.

SENIOR POLICEMAN (SP.)

Senor Mark, please accept our apologies for this unfortunate misunderstanding. We have fully reconstructed the picture of this night's events, and you are indeed entirely innocent. You're free to go.

MARK (SP.)

Oh, really? So I didn't shoot my friend after all? Ha. Well, better late than never. And you needn't apologize - we're even.

Mark taps his own nose and raises his eyebrows - a hint at how he got his own back by hurting the senior policeman's nose. The senior policeman chuckles politely.

At the sound of footsteps in the corridor, the senior policeman peers out the open door.

SENIOR POLICEMAN (SP.)

Oh, and here they are now - tonight's real culprits. One of them you already know.

The view through the doorway, moving from left to right: policemen escorting the arrested Andres, followed by Carlos with his beaten-up face. Turning his head, Carlos notices Mark - and his face twists in hatred. But the pair are already being led into the same cell that Mark had occupied. They are locked inside.

MARK (SP.)

Yeah, got acquainted with the second guy up close and personal. But I don't know the first guy - hey, he wouldn't happen to be the Alvaro Jim was talking about, would he?

(CONTINUED)

SENIOR POLICEMAN (SP.)

Yes - Alvaro on his current ID, alias Andres. Wanted for armed robbery and murder. We've been searching for him for the past year, and now we've caught two of them at once! They're in the same gang.

MARK (SP.)

Congratulations. Don't suppose you know how Jim is, do you? The operation should be over by now.

SENIOR POLICEMAN (SP.)

Yes, I called the hospital just now. He's alive - the operation is done - but his condition is very serious. There was a lot of internal bleeding. It's just a matter of waiting now. But you should be ready for anything.

MARK (SP.)

Oh God... Right, I'm out of here!

Mark heads for the door.

SENIOR POLICEMAN (SP.)

All the best, and once again - our apologies.

The junior policeman by the door nods at Mark as he passes. Mark leaves. The junior policeman looks at the senior policeman, who looks back at him. The senior policeman throws up his hands, not speaking.

INT. JIM'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

After the operation, Jim lies on a hospital bed with IV drips and an oxygen mask. He is breathing, and appears to be asleep. The lights in the room are dimmed.

The door opens slightly, and Claudia cautiously enters the room. Her jacket and blouse are ripped in places. She is rubbing her hands together. Claudia approaches the bed and gazes at Jim, fearfully and compassionately. Sensing her presence, Jim regains consciousness and looks at her. She manages to smile at him, though it costs her some effort to do so. Hesitating at first, uncertainly, she takes his right hand in both of hers.

(CONTINUED)

CLAUDIA

Everything's all right, Jim.
Everything's fine. I knew you
hadn't really left - I could feel
it.

Jim looks at her, but he can't talk, because of the mask. He makes a writing gesture. Claudia understands what he means, and starts searching her pockets for a pen and paper - with an embarrassed giggle at Jim when she notices how torn up her clothes are. Not finding anything, she looks around the room and sees a pad of post-it notes on the doctor's table. She gets up and walks over to the table, finds a pencil there as well, and brings all this back to Jim's bed. She helps his fingers grasp the pencil and holds the pad so he can write on it. Jim writes something. When he's done, he lays the pencil down on the sheets. Claudia picks up the post-it and reads.

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)

"Your lessons have taught me a
great deal, and Spanish is now my
favorite language - because you
speak it."

Claudia no longer has the strength to hold back her tears. She starts crying, but tries to cover it up by laughing as she looks at Jim. The result is strange hysterical laughter, while tears pour down her face. She takes his hand again. Jim looks at her and smiles.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE AIRPORT - DAY

A sunny summer's day. We see a pair of legs, in jeans and shoes, walking along asphalt toward the airport. We see a right arm in a linen shirt-sleeve, hand holding a familiar briefcase. Finally, we see that this is Jim, walking toward the airport with a sprightly step. He looks at the direction signs near the airport and follows the "Departures" arrow. He approaches the doors and enters the airport.

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

Jim looks around for something, finally finding what he's after: the check-in counter. He walks over and joins the queue. He stands there in the queue for a while, then looks at his watch and looks around. More people get in line behind him. A while later, Jim looks around again, notices someone, and waves madly. Mark, with a suitcase, runs up and inserts himself in the queue.

(CONTINUED)

MARK

Nearly didn't make it - sorry, Jim.
Got all the papers?

Mark nods at Jim's briefcase.

JIM

Yes - here, take them, briefcase
and all.

Jim hands the briefcase to Mark. They shuffle forward with the queue, glancing at each other.

MARK

You sure about this, old buddy?

JIM

Absolutely. And what about you -
are you sure? Five years is a long
time, after all. Might get used to
it.

MARK

Well, you know how it is... Pretty
sure! But if anything comes up, you
can expect a guest next summer! Ha
ha.

They reach the head of the queue. Mark hands over his passport and turns to Jim. Uncertainly, for some reason, he holds out his hand.

MARK (CONT'D)

Well... best of luck, Jim!

Jim takes his hand and shakes it.

JIM

Best of luck, Mark!

Mark passes through the barrier and walks on, away from Jim. Before moving out of sight entirely, he turns back to face Jim and stops. Then he raises a hand and waves. Jim waves back. Mark nods, turns, and disappears behind another barrier. Jim also turns around and moves away from the queue, disappearing into the airport crowds.

INT. RENOVATED HOUSE - DAY

The camera moves smoothly through the renovated house. There is new wallpaper in attractive pastel tones, parquetry and linoleum on the floors, and even some new furniture here and there. Complete silence in the house. Window views show green trees waving in the breeze outside, but we don't hear a sound. The windows are tightly closed. Strong sunlight pours through the glass. We see the old piano, still in the same place, closed and silent. A clock on the wall is ticking. The clear impression is that no one has lived in the house since the renovations.

But then the silence is suddenly broken. The door of a room opens, and Claudia comes out, with a handbag on her shoulder. She walks over to a wall-mirror and tidies her hair.

CLAUDIA (SP.)

Diego! I'll be back soon, son!

She goes to the front door and opens it; sounds from the street pour into the house.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Claudia steps outside. She takes a deep pleasurable breath of the warm summer air, and looks over the flowers along the path with proprietary care. She walks along the garden path to the gates leading into the street. Claudia walks through the gates and turns to close them behind her. Then she notices a smiling Jim a few steps away from her, to the right of the gates. His dog, Jefferson, is sitting next to him, on a leash. Jim is wearing a linen shirt and jeans. Claudia stops still in astonishment.

CLAUDIA

You?! What, you've been released already?! Why didn't you tell me?
Does your shoulder hurt?

JIM

Well, that's what I came over to tell you - I've been released. Just this morning. Or rather, I signed myself out. My Jefferson arrived, and I figured that a dog needs an owner who's up and about, not lying in bed, ha-ha. Jefferson, meet Claudia.

(CONTINUED)

CLAUDIA

So this is THE Jefferson! Hello boy
- I've heard so much about you!

Claudia walks over to Jim and crouches down to pet the dog.

JIM

So, have you settled in yet?

Jim nods in the direction of the house. Claudia straightens up.

CLAUDIA

You're kidding, right? There's so much space in there - it'll take us a couple of months to settle in.

JIM

Oh, come on - there isn't that much space - shouldn't take more than a month.

Jim adopts a playful tone. He raises a hand to touch Claudia's hair, moving closer to her. Then he looks over at the garden.

JIM (CONT'D)

By the way, you don't happen to need a regular gardener, do you? I was just passing by and thought to myself: such beautiful flowers really need looking after!

CLAUDIA

We-e-ell... If the gardener has a big dog, to help out with security... and if the gardener is a nice polite guy... then yeah, maybe!

By now, Jim and Claudia are in each other's arms.

JIM

Polite?! A gardener?! Well, that rules me out!

Jim makes as if to leave, moving away from Claudia slightly. But Claudia pulls him back toward herself, forcefully.

CLAUDIA

All right, all right! But then he's got to be fluent in at least one foreign language. So whenever he

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CLAUDIA (cont'd)
messes up, we just won't understand
what he's saying!

Jim and Claudia kiss, standing on the empty street in bright
sunshine, against a backdrop of flowers and green trees,
while Jefferson the dog sits beside them, wagging his tail.

CUT TO: BLACK

THE END