

MIJO, MADRE

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C H A R A C T E R S

SON

Cuban American, Early 30s.

MOTHER

Cuban American, Mid 60s. A Bull of a woman with great but confused vitality, sourced only from the promise of her only son.

P L A C E

A one-bedroom apartment in Hialeah, Florida, with an enclosed balcony.

A front door, a kitchen, a dining area with a door leading to a bedroom and another door leading to a bathroom. A living area that leads to the sliding glass doors that lead to the enclosed balcony overlooking the city of Hialeah, Miami, Florida.

T I M E

The play begins at Sunset and ends at dark.

N O T E S

There is no intermission. Together, the two of these people are supercharged. All emotion. They should exhaust themselves on top of each other like an avalanche that tempers its speed only sometimes when absolutely necessary.

AT RISE:

MOTHER and SON are eating at the dining table.

MOTHER

MMMMMMMMMMMM!!! *Mijo*, if I can tell you one thing you've done right in this life I've given you, it's been being able to make a mean, MEAN pot of *lentejas*! My God, even my Emeterio would have been jealous with how much I love *your lentejas*, I am telling you, I could eat plates after *pots* of your cooking, hand to God, ...Pass me the salt for a second, it needs a little *tiki-tiki*.

SON

From God's ears to your lips.

He hands Her the salt as if it were a knee-jerk reaction and keeps eating.

MOTHER

ÑOOOO! *AJORA SI!* *Mijo*, did you know, that this is the first meal we've had together in years? The first meal in years you have cooked for me! *Por favor, calmate un poquito*, you're eating as though Batista's fleeing *La Habana*, *mira* – will you look at your mother? *Chico*, *por favor*, you are ruining this meal, guzzling without tasting or chewing the very first meal we've shared since you left for California, like an animal, *mijo* – what's the hurry -!?

SON

I'm going to kill myself tonight, *mami*.

MOTHER

...*Bueno*, then eat slower! What's the rush if you're not even planning to digest!?

SON

Besides that, added salt's horrible for your blood pressure, and your incessant rambling and criticizing the way I eat's making me wish I were already dying of famine in Yemen.

He pushes his chair against the table and takes his bowl to the kitchen.

MOTHER

There's nothing *wrong* with my blood pressure!

SON

Yeah, all your life, just calm, cool, collected and totally misunderstood.

MOTHER

Aye(!), are you getting yourself more or us to eat? A leisurely bowl with your one and only mother?

SON

I'm done with my meal, *mami*, and I've already put the rest of the *lentejas* into gladware. I want everything in place before dad arrives.

MOTHER

Well, who says I won't want a second bowl for *myself*?

He shows Her the gladware containers filled with lentils, placing them into the fridge.

SON

You add salt to them and your pressure's gonna keep going up; there's already enough sodium in there to give it flavor.

MOTHER

Y por qué tú haces las lentejas así, ah?

SON

They're the same as always, Ma –

MOTHER

Tiene que ver con tus medicinas? –

SON

They're only *lentejas*, bro, come on –

MOTHER

O como afecta tu sangre? –

SON

The lack of added salt's got nothing to do with either my blood or the pills I pop, *Mami*, alright, the blended spices in there are perfectly blended enough, so perfectly blended that for once in your mothering life you can brag to Emeterio about your *other* son! –

MOTHER

You know I cannot brag to Emeterio about *anything*! He was a victim of the War!

SON

Later on, after I go, if you ever decide you want to taste missing me, take one and place it in the fridge in the morning. By nighttime, it'll be good enough to reheat over the stove.

MOTHER

'After you go,' what do you mean (?), where are you going to go?!

SON

I told you, *mami*. Once he is here and everything is set, I am going to execute myself.

Beat.

MOTHER

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Been there, done that. How are you planning on trying it this time, *chico*, ah? Destroy your only mother's lonely heart with your bare hands?

SON

No. I'm going to be shoot myself in the head.

He heads to the balcony.

MOTHER

Gran Power de Dios, you cannot be that sick of me already, *chico*, come on!

From under the balcony bed, He reveals a giant blue tarp. He unfolds and blankets it onto the ground.

SON

It has nothing to do with you, ma. If it was, I wouldn't have made you your *lentejas*.

MOTHER

Well, it must have *something* to do with me, *mi vida*. Tell me what is going on, every time my Emeterio thought about killing himself, he'd do himself a favor and talk it over with his only living mother. *Yo solo no quiero que pase lo que le pasó a –*

SON

Enough, *Mami*.

He returns with an OLD REVOLVER in a HOLSTER.

MOTHER

Oye, pero que es eso!?

SON

It's the gun I'm using to blow my brains out tonight, *mami*, I wanted to show it to you –

MOTHER

Y PORQUE!? Put that down before you shoot your mother (!), when did you get a gun?!

SON

When I went out shopping for dinner but before I bought the tarp to pool my brain blood. I had Alex fix it for me, gave me bullets, too.

MOTHER

'Alex,' *tu primo*, Cousin Alex(?!) –

SON

That's right, Cousin Alex, the one and only remaining alcoholic of the family.

MOTHER

One of two still living as long as you remain alive under this roof!

SON

One of two depending what you decide to take on after I go. I've seen your liquor cart; I know you match supply to the demand.

MOTHER

I stocked up knowing you were coming home.

SON

My favorite enabler.

MOTHER

I'll always provide whatever it is that allows you to embrace all the love always being hurled at you!

SON

And nothing to drink for all the love I've been denied?

MOTHER

What love could ever be greater desired than the love of one's mother? –

SON

An ounce of love from the universe would do.

MOTHER

You mean God's love.

SON

Oh, Jesus.

MOTHER

His too! Why on Earth did Alex ever give you a gun?

SON

Porque I told him I wanted to get you a special gift after being away for so long –

MOTHER

There is nothing special or *gift-y* about a gun!

SON

Well, if you just take a look at it –

MOTHER

To even *think* that giving a gun to a destitute Cuban woman who's left with *you* as her only son would be a good idea –!

SON

Bueno, it's more about who the gun used to belong to, *mami*, *pero* thanks for that.

He takes the old pistol out of the old holster.

I want you to guess who it belonged to –

MOTHER

DON'T POINT THAT THING AT YOUR MOTHER! –

SON

I'm not pointing it at you, *Mami*, *por favor*, just – look at it, see if you remember.

MOTHER

Why would I remember a gun –?

SON

Porque it ran in the family, I swear to you *mami*, look!

MOTHER

...It can't be.

SON

Abuelo's revolver. I had it fixed. *Bueno*, Alex did. Initially, he had the idea of cleaning it up once he thought the socialists were coming after democracy, but only got to repairing it after his dealer friend Manny got sent out to Alligator Alcatraz for grand larceny.

MOTHER

What'd they say he was stealing, exactly (?), people's jobs?

SON

That and carburetors. What do you think? Shiny. Heavy. Doesn't it look good?

MOTHER

It's a gun, *chico*, not a lechon.

She strokes the old pistol with her fingers.

I remember when he got this. He used to push money through this car wash he inherited way back in the day, *yo recuerdo*, ...had me doing all the counting, said doing so would teach me math quicker than any *gringo*. For an extra ten bucks at his wash, he would get you one of the Cuban hookers he was fucking to wash your car - naked. It upset a lot of people. And so, he used *this* for protection. Thankfully, it doesn't work. ...This gun? *No dispara*. It doesn't shoot.

SON

What are you talking about, of course, it shoots.

MOTHER

Shoots blanks mostly, much like all the remaining men of the family.

SON

Alex said it shoots just fine. He said he tested it last night – he knows his guns –

MOTHER

And he knows his rum, *tambien*, enough to stupidly give his dramatic cousin a revolver -!

SON

He served in the Army -!

MOTHER

Porque that was the only thing he was ever good for! There's a reason this gun was abandoned, *mijo*. It only fired once, a *misfire* because of a rusted bore! Since your *abuelo* never knew how to clean a gun (and his liquor always kept him stupid), he made *mi mama* clean it for him. *Bueno*, first chance she had, she hid that thing as best she could, never touching it, hoping it would deteriorate as much as it would be forgotten. And it was.

MOTHER (Cont'd)

Until finally the day came, your abuelo found it drunkenly flipping the house upside down. He put the barrel in his mouth and finally BOOM! Pulled the trigger, KABOOM. How's that gun feel to you now, *chico*, ah? Heavy with the burden of abandonment?

SON

...You always told me *abuelo* OD'd.

MOTHER

As you got older, and you... became *you*, there were some things I didn't want you to know ran in the family.

SON

So, it *didn't* work, and *that's* when he OD'd(?), later on?

MOTHER

That man tried as hard as he could to be an American and yet...

SON

It still worked, didn't it?

MOTHER

Que carajo, you taking notes(?) of course, it worked! He just had to pull the trigger another five times for it to finally blast his brains out, his 'brain blood!' All those years ago. *Pero*, by now (?), between the rusted bore, rusted insides, rusted springs?

SON

The 'bore?' –

MOTHER

Ay, chico, 'he gets a gun and doesn't know its parts,' *Dios mio* –!

SON

It'll work. I promise you; it has to –

MOTHER

Why must you promise me that?

SON

Because apparently I've never lived up to any other promise I've made to you being born into this world.

MOTHER

So dramatic! Test it, then, be my guest!

SON

Got target in mind?

MOTHER

Surely my heart will do!

SON

Now who's being dramatic -

MOTHER

Ay please, black calling the kettle 'pot!' Shoot it out the window, It's Hialeah! Every other car out here's a 2005 Hyundai with a popping muffler, no one could ever tell the difference, if you're so willing and ready to throw it all in!

SON

Any other neighborhood, the Anglos would be calling *La Migra*.

MOTHER

As if anyone would ever call ICE on the Cubans already living in Miami.

SON

Not yet at least.

MOTHER

Not yet and not ever; we fled as refugees into this country, per their invitation, and have adhered to this nation's every demand; speak English, pretend to remember to pay your taxes, provide enough low-income jobs for even lower income-based Latinos.

SON

Don't expect any gratitude from anybody any time soon!

MOTHER

Who has time to care about gratitude when it is survival, commitment to being here, that is all that matters? I don't understand it, *chico*. Tenacity is built into you, *mijo*, it's a part of your blood, it *is* your blood! You cannot allow what the world has decided you are, cast you away as being, deter you from your placement, your right to exist in this world!

SON

Even when my blood is diseased.

MOTHER

Aye. Is that what this is about? Your illness you refuse to call by name?

SON

Everything's always about plenty, and I think it's one of the reasons he's probably running late.

MOTHER

Well, that's a stupid thing to say. If everything's always about plenty; *bueno*, then that means the little things *are* everything, too. Your little pills, for example -

SON

Swallowed, ingested, every morning ahead of knowing it'll be another day in a land where some other white lady's gonna impose upon the world that her gluten intake ought to be treated as some demographical tragedy.

MOTHER

...You're a homosexual, *mijo*, I don't know how'd you ever spend your time thinking about whatever it is a woman has to say.

SON

Wanna see what happens if I disregard you?

MOTHER

Try it, motherfucker. Just try it. You - you pop that gun - you test it and you'll see - you'll see how nobody, no one, aside from your poor, destitute mother -

SON

And mostly absent father -

MOTHER

Would then rather wish they were dead. Want to see me dead? DO IT! Go on! Try me! -

SON

No. I... I'm not testing it, *Mami*, I said what I said.

MOTHER

A mother always knows when her son is full of shit -!

SON

And you're just 100% certain of everything, aren't you?

MOTHER

To doubt a mother's wisdom -

SON

Aren't you? That it won't do its job? That I won't do mine?

MOTHER

En serio? ...You finally got yourself a job? -

SON

Mami -

MOTHER

I mean a real job, not one where you're hustling with your shortcomings and terminal illness to get older rich men to pity and protect you? -

SON

You think that's how I got by out there? -

MOTHER

Or has that well finally dried and you've come down here to see if your only mother knows anybody that works at Publix?

SON

There are no more wells.

MOTHER

...Well, that sounds stupid if you pull it out of context with all that seriousness –

SON

I'm serious –

MOTHER

'There are no more wells,' – I think you're bluffing! –

SON

I'm not.

MOTHER

You don't have the guts.

SON

Technically, I've still got all my guts intact.

MOTHER

I don't believe *you* – or any of this *mierda*! Test it!

SON

Mami, if this gun's got only one last blast in it, then my skull is going to be the target catching its bullet. It's the way I envisioned it, and it's the way I'm gonna go –

MOTHER

And with all the things you've made me just envision, I hope it's a success!

He returns the old pistol into the old holster and straps it to his belt.

SON

And there we have it.

MOTHER

My ass, there's nothing to 'have,' – remember when you told me as a child that one time that one day you'd be taking me to the Oscar awards by the time you were twenty-eight? What happened, ah? Another failed attempt at making us proud! –

SON

Mami –

MOTHER

All those failed years doing Jenny Craig and for what? Nothing! If Emeterio was around we would've been to the Latin-*Equis* Grammys by now, three times over!

SON

A war hero and a *Bolerista*, was he?

MOTHER

His promise was amazing! – Meanwhile, *yours!* With you, always, always something new. Always, something lived, done wrong. What now!? What else could you possibly want from me when you already have... robbed, surrendered - ! Everything that I gave you. Everything that you are and that's inside you.

SON

It's not your fault I am the way that I am. It's not your fault that I have it. I didn't catch it from you. Even if I caught it being the kind of man this house made me into.

MOTHER

But you are all of me.

SON

I never asked to be.

MOTHER

Such un-gratitude.

SON

It's 'in,' *Mami*, it's 'ingratitude' –

MOTHER

You'll fail the same way you've failed the both of us, *mijo*, all gusto and with none of the follow-through; pointing at the stars while you promise us the Moon! –

SON

Are you done with dinner? I wanna get this show on the road.

MOTHER

Well I would like a dessert; even if you don't want any, didn't make any – ! Why don't I whip us up some natillas?

SON

Mami, you know natillas gives me cramps, I'm lactose intolerant –

MOTHER

Another reason to go, is it? –

SON

Yeah, that's up there, real 'top of the list' shit –

MOTHER

Unlike you, I prefer enjoying every morsel of what has been given to me in my life by our Lord and Savior.

He goes into the bathroom.

SON

Jesus Christ -

MOTHER

That's *exactly* right! Where are you going now?!

SON

I'm getting sheets from the bathroom. I'm using them to make for an easier scene for you and dad.

MOTHER

So much time reading scenes, recreating scenes instead of blossoming into your own for your own self – creating little performances for us who love you to grovel over as though it's anything new!

SON

New for you, isn't it?

MOTHER

With you, not at all – in this life, these days, not at all (!), all these people, so sad and so selfish, so determined to copy and do something people have done time, time again!

SON

Nothing selfish in suicide –

MOTHER

At the very least, it's a little redundant, a little bit dramatic once you've considered that the people who've done it before you suddenly got loads of attention! –

SON

So, suddenly, wanting to kill yourself is only a thing you could have copied from another person? Give me some credit.

MOTHER

You sound just like your father, 'give you some credit,' as though it doesn't matter whether or not an idea is good, but instead that you merely *had* an idea!

He returns with folded sheets and leaves them on the balcony bed.

SON

For what it's worth, that's mostly why I invited him, my dad - so you wouldn't be alone in all this when it's finally time to clean up.

MOTHER

I haven't been alone a long time, *Mijo*. Between the memory of little Emeterio and your promise? Never alone, no. Empty, maybe.

SON

'Empty.'

MOTHER

From the very moment I popped you out of me; until I was refilled with the burden of parenthood and your razor teeth on my tit!

SON

Ever imagine how I would've turned out different if you didn't use formula on me?

MOTHER

You wouldn't be lactose intolerant, that's for damn sure. Perhaps you'd have wound up a doctor or plastic surgeon, something of use to your mother instead of, this – this, livelihood of recreation!

SON

Nothing being recreated, mami –

She takes the folded sheets from the bed and returns them to the bathroom.

MOTHER

Then there's no need for these extra sheets, if I've already made your bed for you, your precious bed, your childhood bed that smells the way it always used to smell when you were young, innocent; devoting yourself to me while you questioned your sexuality!

SON

Well, if that isn't a concerning statement.

SON goes to retrieve the sheets from the bathroom once again.

MOTHER

All your life you've done nothing but shown me stories, shared with me the movies and the books and the shows and the poems of how miserable everything is; the luxury of being able to tell others what shit smells like, as though one has the time and ability to sit and reflect on such things. You only think this kind of behavior is acceptable, worth, recreating for yourself because all of it, its origin, has only come from the very mouths of people you wish you were - !?

SON

Disease-free and without the parentification burden of existence?

MOTHER

Whatever the hell that means! Only the privileged can afford creative suicides, not to mention the time to get creative with their suicides!

He returns with the folded sheets and brings them back to the balcony.

SON

I dunno, *Mami*, maybe with the privilege or leisure some folks are able to see how other people would only want to off themselves.

MOTHER

Excuse me, *pero* those are the *good* sheets! What do you think you're doing with those?

SON

Exactly as I said.

Then returns to the dining area.

SON

Once dad arrives, I'm killing myself on that balcony that was once my childhood bedroom, I'm wrapping my head in those sheets so when my head explodes you won't see the mess; I'll lock the balcony door from the inside, so there'll be no suspicion from the cops once they show as to, like, *who* actually *shot* the body - It'll go over fine I think -

MOTHER

What (?) – *WHOSE* body - !?

SON

Your other son, *mami*, you still remember my name – ?

MOTHER

IT'S A STUPID USE FOR SHEETS.

SON

About as stupid as making them nice and hoping I'd stay. Now -

He heads for the fridge.

Would you like some *tres leches*?

MOTHER

You *did* make dessert for your one and only mother!?! –

SON

I'm suicidal, not selfish.

MOTHER

Hah! You're trying to distract me, tempt me with a good time - !

SON

It should be chilled enough by now; it *was* your favorite thing to sneak-eat when you were doing Jenny Craig.

MOTHER

I had the Grammys in mind, the Latin-*Equis* Grammys!

She pushes her chair in and storms for the balcony to retrieve the sheets.

SON

How big of a slice would you like?

He takes a tres leches cake from the fridge and takes it to the dining table, as She takes the sheets back into the bathroom.

MOTHER

Only as big of a slice as yours –

SON

All for you, *mami*, the *tres leches*, all of it is all for you - !

MOTHER

You're a selfish dreamer, *chico*, I just had these sheets ironed, and I ironed them myself! I'll hide them from you, and you'll never find them!

SON

How big of a piece would you like?

She returns back from the bathroom and goes looking for a photo album.

MOTHER

I don't know what stupid game you're trying to play with me, *mijo*, *pero*, I will not be having any of it any further! I have high blood pressure!

SON

What are you looking for?

MOTHER

Ah-ha!

She finds and retrieves a particular photo album from the bunch.

I'll bet all of this is you trying to guilt me into doing something I wouldn't normally want to do with you, *y entonces* I'm gonna guilt you right back, *mijo*, remember! Remember who you learned all of this from! It can be magic when used on others, *pero* using it on whatever family you have left (!?) – *es pecado*, ah(!?), SIN!

And drops it onto the dining room table with a THUD. She kicks out a chair for her and her Son.

SON

I ain't pulling any *brujo* bullshit with you, *mami* –

MOTHER

Siéntate –

SON

Like, you really think I'd go through all this trouble just to get back at you for some repressed, '*maricon* against his mama and the world' bullshit -!?

MOTHER

DIJE SIÉNTATE!

(beat)

He obliges, taking a seat next to his mother. She flashes a genuine happiness, jauntily holding her son's hand as she takes her seat.

MOTHER

You see? It's better when we're nice and listening to one another. If humoring a person is the only way you know how to love somebody else, you'll *still* make for a fine, dotting husband for Harry. Just the way I made for a wife to your cheating, *comemierda* father.

SON

It's 'doting,' *mami*, it isn't 'dotting.'

MOTHER

And the only Spanish words you know are the contractions.

SON

You mean 'conjunctions,' *mami* -?

MOTHER

I BEARED YOU, MOTHERFUCKER.

SON

You were going to show me something.

MOTHER

Aaah!

She flips through the pages of the photo album, each page engrained into her memory.

Yes – just a moment, *un momentito*, Emeterio would've never rushed me through our memories or our dinners, my War hero. Ah-ha. *Aqui, mira*. You see where we are?

SON

That's us at the Hialeah Race Track. You used to beg dad to take us once a month.

MOTHER

Ab-ha, your 'dad,' your 'father,' you *do* remember the things I've done for you.

SON

I remember plenty –

MOTHER

This photo was taken when they were parading the horses before one of the races, *tu requedas*, of course you do. You, me, and that *man* who once promised me to protect our family and my reputation -!

SON

'Point being' –

MOTHER

'Point being,' you rush the love that's handed to you, you'll never make Harry as happy as he's made us. 'Point being,' you see the way we're sitting?

SON

Yea?

MOTHER

Arms around the knees to your chin, looking up at the horses, like you were trying to give them names that weren't the names already given to them? Like an imaginative, sad, gay-little angel, storyteller. You see it?

SON

I still sit like an imaginative, ...sad -

MOTHER

'Gay-little angel,' *claro*, who doesn't write a single thing anymore for his one and only mother. *Mmm*, so now I suppose just, 'sad,' and 'gay.'

SON

There's no point in writing anything for anybody, anymore, *mami*.

MOTHER

Mocking
...'WOOOOOOOOooooooooo' -

SON

Real nice -

MOTHER

'Ooooh, my writing, oh my God, Ooooh, I invited all of the sadness, all of it, oooooh!' -

SON

I'll do it right now -

MOTHER

'Nooooooo, I'm waiting for my daddy... oooooh, daddy...!'

SON

I MEAN IT MA -

MOTHER

You try it, you ink and quilt bitch, you try it now before I've had my cake and before I've had the ample time I've desired to spend time with you, so Help me God, I'll ensure you were nothing more... Nothing More -

SON

Than what?

MOTHER

You have lists of things to do before you leave me once and for all, don't you?

SON

Anything can be expedited -

MOTHER

That's what the doctor said as he injected that epidural into my spine before the hours it took pushing your inflated head out of me -

SON

You said it was a C-Section –

MOTHER

The size of that skull and that ego I wish to God it were! If you're going to do this –

SON

Trust me, I am –

MOTHER

Shut up. If I'm going to play your game, you are going to play mine, do you understand?

SON

...What's the point of the fucking photo - ?

MOTHER

NICELY.

SON

Mami? Why are you sharing with me this photograph?

MOTHER

I went through this album yesterday when you told me you were flying home. I wanted to remind myself of my son and the promising young man he used to be, and when I saw *this*, I reminded myself of how temper-tantrum-y you can get from your depression, from your anger, *or* for no reason at all. I told myself, I said, that when my son arrived and threw another dramatic episode out of thin air, I would hold him the way I used to, and I would say, 'keep – keep coming up with names for the horses, *mijo*, it'll do you... *something!*' Or something. And then we could move on. Sometimes, I don't remember who I am without the memory of you.

SON

There is only one thing happening tonight, *mami*, and horses aren't a fucking part of it.

MOTHER

You have to know how exhausting this is.

SON

All my life I have - !

MOTHER

All your life you've known how exhausting this would be and yet you've not found any way to make this at all remotely enjoyable?

SON

... The Hell would you like, *Mami*, some Russian Roulette?

MOTHER

My Emeterio would have come up with something for us to do. Emeterio, that brave beautiful promise of a bundle, would have had more of a plan for his future - !

SON

Well, that is unfortunate for you, isn't it (?), that I am not your pride-and-joy-and-dead-successful son, now, isn't it?

MOTHER

You say it like some brotherly competition isn't a *healthy* thing –

SON

I'm going to have a smoke –

He heads for the balcony. She follows.

MOTHER

You cannot smoke in this house! Emeterio died a hero and brought valor to this family, what have you ever done, *dreamer*?

SON

I ran away from you until it was time to say good-bye, didn't I? '*Adios!*'

He takes a cigarette out from a pack of smokes.

MOTHER

Running from *me*, you say, you, a man of *your* actions?

SON

Actions of the past, *mami*, actions *you* supported because of how they benefited you.

MOTHER

Did something happen with that older gentleman Harry or that publicist again?

SON

It isn't limited to either of them, and the publicist's name is James, *mami*, you know that.

He opens one of the balcony windows, then checks his pockets for a lighter.

MOTHER

Que cosa mas grande, 'his name's James,' like you never reduced him to what he was! Like you haven't already fucked every Jimmy, Jordan, and Jahquavius known to the human Alphabet!

SON

'Jahquavius!?'

MOTHER

I know you say No to nobody.

SON

Yeah? What do you know? You work at a fucking laundromat.

MOTHER

And you don't work at all! It took me so long to realize all the times you said you were 'working,' all you were doing was looking at an empty screen and scratching your balls!

SON

Then it's a good thing you've been so supportive of Harry over James, isn't it; Harry's rich and lets me waste my life scratching my nuts, meanwhile all the funds he sends to me funnels straight on down to you. Don't fucking play me, I hustle for you.

MOTHER

And you better *keep* hustling - It's been about time you started giving back to me, and making choices, making sacrifices for me –

SON

There were never any sacrifices! I was held down by the weight of your guilt like some whore of a husband you could use, for 'all you had given me' demanded I surrender!

MOTHER

Surrender what(?), the chance to LOVE?! PFFT. You've never been faithful in your life!

SON

You always said it'd be impractical keeping a thing considering what I got –

MOTHER

Never about what you have, what is inside of you, rather how you have let it affect you, govern all of you! –

SON

Because it IS me, now, *mami*! And not in some, 'woo-woo' kind of way, like a Scarlet letter kind of thing, I mean in the sort of way, that's – gonna follow me forever; gonna have to keep track of – forever - !

MOTHER

What does that mean, the 'Woo-Woo?' –

SON

Especially in a day and age such as this one where suddenly everybody's realizing there ain't enough room for everybody on the planet to be a ballerina and so you're stuck working these chicken-shit gigs; hoping to get by with any flexibility you've got left in you in order to achieve this echo – of some dream – backed by some yesteryear governmental support that any day now's, gonna be – just gone.

MOTHER

Bueno, good thing you've got the older gentleman now who plays the role of your own father and has enough money to ensure that doesn't happen to you.

SON

What of the life I maybe wanted once upon a time?

MOTHER

The one you fucked up for yourself?

SON

Yeah, Ma, the one I fucked up for myself, the life I'd wanted with yea, legacy, and children with a man my own age.

MOTHER

Children aren't all they're marked up to be.

SON

Neither are parents. They lead enough by example; they can convince even their own children that nothing lasts.

MOTHER

Your disease will last. Why shouldn't love?

SON

Because neither of you knew how to hold onto it.

MOTHER

Good thing you grew into a man who'd live long enough to point out, outgrow that trait.

SON

Screw you.

He lights his cigarette.

MOTHER

Our love may not have lasted between one another but at least our love gave us you, our love, gave me YOU. What has it even done for you? What have you ever – been given, treating it with any ounce of respect? – You are not allowed to smoke inside this house!

SON

Abuela smoked inside this house, even on her deathbed, that 'death-recliner'!

MOTHER

She was dying on that thing, melting, fusing into it(!), she could do anything she wanted –

SON

Using *that* logic -

MOTHER

Don't test me motherfucker, that's what your father did, and now he's too fat to fuck.

He flicks his cigarette out the window.

SON

Fine then. If you won't have any cake, since I can't *smoke*, I'll store it in the freezer, so you'll have another thing to remember me by. Then I'm making myself a drink!

He takes the tres leches into the kitchen, then takes out a tray of ice, dropping them into a glass before pouring a strong pour of scotch – to the rim.

MOTHER

Mijo, please, I'm *sorry*, I am – I didn't mean to bring up *some* of the men in your life.

SON

You make it sound like I have a fucking menagerie of them.

MOTHER

You *do*... Or did. Why wouldn't you!? *Chico*, you're your father's son and you're also *my* son – so naturally – look at you! You're so handsome and you're charming and you're... *too* sensitive, and ...love being left alone?! Of *course*, I'd think you have a whole margarine of men – remember how many of them you've told me about?! For what it's worth - I don't even blame you, I mean, *chico*, look at you (!) - your father was *also* well-equipped!

SON

Jesus, ma –

MOTHER

Remember when you were a little boy and would show me the phenomenon of your erect penis *porque* you had thought you had so much pee to pee? *Mijo*, you might have been a child, *pero*, you can always tell, even at that age, who would grow up to have a dick and who would grow up to have a *club*!

SON

At this rate, I'm not even waiting on dad.

MOTHER

And I *want* you to be happy! With Harry *or* James (on the side). Granted, I'd prefer you stay with Harry because of the support he feeds you, and I know you hate that so much of it goes to keeping me and this house afloat, *pero* it is what people like us have to do; so, just have *another* affair! You were having an affair with Harry while you were still with James, *y*, *ahora*, you could return the favor and do things in the opposite direction! Just, keep it quiet, and you can have the best of both worlds, *tu sabes*(?), We can *both* be happy.

She sits at the table as her Son heads back into the bathroom.

Que haces?

SON

Fetching the sheets you hid, you miserable influence.

MOTHER

You'll never find them(!) I promise you!

He reemerges with the same stack of sheets and returns them to the balcony.

SON

Props to you, mami, The tub *was* as good a spot as any -

MOTHER

You would really make your poor mother take those sheets to the same, poor, miserable *lavandería* she works at and make her clean those perfectly clean sheets, covered in *sangre*!?

SON

Throw them out or let the cops deal with it.

He fetches a heavy backpack from the side of his childhood bed and drops it off at the dining room table, returning to the kitchen to get his drink.

MOTHER

You're vile in ways Emeterio never was!

SON

Not that he had much a chance for us to ever find out.

And returns to the table and sits with Her.

Now, I would've preferred doing this with dad also here, *pero* honestly -

He unzips his backpack.

It might be easier for the both of us If I bring you up to speed *como el* down-low -

MOTHER

No me digas nada, no, NO, I will not sit here any longer con *esta* – *FARSA!*

She gets up from the table, heading to the freezer for some tres leches.

SON

This isn't a *game*, ma – where are you going (?), this is important!

MOTHER

Es como si todo fuera importante, everything's important except your mother's feelings, and so I'm going to EAT them with your tres leches you *clearly* made out of a place of love!

She ravages through the tres leches, opting for an oversized spoon and begins swallowing more than she can chew –

SON

Leaving artifacts to remember me by *does* come from a place of love –!

He moves to Her, trying to pry the spoon away from her.

MOTHER

There's no such thing as artifacts you can eat, only ones you can keep, I'll eat every BITE of every artifact until you'll have to take me to the hospital, yes, I'll die before you do and I'll *beat* you at this game (fuck, this is good)!

SON

Slow down, *mami*, you're going to choke! –

MOTHER

You say you want to leave an *artifact*? *Tu quieres* 'artifact (?)' –

SON

Stop it! -

MOTHER

I'll give you 'ARTIFACT' -

SON

GIVE ME THE FUCKING SPOON!! -

With her mouth full, she bellows like a crazed animal -

MOTHER

'AAAAARTIFAAAAAAACT,' you **STUPID FUCKING JERK!! I WANT THE MOST OUT OF THIS MOST ELABORATE, SUCCESSFUL PERFORMANCE.**

And slams the cake and spoon onto the kitchen counter.

SON

You're off your fucking medication again, aren't you(?), you're off the fucking pills!

MOTHER

Your father talked to his mother the exact same way, look what happened to him -

SON

I spent the last month planning for tonight, *mami*, one month to think about every outlying, or underlying factor, reconsider all considerations, think of anything you'd need!

MOTHER

Imagine doing that for 34 fucking years, you *comemierda!* 'One month,' *num-num-num-num-num-num* - EAT SHIT! And take a sip - take a little sippy-sip the way your father always did before his sips turned to gulps turned to an aquarium of scotch in his belly.

SON

As a matter of fact - I'm calling him. ...Fucking Hell, man -

He pulls out his phone.

MOTHER

That's right, run to Daddy *porque tu mama está reaccionando como lo hace*, because this behavior of mine is so 'out of nature,' so, so 'unlike the Anglos of Los Anglos' -

SON

He doesn't talk to me the way you do -!

MOTHER

He doesn't talk to you at all!

(beat)

I didn't mean that. It was a lie...?

He dials a number.

SON

I'm calling.

MOTHER

I'm sorry...

SON

An hour late's pretty bad, even for a Cuban...

He heads for the balcony but stops midway.

You should clean your face while I do so. You looked pretty before you made a mess of yourself, I'd hate for this to be how I see you last, ...all covered in shit n' cream...

He calls and continues to the balcony, phone to his ear, while She takes the veiled compliment and does as she has been told.

MOTHER

Maybe after I clean my face you can give me a pedicure like in the olden days -?

SON

Just a second, *mami* –

It's a voicemail.

Hey dad, it's me – um. Hope you're well; listen I imagine you're running late, but... (*sotto*) mom's sort of losing it and there's nobody else in town who could help out, so – hopefully you're here, soon. Miss you. Um. Hoping to hear how you've been! So. Okay. See you soon. ...Love you(?). Right. Love you.

He hangs up the phone and turns to Her. (beat)

MOTHER

You really think he'll come?

SON

He said he would.

MOTHER

When?

SON

When I texted him. A while back; he gave me a Thumbs Up.

MOTHER

A Thumbs Up -?

SON

Yeah, like the emoji.

MOTHER

...*Bueno*, I suppose worst case scenario he doesn't come, someone is going to be staying right where he is.

SON

That won't be the case, and you'll accept it eventually.

(beat) She advances to Him.

MOTHER

I won't need to. A mother always knows.

SON

Right –

MOTHER

And a mother also knows when to apologize. ...about your father not talking to you?

SON

It's been true, hasn't it? Up until now, at least?

MOTHER

He sent you a 'Thumbs Up,' *mijo* –

SON

Up until now, at least.

MOTHER

Up until now.

SON

Thank you.

MOTHER

Do I look pretty again, the way I used to?

SON

Yes, very much so. As a matter of fact, it would be an honor, shooting myself in the head tonight, seeing how beautiful you truly are. *Mami*, the things you can say...

MOTHER

And the things that you *do*... you've failed as an artist, and that's fine, because you're my son... *pero* now... once again, you've turned your *life* into theatre. But with no royalties.

SON

I haven't failed... as an artist, I. I accept that it's hard. K? To take me seriously this time -

MOTHER

How could I, my son doesn't *know* how to commit. Whatever it is you're going through, can be *gone* through, *mijo*, *por favor*, let's just talk. We haven't *talked*. In one whole month not one word. Before then, it was always a call about Harry or James, James or Harry,

MOTHER (Cont'd)

your sadness, that city, your disease, how it was given, how it happened, how you haven't moved on, how it, how it made you hate what you are, and judge those of you who also were... like you, *pero* without *it*. ...But nothing ever about me, in over a year of never seeing me, never a question about me.

SON

Has there ever been much on your end to report?

MOTHER

Did something happen with Harry?

SON

You wouldn't understand. It's never just a single thing, or like, a certain place.

MOTHER

Ultimately, it always is, though, no? It's just your, your inability to get through the thing that makes all the other things fall apart. There is nothing that can't be unpacked; healed. Come on. Give your mother a pedicure.

SON

Fine.

MOTHER

Really!?

SON

I mean, dad is running late... If it means putting you at ease and the both of us calming down, so, sure.

MOTHER

AYYY! Que rico! And maybe after that you can also give me a teeny-tiny foot rub - !?

SON

Coño, mami, pero que to quires, un masaje de pie o una pedicura, o que tal uno tanque de privación sensorial (!?), dime lo que quieres!! ...What?

MOTHER

You DO speak more Spanish than just the contractions!! I am SO PROUD OF YOU!! A FOOT RUB, it is!! I settle - for – THE RUB!

SON

But you've got to promise you'll behave afterward if I do -!

MOTHER

On Emeterio's soul, I promise I will - I will!

Finally, her SON gives in.

SON

Let me grab your kit. Go take a seat on the recliner.

He goes into the bathroom while She sits on the recliner.

MOTHER

AYYYYYYYYYYYY chico, thank you! AYY! And bring me more of that Tres Leches, bring the entire thing with a fork! It'll go perfect with my foot rub - of ARTIFACT! ...Ayy, concho – I don't think I have any more lotion, do I?

He returns with a pedicure kit, grabs the Tres Leches from the kitchen, And brings it over to his Mother. Taking a seat beside her.

SON

You didn't, *pero* I bought you plenty more at the store today.

MOTHER

You did –!?

SON

I wanted you to have a steady supply.

MOTHER

So you can give me foot rubs as long as you're here! You never did give me a date you were flying back...(!) Who'd need Massage Envy when I could have you. *Ay, I'm proud, that my gay-little angel understands the importance of the lotion.*

SON

Dame tu pies.

She giggles and does as She is told, putting her feet up onto his lap.

MOTHER

Your father always bet his chances. Thought he could have 'a ship in every harbor!' That was all you could expect out of him. Let alone him *ever* showing up for *anything*.

(beat) He takes out his cell phone and begins dialing a number.

Que haces? –

SON

I should try him again, I think, no? He didn't text me after calling him, so - something could have happened, you know? He would know to come tonight.

MOTHER

Did you tell him what sort of, interactive theatrical reinterpretation you planned for us?

SON

No, but I –

MOTHER

Then it's a lost cause, *mijo*, baby, a lost cause, come on – we'll have him visit us in spirit, with his ships in every harbor! *Cuántas mujeres vinieron despues de mí?* Do you remember how many women came after me?

SON

Mami, Just a second –

MOTHER

Oye, pero how many!?

SON

Just a second!

MOTHER

And how many MINUTES before you get to rubbing my feet?!

He hangs up.

SON

He didn't pick up. I didn't want to leave another message.

MOTHER

Good! You need two hands for a foot rub operation such as this one, beginning with one of them on the bottle and another one on its cap!

SON

Maybe he was drinking his scotch in a solo cup again and got pulled over by the police.

He dials again but hangs up.

MOTHER

My non-lotion-ed feet remember the times he always took you on nighttime drives to help you fall asleep, look at the Christmas lights, the sunsets. Took me longer than most to connect those trips with his bottles always getting lower and lower. *Mijo* –

SON

I'm should try him again, *mami* –

MOTHER

Pero! Bring the attention over to me, *mira*, we can talk about him while you're giving me what you promised instead of focusing on that phone. Answer me, *por favor*, it's like a game: after cheating on me with Sylvia, I divorced your father and then he married Yvonne and then married Adriana, *no?* Come on, tell me! After Sylvia and the split –

SON

Mami!

MOTHER

Just answer the question -!

SON

After he cheated on you with Sylvia he went to *Gloria*, remember?

MOTHER

Gloria?! No...

SON

A couple months after the divorce he was drunk and telling me all about how Gloria smelled down there? Two months after that, that's when he started dating Yvonne.

MOTHER

Papaya podrida, 'por Dios, I remember him telling me! Gloria was there so early on!?

SON

Si, Mami, so early on he wound up cheating on Yvonne with Gloria *again* until the fucking went disgusting and he ditched her for that *bruja*, Adriana.

He calls again.

MOTHER

That's right... Adriana. Who had the audacity to wear white to her second wedding!

SON

She wasn't the only one!

MOTHER

Ay por favor, I was dressed in cream! And aside from being there as your mother, in a banquet hall on the second floor of a Hialeah strip mall above a BMV, I wanted him to remember – *exactly* what he had lost! Not that his time with Adri lasted long, that *bruja*.

He hangs up, this time, the most defeated we've seen Him.

SON

It straight up disconnected this time

MOTHER

Se le cayó el teléfono -?

SON

No, he didn't – *drop* it, it – I heard something and then...

MOTHER

Who came after Adri?

SON

Besides that, it's 'D' MV, not 'B'MV, 'D' MV as in 'Department' –

MOTHER

Funny, I always thought it was 'B'MV or 'Bureau' –

SON

I think he might have hung up on me? –

MOTHER

I want you to tell me who came after Adri -!

SON

Why do you care so much!?

MOTHER

Porque the sooner we dive into the *chisme*, the sooner you'll focus on my feet, exclusively!

He begins to apply lotion to his Mother's feet, followed by a gentle rub.

SON

By talking about *him* exclusively?

MOTHER

You have a point. *Pero* thinking about him in retrospect *is* better than thinking about him in the present, thinking about him ever showing up! Who wouldn't want to think about their ex-husband's failed fourth and fifth and sixth marriages, anyways? FUEL PARA MAÑANA! It's good to think about things such as that, and *coño* does that feels nice!

SON

You're welcome – but bad memories fuel nothing–

MOTHER

Of *course* they do – remember that trip we took to LA, the one we took with your father?

SON

Of course, I do –

MOTHER

Where we spent time with your father and his ex-business partner John and John's ex-wife Sylvia who slept with your father and ended both of our marriages?

SON

How is that something good to think about exactly?

MOTHER

Hmph! That cheating fucking cunt got *nothing* from the divorce... *y ahora*, has bags underneath her eyes that you could reuse (I was stalking her on the Instagram)... to top it all off, she's still single, and works at an Enterprise Rent-A-Car!

SON

Knowing a cheating fucking cunt works at an Enterprise really makes you wanna to spin cycle into the next day, wake up bright and early?

MOTHER

As you get older, it surprises you what gets you out of bed. Even in this place your father swore to make our home. It may not be much, *pero*, one day far from now, when I go, this place will pass onto you. The money we've been getting from Harry has already gotten us a new water heater, so keep it coming – we're going to be fancy pretty soon.

SON

I won't be here after all that happens.

MOTHER

Then you can rent it out like a vacation home!

SON

No one wants to vacation in Hialeah.

MOTHER

Of course, they do, *no me jodas* -!

SON

People like who -?

MOTHER

Gainfully employed sons who can afford the required private space they'd need when visiting their frail and weakening mothers -!

SON

Niche -! ...He wouldn't have just hung up on me, would he have?

MOTHER

Who came after Adriana, *mijo*?

SON

Why does it matter.

MOTHER

Because it's fun remembering – even the bad times.

SON

Those times weren't exclusive to the both of us, there was nothing fun about it.

MOTHER

So what(!?) sure, you never had a bedroom or any privacy with any of them, *pero*, it was only for the weekends, and every other one at that! I hope that isn't lost on you –

SON

And hopefully it isn't lost on you I have 16 estranged ex-stepsiblings, *all* from Miami, including one Crystal, a Krystal with a 'K,' and a 'Krystaal,' that had TWO A's at the end!

MOTHER

That one was a real *comemierda* –

SON

Fucking bitch called me fucking faggot more times than she ever got fucked up the rear –

MOTHER

Chico, pero no tan dura, not *that* hard -!

SON

Meanwhile, we're talking about people we've forgotten like it answers my question –

MOTHER

Chico, OW -!!

SON

He fucking hung up on me, didn't he -!?

MOTHER

CHICO, YOU'RE HURTING ME, STOP IT! STOP! WAIT – I'VE GOT IT!

(beat) He stops massaging her feet.

SON

I'm sorry, I -

MOTHER

IT'S GLORIA!

SON

WHAT THE *FUCK, MAMI* -

MOTHER

He went back to Gloria, didn't he!? Ah-*HAAAA!* AFTER Adriana; Gloria and Yvonne and then Gloria into Adriana into Gloria into –

SON

Betty –

MOTHER

Into Betty *porque* who the fuck names their daughter 'Betty' in Miami, then back into Gloria again and then into *coño* what's her face –

SON

Yoli –

MOTHER

Who left your father *porque* he had chosen to spend *Noche Buena* with his dying mother over spending it with her and her *comemierda* kid –

SON

Krystal with the K –

MOTHER

What was her name -!?

SON

IT WAS YOLI -

MOTHER

YOLI(!), that's it, that's the name of that Nicaraguan *penDEJA* -!

SON

El Salvador, *mami* -

MOTHER

El Salvador(!), that makes sense. Like her people, prized speaking with perfect fucking Spanish, as though it were the only thing fueling their economy –

SON

You can't say shit like that –

MOTHER

What are *they* going to do? Correct my English?

He stops rubbing Her feet.

Que haces!? I didn't mean it like, *literally*.

SON

You're out of lotion, I need to get you one of the new bottles for the other foot.

He goes into the kitchen.

And you really shouldn't say things like that, *mami*. You'd appreciate it if someone's spoke of Cubans the way you do of other people?

MOTHER

What's there to say? On the hierarchy of things, we're eight tiers above the Argentinians and just one tier beneath the Puerto Ricans.

He returns with a new bottle of lotion and begins rubbing her other foot.

SON

None of that's true.

MOTHER

Sure, it is! They need speed bumps for their speed bumps, with how slowly they drive.

SON

Then why was it when I came out you begged me to date that Puerto-Rican girl?

MOTHER

Case in point, *mi vida*. I figured it'd go over slow enough you'd finally realign your sexuality. Even if she was hairy; to you, it could've been the best of both worlds!

SON

You're impossible.

MOTHER

And your hands growing weak, firm up! End of the day, it's why Cubans run on the time that we do. It isn't that we're always running late, it's just that everybody else takes too long to get the party started.

SON

Use that excuse in court.

MOTHER

Bueno, habits are both good *and* bad things. Take your father. You could tell he was a cheat by the way he fucked you. Always trying things he thought you already enjoyed.

SON

I thought you wanted to talk about me, *mami*?

MOTHER

When it comes to your father, we always are. It's a good thing he wound up back with Gloria, I suppose. Even though the night of their wedding... it's still a good thing.

SON

That right(?)

MOTHER

There's an old saying I made up and it's that there are two types of Cubans: those that are resilient and those that are doormats. *Pero* the doormats? They're resilient, too.

SON

You carve that into your vows when you married dad?

MOTHER

No. But it's probably what I told myself when I was with my mother, hiding in the bathroom of a freight ship with seven other men when we fled for America. It's also something your father probably thought of when he had to leave his mom and dad and Pedro Pan it over to Miami on the Freedom Flights. Beyond proverb. For us, it's like the gospel of our blood. The same blood that runs in you.

SON

Even if the only Spanish words I know are the 'contractions?'

MOTHER

They're called 'Conjunctions.'

Beat.

SON

At least, Gloria's good to my father. Actually 'good,' not, *whatever* 'good,' I had... with –

MOTHER

If being 'good' with him means feeding him and imbibing him as much as he craves, until it's time for a bigger recliner... absolutely.

SON

It's sorta smart. Sedate a guy with his vices until he's unable to fuck?

MOTHER

Gloria actually called me recently.

SON

About him?

MOTHER

Mhmm. There was an argument. He lost control again.

SON

How bad was it?

MOTHER

As bad as you've known.

SON

He call her a 'faggot,' too?

MOTHER

Maybe not that bad.

SON

Did he... -

MOTHER

I don't think so, no. I think he finally learned that yelling was more than enough.

SON

I mean. I feel sorry for him. His faggot child he never accepted as his son, feels *sorry* for him. It was for the better, I think, I think you're right. Maybe his absence is what's made Harry as alluring as he's been after all this time.

MOTHER

You see?!

SON

He's competent. Yea, handsome too. This one time I drove from LA to visit Harry, and, I mean, I was on the road before the Sun kissed the morning horizon and I was on the road long after it had saluted setting promise of tomorrow. I pulled up to his house; somehow my eyes still... functioning, and he was already waiting by the door. A fresh glass of bourbon for me in his hand, and on the stove, like, fucking take-out thai bubbling in a pot. 'It'll be ready when you're ready for a second glass,' he'd said to me, ushering me out to his back patio, where nothing was said. I sipped my drink; he rubbed my shoulders. All of it without my asking. All of it entirely of his wanting. His wanting knowing... *my* want, all the needs I never said aloud. And that look on his face, that first time at his door? Like, excited? Happy to see me? Happy that I *was* me?

MOTHER

Who are you referring to?

SON

It was nice knowing a good man. *Harry*, I guess. It was very nice being loved by one. But he already had his kids, you know? He's already lived, already has, his, completed home, and world. I'm tired of just... all the using!

MOTHER

Mijo - Love *is* using other people.

SON

Then well will someone just use ME!? I'm tired of the waiting... the waiting to BE used. Because I *want* him to *know*. That there's no resentment, regrets. And that I stopped giving up on wanting his love long, long, long ago. The moment I understood a month ago what, *who* I was. And I know his faggot shit came from a place of fear –

MOTHER

Is *that* what this is about -? What happened a month ago -?

SON

And I know you never told him that I got it, because we know, deep-down, that was always the shit he was most afraid of, losing me to this viral bullshit a pill a day now keeps me from surrendering into developing; I won't even tell him tonight when he comes, I wouldn't want him to know, it would only scar his pained, frightened little ego even further and all I'd be left with was another 'Told you I was right, faggot' and he'd walk out that door before my grand finale -!

MOTHER

This *is* what this is about –

SON

I've accrued, all the damage I have caused, all the hearts, *my* heart, I have broken and also betrayed – *stomped* on, because he always showed me how easy it was to just – *move* on, so long as you've already got something cooking on the side. Once and for all, I took the look, and on behalf of my father, I'm putting a fucking end to it. I am wholly indebted until the tomorrow which will never come.

MOTHER

What the fuck does *that* mean?

SON

It means, *mami*, that we are living through my epilogue.

He goes to the balcony to fetch his pack of smokes.

MOTHER

You don't get to walk out on me after saying *that* bullshit, you... self-pitying *martyr*!

SON

Consider it an intermission, *Mami*!

MOTHER

I don't, I don't believe any of this! You are not allowed to leave this house!

SON

How can you not believe it, *mami*, you need me to draw you up a fucking sign!?

MOTHER

You don't talk to me like that! If you really believed in what you're planning on doing, you wouldn't be waiting for him, you would've done it right now and in front of your poor mother who's trying her hardest not to slip on this tile with her over-lotioned feet!

He opens the front door, but she pushes it shut.

You are not leaving this house for a fucking smoke!

SON

Move out of the way -

MOTHER

NO! Go SHOOT YOURSELF the way said you would! Holding a sheet around your head like some mentally-ill *Santero*!

SON

When you fixate the way I have, you'd understand that needing him here isn't an option – it's necessary, now MOVE -

MOTHER

If you truly intend to kill yourself, why would you need another smoke, ah? Ah? Ah? You said it yourself, *mi vida*, no one is leaving this house tonight and that includes *you*!

SON

Fine. I'll go have one on the balcony.

He marches towards the balcony. She follows him.

MOTHER

That balcony is not a balcony! –

SON

Bro –

MOTHER

It is your childhood bedroom and if smoke gets rid of the smell of your head on your pillows so help me God I will find a gun that actually works!

SON

It does work, *mami*, remember what happened to *abuelo*?

She rips the pack of cigarettes from her Son and crushes the one already tucked between his lips.

You really don't want to do that.

MOTHER

Watch me crush them all.

SON

I got another pack just in case.

MOTHER

'I got another pack just in case,' you selfish, selfish man! Call Harry! He'll talk you out of this. Your father doesn't need to be present in your life any *further* if you'd like -!

SON

He's my father, of course I would –

MOTHER

Bueno, I'm sure you call your Harry your 'daddy' aaaaall the time -

SON

Fuck you, no I don't, not – *often* –

MOTHER

In fact I bet you call him 'Hairy Daddy,' *porque* you've mastered your wit over devotion and loyalty to yourself and hearts of others, the pages you promised to create!

SON

You literally encouraged me to have an affair!

MOTHER

A *quiet* one! He is your father by blood and blood alone. I am the one who raised you, so. Who needs him, just do what you intend to do, GUT ME like a fish and I'll even the message to him! Maybe then he'll send me child support for once!

SON

You guilt me as though I'm still a child –

MOTHER

I know you're no longer looking up at the horses, I know what and who I'm talking to -

SON

Your son?

MOTHER

A man who doesn't believe in anything serious, just the dramatics -!

SON

There is nothing wrong with me, there is nothing broken, there is nothing I want to build, and there is nothing I need to mend. With my life, with myself. Or you.

(beat) She takes the sheets back into the bathroom.

MOTHER

Bueno, your life is all blueberries and razor blades and anything I say means *nothing* to you!

He tails after her.

SON

It's nothing personal and we can play musical sheets all night if you want!

MOTHER

With you it's *never* personal. If it were personal you'd hold yourself accountable, especially when it's come to your failures and your falsehoods, you'd make amends or tell the people who love you what you *feel* and need – you would give me those sheets back!

He walks out of the bathroom with the sheets in hand and she tails after him.

You'd call your Harry, or if what you really wanted was your publicist James, you'd tell him how you feel and what you need (quietly the way I've taught you), you'd get what you'd want out of both worlds, you'd be so inspired living the life of a man-whore and finally write erotic *novellas* for single mothers, and then finally with your successes *mijo*, you'd finally have an emotionally-stunted cock in every major US city to sit on!

SON

You're disgusting. Do not move these again.

MOTHER

A mother always knows!

She takes the sheets back into the bathroom with him following her.

SON

Would you rather my dead body be exposed to you before it's taken away?

MOTHER

You really think you're going to be holding onto a sheet after you blow your brains out, *como Superman*? Just like you and your inability to take initiative, you never think ahead!

SON

What makes you think you know anything about me(?), give me those!

He walks out of the bathroom holding the sheets, yet again. She follows him.

MOTHER

A mother always knows!

SON

Only what you tell them, and even then, only what they choose to believe!

Only this time, She rips the sheets from her Son's hands, wrangles them into unkept knots and dumps them on the ground.

MOTHER

WHY... ARE... YOU... TRYING TO UPSET ME!?

SON

You ironed those sheets yourself; you know.

MOTHER

What are you doing here in my home after one year of never seeing you, a month of never hearing from you, with no luggage, a single backpack, and a stupid gun, if not so I can help you(!?), hooooo.... I know why..., *por Dios*, I do know why -!

SON

I've told you –

MOTHER

No, *chico*, no, you haven't told me nothing as to *why*, just like all the times before, all the times you've been unsuccessful, every time, you never thought ahead *porque* it's always been about a single thing, a single thing your brain and heart have somehow convinced you into believing you've been deprived! It's always been –

SON

Don't say it –

MOTHER

It's always been for attention! And you have it now! You have my attention!

SON

...Well, that would've been another thing I learned from you too, wouldn't it?

MOTHER

I didn't mean to say that –

SON

Yeah, you did.

MOTHER

...*Por favor... déjame ser tu madre. Es lo único que se hacer.*

SON

...I don't know what that means.

MOTHER

Emeterio would.

SON

...Fuckin' A, *mami*. No, he fucking wouldn't - he fucking wouldn't, *mami* –!

MOTHER

Yes, he would. *Si, lo haría* -!

SON

Do you want to go there with me?

MOTHER

You've never wanted to go *anywhere* with me –

SON
Because we could go there, *mami* –

MOTHER
What are you talking about -?

SON
You drop it with the Emeterio shit –

MOTHER
A mother never drops any of her children –

SON
I'm your son –

MOTHER
SO WAS HE –

SON
Mami –

MOTHER
HE'S MY SON *TAMBIEN* AND UNLIKE YOU HE'S NEVER SHAMED ME–

SON
EMETERIO WASN'T –

MOTHER
PAJAMAS!! PAJAMAS!!

SON
WHAT?

MOTHER
You're going to need pajamas to sleep night! At least until your luggage shows. *Vamos* –

She goes to the balcony and begins going through all of the boxes, manic -

SON
Mami, mami, - what are you doing, I don't need any pajamas –

MOTHER
No estes loco – what are you talking about you really expect to sleep like that tonight? It looks uncomfortable! *Tienes ropa en tu* backpack -?

SON
The things in my bags are only the things I have to give you –

MOTHER
My son would've have packed an extra pair of socks and underwear the way I told him to all his life, you could've slept in those, I would've closed the blinds, I wouldn't see -!

SON
Mami, you've got to take a breath -!

MOTHER
I can't –

SON
You've got to –

MOTHER
No puedo!

SON
BREATHE -!

MOTHER
YOU CANNOT – SLEEP – IN THAT -!

SON
I'M NOT GOING TO BE SLEEPING IN ANYTHING

MOTHER
No-!

SON
I chose this outfit in advance too –

MOTHER
NO-!

SON
Harry bought me clothes I always loved, *pero* these, *mami*, these I got myself, hustling against *our* hustle, they're fucking dope and you're gonna have to rip them off of me!

MOTHER
Then I'll, I'll...(!) I'LL THROW WINE ON ALL OF IT!

She RUSHES to the kitchen.

I'M GOING TO THROW WINE ON YOUR STUPID ANGLO-WANNA-BE-PEE-
WEE-HERMAN *CAMISAS*!

SON
I wouldn't do that if I were you –

MOTHER
I'm doing it, *comemierda*, and you'll be forced to change into one of my floral gowns!

SON
My merino wool sweater cost my four payments of forty-five sixty-six, DON'T DO IT -!

MOTHER
IT'S NO DIFFERENT THAN BLOOD. Ah-HA!

She's found a bottle of wine, cracked open the screw cap, and races towards Her Son.

I'M COMING FOR YOU MOTHERFUCKER -!

*But He quickly closes the glass door to the balcony – wedging himself in.
She tries with all her might to open the glass door – all of it push and pull!*

MOTHER
You open this door right now -!

SON
I won't have you ruining the outfit I'm going to wear when MY BRAINS BLOW OUT!

MOTHER
Wish you were going to the gym, don't ya, motherfucker –

SON
Let go of the handle, mother -!

MOTHER
Giving it up for your publicist, only to choose starving yourself to get the fat back off of you -!

SON
I was starving because I couldn't fucking afford groceries -!

MOTHER
BULLSHIT YOU USED HARRY'S MONEY ON BOOZE AND MARINE WOOL -!

SON
'MERINO' -!

MOTHER
NO ONE GIVES A SHIT

SON
HOW ARE YOU SO FUCKING STRONG

MOTHER
I'M A MOTHER, YOU WEAKLING BITCH

SON
HOW COME THERE ISN'T A LOCK ON THIS DOOR

MOTHER

Fast as hell as though it's building all of her strength

BECAUSE I REMOVED THEM WHEN YOU WERE FOUR BECAUSE YOU ALWAYS USED TO LOCK YOURSELF INSIDE CLOSE THE BLINDS AND CRY LIKE A LITTLE BITCH BABY!!

SON

I CAN'T – STOP - !

MOTHER

I'M COMING IN, DRUNKY LIMBS, I'M COMING!

SON

FUCK YOU!

MOTHER

AAGGGGGHHHH -!!

He loses his grip as She slams the sliding door open, then shucks a mighty amount wine on Her son's clothes.

And then proceeds to chug from the bottle. Gasping for air -

MOTHER

You see?? THANK GOD THERE'S A FUCKING TARP ON THE FLOOR!!

SON

You fucking bitch.

She slaps Him across the face. Beat.

MOTHER

Don't make me call you a bastard. Now, go get a glass for your strong, strong mother.

He does as He's told.

MOTHER

Such theatre. 'Nothing wrong looking how you wish you'd chosen to live,' if that were the case and you were wearing everything the choices in your life amounted to you'd be wearing a potato sack with a mandatory *platano* crammed up your asshole. All those amounted failures that said, "*claro*, yes, you tried,' *MAYBE*, *pero*, 'TRIED,' OK, never 'DID,' never... 'COMPLETED,' never 'SUCCEEDED.'

SON

Who would want me even If I tried? Some diseased, white-passing person of color - !

MOTHER

Only in the Winter!

SON

You tell people what's living under your skin, no matter how progressive they get in their hearts you're nothing but a leper –

MOTHER

Porque you've convinced the shit you've got would bar you from ever living long enough to enjoy the fruits of your possible successes!

SON

Fuck you –

MOTHER

Boo-hoo, a pill every day, you'll live forever. Everybody will be fucking annoyed about it!

SON

'What I got,' was a major setback, 'How I got What I got,' was a major fucking setback -!

MOTHER

So what, two men roofied you, took you to their place and took turns pot-roasting you –

SON

It was rape and they were feeding me meth –

MOTHER

I remember your search history from when you were living under this roof, *Mijo*, consider it a fantasy fulfilled and move on!

SON

You're a fucking sociopath for taking pleasure out of this – anguish isn't passion!

MOTHER

Anguish *is* passion! Are you even fucking Cuban!?

SON

'Are You Even Fucking Cuban!?' -

MOTHER

You don't get to mock your blood. No matter what else is in it. Within your blood there is not only the legacy of this family, which is who we are, but there is also the legacy of *what* you are – which is everything you come from! 'Point being,' *chico*: you are an *Other*. *That's* why they don't make stories about us! What you should be doing out there – what I have told you this entire time, was to never play the victim; never play it weak, never settle for your disease, or place yourself into a corner. You were to never, ever, surrender your capacity, you were to do whatever it took, and to do everything that came your way. It's what you were built to do, from your blood, by your father, the bullshit, all of it – it *built* you. And it has made you just as American as the rest of them, even if your *culo* is better than all of theirs!

SON

I ain't a heritage American!

MOTHER

Tough shit. You're here now. And you'll be here tomorrow, too. That is *your* goal as a – 'un-heritage' American - but the first one of your lineages *born* onto this soil. Your *duty* – your 'AMERICAN DREAM,' always has been, *always* will be to work – for tomorrow. Tomorrow – is all that matters. Even if you fail. What you wanted though, hmph, ... that was going to cost extra. Even your fucking father knew *that*.

He pulls out his phone.

MOTHER

Oh fuck! We were doing so good -!

And begins dialing a number –

SON

At the very least he could tell me why he isn't coming, no(?), it's been long enough.

He calls. (beat). But hangs up.

SON

...You know what, just, fuck it. I don't feel like waiting around anymore, anyway.

Suddenly, her phone rings. She takes it and runs to the kitchen.

SON

Is that him? Is that my dad?

MOTHER

No, *chico*, no! It's a buzzer, I – I'm just, getting another bottle of wine from the fridge -!

SON

Who's calling you, you gonna answer it?

MOTHER

When it says 'Unknown,' I don't know who it is –

SON

You're texting someone -!?

MOTHER

I'm just writing out all the terrible things you've ever said to me!!

SON

I wanna see who you're texting -!

MOTHER

Mijo, take it easy, I'm doing nothing, pour yourself another glass, another bottle -!

SON

My dad's not answering me, y all of a sudden your phone goes off after trying him again!?

MOTHER

Mothers live the busiest lives -!

SON

Give it to me -!

MOTHER

What are you doing -!?

SON

It's him I know it is I wanna see it!

MOTHER

Get Off Of Me -!

SON

JUST LET ME SEE IT -!

MOTHER

YOU WANNA KNOW WHO IT WAS; I'LL TELL YOU -!

She HURLS her phone at the wall – it SHATTERS!!

RING-A-DING-A-LING IT'S NONE OF YOUR FUCKING BUSINESS!

Beat.

SON

Well! Wasn't that a bit much!

MOTHER

You selfish prick. Wanting to unload all of this onto me, all the while, you've been all, 'wait for dad,' 'gotta wait for dad,' 'I love you, *mami*, and I say all this out of respect, *pero* before he even arrives, I'm going to unload all of this BULLSHIT onto you because OUT OF RESPECT I think it's best I tell you that I plan on leaving you entirely alone in this world, and entirely on your own!' Emeterio would've *never* -!!

SON

'Never' *what?*

MOTHER

I've accepted you'll always be jealous of him.

SON

'My brother' –

MOTHER

You don't get to mock him –

SON

I'm not 'mocking' him, *mami*, I'm just trying to remember a single thing about him –

MOTHER

It was before you were born –

SON

Yeah(?), and when was that exactly, when you were 12? Maybe 9? Was he growing in your belly and that's why you fled for America, out of shame?

MOTHER

You mock my *pain* –

SON

Only because you always find a way to make me feel less than I already do!

MOTHER

I'm sorry. I am. I just. Bring me more wine, I beg of you. I beg of you, just, anything to release me from this ... *fear*...

He does as he's told, sipping as He pours more wine into Her glass.

SON

Tell me when to stop –

MOTHER

To the rim is fine.

He does as he's told, then watches as She gulps the entire glass down. (beat)

MOTHER

What has Harry had to say about all of this?

(beat) He goes to the dining room table and begins to slowly unpack numerous belongings.

SON

We haven't spoken about it.

MOTHER

He's the man you want to marry.

SON

He's the man *you* want me to marry.

MOTHER

He doesn't know a thing?

SON

We actually haven't spoken at all.

MOTHER

About anything? -

SON
We don't speak.

MOTHER
You're no longer together?

SON
No.

MOTHER
How long ago?

SON
I blocked him, and then deleted his number, about month ago.

MOTHER
'About a month ago' -

SON
When -

MOTHER
When you decided that you would do this to me?

SON
When I decided I would do this to myself.

MOTHER
What did you do this time? -

SON
Mami, I did nothing -

MOTHER
Bullshit, every time something's happened you've *always* found ways to dissolve yourself-

SON
I just, I ended it -

MOTHER
I don't believe you; you wouldn't dare - not without consulting your mother, the only person stupid enough to depend on you, the only person on this planet who knows you for what you are, there shouldn't be a single thing in this world that would make you throw away everything we have worked for!

SON
Love would, especially the sort of love I learned in here, the sort of love I missed out there!

MOTHER
The publicist. He reeled you back in again, didn't he? He -

SON

We reeled each other! We always have, like, *homegrown* addictions. And that quiet affair, *mami*, that quiet little thing that wouldn't mean anything *porque* it was as quiet as you had always wanted it to be? It already happened. And then it happened again. And again. And again. Until...

MOTHER

Until what?

SON

I was making it work, man, you know, I really fucking was.

MOTHER

Until *what, mijo*.

SON

You know how useless it is, doing something entirely for somebody else, *mami*?

MOTHER

...‘Useless?’

SON

I let him go. ...*Que?*

She HURLS her glass at the wall -

MOTHER

USELESS!? ‘USELESS,’ is that what you said you were, you CLOWN-IDIOT-DREAMER-SHIT?!

SON

Useless - Unusable - Bootless - Purposeless - Unavailing - Ineffectual - To no purpose – and to quote you, a selfish dreamer, motherfucker, failure, *comemierda*, clown, idiot, dreamer, shit, *pendejo* –

MOTHER

I never called you a fucking *pendejo*, *Pendejo*! If you really believe you're all those things –

SON

Including the things you've told me, *mami* – and you're fucking barefoot –

He goes to collect the broom and dustpan and sweep up the glass.

MOTHER

If you really are a collective of all those things, then what in the hell does that make me?

SON

My fucking Mother, and nothing else -

MOTHER

Noooooooooooo, no, no, no, no, no, if your life is so worthless, so useless, so meaningless - that doesn't make *me* your 'FUCKING' mother, you *comemierda*, it makes me a – a Bastard's Concubine, incapable of giving you a single thing!

SON

'A Bastard's Concubine,' you pronounce it 'dotting,' *pero* you know how to fucking say, 'CONCUBINE!?' I know very well the sacrifices you've made with raising me, sacrifices you always intended me to repay -!

MOTHER

I gave you my entire life! All my 'USELESS' – 'SACRIFICES!?' I gave you all of me. ...And now you want to rob me of my life's work.

SON

There is plenty more to your life than me.

MOTHER

...Is that so? ...Is that what you truly believe?

She begins to storybook through the photo album. Photos as old as her age.

I know it hasn't been easy. You deserved more — but so did I. Fighting tooth and nail every day for a job I had no desire for, climbing ladders made of splinters and grease, just to preserve what was left of you after he stole what he promised us — your father, and mine. All my work for you began the day my mother and I came from Cuba to Port Everglades. We started in a single bedroom at your Tía Cuca's. From fourteen, I worked, with only my mother's nightly promise: "*Mi corazón, todo es para mañana, y mañana es por un otro día.*" Everything was "for tomorrow." To be American was to work today so they'd believe you belonged tomorrow. I only found a man to marry so I could have you. That was the dream all those tomorrows led to. So even if you failed, even if you broke things, even if all you ever were a disappointment — you were still enough. Because you were mine. And as long as you were mine, I would make sure you kept dreaming, *mijo*. Don't you see how much that makes you? How much worth that gives you? How that makes you my tomorrow? Don't make me live without your noise. Don't.

SON

We should go over the things I brought for you.

He brings the stack of belongings closer to them.

MOTHER

I don't want them –

SON

Would you prefer going through everything once I'm gone and wonder what everything is for? Come on. Sit down...

MOTHER

You can't make me –

SON

Please. Sit with me?

MOTHER

Let me keep holding onto your hand.

SON

...I need to use them, *mami*. So, uh. We can start with - we're starting with... a breakdown, on the dog's health insurance. His doctor, any allergies, his favorite treats, some photos of the two of us holding him.

MOTHER

You're giving up your little boy?

SON

This here, uh - here is Janine - my roommate's - contact info, should you want him. She can fly him to you, or you can fly to him and bring him back, she loves him and is ready to keep him, um, whatever the case winds up being, I provided legal documentation to either of you, should you choose to adopt - he needs someone more reliable -

MOTHER

The most unreliable person in the world is a mother without her child in the world.

SON

Abuelo's car. There's a spare key in here somewhere. I left it at my - at Janine's place. She's happy to look after it or keep it *pero* I figured since you walk to work and such -

MOTHER

That's impossible - I would be pulled over.

SON

I got that covered, *mami, mira*, because I - I transferred the name of the lease, the lot of it, it's yours, even the insurance, you see -?

MOTHER

How could I ever afford such a thing -

SON

We'll get to that - *pero* all to say if you ever wanted the dog, we could fly you out to get him, you could do a cross-county trip with him, it could be therapeutic for you -

MOTHER

You should have driven down in it initially, saved all of us the time and money-

SON

I didn't want to be affected by the scenery, the painted mountains of Colorado, and, um - which brings me to this, just - take it, there you go.

He hands Her a check.

MOTHER

How could you write such a high number?

SON

Sold my records, books, my trumpet, the theremin, televisions, laptop, everything electrical, whored myself out a bit even, 'for old time's sakes,' you know, don't think about it - and so, you know, when it's time, you can cash the check and depending on who is flying where - I wrote instructions on how to transfer money from your phone.

MOTHER

'How to transfer funds to Janine?'

SON

Yeah, correct -

MOTHER

The electronics had all your writings, all the ones you sold -?

SON

Copies of car insurance information, obviously the vehicles already paid off, I went over this already, shit, I had a list for all of this -

MOTHER

What did you tell Janine you were going to do?

SON

That I was backpacking across the world indefinitely.

MOTHER

It's so much money, *chico* -

SON

Enough for you to forget about Harry's help for a while. This is for you too.

`

He hands Her a stack of

MOTHER

Letters?

SON

For those closest to me. I pre-stacked them in the order of who I figured would be easiest to send to first. Not that you have any trouble mailing a letter, I - there will just be some names in there that may make you resist sending.

MOTHER

You want to wreck my life as much as you can.

SON

If I wanted to do that, I would've done this on my own and by the sea.

MOTHER

With no gun?

SON

There's that movie about two brothers in the future(?), swimming out into the deep - one of them gets too tired to swim back to shore, I seemed to be the most cost effective.

MOTHER

You don't have to go. You don't have to *leave*!

SON

I – uh; now this is something very special for you and you alone –

She stands.

MOTHER

No!

SON

Mami, where are you going? –

MOTHER

I refuse to believe this is anything more than your most desperate attempt for attention –

SON

This is what you truly think is going down, right now –?

MOTHER

I'll call the police. I will... call the police, with my phone –

SON

The phone you threw and broke?

She races for the front door.

MOTHER

Then I will race out into the hallways right now and yell for help! –

He Stands and presses the revolver against his temple.

SON

You do that and I'll pull it while your back is turned on me, I – I mean it –

MOTHER

Porque it's so much better than looking you in the face when you blast your HEAD OUT!? You're sick – you're SICK! – TO SHOW ME THE SIGHT OF THIS -!

SON

I have plenty more to show you, please –

MOTHER

We'll wait for your father, then – Oh, oh, try – try calling your father again – give me your phone, I'll tell him to answer you this time -!

SON

He hasn't answered me not once he's running up on being a couple hours late already,
I'm suspicious he'll even show –

MOTHER

Of course, he'll show. He'll show, he'll, uh, he'll show for this, just, give me *your* phone –

SON

I'm not giving you anything aside from what I've set aside –

MOTHER

I'm begging you, *mijo* –

SON

I'm begging you, *too* - !

MOTHER

No... NO...!

SON

Please!? *Mami*, please... just – come back to the table, please? I, need - !

MOTHER

Need what -!?

SON

For you to hold my hand. Please. Please.

(beat)

MOTHER

Okay. ...Okay... Just... calm down, *chico*... and just, guide me, tell me what to do –

SON

Just sit down, *por favor*, please just, hold my hand -?

MOTHER

Are you scared, *mijo*?

He places the revolver back into his holster, sits down and offers Her a seat.

SON

Yes.

MOTHER

Imagine me –

SON

Imagine me. Please. *Please.*

She sits down at the table.

MOTHER

...What else do you have for me?

He hands Her a large binder, over-stuffed with hundreds of pages of paper.

SON

This here... uhm, fuck - this is, very, very special. I leave this to you, for you, and only you, with some... amendments.

MOTHER

What is it?

SON

This... is Me. It's every essay, every story, every poem, play, lyric that I have ever come to love writing, creating, thinking of, molding, used to remind myself of things that used to be.

MOTHER

This is all you? -

SON

Consider it a collection. It ranges from, yesterday, three months ago, my time with James, my time with Harry, my times with Harry while I was with James, the time it was the other way around, being home with you, everything from New York although not everything out of college. Before I left here for LA I took several of my old journals from when I was in high school and middle school, hard drives, and such?

MOTHER

'I cut a limb to feel my heart,
To Fix Myself at least to think I could,
Dragged feet to soaring wings' -

SON

'To feel my pulse, to heal a thing, at least I've tried, confused remorse, missed the grief.'

MOTHER

You wrote this?

SON

Not my best, I guess, but I guess soon, in retrospect... not too bad, ...no?

MOTHER

...Hm.

SON

What?

MOTHER

No, it's nothing.

SON

Come on, what. Tell me –

MOTHER

No, it's nothing, I shouldn't –

SON

Bro you went 'Hm' –

MOTHER

No, I know I did, it's true, I went 'Hm' and I'm not your 'bro' I'm your mama -

SON

'Hm' because it's good right, like a good 'Hm?' –

MOTHER

Chico, what kind of a 'Hm' do you want out of me, it was nothing but an honest 'Hm!'

SON

Bueno then be honest in your explanation of said 'Hm!'

MOTHER

I just think maybe I you were going to kill yourself and leave behind things of yours for people to read and remember you by... -

SON

Yes... yes?

MOTHER

Bueno, couldn't it be, like, a little bit better?

SON

I don't believe you –

MOTHER

What can I say (?), it isn't for me –

SON

But it's OF me, it IS me –

MOTHER

I just enjoy my poetry with a cookie and a little bit of tea, not a Xanax and a razor blade for cutting - !

SON

FUCK OFF - !?

MOTHER

I mean maybe that's what people will say when they read all this, all this 'Boo-HOO-WOO-WOO' some people like some things pretty, you know, 'over the rainbow' –

SON

‘Over the rainbow?’ –

MOTHER

‘Over the rainbow,’ you know, like a euthanasia for a Happy Place –

SON

You mean a ‘Euphemism’ –

MOTHER

Exactly right, that’s what I said, a ‘Youth-ism.’ I don’t think anybody’s looking to publish anything, put up a statue of you or something because you were *sad*.

SON

...I don’t believe this.

MOTHER

Not even one glimmer of hope?

SON

Why would there be?

Beat.

MOTHER

Mijo... look at me.

SON

What?

MOTHER

You could end this, you know, if only you tell yourself to do so.

SON

That’s exactly what I intend to do.

MOTHER

No! You could, *save* yourself if only you abandoned that *ego*, admit to me, if only to me what you led you here -!

SON

I already told you, *mami* – there are still some things we have to go through. Things, we *need* to go through, it’s getting late.

MOTHER

Not until you tell me what I’ve asked to know -!

SON

I’ve set myself too far back to consider moving any further, you know this -

MOTHER

That's not true. Your... 'set backs,' can, should, only benefit you with what you've wanted to give to the world, what you can still, *give* to the world.

SON

Why give to something you no longer need? Dad didn't want a faggot son. Mother was ill-equipped to handle me on her own –

MOTHER

Not the listing shit again, *mijo*, please -

SON

Went off to New York to discover booze and the types of boyfriends that preferred to abuse it until suddenly I was slapping and snapping, shared a cell with Mingdong Chen -

MOTHER

Which one was that –

SON

The one who butchered the mother and her four kids –

MOTHER

Time flies –

SON

Then we moved me back here but my depression had gotten out of control and so you threw me into that psycho ward -

MOTHER

Mi mijo, I didn't know -

SON

Regained a bit of stability but attempted twice while living here, you remember that -?

MOTHER

Of course - first the pills, and -

SON

And the second after my father married Gloria and *He* told *Her* son that *He* was 'the son he never had,' I think the way I went with that one, I -

MOTHER

You ran into traffic, yes – you can... You can stay with me until it's time to go again, back out there! You can rejuvenate yourself, learn the ropes from afar with whatever fibers you were able to keep for yourself -

SON

What would I do here, *mami*, sulk and brood, run into streets again?

MOTHER

We can get you professional help!

SON

'Back to the asylum?' -

MOTHER

I could never pay off those bills again, are you crazy -

SON

Would you have me go to church?

MOTHER

Would you -!?

SON

No fucking way -!

MOTHER

We could use that money to get you into therapy; get you back on medication-!

SON

Have you seen the going rate for stabilization?

MOTHER

And then, we'll get you back all the things you gave away, get Janine, to put it into storage, get the car back and get you help and find something to do so we can get you stable, so you can get a job. Sure, you'd live with me and sorry you're shit out of luck when it comes to that one, *pero* you could help me around the house! Put away things, help me take things to Goodwill, teach me how to cook *lentejas*! Sounds like a heck of world, then, don't you think?! A world that will love you and need you and want you, until you're rebuilt and remember your path, become your own champion, through tomorrow's and beyond(!), you're back on the move, making enough money, you can fix things with Harry, finally move in with him maybe?!

SON

Why are you so adamant on Harry and I making amends? -

MOTHER

Porque I cannot be there with you, forever, *mijo*, and you will always need somebody given your condition -

SON

PERO I DON'T WANT HIM. I gave up my heart so we could have a limb to stand on. To not tilt, to not collapse, but to stand the way other families do — with their generational scaffolds holding them up. I chose limb over heart. Distance, money, tenderness when paid for — I chose that instead of the only love where I ever felt I was truly giving myself. And I told myself it was freedom. Freedom from the chaos I grew up watching: the drinking, the yelling, the guilt — the chaos you always called love. And yet... that chaos was home. My home. A home I gave up.

MOTHER

You are not your father.

SON
I am.

MOTHER
You're not!

SON
It's too late for me –

MOTHER
It isn't too late, you aren't him, you would show up if you had a son and your son had asked you to, you wouldn't say No, would you?

Beat.

SON
...Wait -

MOTHER
Mi mijo...

SON
What do you mean, 'wouldn't say No?'

MOTHER
I didn't want to tell you –

SON
He didn't say 'no,' I just haven't been able to get a hold of him, right -?

MOTHER
I'm so sorry –

SON
Why, what happened, is he out of the state or something, I -

MOTHER
I didn't want to tell you–

SON
Tell me what –

MOTHER
But I think you should know –

SON
Know – WHAT, *MAMI*?

MOTHER
So you know you aren't him -!

SON

Just tell me!

MOTHER

Your father was never going to come. ...I begged him. I did. I swear to God, I did, not knowing what you wanted us to come together for, I had thought it was something, about Harry, *tu sabes*, something, about, you, moving back home –

SON

He was never going to come. –

MOTHER

And no matter how much I begged he was entirely against the whole idea the entire time and was never planning on making it out –

SON

What did I do though –

MOTHER

That's why after you called him all those times he called me, to ask why I never told you.

SON

Tell me what –

MOTHER

He called and then he texted, and I texted back and asked him to help me, *pero* –

SON

Why doesn't he want to see me? –

MOTHER

It's not that he never wanted to see you, baby –

SON

Why wouldn't he want to see me? –

MOTHER

Mi mijo, I'm so sorry, but it has nothing to do with that, I mean it! –

SON

Why doesn't he want me?

MOTHER

He thought that you were finally going to tell him about... *you*. He thought that you were going to finally tell him, what you told me, I know, *mijo*, what you told me in confidence –

SON

What I told you –

MOTHER

I know, *mi vida*, I know, your disease and condition, how it happened, all of it, all the things he was so afraid would happen to you –

SON

‘You’ll die a faggot and not my son’ –

MOTHER

And he was too scared to even look you in the eyes –

SON

What’d he say to you –?

MOTHER

That he knew you’d prove him right.

Beat.

SON

You promised me you’d never tell him.

MOTHER

It came up, only once. After you stopped trying to call him, a couple of years ago. When you went quiet. He never thought of calling you, *pero*. When it came to you dropping the ball... he just... called me.. upset... drinking, and I just thought...

SON

Mami...

MOTHER

I thought, if I told him, that he would pick up the phone for you, for once.

SON

...That phone never rang.

MOTHER

I think you knew it never would. I think, you knew...

SON

What a fucking Thumbs Up meant.

Beat. He collapses by the recliner. His MOTHER goes to him. Holds him. Then offers him his pack of smokes.

Really? Even though we’re indoors...?

MOTHER

You can ash on the floor. Just this once.

He hugs Her tight. They don’t let go.

I loved you so much, <i>mami</i> ...	SON
<i>Aye... mi niño... mi niño, mi niño, mi niño...</i>	MOTHER
<i>Pero</i> I wanna go.	SON
I know...	MOTHER
I do –	SON
I know -	MOTHER
I don't wanna – I want – I miss him so much.	SON
I know.	MOTHER
And I miss him too.	SON
I know.	MOTHER
And <i>also</i> him.	SON
I'm glad you got him in there	MOTHER
And I'm so stupid	SON
<i>No, mi chico, no...</i> -	MOTHER
I'm so stupid... -	SON
Nooo... you aren't stupid, <i>mi vida</i> , you aren't stupid -	MOTHER
I'm the stupidest fucking person in the whole fucking world and an embarrassment to myself and to my family –	SON

MOTHER

Pero, chico, are you begging me to tell you are all those things -?!

SON

...Yes...!

MOTHER

De verdad -?

SON

YES!!

MOTHER

Ay... mi vida... 'you're the stupidest person in the whole fucking world and you are,' an –

SON

'An embarrassment-!!'

MOTHER

'An Embarrassment!'... 'to yourself'...

SON

Uh-huh...

MOTHER

And uh, to ah...

SON

'My... FAMILY!!'

MOTHER

'*And* your family,' *guapo*, it's true, it's all so true... It's true.

SON

...I wish it was Emeterio who had out made it instead.

MOTHER

...*Que?*

SON

Emeterio. I wish he was the one who came out alive, instead of me.

She pulls apart from Him.

MOTHER

...Emeterio did come out of me. Alive. He died in the war; *que haces* –!

SON

Which war?

...What?

MOTHER

Which. War. *Mami*. Or have you forgotten?

SON

...I forget nothing -!

MOTHER

You just disguise it –

SON

War –

MOTHER

Just shape it every day as if he ever existed; molded out of clay –

SON

No... *WAR!*? –

MOTHER

Out Of Clay –

SON

What did you do with Emeterio –

MOTHER

How many times will I have to remind you –

SON

‘Out of Clay,’ ‘Out of *CLAY!*?’

MOTHER

He existed in spite of me –

SON

‘OUT OF CLAY!?’

MOTHER

Because he clearly existed inside of you – I’m tired of going along with your games –

SON

My Emeterio was a good man, a good boy who went to war, his picture’s on the wall!

She points to the portrait of the soldier on the wall.

MOTHER

That’s not him.

SON

MOTHER

It is.

SON

You got that painting from Goodwill seven years ago, I remember when you got it –

MOTHER

No I didn't – don't do this to me because he never wanted you –

SON

It'll be over before you know it, *mami*, you wanna keep me, you wanted me to tell all the things, didn't you –

MOTHER

This anger -!

SON

Emeterio wasn't real

MOTHER

He was

SON

Fine then he was *pero* he never –

MOTHER

Don't you break me

SON

I've broken you every day I've lived

MOTHER

No

SON

Emeterio never went to War because he died coming out of you -!

MOTHER

TAKE THAT BACK!

SON

You wanted him to be everything and anything and when it was me who made it kicking out of your cave, everything you'd wanted of him you pressed onto me -!

MOTHER

MONSTER -!

SON

And with every fucking little tick, everything that went wrong, everything I broke, you just pressed down, harder, deeper into onto me, *porque* HE would've never done, never not-COMPLETED any of the things I could never achieve -!

MOTHER

He was a fine, fine boy -!

SON

Who died before he ever lived, from your arms, into a CuddleCot –

MOTHER

Emeterio –

SON

But I was real. I was here. And you still couldn't let me be enough.

MOTHER

You're not enough for *yourself*!

SON

BECAUSE YOU ALWAYS TOLD ME I WASN'T -!

MOTHER

I AM ONLY LEFT WITH DREAMS OF HIM. THE DREAMS I SAW, THE ONES I WANTED, FROM WHEN I WAS A LITTLE GIRL -!

SON

WELCOME TO ADULTING –

MOTHER

THE DREAMS OF HIM GREATER THAN THE DREAMS YOU HAD FOR YOURSELF -!

SON

WELL WHEN YOU'RE COMPETING AGAINST A FUCKING FANTASY –

MOTHER

NOT FANTASY, PROMISE! AND THERE WAS MORE PROMISE IN HIS STILL BODY THAN EVER THERE WAS IN THE ENTIRETY OF YOUR LIFE!

Beat.

SON

You're right.

MOTHER

What?

SON kisses his mother on the forehead.

SON

It's time.

MOTHER

Wait... wait...!

She grabs onto him, but He pushes Her off and walks over to the tarp overlooking the balcony.

SON

Don't hold me like that, *mami* –

MOTHER

Mijo!? PLEASE!

SON takes the revolver to his head.

SON

I know you tried your best.

MOTHER

NO! -

And he pulls the trigger. ...But it doesn't shoot.

MOTHER (Cont'd)

No!

He pulls the trigger again. And nothing.

No... no...

Beat.

He pulls it again.

Nothing.

He crumbles to his knees.

She does the same.

And slowly crawls to her SON.

She takes the revolver away from him and finally

finally allows Him to collapse in Her arms.

(He sobs).

...I told you it wouldn't go

SON

Mom

MOTHER

I told you you couldn't go

Momma	SON
I didn't want to see you try	MOTHER
Mommy	SON
I didn't want to know it was real	MOTHER
I'm still here	SON
I couldn't know it was for real	MOTHER
I wanted	SON
I couldn't know this was real	MOTHER
I want to go	SON
This is real, this is for real	MOTHER
I wanted to go! –	SON
No no no no no no no, just tremble here, tremble here, you are where you are	MOTHER
I needed to go! –	SON
And you will go where you go, you will go where you go, but not tonight, my baby boy	MOTHER
No	SON
Not tonight, you understand me	MOTHER
Like a taste	SON

MOTHER
We'll go until tomorrow, you understand

SON
Sitting on the floor

MOTHER
We'll go until tomorrow and then tomorrow we'll say the same

SON
On the floor we stay

MOTHER
Tomorrow, baby, however long you need

SON
Tomorrow

MOTHER
Yes, baby, yes baby, just until tomorrow, then we'll go again

SON
No

MOTHER
Tomorrow baby, then we'll go again

SON
No tomorrow, no to tomorrow

MOTHER
Yes, baby, yes, just until tomorrow

SON
No

MOTHER
Yes, baby, God, like another pill

SON
No

MOTHER
It's just another pill to swallow down

SON
No

MOTHER
Yes, yes

No. No...	SON
Yes	MOTHER
No	SON
Yes	MOTHER
No!	SON
Yes.	MOTHER
No.	SON
Yes.	MOTHER
No?	SON
Yes.	MOTHER
No?	SON
I promise.	MOTHER
Yea?	SON
Yes.	MOTHER
Yeah.	SON
Yes.	MOTHER
Yes?	SON

Yes. MOTHER

Yes? SON

Yes. MOTHER

SON
Tomorrow.

Just tomorrow.

MOTHER

SON
Just until tomorrow.

MOTHER
Just until tomorrow, baby. Then we'll try again.

SHARP BLACKOUT.

End of play.