

"A PERIODIC OCCURRENCE"

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EXT. LAPU-LAPU CEMETERY -- AFTERNOON

It's raining.

Not your standard Western cemetery. There are few tombs lining the ground. High walls contain shelves of 2x2 enclosures where cremated remains store behind decorative plates with the deceased's name and dates.

The cemetery's full of relatives paying respects, cleaning the plates, lighting candles, repainting names and numbers. DYLAN CASTOR, 30's, tan, lithe, a look of concentration as he works on a burial plate. He steps back, wipes his face, gazes longingly.

FADE OUT:

EXT. AIRPORT - CEBU, PHILIPPINES -- AFTERNOON

A Philippine Airlines jet flies over head.

**15 MONTHS EARLIER**

INT. AIRPORT - CEBU, PHILIPPINES -- AFTERNOON

Pale from a life in Ohio, Dylan exits the jetway carrying a backpack. He's a step behind RICHARD HOFFMAN, 30's, doughy, small carry on. Where Dylan comes off as adventurer, Richard reads American Tourist. Ugly American Tourist.

INT. AIRPORT - CEBU, PHILIPPINES - CUSTOMS -- AFTERNOON

Richard stands across a Filipino CUSTOMS AGENT.

CUSTOMS AGENT

Business or pleasure, sir?

Richard smirks, says nothing. The Customs Agent stamps his passport, hands it back, waves Dylan to approach. Dylan hands over his passport.

DYLAN

(nervous)

I -

The Customs Agent stamps the passport, hands it back.

INT. TAXI -- AFTERNOON

The boys sit in the back. The cab drives along the coast. In the distance, a bridge stretches to another island. Dylan's taken by its beauty.

RICHARD  
Never cross the bridge. Trust me.

Dylan turns to him.

DYLAN  
Why?

RICHARD  
You'll get lost. Stick with the city. Trust me. You're better off calling your Ex.

DYLAN  
She's not my Ex. Yet.

Richard smiles, slaps Dylan's leg.

EXT. CEBU -- AFTERNOON

The taxi cab veers away from the bridge, heads into the city.

EXT. MAGELLAN'S SQUARE -- AFTERNOON

Chess board. 3/4 through game. SIMON HUMPHREY, 30's, Australian, fit, like he spent his teens in the Outback and his 20's kicking ass across the continent, plays CALIPUSAN ABRADEZ, 40's, Cebuano, muscular like a zen soldier.

Simon stares at the board. Indecisive. Cal watches patiently. The subtle smile betrays peace, amusement. He glances off at children playing, the setting sun. Simon reaches for the board, retracts his hand, looks at Cal.

SIMON  
Sorry, mate. Say, weren't we supposed to play checkers today?

He returns his attention to the board, makes a move. Calmly, Cal takes his turn, claims a piece.

SIMON  
You think you could take a few more seconds next time?

CALIPUSAN  
Would it change the outcome?

SIMON  
For me, yeah. It'd change things for me. How long we know each other, Cal? You put a lot of pressure on me moving so fast.

CALIPUSAN

Its not about time, Simon. Its about  
experience. Enjoy the experience.

SIMON

I will. If you'd just take your  
time.

Simon moves. Mildly, Cal takes his turn.

CALIPUSAN

Check mate.

SIMON

Bloody hell, Cal.

Cal collects the pieces, places them in a small bag.

EXT. PARKING LOT BY SQUARE - LATE AFTERNOON

Simon gets into his jeep, Cal his truck.

SIMON

You going straight there?

Cal nods.

SIMON

I gotta pick up Tobin.

EXT. DOCK -- DUSK

A series of vehicles are lined up near a ship. Boxes of liquor are stacked in different configurations atop various pallets, each order with a packing slip/invoice taped to it. Military Officials and Police watch, some carry guns, others machetes.

Between the boxes and cars stand numerous BAR OWNERS. Some Filipino, some Korean. All peruse order sheets.

Among them, Cal stands next to GRAHAM, late 50's, British. Across from the bar owners Simon stands with TOBIN KRELL, 50's, British. He steps forward.

TOBIN

Gentlemen. You may have noticed a slight increase from the last delivery. My apologies, but supply and demand, blah-blah-blah, you get it. Shouldn't sting too much.

(motions to pallets)

Please.

Simon walks over to the pallets, collects money as the Bar Owners and their employees load the boxes, drive away.

Tobin approaches Graham, speaks softly.

TOBIN

Yours remains the same. See you tonight.

He winks. Graham nods, motions for Cal to pick up their order. Tobin steps away, turns to the sunset, smiles with self satisfaction.

INT. HOTEL - MAIN AREA -- NIGHT

The guys enter with a PORTER, unload their luggage. Dylan steps deep into the main room. Richard removes his wallet, hands the Porter some bills and gently pushes him into the hall, closing the door.

RICHARD

(walking towards the bathroom)

I wanna leave in 5 minutes.

Dylan looks around the room, finds his way to the window, opens the shade and the glass. Outside, its busy, loud with urban movement bustling poetic. Full of life.

Dylan catches the eye of a small group of kids who smile and wave. He waves back. Suddenly, Richard shuts the window. Dylan turns.

RICHARD

Dengue fever? Know what that is? Mosquitoes. We gotta keep these closed as much as possible, especially at night.

EXT. MANGO SQUARE -- NIGHT

Neon lights. Crowds of people. Traffic. A flurry of motorcycles and scooters. Richard and Dylan move with the crowd down the sidewalk.

RICHARD

This is gonna blow your mind. Nothing to compare it to in the States, let alone Ohio.

DYLAN

Ohio's in the United States.

RICHARD

Ha-ha.

They cross the busy street, head down a much less trafficked road. A line of HOMELESS PEOPLE sleep on the ground. Kids run around, ask for money. Richard waves them off. Dylan is taken by a family of four: Mother, Son, Father and a baby on the man's chest - all lay atop cardboard flats.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Keep walking, we're almost there.

We begin to make out the muffled sound of speakers blasting music. To their left's a small turnabout island, a large white church. Up ahead, a glass walled KFC. The three major influences: poverty, religion, the West.

Half a dozen kids in worn, dirty clothes stand with faces pressed against the KFC window watching people at the counter, the tables. Dylan stops. Richard backtracks, stands next to him.

RICHARD

Yeah, its pretty bad around here.  
I get it. Don't let it ruin our  
night, okay?

They reach their destination. An old neon sign burns "**Lone Star**" into the night. An obese SECURITY GUARD sits on a chair outside the curtained door. Richard and Dylan enter.

INT. LONE STAR -- NIGHT

Wow! The lights, while not dim, are atmospheric, slightly pulsing to the song. To the left - a service bar for WAITRESSES. To the right, booths and tall tables.

A stage protrudes into the middle of the room, a bar counter with chairs around it. Working between the stage and the counter, FEMALE BARTENDERS serve CUSTOMERS. On the far side - bathrooms and dressing rooms.

The distant corner sports a pool table. On stage, BAR GIRLS, 20's, perform a choreographed dance routine. They wear matching black and red outfits. They gyrate, move, smile. All are beautiful, joyful. Dylan's in awe, stares at the stage, the girls. Richard walks into his line of sight.

RICHARD

Nice, huh?!? Come on....

He leads Dylan past similarly dressed Waitresses and Bar Girls fawning over men. They pass Calipusan, watching protectively over the girls.

CALIPUSAN

You're back.

RICHARD

Can't stay away. Mamasan?

Calipusan points. MAMASON, 40's, the establishment's matron. She turns, puts her hands on hips, cocks her head at him. Richard opens his arms and she reluctantly hugs him.

MAMASAN

(skeptical)

Another business trip?

RICHARD

Gotta pay the bills, don't I? This is my buddy Dylan. He's one of the good guys.

MAMASAN

(to Richard)

Then tell me, what's he doing with you?

Mamasan snaps her fingers at TWO BAR GIRLS, points toward the men. No sooner are the guys seated than the girls scrunch in with them.

BARGIRLS

Hi.....

Dylan shoots a look at Richard. Richard winks.

RICHARD

(draping an arm around  
one)

Its my roman nose, isn't it?

Where Richard's quite at home, Dylan is very uncomfortable. One of the girls runs a hand up his leg. He jerks back, slides her hand away.

DYLAN

I'm good, thanks.

She puts it back, smiles.

DYLAN

(to Richard)

I'm gonna check out the pool table.

(to Bar Girl)

Excuse me.

He slips away as the girls "ahhhh" him.

RICHARD  
He's going through some shit.

They nod.

RICHARD  
I'm not.

We stay with Dylan. He passes Mamasan, reaches the pool table as Simon sinks a ball.

DYLAN  
Who's got next?

SIMON  
(chalking cue)  
Name on the chalkboard.

Dylan steps around Simon, reaches for a stick of chalk. A Bargirl picks it up.

SIMON  
They do it for you. They do  
everything for you.

The Other Player laughs. Simon lines up a shot.

DYLAN  
(To Bargirl)  
Dylan.

She writes his name on the board. Dylan turns around, Simon rockets the 8 ball into a corner pocket. His OPPONENT sets the cue down, shakes Simon's hand. The Bargirl racks the balls.

SIMON  
Thanks, mate.

Dylan picks up the cue, sneaks a peak at Richard. His two girls have grown to four.

DYLAN  
(to Simon)  
Any house rules?

SIMON  
This is the Philippines.

Dylan turns back to the pool table. The Bargirl's nearly done racking, steps away. Simon places the cue ball.

SIMON

Only rule you gotta worry about's  
not pissing someone off, ending up  
in a body bag - if you're lucky.

He breaks.

SIMON

First timer, huh? I saw you and  
your mate come in. Too much too  
soon, eh? The Sheilas?

DYLAN

Australia?

SIMON

Yep.

Simon sets the cue down.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Go ahead and shoot.  
(to Bargirl)  
Grab us some beers, sweetie.

Simon walks off to the men's room. In the background, Tobin enters. He's friendly and jovial, yet we pick up a measure of distance, fear in the patrons and employees.

Dylan shoots, pockets a ball, moves around the table. Tobin's stopped to speak with Mamasan, watches Dylan. She mouths "pool table" and "bathroom".

He pats Mamasan on the shoulder strolls to the pool table as Dylan misses his shot. Tobin picks up Simon's cue, chalks it, walks around the table looking for a shot.

DYLAN

I'm sorry, but someone else is  
playing.

TOBIN

Don't be sorry, son. He works for  
me.

DYLAN

You the owner?

TOBIN

Not exactly.

Tobin shoots, sinks the ball. Simon exits the bathroom, sits nonchalantly in a chair. The beers arrive and Dylan pulls out his wallet.

SIMON  
You pay at the end, mate. They have  
you sign slips like a tab, add 'em  
up before you call it a night.

The Bargirl hands a pen and pad to Dylan. He signs the paper,  
she rips it out, puts it into a small glass by his beer.

Simon lifts his bottle.

SIMON  
Cheers.

Dylan does the same, takes a sip, makes a face. Simon laughs.

SIMON  
Yeah. It sucks.

Tobin's running the table. Pretty impressive.

SIMON  
You'll develop an appreciation for  
it.

TOBIN  
You'll have to.

Another Bargirl delivers an imported beer to Tobin.

TOBIN  
Simon, take over for me.

Simon stands, takes the cue. Tobin moves into the chair.

TOBIN  
American?

Dylan nods. Tobin glances over a shoulder, watches the bar  
girls.

TOBIN  
You've entered the last bastion of  
the wild west, son.

DYLAN  
I don't follow.

TOBIN  
Of course you don't. You're American.

Dylan is trying to figure out if this guy's rude or stupid.  
Simon sees it as well, misses a shot.

SIMON

You're up.

Dylan rises, checks out the table. Simon assumes his seat.

Another dance routine finishes and the Bargirls flood the floor. Others appear from the dressing room, take the stage.

SIMON

He's alright, don'tcha reckon?

Tobin throws him a smirk, drinks his beer. ANNA, 30's, an aging Bargirl, approaches Tobin, sits on his lap.

ANNA

Baby!!

She plants a generous kiss to his cheek. Tobin soaks up the attention.

TOBIN

Anna, this is my new American friend.  
Ah...

DYLAN

Dylan. Nice to meet you.

Dylan misses a shot.

TOBIN

Dylan is typical American. It's comforting to know how little things change. Life has a nice way of reminding us of that. Tell me, Dylan, just why would America turn over a country as beautiful as this to let it rule itself? Don't get me wrong, I've benefited from their poverty on more than one occasion. Tonight further distancing me from the rare exception.

He lightly pats Anna's thigh.

DYLAN

Your shot.

TOBIN

You boys finish up. Anna, be a sport and find us a playmate.

Anna kisses his cheek and disappears into the dressing room.

INT. LONE STAR - DRESSING ROOM NIGHT

Anna closes the door, leans against it. Numerous BARGIRLS fill the room. Some getting into their uniforms, some getting out, others applying make up. Anna utters something in Filipino. Looks around the room. No takers. We settle on one girl, MARELLA, 20's, beautiful, humble, quiet.

BARGIRL #1

I'm sure he'd be happy with Marella.

The other girls snicker.

ANNA

I don't want him happy. I want him satisfied. I've put in too much time for someone else to make him happy.

Another bargirl with a smoking hot body, DANA rises.

DANA

I'll do it.

ANNA

Bag your own elephant.

BARGIRL #1

(to Dana)

I thought they kept your medical folder?

BARGIRL #2

Yeah, should you even be here?

DANA

I'm as clean as you.

BARGIRL #1

That's what we're all worried about!!

Laughter. The door abruptly opens and in steps Mamasan.

MAMASAN

Anna, he's waiting.

Anna has panic on her face. Mamasan turns, points to Bargirl #2, motions toward the door.

MAMASAN

OUTSIDE! 5 MINUTES!!

BARGIRL #2

He sweats so much!

Reluctantly, Bargirl #2 begins to undress.

MAMASAN (CONT'D)

The rest of you - on stage.

The girls rush out past Mamasan, she follows, closes the door. Anna walks over to Bargirl #2.

ANNA

He finishes with me.

Bargirl #2 nods.

INT. LONE STAR - NIGHT

Richard stands by the table speaking with Calipusan. He points at Dylan, waves him over, continues the conversation. Dylan approaches.

DYLAN

What's up?

RICHARD

I've got some business tomorrow.  
Cal's gonna take you diving.

(re: Dylan)

He used to dive before he moved to Ohio. Not a lot of oceanic sites in the midwest.

CALIPUSAN

I'll take care of you, my friend.

RICHARD

Make sure he uses a tank. Don't let him talk you into any of that free diving shit he does.

CALIPUSAN

No problem.

Calipusan peels off. Richard smiles at Dylan, nods at the table full of girls.

RICHARD

Ready to take off? I have a couple friends who want to join us.

DYLAN

I don't know, man.

RICHARD

Come on! We're in the Philippines!!!

DYLAN  
I'm still gonna pass.

RICHARD  
Bummer. 'Cause I already bar fined  
'em.

The girls approach. Richard places an arm over each. Dylan turns away. Above him, Marella and the girls move slightly to the song playing.

RICHARD  
Let's hit it.

DYLAN  
I really don't feel comfortable with  
this.

RICHARD  
Of course you don't.

Richard and the girls file through the club. Dylan locks eyes with Marella. She offers a gentle smile.

EXT. LONE STAR - NIGHT

Richard, Dylan and the girls exit. Richard flags down a cab, opens the door. The girls file into the back.

RICHARD  
(to Dylan)  
Get in.

Dylan steps around Richard, slides inside the front passenger side. Richard laughs, climbs in the back, shuts the door. Curious, Calipusan watches the car drive away.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. HOTEL - DYLAN'S ROOM - MORNING

Dylan wakes, sits up. He rises, looks out the blinds.

EXT. CEBU STREETS -- MORNING

Traffic. Kiosks. People rushing about.

INT. HOTEL - MAIN ROOM - MORNING

Dylan walks into the main room, sees Richard's door slightly askew. He steps over, creaks it open a bit. Richard and the two Bargirls drape the mattress.

As Dylan closes the door, the noise rustles the bodies. He steps into the kitchen area. A moment later, Richard pokes his head out, holds a towel around his waist.

RICHARD

Hey. You hungry? Gimme 5 and we'll grab something.

He closes the door. Inside the room we hear talking, movement. A moment later, the door re-opens and the girls parade out, all either holding money or putting it away. Richard winks, shuts the door as Dylan watches the exodus.

INT. FRENCH BAKERY CAFE -- MORNING

Richard, dressed in suit and tie, carrying a briefcase, opens the door for Dylan. Richard removes his sunglasses, scans the room for a table.

RICHARD

I gotta roll after this. Cal'll meet you at the dock. Set you up. We'll catch up later, okay?

Dylan nods.

EXT. TOURIST DOCK - MORNING

Tourists fill the dock as HOTEL EMPLOYEES help with tanks, fishing gear, boats, etc. Dylan and Calipusan watch the organized chaos unfold.

Cebuanos do their best to attend to the needs of the Westerners, most of whom are spoiled tourists. Dylan's growing discomfort's not lost on Cal. Cal taps his arm, motions for them to leave.

INT. TAXI - DAY

Dylan and Calipusan ride through the city.

CALIPUSAN

Last night, you didn't get in the back with the girls. Why not?

DYLAN

Richard, he's...married. He doesn't care about who or where. I mean, I'm married, too...technically, for a few more weeks, but I care about who and where. I start sleeping with a girl - I fall in love.

Dylan sees the bridge up ahead.

DYLAN

Hey, is it safe to go over there?  
It was suggested to not cross the  
bridge.

CALIPUSAN

For you? Yes. It is safe.

The Taxi drives alongside a large vehicle which looks like a van or truck but with open air windows and benches inside for patrons.

CALIPUSAN

Jeepney.

DYLAN

Jeepney?

Calipusan nods.

DYLAN

Can we ride in one on the way back?

CALIPUSAN

Up to you.

The TAXI DRIVER laughs, smiles into the rear view mirror.

TAXI DRIVER

American?

DYLAN

Sort of. I'm from Ohio.

TAXI DRIVER

Welcome to my country.

EXT. TAXI - DAY

The Taxi pulls from the Jeepney. Dylan watches the jeepney with fascination.

EXT. MACTAN PIER - DAY

Dylan stands by as Calipusan negotiates renting a Bonka Boat.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

Dylan and Calipusan work the nets from the Bonka Boat. Across the water various FISHERMAN ply their trade, among them a ONE ARMED MAN who's adapted to his handicap.

Dylan and Calipusan toss the nets overboard. Dylan turns, grabs a mask, fins and spear.

DYLAN

Thank you for this.

Calipusan picks up a fishing pole, steps to the other side of the boat. A moment later, Dylan dives into the water.

EXT. OPEN AIR MARKET - DAY

A mesh bag of fish lands on the table. Dylan and Calipusan stand opposite a WOMAN WITH NO FRONT TEETH, 50's. Calling this a market's kinda generous. It's really an area for locals to gather, sell wares whether they be fruits, vegetables, meats, toys, etc. Calipusan and the Woman speak in Filipino.

CALIPUSAN

How much do you want to sell?

DYLAN

I just want something to cook. You can have the rest.

Calipusan continues the negotiation. Dylan steps aside, browses the surrounding stands. Down the end of the street he sees Richard in shorts and sandals, walking with a different girl from last night.

Richard's uncharacteristically caring, affectionate, doting.

Dylan smiles, takes a breath to call after him when he sees Richard take a toy from a vendor, squat down and give it to a smiling LITTLE BOY. Richard lifts the boy, places an arm around the woman and walks away.

CALIPUSAN

Here. I got you some rice. Careful with this beer. Its known to knock foreigners on their backsides.

Calipusan notices what Dylan's been looking at.

CALIPUSAN

The jeepney's are this way.

DYLAN

Did you know about this?

CALIPUSAN

The jeepney's. They are this way.

They pass a SECURITY GUARD, 50's, who offers a nod of friendly recognition to Calipusan. Calipusan smiles, returns the greeting.

INT. JEEPNEY - DAY

Dylan and Calipusan sit in the crowded jeepney as it rolls along the bumpy road. It passes us, revealing the gorgeous countryside...

INT. HOTEL - MAIN AREA - LATE AFTERNOON

Dylan cooks his fish, rice.

TIME CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL - MAIN AREA - LATE AFTERNOON

Dylan eats alone.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOTEL - MAIN AREA - LATE AFTERNOON

Dylan cleans the dishes, dries them, puts them away.

INT. HOTEL - MAIN AREA - LATE AFTERNOON

WE DOLLY TOWARDS the window, push through the curtains, see Dylan walking down the street. The window closes, revealing Richard. He's in a suit, carries a small duffel. Stepping away, he sets the bag on the table, undoes his tie.

EXT. CEBU CITY -- LATE AFTERNOON

Dylan strolls the streets taking photographs. Click! Kids play. Click! A man pushes a wooden trolley full of pineapple. Click! Another man repairs a rubber tire over an open flame. Click! A family of four rides the same motorcycle. Click! A beautiful girl passes by.

Dylan lowers the camera - its Marella, one of the bargirls from Lone Star. He raises the camera, takes another photo of her. Begins following her. She strolls through the city, checking out kiosks, buying small things, putting them into a mesh bag.

Dylan's clearly taken by her, snaps pictures of her interacting with fellow locals, noticing how she stirs them, brightens their expressions. If it weren't for how we feel about him, we'd think Dylan was -

TOBIN (O.S.)

Stalking?

Dylan lowers the lens. Tobin stands behind him.

TOBIN

Marella's a pretty girl. Are you stalking her?

Dylan doesn't know what to say.

TOBIN

You can have her for a fair price. You do like girls, don't you?

(points down the way)

There are establishments catering to alternative pleasure discretions.

Two blocks over. Quite discreet.

Here, they're referred to as 'lady boys'.

Dylan glances back at the crowd. Can't see her.

TOBIN

Poof!! She's gone!!

Disturbed, Dylan adjusts his camera strap, walks away. Tobin merely smiles at him.

EXT. KIOSK -- DUSK

Dylan buys a coke, sits down at a rickety bamboo table, takes in the scenery. A few moments pass and a YOUNG GIRL approaches. Taps him on the arm, hands him a drawing then runs away.

He looks at the paper - an artistic sketch of himself taking photographs. At the bottom's written "**now we're even :)**"

Dylan looks around - no Marella.

INT. JEEPNEY -- DUSK

Dylan rides the jeepney, stares aimlessly. It stops and folks get off and get on. A girl sits across from him but he's staring at the ground, sees a mesh bag full of inexpensive toys. He recognizes it, looks up - Marella.

The jeepney moves forward. A chance encounter, both are somewhat taken aback but don't want to show it. Neither do they wish to engage the other.

They connect, smile but try and play it off. Its the moment when you desperately long to say something but fear you're reading into a situation. You like this person, your heart's beating, you're pretty sure they feel the same way but you're afraid.

Others are on the jeepney but they don't really exist. Just this person across from you with whom you'll not converse. The jeepney stops and Dylan rises, exits. It pulls away and he raises the camera. Takes one last photo of her before crossing to his hotel.

INT. LONE STAR - DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Anna sits at the vanity, calmly applying make up.

Other Bargirls dress and chat behind her, but she's in her own world, contemplating an evening with Tobin. She remembers happy times, laughing with Tobin at the bar, kissing him in the back of a cab, making love to him in a hotel room, walking through a crowded celebration. Like a couple. Like they're in love.

Sad times when he bumps into her prompting an accidental spill of a drink tray, splashing on his shirt. His temper, his anger, yelling at her as if she were at fault, not apologizing.

Eyeing the younger Bargirls, groping at Marella in front of her, Marella looking to her for help, Anna turning away in jealousy.

Tobin sitting with other Bargirls, Anna attempting to sit next to him, closer to him, Tobin ignoring her. Opening a present from him, a dress, his acceptance of her embrace, his gentle smile, his kiss...

FADE OUT:

INT. LONE STAR - NIGHT

Anna sits at a table staring blankly.

MAMASAN

Anna. Anna!

Anna shakes out of it. Mamasan stands before her. Calipusan takes a seat at the stage a few feet away.

MAMASAN

I need you to watch the floor for me tonight. Make sure the girls going to the clinic tomorrow bring their charts.

Anna nods.

MAMASAN

Calipusan's here if you need anything.

Anna smiles, understanding. As Mamasan exits, Anna focuses on Calipusan, loses the smile.

ANNA

One of these days, I'll be your boss.

Stoic, Calipusan merely lifts his glass to toast her, sets it back down.

TIME CUT TO:

INT. LONE STAR - POOL TABLE - NIGHT

Dylan plays Simon again. Richard watches as does Tobin.

Dylan talks a mile a minute, following Simon around the table, alternating between shots as they clear their balls. Tobin notices how everyone's taken by Dylan's enthusiastic re-telling of the day's events, including Anna.

DYLAN

It was awesome! The water? Simon, the clearest I've experienced. Never seen anything like it. I was a swimmer in college. I grew up by the ocean - used to scare the shit out of my mom by entering free diving contests, you know - hold your breath, try not to die, grab a flag - so I can stay underwater pretty long and these fish - THESE FISH! My God!! Barely needed the spear.

Cal passes by.

DYLAN

Cal? Am I right?

CALIPUSAN

(endeared)

They all but asked to be cooked.

Simon's ready to shoot the 8. Dylan stands in the way.

SIMON

Mate?

DYLAN

Oh - sorry.

Simon checks out the table. No clear finish.

SIMON

Bugger...

He lines up a trick shot for the 8 ball, throws some spin on it, sends the 8 rolling toward the pocket, draws the cue ball away.

We watch as the 8 ball drops and there's some cheering but it's muted by the sudden realization of the cue ball's continued movement toward a pocket. The noise of apprehension grows, released only by the cue ball dropping into a pocket.

Scratch. Simon loses. The Bargirl racks the balls as Simon, upset, yet gracious, shakes Dylan's hand.

DYLAN

I won?

SIMON

Gotta throw you Yanks the occasional bone elsewise you may take this island back. Then where'd we be? Am I right?

He laughs, takes a seat next to Richard as Tobin rises. Dylan has his back to the main floor, chalks up his cue. The winner, it's Dylan's break. But as he reaches for the cue ball Tobin slaps a cue on the table, blocks him.

The jovial mood is gone. Everything stops - the music, the Bargirls and Marella dancing. Calipusan slowly pushes through the crowd, subtly, stealthily. Tobin locks eyes with Dylan. Power struggle.

Dylan reaches for the cue ball, gets his palm around it.

TOBIN

Simon.

Reluctantly, Simon stands.

SIMON

(to Dylan)

Take your hand away, mate. I mean it. Take your hand away. Let him break.

RICHARD

Dylan.

Dylan is fucked and knows it, releases the ball.

Tobin takes his time. Places it where he wants it, lines up the shot, breaks the rack. Tobin chalks his cue, keeps his attention on the table.

TOBIN

Anna? May we have some music please?

Anna sits up, motions. The music returns, Simon sits back down, the energy returns to the club. Tobin proceeds to run the table.

TOBIN

America has a history of mistaking its overabundance of fire power for intelligence, victory. And when it makes a bad decision, its the first to use disinformation as a moral platform illuminating what it sees as an inferiority of what it left behind.

Tobin stops, glances back at Richard who's sobered to the situation, turns back to Dylan, continues shooting.

TOBIN

Even if you appear to win, by, say, your opponent scratching. You didn't really win now did you?

Tobin's cleared all his balls off the table, goes for the final shot for the 8 ball. He taps it, runs the ball to the pocket - just short.

Dylan steps up, checks out the table, shoots the 8 Ball in. Losing intentionally he's turned Tobin's speech around. The pool area doesn't know what to make of it. Anna worries about Tobin's temper, Simon's concerned he may be prompted to act against Dylan. Richard drops his head.

DYLAN

Thanks for the game.

Tobin's surprisingly impressed. Like he's found a worthy opponent. He watches Dylan boldly hand the cue to the Bargirl, walk calmly from the area. Richard catches up to him.

RICHARD

I was hoping we'd return to the states in a commercial jet, not a body bag.

DYLAN

Don't sweat it. Odds are we'll never make it to the body bag.

RICHARD

You keep making us the blood in the shark tank we probably won't. What the fuck was that?

DYLAN

He's an asshole.

RICHARD

Yeah? Well, so am I.

DYLAN

He's a bigger asshole.

RICHARD

Alright, alright.

(to Bargirl)

Babe, go get that thing I bought will you?

The Bargirl runs off.

RICHARD

Look, its our last night. Can we have a good time? In 24 hours we have to go back to our shitty lives in a shitty midwest winter. I'd like to enjoy a little paradise beforehand. I was hoping you would, too. Or do you not want to go back to civilization?

DYLAN

Thinking about it.

Richard studies him.

RICHARD

Look, I get that you had a good time today - I wanted you to. You deserve it. But that's all this place is. A good time. We gotta go home, man. Its unfortunate, but -

The girls appear. One of them's Marella. She offers a slight smile. Not necessarily disingenuous but certainly not heartfelt inviting. Clearly this isn't the scenario either expected to unfold.

RICHARD

You're welcome.

Dylan turns to Richard who sports a wicked grin.

RICHARD  
 What? Hey, its all you now, brother.

Richard walks away with the other girl, heads for the exit.

DYLAN  
 Richard?

RICHARD  
 (over his shoulder)  
 See you tomorrow.

Dylan turns to Marella.

POOL TABLE.

Tobin sees Dylan with Marella.

TOBIN  
 Anna, bring me Mamasan.

ANNA  
 (proudly)  
 Tonight, I am Mamasan.

TOBIN  
 You let him bar fine her?

ANNA  
 It was the other American. They're  
 leaving tomorrow.

Tobin rises, moves toward Dylan and Marella. Anna exchanges a look with Simon. Simon knows this isn't good for public relations.

DYLAN AND MARELLA.

Tobin approaches.

TOBIN  
 This is the part where she gets her  
 things and you meet her outside.

No movement.

TOBIN  
 Marella? Get your things.

She drops her eyes, saunters off. Tobin extends his arm to the door. Dylan locks eyes with him.

TOBIN  
 Have a safe journey back to America.

Reluctantly, Dylan exits.

EXT. LONE STAR - NIGHT

Dylan and Marella, changed from her Lone Star uniform, stand outside the club.

DYLAN

That guy, the Brit? Not a nice guy?

She stares back uncommitted.

DYLAN

Right. You work here. Got it.  
What would you like to do? You wanna  
grab something to eat?

MARELLA

Up to you.

DYLAN

Help me out a little, okay? Where  
should we go?

A taxi turns up the road, headlights catching their eyes.

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

Marella and Dylan sit in the back. The cab pulls off the street, drives up the embankment of a motor hotel, an enclosed structure, with numerous stairwells leading to hourly rooms.

The taxi slows behind another. An OLDER MAN exits with a much YOUNGER GIRL. Around them, MOTEL EMPLOYEES scurry about, leading clients in and out of rooms, carrying sacks of dirty sheets and pillowcases. Its busy.

DYLAN

No.  
(To Driver)  
Please get us out of here.

They pull out. Dylan turns toward the window.

MARELLA

Sir? I'm sorry.

DYLAN

Its okay. And please don't call me  
sir. Look, I'll have this gentleman  
drop you back at the bar, okay?

Marella fills with apprehension.

DYLAN  
Please talk to me.

MARELLA  
I have to spend the night.

DYLAN  
You have to spend the night?

MARELLA  
Yes. If they find otherwise I will  
be in trouble.

There's a pause. Marella reaches over, sets her hand on his.

EXT. BUSY STREET - NIGHT

A taxi cab drives past. A moment later, Dylan and Marella appear, strolling down the sidewalk.

DYLAN  
So you wouldn't be paid?

MARELLA  
Correct.

DYLAN  
Do you get to say no?

MARELLA  
Occasionally. Its not something to  
do often.

DYLAN  
Do you mind me asking how old you  
are?

MARELLA  
Yes.

She pushes him with her shoulder, smiles.

DYLAN  
I'm going to get you something, okay?  
Most people around here look like  
they swallowed a rib cage.

They reach a pizza place and he opens the door for her.

INT. YELLOW CAB PIZZA-- NIGHT

They enter the pizza place, get in line. Outside, girls work the streets, flag down cars.

MARELLA

How long have you been on the island?

DYLAN

Not long. Couple days.

MARELLA

Are you on Holiday?

DYLAN

Yes. No. Not exactly. My friend brought me to see the girls. I came to see the water.

MARELLA

Have you seen the water?

DYLAN

A little. Today. You've lived here your whole life?

Marella nods. She glances around, becomes a little uncomfortable.

DYLAN

Would you be interested in showing me places Westerners don't see? Across the bridge?

MARELLA

Its night time.

DYLAN

In the morning?

MARELLA

I have the clinic in the morning.

DYLAN

After the doctor?

MARELLA

I have to work.

Silence.

MARELLA

Sir, aren't you leaving tomorrow?

DYLAN

I left a long time ago.

Outside, the Girls loudly accost Passersby. Dylan notices Marella's body language, the locals in the restaurant see

her. He reaches for her hand, grasps it tenderly. Surprised, she looks up.

DYLAN  
(softly)  
C'mon...

Dylan leads her outside.

EXT. YELLOW CAB PIZZA -- NIGHT

Exiting the door, Dylan takes her past the group of girls, hails a cab. Marella keeps her head down.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MAIN ROOM -- NIGHT

A piece of fish hits the skillet.

Sitting on the couch, Marella looks at his things - laptop, camera, phone, bag. She tucks in her legs, lays her head on the arm rest.

Cooking, Dylan hears snoring. He turns, sees Marella's fallen asleep. He turns off the skillet, covers her with a blanket, dims the lights.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

Its later. The lights are completely off. We hear Richard and two Bargirls approach from outside. Drunk, loud. He turns the key, the door creaks open - light crosses onto the couch - the blanket's there, Marella's purse but no Marella. They bust through the door amid giggles and shh-shhing.

Richard flicks a switch. Dishes cleaned, drying in rack.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Marella's on the toilet, hears the noise, cleans herself with a tissue, pulls up her underwear. She's in bra and panties, sitting nervously, afraid. There's a knock.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

Marella exits the bathroom past one of the Bargirls. The other stands by Richard. He steps from her, stares at Marella.

The other two bargirls realize Richard wants her. A short exchange in Filipino between the three women. Marella lowers her eyes, attempts to walk away. Richard blocks her, gives a nod to the others who open his door.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DYLAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Dylan stirs, sits up, sees Marella's things in the living room but no Marella.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

Dylan moves slowly through the main room, pushes the door to Richard's. Richard lays on his back. One Bargirl's going down on him, the other laying on her side next to him kissing him, Marella on the other being fondled. Marella clearly doesn't want to be here but feels there's no choice.

Dylan enters the room, collects her clothes.

DYLAN

Let's go.

Richard looks up.

RICHARD

Come on, man, really?

Marella quickly dresses and they exit, closing the door.

INT. DYLAN'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Dylan jams a chair against the doorknob, turns.

DYLAN

I'm sorry. Please.

He motions to the bed. She slips in. He follows. The chair keeps the door secure.

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DYLAN'S HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

The chair's still secure. At the table next to it, Marella draws what's before her: Dylan sleeping. He stirs, sits up. Realizes she's waiting for him to dislodge the chair.

INT. HOTEL - MAIN AREA - MORNING

Dylan lets her out the front. Once in the hallway, she turns to him. Regal, proper.

MARELLA

Thank you.

Eyes downcast, she smiles, walks away.

DYLAN

Hey?

She turns.

DYLAN

Can I see you again?

MARELLA

Up to you.

He shakes his head, watches her disappear around the corner.

INT. DYLAN'S HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Dylan picks up the drawing. Steps to the window. A city full of people....

FADE OUT:

INT. CLINIC - WAITING ROOM - DAY

A GROUP OF BARGIRLS we've met before including Dana, wait in the lobby. Some text from their phones, a few flip through magazines, a couple hold children, others stare blankly.

INT. CLINIC - OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

Marella's in the stirrups. A DOCTOR and NURSE observe her.

INT. CLINIC - WAITING ROOM - DAY

Marella enters from Observation, sits amidst the others. A Nurse appears with an arm full of laminated cards complete with charts and photos, some worn, a few new.

As she calls names the respective Bargirl rises, retrieves her chart, exits the building. Nervous, girls exchange glances, look down, wait to hear their names.

Through a series of dissolves, the room clears. We're down to three charts. But there are four girls, including Dana and Marella.

BARGIRL #3

(whisper)

There's only 3 charts...

BARGIRL #4

(Shhhh)

I know!

The Nurse calls a name, a girl rises, exits. Down to three. A name is called, a girl rises, exits. Two left.

Marella continues staring at the ground, hears her name.

She rises, eyes still downcast, retrieves her chart, exits. We PUSH IN on Dana, chin trembling, tears beginning to fall. Compassionate, the Nurse turns to the Observation door, opens it for her.

EXT. CLINIC - DAY

A few Bargirls wait outside with the last 3rd and 4th girl. They're disappointed to see Marella, exchange harsh words. As Marella walks away, one of the girls rushes into the building.

Marella barely maintains her composure. Shaken by the experience she moves past us, leaving a clear view of the clinic and the others.

INT. FRENCH BAKERY CAFE - DAY

Remnants of breakfast rest on two sets of plates. A PRETTY WAITRESS, 20's, sets coffees in front of Richard and Dylan, clears their dishes. Richard checks her out. Dylan studies him, slightly disappointed.

DYLAN

What'd you do yesterday?

RICHARD

(still looking at  
Waitress)

Hmmm?

DYLAN

Your meeting. How'd it go?

Richard leans back, sips coffee.

RICHARD

Great. They were great.

He smiles. Dylan nods.

DYLAN

Do you have any others? That you know of?

RICHARD

Meetings? We fly out tonight, remember? My money go to waste last night? It did, didn't it?

DYLAN

The thing is, you and the rest of Western Civilization view Asia as its very own recreational sex crime.

RICHARD

What happens, Dylan? What happens if me and the rest of Western Civilization says 'thanks but no thanks'? What do those girls do for money? You got an answer for that?

DYLAN

Since when did intercourse become a public service?

RICHARD

Since someone needed money and someone else...

(pinches Dylan's cheeks)

...needed to feel better about himself.

DYLAN

That's not what's gonna make me feel better about myself.

RICHARD

No? Then what? 'Cause these girls really make me feel a lot better about myself.

DYLAN

Then why are you married?

RICHARD

Because she said yes. Personally? I was shocked a girl like her would say yes to a guy like me so I went with it.

DYLAN

Do you even love her?

RICHARD

I suppose. We're different people, Dylan. You give me an insight to the pursuit of truth, of "wild horses" and sometimes, my shallow collection of trophy wife, corporate ladder and material belongings seems trivial. But not often.

EXT. FRENCH BAKERY CAFE - DAY

Richard and Dylan exit the cafe. Dylan slows as Richard approaches a line of cabs. Behind Dylan are the Jeepneys.

DYLAN

Hey. Let's take a Jeepney.

RICHARD

(reaches for cab door)

Fuck that.

(opens door)

You coming?

Dylan stands there.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

You okay? You're acting really odd.

(affirming)

Let's pack and grab a couple drinks.

DYLAN

I'll meet you later.

RICHARD

What? You're gonna miss the flight.

DYLAN

I won't.

RICHARD

You know how much a change fee is?

You think divorce is expensive?

Man...

DYLAN

I wanna ride the jeepney.

Richard gets in the cab. Dylan watches him leave, really watches, as if he's not gonna see him again, or at least for awhile.

EXT. OPEN AIR MARKET - DAY

In slow motion, Dylan walks through the market, sees happiness, life, the One Armed Fisherman, a LITTLE BOY, kids playing - JOY!

EXT. MACTAN PIER - DAY

Dylan negotiates to rent a Bonka Boat with the same gentleman from the previous day.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

Empty, the Bonka Boat floats peacefully. Moments later, Dylan rushes from the water, tosses fish onto the deck, pulls himself on board.

He rises, and we spin around him as he takes in gorgeous water, the bright sunshine, the green coastline, the other fisherman, absolute purity...

EXT. OPEN AIR MARKET - AFTERNOON

The Woman With No Front Teeth hands Dylan some coins. He picks up the mesh bag.

DYLAN

I only come here 'cause I have a crush on you.

She blushes, smiles. The Woman's CO-WORKER leans over.

CO-WORKER

She has crush on YOU!

DYLAN

On me?!? No. That's crazy talk. Crazy talk...

He winks, walks away.

INT. MACTAN AIRPORT - BOARDING GATE - EVENING

Richard stands by the jetway. The flight's been called. He scans the floor - no Dylan. It's clear he needs to get on board or miss the plane. Richard glances at his phone, types in a message, boards the plane.

INT. DYLAN'S HOTEL ROOM - EVENING

Dylan's phone rests on a table. The light blinks and Richard's message reads "*I hope you know what you're doing*". Next to the phone is Marella's drawings of Dylan.

Dylan picks up the phone, his keys. We stare at the drawings as he exits in the background.

INT. LONE STAR - NIGHT

Marella and the other girls do the dance thing. Dylan sits in a booth watching alone. Tobin casually enters, slips into the next booth so they're separated yet close enough to talk. Dylan glances over and Tobin offers a friendly smile. A moment passes before Tobin adjusts his position.

TOBIN

It's going to end in tears.

Dylan remains silent.

TOBIN

You know that don't you?

DYLAN

Mine or yours.

TOBIN

Hers.

Dylan takes this in.

TOBIN

This whole territory's prone to tears.  
No one's gotten it right. Not the  
Spanish, the Japanese, the British.  
They all try to possess its beauty  
but soon enough.... Even you  
Americans, with your "good"  
intentions.

(laughs)

The damage was done and there was  
nothing to do but leave disappointed.  
And history? History does have a  
way of repeating itself. Often  
redundantly. My suggestion's to  
leave before you re-discover America's  
disappointment. Good advice, son.

Tobin toasts Dylan. Dylan turns his attention to Marella.

INT. DYLAN'S HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Dylan sleeps alone. A soft knocking wakes him. He walks  
through the main room, approaches the door as a drawing's  
slipped under. He picks it up - Magellan in shallow water,  
Spanish Armada behind him, Lapu-Lapu on land. Confrontation.

He opens the door. Marella's standing there.

MARELLA

Sight seeing. Chop-chop.

EXT. MACTAN BEACH - MORNING

From the drawing.

MARELLA

Magellan landed in Cebu, charmed the King and Queen, introduced Catholicism. He and his men sailed here, to Mactan where they met their doom in Lapu-Lapu and Lapu-Lapu's men who killed Magellan. Right here.

DYLAN

Your drawing. Pretty spot on.

MARELLA

No. Lapu-Lapu's wearing basketball shoes.

Dylan looks at it. Yep. He laughs.

MARELLA

I'm disappointed you didn't notice. You should be embarrassed.

DYLAN

Thanks. I'll get right on that.

MARELLA

You said you wanted me to show you things most Westerners don't see. I'd like to do that. For you.

EXT. SLUM - DAY

Poverty. No running water or sewage. Children bathing from buckets. Houses crammed on top of each other, stilts keeping them from the water's surface. Far from resort living.

Children play, unaware of their living conditions, their bleak future, their hunger. Taken aback, Dylan stares off at the ocean. Marella approaches.

DYLAN

We need to go fishing.

Marella raises an eyebrow.

EXT. OCEAN - BONKA BOAT - DAY

Marella knows her shit. She can swim, dive, set nets, etc. Dylan is impressed, curious. They both surface. Toss nets and spears into the boat, hang on the side.

MARELLA

My father. You were going to ask where I learned all this.

Dylan smiles. True. He was. He nods, starts to ask a question. She puffs out her cheeks, holds her nose, lowers beneath the surface. No more inquiries.

From afar, their boat is one of many on the beautiful blue water amidst a gorgeous sunny day.

EXT. SLUM - LATE AFTERNOON

The kids eat freshly cooked fish from a makeshift fire. In the distance, Marella and Dylan sit on the ground. Marella turns to him, observes him watching the kids. Sincere. Serene. He turns to her, smiles, bumps her playfully.

EXT. SLUM - JEEPNEY BENCH -- LATE AFTERNOON

Dylan and Marella stand next to an older Cebuano Woman. He leans into Marella, whispers, leans back. She does the same. It becomes a flirtatious game, each leaning in to whisper, leaning back as the other leans in for reply.

DYLAN

Can I see you tonight?

MARELLA

Up to you.

DYLAN

Which way are you going?

She stares at him.

DYLAN

You're not going to tell me.

She smiles.

DYLAN

Is it that I'm American or I met you at a bar.

MARELLA

Both.

A Jeepney arrives. She gently pushes him toward it. On the back, a YOUNG BOY hangs on, collecting fares. Dylan hands him some coins, climbs inside. It pulls away and he watches Marella disappear. Next to him are a few locals, benign.

INT. LONE STAR - NIGHT

Simon lounges nervously in a booth. Keeps his eye on the front door. Seeing Dylan enter, he rises, moves toward him at the front desk.

Dylan stands by the cash register opposite Mamasan.

DYLAN

I don't understand. Not here like she's not working tonight -

MAMASAN

Is there someone else you'd like to buy a drink?

(waves hand around bar)

We have many pretty girls.

Dylan is confused. He turns as Simon approaches.

SIMON

Let's me and you go for a ride. C'mon...

Simon pulls back the curtain, leads Dylan out.

INT. SIMON'S JEEP - DRIVING - NIGHT

Simon drives, Dylan rides in the passenger seat.

DYLAN

Did you see her? Did you see her leave?

SIMON

Listen, these girls, they're not for falling in love. You get me? You're a good fella, alright? Not like most American or British wankers. Trust me on this. You're in native waters with strong rip tides.

Dylan isn't convinced.

SIMON

(re: jeep)

You like this? Four wheel drive. Beats those fucking jeepneys, eh? You wanna borrow it sometime you let me know, okay? Now let's you and me focus on having a good time.

He floors it, pulls into oncoming traffic, lets out a hoot as he weaves through the cars.

INT. COCKFIGHT - RING - NIGHT

We're watching TWO TRAINERS hold their respective fighting birds. The metal on the birds' blades glints with light.

Their eyes focus on each other.

INT. COCKFIGHT - STANDS - NIGHT

Dylan watches alone. Simon appears, slides through the crowd with a couple beers. Hands one to Dylan. Amongst the crowd, men wager, point, yell, wave money.

DYLAN

I don't know how I feel about this.

SIMON

Well, you better figure it out right quick. 'Cause this here's what you'll be dealing with if you're looking at sticking around.

Simon yells to a man down below. Agrees on a bet.

SIMON

This is the last bastion of the wild west. Kill a man for a hundred bucks you can. And the police? They don't investigate unless someone, like say the victim's family, picks up the tab.

Dylan takes it all in.

DYLAN

She left with him didn't she? He bar fined her before I got there?

INT. LONE STAR - AFTERNOON

This happened before Dylan showed up and left with Simon. Mamasan counts money behind the front desk.

INT. COCKFIGHT - RING - NIGHT

The Fighting Birds are released. Land on the ground.

INT. COCKFIGHT - RING - NIGHT

SIMON

I work for him. I don't necessarily need the money, but its nice to have. He knows a lot of people. Makes for an easier time. Plus, I can't exactly go back to Australia.

Dylan watches the ring. Listens.

SIMON

He's not a nice man. You're a decent bloke. But I don't work for you.

INT. LONE STAR - AFTERNOON

Marella enters, hands Mamasan her chart. Mamasan gives a glance, places it into a file.

MAMASAN

You've been bar fined.

INT. COCKFIGHT - STANDS

SIMON

He's got his money but he can't really go back to Wales, either. He's pretty bored most of the time. Any chance for sport, he takes it.

INT. COCKFIGHT - RING - NIGHT

The birds go at it. Knives swipe. Feathers fly. Its fast, bloody, mortal.

INT. LONE STAR - AFTERNOON

Mamasan nods toward the bar. Smiling, expecting Dylan, Marella peers around the barrier, sees Tobin grinning. She's taken aback, recovers, puts on the insincere closed mouth smile.

INT. COCKFIGHT - STANDS - NIGHT

Dylan stares at the match. One bird's gained the advantage. The other lays on the ground.

INT. LONE STAR - AFTERNOON

Tobin and Marella exit the front. In the background, Calipusan sets down the mop, walks toward the rear door.

MAMASAN

Hey. HEY!!!

He ignores her. Mamasan's back straightens, unhappy with the insubordination. The bar silences, save the music, some gentle movement. Mamasan glances around, motions for all to return as they were.

INT. COCKFIGHT - RING - NIGHT

The REFEREE steps up, takes hold of the superior bird, keeps it at bay with one hand.

The other lifts and drops the competition. Once. Twice. A third time - dead.

INT. COCKFIGHT - STANDS - NIGHT

Bets are paid, collected. Money's crumpled and tossed. Simon unfolds his winnings.

SIMON

With Tobin between you and me - its just business. Otherwise, borrow my jeep whenever you like.

DYLAN

I think I've seen enough.

SIMON

Good on ya'....

Simon leads the way out.

EXT. MACTAN PIER - LATE AFTERNOON

Dylan ties up his boat. A few yards away, a ONE ARMED MAN struggles with a rope. Dylan steps over, throws a knot into the rope, secures the boat. Terse, yet appreciative, the One Armed Man gives a nod, collects his nets, his fish, moves down the pier.

Following, Dylan sees Calipusan at the end of the pier, standing by a beat to shit pick up truck. Calipusan smiles.

EXT. OPEN AIR MARKET - DAY

Calipusan stands by as Dylan barter with the women, notices the One Armed Man buying rice.

CALIPUSAN

(re: One Armed Man)

Have you met him?

Dylan leans back, catches sight of the man.

DYLAN

Seen him around.

Dylan picks up his money, remaining fish, walks with Calipusan toward the jeepneys.

CALIPUSAN

This way. My truck.

DYLAN

Last time I got into a vehicle I saw something I can't unsee. Am I gonna experience something similar?

CALIPUSAN

Up to you.

Dylan sighs, smiles, shakes his head, takes a moment, then acquiesces, follows.

INT. CALIPUSAN'S TRUCK - DAY

The two drive through Mactan, pass various shops, the water, the shanty houses, the impromptu basketball courts. Cal notices Dylan's attention perks up when he sees a game.

CALIPUSAN

You play?

Dylan smiles.

CALIPUSAN

Yeah? We should play sometime.

DYLAN

I never thought I'd have a height advantage over an entire nation.

CALIPUSAN

We play for money then?

DYLAN

We play for fish. I can get more fish.

EXT. SHACK - DAY

We're watching a crudely built house set back from the road. The truck is parked a good distance away.

DYLAN

How much longer do we need to look at this?

CALIPUSAN

Not much longer.

A jeepney appears, slows to a stop. Movement from inside as a passenger disembarks and it pulls away. Dylan sits up. Its Marella. She carries the mesh bag of toys we saw her buy earlier. Dylan glances at Calipusan who gives away little except concern, empathy.

Marella hurries to the house, knocks on the door. Her MOTHER opens it, there's a brief exchange of words, not unpleasant but clearly worried and semi-confrontational. She hands her mother the mesh bag and some money. Her mother looks up and down the road, motions for her to go around the back, closes the door.

Marella walks toward the back of the house and the rear door opens. She crouches down, hugs her son THOMAS, 8. She speaks with him, rubs his face.

A moment later, another jeepney arrives and the One Armed Man, whom we realize is MARELLA'S FATHER, exits the vehicle. Other PASSENGERS hand him his nets, fish, etc. He walks toward the house as the jeepney pulls away.

From his vantage point, he can't see the back but the women hear the jeepney. Marella's Mother quickly pulls the boy from Marella, quietly brings him inside.

Marella stands there, pleading silently. Her mother hugs her, kisses her head then extracts herself. Almost an afterthought, the door closes.

Marella slinks away, begins walking up the road in tears.

CALIPUSAN

If you are to stay, you need to know  
this.

Calipusan starts the truck, does a U-turn. Contemplative, Dylan stares straight ahead. He's got a lot to consider.

INT. DYLAN'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Camera hooked up to laptop, editing software open on screen, Dylan scrolls through his photos - the kids eating fish, the One Armed Man fishing, locals playing basketball, Marella smiling.

A DING announces an email's arrival. His ex. "**Please Call Me.**" He sits back, collapses the email window, reveals Marella's smiling face, his photo of her which he uses as his desktop image.

EXT. CEBU STREET - NIGHT

Its late. Dylan stands at a pay phone, load card in hand. International ringing.

DYLAN'S EX (O.S.)

Hello?

DYLAN  
Hey. You asked me to call? I'm  
calling.

DYLAN'S EX (O.S.)  
You didn't come back.

DYLAN  
Yeah.

DYLAN'S EX (O.S.)  
I just...I just wanna know you're  
okay there by yourself.

Silence.

DYLAN'S EX (O.S.)  
Dylan?

DYLAN  
I'm fine. Considering I lost my job  
and then my wife? I'm doing great.

She sighs.

DYLAN'S EX (O.S.)  
The house sold. Your things are in  
the garage. The new owners say that's  
okay for a few weeks. I didn't know  
what else to do.

Another pause.

DYLAN'S EX (O.S.)  
Dylan?

DYLAN  
We good?

DYLAN'S EX (O.S.)  
We're good, Dylan. Be careful, okay?

He remains silent, slowly hangs up the receiver.

EXT. CEBU STREET - NIGHT

Dylan walks through the city, sees the homeless, the men  
sleeping on cardboard, babies beneath their arms, rich kids  
in sports cars, tribes of scooters, motorcycles. He snaps  
photos.

EXT. PIZZA CAB COMPANY - NIGHT

Dylan sits outside, remnants of a pizza before him, a coke in his hand. Dana, the Bar Girl whom we saw at the clinic with Marella, approaches. Dressed for work - short skirt, make up, etc.

DANA  
Hello. How are you?

Dylan looks up.

DYLAN  
I'm sorry?

DANA  
From Lone Star? I know you from  
Lone Star. You went with Marella.

She sits down, leans over, touches his leg, slides up his thigh. He gently moves her hand away. Rejected, she turns from flirty to hurt, glances at the pizza.

DYLAN  
Are you hungry?

DANA  
I need money.

Dylan reaches into his pocket, pulls out some bills, some change, gives it to her.

DYLAN  
I'm sorry it can't be more.

From afar we see him grab his camera, rise. As he moves toward the street, she hurriedly eats the remaining pizza. Before he's too far, though, she rushes after him.

DANA  
Hey! Hey, wait....

She catches Dylan, falls into step.

DANA  
Would you like me to take you to  
Marella?

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

Kinda scary, intimidating. Not a place you'd want to enter. Dana carefully undoes the dummy locked chain, opens the gate.

DANA

It's okay...

Reticent, Dylan glances around the city streets.

DANA

You want to see Marella, right?

EXT. CEMETERY GROUNDS - NIGHT

Walking past various tombs, the occasional flicker of candle light reveals families, children, parents, the very poor. Up ahead, a group of men sit on folding chairs, crates, cement blocks, encircling a fire. Rough men - tattoos, muscles, scars.

Seeing Dylan, TWO MEN rise, converse with Dana in Filipino. Skeptical. The larger of the two steps up to Dylan.

CEMETERY MAN #1

You a friend of Marella? Convince me.

He glances at Dylan's camera. Reluctantly, Dylan slides it off a shoulder.

DYLAN

I get this back?

CEMETERY MAN #2

If you are a friend, yes. If not...

He shrugs.

EXT. CEMETERY GROUNDS - MARELLA'S AREA - NIGHT

We're pushing down a very dark corridor. This does not bode well. Dylan steps into his own POV, sees a flicker of candle light. To either side, more tombs, mostly unkempt, some covers broken, others spilling with bones of the departed.

Dylan reaches a small area, a family tomb with a gate, ceiling, two walls. This is where Marella lives. Next to him stand Cemetery Man #1 and Dana.

Marella lays beneath a blanket on the foam mattress, asleep. A small candle flame flickers upon her face

DANA

I'll wake her.

As she steps forward, Dylan gently places a hand on her shoulder, stops her, shakes his head 'no', motions for them to leave.

EXT. CEMETERY GROUNDS - NIGHT

Camera on his shoulder, Dylan walks toward the gate. In the distance behind him, the group of men and the Girl sit at the fire. Dylan reaches the gate, exits, replaces the lock, continues down the city street. He stops at an intersection, sits on the curb, alone, pondering...

FADE OUT:

INT. AIRPORT TICKETING -- DAY

Dylan hands over money for a change fee. The AIRPORT CASHIER tags his bags, places them on the conveyer belt.

INT. AIRPORT SECURITY -- DAY

Dylan checks his bag through TSA.

INT. AIRPORT - GATE - DAY

Dylan waits with his backpack. Looking around, he sees American Tourists, some overweight, others clearly visiting for carnal adventure. Some have children who rudely run about as Filipinos observe, employing restraint but possessing negative opinion.

Across from him sits an ASIAN COUPLE, 30's and their YOUNG SON. From a plastic bag, the mother hands the boy some dried mango pieces. As she turns to rifle through her luggage, the Young Son slides off his chair, approaches Dylan.

He hands Dylan a piece of mango, smiles, and in unison they take a bite. The boy laughs, runs back and re-takes his seat.

INT. AIRPORT - GATE - LATER -- DAY

Dylan lays on the floor playing a magnetic fishing game with the boy. The parents sit observing. Both Dylan and the boy use extremely small colored fishing poles with a magnet suspended from a string to "catch" fish from a recessed section of the game.

Over the intercom, the flight's called. Hurriedly, the mother retrieves the game pieces as PATRONS rise, line up to board.

Dylan stands, picks up his backpack, stares at the people. Slowly, he slides the backpack from his shoulder, sits down in the chair as the line slowly moves forward, tickets collected, scanned, handed back.

EXT. MACTAN - DAY

The plane takes off. We PULL BACK to reveal Dylan walking down the road, backpack over a shoulder. He approaches a basketball game, stops to watch.

TIME CUT TO:

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Backpack and jacket on the ground, Dylan plays basketball with the group. Friendly competition, marginal skills, joy....

FADE OUT:

INT. CHURCH - EVENING

The congregation's nearly empty save Anna, kneeling near the front, rosary dangling from her hands.

ANNA

I know I'm not your favorite, Lord.  
I know that. I'm stained. But I  
love him. I do. I don't know why,  
he can be mean, but I love him.

Behind her, outside, WE SEE Dylan stop by the fountain, removes his backpack, wipe his face with a handkerchief.

ANNA

And, I know you're not used to handing  
out miracles, to women like me, but  
I need a miracle. I need you to  
send me a miracle. Something to let  
me know I'm on the right path.

A LITTLE BOY appears, asks Dylan for money. Dylan hands him some coins. Another kid appears, then another. Soon there are numerous kids asking for money, pulling on his shirt, making noise.

ANNA

I will do anything you ask. I will  
pray, I will do a Station Of The  
Cross, I will cut back on my drinking -  
unless he's buying them for me  
because, well, you do know that's  
part of my job so it kinda makes it  
okay, right? But....I need a miracle.  
I need you to send me a miracle.

The noise outside distracts Anna. She turns around, sees Dylan. Can't believe it. Hand to mouth. A miracle.

She jumps up, rushes down the aisle, suddenly stops, points at Jesus as if to say "sorry, I forgot", kneels, does a quick sign of the cross and bolts outside.

ANNA

You won't regret this. Not like last time!!

EXT. CHURCH - EVENING

Anna sails across the street, yells at the kids in Filipino, parts the crowd.

ANNA

Come with me!! Come!!

She drags Dylan toward Lone Star.

INT. LONE STAR - EVENING

Anna pushes through the door with Dylan, sees Marella on stage.

ANNA

Marella! You've been bar fined!

At the register, Mamasan offers protest.

MAMASAN

Anna! She has not been bar fined!

Anna reaches into her bra, pulls out a wad of currency, slaps it on the table.

ANNA

The American. He paid me. Outside.

Mamasan looks at her like "this is bullshit", then to Dylan, but takes the money all the same. Marella arrives in street clothes and Mamasan waves them on their way.

EXT. LONE STAR - EVENING

Dylan and Marella stand outside. Cabs line the road.

DYLAN

Where should we go?

MARELLA

Up to you.

DYLAN

I checked out of my hotel.

(MORE)

DYLAN (CONT'D)  
My stuff's on its way to Ohio. I  
just wanna go to sleep, Marella.  
Where should we go?

MARELLA  
(softly)  
Up to you...

EXT. CEMETERY GROUNDS - MARELLA'S AREA - NIGHT

Dylan sets his backpack down. Marella lays on the foam  
mattress.

DYLAN  
Will you do another drawing for me?

MARELLA  
If you like. Will you do something  
in return?

DYLAN  
Of course.

MARELLA  
Will you hold me?

Dylan lays next to her, places his arms around her, comforts  
her. The candle light plays off their faces.

DYLAN  
Where were you yesterday?

MARELLA  
I was on the ocean, listening to the  
water as moonlight danced across the  
sky. That's where I am when I am  
not here.

She reaches back, caresses his face, closes her eyes.

MARELLA  
Close your eyes. I will meet you  
there.

FADE OUT:

EXT. CEMETERY GROUNDS - MARELLA'S AREA - MORNING

Marella sleeps alone. Dylan pulls the blanket up on her,  
grabs his backpack, exits.

EXT. CEMETERY - MORNING

Dylan re-locks the chain, walks down the street.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

We're traveling really fast down the road, pan around, see Marella in the passenger seat of Simon's jeep, smiling, continue panning around, see Dylan in the driver's seat.

DYLAN

Where are we going again?!?

MARELLA

(smiling, laughing)

Up to you!!

DYLAN

That's right!!!

He hits the gas, they pull away.

EXT. KIOSK -- LATE AFTERNOON

A large procession fills the street - cars, people walking, flowers, musicians. On one side of the street's the jeep. On the other we make out Dylan and Marella carrying bags from a kiosk.

DYLAN

What's going on here, a parade?

Marella shakes her head no.

DYLAN

This is kinda cool. They have musicians. What is this some kind of holiday?

Marella's shocked.

MARELLA

No-no-no...shhhh.

DYLAN

(softly)

What? Its a parade, right?

Suddenly, a hearse rolls by. Shocked, Dylan turns to Marella who can't help but laugh.

DYLAN

You're laughing?

(MORE)

DYLAN (CONT'D)

I'm the bad guy here but you're laughing? In the States we call that bullshit.

Marella continues to laugh.

DYLAN

I'm so not cooking for you tonight. Please stop laughing....

(to himself)

...So not cooking for you tonight.

(to Marella)

I'm guessing you're not related, right?

People start to notice her.

DYLAN

You do know they're gonna blame me 'cause I'm American? Please stop laughing. SOOOO not cooking for you tonight....

INT. MAGELLAN SQUARE - LATE AFTERNOON

A checkers board. 3/4 through game. Simon and Cal play. Tobin arrives with Anna.

TOBIN

I noticed your jeep's missing. Everything okay?

SIMON

Yeah, mate. All good.

TOBIN

Great. 'Cause it'd be a shame if something happened to it. I mean, it's a nice jeep, right? Took a few favors to get it for you and I don't know if I'd be able to pull those same strings again. That is, *if* something indeed happened to it.

Tobin pulls out a chair for Anna. She sits. He remains standing.

TOBIN

And you're not exactly in the position to do much in the way of securing a vehicle in these parts. At least not without attracting the wrong sort of attention.



CALIPUSAN

You shouldn't say those things.

(beat)

Until you're ready.

They meet eyes.

EXT. BEACH BUNGALOW - EVENING

Two single beds fill the room, french doors open to the beach. Not a 5 star resort but very accommodating, even romantic.

Dylan and Marella sit by a fire pit, nets and towels drying on a tree, fish cooking over the flame. Dylan deals with the culinary while Marella sketches out what she sees before her - Dylan, the fire, the ocean.

DYLAN

(craning neck up)

What are you drawing?

Marella smiles, angles the drawing away.

DYLAN

Oh, yeah?

He grabs his camera from the bag. Snaps off the lens cap, teases her, clicks photos.

DYLAN

What are drawing, Marella? Huh?

What are you drawing....

He takes a series of shots as she laughs, turns from side to side, finally gives up and flips the drawing around to him.

DYLAN

You know, you're really very talented.

MARELLA

Its just a drawing. Don't make me out to be Maria Makiling.

The reference is lost on Dylan.

MARELLA

Maria Makiling. Folklore. She hands out ginger to husbands looking to cure ill wives. Only the husbands cannot bear the weight of the ginger and discard a portion before arriving home to realize it was gold. My drawings are not gold.

DYLAN

Tell me more. Tell me more stories.

As Marella speaks, Dylan finishes preparing the food, serves them onto plates and escorts her to the table.

MARELLA

Maria Makiling lives on the mountain protected by a gentle mist. Once, a Hunter found himself on the mountain. He and Maria fell deeply in love. He would visit her on the mountain every day and they promised themselves to one another. But soon he fell in love with another, a mortal woman whom he married. Maria Makiling discovered this and no longer trusted the people in the village. She held sway over plants and refused to let hunters seek animals in the mountains, nor fish in the ocean. Only on pale moonlit nights, such as tonight, would a man be fortunate to catch a glimpse of her mourning beauty.

They both sit, begin eating.

DYLAN

Wow. She's kinda bitter.

MARELLA

She gave her heart and he discarded it.

DYLAN

You know any happy myths?

MARELLA

That was the happy myth. Your turn.

DYLAN

The only real myth in the States is something referred to as the "American Dream". In reality, we have athletes who use performance enhancing drugs and charge kids for autographs, financiers who legally steal money, politicians who marginalize education and people who just generally twist the truth to get ahead. Which is part of why I came here. So, yeah, come to think of it - Maria Makiling? Happy myth.

She holds up her glass. He raises his.

MARELLA  
To Maria Makiling.

They toast.

DYLAN  
You know where we can get some  
fireworks?

Marella laughs and nearly chokes.

DYLAN  
Is that a yes? That's a yes, right?  
Choke twice for yes.

She hits his arm. As their dinner conversation continues,  
we PUSH IN and HOLD on Marella's drawing.

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BEACH BUNGALOW - NIGHT

The drawing sits on a desk top. Marella sleeps alone in one  
of the beds. She wakes, stares at Dylan sleeping in the  
other. Calmly, his eyes open. He smiles at her.

She slips from the bed, still retaining eye contact, turns,  
walks toward the French Doors, slowly pushes them, reveals  
the beautiful beach, the ocean.

Marella disrobes, strolls out, across the sand, into the  
water. Dylan rises, follows her into the ocean, she steps  
over to him, brings his face to hers, kisses him...

FADE OUT:

EXT. BEACH BUNGALOW - MORNING

Dylan rustles awake, sees Marella dressing.

DYLAN  
Where you going?

Marella sits on the bed.

DYLAN  
You don't have to leave. We have  
two more days.

MARELLA  
I can't stay with you.

DYLAN

Yeah, you can. Its ours. I want you to. Isn't it 'up to me...'?

He smiles.

MARELLA

My head and heart are not up to you.

She rises.

DYLAN

Is there some place you need to be?  
I can drive you in the jeep.

MARELLA

No.

DYLAN

(sits up in bed)  
I don't understand. I thought after last night.... I mean, was that just.... I'm not leaving you, Marella. Not like that Hunter who -

Marella sits back down, takes his hand, caresses it.

MARELLA

You feel this? To name it, describe it, lessens what it is. Definition puts it in a box from which it cannot escape. But eventually - when it overwhelms - we will. *Kahimayaan*. It is here...

(places his hand upon his heart)

For us it is a myth.

She kisses his cheek, rises, grabs her bag, exits.

EXT. BEACH BUNGALOW - FRONT - MORNING

Marella walks toward a jeepney. Dylan follows.

DYLAN

Marella? Marella, please don't go.

This is gonna get messy. She doesn't want to leave but feels she must. She ignores him, boards the jeepney. He pauses at the back.

DYLAN

Can I see you again?

Marella throws that practiced smile. We expect her to say "up to you" but tears emerge. She betrays the contrite smile, shakes her head 'no'.

The jeepney pulls away and she turns from Dylan. He's left in the distance.

INT. BEACH BUNGALOW - MORNING

Dylan enters the room, walks to the French Doors, exits toward the beach. We SLOWLY PUSH FORWARD, find Marella's drawing from last night as Dylan dives into the ocean.

FADE OUT:

EXT. MACTAN BEACH - AFTERNOON

Dylan fishes, places nets, guides the boat, swims, lays on the deck.

EXT. MACTAN PIER - AFTERNOON

Dylan walks away from the bonka boat. We RACK FOCUS to the One Armed Man.

EXT. OPEN AIR MARKET - AFTERNOON

Dylan sells fish, makes small talk with the women. The Security Guard who nodded at Calipusan listens nearby.

DYLAN

Your english. Its getting better.

She smiles.

DYLAN

In the US?

(points at himself)

Teacher. Elementary School Teacher.

If you were in my class, I'd give you an "A".

The Security Guard perks up. Takes a step closer.

DYLAN

I'll see you tomorrow.

He picks up his bags, places them in a basket on his bicycle, pedals away. The Security Guard walks from beneath the awning, watches Dylan with scrutiny. Something's turning in his mind.

INT. DYLAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

The bike's parked in this very humble apartment. Laundry hangs across the room. There's a table, chair, small bed, mini fridge, mini stove. Dylan cooks fish, rice. Eats. Does dishes.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - EVENING

Dylan plays basketball with locals.

FADE OUT:

EXT. DYLAN'S APARTMENT - MORNING

There's an incessant knocking. Dylan pulls himself out of bed and over to the door. He opens it, revealing the Security Guard. Calipusan and Simon standing behind to either side.

Dylan takes it all in.

SECURITY GUARD

Get dressed.

DYLAN

What did I do?

CALIPUSAN

Get dressed, Dylan.

DYLAN

I just...

SIMON

You need to come with us.

Simon bursts out laughing.

SIMON

(to Calipusan)

I'm sorry, mate. Can't do it.

Calipusan hits him on the arm.

SECURITY GUARD

You kidding me?

(to Calipusan)

I'm gonna be late for work and he blows it by laughing?

The Security Guard sighs, shoots Simon a look in passing.

SIMON

I'm sorry, mate...

CALIPUSAN

(to Dylan)

Get dressed. Nicer the better. You own a tie?

DYLAN

You need a collared shirt for that, right? What's going on?

CALIPUSAN

You are. For a job. Let's go. We'll pick you up a shirt and tie on the way.

Calipusan turns to Simon, sighs, slaps him on the head.

SIMON

(still laughing)

I'm sorry, mate!!

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

The jeep's parked in the lot.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Simon and Calipusan sit in the hall.

SIMON

Hey, mate? It just occurred to me, you know, I don't think I'm legally allowed to even be in here.

Calipusan nods.

CALIPUSAN

I was thinking the same thing.

A moment later, the door opens. A PRINCIPAL escorts Dylan out.

PRINCIPAL

(shaking his hand)

8AM tomorrow morning. Don't be late.

Calipusan shrinks as best he can. The Principal notices, points a finger at him.

PRINCIPAL

You.

Simon points at himself.

PRINCIPAL

No. You!  
 (Calipusan looks up)  
 Are you even allowed to be in here?

CALIPUSAN

I just...

PRINCIPAL

(smiling)  
 How's Teresa?

Calipusan rises, nods his head.

PRINCIPAL

Give her my best.  
 (to Dylan)  
 Stay away from this guy. Bad news.

The men stand idly.

PRINCIPAL

(to Calipusan)  
 Get out of here!

Calipusan leads the group down the hall.

DYLAN

(softly, to Simon)  
 Who's Teresa, his wife?

SIMON

(whisper)  
 Mamasan.

EXT. DYLAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Simon pulls up, stops but leaves the motor running. Calipusan gets out, followed by Dylan.

SIMON

Good luck.

Calipusan shuts the door, waves as Simon drives away. Dylan is confused. Calipusan points at Dylan's apartment.

CALIPUSAN

Grab your nets. I'm fishing with you today.

EXT. OCEAN - BONKA BOAT - DAY

Dylan and Calipusan fish off the Bonka boat.

## CALIPUSAN

Teresa was my first love. We went to school together. She didn't finish, took a job waitressing for Graham. They needed someone to bus tables, keep people in line. Teresa brought me to them.

Calipusan takes his time with this next part.

## CALIPUSAN

It stayed this way for a while. But the money, its never enough for some people. And the men, they make promises. Most, they don't keep their promises. She was a waitress. I wanted to make her a wife. They made her a bar girl.

Dylan takes it all in.

## CALIPUSAN

We make our choices. We fall in love. We live with how things unfold. Marella, she has a young boy. The father chose to abandon them. The boy, he got Dengue Fever and her only currency was men's desire. Families, they aren't forgiving. Despite the reason, they aren't forgiving. When you find yourself so far from where you want to be, hope and despair trade places. This is who you choose to love?

Dylan remains silent. That's a yes. Calipusan thinks on it.

## CALIPUSAN

Love is only forever in our hearts. People come and go, pass away. True love, bliss, *kahlmayaan*, is what we call *walay kaparehas* - a periodic occurrence.

EXT. MACTAN PIER - DAY

The bonka boat makes its way towards the docks. We see Simon's jeep backed in. Simon gets out, walks around the front, opens the passenger side door. Marella gets out.

The boat lands. Calipusan hops on the pier, secures it. Dylan steps on the deck. Marella makes her way towards him. It's slow, methodical.

They reach each other and she places a hand on his cheek.

They embrace.

EXT. MACTAN PIER - DAY

Dylan and Marella walk away with the nets, fish. Calipusan stands by Simon with some fish as well.

SIMON

How long you think Romeo and Juliet have?

CALIPUSAN

Westerners worry how long when they should measure how much.

They move for the jeep.

SIMON

Right. So...*how much* time do you think they have.

CALIPUSAN

(getting angry)

That's not what I meant.

SIMON

I know, I know, I'm sorry. Just having a go at you's all...

INT. DYLAN'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Dylan wakes up. Marella rests on an elbow watching him. He smiles.

MARELLA

I have a child.

DYLAN

I know. A boy. Thomas. 1st Grade. Ms. Orcaro.

MARELLA

How do you know this?

DYLAN

I need to get going.

He gets out of bed, enters the bathroom.

MARELLA

But how do you know this?

DYLAN  
(oc; from bathroom)  
I'm his new teacher.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

Dylan teaches English. Kids recite words as he strolls up and down the aisles of desks, ends up next to Thomas, winks at him.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

The hallway fills with kids as school lets out. Marella's boy exits and bursts into her arms. From his desk inside, Dylan takes a moment of pride and watches.

EXT. SHACK - EVENING

A jeepney slows down, once again lets out Marella's Father.

INT. SHACK - EVENING

Marella's Father enters. He closes the door, turns. Slowly, he takes everything in - his wife sitting across from his Grandson, sitting next to his daughter, sitting next to Dylan. Respectfully, Dylan rises.

INT. SHACK - EVENING

Later.

Dinner. Marella's Father at the head of the table, Marella's Mother at the other end, Marella & her boy on one side, Dylan opposite them.

There's no conversation. Everyone eats quietly. Stern, Marella's Father finishes his meal, rises, exits the front.

EXT. SHACK - NIGHT

Marella's Father stands out front smoking. Dylan exits. Marella's Father doesn't look at him.

MARELLA'S FATHER  
Are you a fisherman or a teacher?

DYLAN  
Do I need to choose?

MARELLA'S FATHER  
That's very American of you. Having  
it both ways.

DYLAN  
I love your daughter.

MARELLA'S FATHER  
Numerous men have.

Dylan lets this pass.

MARELLA'S FATHER  
How's my grandson doing at school?

DYLAN  
He's a smart kid. Has a good heart.

Marella's Father nods.

DYLAN  
Marella handles herself in the water.  
With the nets. You taught her well.

Marella's Father clears his throat. He wants her back, but...

MARELLA'S FATHER  
This will take time. You will need  
patience.

DYLAN  
I understand.

MARELLA'S FATHER  
The boy? He stays here until....

Dylan nods.

INT. SHACK - NIGHT

Marella puts her boy to sleep. She exits to the main room,  
hugs her mother, turns, bows her head.

MARELLA  
Father.

She joins Dylan. He opens the door, they exit. Marella's  
Mother turns to Marella's Father. He holds up his hand.

MARELLA'S FATHER  
I will try.

She smiles.

EXT. OPEN AIR MARKET - AFTERNOON

Having finished fishing, Dylan walks with Marella's Father.  
They stop at a kiosk, set down their things.

Dylan holds up two fingers to the Woman behind the counter. They sit on rickety stools as two beers arrive. Dylan takes his time before speaking.

DYLAN

I need to return to the states for a week. Clear up things, tie up loose ends. I wanted to speak with you first. I haven't told Marella.

MARELLA'S FATHER

Have you told Marella you're married?

Dylan is taken aback, starts to say something.

MARELLA'S FATHER

Please don't say you don't consider yourself married.

Dylan is deflated.

DYLAN

I'm returning to the states to sign the papers and liquidate my assets, however few. I'm coming back.

MARELLA'S FATHER

My Grandson's father assured me the same. What am I to take from this? Your word? The word of an American who met my daughter at a.....?

DYLAN

I've been very accommodating here. I'm not saying I'm doing anything special or deserving since I'm amazed I wake each morning with this wonderful girl, teach these wonderful kids and fish these waters with a wise man such as yourself. I'm very happy here. And it appears people are happy with me. So please, I understand your position. I understand your skepticism. Your doubt. But I don't think I need it reiterated.

Dylan grabs his beer, swivels around on the stool, faces out toward the market. Marella's Father rises.

MARELLA'S FATHER

I would be honored if Marella stayed in her mother's house while you're  
(MORE)

MARELLA'S FATHER (CONT'D)  
 away. And if, upon your return, you  
 would call it your home as well.

He extends his hand. Dylan shakes it. Marella's Father  
 walks away with the nets, fish, rice. Dylan remains at the  
 kiosk.

EXT. OHIO AIRPORT - DAY

Overcast skies, snow flurries, limited visibility, cold.

INT/EXT. OHIO AIRPORT - DAY

A series of shots: Dylan claims his luggage, clears customs,  
 steps out to cabs. The cold hits. Wow! Culture shock.

EXT. DYLAN'S OHIO HOUSE - DAY

A cab pulls away as Dylan walks up the driveway. He sets  
 his backpack on the ground, opens the garage door. Boxes  
 are stacked neatly, contents labeled on the side of each.

TIME CUT TO:

INT. DYLAN'S OHIO HOUSE - GARAGE - DAY

All the boxes are intact save one: winter clothes. In the  
 background, WE SEE Dylan walk away with his backpack, wearing  
 a warm jacket.

EXT. OHIO STREET - DAY

Dylan makes a call at a pay phone.

RICHARD (O.S.)  
 This is Richard.

DYLAN  
 Hey.

RICHARD (O.S.)  
 Hey, buddy! Man, you sound really  
 clear.

DYLAN  
 That's cause I'm outside your office.

Dylan looks up at a window across the street. We see RICHARD  
 stand and turn around, look out.

RICHARD  
 What?

Dylan waves. Richard waves back.

INT. SPORTS BAR - DAY

America at its finest. Rowdy guys drinking. Sports on tv. Snow falling outside. Richard and Dylan sit at the bar.

RICHARD

So that's it? You're cashing out and disappearing?

DYLAN

Pretty much, yeah.

RICHARD

How's the ex feel about that?

DYLAN

I'll find out tonight.

Richard looks past Dylan.

RICHARD

Hey, babe.

Dylan turns, sees RICHARD'S WIFE, 30's, pretty, step up, offer a cheek for Richard to kiss.

RICHARD

(rising)

I'm gonna hit the head.

As Richard peels off, his wife takes his seat.

RICHARD'S WIFE

Richard told me about your whore.

DYLAN

Why are you here? You don't even like me. Never have. So why are you here?

RICHARD'S WIFE

My husband asked me to come down. I love my husband. You know, Dylan, when you degrade women -

DYLAN

What's your definition of a whore?

RICHARD'S WIFE

Excuse me?

DYLAN  
Your definition. Tell me.

She smirks.

DYLAN  
Okay. I'll start. What do you REALLY  
bring to the table? You and Richard  
have no kids.

RICHARD'S WIFE  
Well, we're thinking of adopting,  
actually.

DYLAN  
Really?

RICHARD'S WIFE  
Yes. Richard says there are many  
children in Cebu who could benefit  
from what we have to offer.

Dylan nearly laughs.

DYLAN  
But, for now, no kids. So your role  
is merely "housewife".

RICHARD'S WIFE  
I'm not a whore, Dylan.

DYLAN  
Well, you don't have a job. You,  
what? Take care of the house? A  
maid could do that. HE could do  
that. Pay the utilities every month  
with his money? He could set that  
up on his bank's web page. But he  
loves you, right?

Dylan leans in.

DYLAN  
Stop sleeping with him and see how  
long that love lasts. See how long  
your free ride lasts. See how long  
it is before things take a drastic  
change in YOUR life. So tell me,  
what service do you provide which  
allows you to live, rent free, in  
his house, spending *his* money for  
things *you* want. And what does that  
service make *you*?

RICHARD'S WIFE

I'm not a whore.

DYLAN

Ya' sure about that?

The Bartender approaches. Richard's Wife throws on a polite smile. He can tell something's up but drops a cocktail napkin down all the same. As she opens her mouth to order, Dylan slaps some money on the bar, stands.

DYLAN

Tell Richard I said good luck on the adoption.

EXT. DYLAN'S OHIO HOUSE - NIGHT

A small candle illuminates the room. Dylan lays in a sleeping bag by the fireplace, warmed by burning logs. We hear a car engine and see headlights cross the windows. Someone's pulled into the driveway. A few moments later, a key turns the lock, opening the front door. It's DYLAN'S EX.

DYLAN

Hey.

DYLAN'S EX

Dylan, you can't be here. It's not our house anymore.

DYLAN

Just tonight.

She closes the door, walks over.

DYLAN'S EX

It's not our house anymore, baby.

She sits down. Shakes her head.

DYLAN'S EX

Richard called. You really pissed off his wife.

DYLAN

I never really liked her.

DYLAN'S EX

Yeah, I know. She's a bitch.

They smile.

DYLAN'S EX

What are you doing here, Dylan?

DYLAN

I came to settle us up.

DYLAN'S EX

It's gonna be a bit for the money to clear. I'd say a week or so.

DYLAN

No worries.

A moment passes.

DYLAN

I've been fishing.

DYLAN'S EX

(brightens up)

You have?

DYLAN

Yeah. Every day. Spear fishing. How are you? You're dating your boss now, huh?

DYLAN'S EX

We've gone to dinner. And Richard needs to get his facts straight or keep his mouth shut. I'm not sleeping with my boss, if that's what you're thinking. I want to find someone I can be happy with again.

Dylan sits up.

DYLAN

What was it? Where did I mess up?

DYLAN'S EX

I'm not what you want. And this isn't where you want to be. We moved here, you missed the water. I knew it was wrong.

DYLAN

It wasn't my job? It wasn't the money?

DYLAN'S EX

We didn't make one another happy, Dylan. This girl? You care for her? You make each other happy?

DYLAN

Yes. We do. She has a boy.

DYLAN'S EX

She has a child? Good for you. I know how much you wanted that. Especially after referring to my womb as 'The Death Star'.

DYLAN

I'm really sorry about that.

DYLAN'S EX

What does she do that makes her special to you?

Dylan holds up one of Marella's sketches - the shore line, the ocean, the sunset.

DYLAN

She can draw. And she loves the water as much as I do.

DYLAN'S EX

Then forget all these people telling you not to be happy. I want you to be happy, Dylan. Go back to her. Be happy.

Dylan glances at the drawing.

DYLAN'S EX

The Ocean and a kid. Looks like you have everything you wanted.

DYLAN

Don't forget the girl.

DYLAN'S EX

(sincere)  
Bonus!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. OCEAN - DAY

We're rushing toward the surface as "WHO FEELS LOVE" plays. Air bubbles pass us followed by Dylan. We break the surface with him and he reaches for the boat. Marella smiles down at him as her Father grabs the spear and fish.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

Dylan uses a teaching game to stimulate the kids. Like "Duck-Duck-Goose" he asks a question and one team sends a kid to write the answer on the blackboard while the other runs around the classroom.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

A game between two schools. ANOTHER TEACHER's the Head Coach but Dylan is there all the same. Marella's Boy plays, not particularly well, but he's in the game. Marella watches with her parents from the side.

INT. DYLAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Alone with Marella, gently caressing her face, she kisses him.

EXT. KIOSK - DAY

Dylan plays Dominos at a kiosk table with Marella's Father. Marella's Father wins and they re-distribute the pieces.

DYLAN

You're just gonna keep beating me  
aren't you?

MARELLA'S FATHER

The sea does not give back. The day  
it does, I take pity on you.

EXT. SHACK - SUNSET

They've set up a table outside and have dinner in the front. This isn't regal, but its pure, blissful, happy.

INT. LONE STAR - DAY

Tobin holds court with Anna watching as Simon runs the pool table, money's on the rail, he's on fire.

TOBIN

Don't peak too soon, there Simon.  
That's a lot of cash.

SIMON

Game of my life, mate. Game of my  
life.

He smiles, chalks the cue, nails another shot, whoops it up. Nails another. And another. Now, he's going for the 8-Ball.

Behind him's a disturbance. A COUPLE AMERICAN BOYS sit by the stage, obnoxious, drunk. Getting a little too rough with a Bar Girl. Calipusan sees, carefully walks over and crouches down. He's reserved.

CALIPUSAN

Gentlemen, we'd appreciate it if you'd treat our girls with more respect.

AMERICAN #1

I really don't want to...

Calipusan gently places a hand on the American's neck, slowly stands up and lifts him in the air. The second American steps over and Calipusan places his other hand on the man's neck, keeps him at bay.

CALIPUSAN

I appreciate everything your country's done for mine, really, but we'd like you to accept our gratitude verbally and not by letting you hurt our people.

Simon slowly approaches. He's reticent, glances back at the table, at Calipusan. Like he doesn't want to interrupt.

SIMON

Hey. Hey, mate. No disrespect, but I'm playing the game of my fucking *life* over here. Kinda feel like I'm in the zone, you know? And, well, I'm worried if I don't go for the 8-Ball, RIGHT NOW, I'm gonna cool off and maybe not make it. So....

CALIPUSAN

Go. Shoot it.

SIMON

Yeah?

CALIPUSAN

Quickly.

SIMON

Thanks, mate.

Simon steps away. Calipusan continues holding the Americans at bay. He's sweating, it's not easy. Simon returns to the table, chalks his cue, checks out the shot. Takes a little bit of time.

CALIPUSAN

Simon?

SIMON

Yeah, mate.

CALIPUSAN  
This kid ain't light....

SIMON  
Oh, shit, right....

Simon sets up his shot, makes it.

CALIPUSAN  
(to kid in the air)  
He make it?

The kid nods.

CALIPUSAN  
(to other kid)  
Was it a good shot?

AMERICAN #2  
Yeah. Double bank to the side.

Calipusan smiles. Lowers American #1.

CALIPUSAN  
I would very much like you to  
apologize before leaving.

AMERICAN #2  
No problem.  
(to American #1)  
Dude...?

American #1 turns, apologizes to the girl.

CALIPUSAN  
Thank you, gentlemen. Please come  
back.

Simon sits next to Tobin, counts his money.

TOBIN  
I miss Marella. Isn't it time she  
returned? She hasn't been released.  
I know that for a fact.

SIMON  
Ah, let her go, mate.

TOBIN  
No, I don't think I will. Watching  
those ugly Americans just now's  
convinced me.

Anna runs her hand along his leg. Aggressively, he pushes it away.

TOBIN

Mamasan!

Mamasan approaches, raises her eyebrows as if asking "yes?"

TOBIN

I very much need to speak with Graham.

Simon and Anna exchange a worried glance.

TOBIN

How much is a lifetime bar fine these days?

(to Simon)

Simon?

EXT. LONE STAR - DAY

Simon exits the back, heads for his jeep. Calipusan follows.

CALIPUSAN

Simon. You can't do this.

SIMON

I feel for the guy. Trust me. I do. I ain't proud of it, mate. But Tobin's the one and only person who knows why I'm here. I wish there were another way.

Simon hops in his jeep, drives off. Calipusan's struck with an idea, jumps into his truck and pulls out the opposite direction.

EXT. SHACK - AFTERNOON

Dylan and Thomas return home after school. Marella's Mother washes dishes at the sink. Dylan sets down his work, glances around.

DYLAN

Where's Marella?

Marella's mother dries her hands, retrieves some coins, approaches Thomas.

MARELLA'S MOTHER

Go get some sweets at the kiosk.

The Boy glances at Dylan.

DYLAN

I'm good.

The Boy rushes out the door. Dylan turns his attention to Marella's Mother.

INT. LONE STAR - AFTERNOON

Marella enters the curtains, followed by Simon. She's scared. Mamasan stands behind the counter, offers a conciliatory smile. Anna sits behind her, unhappy. Nearby, Calipusan reads his daily paper.

Across the bar, Simon reaches Tobin. Tobin sits up, grins.

MAMASAN

You've been bar fined. Lifetime.  
Bar fine.

Anna's eyes go wide. She exchanges words in Filipino with Mamasan. Marella glances at Tobin. Can't put on the smile.

MAMASAN

Sir?

There's a stirring around the corner behind her. Marella turns. Sees her father rise, step forward. He's compassionate.

MARELLA'S FATHER

Let's go.

Taken aback, Tobin watches them exit.

TOBIN

Who the fuck is that?!?

SIMON

Don't know. But he's got only one arm.

TOBIN

I don't care. Go after him.

SIMON

For fuck's sake he's only got one arm!

Tobin pushes Simon hard.

TOBIN

Anna!

Anna walks from Mamasan to a very upset Tobin. Mamasan sits next to Calipusan. He ignores her. She pushes the paper down.

MAMASAN

Tell me. Where does a one armed fisherman find enough money for a lifetime bar fine?

Calipusan's quiet. Lifts the paper up. She slowly pushes it back down.

MAMASAN

Why?

CALIPUSAN

(glancing over reading glasses)

So they'd have the chance you and I never did.

She sits back. Touched. Surprised. She rises, kisses his cheek. From across the bar, Tobin's grilling Anna who clearly knows nothing. He sees Mamasan pull from Calipusan. Picks up on something.

TOBIN

(to Simon)

It would be very foolish if you were involved, Simon

SIMON

Very foolish.

INT. SHACK - NIGHT

Dylan pulls the covers up on the boy, turns down the light.

EXT. SHACK - NIGHT

Dylan steps outside, sits on the stoop. A jeepney passes and Dylan perks up. But it continues on its way. Through a series of dissolves, we observe his enthusiasm and expectation diminish with each passing jeepney.

He leans his head against a pillar, closes his eyes as a jeepney's lights pass by. Another dissolve and Marella's Mother drapes a knitted blanket over him.

Finally, a jeepney stops by the house. Marella and her Father get out. It drives away. Dylan remains asleep. Marella's Father quietly enter the house.

Dylan sits next to him, slips under the blanket, her head on his shoulder, closes her eyes.

FADE OUT:

INT. SHANGRI LA RESTAURANT - DAY

Tobin's at the end of lunch in an upscale restaurant with GRAHAM, 50's, owner of Lone Star.

TOBIN

How long have we been doing business,  
Graham?

GRAHAM

I don't like where this is going,  
Tobin.

TOBIN

I need you to help me with something.

GRAHAM

Still don't like where its going.

TOBIN

I need a favor.

GRAHAM

She's just a girl.

TOBIN

(ignoring Graham)  
Expatriate to Expatriate.

GRAHAM

She's gone, Tobin.

TOBIN

Its no longer about that.

Graham looks at him with curiosity.

TOBIN

I'm not a good loser, Graham. Which  
is a big part of why I left the UK.  
Here, I don't HAVE to lose.

GRAHAM

I can't very well give the man his  
money back.

TOBIN

She has a son, correct?

GRAHAM

Don't make this personal. Not between us.

TOBIN

I'm willing to keep it all business. You and I - do business. You pour liquor. I provide liquor. As long as it doesn't become personal, we continue to do business. Now. She has a son. Correct?

GRAHAM

What do you want?

Tobin smiles.

INT. SHACK - EVENING

Dinner. Dylan sits across from Marella and her son, who wears a basketball jersey. To either end are Marella's Father and Mother.

Dylan and Thomas quickly finish their plates, delicately place their silverware down accordingly, sit very straight and quiet, suppressing smiles. Everyone appears to be in on the joke. A moment passes and Marella's Father grunts, offers a brief nod.

Dylan and the boy vault from their seats, grab their basketball gear and bolt out the door, slamming it behind them. Marella and her mother smile, wait for a semblance of emotional commitment from her father. It nearly surfaces. Nearly.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

Dylan helps coach the team as they play a rival school. The stands are full with parents, students, the community. Not a whole lot of activity occurs in these parts. Basketball games are as much civic theater as athletic competition.

The teams vie back and forth, running end to end, making baskets, missing, giving it their all. During one exchange, we PUSH IN on the opposing crowd, PUSH IN further, notice a familiar face - Tobin Krell.

The game continues and we see what Tobin's looking at - Marella and her parents on the other side. He laughs out loud, pats the guy next to him and points across the court.

TOBIN

You see that girl over there?  
(MORE)

TOBIN (CONT'D)

I believe her son's on the other team, but guess where she works...

The game stops for a time out. As the teams convene, Tobin moves places, sits next to some more parents. Its here Dylan notices him. Tobin waves. Dylan turns, sees Marella. She's aware of Tobin's presence as well.

Tobin strikes up another conversation, points across the court. Marella turns her head, lowers her eyes. She's unsure what to do.

Does she attempt to leave but draw more attention as she struggles through the crowded bleachers? Or does she remain seated and attempt to ignore him? She stays. Fortifies herself, throws on the forced Lone Star smile, applauds her boy's team as they re-take the court.

The ripple effect's begun. The parents and spectators on the other side speak amongst themselves as they watch the game. Tobin's moved to a third spot, does the tap, point and talk, then makes his way through the crowd and disappears.

TIME CUT TO:

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

Half Time. Dylan and Marella weave through the crowd. Probing eyes or not, who can tell when you're scared, insecure? No sign of Tobin. Marella takes her place back in the stands, Dylan on the bench. The game begins again and the teams continue play.

But there's a stir behind Marella and her parents. A couple rows back, we hear Tobin's voice. Marella's ears prick up, her back straightens. Makes out snippets of conversation, pretty girl, Lone Star, bar girl, young boy, American.

She glances back, sees the judgment, her eyes tear up and she faces around. Its done. She knows it. Marked.

TIME CUT TO:

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

The game's over. Marella and her parents move through the stands. Eyes probe, people judge. Public ridicule. Dylan sees her, attempts to comfort. No use. She's in his arms but gone. They put on a front for the boy, walk out of the stadium.

Tobin sits in Simon's Jeep. None too happy, Simon reaches for the ignition.

But Tobin places a hand on Simon's as if to say "*don't start the vehicle*".

Dylan breaks away from the family, approaches.

TOBIN

Simon. You may have a situation to take care of.

SIMON

We can leave.

TOBIN

No, we can't.

SIMON

(attempting to start jeep)

Let's just leave, Tobin.

Tobin refuses to let him start the engine.

SIMON

You made your point.

TOBIN

No. I haven't.

Tobin gets out of the jeep. Simon reluctantly follows.

DYLAN

Why?

TOBIN

Because I can!!

DYLAN

You don't care. At all. The damage.

TOBIN

I really don't. You're right.

He smiles. Dylan blows, steps over, grabs Tobin, pushes him against the jeep. Simon intercedes.

SIMON

Mate, don't. Please, mate. Let him go. Please.

Tobin turns to Simon, motions toward Dylan. Simon's hesitant.

TOBIN

Simon!

Reluctantly, Simon separates them, punches Dylan in the face.

TOBIN

Again.

SIMON

He's not on you. Let's go!

TOBIN

Again!

SIMON

We can just go!!

TOBIN

AGAIN!!!

SIMON

For chrissake, Tobin!!

Tobin's not giving in. Simon turns, punches Dylan in the face, in the stomach. He's down on the ground. Simon rushes around to the jeep, gets in starts it. Satisfied, Tobin gets into the jeep as Simon peels out.

Marella is there for Dylan, her boy by the Grandparents. The crowd continues to disperse but the spectacle's still before them. Dylan rises, bloody nose, black eye. They turn to the crowd. Alone.

EXT. SHACK - NIGHT

Ominous. We know something stressful's about to unfold...

INT. SHACK - NIGHT

The family sits at the table, save Thomas, presumably asleep in the other room. Marella sits straight, head bowed, tear stained face. Her Mother's similarly posed, worried. A bruised face and reddened eye, Dylan sits across from Marella, waiting for her Father to begin.

MARELLA'S FATHER

In most situations, a Westerner returns to his homeland with his Filipino bride. He doesn't bring shame to her father's house.

DYLAN

I apologize. I certainly could've handled the situation better. I let him outrage me which, I'm guessing, was the intent.

MARELLA'S FATHER

You've brought shame to this house.

DYLAN

The worst is behind us. He has nothing left with which to harm.

MARELLA'S FATHER

Everyone knows!  
(slam table)  
Everyone!

Silence.

MARELLA'S FATHER

(to Marella)  
They call you bar girl.

A tear runs down Marella's face. She begins calmly.

MARELLA

I took care of my son. He had dengue fever. We had no money. I saved his life. I'm sorry if it brought shame to your house.

MARELLA'S FATHER

As long as you live here, shame remains.

Marella rises. Her mother grabs her hand, prohibits movement.

MARELLA

You left me no choice. You speak of shame. You offer no condolences for your lack of patriarchal responsibility.

MARELLA'S FATHER

I didn't raise a bar girl.

MARELLA

Nor did you provide any support or solution. My son was dying. You had nothing. You saved nothing. We had nothing. You raised me to save my child and I saved my child. Then pushed me to the streets. I traded my life for his in this house. And now you turn to me as if I'm evil. You failed us, father. And you offer no remorse.

Marella's Father rises.

MARELLA'S FATHER

OUT!!

Marella's Mother rises.

MARELLA'S MOTHER

No. Not again.

There's an impasse.

DYLAN

Let us stay the night. Tomorrow  
after school I'll find a place for  
the three of us to live.

MARELLA'S FATHER

You're not taking my grandson.

DYLAN

That's not up to you.  
(looking at Marella)  
Its up to his mother.

Marella's Father sighs, pushes from the table, heads to the  
bedroom. Marella's Mother kisses her daughter's face, follows  
her husband into the room, shuts the door.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Dylan sits across from the Principal.

PRINCIPAL

I'm guessing I should see the other  
guy.

Dylan snickers, smiles.

PRINCIPAL

I missed an eventful evening. The  
talk around the water cooler's quite  
colorful. Listen, I'm not going to  
string you along. First off, there's  
a place for you here as long as you  
care to teach. Despite the surface  
presumptions, what the general  
consensus seems to be missing is no  
matter where you met this girl, you're  
here when you could be somewhere  
else. And you've taken to her son.  
In my eyes, that is all that matters.

DYLAN

I appreciate it.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Walking towards the classroom, Dylan hears excitement echoing through the door. He reaches it, sees kids huddled around a fight.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DYLAN'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Dylan enters, rushes into the kids, sees Thomas fighting another boy and not doing well. Dylan separates the kids, revealing Thomas has a black eye similar to his own.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

The end of the school day. Kids, parents, teachers fill the front. Dylan exits with Thomas, a protective arm over the boy's shoulder.

DYLAN  
Head high. Stand straight. Walk  
with purpose.

The two move through the crowd, to the street, head home.

INT. LONE STAR - DAY

A box of liquor lands on a table. The tops opened and Graham removes bottle after bottle, restocking the bar. He glances at Mamasan, Calipusan and Anna watching from afar. Their eyes tell all and he begins having difficulty removing and placing the bottles. One in particular gives him great difficulty and he slams it on the bar, exhales deeply.

GRAHAM  
(not looking back)  
What!!!

Calipusan sets down his paper, calmly exits the bar.

GRAHAM  
(softly, to himself)  
I have a business to run.

He resumes stocking the bar.

EXT. OPEN AIR MARKET - AFTERNOON

Marella enters the market. Head high. She's purchased bags of fruit, rice. She's got her game face on but its tenuous at best. She can feel the eyes on her.

INT. NEW APARTMENT -- AFTERNOON

We TRACK ACROSS the floor, see the bags open on the ground, fruit and rice spilt, hear muffled weeping, find the bathroom door, enter, see Marella in the shower, towel pressed to her face, crying. We PULL BACK to the original position...

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

INT. NEW APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Marella, Dylan and Thomas sit at dinner. Both have wounds from fighting. There's a knock on the door. Dylan rises, answers it. The Basketball Coach. Hushed voices, Dylan steps outside, leaves the door cracked.

A moment later, he re-enters, moves through the apartment with purpose while the Coach remains outside, eyes cast away from the room. Dylan returns with a basketball uniform, a clipboard, a whistle, hands it over, closes the door, returns to the table.

DYLAN

(to Thomas)

American Baseball. You have 9 players on each side. You play 9 innings. Each side bats. Gets 3 outs.

Marella looks back to the door, to Thomas, reaches for Dylan's hand. He lets her take it, but his focus remains on Thomas as he continues describing the rules. Marella stands, clears the dishes.

FADE OUT:

EXT. OPEN AIR MARKET -- AFTERNOON

Dylan, Marella and Thomas kneel down on the road. In the dirt, Dylan's sketched the market and uses a stick to diagram a faux football play for their shopping.

DYLAN

Okay. We need a bunch of things. We gotta make it fast 'cause homeboy here's booting math and needs to study. So - you  
 (points at Marella)  
 Run a bit of a post pattern, go for the fruit. And you -  
 (points at Thomas)  
 Flag the opposition and help me grab some spices and noodles. We also need soap, toothpaste, some drinks -

MARELLA

I can grab those after the post pattern.

DYLAN

Way to go. Like your initiative.

He continues drawing in dirt.

DYLAN

So we'll swing past you over here, get some sweets 'cause I have faith we're gonna do well on the schoolwork, then double back and meet you here. Everybody got it? Anybody need money? No? We're all good? Okay....

Dylan places his hand in the middle. Both Thomas and Marella set theirs atop.

DYLAN

Ready and -

ALL IN UNISION

BREAK!!

They sprint to their respective destinations. We've through the public, individually buy their goods, avoid crashing into people, hurdle animals, carts, pass each other. Its a game, even though they are, in essence, avoiding ridicule.

EXT/INT. OPEN AIR MARKET - BAR -- AFTERNOON

Marella rushes into the bar. Breathless, she reaches the counter, leans on it. She orders in Filipino.

There are TWO MEN in the back. They notice her. Make eye contact with the Bartender. He smiles agreement.

OPEN AIR BARTENDER

One moment. They are in the back.

He disappears in the back. Meanwhile, one of the men strolls to the front. He looks around before closing the doors.

EXT. OPEN AIR MARKET -- AFTERNOON

Dylan and Thomas reach the middle of the street with their goods. Look around. No Marella. The doors to the bar are closed.

INT. OPEN AIR MARKET - BAR -- AFTERNOON

The men approach her while she waits. She's uncomfortable. She looks toward the store room door. Behind it, the Bartender stands with his back against the wall. The Second Man slides hair from Marella's face. Smiles at her.

EXT. OPEN AIR MARKET -- AFTERNOON

Dylan and Thomas observe the front door. Dylan steps to the window, sees the other man approach Marella. Light pours into the room - Thomas has opened the door.

The Men yell for him to close it. Thomas starts to but Dylan enters.

DYLAN  
(to Marella)  
Let's go.

She looks him in the eyes. Its different. And she sees it. Not loving. Judgmental. Like she created this. She's to blame. She see disappointment. Not bliss.

DYLAN  
Marella.

The Bartender returns with her order. Nervously places it on the the counter. She lays down money, walks away past Dylan, past her son. Dylan turns to leave. Overhears snickering. Stops.

DYLAN  
(handing Thomas bags)  
Catch up with your mother.

Thomas rushes to Marella. She's stopped about 20 feet in the street. Facing away from the bar staring at her father in the distance. He stands still. Staring at her as well.

A commotion draws everyone's attention. Dylan falls backward from the bar. The two men descend upon him. Marella's Father sees this clearly but walks away without hesitation.

Marella lets a tear fall before turning to Dylan's aid.

INT. NEW APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Marella tucks in Thomas, makes her way to the bed she shares with Dylan. She stares at him.

MARELLA  
You love my son?

DYLAN

Yes.

MARELLA

You will take care of him like he were your own?

DYLAN

Of course.

She nods.

MARELLA

I'm tired. May we go to sleep?

Dylan nods. She takes her place next to him, but its different, clinical, merely two bodies prone on the same mattress.

TIME CUT TO:

INT. NEW APARTMENT - NIGHT

Dylan and Marella spoon in the bed. He sleeps, she's awake. Marella slips out of bed, pulls on her clothes. She disappears and we hear a rustling, a little boy quietly protesting.

A moment passes and she returns with her son, places him in bed next to Dylan, drapes Dylan's arm around her boy and soon they're both asleep.

She stares at the two, cocks her head, endeared, a brief interlude of bliss. Its short lived and reality over takes her. She kisses her boy, caresses Dylan's face and she's gone. Doors open and close.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

The Principal walks down the empty hallway, opens the door to Dylan's classroom. In session. Dylan stands at the front, teaching. He turns to the Principal, the damage from the previous evening still apparent.

Dylan exits the classroom to speak with the Principal in the hallway. He closes the door.

PRINCIPAL

How long has she been gone?

DYLAN

A few days. I checked with her mother. She's not there.

PRINCIPAL

Then why are you here?

DYLAN

The boy. He needs to be supported  
and protected.

PRINCIPAL

I'll watch him tonight. You find  
Marella.

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

Dylan pushes open the gate. Steps inside. The guys are in  
their normal position up ahead. They see Dylan approach,  
rise and meet him.

DYLAN

Is Marella here?

Cemetery Man #1 motions to #2. He snaps his fingers and a  
Young Boy rushes off. Moments later, the boy returns, shakes  
his head no.

DYLAN

No she's not here or no...

He glances around.

DYLAN

I just want to talk to her.

Around the corner where the Young Boy stands, Marella listens  
unseen. She pushes off the wall, comes around the corner.  
Dylan notices, as does Cemetery Man #1. He asks her something  
in Filipino. She nods. The men remain between her and Dylan.

DYLAN

Are you coming home? We want you to  
come home, Marella. Please.

MARELLA

How is our son?

DYLAN

He misses his mother. Please. Come  
home with me. I want you to.

MARELLA

I saw it in your face. You never  
looked upon me as bar girl.

DYLAN

I know -

MARELLA

Until the market.

DYLAN

Marella -

MARELLA

And now you'll lie. If you're to lie to me - pay me. Pay me like all men pay me to believe their lies, tell them lies, *feel* their lies...

Dylan reaches for her. She spins away. This is a different person, a hurt person, shattered.

DYLAN

Marella, I don't care about those people. Please. We can get through this.

MARELLA

How?!?! How can we get through this? To everyone I am bar girl. To my parents, to the people here, even to you!! I saw the way you looked at me. As if I brought this on you! Will you take me to America? Will the same result not follow us? The ridicule? The fighting for my honor which can never be re-claimed? Our child - MY child? This? Dylan, this can end no other way.

She turns, walks toward the corner.

MARELLA

Don't come back here. You are not welcome.

DYLAN

Marella?!? Please, Marella?!?

He steps forward but the men block him.

DYLAN

Guys, c'mon.

He tries to push past them. They're not gonna hurt him, but they're not gonna let him pass either. He realizes its of no use, retreats for the gate.

EXT. CEMETERY GROUNDS - MARELLA'S AREA - NIGHT

Marella enters the mosquito nets, takes hold of them tightly, pulls them down, one side at a time. Once the nets are on the ground, she lays on the bedding, exposed.

Nearby, a puddle of still water. Mosquitoes buzz about, drifting through the air, they find her.

INT. JEEPNEY - NIGHT

Dylan rides the jeepney, a lone westerner amongst many Cebuanos. It disappears into the night...

BEGIN MONTAGE:

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

Quiet. The class takes a quiz. Dylan sits at his desk. Thomas has pushed his desk up next to Dylan's.

INT. SHACK - NIGHT

Marella's Father stands before the fireplace. He holds a stack of her drawings. Drops one into the flame. It burns....

EXT. OCEAN - BONKA BOATS - DAY

Independent of each other, Dylan and Marella's Father pull in nets. No conversation.

INT. LONE STAR - NIGHT

Bar Girls dance on stage, Tobin swirls a hand, big smile, Anna watching suspiciously as he flirts with another girl. Simon sits with a drink, bored of Tobin, glances to the side. Meets eyes with Calipusan. They're on the same page.

INT. SHACK - NIGHT

More drawings have burned. Another's dropped on the fire.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - AFTERNOON

The basketball team plays an opposing school. A time out's called and everyone rises to make room for the players.

EXT. CEMETERY GROUNDS - MARELLA'S AREA - NIGHT

Marella shivers. A WOMAN pulls a blanket up on her as the Cemetery Men fix the mosquito nets.

EXT. OPEN AIR MARKET - DAY

Dylan and Thomas walk through the market. They're going through the motions. The people surrounding them aren't casting suspicious looks, but the sentiment Dylan and Thomas exude is anything but bliss.

Marella's Father and Marella's Mother appear. Thomas brightens, pushes into his Grandmother's arms. She leads him away. Marella's Father stands defiant, takes a couple steps backwards. They've reclaimed the boy.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - AFTERNOON

The game's over. Everyone's going home.

EXT. CEMETERY GROUNDS - MARELLA'S AREA - NIGHT

Alone now. Marella rises, pulls down the nets, returns to bed.

INT. SHACK - NIGHT

Still more drawings burn. Marella's Father has few left.

INT. LONE STAR - NIGHT

Tobin walks toward the entrance, Anna on one arm, the Bar Girl he flirted with on the other. They exit past Mamasan and Graham. Graham's not impressed, glances at Mamasan. Something's gonna happen.

EXT. CEMETERY GROUNDS - DUSK

A group gathers by the water source. A few yards away, Marella walks by. Numerous Cemetery Citizens take notice. She does not look well as she leaves the grounds.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

The Principal stares through the door's window. Dylan teaches but gone is the spark of life inspiring students.

EXT. MANGO SQUARE - NIGHT

A few GIRLS stand on the street, offering themselves to passersby, amongst them Dana.

A dark car pulls up and the girls step back, shut down. An UNKEMPT MAN leans over and smiles, offers a wave for one to go with him. From the darkness, Marella intently moves for the car. Concerned, Dana steps forward.

DANA

Marella?

Too late. Marella closes the car door. It peels out.

INT. CEMETERY GROUNDS - MARELLA'S AREA - NIGHT

Dylan sits on the bedding area alone. Cemetery Man #1 stands watch, concerned, not the slightest bit aggressive. At the front area, Cemetery Man #2 again restores the mosquito netting.

On a nearby table, Dylan sees one of Marella's earlier drawings. He picks it up, glances at Cemetery Man #1 as if asking permission to keep it. Cemetery Man #1 nods affirmatively.

INT. SHACK - NIGHT

Marella's Father drops the last of her drawings in the fire. He moves away, reveals Marella's weeping Mother.

EXT. NEW APARTMENT - MORNING

Dylan opens the door, heading for school. On the porch are a variety of stuffed animals, sporting equipment, toys, fishing gear, etc.

EXT. CEMETERY GROUNDS - MARELLA'S AREA - MORNING

Again, the nets are down. Marella lays on her stomach. The Older Woman from earlier steps into frame, frustratingly attaches one of the nets. Worried, she approaches Marella, sits, caresses Marella's matted hair. She's burning up, sweating, not well.

The Woman brushes back Marella's hair, reveals a black eye, bloody nose, she's been worked over.

INT. SHACK - NIGHT

The fire finishes burning the last drawing.

END MONTAGE.

FADE OUT:

INT. LONE STAR - DAY

Cemetery Man #1 enters the curtains. Glancing up from his paper, Calipusan's taken aback by the man's demeanor.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

Slow motion. We're framed oddly, staring at the front steps. We see a piece of Dylan's pants, his leg. He's standing. Behind him, Thomas is crying, alternately burrowed against Marella's Mother and glancing at us.

Dylan lowers, sits down on the steps. Devastation. Shock. The Principal sits next to him. On the other, Calipusan.

Across from the steps, Simon leans against the jeep, arms folded, sunglasses, watching, takes it all in, clearly not happy, knows what must be done.

INT. SIMON'S JEEP - DRIVING - DAY

Calipusan rides shotgun. Simon drives, silent, resolute, angry, firm.

EXT. SHACK - EVENING

Dylan sets the basket of toys on the porch. Marella's Father stands watch. No words are spoken.

EXT. MANGO SQUARE - DAY

Simon and Calipusan play chess. We're in close on them, don't see surroundings. The game's nearly finished.

SIMON

Tobin has no one. Except maybe Anna.

CALIPUSAN

Family?

SIMON

Please.

CALIPUSAN

And his business partners?

SIMON

They'll be happy to get more revenue for the same risk. And not have to deal with his shit.

A third person reaches over, makes a move for Simon. Places Calipusan in checkmate. Calipusan sets his king down upon the board.

GRAHAM

We all will.

We reveal Graham, sitting to the side between them. He rises, shakes their hands.

GRAHAM

(to Simon)

Glad we're in business. And agreement.

Graham exits, leaves Simon and Calipusan.

EXT. FUNERAL MARCH - DAY

We're staring at Dylan, see slow moving cars and people walking down the street. Marella's Funeral march. For friends and family - its mourning. For others - spectacle. Dylan blends with the public, watches Marella's Family move past.

Thomas catches his eye, throws up a hand in a very youthful, innocent hello. Dylan reluctantly smiles and nods at the boy.

EXT. CEMETERY GROUNDS - MARELLA'S AREA - NIGHT

Dylan sits in Marella's area. A small candle burns. He's alone. We push in on the candle.

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CEMETERY GROUNDS - MARELLA'S AREA - NIGHT

Five more candles, five more nights. Dylan is starting to look worse for wear.

EXT. DOCK -- NIGHT

Same scenario as before. Bar Owners and Employees collecting boxes of liquor, Military and Police watching. The last of the Bar Owners drive off, leaving Simon, Calipusan, Tobin, Graham.

Slowly, the Military and Police convene in a tightening circle. Its terrifying. Tobin turns around, watches the circle of men descend towards him, passing Graham, Calipusan then finally Simon.

Tobin makes eye contact with Graham who stares right back, watches Cal & Simon step forward, retrieve machetes from the guards and approach with intense menace.

TOBIN

Long live the king...

INT. LONE STAR - NIGHT

The normal activity. Bar Girls, Westerners, drinking, music. Dylan enters the front, slowly walks through the bar, Patrons and Employees disturbed at his appearance. Rough, a little off. He sees Anna in the back. Upset. Crying. Dylan approaches.

DYLAN  
Where is he?

Simon steps over, cue in hand, touches Dylan's shoulder.

SIMON  
Mate -

Dylan swings his arm away. Squares off.

SIMON  
No, mate.

Dylan pushes him. Once, twice. Simon takes it, glances down, doesn't want to engage. Calipusan steps up.

CALIPUSAN  
Let's step outside.

Dylan stares at Simon, at Anna.

ANNA  
He's gone.

DYLAN  
Who?

ANNA  
Who do you think?!?

Dylan lets it sink in. Turns to Calipusan.

EXT. LONE STAR - NIGHT

Sitting at the fountain, Calipusan and Dylan smoke a cigarette. The church looms in the background. Dylan has calmed down.

CALIPUSAN  
Better this way.

DYLAN  
Doesn't feel better. I really miss her, Cal.

CALIPUSAN

We all miss her. And you. I'm sure her boy misses you. Let me take you to see him.

DYLAN

I'd rather see Marella.

CALIPUSAN

When your sorrow subsides, you may discover the Universe gave you everything you truly wanted.

Dylan rises, walks away.

EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT

On the horizon - a storm. Dylan in his underwear. Remaining clothes lay on the sand. He's in knee deep water, slowly moving forward, wades into the ocean, disappears as distant lightning strikes and the sky begins to rain.

TIME CUT TO:

EXT. OCEAN -- NIGHT

The expanse shows us everything, a piece of land, endless water, electric storm, winds of rain and a small form we make out as Dylan swimming further and further until he disappears beneath the surface.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

EXT. OCEAN -- MORNING

Beach. Morning after. Dylan has been brought back, lays on stomach. A group of FISHERMAN are on one side with the Security Guard. Marella's Father has them turn Dylan over.

MARELLA'S FATHER

Help me get him up.

INT. SHACK -- AFTERNOON

We TRACK along the bed. Find the Principal sitting in a chair. Dylan wakes. The Principal points a finger at him.

PRINCIPAL

Next time you need a couple days to go body surfing - ask.

Dylan smiles.

PRINCIPAL

The kids miss you. Especially this little guy.

Thomas approaches. Takes his hand.

PRINCIPAL

You ARE coming back to the school? Right?

Dylan nods.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

EXT. LAPU-LAPU CEMETERY -- AFTERNOON

15 months later.

It's raining. Not your standard Western cemetery. There are few tombs lining the ground. High walls contain shelves of 2x2 enclosures where cremated remains store behind a decorative plate with the deceased's name and dates.

The cemetery's full of relatives paying respects to their departed, cleaning the plates, lighting candles, repainting names and numbers.

Dylan has recovered, at peace, happy. He's tan, lithe, a look of concentration as he works on a burial plate. He steps back, wipes his face, gazes longingly. Behind him are Calipusan, Mamasan, Simon.

DYLAN

(to Thomas)

What do you think?

His hair longer, Thomas looks at the burial plate, cocks his head, offers a nod. WE SEE Marella's name on the plaque. Simple lettering, dates of life, flowers, burning red candle. But specifically pronounced are the words Calipusan spoke on the bonka boat - **kahlmayaan** and **walay kaparehas**.

DYLAN

Let's go home.

Dylan picks up a pair of helmets, strolls away with Thomas. They walk toward the exit, pass Marella's friends, offer smiles, a wave. Dylan hands the boy a helmet.

EXT. CEBU - VARIOUS SHOTS -- DAY

Dylan drives a moped, Thomas clutched behind him. They roll through various streets, places Dylan photographed, places he hasn't. WE SEE the city, the people, the culture. Hope and despair, pride, enduring spirit. But most of all, we see kahlmayaan and walay kaparehas - bliss, a periodic occurrence.

EXT. MACTAN BRIDGE -- DAY

We pick up Dylan and Thomas riding over the bridge. They're heading home.....