

The Heritage

Written by

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BLACK SCREEN.

"Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him."

— Matthew 13:12

EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - DAY

Golden sunlight spills over red-tiled rooftops and eucalyptus-lined paths. The air hums — footsteps, low chatter, distant espresso machines.

Students drift by — earbuds in, coffee in hand, laughter trailing behind.

ROHAN KAPOOR (early 20s) moves steadily, observant, slightly off-beat — not detached, just on a different frequency.

Two students cross his path.

FIRST STUDENT

Yo, Rohan. You good?

SECOND STUDENT

What's up, man?

Rohan nods, half-smiles — easy, unreadable — and keeps moving.

Ahead, a UNIVERSITY OFFICIAL with a clipboard spots him.

UNIVERSITY OFFICIAL

Morning, Rohan.

Another polite nod.

Near the admin building, a polished SECOND UNIVERSITY OFFICIAL with a bright tie approaches briskly.

SECOND UNIVERSITY OFFICIAL

Rohan! Been a while — how are you?

ROHAN

Doing well, thanks.

A brief, sincere smile exchanged. The official moves on. So does Rohan — same steady rhythm, gliding through noise like a signal.

INT. CAMPUS CAFÉ - DAY

A sleek, modern café hums with quiet focus. Muted debates, glowing laptops, half-drunk espressos fill the air — a mix of caffeine and urgency. Faculty, grad students, and VCs huddle in low tones.

Rohan, cappuccino in hand, weaves between tables. Alert. Removed. Like a guest in a room he knows too well.

From a corner booth, a sharp-eyed MBA STUDENT calls out.

MBA STUDENT

Rohan! Yo — come here a sec.

Rohan pivots, approaches. At the table: MILES GREEN (mid-30s), casually precise, notebook open, pen ready.

MBA STUDENT (CONT'D)

This is Miles Greene. He's writing a piece for *The Atlantic* — something about B-school grads reinventing tech.

ROHAN

Cool. Nice to meet you.

They shake — firm, quick. No linger.

MBA STUDENT

And this is Rohan Kapoor. Future titan of industry... and yeah — Vikram Kapoor's son.

MILES

Lumin's CEO. Of course. The name rings loud.

Rohan offers a cool, practiced smile. Calm. Controlled. A flicker of something unreadable behind the eyes.

INT. CAMPUS CAFÉ - MOMENTS LATER

Rohan sits across from Miles and the MBA Student, absently swirling the foam in his cappuccino.

MILES

So I've got to ask — your dad's an icon in engineering. Why business? Why not follow his path?

ROHAN

I am, kind of. Just taking a different route.

(beat)

He's actually the one who nudged me toward business. Said growing up around him was its own engineering education.

MILES

And you just... trusted that?

ROHAN

He's run Lumin since I was a kid. If anyone knows where the game's headed, it's him.

Miles nods, jots a note.

MILES

So after business school – straight to Lumin?

Rohan pauses, shrugs – carefully.

ROHAN

Probably. It's familiar – I know the culture, the people. Makes sense.

The MBA Student tilts his head.

MBA STUDENT

Yeah, but do you want to?

Rohan leans back, considers.

ROHAN

I've never really thought about it. It's just... always been the plan. Doesn't it work like that for most people?

A glance between Miles and the MBA Student – quick, unreadable.

MILES

Alright. So if you end up there – any big ideas?

ROHAN

Nothing earth-shattering. The company's solid. But I'd want to make it... warmer.

(MORE)

ROHAN (CONT'D)

Less monolith, more movement.

(beat)

Been playing with stuff — podcasts, digital content, community. Getting people to talk to the brand, not just about it.

MILES

Podcasts?

ROHAN

Yeah. Lo-fi, experimental. Tech, trends, culture. Did one with friends — didn't push it, but the response was interesting. Felt like a space worth exploring.

MILES

So instead of running the company, you want to run a mic?

Rohan chuckles, unfazed.

ROHAN

People listen to voices they trust. You can't lead without relevance. Culture isn't decoration — it's direction.

MBA STUDENT

So what's culture saying now?

Rohan leans in, eyes sharp for the first time.

ROHAN

Simplicity. Fluidity. Anticipation. Meeting people before they even realize they're looking.

A moment. Miles raises an eyebrow. The MBA Student watches.

MILES

That's a very... Lumin thing to say.

Rohan sips his coffee — the taste suddenly uncertain. Not sure if he passed a test, or walked into one.

INT. LECTURE HALL - DAY

A spare room bathed in cool fluorescents. Students scattered like punctuation — eyes on screens, fingers tapping — a quiet symphony of keystrokes.

Up front, the PROFESSOR — crisp, no notes, total command.

PROFESSOR
—evaluating capital structure isn't
just about the debt-to-equity
ratio. The WACC — weighted average
cost of capital — plays a critical
role. It shapes—

A faint buzz cuts through the quiet.

Rohan's phone vibrates on the desk.

He glances down.

Incoming Call: AANYA.

His brow tightens — concern flickers. He stares a beat too long. Something's off.

EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS — MOMENTS LATER

Rohan pushes through the doors, phone to his ear. The sunny campus sprawls ahead, unaware.

Two rings.

AANYA (V.O.)
Rohan... where are you? Where are
you?

He slows. Instincts flare. Grip tightens.

ROHAN
Aanya? What's going on?

AANYA (V.O.)
It's Dad. He had a heart attack. I
need you to come home — now. People
are showing up but... I can't leave
Mom. I can't do this alone—

He stops cold. Heart pounding. Eyes scan nothing.

ROHAN
Wait — what? What do you mean?

AANYA (V.O.)
Please. Just come home.

Silence. Then:

ROHAN

I'm coming. I'm on my way.

The line goes dead.

Rohan lowers the phone, stares ahead, unblinking. A beat.
Then another.

And the world keeps turning around him.

INT. RIDESHARE CAR - DAY

The city blurs past in streaks of color. Inside, silence.

Rohan scrolls his phone in the backseat.

ON SCREEN: *"Vikram Kapoor, Lumin CEO, Dead at 53."*

His thumb freezes. The world narrows.

He stares, expression unreadable. Then — a subtle shift: jaw tightens, shoulders tense. A long, unnoticed inhale.

Up front, the driver hums softly, unaware.

Outside, traffic flows. Inside, time stalls.

EXT. KAPOOR ESTATE - ENTRANCE - DAY

The rideshare car rounds the final bend of a shaded drive. At the gate, a small crowd of reporters waits — lenses trained, fingers poised.

No shouting. Just the dry stutter of shutters as the car nears.

INT. RIDESHARE CAR - CONTINUOUS

Rohan sits upright in the back, silent.

Outside, cameras flicker — more felt than heard, pressing against the glass.

The gate opens — slow, automatic.

The car slips through.

Past luxury cars.

Past mourners in quiet conversation.

Past the silence that follows sudden news.

Ahead, the house — glass and clean lines, untouched by the moment.

Rohan doesn't move. Doesn't blink.

Just watches the world move on without him.

INT. KAPOOR HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Daylight cuts sharp through towering windows, casting patterns on a pristine, minimalist space.

Outside: still pool, sculpted hedges — curated calm.

Inside: soft murmurs, slow movement. Mourners gather in quiet clusters — grieving, polite, detached.

On the couch, AANYA (mid-20s) reclines with practiced ease, unreadable.

Nearby, LENA (40s) stands watchful, scanning the room like she's waiting.

Rohan enters — careful, composed, eyes sweeping the space.

No reaction. Then Lena turns; eyes lock.

LENA
Your brother's here.

Heads turn. The atmosphere shifts — conversations pause, not quite stop.

Lena crosses to him — graceful, controlled.

LENA (CONT'D)
(quietly)
How are you holding up?

Rohan shrugs.

ROHAN
I'm fine.

A beat. She studies him — not convinced, not pressing.

She nods, gestures toward the group.

LENA
Come on.

He follows — not resisting, not fully present.

Between them, an unnamed tension.

INT. KAPOOR HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Rohan sits beside Lena, posture tight, gaze distant. A heavy silence between them.

LENA

I was in my office when they
called. I rushed over... but by the
time I got there, the medics were
already working on him.

Rohan's eyes drift past her, unfocused.

ROHAN

So... it was quick?

Lena nods, voice barely a whisper.

LENA

He didn't suffer.

Rohan lowers his gaze, swallowing hard. The weight settles.

ROHAN

Okay.

He goes quiet again, staring ahead — somewhere unreachable,
lost in a world he won't let in.

INT. KAPOOR HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Sunlight filters through floor-to-ceiling windows, casting
soft patterns across warm wood and pale upholstery — curated
calm.

DEVIKA (50s), in a wheelchair, gazes out at the city skyline.
Still. Withdrawn. Her reflection faint, almost ghostlike.

The door opens quietly.

Rohan steps in, footsteps light, cautious — not to break the
fragile silence. He sees her and pauses.

ROHAN

Mom.

Devika turns slowly. Her face softens, eyes warm but tired.

She lifts a hand.

DEVIKA

Come.

He crosses, takes her hand with quiet care. Together, they look out – mother and son, sharing a hush only grief holds.

The door opens again. Aanya enters, followed by a nurse carrying an IV kit with clinical precision.

AANYA

Mom, it's time for your infusion.

Devika nods, eyes still on the window. She waits until the nurse gently wheels her toward the bed.

Rohan steps back, watching.

The nurse moves with practiced tenderness – connecting tubing, adjusting the drip.

Rohan stands still.

Silent.

Tethered by helplessness.

INT. KAPOOR HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The hallway is dim and silent. Rohan moves slowly, hesitant, drawn by a familiar voice.

From the living room, Aanya's voice drifts clearly through the stillness.

AANYA (O.C.)

David, I don't need the full estate breakdown. Just – what about Mom? Does the will cover her care, or not?

Rohan pauses in shadow at the room's edge.

Aanya sits on the couch edge, back straight, phone pressed tight to her ear. A laptop glows beside her, casting tension across her face.

AANYA (CONT'D)

Right, everything's tied up in Lumin... but who's paying for Mom's care? This isn't startup cash.

Rohan stays quiet; her soft murmur threads through the room.
His jaw tightens. Unease coils – slow, familiar.

AANYA (O.C.) (CONT'D)
Okay, so there is something. But
where's it coming from? Dad's worth
half a billion... but does that
even matter now?

INT. FUNERAL HOME - VIEWING ROOM - DAY

The room is immaculate – pale stone floors, soft recessed lighting, minimalist flowers. A space designed to contain grief.

At the front, VIKRAM lies in an open casket. Composed. Untouched. Stillness surrounds him.

Rows of chairs stretch out – family upfront, mourners scattered behind. Rohan, Devika, Aanya, and relatives sit silently, faces caught between disbelief and exhaustion.

The door opens quietly.

The GOVERNOR OF CALIFORNIA enters – tailored, polished, solemn. He moves through the room with soft nods, acknowledging familiar faces.

He stops before the family. A practiced pause.

GOVERNOR
I'm deeply sorry for your loss.
Vikram was a visionary. His legacy
will outlast all of us.

DEVIKA
(quietly)
Thank you, Governor.

He nods – respectful, brief – and moves on. Silence settles again.

INT. FUNERAL HOME - RECEPTION - LATER

The reception mirrors the viewing room – clean lines, neutral tones, discreet elegance. It hums with low conversation – condolence mixed with calculation.

Clusters of mourners stand in practiced poses – businesspeople, politicians, familiar faces. Every word measured. Every hand on a shoulder deliberate.

Rohan stands alone at the edge of a small family group, posture upright but disconnected. He scans the room without truly seeing.

Across the space, Lena speaks quietly to the Governor, calm and firm.

LENA

We'll keep the transition smooth.
I'll step in as interim, hold the
line until the board reconvenes.

GOVERNOR

You're the right choice. Vikram
trusted you — we all did.

Rohan watches from a distance. His face reveals nothing, but his stillness tightens — just enough.

He doesn't move.

But he's listening.

INT. FUNERAL HOME - VIEWING ROOM - NIGHT

The room cloaked in shadow. Dim, golden light pools across pale stone. At the front, the closed coffin rests beneath a muted spotlight. No flowers. No distractions. Just presence.

Empty chairs blur in low light. The air hangs heavy — not peaceful.

Rohan steps inside.

His footsteps whisper on the floor. He moves slowly, each step weighted.

He stops before the coffin, hesitant — as if crossing that space might break him.

He stands. Face unreadable. Jaw tight.

Behind his eyes: grief, yes — but also something sharper. An older ache. Loss tangled with silence.

The silence presses, dense and endless. He doesn't resist. He lets it settle.

For a long moment, he just stands — alone with it all.

INT. KAPOOR HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Late morning light spills through high windows – soft but unforgiving.

Rohan sits on the edge of a low chair, spine straight, jaw set. His foot taps once, then stills. Hands folded tightly in his lap – white-knuckled calm.

Across the room, Aanya lounges with her phone, face a mask. Her thumb moves slow, deliberate.

A chime breaks the silence.

She checks the screen. A pause. Then:

AANYA

He's here.

She rises without looking at Rohan. Steps sharp, controlled. No follow-up. No reassurance.

Rohan stays seated a beat. Breath catches. Shoulders rise, then fall.

He stands – stiff, hesitant – bracing for a storm that already knows his name.

INT. KAPOOR HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

The room feels colder, shadows stretching. Rohan, Aanya, and Devika sit across from VIKRAM'S LAWYER – sharp, precise, voice formal and measured.

VIKRAM'S LAWYER

Per Mr. Kapoor's will, Aanya and Rohan will each inherit twenty-three percent of his personal shares – approximately one point zero five percent of Lumin's total stock.

He lets the information hang.

VIKRAM'S LAWYER (CONT'D)

There's also a trust fund of forty million dollars set aside for each of you, separate from the shares, to provide long-term security.

His tone shifts slightly.

VIKRAM'S LAWYER (CONT'D)
 For Mrs. Kapoor, a thirty-million-dollar-fund has been designated exclusively for her medical care and related expenses.

Aanya's fingers tighten briefly around Devika's hand. Devika offers a faint, reassuring smile.

Rohan forces a small, practiced smile that doesn't reach his eyes.

VIKRAM'S LAWYER (CONT'D)
 These distributions will be carried out according to the estate plan, once all legal formalities are complete.

INT. KAPOOR HOUSE - ENTRYWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Near the front door, Devika sits composed. Aanya stands nearby, arms loosely crossed. Vikram's lawyer lingers – polished, calm.

VIKRAM'S LAWYER
 The fund covers full access to Van Ness. Around-the-clock private care, transportation, all top-tier services. Everything she's used to – uninterrupted.

Devika exhales softly.

Aanya nods slightly.

AANYA
 Good.

No more words. None needed.

INT. KAPOOR HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rohan sits alone.

Still in his suit, still in the same chair. Hands resting on his knees – still, but tense.

His gaze drifts, unfocused. Thinking.

Shares. Votes. Control. Leverage. Timing.

Muted voices echo down the hall.

He doesn't turn.

He just keeps thinking.

INT. LECTURE HALL - DAY

A low buzz. Students cluster in twos and threes, phones glowing. Laughter, murmurs – a soft, ordinary rhythm.

Then Rohan enters.

Heads turn. Conversations quiet. A subtle ripple of recognition spreads.

He doesn't flinch. Just walks.

A few nods. Quiet greetings. He returns none.

At an empty seat near the middle, he stops, shrugs off his bag, sets it down carefully, and sits – still, composed.

The ambient noise dulls – as if the room adjusts.

UNIVERSITY OFFICIAL (PRE-LAP)
(through a mic, formal)
Rohan Kapoor.

EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - DAY

Applause ripples as Rohan steps on stage. His movements steady but reserved, the moment's weight settling on him.

He approaches the podium, accepts his diploma with a small, measured nod.

The applause swells again – warm but distant.

Rohan turns, walks off, eyes ahead, mind elsewhere, the cheers fading behind him.

INT. RIDESHARE CAR - DAY

Rohan sits silent in the backseat. Outside, the city blurs – glass, metal, motion.

The car slows.

Ahead, a sleek building rises: *LUMIN TECHNOLOGIES*, bold chrome letters.

Rohan leans in, eyes fixed. No blink.

Not awe. Not grief.

Something colder.

A calculation.

The car rolls on.

INT. LUMIN - INNOVATION LAB - DAY

A sleek, open space humming with quiet precision. Engineers move with choreographed intent between touchscreens and prototypes. No wasted motion. No raised voices.

Beyond the glass, Lena leads a cluster of executives – crisp and composed. Rohan trails just behind – not quite part of the group, but not separate.

A few engineers glance up. Recognition flickers – unspoken.

Some watch him pass. Most return to work.

Rohan's gaze stays ahead – expression still, posture spare. He doesn't meet their eyes. Doesn't need to.

INT. LUMIN - OFFICE - DAY

A sunlit office framed by floor-to-ceiling glass – minimalist and deliberate.

CAMERON (late 30s), sharp in a tailored suit, works intently, posture precise.

A soft KNOCK breaks the quiet.

He looks up. Lena stands in the doorway, Rohan just behind.

CAMERON

Come in.

Lena steps aside. Rohan enters.

LENA

This is Cameron – Director of Product Strategy.

Rohan extends a calm, measured hand.

ROHAN

Nice to meet you.

CAMERON

Likewise. Your father made a lasting impact here.

LENA

Cameron will bring you up to speed on all current initiatives. You'll be looped into every major strategy session moving forward.

ROHAN

Appreciate it.

CAMERON

Welcome aboard.

A brief handshake. Polite nods.

INT. LUMIN - ROHAN'S OFFICE - DAY

A pristine glass-walled office. Sunlight refracts off brushed steel and matte surfaces. Elegant, spare — no clutter, just tools of efficiency.

Rohan sits at his sleek desk, posture straight, eyes locked on the screen. Fingers tap relentlessly. Around him, Lumin hums faintly — footsteps, distant talk, muffled by design.

The door clicks softly.

An ASSISTANT (early 30s), crisp in black and gray, enters with a leather folder under one arm.

ASSISTANT

Latest market analysis.

She sets the folder on the desk. Rohan reaches for it without breaking focus, eyes scanning data.

ASSISTANT (CONT'D)

Also — the client pitch. Do we lead with features, or anchor on market expansion?

Rohan flips the folder open, eyes shifting between report and screen.

ROHAN

What was the original direction?

ASSISTANT

Features push innovation. Expansion sells scale.

His fingers still. He looks up – sharp, assessing.

ROHAN

Then expansion. Let's anchor there.
For now.

ASSISTANT

Understood.

She exits briskly. The door clicks shut.

Rohan leans in, focus snapping back to the screen. Light shifts on the glass behind him – unnoticed.

He's already deep in the machinery.

INT. KAPOOR HOUSE - ENTRYWAY - NIGHT

The front door creaks open. JONATHAN LAWSON (50s), immaculately dressed, steps inside with a leather briefcase. Smooth, self-assured – commanding without raising his voice.

Devika waits near the foyer in her wheelchair, poised. Her carer stands discreetly nearby.

DEVIKA

Jonathan. I'm glad you made it.

JONATHAN

Devika – always a pleasure.

They share a brief, familiar embrace – warm but practiced.

She gestures toward Rohan, standing nearby, composed but reserved.

DEVIKA

You remember my son, Rohan?

Rohan steps forward with quiet courtesy.

JONATHAN

Of course. Rohan – it's been a while.

ROHAN

Mr. Lawson. Good to see you.

INT. KAPOOR HOUSE - DINING ROOM - LATER

Soft, warm light from a low chandelier washes over polished wood, reflecting the room's quiet tension.

Rohan and Jonathan sit across a long, sleek table, documents and leather-bound folders arranged methodically between them. The faint clink of a silver spoon against glass breaks the silence as Jonathan sips water.

Jonathan's calm, assured voice cuts through the quiet.

JONATHAN

The trust is solid. Your father
built it for stability – no
surprises. Everything's in order.
And with your role at Lumin, you've
got room to find your footing.

Rohan traces a page's edge with his thumb, crisp paper grounding him amid the weight of responsibility.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

You're not expected to carry this
all alone. There's structure –
advisors, systems, checks. You have
support.

Rohan exhales slowly, meeting Jonathan's steady gaze – a flicker of relief breaking through.

ROHAN

Alright.

Jonathan leans back; leather creaks softly. His voice softens.

JONATHAN

You have a seat at the table. Speak
up when it feels right.

Rohan offers a small, genuine smile – subtle but steady, a quiet connection amid unspoken pressures.

INT. LUMIN – MEETING ROOM – DAY

A compact glass-walled room hums with quiet energy. The table's a mess – papers, half-drunk coffee cups, laptops casting a blue glow.

SLOANE (early 20s), sharp-eyed, messy bun barely holding frizzy hair, types furiously. Crumbs cling to her sweater – a distracted snack.

The door creaks.

Rohan steps in halfway, scanning the room. His presence fills the doorway – quiet, assured.

ROHAN
Hey... is this the strategy
meeting?

Sloane startles, then smiles, fingers pausing.

SLOANE
Oh! Uh — yeah. Yeah, it is.

Rohan's eyes flick to the empty chair nearest the table.

ROHAN
Where's Jessica?

SLOANE
With the partners. She should be
back soon, I think.

He steps in fully. The soft thud of his shoes blends with the
low hum of electronics.

ROHAN
Cool.

A pause. Slight uncertainty lingers.

ROHAN (CONT'D)
I don't think we've met. Are you
new?

Sloane jumps up too fast, brushing crumbs from her sweater.

SLOANE
Yeah — yes. I'm Sloane. Junior
business analyst. I started last
week.

Rohan offers a steady hand.

ROHAN
Rohan.

They shake — brief, tentative. Her grip shy. His calm.

SLOANE
Yeah, I know who you are.

A beat.

ROHAN
(chuckles)
Oh. Right.

SLOANE
(flustered)
I mean – you're the Business
Development Manager, right?

ROHAN
(laughs lightly)
That's right.

They share a soft, awkward laugh.

ROHAN (CONT'D)
Well... guess I'll see you around.

SLOANE
Yeah. Definitely.

ROHAN
Nice meeting you, Sloane.

SLOANE
You too.

He turns, nearly walks into the glass door – catches himself, sheepish.

Sloane watches him go. As the door clicks shut, she exhales – a breath she didn't know she was holding.

INT. KAPOOR HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sunlight fills the tastefully adorned room. Rohan and Sloane stand before a JUDGE – poised, still, a quiet charge between them.

Around them, a small group of guests in polished cocktail attire – Aanya, Devika, Lena, and others watching with shining eyes, pride warm on their faces.

JUDGE
By the authority vested in me, I
now pronounce you husband and wife.

A hush. Then applause – bright, heartfelt. Glasses clink, someone cheers as Rohan leans in and kisses Sloane.

The moment lingers.

EXT. KAPOOR ESTATE - DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

The grand entrance buzzes. Valets guide sleek cars down the winding drive, headlights cutting through fog.

Security melts into shadows, eyes sharp.

Guests emerge in polished elegance — heels tapping, laughter low, voices hushed as they head toward the warm glow of the entrance.

INT. KAPOOR HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The wedding party hums. Chillwave pulses as guests mingle with drinks in hand.

Servers weave through the crowd with champagne and delicate hors d'oeuvres.

Near the bar, a celebrity sparks bursts of laughter.

A spontaneous toast lifts the room — easy, joyful, wrapped in warmth.

EXT. KAPOOR ESTATE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

A cool breeze carries floral scents. Rohan, Sloane, Aanya, and Devika trade warm goodbyes with departing elders.

By the pool, guests linger — voices low over the gentle splash of water under glowing string lights.

On the lawn, small groups gaze at the distant city skyline, twinkling like stars.

The night exhales, serene and content.

INT. ELECTRIC CAR - DAY

Rohan glides through an upscale neighborhood, the car silent on smooth pavement. Manicured lawns, bright flowerbeds, and polished façades slide past.

EXT. ROHAN'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

He pulls up to his modern home — sharp lines, glass, bold against the neighborhood. Steps out with a dry cleaning bag, the rustle breaking the quiet.

INT. ROHAN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Refined minimalism — stylish furniture, a single tasteful artwork, clean lines, and calm textures shaping a curated order.

EXT. ROHAN'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - DUSK

Electricians finish wiring as LEDs flicker on, casting a warm glow.

Sloane, pregnancy showing, watches with a serene smile.

Rohan arrives, cradling a small dog. Together, they stand in the soft light.

INT. LUMIN - MEETING ROOM - DAY

A glass-walled room hums with quiet tension. On the wall screen, a schematic glows - code and component maps flickering as an ENGINEER gestures with a laser pointer. Two REGULATORS, sharp suits and sharper eyes, lean in.

ENGINEER

-we've updated the units to comply
with the notice, but the future
hinges on the interpretation of
section 15-B-

The door hisses open. Rohan, now in his 30s, steps in - tailored blazer, composed. The room stills. Everyone rises.

ENGINEER (CONT'D)

Gentlemen, this is Rohan Kapoor,
our Director of Business
Development.

Rohan moves down the line - firm handshakes, steady eye contact, a nod. Controlled, practiced.

ROHAN

Thank you all for being here.
Please - let's sit.

They settle. The schematic's blue glow washes across focused faces. A laptop clicks. The meeting rolls on.

INT. LUMIN - ROHAN'S NEW OFFICE - DAY

Soft daylight spills through floor-to-ceiling windows. Modern furniture, design books on a shelf, a framed photo half-hidden behind a monitor.

Rohan lies on a charcoal-gray couch - tie loosened, sleeves rolled, eyes closed. A stolen moment of stillness.

The door eases open. Sloane, now in her 30s, steps in – polished, efficient, fatigue beneath the surface. A toddler clings to her coat; a baby sleeps in a carrier on her chest.

SLOANE

Sorry to drop by – I've got a meeting in ten.

She unclips the carrier, sets it on a chair with practiced care. Rohan stirs, blinking awake. Sloane gives him a knowing look – part apology, part routine – and slips out.

The toddler wanders to the bookshelf, brushing spines. Rohan sits up, still shaking off sleep, and gently rocks the carrier. His gaze lingers on the baby.

A rare, unguarded smile.

INT. LUMIN – LENA'S OFFICE – DAY

Matte black walls, brushed metal, a sculptural pendant casting sharp shadows. The skyline looms beyond glass.

Lena, now in her 50s, sits poised behind her desk. Across from her, a BOARD MEMBER in a navy suit leans in.

BOARD MEMBER

You think he's been holding onto this the whole time?

LENA

If he knew, he didn't know how to use it. Rohan's not exactly the subtle type.

A soft knock. The glass door slides open.

Rohan steps in – crisp suit, presence steady, tension in his shoulders.

ROHAN

You wanted to see me?

LENA

Yeah. Sit down.

He does – calm, but coiled.

LENA (CONT'D)

Ryan Chen – name ring a bell?

ROHAN

Yeah. We overlapped at school.
Didn't know him well, but we
talked.

The Board Member leans in, intrigued.

BOARD MEMBER

His father-in-law's the CFO at
Nexora.

LENA

They're locking in customers with
that subscription model. It's
working. We wait, we lose ground. I
want you to reach out. Float the
idea of a partnership.

Rohan glances between them.

ROHAN

Alright. I can do that. But first —
there's something I want to
discuss.

Lena arches a brow.

ROHAN (CONT'D)

I want the option to buy more
shares. Discounted. And I want a
board seat.

LENA

What kind of discount?

ROHAN

Twenty percent under market.

LENA

Hm. And the seat?

ROHAN

You're asking for commitment. I
want skin in the game.

Lena leans back, weighing him.

LENA

Three percent off. That's all I'll
give.

Rohan's jaw tightens.

ROHAN

That's low. Not with what you're asking me to carry.

LENA

Then don't carry it. Walk.

A beat.

ROHAN

I'm in — but not at three percent. Not for that.

LENA

Then what are you asking?

Before he can answer —

BOARD MEMBER

Alright. Here's the offer: board seat — non-voting, for now. Five percent under valuation. You observe, contribute, learn. After a year, if you've earned it, we talk again.

Rohan meets his gaze.

ROHAN

Deal.

He exhales — quiet, sincere. Lena studies him, a flicker of acknowledgment in her still posture.

The balance shifts. Just enough to feel.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

A sunlit café corner. Tables shaded by ivy-covered trellises. The soft hum of conversation and indie music drifts through the air.

Rohan and RYAN (30s), hoodie, sneakers, effortlessly confident, sit at a small table. Ryan leans back, coffee in hand, relaxed.

RYAN

Totally random — I went out with Tessa Caldwell a couple times.

ROHAN

Wait, *seriously*?

RYAN

Yeah. College thing. We orbited the same group but never really crossed paths. Weird, right?

ROHAN

Yeah... funny how that happens.

A pause. Ryan sips his coffee, then sits up.

RYAN

So, Director of Business Dev. Big title.

ROHAN

(half-laughs, shakes his head)

Still getting used to hearing it out loud.

RYAN

At Lumin, no less.

ROHAN

Wild, right?

RYAN

Living the dream.

ROHAN

Not quite. But... that's actually why I reached out.

Ryan perks up, intrigued.

ROHAN (CONT'D)

We're looking at layering Lumin's tech into a subscription model. Nexora's setup? It's what we want to learn from. Think there's room for a conversation — maybe with your father-in-law?

RYAN

(grins, casual but sharp)

You walk in with the Kapoor name, you'll have their full attention before you even finish the pitch. Trust me.

Rohan exhales, relieved.

ROHAN

Good to hear. Think you can set something up?

INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - DAY

Soft daylight filters through tall windows, casting pale rectangles on polished linoleum. The room feels sterile, muted — a tense refuge.

Rohan slouches in a plastic chair, staring at his phone. Onscreen, a photo of Lena shaking hands with Nexora's CEO — headline:

"Lumin x Nexora: Strategic Partnership Talks Underway."

A quiet, almost private grin spreads across his face.

Across from him, Aanya, arms folded, watches him. One brow arches.

AANYA

(quiet, pointed)

There's always something slightly sideways about you. You know that?

ROHAN

(glancing up)

What now?

Before Aanya can reply, a firm voice calls out.

DOCTOR (O.S.)

Aanya?

Aanya rises smoothly. Rohan stands, slipping his phone away.

A doctor approaches — calm, authoritative. Devika waits nearby in a wheelchair, pale and fragile.

The doctor nods toward them, motioning to follow.

Without another word, they move down the sterile corridor together.

INT. LUMIN - BOARDROOM - DAY

A vast room of polished wood and glass. Executives murmur quietly, the weight of corporate power thick in the air.

The door opens.

Rohan enters – shoulders squared, face unreadable, eyes sharp. Heads turn, some curious, some cautious.

He nods, moving through with quiet purpose.

At the table's head, Lena leans into a conversation with a senior advisor. Her laughter is light, but her eyes flick to Rohan – a quiet storm.

Their gazes lock. He nods – a silent, heavy exchange.

She returns a tight smile, then turns back, calm and controlled.

Rohan takes his seat, fingers grazing the table as he adjusts his cufflinks. Outwardly composed; inwardly, momentum gathers – neither pride nor nerves.

INT. LUMIN – SLOANE'S OFFICE – DAY

Sunlight spills over a cluttered desk – a forgotten mug, a photo of Sloane with two smiling kids, a half-eaten granola bar on a crumpled napkin. Signs of long, busy days.

The door clicks open.

Rohan enters – hair thinning at the temples but still electric. He closes the door softly.

SLOANE
(looking up, curious)
What's going on?

He sinks into the chair, trying to stay cool, but a grin breaks through.

ROHAN
(half-laugh, excited)
Board meeting just ended. Guess what.

She leans in, eyes wide.

SLOANE
What?

ROHAN
The flagship store? It's happening.

She blinks, stunned.

SLOANE
Wait – seriously?

He leans closer, voice low.

ROHAN
That's not the headline.

Her brow tightens, intrigued.

SLOANE
What's the headline?

ROHAN
They tapped me to lead it.

She stares – shock melting into pride.

SLOANE
You're kidding.

He shakes his head, grinning.

ROHAN
Not even a little.

A laugh escapes her – surprised. She leans back, letting it sink in. The moment lingers – rare, quiet.

SLOANE
Damn.

INT. AIRPLANE – NIGHT

First class hums with quiet elegance – glass clinks softly, a page turns. Warm light glows on polished metal and leather.

Rohan sits by the window, silhouette edged in shadow. Alone, relaxed, head bowed, thumb tracing his phone – grounding, not searching.

A nearly empty mug of green tea steams faintly on the tray table.

The window is covered, shutting out the world.

A long breath.

Stillness.

At thirty thousand feet – finally at peace.

INT. FLAGSHIP STORE - DAY

The vast interior echoes with progress — drills whir, tools clang, boots thud on concrete.

Steel beams arch overhead like cathedral ribs, scaffolding spirals toward an open skylight. Dust swirls in golden shafts of sunlight, cutting through like divine light.

Rohan strides through, flanked by an ARCHITECT and contractor, hard hats on, blueprints tucked under arms.

ARCHITECT

That'll be the central atrium —
right above. Natural light pours
in, makes the whole floor feel
alive.

Rohan stops, tilts his head back — not just seeing the structure, but the potential.

ARCHITECT (CONT'D)

And that section over there? That's
where the interactive installations
will live. We're designing it to
pull people in the second they step
inside.

They move on, weaving through columns and workbenches. Rohan's eyes scan every detail — raw concrete, dangling wires, exposed veins of something still becoming.

Behind his stillness: ownership, anticipation — the calm before the curtain lifts.

EXT. DOWNTOWN MANHATTAN - DAY

Manhattan pulses — engines hum, horns blare, footsteps layer into a steady rhythm.

Rohan stands off the curb, coffee in hand. The sleeve's wrinkled, steam curling into the crisp air.

He's still — one figure unmoving amid a thousand in motion.

Across the avenue: the flagship store. Skeletal but bold, a glass-and-steel frame rising between polished titans — Gucci, Apple, Prada — already demanding attention.

Scaffolding hugs the façade. Workers crawl like careful ants, assembling the future beam by beam.

Rohan watches. Just watches.

Around him, the city surges – taxis blur, a cyclist curses, a phone rings.

But he doesn't move. Not yet.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

Sunlight floods through large windows, lighting matte-black panels and polished microphones. The studio feels open and calm, engineers' quiet hum filtering through soundproof glass.

Rohan sits behind the mic – composed, blazer crisp, hairline subtly restored. Calm, present, not performing.

Across from him, the PODCASTER – familiar and confident, sharp-eyed, relaxed – leans in with measured interest.

ROHAN

Starting from scratch isn't just grinding. It's knowing what to grind toward.

(beat)

For me, it was learning to see. Knowing when to wait – when to move. Timing matters. But clarity? That's the real edge.

PODCASTER

Right. So many people stay busy just to feel in control. But you – you knew what not to chase.

He leans in, energy shifting.

PODCASTER (CONT'D)

What gives you the edge? Instinct? Timing? Or something else?

Rohan exhales through his nose. Not cocky – composed.

ROHAN

Awareness. The ability to zoom out – see the whole board.

(beat)

Momentum can burn you out. Strategy? Strategy moves the needle.

PODCASTER

Yeah. That's the line – staying afloat versus staying ahead.

(beat)

(MORE)

PODCASTER (CONT'D)

So now, when you zoom out... what's the big picture? The endgame?

Rohan shifts slightly. Thoughtful. Not in a hurry.

ROHAN

I want to build something that lasts. Something that doesn't need me in the room to keep moving.

PODCASTER

Legacy.

He nods, catching the weight in Rohan's tone.

PODCASTER (CONT'D)

Do you imagine your kids stepping in someday? Carrying the torch?

A quiet softening in Rohan's expression — fleeting, but real. He lets the question breathe.

ROHAN

I think about giving them options.

(beat)

Not a script. Not pressure. Just... space to choose.

The Podcaster nods — no follow-up needed.

A silence settles in. Not empty. Full.

INT. ROHAN'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

Muted light filters through sheer curtains, softening the room's modern edges. At the table, Rohan sits still while an ACCOUNTANT — late 30s, efficient — taps through a neatly organized spreadsheet.

The laptop's glow reflects off polished wood. Between them, a slim stack of reports.

ACCOUNTANT

So — shares valued at two hundred and eighty million. Residential: five million. Commercial holdings: ten point five million.

(beat)

Cash reserves, another ten point five. Other investments... roughly six point two million.

The accountant looks up, direct.

ACCOUNTANT (CONT'D)

That puts your net worth at
approximately three hundred and
forty-four point six million
dollars.

Rohan doesn't flinch. He nods once, slow.

ROHAN

Got it.

The laptop closes with a soft click as the accountant packs
up.

Rohan remains still – the faintest smile appears. Not
triumph. Just acknowledgment. A moment earned.

EXT. YACHT - DUSK

The yacht drifts gently, its white hull glowing in the fading
Mediterranean sun. Water laps softly, reflecting gold and
indigo.

Rohan reclines in a sun chair at the stern, barefoot, linen
shirt loose in the breeze. The sky bleeds rose and flame; the
sea mirrors dusk's slow burn.

A coastal town clings to the hillside – white stone and
terracotta lit by flickering lanterns.

He watches the horizon in silence. No phone. No noise. Just
steady stillness.

INT. MEDICAL ASSISTANTS STATION - DAY

A bright, orderly workspace hums with quiet focus – soft
phones ring, keyboards click, papers shuffle in practiced
hands.

CAMILA TORRES (late 20s) sits at her desk in pale blue
scrubs, a sleek headset snug over her dark hair. Composed and
graceful, she's a quiet calm in the current.

She taps her headset, voice warm and steady.

CAMILA

Hi, this is Camila Torres calling
from Sunset Medical Center – is
this Carl Penrose?

(beat)

Hi Carl.

(MORE)

CAMILA (CONT'D)

I'm just calling to go over your lab results — everything looks good.

(beat)

That said, Dr. Nguyen would like to schedule an abdominal ultrasound, just to follow up on some of the symptoms you mentioned.

(beat)

We've got an opening Monday at 9 a.m. — does that work for you?

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Camila wraps a blood pressure cuff around the patient's arm. The machine hums, inflates, then exhales softly.

CAMILA

Okay — your blood pressure's 135 over 85. Slightly elevated, but that could just be from the walk in. Nothing to stress about.

She peels off the cuff, sets it on the counter.

CAMILA (CONT'D)

Go ahead and have a seat — the doctor will be with you shortly.

PATIENT

(smiling)

Thanks a lot.

INT. LAB - DAY

Masked and gloved, Camila works with steady hands, transferring fecal samples from a sealed container into labeled vials. Her movements are precise, focused — pure clinical professionalism.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Camila strides down the hall, bag over her shoulder, scrubs slightly rumpled. A quiet smile lingers — the mark of a good shift.

She passes the front desk. A SECURITY GUARD nods.

SECURITY GUARD

Have a good one!

CAMILA

You too – see you tomorrow.

Glass doors slide open. Camila steps into warm afternoon light, brushing her face as she heads out.

INT. MINIVAN – DAY

Camila drives down a sunlit Southern California boulevard. Palm trees and strip malls glide past. Low pop music fills the quiet. She's calm, thoughtful – one hand on the wheel, the other near the gearshift.

INT. HYPERMARKET – DAY

Camila weaves through the busy drink aisle, cart full of boxed and canned goods – no fresh produce in sight.

She stops at an empty shelf, scanning the gap where her usual items should be. A quiet exhale, a flicker of irritation. Her eyes search for alternatives.

INT. HYPERMARKET – LATER

Camila waits by the stockroom door, cart at her side. A STOCK CLERK appears, holding a full six-pack of yerba mate.

STOCK CLERK

(in Spanish)

I found it.

CAMILA

(relieved, in Spanish)

Oh, thank you so much – you saved my life.

She takes the bottle with a grateful smile.

INT. MINIVAN – DAY

Camila drives through steady freeway traffic, hands relaxed on the wheel. The hum of tires blends with distant radio chatter.

Ahead, a green sign looms:

INTERNATIONAL BORDER / FRONTERA INTERNACIONAL – 1 MILE / 2 KM

EXT. MEXICAN BORDER CROSSING - DAY

Vehicles crawl through winding lanes. The sun beats down on metal roofs as drivers fan themselves or sip from water bottles.

Ahead, customs booths stand like sentinels, officers waving cars through. The hum of idling engines mixes with the occasional honk — a steady rhythm of waiting and passage.

INT. MINIVAN - CONTINUOUS

Camila grips the wheel, eyes scanning the slow-moving line of cars. The heat presses in, but the air conditioning hums quietly.

In the distance, a large sign looms: *MEXICO*.

INT. MINIVAN - AFTERNOON

Camila cruises down a sunlit street lined with tall palms. Sleek, gated communities sit behind manicured lawns and high fences, exuding quiet affluence.

EXT. GATED COMMUNITY - ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

She slows before a stone sign etched in chrome:

URBANA HORIZONTE NORTE

The gate whirs open. Tires crackle softly over swept asphalt.

INT. MINIVAN - CONTINUOUS

Camila passes sculpted shrubs and trimmed grass. Semi-detached, clean-lined homes stand like sentries.

She eases into a driveway and stops. The engine clicks cooling. She sits — the hush of arrival settling.

INT. CAMILA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DUSK

Warm dusk light filters through linen curtains, casting a golden glow over a tidy kitchen-living space. The fridge hums softly.

Camila seals two lunch boxes, placing them beside neatly labeled leftovers — efficient, gentle.

The front door clicks open.

RICARDO (30s, balding, well-groomed) enters — blazer over one arm, takeout bag in hand, Bluetooth earpiece in.

RICARDO
(in Spanish; into phone)
I understand the delay, but those
components need to ship by Friday.

He sets takeout on the table, leans in for a brief kiss as Camila closes the fridge. They sit.

He glances at a spreadsheet, still on call.

RICARDO (CONT'D)
No, the deadline can't be pushed.
The client expects the full
shipment.
(beat)
Let me talk to the team. If we need
overtime, we'll make it happen.

Camila opens chopsticks, lays out napkins — quiet coordination, a life run on precision and partnership.

INT. CAMILA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Moonlight filters through sheer curtains, casting faint patterns.

Camila and Ricardo lie entwined, breaths synced, ceiling fan humming overhead.

On the nightstand, a clock glows 10:02 PM.

Stillness — a pocket of calm between days.

INT. CAMILA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

The alarm BUZZES — harsh, insistent. Red digits read 3:00 AM.

Camila stirs, eyes barely open, silencing it. She sits slowly, feet meeting cool floor.

She rises, crosses to the bathroom. The soft rush of shower water breaks silence.

INT. CAMILA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

Fresh from shower, hair pulled back, Camila moves through the quiet kitchen.

She slides a chilled yerba mate can into her tote – tab unpopped.

Her packed lunch waits on the counter; she adds it beside the can – careful, unhurried.

She checks the time. No rush – just rhythm.

EXT. AMERICAN BORDER CROSSING - DAWN

Vehicles stretch in endless lines, inching forward steadily. Border Patrol agents move methodically between cars, K9 units sniffing the air. Surveillance cameras pivot overhead, lenses tracking.

INT. MINIVAN - LATER

Camila pulls up to the checkpoint, sliding her U.S. passport across the window with practiced calm.

The CBP OFFICER scans it briefly.

CBP OFFICER
Open your trunk.

Camila presses a button. The trunk clicks open.

She holds back a sigh – a flicker of irritation crosses her face, but her voice remains steady, unreadable.

INT. MEDICAL ASSISTANTS STATION - DAY

Morning light filters through blinds. Phones ring, keyboards click, murmured conversations weave through the air.

Camila strides to her cubicle, offering a bright smile and nod to a passing colleague.

Sliding into her chair, she exhales, lifts a chilled yerba mate to her lips, savors a slow sip, then sets it down.

Her fingers hover over the keyboard, then begin typing – calm, focused, ready for the day.

INT. HOSPITAL - BREAKROOM - DAY

Camila leans casually against the counter, holding out her phone to a weary COLLEAGUE rubbing her neck.

CAMILA

(in Spanish)

Check this one out — a shared apartment in Colonia Santa Cruz, right by the border, for \$750. Honestly, though, you could get a whole place for that, just half an hour away.

COLLEAGUE

I don't care if it's shared. I can't spend another night in the car.

CAMILA

Look, I know moving to Mexico wasn't exactly your first choice, but trust me, it's just like anywhere else. You'll adjust.

INT. MINIVAN - DAY

Camila drives down a worn stretch of Southern California street. Faded strip malls and weathered buildings blur past.

Her eyes catch a cluster of tents and parked cars — makeshift shelters for homeless workers.

She quickly looks away, face unreadable, the weight of it pressing just beneath the surface.

INT. CAMILA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sunlight filters softly through the windows. Camila stands beside a painter, looking at a blank wall.

PAINTER

(in Spanish)

What color do you want?

CAMILA

(in Spanish)

Something warm... not too bright. Just enough to feel different.

She glances toward the afternoon light slipping through the curtains.

CAMILA (CONT'D)
(soft, almost to herself)
It's nice to have a corner that
feels... a little softer.

The painter nods quietly, understanding.

Camila steps back, watching the light shift across the empty wall — a quiet moment of calm in her day.

INT. MINIVAN - AFTERNOON

Camila, still in scrubs, eases the minivan into the driveway. The engine clicks softly as she shuts it off.

She sits for a moment, hands on the wheel — not tired, just pausing.

Then, with quiet resolve, she steps out.

EXT. GATED COMMUNITY - CAMILA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Camila walks the clean path to her front door, balancing her bag and water bottle in one arm.

She pauses — a lone envelope rests on the mat.

She picks it up, eyes scanning the label. Her brow creases slightly. A quiet breath escapes — not panic, just weight.

Then she unlocks the door and steps inside.

INT. CAMILA'S HOUSE - DINING AREA - DUSK

Camila sits at the table, shoulders tense, a document spread before her. The envelope lies discarded nearby.

The front door opens. Ricardo steps in with a takeout bag.

RICARDO
(in Spanish)
What's going on?

CAMILA
(frustrated)
Look.

She pushes the document toward him. He sets down the food, picks it up, skims it. His expression shifts — not surprise, just annoyance.

CAMILA (CONT'D)
That's nearly \$500 more in rent!

RICARDO
(dismissive)
It doesn't say it's non-negotiable.

He sets the paper down and heads down the hall.

RICARDO (CONT'D)
I need to use the bathroom.

Camila exhales hard, dragging a hand through her hair.
Frustration simmers — familiar and heavy.

INT. CAMILA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Camila and Ricardo stand at the counter, speakerphone between them. A few cleared plates sit nearby. The air is tense, all business.

A LEGAL ADVISOR's tinny voice comes through the phone.

RICARDO
(in Spanish)
Look, here's the situation. I work in Mexico, and my income is lower than my wife's. This rent increase is going to hit her the hardest. For me to contribute, she'd have to cover some of my expenses.

LEGAL ADVISOR (O.S.)
So, \$150 is your offer then?

CAMILA
(trying to keep it light)
If there's any chance of not increasing it at all, that would be wonderful.

She lets out a nervous laugh, glancing at Ricardo — already stiff, distant.

LEGAL ADVISOR (O.S.)
Alright. I'll reach out to the client and let you know what they say.

RICARDO
Thank you.

The call ends.

Silence.

Ricardo takes her hand — more habit than comfort.

RICARDO (CONT'D)
Let's just go to bed.

They head upstairs, steps slow and heavy, the day still hanging over them.

INT. HOSPITAL - LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Camila opens her locker, movements tight. The room is quiet — a rare stillness.

She checks her phone, hesitates, then dials.

A soft buzz echoes.

RICARDO (V.O.)
(in Spanish)
Hey.

CAMILA
Hey, what's going on?

RICARDO (V.O.)
The lawyer called. He says the best
the client will do is \$250.

Camila exhales sharply, weary.

RICARDO (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Should I tell him we agree?

CAMILA
(voice tight)
Of course, Ricardo! What other
choice do we have?

A beat.

RICARDO (V.O.)
Okay. We'll talk later.

Camila slams the locker shut — the clang ricochets through the room. She stands still, breathing hard, the weight pressing in.

INT. CAMILA'S HOUSE - DINING AREA - NIGHT

Takeout containers sit open. Ricardo eats steadily. Camila picks at her food, distracted.

CAMILA
(in Spanish)
I'm not stopping the savings plan,
so we'll need to cut back on other
expenses.

RICARDO
Let's drop the gym and cancel the
streaming subscriptions. We barely
use them anyway.

She nods, distant, eyes on her container.

CAMILA
We can't keep spending so much on
takeout either.

RICARDO
I agree.

She crunches numbers silently, the weight settling in.

Her fork clinks softly as she sets it down, frustration shadowing her face.

CAMILA
We're paying almost \$3,000 a month
for rent.

RICARDO
(trying to calm her)
Hey, relax. We'll figure something
out.

Camila stares ahead, unmoving, her mind far from the table.

INT. OFF-PRICE DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

Crowded aisles overflow with designer bargains. Bold yellow tags scream: "COMPARE AT \$48 - NOW \$19.99." Shoppers dig through racks, carts piled high.

At the beauty counter, a BEAUTY ASSOCIATE swiftly scans items behind the glass.

Camila approaches, holding a foundation bottle, eyes scanning the shelves.

CAMILA
(in Spanish)
Hi, I'm looking for a liquid
foundation in this shade. Something
that won't settle into fine lines.
The one I use matches my undertones
perfectly and feels really light.

The Beauty Associate looks up, curious.

BEAUTY ASSOCIATE
(in Spanish)
Which one do you use?

Camila hesitates.

CAMILA
Uh... Urban Decay. But they haven't
had it at my usual store.

Her voice softens – self-conscious.

The Associate nods, taking the bottle.

BEAUTY ASSOCIATE
Let me see what I can find for you.

She disappears into the shelves. Camila lingers, shifting
slightly – a flicker of embarrassment in her stance.

EXT. SHOPPING MALL – DAY

Camila walks a sleek plaza – polished concrete, palm
planters, soft jazz from hidden speakers. Familiar brands
line the walkway.

She slows at a high-end boutique. The window glows,
mannequins draped in silk, heels sculptural.

Inside, a woman twirls before a mirror, laughing with the
clerk – effortless, pleased.

INT. BOUTIQUE – CONTINUOUS

Camila watches from outside.

The woman adjusts her dress, radiant in the glass – alone,
unaware of anything beyond.

Camila stands still, unreadable. Not envious. Not bitter.
Just quietly apart.

INT. CAMILA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Camila arranges two lunches on the counter with quiet precision. Ricardo stirs a pot at the stove, focused but tired.

CAMILA
(in Spanish)
We've got nothing to lose, Ricardo.
Let's at least see what we can do.

Ricardo pauses, breath slow, weighing the idea.

RICARDO
Alright, but let's be realistic
about it.

Camila nods, a quiet understanding passing between them.

CAMILA
Of course.

They share a brief, tender smile. A soft kiss. Then, back to their tasks — together.

INT. BANK - MORTGAGE OFFICE - DAY

A sleek, sunlit office. Camila and Ricardo sit across from MIGUEL, a friendly mortgage advisor. Their conversation flows with easy familiarity.

MIGUEL
(in Spanish)
Your payment capacity looks solid.
Ideally, your mortgage should be
about 30 to 40 percent of your
monthly income — which means you're
looking at \$1,200 to \$1,600 a
month.

RICARDO
And with that, what kind of loan
are we looking at?

MIGUEL
It depends on the value of the
property.

CAMILA
What about the place we're renting
right now?

Miguel types swiftly, then looks up.

MIGUEL

If it's valued over \$800,000, your
down payment would be between
\$80,000 and \$240,000.

Camila's eyes widen slightly at the number.

RICARDO

Miguel, just tell us what we can
afford with \$50,000 down.

MIGUEL

With that amount, you're looking at
something in the \$250,000 to
\$300,000 range. Most likely an
apartment, depending on the
location.

INT. SEDAN - DAY

A sleek sedan moves through busy streets. Camila sits
passenger-side, face tight with tension. Ricardo drives,
hands steady.

Outside, workers wait for buses and colectivos — the pulse of
a bustling Mexican street. City sounds drift in through the
open window.

Camila blinks fast. Tears slip free despite her.

RICARDO

(in Spanish)

Are you crying?

Her voice cracks.

CAMILA

I don't want to be poor, Ricardo. I
don't want to be poor.

Ricardo glances at her, concern softening his face, but keeps
focus on the road.

RICARDO

You're not going to be poor,
Camila. Please, just relax.

She wipes her eyes quickly, trying to steady herself, but the
weight lingers in her shoulders.

INT. CAMILA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

The room is dim, lit by a soft nightlight. Ricardo sleeps peacefully. Camila stirs beside him, eyes wide with restless thoughts. She gently shakes him awake, her touch light.

CAMILA
(whispering, in Spanish)
Hey. Hey, Ricardo.

Ricardo blinks, half-dreaming, and turns toward her, voice groggy.

RICARDO
(murmuring,)
Eh? What's wrong?

Camila hesitates, then speaks softly, letting the moment settle.

CAMILA
(softly)
Sorry for freaking out earlier
today — or, well, yesterday,
actually.

Ricardo exhales, calm despite his sleepiness.

RICARDO
Don't worry about it.

Camila nestles closer, resting her head on his chest. She kisses his cheek, then presses her lips to his.

CAMILA
I love you.

RICARDO
(smiling)
I love you too.

She pulls back, looking at him with quiet resolve.

CAMILA
We're going to own a house one day.

Ricardo smiles gently, brushing her hair.

RICARDO
(with a reassuring smile)
Of course we will.

Camila's eyes soften, a glimmer of hope shining through.

CAMILA

And then... we'll have children.

Ricardo's smile deepens, voice tender.

RICARDO

(gently)

Of course.

They share a lingering kiss. Outside, the world fades away, wrapped in the moment's quiet warmth.

INT. MAILBOX SERVICE LOCATION - DAY

Rows of mail slots line the modest room, the faded USPS logo faint in the background. A quiet hum fills the space.

Camila sits alone, hands folded, waiting.

A voice calls from behind the counter.

MAIL CLERK (O.C.)

Camila?

She rises smoothly and steps forward.

The clerk slides two small boxes across the counter, nodding.

Camila nods back, steady-eyed, and picks them up.

INT. MINIVAN - MOMENTS LATER

Camila sits in the driver's seat, engine off, parked outside the mailbox service.

She carefully opens a box on her lap. Inside, luxury skincare products gleam in pristine packaging.

Her fingers trace the items, eyes sharp and calculating.

EXT. MEXICAN BORDER CROSSING - DAY

Cars crawl toward the checkpoint, engines humming in the heat. Pavement shimmers under the relentless sun.

INT. MINIVAN - CONTINUOUS

Camila drives slowly through the line. The mailbox service boxes peek from beneath grocery bags.

Mexican soldiers stand alert, scanning each vehicle with practiced precision.

INT. SPA - OFFICE - DUSK

The sleek, minimalist office glows softly. Camila hands over a couple of skincare products to a poised BEAUTICIAN (40s).

BEAUTICIAN
(in Spanish)
You got my deposit, right?

CAMILA
Yes, do you need me to send you the receipt?

BEAUTICIAN
Please, if it's not too much trouble.

Camila pulls up the receipt on her phone, typing smoothly.

BEAUTICIAN (CONT'D)
Next time, can you grab the hyaluronic acid serum? The paperwork's a pain for me since I'm Mexican.

CAMILA
Sure, I'll make a note of it.

BEAUTICIAN
And if Ana asks, tell her I got the vitamin C serum last week. She doesn't know I picked it up.

Camila smiles faintly as she hits send.

CAMILA
Got it.

INT. CAMILA'S HOUSE - DINING AREA - DAY

Camila sits at the dining table, focused on her laptop. A virtual class plays onscreen. Beside her, a notebook lies open, half-filled with neat notes.

INSTRUCTOR
(in English)
Welcome to the Geriatric Care Certification Program on edX.
(MORE)

INSTRUCTOR (CONT'D)
I'm Ethan Carr, and I'll be guiding
you through the course.

Ricardo, dressed for work, walks by, leans down to kiss her
head, then grabs his lunch and jacket from the counter.

INSTRUCTOR (CONT'D)
We'll begin by exploring the unique
needs and challenges faced by older
adults – a crucial foundation for
quality care.

INT. HOSPITAL - COGNITIVE THERAPY ROOM - DAY

A calm, softly lit room. Camila sits at a small table with an
ELDERLY PATIENT, mid-game of memory cards.

CAMILA
(in English)
Alright, let's see... the grapes
were on top of the...?

ELDERLY PATIENT
Apple.

CAMILA
Yes! The apple – you've got it.

Camila smiles warmly, flipping the matching card. The patient
grins, pride flickering through.

INT. HOSPITAL - BREAKROOM - DAY

Camila sits alone at a small table, half-eaten lunch pushed
aside. She scrolls her phone, eyes sharp.

A digital pay stub appears:

NET PAY: \$1,712.43

She exhales – a long, quiet breath. A small, tired smile
flickers. Worn out, but reassured... for now.

INT. MINIVAN - DAY

Camila drives in silence, fingers tight on the wheel, eyes
sharp.

A gas station sign flashes:

REGULAR 4.643 9/10

PLUS 4.723 9/10

V-POWER 4.886 9/10

DIESEL #2 4.931 9/10

Her gaze locks on the prices. Jaw tightens. Knuckles blanch.

A flicker of anger sparks – silent, sharp – as she keeps driving.

INT. CAMILA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Camila stirs a steaming pan, efficient but tight. Two lunch containers sit half-packed nearby. She moves between them, multitasking without pause.

Ricardo enters.

CAMILA
(in Spanish)
Hey.

RICARDO
What's up?

CAMILA
Did you hear? They're increasing
the electricity and water rates
again.

RICARDO
Yeah. I saw the notice.

CAMILA
So now what?

His phone buzzes. He checks the screen.

RICARDO
Maybe we tap into savings if
there's any emergency from now on –
just to get through the bump.

Camila pauses mid-stir. Her eyes dim slightly.

RICARDO (CONT'D)
I've got to take this.
(into phone)
Yeah? What's happening?

He steps into the living room, voice shifting into business mode.

RICARDO (O.C.) (CONT'D)
No, tell the supplier to send the
invoice today. I don't want another
delay.

Camila exhales sharply, returns to the stove, stirring slower
— less cooking, more coping.

INT. HOSPITAL - BREAKROOM - DAY

Camila sits alone at a small table, quietly eating from a
Tupperware. The hum of a vending machine and distant chatter
fill the room.

She scrolls through her phone, distracted.

She stops mid-bite.

CLOSE ON PHONE SCREEN

Subject: *"Important Update Regarding Your Loan Payment."*

Her thumb hovers, then taps.

Her eyes scan rapidly. Her posture stiffens, shoulders
rising. The background noise fades beneath the weight of the
message.

She sets down her fork.

The Tupperware stays open — but her appetite is gone.

EXT. HOSPITAL - LATER

Camila paces near the staff entrance, phone pressed to her
ear, brow tight with frustration.

CAMILA
(in Spanish)
\$1,250 a month? How am I supposed
to pay that? Makes me want to just
sell the damn thing before they
come for it.

RICARDO (V.O.)
No one's coming for anything. Let
me figure something out, alright?
I've got to get back to work. We'll
talk later, okay? —

She ends the call mid-sentence, lips pressed, jaw clenched.

Her eyes drift to the lot – landing on her minivan.

She stares, still. A long, heavy pause.

Then she turns, walking back inside, shoulders hunched, head low.

INT. CAMILA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Water runs as Camila washes dishes, slow and almost meditative. Ricardo approaches, handing her his plate, lingering hesitantly.

Camila looks up.

CAMILA
(in Spanish)
What is it?

Ricardo shifts, uneasy.

RICARDO
I'm selling the Honda. I'll buy
Carlos' Chevy outright – no
payments. It'll take some pressure
off.

Camila pauses, eyes on him.

RICARDO (CONT'D)
You're wasting water.

She shuts off the faucet, meeting his gaze.

Silence.

RICARDO (CONT'D)
This isn't a debate. I've already
decided.

He walks away.

Camila stands frozen, dish in hand, staring down the hall.

INT. MINIVAN - DAY

Camila sits behind the wheel, engine off, fingers tapping the steering wheel.

Through the windshield, she watches Ricardo hand keys to a waiting man by his sedan. They shake hands, exchange quiet words.

Behind them, a lively Mexican neighborhood hums — fresh stucco walls, neat sidewalks, colorful murals, the distant bark of a dog, and a vendor's faint call drifting on warm air.

Camila remains still, her gaze steady, expression unreadable — caught between gratitude and guilt.

She exhales softly.

INT. CAMILA'S HOUSE - DINING AREA - NIGHT

Spatula in hand, Camila moves to the window.

Outside, Ricardo pulls into the driveway in a sedan showing signs of years on the road — its paint holding steady, a few gentle marks telling quiet stories.

She watches him, silent, the soft clatter from the stove behind her the only sound.

A quiet exhale. She turns back to the kitchen, face calm but unreadable — thoughts held just beneath the surface.

INT. HYPERMARKET - DAY

Camila pushes her cart down the aisle, colorful cans lining the shelves.

She slows by the energy drinks. Her eyes fix on the familiar yellow six-pack of yerba mate.

Her fingers brush the packaging, then hesitate.

Guilt flickers — the price, the indulgence, the necessity.

She exhales sharply, then grabs the six-pack and drops it in the cart.

Her cart rolls forward; her steps grow heavier.

INT. CAMILA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Camila lies in bed, phone to her ear, quiet strain etched across her face.

CAMILA

(in Spanish)

Ever since Ricardo sold his car, I can't even buy something for myself without feeling like I'm doing something wrong.

WOMAN (V.O.)

Wait, weren't Ricardo's parents well-off? Didn't they have money?

CAMILA

Not anymore. They lost the business. Now, it's just rent and pensions keeping them afloat.

WOMAN (V.O.)

Damn...

CAMILA

Yeah...

WOMAN (V.O.)

I know your schedule's packed, but have you considered picking up extra hours?

CAMILA

I've thought about it from day one. But I don't want to use that option yet.

WOMAN (V.O.)

Why not? Just a few extra shifts to help take the edge off... It doesn't have to be long-term.

Camila exhales, the weight of it pressing in. The idea lingers.

INT. MEDICAL ASSISTANTS STATION - DAY

Camila types with calm precision, eyes fixed on the scrolling patient data.

Around her, the office winds down — drawers close, chairs roll back, footsteps echo.

The wall clock reads 5:22 PM.

She pauses, stretches her fingers, then resumes — steady, unfazed.

INT. HOSPITAL - LATER

Camila heads for the exit, her pace slow, shoulders heavy with exhaustion.

The front desk security guard looks up, concern in his eyes.

SECURITY GUARD
(in English)
Extra hours again?

Camila offers a faint smile, nods, and keeps walking – too tired to answer.

EXT. MEXICAN BORDER CROSSING - DUSK

Cars inch forward, headlights glowing in the dimming light.

Distant honks and raised voices cut through the thick air.

INT. MINIVAN - CONTINUOUS

Camila grips the wheel, eyes locked on the crawling line.

A car suddenly swerves into her lane, cutting her off.

She hits the horn.

The driver throws a middle finger out the window – never looks back.

Camila's jaw tightens. She says nothing.

INT. MINIVAN - NIGHT

Camila drives fast, headlights cutting through the dark.

Palm trees blur past, shadows stretching over the pavement.

Streetlights flicker above, briefly illuminating gated communities – pristine, distant, unreachable.

Her grip tightens on the wheel. She doesn't slow down.

EXT. GATED COMMUNITY - CAMILA'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Camila climbs out of the minivan, arms full of grocery bags.

She strides to the front door, focused, unsmiling.

Ricardo's aging sedan sits in the driveway – a quiet reminder.

She doesn't look at it.

INT. CAMILA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Camila moves briskly between stove and counter, steam rising as something sizzles. She packs lunch containers with practiced urgency – every motion precise, controlled.

In the living room, Ricardo paces, phone to his ear, tension sharp in his voice.

RICARDO

(in Spanish)

The parts still haven't come in. If they don't get here today, we'll miss the deadline and get hit with a fine.

(beat, in Spanish)

The line's already backed up! We need those parts, now!

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The alarm BLARES: 3:00 AM.

Camila silences it, eyes heavy. She sits up, swings her legs over the edge of the bed, and exhales.

A beat.

Then she rises and heads to the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - LATER

Camila brushes her hair with steady strokes. A few strands snag in the bristles.

She glances down – more hair collects in the sink.

A flicker of concern crosses her face.

INT. DERMATOLOGIST'S OFFICE - DAY

A softly lit, clinical space. Camila sits tense in the exam chair as the DERMATOLOGIST gently parts her hair, inspecting her scalp.

DERMATOLOGIST

(in Spanish)

When did you start noticing the hair loss?

CAMILA

A few months ago. It started in the shower, but now it's on my pillow, in my brush... even when I touch it.

DERMATOLOGIST

Any recent illnesses or new medications?

CAMILA

No, nothing like that. Everything's been the same.

DERMATOLOGIST

What about family history?

CAMILA

My dad, but his hair started thinning in his fifties. My mom has fine hair, though.

The dermatologist nods thoughtfully, continuing the exam.

INT. CAMILA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

The kitchen hums with boiling pots; counters crowded with lunch containers. Camila moves briskly, sharp and tense. Ricardo stands nearby, trying to help.

CAMILA

(in Spanish)

He didn't prescribe anything. No medication — just a stress management plan.

RICARDO

What kind of plan?

CAMILA

Meditation. Yoga. All that nonsense.

RICARDO

Didn't you use to meditate?

CAMILA
 (frustrated)
 I don't want to meditate, Ricardo!

They freeze, eyes locked. A heavy silence fills the room.

RICARDO
 Alright. Calm down.

CAMILA
 I'm done with these quick fixes! I
 need real solutions – not more
 nonsense!

RICARDO
 I know.

CAMILA
 Then why the hell are you always so
 goddamn calm?!

Suddenly, Ricardo's phone rings. They exchange a tense look.
 Without a word, Ricardo turns away and answers.

RICARDO
 (into phone)
 What now?

Camila slams the spatula down on the stove; the sizzle goes
 unnoticed as she storms toward the stairs.

Ricardo moves to the living room.

RICARDO (CONT'D)
 (into phone)
 No, I sent those numbers last week!
 This is the second time you're
 telling me this?!

INT. PSYCHOLOGIST'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The room is warm, bathed in soft light. Bookshelves line the
 walls; a flickering candle casts gentle shadows.

Camila sits cross-legged on the couch, relaxed but fidgeting
 nervously in her lap.

Across from her, the PSYCHOLOGIST (40s) listens calmly,
 steady.

CAMILA
 (in Spanish)
 I always take it out on him.
 (MORE)

CAMILA (CONT'D)

All my anger, my stress — I just
dump it on him.

PSYCHOLOGIST

Do you feel like he's responsible
for what you're going through?

CAMILA

No. But sometimes it feels like I
treat him like he is.

(beat)

It's the damn economy. If I lived
alone with cats, I'd probably be
yelling at them instead.

She exhales, staring off, gaze distant.

CAMILA (CONT'D)

What really gets me is knowing what
he thinks the solution is.

PSYCHOLOGIST

What's that?

CAMILA

Move somewhere cheaper.

The Psychologist's eyes sharpen, sensing Camila's tension.

PSYCHOLOGIST

This is a tough situation. But
maybe try focusing on what you *can*
control. The way you communicate.
How you manage stress together.

(beat)

Even when the answers aren't clear,
putting your relationship first
might make the next step a little
easier to see.

Camila absorbs the words quietly, the weight settling around
her.

INT. CAMILA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Dim light filters through the cluttered room, casting long
shadows. Camila, pale and sniffling, shuffles down the stairs
in a hoodie and socks.

A loud thud breaks the silence. She freezes, then moves to
the window.

Outside, a neighbor yells into their phone. Movers load furniture onto the curb while a Mexican police cruiser idles nearby.

Camila stands still, staring blankly, her face expressionless under the weight of it all.

INT. MINIVAN - NIGHT

Camila, still in scrubs, pulls up beside Ricardo's car in the driveway. She exhales deeply, fingers tightening on the wheel before stepping out.

INT. CAMILA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Camila bursts through the door, bags in hand, eyes scanning the dim room.

CAMILA

Ricardo?

Silence. She calls again, voice rising.

CAMILA (CONT'D)

Ricardo?

No answer. She sets the bags down, brows knitting in confusion.

INT. CAMILA'S HOUSE - DINING AREA - LATER

Ricardo enters slowly. Camila sits at the table, tense, eyes locked on him.

CAMILA

(in Spanish)

Where have you been?

RICARDO

I was talking to the neighbors.

CAMILA

I didn't see you when I got here.
Were you in their house?

RICARDO

They needed help moving some
furniture.

CAMILA

Since when do they ask you to help with that?

RICARDO

What's wrong with that?

CAMILA

Nothing, but you've been acting weird lately. Talking to the neighbors for hours, taking calls outside, smoking. What's going on?

RICARDO

Nothing's going on.

CAMILA

Ricardo, don't treat me like I'm an idiot. What. Is. Going. On?

Ricardo exhales, hesitation flickering in his eyes. He stands frozen, weighing his next words.

INT. CAMILA'S HOUSE - DINING AREA - LATER

Camila and Ricardo sit across from each other, an open envelope between them. Camila scans the document, brow furrowed.

RICARDO

I found it on the step three weeks ago. I didn't want to worry you, so I hired a real estate lawyer. He says we can use the neighbors as leverage to stop another rent hike.

CAMILA

How much is he charging you?

RICARDO

Not much. He's a family friend.

Camila pauses, mind racing as she takes in the news. She sets the paper down, tension tightening her face.

CAMILA

We've got enough on our plate already, Ricardo.

She stands abruptly, moving toward the kitchen, beginning to pack lunches.

CAMILA (CONT'D)

Let's just move out. There are
houses for \$1,800 in Residencial
Las Dunas.

RICARDO

You don't like that area.

CAMILA

I'll adjust.

Ricardo remains silent, eyes distant. A heavy quiet fills the room, thick with unspoken words.

INT. CAMILA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Movers carry out the last pieces of furniture, footsteps heavy on the hardwood. The house sits nearly empty, bare walls silent. Faint scrapes echo through the stillness.

INT. OLDER-MODEL SEDAN - MOMENTS LATER

Camila sits in the passenger seat, eyes fixed on the road, distant. The muffled sounds of movers fade behind them.

Ricardo slides in, starts the engine, and drives forward. They pass rows of shuttered homes, washed in late afternoon light.

The gate swings shut behind them with a soft, final clank — a quiet punctuation to the chapter just closed.

EXT. MODEST GATED COMMUNITY - DAY

Ricardo guides his sedan toward a modest two-story house in a quiet, tightly packed neighborhood. Narrow streets, homes close-set — neat, unadorned.

The gate is locked. Camila's minivan sits in the driveway, a quiet anchor in their new reality.

INT. HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Camila and Ricardo enter. The door's soft click echoes in the new space. Boxes lie scattered — some half-open, others neatly stacked. A few simple furnishings stand modest but welcoming.

The air holds fresh paint and the quiet promise of a reset.

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Camila steps into the bare bedroom. A single bed is neatly made. She pulls back the curtain.

Beyond the development's edge, rooftops of a dense, aging Mexican neighborhood stretch out — concrete, wires, rust, resilience.

She stands still, absorbing the view.

Her reflection overlays the scene — a woman changed, weathered, still standing.

Her eyes steady. Not defeat, but acceptance.

She exhales slowly.

EXT. ROSENTHAL TOWER — MANHATTAN — MIDDAY

A sleek glass-and-bronze skyscraper reflects the afternoon sun. The name "ROSENTHAL" is inlaid in brass across the marble base. A stylized "R" flag waves beside the American one.

Tourists linger, taking photos. Some stare upward. Others approach, unsure if they're allowed to enter. No one passes without clearance.

INT. ROSENTHAL TOWER — LOBBY — CONTINUOUS

Muted, chilled air. Polished marble floors. Black mirrored walls. The lighting is soft, indirect.

A receptionist answers phones without looking up. A security guard stands motionless. Silent monitors play archival clips of NATHAN C. ROSENTHAL: ribbon cuttings, handshakes, interviews.

In a glass case: the first edition of his book, *"Building for the 21st Century."* His face on the cover — calm, certain.

Further in: trophies, framed contracts, magazine covers. One document reads:

"Certificate of Incorporation — Rosenthal International Holdings"

Elevators require keycards. Tourists wait in vain.

INT. ROSENTHAL'S PRIVATE OFFICE — FLOOR 57 — LATE AFTERNOON

NATHAN C. ROSENTHAL (early 60s), precise, composed, sits behind a pale wood desk. White shirt, black tie, no jacket. He marks up documents with a black Montblanc.

A tablet streams silent financial headlines. A bowl of almonds remains untouched.

The door opens softly. His ASSISTANT enters, discreet, placing two folders on the desk.

ASSISTANT
Phoenix file, and this from HR.
Leadership manuals. They want a
short bio — something more...
personal.

Nathan doesn't respond. He opens the HR folder.

A printed form. At the bottom:

"Please describe your personal journey in your own words (max 100 words)"

He sets the form down.

Rises. Walks to a filing cabinet. Opens a drawer labeled:

"Internal / Personal / N.C.R."

He pulls a folded document:

"Certificate of Incorporation — Rosenthal Int'l Holdings LLC"

He studies it. Then places it beside the form.

He picks up his pen. Writes deliberately:

"I built it. I grew it. There is nothing else."

He closes the folder. Leaves it atop the others.

Sits. Returns to his contract edits. No expression. No pause.

The tablet continues streaming. The office hums with quiet control.

INT. ROSENTHAL TOWER — EXECUTIVE FLOOR — LATE AFTERNOON

A long, silent corridor. Frosted glass. Low, indirect light. The hum of ventilation and distant city noise — faint, controlled.

Nathan glides down the hall with mechanical calm. His shoes make no sound on the carpet. His face, unreadable.

He reaches a sleek, matte door marked "BOARDROOM C." Inside: murmurs, the shuffle of papers.

He pauses — a second, no more — then opens the door.

INT. BOARDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Twelve chairs around a pale wood table. Executive suits, tablets, styluses. A large wall screen glows with:

"PROJECT RIVERTON - STATUS UPDATE"

Nathan takes his seat without a word. No one breathes too loudly.

EXECUTIVE 1

Nathan.

NATHAN

Go on.

EXECUTIVE 2

We lost Blackshore this morning.
Pulled their equity — they're
citing macro risk and currency
exposure.

EXECUTIVE 3

That puts us fifty-seven million
under. Phase 1 can't break ground
without it.

Nathan doesn't react. Just reads the numbers on his tablet.

EXECUTIVE 2

And we're over on steel. Again.
Eight percent increase in ten days.

EXECUTIVE 1

We've contacted half the majors for
replacement funding. No one's
biting without a federal backstop
or ESG angle.

EXECUTIVE 3

Goldman's willing — but only with
your personal guarantee.

Nathan finally looks up.

NATHAN
That's a bluff.

EXECUTIVE 1
No, Nathan. It's policy now.
They're risk-hedging exposure to
"legacy-heavy portfolios."

A long pause. No one speaks.

EXECUTIVE 2
And it's not just funding. The
regulators moved the compliance
window. We're retroactively out of
step on Riverton's zoning package.

EXECUTIVE 3
And branding. The optics.
Everyone's chasing sustainability.
Inclusion. "Narrative capital." Not
steel and concrete.

Nathan sets down the tablet.

NATHAN
We build for permanence. That used
to mean something.

EXECUTIVE 1
Now it means exposure.

A flicker of something in Nathan's eyes. Not rage — insult.
He gathers his folder slowly, calmly.

NATHAN
Pull the land option before Friday.
Offload soft costs through Holden
if we can.

EXECUTIVE 2
You want to kill the project?

NATHAN
I want to stop bleeding for
something no one's willing to pay
for.

He stands.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
Draft a statement: "Rosenthal is
realigning its capital strategy to
reflect long-term structural shifts
in the market."

(MORE)

NATHAN (CONT'D)

(beat)

And tell Legal I'm not personally
underwriting fairy tales.

He leaves the room.

Silence lingers after he's gone.

INT. ROSENTHAL'S OFFICE — EARLY EVENING

Nathan enters slowly, removing his watch and placing a folder on the desk. The room is quiet except for the soft hum of the air conditioning.

On the desk lies a folded newspaper. Nathan unfolds it and scans the headline:

NEWSPAPER HEADLINE:

"Private Investment Slows Sharply as Rates Hold, Market Waits for Direction"

Subheadline: *"White House Signals No Major Stimulus in Sight; Businesses Urged to 'Weather the Cycle'"*

Nathan's eyes fix on the phrase *"weather the cycle."* He reads it again, his jaw tightening.

He closes the paper carefully and sets it aside.

Nathan walks to the window, looking out at the city skyline bathed in late afternoon light.

He stands in silence, the weight of the words settling in.

A quiet resolve hardens in his expression.

INT. BROADCAST STUDIO — DAY

A clean, modern studio. Neutral tones. Soft, calculated lighting. A glass table between two minimalist chairs. Behind them, a lit screen displays:

"The Future of Leadership" — BusinessFocus Live

Nathan, composed but distant, sits straight-backed in a dark suit. Across from him, TOM REED, 30s, smooth and upbeat.

Cameras roll. The ON AIR light glows red.

TOM

(cheerful)

We're seeing companies shift faster than ever — tech-driven, value-driven, leaner, more human. What's the role of legacy leadership in that kind of landscape?

NATHAN

(flat)

Legacy doesn't mean old. It means proven.

TOM

Of course. But we're in a moment where disruption is... expected. The winners now are the ones who adapt.

Nathan holds a long pause. Measured. Cold.

NATHAN

Adaptation without judgment isn't evolution. It's panic.

Tom shifts in his seat.

TOM

So... you're skeptical of the direction?

NATHAN

I'm skeptical of who's steering it.

(beat)

We've replaced competence with branding. We reward noise over results. Every failure is forgiven — if it tweets well.

TOM

(chuckles, awkward)

That's a strong take.

NATHAN

It's not a take. It's an obituary.

Silence. Tom glances toward the crew. Nathan doesn't move.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

They've built a system where perception is currency. And government? Government's the bank.

Beat.

TOM
(careful)
So... you're saying public policy's
part of the problem?

NATHAN
I'm saying the country is being run
by people who've never built
anything – and think growth happens
on a spreadsheet.

Another beat.

TOM
Well... that's one perspective.

Nathan just stares. The ON AIR light flicks off.

EXT. CONVENTION CENTER – EVENING

Elegant, warm lighting bathes the grand façade of the
convention center.

Black luxury cars pull up to the entrance.

Guests in sleek suits and gowns step onto a red carpet,
greeted by sharply dressed staff.

A jazz band plays softly nearby.

The event title glows on the building's façade:

"Reimagining Infrastructure: From Steel to Data"

Conversations buzz with quiet ambition and power.

INT. CONVENTION CENTER – LOBBY – CONTINUOUS

The lighting dims to a refined glow. Marble and steel
surfaces reflect subtle light.

Nathan enters – no tie, crisp suit, confident but carrying a
shadow of tension.

A STAFF MEMBER approaches with a folded program.

STAFF MEMBER
Welcome, Mr. Rosenthal.

Nathan nods slightly, takes the program.

His eyes scan the crowd — then lock on JULIAN KELLER, late 40s, relaxed, charismatic, surrounded by advisors and journalists.

Nathan unfolds the program.

INSERT — PROGRAM PAGE

"Closing Keynote Speaker: Julian Keller — Secretary of the Treasury"

Nathan's jaw tightens subtly.

A soft chime rings out. Guests begin filing into the auditorium.

INT. CONVENTION CENTER — AUDITORIUM — MOMENTS LATER

Minimalist stage, clean lighting.

A title shines behind the podium:

"Global Capital in a New Era"

Julian Keller stands at the podium, sleeves rolled, calm and controlled.

JULIAN

In times of transition, it's
tempting to cling to what's
familiar — to legacy, to empires,
to names. But true progress doesn't
come from nostalgia. It comes from
action. Humble, adaptive action.

Audience listens closely. Nathan sits in the front row, rigid, eyes fixed on Julian.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

I've met entrepreneurs in Lagos,
engineers in Seoul, small business
owners in Ohio — all driven not by
what was, but by what will be. They
share a clarity that transcends
capital or connections. They know
what's next. They're building it.

Some nod, some take notes. Nathan remains still, tense.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

What some refuse to see is that the era of permanence — where power guaranteed immunity, and a name on a building meant legacy — that era is over. Today, institutions must be earned every day. No plaque assures relevance. No inheritance secures trust.

A subtle murmur spreads. Heads glance toward Nathan. A photographer captures a fleeting shot.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

The future belongs to those who embrace change, not those who resist it.

Applause rises steadily. Nathan tightens his grip on the armrest; a faint jaw twitch betrays his restrained frustration.

INT. NATHAN'S PENTHOUSE - KITCHEN / STUDY AREA - NIGHT

Dim city lights leak through the vast floor-to-ceiling windows. The penthouse is immaculate, cold, museum-like in its luxury. Marble counters. Designer furniture. Empty.

Nathan, in a plain t-shirt and drawstring pants, barefoot, pads softly across the polished floor. He opens the fridge. Stares. Closes it without taking anything.

He starts a single-cup espresso machine. The hum cuts through the silence.

He leans on the counter, arms crossed. Tired, yes — but not from lack of sleep. His mind is still running.

Coffee ready. He walks it over to a sleek desk in the corner, under low ambient light. There's a laptop — closed — and scattered clippings, some folded legal pads, a pen.

He sits. Sips. Pauses.

Among the clippings: a photo from years ago. Nathan in a hard hat, smiling broadly, shaking hands with construction workers. A ribbon-cutting. Younger. Grounded. Liked.

He picks it up. Studies it.

After a long beat, he sets it down and opens the legal pad. Writes something — short, deliberate.

We don't see the words.

He sets the pen down.

Another sip of coffee.

He looks out the window at the vast, glowing city – still, maybe indifferent – stretched out before him.

INT. NATHAN'S TOWER – LOBBY – DAY

The elevator doors slide open.

Nathan steps out, flanked by his poised, younger wife and two aides. A tailored overcoat, polished shoes. He walks with unhurried confidence.

The lobby is packed. Cameras flash. A mix of EXECUTIVES, ASSISTANTS, ADULT CHILDREN, and ALLIES wait in place – some clapping, others nodding.

Behind them, DOZENS OF SUPPORTERS cheer and wave small American flags. Handwritten signs read:

"AMERICA NEEDS NATHAN"

"ENOUGH TALK."

"BUILD. FIX. LEAD."

Nathan gives a tight smile, acknowledging the noise without basking in it.

He steps onto a small stage built in front of a marble wall. A podium stands at the center, seal of his foundation affixed to the front. The crowd keeps applauding.

Nathan adjusts the mic, glances once at his wife, then out at the crowd.

INT. NATHAN'S TOWER – LOBBY – MOMENTS LATER

Nathan is mid-speech now – composed, calm. His cadence is measured, like he's laying out a business case.

NATHAN

For years, I watched these people make decisions – trillions of dollars' worth – and never once ask who's paying the bill. Never once think about what it costs the people doing the actual work.

He looks around. Silent agreement. Some nods. The occasional "Mm-hmm" from the back.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
I've spent my life negotiating with governments. Building through red tape, incompetence, indifference. I know exactly how broken it is — not because I read a report. Because I had to survive it.

Tight on a SUPPORTER in the crowd, eyes locked on him.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
I'm not doing this because it's my turn. I'm doing it because someone has to know what it means to run something.

A beat. Cameras flash again.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
So yes — I'm running for President of the United States.

A loud, immediate cheer. The crowd explodes — applause, chants of his name. Flags raised high. AIDE 1 quietly exhales, already texting someone.

Nathan holds the podium. The barest flicker of satisfaction on his face — contained.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
Let's get to work.

Smash of sound as the cheers rise again.

INT. WEST WING — CORRIDOR — DAY

A cold, gray morning light filters in through tall windows. Nathan walks down the hallway of the West Wing, flanked by two senior aides. No conversation. Just the muted sound of footsteps on marble.

He passes historic portraits. Presidents. Conflicts. Symbols. He barely glances at them.

INT. OUTER OVAL OFFICE — CONTINUOUS

A TRANSITION STAFFER stands, holding the door open. Nathan enters alone.

INT. OVAL OFFICE — CONTINUOUS

The door clicks shut.

Silence.

Nathan scans the room, impassive. The Resolute Desk. The flags. The furniture arranged for photo ops. This is not reverence. It's assessment.

He crosses to the desk. A leather folder awaits.

He opens it.

INSERT — COVER PAGE:

"EXECUTIVE ACTIONS — INITIAL PACKAGE (DAY ONE)"

He flips through. Headings flash:

"Federal Infrastructure Reform Directive"

"Executive Order: Regulatory Streamlining Task Force"

"Cabinet-Level Agency Consolidation Authority"

"Reversal: Climate Compact Participation"

"Temporary Suspension of Oversight Review Panels"

Nathan picks up a pen.

And begins to sign.

One.

Another.

Another.

Calm, focused. No flourish. Just action.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE — DAY

Clouds hang low over the North Lawn. A flag stirs in the breeze.

Inside, something irreversible has begun.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - SITUATION ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Muted lighting. Long polished table. National security monitors idle in the background.

Around the table: senior staff, aides, cabinet deputies. Some with folders open, others waiting.

Nathan, tieless in a dark suit, sits at the head. Watching. Listening.

CHIEF OF STAFF
(calmly, controlled)
If we announce next week, markets won't have time to adjust. We're talking about billions in active contracts. There are automatic penalties.

The NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR leans in.

NATSEC ADVISOR
The Germans already flagged this. If we exit cold, it'll look like a destabilizing move. They'll read it as a shift in posture.

Nathan cuts in. Not angry — just fed up.

NATHAN
That's the problem. We're always afraid of how it'll look in Brussels. That's why nothing changes.

DEPUTY SEC. COMMERCE
(precisely)
U.S. firms are exposed. Clean tech, joint ventures. If we pull out unilaterally, they'll get buried in international litigation.

Nathan taps the table lightly, looking around.

NATHAN
We didn't come here to repeat the same cautious, endless paralysis. I'm not asking. I'm telling you — we're pulling out.

A pause. The room stiffens.

The Chief of Staff meets his gaze. Measured.

CHIEF OF STAFF

Then I need to know, Mr. President
— what's the endgame? Retaliatory
tariffs? Midwest governors calling
about lost jobs? European
countersanctions?

Nathan holds her stare. Says nothing for a moment. Then
reclines slightly.

NATHAN

So what — another roundtable?
Another working group?

CHIEF OF STAFF

No. We scale it. Quiet channels.
Signal intent, not rupture. Write
the timeline ourselves — or they'll
write it for us.

Nathan doesn't respond. He scans the table. No defiance. No
loyalty, either. Just professionals waiting to see what he
does next.

INT. OVAL OFFICE — NIGHT

Dim, still. The windows show the last blue hues of dusk.
Nathan stands alone, phone on speaker, pacing slowly behind
the Resolute Desk.

SENATOR (V.O.)

Look, I respect what you're trying
to do. I do. But you're picking a
fight that's not winnable right
now. Not this way.

Nathan says nothing. He stops, hand resting on the desk, eyes
distant.

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

We've got donors already calling.
Governors nervous about trade
exposure. I'm not saying don't move
— I'm saying scale it. Sequence it.
Or it all collapses.

Nathan presses a button. The call ends. The line goes dead.

He sets the phone down. Stares at it for a beat. Still.

Then he turns, walks to the window. Hands on hips.

Outside: darkness settling over the South Lawn.

Nathan lingers there, silhouetted. Silent. Watching.

INT. WEST WING — SMALL BRIEFING ROOM — DAY

Fluorescent lighting. A tight, utilitarian space. A folder sits open on the conference table.

Nathan at the head, reviewing a single-page memo. Flanking him are a mid-level BUDGET ADVISOR and a younger HHS POLICY STAFFER — both visibly tense.

BUDGET ADVISOR

The extension affects roughly 800,000 recipients. Mostly rural counties — West Virginia, parts of Mississippi, tribal lands in Arizona...

POLICY STAFFER

It's already approved. Local clinics have made staffing decisions based on it. Cutting it now—

Nathan folds the paper, slowly.

NATHAN

They'll survive. Cut it.

A beat. The room freezes.

POLICY STAFFER (CAREFULLY)

Sir, this wasn't meant to be political. These communities—

NATHAN

Then they can elect someone who'll keep feeding them.

He stands and exits. No further discussion.

The advisor scribbles a note. The staffer just stares ahead — stunned.

INT. STADIUM — VIP PLATFORM — LATE AFTERNOON

Packed stadium. American flags ripple in the breeze. A pre-game ceremony is underway — honor guard, military band, massive flag unfurled on the field.

Nathan stands at the center of a VIP platform, flanked by his wife and adult children.

Behind them, several top aides hover. A camera crane sweeps past, broadcasting his image to the jumbotrons.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

—And we are honored to be joined
today by the President of the
United States...

Applause breaks out from the crowd. Some in the audience hold signs: *"Nathan Delivers"*, *"Strong Again"*.

A presenter from the league hands Nathan a commemorative jersey. He smiles for the cameras. Shakes hands. A small boy in a dress uniform offers him a folded flag.

Nathan accepts it, nodding solemnly. For a moment, he looks like he belongs — poised, in command, at the center of the spectacle.

EXT. STADIUM — MEDIA AREA — MINUTES LATER

Nathan exits the venue with his entourage. Flashbulbs pop. Reporters shout questions. He responds lightly to one or two — all softball.

Then, a VOICE cuts through — sharp, clear:

YOUNG REPORTER (O.S.)

Mr. President — are you aware that
food insecurity is up twelve
percent in the counties affected by
your SNAP rollback?

Nathan's stride falters slightly. He looks toward the voice — a young, composed REPORTER holding out a mic.

NATHAN

(half-smiling)

We're fixing a broken system. That
doesn't happen overnight.

YOUNG REPORTER

But the USDA's own data shows
clinic closures and meal program
cutbacks — this week.

An aide tries to move Nathan along. He waves them off.

NATHAN

You people cherry-pick numbers.
We're doing just fine.

He keeps walking. The press scrum pushes forward. The moment lingers in the air.

Behind him, the reporter lowers her mic. One of Nathan's aides whispers something into a phone — already dealing with the fallout.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE — NORTH LAWN PERIMETER — NIGHT

Spotlights cut across a restless crowd outside the gates. Hundreds of protesters chant, some holding signs: *"WE'RE STILL HUNGRY," "NO MORE CUTS," "WHERE'S THE CHANGE?"*

Uniformed police and riot officers stand firm behind metal barricades. A tense standoff.

A water bottle flies. Then — a firecracker POPS.

The crowd jolts. Surges forward. Shouting intensifies.

Officers move. Shields raised. Push back hard. Protesters stumble. Some fall. Screams. Chaos begins to flicker.

A cop grabs a young man. Someone yells *"Let him go!"* The line teeters on collapse — barely held.

INT. WEST WING — HALLWAY — NIGHT

Muted interior. Nathan, walking with two aides, passes a window — sirens faint in the distance.

A SECRET SERVICE AGENT approaches quickly but calmly.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT
Sir — we recommend you and the
First Lady relocate to the lower
residence. Just a precaution.

Nathan slows. A pause. He doesn't like it.

He glances toward a curtained window. The sounds are closer now — muffled yelling, horns.

He gives a small nod. Keeps walking. Tight-lipped. No further comment.

Behind him, an aide quietly pulls the curtain shut.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - PRIVATE STUDY - NIGHT

Dim lighting. The room is still. A flat-screen TV plays a live press conference from Capitol Hill. Onscreen: a poised CONGRESSWOMAN speaks before reporters.

CONGRESSWOMAN (ON TV)
We now have sufficient grounds to
initiate a formal investigation
into the President's misuse of
federal procurement channels as
political retaliation against
dissenting governors.

Nathan stands in front of the TV. No tie, sleeves rolled up. Stone-faced.

The camera holds on him — unmoving. Watching.

A young aide appears in the doorway, takes in the scene, says nothing. Nathan doesn't look back. After a moment, the aide quietly backs out.

Nathan picks up the remote and turns off the TV.

Silence.

He stares into the blank screen, jaw tight, breathing through his nose.

EXT. MILITARY APPRECIATION CEREMONY - DAY

A modest outdoor ceremony on federal grounds. American flags. Brass band offscreen. Ranks of enlisted troops stand at attention.

Nathan is at the podium — not speaking, just observing. Wearing a long coat, flanked by DEFENSE OFFICIALS.

From the crowd: scattered claps. Cameras click.

Then — a sharp CRACK cuts through the wind.

Chaos.

AIDE ducks. Soldiers flinch. One SECRET SERVICE AGENT slams into Nathan from the side.

AGENT
Gunshot! Move!

Others swarm in. A second POP. Screams. People drop. Someone yells "Sniper!"

Nathan is dragged off the podium behind a security barricade. The screen shudders. A lens cap hits the ground.

In the blur: running feet, radios blaring, flags rustling.

The feed cuts mid-shout.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - PRIVATE SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

Dim lighting. A flat-screen TV plays news footage at low volume — scrolling banners mention HEARINGS, GOVERNORS, SECURITY REVIEW.

Nathan sits motionless in a leather chair. No tie. A half-finished cup of coffee on the side table. His eyes fixed on nothing.

On a nearby couch, his wife scrolls through her phone, occasionally chuckling softly. One of Nathan's adult children lounges across from her, sipping wine, talking quietly on Bluetooth.

Nathan doesn't register any of it. The noise around him blurs.

ON SCREEN -

A pundit says something about approval ratings and legitimacy.

His DAUGHTER glances over.

DAUGHTER
(softly)
Dad? You okay?

Nathan blinks — slowly. Nods once.

NATHAN
Yeah.

He looks away again. Still elsewhere.

The conversation in the room continues, without him.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - SITUATION ROOM - NIGHT

Low lighting. The room hums with the quiet thrum of monitors. A digital map of Eastern Europe glows on the wall. Military and national security officials line both sides of the table. Papers. Coffee. Fatigue.

Nathan enters, expression unreadable. His tie is gone. Shirt collar loosened. He takes his seat without a word and gestures to begin.

NATSEC ADVISOR
 (urgent, composed)
 Russian Northern Fleet left
 Murmansk at 0400. Five destroyers,
 one sub. Air surveillance confirms
 mobilization near the Barents.
 (beat)
 Our Norwegian partners are
 requesting immediate joint drills.
 Quietly. They don't want to
 provoke.

A GENERAL flips open a binder.

GENERAL
 We have two options ready. One is a
 forward posture — ships into the
 Greenland-Iceland-UK gap. The other
 is covert: reposition and wait.
 Signal strength, not escalation.

DEPUTY NSA
 State's asking if we want to brief
 NATO first. If this looks
 unilateral, we lose EU cover.

Nathan sits still. Steeped fingers. Eyes on the map.

NATHAN
 (low, tired)
 What's Moscow saying?

NATSEC ADVISOR
 Silence. No statement. Their
 embassy's been quiet since
 yesterday.

Nathan exhales. Rubs his temple — subtle, quick. He blinks, reengages.

NATHAN
 (intently)
 They're pushing.
 (beat)
 We push back. But we don't blink
 first.

Silence around the table.

GENERAL

Mr. President... escalation is manageable — but if this goes sideways, we're not looking at sanctions. We're looking at force posture across the entire Arctic rim.

Nathan stands. Collects his folder. Calm, even.

NATHAN

I'll speak to Moscow tonight.

A beat.

CHIEF OF STAFF

Directly?

NATHAN

Translator and transcript. That's it.

He turns to leave.

As he grips the folder, his hand trembles — just barely. He notices. Fist clenches. Keeps walking.

INT. OVAL OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON

Muted light filters through tall windows. A thick policy folder lies unopened on the Resolute Desk.

Nathan stands at the window, still in his suit, tie loosened. He watches the South Lawn in silence.

He glances at the folder. Doesn't touch it.

EXT. SOUTH LAWN - MOMENTS LATER

Nathan walks alone across the manicured lawn, hands in his pockets. A single Secret Service agent lingers at a respectful distance.

He's not rushing. Not thinking about cameras. Just walking.

In the distance, staffers near the colonnade pause, watching him silently. One of them checks a phone — no briefing scheduled.

Nathan stops briefly. Looks up at the sky.

No one speaks. Nothing happens.

Just a man, surrounded by the seat of power, trying to breathe.

EXT. PRIVATE COUNTRY CLUB — GOLF COURSE — LATE AFTERNOON

Nathan swings his club. A clean hit. The ball sails toward the green.

Two MEN — mid-60s, dressed casually but sharp — walk alongside him. They chuckle about something that happened earlier on the course. It's friendly banter, light, apolitical.

MAN #1

You finally decided to fix that slice, huh?

Nathan gives a small smirk. He sips from a water bottle, gazing across the fairway. The breeze catches the trees. Cicadas hum. For a moment, Nathan just watches.

A GOLF CART hums softly past them in the distance. Nathan's smile fades slightly, thoughts creeping in.

NATHAN

(quietly)

It's a nice kind of quiet.

No one responds. They move on, clubs in hand.

EXT. COUNTRY CLUB TERRACE — EARLY EVENING

Mellow jazz plays over outdoor speakers. Members sit around tables, sipping drinks. Sunlight falls low across the lawn.

Nathan, now in a blazer, finishes a brief handshake with someone. A CLUB ATTENDANT approaches discreetly.

ATTENDANT

Mr. Wendell asked if he might say hello.

NATHAN

Of course.

Moments later, ROBERT WENDELL — late 70s, lean, polished, the kind of man who knows who really runs things — approaches with a glass of cognac.

WENDELL

Nathan. Didn't think I'd see you
out here with the rest of us
mortals.

They share a handshake and polite smiles. Wendell sits across
from Nathan.

WENDELL (CONT'D)

You catch that Midwest transfer
deal?

Nathan raises an eyebrow.

NATHAN

Bits of it. Why?

WENDELL

A small group moved through control
rights on over a dozen substations.
Foreign-backed. All routed through
a trust with an office in Delaware
and a tech shell in Zürich. No
flags raised.

Nathan listens, expression hard to read.

NATHAN

Domestic regulators didn't catch
it?

WENDELL

They saw it. But it was clean.
Paperwork was perfect. Local boards
were underfunded — or distracted.
You know how it is.

Beat.

WENDELL (CONT'D)

Pressure doesn't break the pipes,
Nathan. It just finds the ones
you're not looking at.

Wendell taps his glass against the table once, friendly but
firm, then rises.

WENDELL (CONT'D)

Enjoy the sunset.

He walks away. Nathan watches him go. His eyes flicker to the
horizon.

The jazz continues. Someone laughs in the background. But Nathan sits still, not quite in the moment.

INT. WHITE HOUSE — PRIVATE STUDY — NIGHT

Low lighting. A desk lamp casts a soft glow over a stack of classified folders. Nathan sits alone in a white dress shirt, jacket draped over a chair.

He reviews a document. It looks like a legal sign-off — technical language, economic terms, something dense and buried.

He picks up the secure phone. Dials.

NATHAN
(even)
Go ahead. Approve it. Quietly.

He hangs up. Closes the folder. Exhales — slow and steady.

He walks toward the window. The city lights blink faintly outside. The room is silent.

Nathan stares out, his reflection just barely visible in the glass. He doesn't say anything.

And he doesn't have to.

INT. FEDERAL BUILDING — CEREMONIAL HALL — DAY

A modest but dignified government event is underway. Flags, a podium, and rows of seated federal employees, military officers, and civil servants.

Nathan steps up to the podium. He's composed. Presidential. A small stack of cue cards in his hand.

NATHAN
Today is not about politics. It's
about the people who keep things
running — often without
recognition, and never for
applause.

Muted claps. Polite. Measured. Nathan continues.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
Your work — steady, quiet,
essential — is the backbone of our
country's institutions. You deserve
to be seen.

He steps away from the mic. A brief handshake with a decorated civil servant. A small smile.

A staffer hands him a ceremonial pen. Nathan signs a framed certificate — symbolic recognition of public service.

As cameras flash, a REPORTER from the press line leans forward.

REPORTER

Mr. President, what does this ceremony mean to you personally?

Nathan doesn't pause. Keeps walking.

NATHAN

It's always an honor to acknowledge those who serve the country with discipline and purpose.

He nods to the crowd. Shakes another hand. Keeps moving.

Applause rises again — restrained, respectful, already fading.

INT. UNDER-CONSTRUCTION PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY - DAY

Nathan walks slowly through the skeletal halls of the future Nathan C. Rosenthal Presidential Center. Metal framing lines the walls. Sheets of glass lean against unfinished partitions. Workers speak in low tones somewhere in the background.

Beside him, a calm, middle-aged ARCHITECT carries a folder of blueprints and renders.

ARCHITECT

We'll have the archival wing complete by December. The exhibit halls follow — campaign trail, first year, foreign policy, economic stabilization... all modular.

Nathan barely responds. He absorbs the space — the silence, the dust, the sense of prelude.

They enter a half-finished exhibit room. Glass display cases already in place. Inside one: a pen, a campaign button, a pair of framed photographs. A draft of his inaugural address, printed and annotated.

Nathan glances at them, but lingers only a moment.

ARCHITECT (CONT'D)
 We'll position this as the central
 artery of the visitor path. The
 legacy corridor.

He gestures to a large scale model of the building on a drafting table nearby.

Etched in a provisional plaque beside it:

"The Nathan C. Rosenthal Presidential Center – Leadership in a Changing World."

Nathan steps closer. Next to the model: a mounted text panel with sample exhibit text. It reads like a press release. Clinical. Measured. Phrases like *"Policy shifts," "Public response," "Mixed reception."*

Nathan reads it once. Then again.

No comment. No expression of approval or disapproval. Just quiet.

He turns away slowly. Walks back toward the hallway.

The ARCHITECT keeps speaking, softly, professionally, but Nathan no longer listens.

ARCHITECT (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 ...archives accessible both
 digitally and on-site... curated
 press clippings, personal items...
 international coverage...

Nathan moves out of frame.

Silence.

EXT. AMAZON RAINFOREST - DAWN

A dense tapestry of lush green leaves, some glistening with dew. Early sunlight filters softly through the canopy, casting patches of warm golden light amidst deep shadows.

The air hums with gentle insect buzz and distant birdsong, fragments of waking life stirring.

A slow, clear river winds quietly through the scene, reflecting the greens and browns around it. Its calm flow feels timeless, meditative.

Leaves tremble lightly in the breeze. An insect lands delicately on a branch. Small creatures dart briefly through the undergrowth.

The rainforest breathes – alive, ancient, and sacred – holding a profound stillness that invites reverence.

No human presence. Just the pure, powerful pulse of nature.

EXT. AMAZON RAINFOREST CLEARING - MORNING

An elderly SHAMAN sits quietly on the forest floor beneath a large tree. The filtered green light of the canopy bathes his weathered face in a soft, natural glow.

His eyes remain closed, breath steady and deep, merging with the gentle sounds of the waking jungle.

After a moment, he slowly opens his eyes, revealing a calm and wise gaze – full of history and quiet strength.

He rises with deliberate, measured movements, embodying dignity and a deep connection to the land.

A simple traditional necklace rests around his neck. Subtle face paint marks his skin, blending with the dappled light.

Silence surrounds him, save for his steady breathing and the distant whispers of the forest.

He simply exists – the living heart of an ancient world.

EXT. AMAZON RAINFOREST - DAY

The shaman walks slowly along a narrow forest path, his footsteps soft on the earth. Surrounding him, birds sing and leaves rustle gently in the breeze.

He stops by a bush and carefully picks green leaves, roots, and small flowers, his hands steady and knowledgeable. Each plant is chosen with deep understanding.

Ahead, he spreads dry leaves over a large, flat leaf on the ground. He gently blows on them, raising a thin smoke that curls upward – a silent ritual of respect and preparation.

A young BOY watches quietly from a short distance, eyes fixed on the shaman's deliberate movements.

No words are spoken. The boy learns through silence and presence.

The shaman continues his work, calm and purposeful, embodying a living connection to the forest.

The jungle breathes around them – alive, sacred.

EXT. RAIN SHELTER - DAY

A rustic palm-leaf roof casts filtered sunlight onto the earth below. Sounds of the jungle hum in the distance.

The shaman kneels beside a wide stone slab. He places a dark piece of bark into a wooden bowl, then transfers it onto the stone. With a slow, steady rhythm, he crushes it using a worn wooden mallet. Dust rises.

Beside him, the boy watches in silence. No words. Only the weight of observation.

The boy carefully mimics the action. He places his own bark piece onto a smaller rock. His strikes are lighter, uneven. The bark shifts.

The shaman notices, pauses his own work. Without speaking, he watches the boy. Their eyes meet. A slight nod from the shaman – neither approval nor correction, simply acknowledgment.

The boy adjusts, tries again.

Between them: the rhythm of hands, stone, and bark. A language without words.

A butterfly drifts through the space. Bark dust hangs in the air like memory.

EXT. RAINFOREST - DAY

Birdsong, buzzing insects. A distant mechanical sound emerges – low, droning. It grows slightly, humming above the canopy. An airplane.

Amid twisted roots and damp foliage, a crushed plastic bottle lies abandoned. Its surface reflects pale light. Out of place. Forgotten.

The shaman walks slowly through the forest. He notices the bottle. Pauses. Stares at it in silence.

His face reveals no surprise. No disgust. Just recognition.

The airplane fades away. The jungle reclaims the soundscape.

The shaman continues walking, his steps calm, deliberate, unhurried.

INT. MALOCA - DAY

The shaman and an ELDERLY MAN sit on woven mats on the earthen floor inside a traditional maloca. Warm, filtered light bathes the space. The walls made of wood and palm leaves seem to hold the weight of many stories.

The elderly man carefully prepares a tobacco pipe with steady but aged hands. The shaman holds a small bundle of tobacco.

They both take slow, deliberate puffs. Smoke curls upward, mingling with the stillness.

After a moment of quiet, the elderly man speaks softly, voice deep and steady, recalling the first time they saw the "whites." His words carry a mix of wonder and quiet sorrow.

The shaman nods, then a faint, knowing smile crosses his lips. They share a dry, ironic laugh — a sound full of history and pain.

A long pause follows.

The elderly man's voice lowers, firm and clear:

ELDERLY MAN
We had to move. They left
everything sick.

They watch the smoke rise in silence, the weight of the past lingering between them.

EXT. RIVERBANK - DAY

The shaman kneels at the edge of the river. He dips his feet into the cool water, breathing slowly.

His reflection ripples back at him — an aged face, calm and grounded. Sunlight glints off the surface, illuminating the lines of his face, his stillness.

A heavy cloud drifts over the sun. The light dims. The forest hushes.

The water darkens. The reflection blurs. For a brief moment, all sound disappears — the river, the birds, the wind.

The shaman stares into the shadowed surface. Still. Listening to silence.

The light slowly returns. The river resumes its whisper.

The shaman stands and walks away, leaving the river behind.

EXT. RIVERBANK - DAY

A group of children plays by the water's edge. Barefoot, muddy, joyful – they chase leaves, skip stones, and drag sticks through wet sand.

One of the youngest, maybe four, stumbles while reaching for a floating leaf. He slips and falls into the shallow water with a splash.

The other children pause – then burst into laughter. The fallen child laughs too, standing up soaked and covered in mud.

At a distance, half-hidden among the trees, the shaman watches silently. His face is still. Observant.

He doesn't intervene. He lets the world teach.

The children go back to playing, their laughter echoing. Tiny footprints in the mud begin to fill with river water.

EXT. JUNGLE RIVERBANK - LATE AFTERNOON

Children play near the river's edge, laughing and chasing each other. The sky above grows dark quickly, thick gray clouds gathering fast. A low rumble of thunder sounds in the distance. The wind picks up, rustling leaves and bending branches.

Adults begin calling the children urgently, voices sharp over the growing storm. The animals quiet down; insects vanish. The first drops of rain fall, small and scattered, then quickly grow heavier.

The shaman watches quietly from the edge of the clearing, eyes focused on the sky. His face tightens as the storm approaches.

Rain intensifies, water dripping rapidly from leaves, darkening the earth beneath.

EXT. JUNGLE RIVERBANK - MOMENTS LATER

The rain falls hard, turning the ground muddy and slippery. The river swells, water rushing faster. Children scramble toward shelter, slipping and screaming.

A small boy runs along the river's edge, suddenly losing footing. He stumbles into the rushing water. A desperate shout breaks through the storm.

Adults shout his name, rushing to the water's edge, trying to reach him. The shaman steps forward, watching the current with solemn concern.

The water drags the boy downstream, swift and merciless.

EXT. JUNGLE RIVERBANK AND CLEARING - NIGHT

The rain has stopped. The jungle is soaked and silent, shadows deep under the clouded sky. Adults search the riverbank slowly, some with torches, calling out in the quiet.

The shaman stands nearby, eyes steady but filled with restrained sorrow.

Faces show exhaustion and fear; hands grasp each other for comfort. The river flows calmly now, reflecting the overcast sky.

The search continues, hope hanging fragile in the damp night air.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE MALOCA - NIGHT

The forest is unusually still. No wind, no insects. Just a dense, uneasy silence.

The shaman stands at the threshold of the maloca, unmoving. He does not step inside, nor does he walk away. He remains, gazing toward the darkened jungle.

The firepit nearby is mostly out — only a few glowing embers remain, pulsing dimly in the quiet.

He lifts a handmade pipe to his lips and takes a long, slow draw. The smoke curls upward, barely visible in the faint glow.

From within the maloca, silhouettes of others are visible. Sitting. Waiting. No words. No crying. Just the shared weight of silence.

The shaman exhales. His eyes are calm but distant. The absence of song is its own kind of lament.

Behind him, the jungle remains quiet — as if even the trees know what was lost.

He takes one final puff from the pipe.

The smoke rises, fades into the night.

INT. MALOCA - NIGHT

The fire has gone quiet. Only a few glowing embers pulse in the dark. Water drips rhythmically from the thatched roof.

The shaman sleeps on a woven mat. His body is still, but his breath is fast. His eyes move beneath closed lids.

Brief glimpses flicker.

A jaguar moves between trees - silent, watching. Its golden eyes shine through the dark.

Figures appear - painted bodies, masked faces. They dance in slow circles. Smoke surrounds them. Their movements are dreamlike, almost weightless.

A chant emerges. Soft at first. Murmured words in an unknown tongue. The rhythm grows.

The jaguar steps forward. Closer. Suddenly, it surges into darkness.

The shaman sits up abruptly, breathless. His chest rises and falls. Sweat beads on his brow. He looks around, wide-eyed, but calm.

Dripping water continues outside.

Silence.

EXT. DEEP IN THE JUNGLE - DAY

The jungle is dense, light filtering softly through thick leaves. The air feels heavy, quiet.

The shaman walks slowly, purposefully, followed closely by the boy from earlier. Both move with reverence.

The shaman stops before a simple plant. He crouches and gently places his hand on its leaves, not breaking them.

SHAMAN

(softly)

They are here. Always have been.

The boy watches closely, absorbing the words without reply.

The shaman looks toward the forest in silence. After a moment, he stands and they continue walking, leaving the plant untouched.

EXT. UNDER PALM ROOF - DAY

Dappled sunlight filters through the canopy. The shaman and the boy sit cross-legged on woven mats. In front of them lie small bundles of pale, pliable plant fibers.

The shaman twists a strand between his fingers, working with quiet precision. His movements are slow and deliberate, as if listening to the rhythm of the fiber.

The boy mimics him, impatient. He pulls too hard, and the fiber snaps. Frustrated, he starts over. It tangles. He exhales sharply, glancing at the shaman.

The shaman continues without looking at him. Then, calmly:

SHAMAN

The plant has its own time. If you
rush, it breaks.

The boy looks down at his hands, then tries again — this time slower, more mindful.

The shaman finally glances at him, gives a subtle nod, and continues working.

Only the quiet sound of fingers on fiber remains.

EXT. CLEARING IN THE FOREST - LATE AFTERNOON

Soft orange light filters through the canopy. A stillness hovers in the air. In the center of a modest clearing, surrounded by low trees and silence, the shaman kneels before a wooden bowl.

Beside him, a few sacred leaves, dried roots, a stone pestle, and a clay vessel of water rest in deliberate arrangement.

He picks up the stone and begins grinding the plants in the bowl. The crushing sound is steady, deliberate. Each motion carries weight, but not force. His breathing matches the rhythm.

A small ember smolders gently in a carved shell to his left. Faint tendrils of smoke rise into the warm air. The smoke curls, flickers, vanishes.

Without fanfare, the shaman begins to sing.

A low, rhythmic chant, more vibration than language. Murmured, fragile at first. His eyes are half-closed. The chant grows in tone – not louder, but more embodied.

He pours a measure of water into the bowl. The liquid swirls with the mixture of leaves. He stirs it with a thin branch, never breaking the chant. He blows softly over the mixture – a single breath, slow and steady.

From the trees, the boy appears. He stays at a respectful distance, watching.

The shaman notices him briefly. No words. He continues the chant. It deepens. The syllables shift, pulse. The tempo is neither fast nor slow, but intuitive – like breath.

The boy sits, listening.

The shaman lifts the bowl slightly, feeling its weight. He dips his fingers in, touches the liquid to his forehead, his chest, then gently places the bowl back down.

His voice now carries more power. Still soft, but firm. The chant mingles with the hum of the forest – crickets, a distant bird call, the trees rustling.

The smoke thickens slightly. It lingers longer in the air.

At last, the chant subsides into breath. The shaman remains still. His face is calm. His energy – returned.

He raises the bowl briefly, offering it to the forest, the spirits, or perhaps no one at all.

The boy lowers his gaze in quiet reverence.

Stillness. No words. Only presence.

EXT. CLEARING NEAR THE MALOCA – NIGHT

A quiet fire burns steadily between the shaman and the boy. Night sounds hum softly around them.

They sit facing each other, sharing a simple meal wrapped in leaves. The shaman offers food with calm respect; the boy accepts quietly.

Warm firelight flickers over their faces, revealing calm and connection.

Neither speaks. The silence is gentle, filled with unspoken understanding.

The boy's posture relaxes; the shaman's gaze softens.

Hands pass food slowly, intentionally.

A moment of shared legacy, quiet and profound.

INT. HUT - DAY

The shaman enters quietly, his movements deliberate and calm.

He approaches an old, worn metal box resting on a low wooden table.

Carefully, he opens the box, revealing several simple objects inside.

He reaches in and lifts a crumpled, yellowed magazine page.

The image shows him standing at a podium, dressed in traditional attire, addressing an unseen audience.

His eyes linger on the photo — a mix of solemnity and quiet resolve.

After a moment, he gently folds the page and places it back inside the box.

He closes the lid slowly, as if safeguarding a fragile treasure.

He sits silently for a beat, eyes fixed on the closed box, surrounded by soft, dim light.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - LATE AFTERNOON

The last light of day glows through the trees. A man from the community stands before a small fire, built with care. He holds a worn-out T-SHIRT — faded, printed with a corporate logo.

He stares at it a moment, then tosses it into the fire. It sizzles and curls in the heat. He adds more: a pair of jeans, a cap, some socks. One by one, they vanish into flame.

A short distance away, the shaman pauses on his path, a bundle of fresh herbs in hand. He watches silently.

The fire crackles. Smoke rises gently.

The shaman observes, unmoved. Then, without a word, he continues on, slipping quietly into the forest.

Birdsong fades into the hush of evening. The fire remains, steady.

EXT. FOREST SHELTER - DUSK

A small wooden structure near the river. Open, airy. The forest hums in the background.

The shaman and the boy sit cross-legged on the ground, facing each other. Between them, a large wooden mortar filled with crushed roots, leaves, and bark.

The shaman grinds slowly, rhythmically. Each movement is deliberate. The boy watches, then takes the pestle and mimics him, a bit clumsier, but careful.

The shaman pours a few drops of thick liquid from a small gourd. The mixture darkens. The boy stirs it slowly.

They work in silence.

When the mixture is ready, the shaman takes a clean calabash bowl, fills it slightly, and offers it to the boy. The boy receives it with both hands.

The shaman drinks first. Then nods. The boy drinks.

They sit quietly for a moment, side by side, looking out into the forest.

The silence is complete. Peaceful.

A soft breeze rustles the leaves.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAWN

Mist coils between towering trees. Sunlight filters through the dense canopy, illuminating drifting particles in the humid air.

A scarlet macaw perches still on a branch. It lets out a short, clear call, then bursts into flight.

A shiny beetle crawls slowly across tree bark, glinting in the soft light. Its movement is deliberate, rhythmic.

Bare feet press into the earth. Two FIGURES painted in white and red pigments move in a slow, circular dance. Their backs are to us, swaying gently.

A HAND rises into frame, painted crimson, fingers outstretched toward the rising light.

Smoke from a nearby fire coils upward, blending into the morning mist.

The forest breathes.

EXT. AMAZON RAINFOREST - DAY

The shaman walks calmly along a leafy forest path, carrying a small basket filled with brightly colored wild fruits, neatly rolled tobacco leaves, and a shimmering feather. Dappled sunlight filters through the canopy, casting golden-green patterns on the ground.

He stops at the base of a massive tree with wide roots sprawling over the earth. Kneeling respectfully, he carefully places the fruits, tobacco, and feather atop the roots, arranging them with deliberate care.

In a low, steady voice, he says:

SHAMAN

Thank you for letting me continue.

His gaze lingers on the leaves above, as if speaking to the very soul of the forest. He breathes deeply, soaking in the quiet connection. Rising slowly, he walks away, leaving the offering behind.

Soft sounds of wind and distant birdcalls fill the air.

EXT. JUNGLE CLEARING - NIGHT

The sky darkens into deep indigo, scattered with the first stars. A large fire crackles at the center of a wide clearing, casting warm, flickering light. Shadows dance across the painted bodies of the community — men, women, and children — gathered in a circle, their skin adorned with earthy reds, blacks, whites, symbolic patterns.

The shaman stands in the center, adorned with a towering feathered headdress. His face is painted with bold, sacred designs marking his spiritual leadership.

He begins to sing — a deep, resonant chant, ancient and powerful. The community responds with chorus-like calls, joined by the rhythmic beating of hand drums, wooden flutes, and guttural sounds filling the humid night air.

The movements start slow and meditative, eyes fixed on the fire or the shaman. Slowly, the rhythm intensifies — feet stamping the earth in unison, raising a thin cloud of dust that mingles with the fire smoke.

The shaman lifts his arms to the sky, eyes closed, invoking the invisible spirits of the jungle. Leaves rustle as if responding, feathers in his headdress sway with the gentle breeze.

The chanting grows louder and more urgent, voices weaving together in hypnotic harmony. The entire community moves as one, bodies swaying and pulsing with life, sweat gleaming in the firelight.

The fire sparks leap higher, illuminating faces filled with fierce devotion and connection. The jungle seems alive – trees breathe, shadows lengthen, the energy thickens in the air.

The shaman's voice rises to a powerful crescendo, embodying the soul and roots of his people. The community's song and dance reach their peak – a sacred communion with nature and spirit.

Slowly, the rhythm softens, the voices fade, the fire's glow dims to embers. Silence falls – profound and reverent.

The shaman opens his eyes, gazing upward to the starry sky. A look of peace, strength, and belonging settles on his face.

Around him, the community breathes deeply, united in quiet fulfillment. The jungle's distant murmur accompanies the sacred stillness.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - LATE AFTERNOON

The shaman and the boy sit cross-legged beneath a towering tree. A woven mat lies between them, scattered with natural objects – seeds, feathers, bark strips, and small stones.

The shaman weaves a thin cord of fiber with slow, practiced hands. He ties a feather to it, then threads a small animal tooth. His fingers move with reverence.

The boy watches closely and mirrors each step. His movements are clumsy but focused. The shaman doesn't correct him – just watches. When the boy struggles, the shaman gestures gently, without words.

They both finish their amulets. The boy examines his. The shaman studies him quietly.

A pause.

SHAMAN

(softly)

One day you will teach this. Not to
me. To the forest.

The boy nods slowly. Their eyes meet.

They look down at the amulet resting in the boy's hands.

Silence.

Birdsong in the distance. The forest breathes around them.

EXT. JUNGLE PATH - DAWN

Thick morning mist blankets the forest. Trees rise like ancient shadows. Droplets fall slowly from wide leaves. The jungle is hushed, waiting.

The shaman walks barefoot along a narrow path. His steps are steady, unhurried. His body adorned simply – natural paint across his face, a crown of woven leaves resting lightly on his head. He moves with purpose, gaze forward, never looking back.

Moments later, the boy emerges behind him. Quiet, composed. He follows, not with the clumsy eagerness of a child, but with calm focus. His posture echoes the shaman's. He carries nothing, yet something in him has changed.

They move deeper into the fog, their outlines slowly blurring. First the boy, then the shaman – absorbed into the mist, until only the forest remains.

A soft breeze stirs the canopy. Leaves whisper.

Silence.

EXT. RAINFOREST - DAY

Dense foliage. Vines sway gently. The air is humid, alive.

A large leaf drops to the forest floor. Birds call softly in the distance.

Between trees, the boy reappears – quiet, older. His fingers run along the bark of a massive tree. He listens, not expecting anything, just present.

Behind him, nothing follows.

The forest breathes. Sounds of insects rise. Mist gathers
once more.

Stillness.

CUT TO BLACK.

TITLE CARD: THE HERITAGE.