

COCO

Original story by

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Screenplay by

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1.

EXT. MARIGOLD PATH - DUSK

A path of marigold petals leads up to an altar lovingly arranged in a humble cemetery. An old woman lights a candle as the smoke of burning copal wood dances lyrically upward...

CARD: DISNEY PRESENTS

CARD: A PIXAR ANIMATION STUDIOS FILM

The smoke lifts up toward lines of papel picado -- cut paper banners -- that sway gently in the breeze.

PAPEL PICADO CARD: "COCO"

MIGUEL (V.O.)

Sometimes I think I'm cursed...
'cause of something that happened
before I was even born.

A story begins to play out on the papel picado.

MIGUEL (V.O.)

See, a long time ago there was this
family.

The images on the papel picado come to life to illustrate a father, a mother, and a little girl. The family is happy.

MIGUEL (V.O.)

The papá, he was a musician.

The papá plays guitar while the mother dances with her daughter.

MIGUEL (V.O.)

He and his family would sing, and
dance, and count their blessings...

(beat)

But he also had a dream... to play
for the world.

(beat)

And one day he left with his
guitar... and never returned.

The man walks down a road, guitar slung on his back. In
another vignette his daughter stands in the doorway, watching
her papá leave. Two feet step up next to her. It is her
mamá, hardened.

She shuts the door.

2.

MIGUEL (V.O.)

And the mamá...? She didn't have
time to cry over that walkaway
musician!

(beat)

After banishing all music from her
life...

The woman gets rid of all of her husband's instruments and
records.

MIGUEL (V.O.)

She found a way to provide for her
daughter...

(beat)

She rolled up her sleeves and she
learned to make shoes.

(beat)

She could have made candy!

Amongst the papel picado, a stick swings at a strung up
piñata which bursts with candy...

MIGUEL (V.O.)

Or fireworks!

Fireworks go off in the background...

MIGUEL (V.O.)
Or sparkly underwear for wrestlers!

Sparkly underwear and a luchador mask hang on a line amongst other linens...

MIGUEL (V.O.)
But no... she chose shoes...

On the papel picado, the little girl becomes a young woman.

MIGUEL (V.O.)
Then she taught her daughter to
make shoes. And later, she taught
her son-in-law.

She introduces a suitor to the family business.

MIGUEL (V.O.)
Then her grandkids got roped in.
As her family grew, so did the
business.

In the next vignette, a bunch of goofy grandchildren join in the shoemaking. The shoe shop is full of family!

3.

MIGUEL (V.O.)
Music had torn her family apart,
but shoes held them all together.
(beat)
You see, that woman was my great-
great grandmother, Mamá Imelda.

TILT DOWN from the papel picado to the

OFRENDA ROOM - DAY

where a photo sits at the top of a beautiful altar. The photo features MAMÁ IMELDA -- serious, formidable. She holds a baby on her lap. Her husband stands beside her, but his

face has been torn away.

MIGUEL (V.O.)

She died WAY before I was born.
But my family still tells her story
every year on Día de los Muertos --
the Day of the Dead...
(beat)
And her little girl?

Fade from the face of the little girl to present day MAMÁ
COCO (97), a living raisin, convalescing in a wicker
wheelchair.

MIGUEL (V.O.)

She's my great grandmother, Mamá
Coco.

A boy (12) walks into frame and kisses her on the cheek.
This is our narrator, MIGUEL.

MIGUEL

Holá, Mamá Coco.

MAMÁ COCO

How are you, Julio?

MIGUEL (V.O.)

Actually, my name is Miguel. Mamá
Coco has trouble remembering
things... But it's good to talk to
her anyway. So I tell her pretty
much everything.

QUICK CUTS of Miguel with Mamá Coco:

4.

EXT. COURTYARD

MIGUEL

I used to run like this...

Miguel pumps his arms with his hands in fists.
switches to flat palms.

Then he

MIGUEL
But now I run like this which is
way faster!

CUT TO:

INT. MAMÁ COCO'S ROOM

Miguel, in a luchador mask, climbs onto the bed, arms raised.

MIGUEL
And the winner is... Luchadora
Coco!

Miguel leaps off the bed onto a pile of pillows that bursts,
sending feathers onto Mamá Coco who wears a mask of her own.

CUT TO:

EXT. DINING AREA

Miguel leans toward Mamá Coco at the dinner table.

MIGUEL
I have a dimple on this side, but
not on this side. Dimple. No
dimple. Dimple. No dimple--

ABUELITA
Miguel! Eat your food.

Miguel's ABUELITA (70s) runs the table like a ship captain.
She gives Mamá Coco a kiss on the head.

MIGUEL (V.O.)
My Abuelita? She's Mamá Coco's
daughter.

Abuelita piles extra tamales on Miguel's plate.

ABUELITA
Aw, you're a twig, mijo. Have some
more.

5.

MIGUEL
No, gracias.

ABUELITA
I asked if you would like more
tamales.

MIGUEL
S-sí?

ABUELITA
That's what I THOUGHT you said.

MIGUEL (V.O.)
Abuelita runs our house just like
Mamá Imelda did.

CUT TO:

INT. OFRENDA ROOM - DAY

Abuelita adjusts the photo of her beloved Mamá Imelda. Then
she perks her ear at a hooting sound.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Miguel idly blows into a glass soda bottle. Abuelita takes
the bottle away.

ABUELITA
No music!

INT. MAMÁ COCO'S ROOM - DAY

Miguel listens as a truck drives by the window, blaring radio
tunes. Abuelita angrily slams the window shut.

ABUELITA
No music!!

EXT. STREET - EVENING

A trio of gentlemen serenade each other as they stroll by the

family compound.

MUSICIANS
(singing)
AUNQUE LA VIDA--

6.

Abuelita bursts out of the gate and chases them away.

ABUELITA
NO MUSIC!!!

Terrified, the musicians stumble as they run away.

MIGUEL (V.O.)
I think we're the only family in
México who hates music...

INT. RIVERA WORKSHOP - DAY

We see the Rivera family tinkering in the shoe shop, no music to be heard. Miguel jogs past them.

MIGUEL (V.O.)
And my family's fine with that...

He grabs his shine box, and heads out of the shoe shop.

MIGUEL (V.O.)
But me?

MAMÁ
Be back by lunch, mijo!

MIGUEL
Love you, Mamá!

Once outside, Miguel makes his way through the small town of

SANTA CECILIA - MORNING

MIGUEL (V.O.)

I am NOT like the rest of my
family...

He passes a woman sweeping a stoop.

WOMAN
Hola, Miguel!

MIGUEL
Hola!

He passes a band of musicians playing a tune. Miguel joins
with some air guitar and the further down the street he goes,
the more instruments and sounds layer in. The bells of the
church chime in harmony, a radio blares a cumbia rhythm.

7.

Running past a food stand, Miguel grabs a roll of pan dulce
and tosses the vendor a coin.

MIGUEL
Muchas gracias!

STREET VENDOR
De nada, Miguel!

As Miguel passes all these scenes, the music synthesizes and
he can't help but tap out rhythms along a table of alebrijes.
The fantastical wooden animal sculptures each play a
different tone like a marimba. Miguel finishes with a SMACK
on a trash can, out of which a pops up a scrappy hairless
Xolo dog. The dog, DANTE, barks and jumps up to lick Miguel,
who laughs.

MIGUEL
Hey, hey! Dante!

Miguel holds the pan dulce over Dante's head.

MIGUEL
Sit. Down. Roll over. Shake.
Fist bump.

Dante obeys to the best of his ability.

MIGUEL
Good boy, Dante!

Miguel tosses the pan dulce to his furless friend who topples back into the trash can.

CUT TO:

MARIACHI PLAZA - MOMENTS LATER

Miguel rounds the corner toward the town square. Vendors sell sugar skulls and marigolds, and musicians fill the square with music.

MIGUEL (V.O)
I know I'm not supposed to love
music -- but it's not my fault!
(beat)
It's his: Ernesto de la Cruz...

Miguel approaches a statue of a handsome mariachi at the heart of the plaza.

8.

MIGUEL (V.O)
...The greatest musician of all
time.

A tour group and their TOUR GUIDE are gathered around the base of the statue.

TOUR GUIDE
And right here, in this very plaza,
the young Ernesto de la Cruz took
his first steps toward becoming the
most beloved singer in Mexican
history!

CUT TO:

CLIPS of de la Cruz in his hay day: playing as a young man in the plaza, serenading bystanders in a train car...

MIGUEL (V.O.)
He started out a total nobody from
Santa Cecilia, like me. But when
he played music, he made people
fall in love with him.

MORE CLIPS from de la Cruz's films. He leaps from a tree
branch onto a galloping horse. He plays his signature skull
guitar with flourish and flair.

MIGUEL (V.O.)
He starred in movies. He had the
coolest guitar... He could fly!

A CLIP features de la Cruz dressed as a hovering priest, held
up by strings, in front of a cycling sky flat.

MIGUEL (V.O.)
And he wrote the best songs! But
my all-time favorite? It's--

A CLIP of de la Cruz performing in a fancy nightclub.

DE LA CRUZ
(singing)
REMEMBER ME
THOUGH I HAVE TO SAY GOODBYE
REMEMBER ME
DON'T LET IT MAKE YOU CRY
FOR EVEN IF I'M FAR AWAY
I HOLD YOU IN MY HEART
I SING A SECRET SONG TO YOU
EACH NIGHT WE ARE APART
REMEMBER ME
(MORE)

9.

DE LA CRUZ (CONT'D)
THOUGH I HAVE TO TRAVEL FAR
REMEMBER ME
EACH TIME YOU HEAR A SAD GUITAR
KNOW THAT I'M WITH YOU THE ONLY WAY
THAT I CAN BE...

MIGUEL (V.O.)
He lived the kind of life you dream
about... Until 1942...

As the audience swoons over de la Cruz, an absent-minded stagehand leans on a lever. Ropes and pulleys go flying.

DE LA CRUZ
UNTIL YOU'RE IN MY ARMS AGAIN
REMEMBER ME!

De la Cruz is subsequently crushed by a giant bell.

MIGUEL (V.O.)
When he was crushed by a giant
bell.

CUT TO:

MARIACHI PLAZA - DAY

Miguel gazes up at the statue of de la Cruz in awe.

MIGUEL (V.O.)
I wanna be just like him.

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - MOMENTS LATER

Miguel weaves up to de la Cruz's mausoleum and peeks in the window. He catches a glimpse of de la Cruz's signature skull guitar.

MIGUEL (V.O.)
Sometimes, I look at de la Cruz and
I get this feeling... like we're
connected somehow. Like, if HE
could play music, maybe someday I
could too...

10.

EXT. MARIACHI PLAZA - DAY

MIGUEL (CONT'D)

...If it wasn't for my family.

PLAZA MARIACHI
(playful)
Ay, ay, ay, muchacho.

MIGUEL
Huh?

PLAZA MARIACHI
I asked for a shoe shine, not your
life story.

Miguel comes out of his reverie and looks up at the PLAZA MARIACHI whose shoes he is shining.

MIGUEL
Oh, yeah, sorry.

He goes back to scrubbing the man's shoe. As Miguel shines, the mariachi plucks his guitar idly.

MIGUEL
I just can't really talk about any
of this at home so...

PLAZA MARIACHI
Look, if I were you I'd march right
up to my family and say, "Hey! I'm
a musician. Deal with it!"

MIGUEL
I could never say that...

PLAZA MARIACHI
You ARE a musician, no?

MIGUEL
I don't know. I mean... I only
really play for myself--

PLAZA MARIACHI
Did de la Cruz become the world's
best musician by hiding his sweet,
sweet skills? No! He walked out
onto that plaza and he played out
loud!

The mariachi gets an idea. He points to the gazebo where organizers are setting up for a show. They unfurl a canvas poster which reads "TALENT SHOW."

PLAZA MARIACHI (CONT'D)

Ah, mira, mira! They're setting up for tonight. The music competition for Día de Muertos. You wanna be like your hero? You should sign up!

MIGUEL

Uh-uh, my family would freak!

PLAZA MARIACHI

Look, if you're too scared, then, well... have fun making shoes.

Miguel considers this.

PLAZA MARIACHI (CONT'D)

C'mon. What did de la Cruz always say?

MIGUEL

...Seize your moment?

The mariachi appraises Miguel, then offers his guitar.

PLAZA MARIACHI

Show me what you got, muchacho.
I'll be your first audience.

Miguel's brows rise, surprised. He reaches to take the instrument, regarding it as if holding a holy relic.

Miguel spreads his fingers across the strings anticipating his chord and...

ABUELITA (O.S.)

MIGUEL!

Startled, Miguel impulsively throws the guitar back onto the mariachi's lap. He turns to see Abuelita marching toward him. Miguel's TÍO BERTO (40s) and PRIMA ROSA (16), follow

with supplies from the market.

MIGUEL
Abuelita!

ABUELITA
What are you doing here?

12.

MIGUEL
Um...uh...

Miguel quickly packs away his shine rag and polishes.
Abuelita barrels up to the mariachi.

She hits his hat with her shoe and waves him away.

ABUELITA
You leave my grandson alone!

PLAZA MARIACHI
Doña, please -- I was just getting
a shine!

ABUELITA
I know your tricks, mariachi!
(to Miguel)
What did he say to you?

MIGUEL
He was just showing me his
guitar...

Gasps from the family.

TÍO BERTO
Shame on you!

Abuelita lords over the mariachi, shoe aimed directly between
his eyes.

ABUELITA
My grandson is a sweet little
angelito querido cielito -- he

wants no part of your music,
mariachi! You keep away from him!

The mariachi scrambles away, snatching his hat off the ground before he goes. Abuelita hugs Miguel protectively to her bosom.

ABUELITA
Ay, pobrecito! Estás bien, mijo?

She peppers him with kisses then releases him from the embrace. He gasps for air.

ABUELITA
(distressed)
You know better than to be here in
this place! You will come home.
Now.

13.

Abuelita turns toward home. Miguel sighs and gathers his shine box. Then, seeing a flyer for the plaza "TALENT SHOW", he can't help but pocket it. He follows Abuelita.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Miguel catches up to his family.

TÍO BERTO
How many times have we told you --
that plaza is crawling with
mariachis!

MIGUEL
Yes, Tío Berto.

Dante ambles up to Miguel, sniffing and whining for a treat.

MIGUEL
No, no, no!

Abuelita shoos him away.

ABUELITA

Go away, you! Go!

Dante darts off, scared.

MIGUEL
It's just Dante...

Abuelita throws her shoe at the dog.

ABUELITA
Never name a street dog. They'll
follow you forever.
(beat)
Now, go get my shoe.

CUT TO:

INT. RIVERA WORKSHOP

The Rivera workshop is abuzz with family making shoes.
WHOMP! Miguel is plopped onto a stool, ready for a lecture.

ABUELITA
I found your son in Mariachi Plaza!

PAPÁ
(disappointed)
Miguel...

14.

MAMÁ
You know how Abuelita feels about
the plaza.

MIGUEL
I was just shining shoes!

TÍO BERTO
A musician's shoes!

Gasps from the family. PRIMO ABEL (19) is so shocked he
loses his grip on the shoe he is polishing, which zips away
from the polisher and lodges itself in the roof.

MIGUEL

But the plaza's where all the foot
traffic is.

PAPÁ
If Abuelita says no more plaza,
then no more plaza.

MIGUEL
(blurting)
But what about tonight?

PAPÁ FRANCO
What's tonight?

MIGUEL
Well they're having this talent
show-

Abuelita perks her ear, suspicious.
whether to go on.

Miguel squirms, deciding

MIGUEL
And I thought I might...

Mamá looks at Miguel, curious.

MAMÁ
...Sign up?

MIGUEL
Well, maybe?

PRIMA ROSA
(laughing)
You have to have talent to be in a
talent show.

15.

PRIMO ABEL
What are YOU going to do, shine
shoes?

The shoe from the ceiling falls back down on Abel's head.

ABUELITA

It's Día de los Muertos -- no one's going anywhere. Tonight is about family.

She deposits a pile of marigolds in Miguel's arms.

ABUELITA

Ofrenda room. Vámonos.

CUT TO:

INT. OFRENDA ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Miguel follows his Abuelita to the family ofrenda, holding the pile of flowers as she arranges them on the altar.

ABUELITA

Don't give me that look. Día de los Muertos is the one night of the year our ancestors can come visit us.

(beat)

We've put their photos on the ofrenda so their spirits can cross over. That is very important! If we don't put them up, they can't come!

(beat)

We made all this food -- set out the things they loved in life, mijo. All this work to bring the family together. I don't want you sneaking off to who-knows-where.

She looks up to find Miguel sneaking away.

ABUELITA (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

MIGUEL

I thought we were done...

ABUELITA

Ay, Dios mío... Being part of this family means being HERE for this family... I don't want to see you end up like--

Abuelita looks up to the photo of the faceless musician.

MIGUEL

Like Mamá Coco's papá?

ABUELITA

Never mention that man! He's better off forgotten.

MIGUEL

But you're the one who--

ABUELITA

Ta, ta, ta-tch!

MIGUEL

I was just--

ABUELITA

Tch-tch!

MIGUEL

But--

ABUELITA

Tch!

MIGUEL

I--

ABUELITA

Tch-tch!

MAMÁ COCO

Papá?

They look to find Mamá Coco agitated.

MAMÁ COCO (CONT'D)

Papá is home...?

ABUELITA

Mamá, cálmese, cálmese.

MAMÁ COCO
Papá is coming home?

17.

ABUELITA
No Mamá. It's okay, I'm here.

Mamá Coco looks up at Abuelita.

MAMÁ COCO
Who are you?

Sadness rises in Abuelita; she swallows it down.

ABUELITA
Rest, Mamá.

Abuelita returns to the ofrenda.

ABUELITA (CONT'D)
I'm hard on you because I care,
Miguel.
(beat)
Miguel... Miguel?

She looks around the room. Miguel is nowhere to be found.
Abuelita steps up to the ofrenda.

ABUELITA (CONT'D)
(sigh)
What are we going to do with that
boy...?

She looks to the photo of Mamá Imelda. Abuelita's eyes
brighten with an idea.

ABUELITA (CONT'D)
You're right. That's just what he
needs!

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDE STREET

Tío Berto unloads rolls of leather from a truckbed. Nearby, Dante sleeps under the shade of a tree. He startles awake by a faint TWANGING. The dog scrambles up to the roof.

He reaches a shoe sign advertising the Rivera Family business and lifts it up.

INT. ROOFTOP HIDEOUT

Dante pokes his head in. Miguel turns and gasps.

18.

MIGUEL

Oh, it's you. Get in here, c'mon,
Dante. Hurry up.

Dante wriggles into the hideout. Miguel is huddled over something. The dog peeks around his shoulder.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)

You're gonna get me in trouble,
boy. Someone could hear me!

Miguel reveals a makeshift guitar, cobbled together from a beat up old soundboard and random other items.

He takes a china marker and sketches a nose on what appears to be his own version of a skull guitar head.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)

I wish someone wanted to hear me...

Miguel tunes the guitar.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)

Other than you...

Dante gives Miguel a big sloppy lick. Miguel gives a grossed-out chuckle. He lifts his guitar and strums.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)

Perfecto!

He crawls to the far side of the attic where he's built his own ofrenda to Ernesto de la Cruz. Posters, candles, and songbooks are arranged with care. Miguel lights the candles with reverence, illuminating an album cover of de la Cruz holding his skull guitar.

Miguel compares the head of his guitar to the album cover. Then he imitates de la Cruz's pose and smile.

He switches on a beat up old TV and pushes a tape into the VCR, "Best of de la Cruz" scrawled on the spine.

A montage of the greatest moments from de la Cruz's films plays out.

A clip from "A QUIEN YO AMO:"

DE LA CRUZ (FILM CLIP)

I have to sing. I have to play.
The music, it's -- it's not just in
me. It is me.

19.

Miguel strums his guitar as de la Cruz imparts his wisdom. More clips run in the background as Miguel plays:

DE LA CRUZ (FILM CLIP)

When life gets me down, I play my
guitar.

In a clip from "A QUIEN YO AMO:"

DE LA CRUZ (FILM CLIP)

The rest of the world may follow
the rules, but I must follow my
heart!

De la Cruz kisses a woman passionately. Miguel cringes.

Another clip from "A QUIEN YO AMO:"

DE LA CRUZ (FILM CLIP)

You know that feeling? Like
there's a song in the air and it's
playing just for you...

As Miguel watches de la Cruz play guitar in the video, he
repeats the melody on his own guitar.

DE LA CRUZ (FILM CLIP)
(singing)
A FEELING SO CLOSE
YOU COULD REACH OUT AND TOUCH IT
I NEVER KNEW I COULD
WANT SOMETHING SO MUCH
BUT IT'S TRUE...

As a good-natured priest in "NUESTRA IGLESIA:"

DE LA CRUZ (FILM CLIP)
You must have faith, sister.

NUN (FILM CLIP)
Oh but Padre, he will never listen.

DE LA CRUZ (FILM CLIP)
He will listen... to MUSIC!
(singing)
ONLY A SONG
ONLY A SONG
HAS THE POWER TO CHANGE A HEART...

Miguel loses himself in the music.

20.

DE LA CRUZ (FILM CLIP)
Never underestimate the power of
music...

Miguel's tune intertwines with the melodies on the TV set.
The clip jumps forward:

LOLA (FILM CLIP)
But my father, he will never give
his permission.

DE LA CRUZ (FILM CLIP)

I am done asking permission. When
you see your moment you mustn't let
it pass you by, you must seize it!

The tape ends with an interview clip.

INTERVIEWER (FILM CLIP)

Señor de la Cruz, what did it take
for you to seize your moment?

DE LA CRUZ (FILM CLIP)

I had to have faith in my dream.
No one was going to hand it to me.
It was up to me to reach for that
dream, grab it tight, and make it
come true.

MIGUEL

...and make it come true.

The tape ends. The words sink into Miguel. He reaches for
the flyer for the plaza "TALENT SHOW."

MIGUEL

No more hiding, Dante. I gotta
seize my moment!

Dante wags his tail, panting happily.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)

I'm gonna play in Mariachi Plaza if
it kills me!

CUT TO:

EXT. RIVERA COMPOUND - SUNSET

Children run by with sparklers as Abuelita opens the doors to
the family compound.

21.

ABUELITA

Día de los Muertos has begun!

In the courtyard, two TODDLER COUSINS haphazardly scatter marigold petals from their baskets.

MAMÁ

No, no, no, no, no.

Mamá corrects them, creating a path from the ofrenda room to the front gate.

MAMÁ (CONT'D)

We have to make a clear path. The petals guide our ancestors home. We don't want their spirits to get lost. We want them to come, and enjoy all the food and drinks on the ofrenda, sí?

As Mamá teaches, Miguel and Dante sneak across the roof and drop to the sidewalk outside the compound, Miguel clutching his guitar.

Suddenly Tío Berto and Papá round the corner carrying a small table from storage.

PAPÁ

Mamá, where should we put this table?

Miguel and Dante back up to avoid the adults, only to find Abuelita sweeping the sidewalk behind them! Miguel and Dante jump into the back into the Rivera courtyard before she sees them.

ABUELITA

In the courtyard, mijos.

PAPÁ

You want it down by the kitchen?

ABUELITA

Sí. Next to the other one.

INT. OFRENDA ROOM

Miguel backs out of the courtyard and into the family ofrenda room. Nearly cornered, he ushers Dante past a sleeping Mamá Coco. He stashes the dog and the guitar under the ofrenda

table.

22.

MIGUEL
Get under, get under!

ABUELITA (O.S.)
Miguel!

Miguel straightens up to notice the doorway of the ofrenda room darkened by three figures.

MIGUEL
Nothing!

His Abuelita and parents stare straight at him. A pit grows in his stomach; he's been caught.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)
Mamá -- Papá, I--

Papá lifts his finger to silence his son.

PAPÁ
Miguel...
(beat)
Your Abuelita had the most
wonderful idea!
(beat)
We've all decided -- it's time you
joined us in the workshop!

Abuelita hands Papá a leather apron, which he hangs over Miguel's shoulders.

MIGUEL
What?!

PAPÁ
No more shining shoes -- you will
be making them! Every day after
school!

Abuelita shuffles toward Miguel squealing. She squeezes his

cheeks, full of pride.

ABUELITA

Our Migueli-ti-ti-ti-to carrying on
the family tradition! And on Día
de los Muertos! Your ancestors
will be so proud!

She gestures to the shoes adorning the ofrenda.

23.

ABUELITA (CONT'D)

You'll craft huaraches just like
your Tia Victoria.

PAPÁ

And wingtips, like your Papá Julio--

Miguel crosses away from the ofrenda.

MIGUEL

But what if I'm no good at making
shoes?

PAPÁ

Ah, Migue... You have your family
here to guide you...

(beat)

You are a Rivera. And a Rivera
is...?

MIGUEL

...A shoemaker. Through and
through.

Papá swells.

PAPÁ

That's my boy!

(calling out)

Berto, break out the good stuff, I
wanna make a toast!

Papá heads out of the room, Mamá follows. Last is Abuelita,

who smothers Miguel with tons of kisses as she leaves.

With the family gone, Miguel deflates.

Suddenly, a noise comes from the ofrenda. Miguel turns to find Dante on the bottom tier, licking a plate of mole to his heart's content. Miguel is horrified!

MIGUEL

Dante! No, Dante, stop!

Miguel pulls the dog away from the ofrenda, but the table shakes. The frame with Mamá Imelda's photo sways back and forth, then topples to the ground with a sickening crack.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)

No, no, no, no, no! No...

Miguel picks up the old photo of Mamá Imelda, which unfolds to reveal another portion, hidden all these years;

24.

the man with no face is revealed to be holding a familiar skull-headed guitar.

MIGUEL

De la Cruz's guitar...?

MAMÁ COCO

Papá?

Miguel turns, startled. Mamá Coco points a crooked finger at the picture in his hand.

MAMÁ COCO (CONT'D)

Papá?

Miguel's eyes go wide as the connection dawns on him. Could it possibly be true?

MIGUEL

Mamá Coco, is your papá... Ernesto de la Cruz?

MAMÁ COCO

Papá! Papá!

CUT TO:

INT. ROOFTOP HIDEOUT

Miguel goes to his secret ofrenda, to the record album of Ernesto de la Cruz. He compares the guitar in the family photo with the guitar on the sleeve. An exact match!

MIGUEL
Ha, ha!

EXT. ROOFTOP

Miguel runs to the edge of the roof, overlooking the courtyard, photo in one hand, guitar in the other.

MIGUEL
Papá! Papá!

His parents stop, looking up at Miguel.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)
It's him! I know who my great-
great grandfather was!

25.

MAMÁ
Miguel! Get down from there!

MIGUEL
Mamá Coco's father was Ernesto de
la Cruz!

PAPÁ
What are you talking about?

Miguel whips off his shoemaker's apron, striking a pose with the guitar.

MIGUEL

I'm gonna be a musician!

CUT TO:

EXT. COURTYARD - EARLY EVENING

Miguel's guitar is cast at his feet, along with his de la Cruz albums. The whole family encircles the boy.

ABUELITA

What is all this? You keep secrets
from your own family?

TÍO BERTO

It's all that time he spends in the
plaza...

TÍA GLORIA

...Fills his head with crazy
fantasies!

MIGUEL

It's not a fantasy!

Miguel hands Papá the photo and points to the skull guitar.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)

That man was Ernesto de la Cruz!
The greatest musician of all time!

PAPÁ

We've never known anything about
this man. But whoever he was, he
still abandoned his family. This
is no future for my son.

26.

MIGUEL

But Papá, you said my family would
guide me! Well de la Cruz IS my
family! I'm supposed to play
music!

ABUELITA

Never! That man's music was a
curse! I will not allow it!

MIGUEL

If you would just let--

MAMÁ

(warning)

Miguel--

PAPÁ

You will listen to your family. No
more music.

MIGUEL

Just listen to me play--

PAPÁ

End of argument.

Miguel lifts his guitar to play when Abuelita snatches the
instrument away. She points to the man in the photo.

ABUELITA

You want to end up like that man?
Forgotten? Left off your family's
ofrenda?!

MIGUEL

I don't care if I'm on some stupid
ofrenda!

Gasps from the family. Abuelita's brow hardens. She lifts
the guitar in the air.

MIGUEL

No!

PAPÁ

Mamá...

Abuelita smashes it to bits!

ABUELITA

There. No guitar, no music.
(softening)
(MORE)

27.

ABUELITA (CONT'D)

Come. You'll feel better after you
eat with your family.

She reaches out to comfort Miguel, but he is hurt beyond
repair.

MIGUEL

I don't wanna be in this family!

He snatches the photo from Papá and bolts out of the
hacienda.

PAPÁ

Miguel! MIGUEL!

EXT. SIDE STREET

Miguel bursts out of the compound, desperate to get away.
Dante, nose buried in a trash bag, hears Miguel and chases
after him. Miguel runs past a poster for the plaza "TALENT
SHOW."

EXT. MARIACHI PLAZA - EVENING

Miguel approaches a STAGE MANAGER in the gazebo.

MIGUEL

I wanna play in the plaza. Like de
la Cruz! Can I still sign-up?

STAGE MANAGER

You got an instrument?

MIGUEL

No... But if I can borrow a guitar--

STAGE MANAGER

Musicians gotta bring their own
instruments...

(walking away)

You find a guitar, kid, I'll put
you on the list.

Miguel looks distraught.

MOMENTS LATER:

Miguel approaches any musician he can find.

28.

MIGUEL

Excuse me, can I borrow your
guitar?

MUSICIAN #1

Sorry, muchacho.

CUT TO:

MIGUEL

You guys have a spare guitar?

MUSICIAN #2

No.

CUT TO:

MIGUEL

I need a guitar, just for a little
bit--

MUSICIAN #3

Get outta here, kid!

Disheartened, Miguel walks away. He finds himself facing the
statue of de la Cruz.

MIGUEL

Great-great grandfather... What am
I supposed to do?

No answer. Miguel's gaze falls on a plaque at the base of
the statue that reads "Seize Your Moment!" Miguel looks at
the photo in his hand. He moves his thumb to reveal the
skull head guitar. Then, a firework illuminates the skull
head guitar that the statue holds. Miguel gets an idea.

EXT. CEMETERY - MOMENTS LATER

A sea of candles and flowers, families gathered at graves.

Miguel sneaks through the cemetery unnoticed, slipping from one shadow to the next.

Dante suddenly catches up to Miguel. He barks excitedly.

MIGUEL

No, no, no, no, no, Dante stop!
Cállate! Shhh!

Miguel swipes a chicken leg off a neighboring grave, and chucks it. Dante bounds after the food.

29.

EXT. DE LA CRUZ'S MAUSOLEUM

Miguel slinks around the side of the tomb. He looks in one of the windows.

Inside, the famous guitar hangs above the crypt. Fireworks pop; bursts of light glint off the instrument. It seems to beckon him. He tries the window but it's locked.

More fireworks shoot into the sky.

MIGUEL

I'm sorry...

Timing to the explosions, Miguel throws his shoulder into the rusted-shut window pane and forces it open with a scraping KRRRR-LANK! He slinks inside the tomb.

INT. DE LA CRUZ'S MAUSOLEUM

Miguel drops down to the mausoleum floor. The noise from outside is muffled. He climbs onto the crypt, slightly moving the lid. He stifles a gasp.

He crawls over the marble sarcophagus and comes face-to-face with the famed guitar. Miguel wipes away a layer of dust, revealing the rich painted wood beneath. He looks up to the portrait of de la Cruz.

MIGUEL

Señor de la Cruz? Please don't be mad. I'm Miguel, your great-great grandson... I need to borrow this.

Heart in his throat, Miguel lifts the guitar off its mount. Unbeknownst to him, some marigold petals in the mausoleum begin to sparkle.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)

Our family thinks music is a curse. None of them understand, but I know you would have. You would've told me to follow my heart. To seize my moment!

He backs up, in full view of the painting.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)

So if it's all right with you, I'm gonna play in the plaza, just like you did!

30.

Confidence building, he strums it once.

The air around him vibrates -- radiating like a shock wave. The petals on the ground whirl and surge with light for just a moment. Miguel is visibly taken aback. What just happened?

Suddenly, a flashlight shines in the window of the mausoleum.

VOICES (O.S.)

The guitar! It's gone! Somebody stole de la Cruz's guitar! The window's broken, look.

Miguel hears keys jangling and the door unlocking. A GROUNDSKEEPER enters with a flashlight.

GROUNDSKEEPER

Alright, who's in there?

Startled, Miguel puts down the guitar.

MIGUEL

I... I'm sorry! It's not what it
looks like! De la Cruz is my...

The groundskeeper walks straight through Miguel! He doesn't
even see him!

GROUNDSDKEEPER

There's nobody here!

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

A panicked Miguel runs out, trying to figure out what's going
on! But the people in the cemetery walk through him too.

Suddenly he hears a familiar voice.

MAMÁ

Miguel!

Miguel turns to see Papá and Mamá still searching for him.

MIGUEL

Mamá!

PAPÁ

Miguel! Come home!

He reaches for his parents, but goes straight through them.

31.

PAPÁ

Where are you, Miguel?!

Frantic, Miguel trips and falls into an open grave. A nearby
woman gasps and peeks over the ledge of the grave.

WOMAN

Dios mío! Little boy, are you
okay?

She reaches into the grave.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
Here, let me help you.

Miguel takes her hand and she pulls him out.

MIGUEL
Thanks, I--

They see each other face to face. The woman is a skeleton!
Miguel screams! She does too!

Miguel backs away. He turns to see another skeleton. He falls backwards and scoots away frantically. He bumps into another skeleton whose head falls off and lands in Miguel's hands.

SKELETON HEAD
Do you mind?

MIGUEL
Ahhh!

SKELETON HEAD
Ahhh!

MIGUEL
AHHH!

Miguel tosses the head away from him and turns to see the whole cemetery is teeming with skeletons! And they can all see him!

He races off and hides behind a grave. After a moment, he peeks over the headstone to watch the skeletons engaging with their living families.

One couple dances.

Another man reaches for offerings on his grave, which solidify in his hands when he takes them.

A couple of skeletons coo over a toddler.

SKELETON ABUELA
Look how big she's getting!

Suddenly Dante surprises Miguel and licks him on the cheek.
Miguel screams.

MIGUEL
Dante?! You can see me? W-wait!
What's going on?!

Dante barks, points, and bounds through the crowd.

MIGUEL
Dante! Dante!

Miguel gives chase until -- BAM! He runs smack into a
mustached skeleton and falls to the ground. The skeleton's
bones break apart and scatter. The head pops up.

MIGUEL
I'm sorry, I'm sorry...

PAPÁ JULIO
Miguel?!

Miguel tries to gather the scattered bones.

TÍA ROSITA
Miguel?

TÍA VICTORIA
Miguel?

The bones magically pull away from Miguel.

PAPÁ JULIO
You're here! HERE here!

PAPÁ JULIO reconstitutes himself.

PAPÁ JULIO (CONT'D)
And you can see us?!

TÍA ROSITA charges through Papá Julio, sending his bones
scattering again. She grabs Miguel, hugging him tight.

TÍA ROSITA

Our Migueli-ti-ti-ti-to!

Miguel, smothered by Rosita's ample ribcage, struggles for air.

33.

MIGUEL
(muffled)
Remind me how I know you?

TÍA ROSITA
We're your family, mijo!

Tía Rosita's ofrenda photo flashes in Miguel's memory.

MIGUEL
Tía... Rosita?

TÍA ROSITA
Sí!

He looks at Papá Julio, whose head is still turned the wrong way. TÍA VICTORIA straightens it.

MIGUEL
Papá Julio?

PAPÁ JULIO
Hola.

MIGUEL
Tía Victoria?

Tía Victoria pokes Miguel's cheek, skeptical.

TÍA VICTORIA
He doesn't seem entirely dead.

A living person ambles through Miguel's non-corporeal form.

TÍA ROSITA
He's not quite alive either...

PAPÁ JULIO
We need Mamá Imelda. She'll know

how to fix this!

Suddenly twin skeleton gents run, huffing, toward the family.

TÍO FELIPE
(huffing)
Oye!

TÍO OSCAR
(winded)
It's Mamá Imelda--

34.

TÍO FELIPE
(huffing)
--She couldn't cross over!

The others gasp.

TÍO OSCAR
She's stuck--

TÍO FELIPE
--On the other side!

Miguel sees pictures of his Tío Oscar and Tío Felipe flash in his memory.

MIGUEL
Tío Oscar? Tío Felipe?

TÍO OSCAR
Oh, hey Miguel.

Tía Victoria turns her gaze on Miguel.

TÍA VICTORIA
I have a feeling this has something
to do with you.

TÍA ROSITA
But if Mamá Imelda can't come to
us...

PAPÁ JULIO
...Then we are going to her!
Vámonos!

Papá Julio grabs Miguel by the arm and the family rushes through the cemetery, trailed by Dante.

EXT. CEMETERY - MOMENTS LATER

Miguel and his family weave through the graves, rounding a corner.

His gaze falls upon a glowing MARIGOLD BRIDGE arching before them.

MIGUEL
Whoa...

The bridge extends into the mist. A stream of skeletons
amble across for the holiday.

35.

The family passes through an invisible barrier onto the bridge. Their bodies change from ghostly to solid. Miguel hesitates at the threshold.

PAPÁ JULIO
Come on, Miguel. It's ok.

Miguel follows after the family, the petals glowing under his feet. Dante takes off.

MIGUEL
Dante! Dante! Dante, wait up!

Miguel runs after Dante, finally catching up to the dog as he rolls in the petals at the crest of the bridge. He sneezes some petals into Miguel's face.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)
You gotta stay with me, boy. We
don't know... where...

Out of the mist, the sparkling cityscape of the Land of the Dead emerges. It's breathtaking. His family sidles up.

MIGUEL

This isn't a dream, then. You're
all really out there...

TÍA VICTORIA

You thought we weren't?

MIGUEL

Well I don't know, I thought it
might've been one of those made up
things that adults tell kids...
like... vitamins.

TÍA VICTORIA

Miguel, vitamins are a real thing.

MIGUEL

Well, now I'm thinking maybe they
could be...

As skeletons pass in the other direction, Miguel receives some strange looks. A little skeleton girl gasps, pointing at him.

SKELETON MOTHER

Mija, it's not nice to stare at--
(seeing Miguel)
Ay! Santa Maria!

36.

The woman goes wide-eyed, her head turning backwards to gawk at Miguel as she walks in the opposite direction. Miguel puts up his hood.

The Riveras continue on toward an arrivals area on the far side of the bridge. Miguel sees fantastical creatures crawling, flying, making nests in the nearby architecture.

MIGUEL

Are those...? Alebrijes! But
those are--

TÍO OSCAR
REAL alebrijes. Spirit
creatures...

TÍA ROSITA
They guide souls on their
journey...

TÍO FELIPE
Watch your step, they make caquitas
everywhere.

They get to the far edge of the Marigold Bridge.

EXT. MARIGOLD GRAND CENTRAL STATION

CANNED LOOP (V.O.)
Welcome back to the Land of the
Dead. Please have all offerings
ready for re-entry. We hope you
enjoyed your holiday!

A sign reads RE-ENTRY.

ARRIVALS AGENT
Welcome back! Anything to declare?

TRAVELER
Some churros... from my family.

ARRIVALS AGENT
How wonderful! Next!

CANNED LOOP (V.O.)
...If you are experiencing travel
issues, agents at the Department of
Family Reunions are available to
assist you.

Miguel and family get into the line for RE-ENTRY, along with
other skeletons returning from the Land of the Living.

Nearby, skeletons exit the Land of the Dead through a gate

marked DEPARTURES. Miguel watches.

DEPARTURES AGENT
Next family, please!

An ELDERLY COUPLE steps in front of a camera-mounted monitor. The monitor scans their faces and returns an image of their photos on an altar in the Land of the Living.

DEPARTURES AGENT (CONT'D)
Oh, your photos are on your son's
ofrenda. Have a great visit!

ELDERLY COUPLE
Gracias.

The couple unites with the rest of their family. They all step onto the bridge, which begins to glow as they gain footing.

CANNED LOOP (V.O.)
...And remember to return before
sunrise. Enjoy your visit!

DEPARTURES AGENT
Next!

A skeleton man, a smile full of braces, steps up to the monitor.

DEPARTURES AGENT (CONT'D)
Your photo's on your dentist's
ofrenda. Enjoy your visit!

JUAN ORTODONCIA
Grashiash!

DEPARTURES AGENT
Next!

HÉCTOR (early 20s), a ragged fellow, steps up to the monitor, disguised as Frida Kahlo.

HÉCTOR
Yes, it is I. Frida Kahlo.
(beat)
Shall we skip the scanner? I'm on
so many ofrendas, it'll just
overwhelm your blinky thingie...

The monitor scans him, but an "X" appears, accompanied by a negative buzzing sound.

38.

DEPARTURES AGENT
Well shoot. Looks like no one put
up your photo, Frida...

Héctor peels off his unibrow and throws off his frock.

HÉCTOR
Okay, when I said I was Frida...
just now? That... that was a lie.
And I apologize for doing that.

DEPARTURES AGENT
No photo on an ofrenda, no crossing
the bridge.

HÉCTOR
You know what, I'm just gonna zip
right over, you won't even know I'm
gone.

Héctor bolts for the bridge. A security guards blocks the gate. Héctor splits in two and slides past the guard, half going over, half under.

HÉCTOR
Ha HA!

Héctor reaches the bridge at a sprint, but the magic doesn't engage; he sinks right into the petals.

HÉCTOR
Almost there, just a little
further...!

The guards saunter to the bridge and casually pull Héctor back toward the Land of the Dead.

OFFICER
Upsy-daisy...

HÉCTOR

Fine, okay. Fine, who cares...
Dumb flower bridge!

Miguel watches as the guards haul him out. Tía Rosita looks
up in time to see his back.

TÍA ROSITA
I don't know what I'd do if no one
put up my photo.

ARRIVALS AGENT (O.S.)
Next!

39.

TÍA ROSITA
Oh! Come mijo, it's our turn.

The arrivals line moves forward. The Dead Riveras crowd
around the gate. The arrivals agent leans out from his
window.

ARRIVALS AGENT
Welcome back, amigos! Anything to
declare?

PAPÁ JULIO
As a matter of fact, yes.

The family pushes Miguel to the front, very much alive.

MIGUEL
Hola.

The arrivals agent's jaw literally drops.

CUT TO:

INT. MARIGOLD GRAND CENTRAL STATION

Miguel and his family are escorted by a security guard across
an arching second floor walkway.

VOICE OVER P.A.
Paging Marta Gonzales-Ramos. Marta

Gonzales-Ramos, please report to
Level 7.

Dante happily trots alongside. Miguel looks up to see
gondolas traveling by.

MIGUEL
Whoa...

Skeletons stare at Miguel as he walks by. Suddenly Miguel
notices Tío Oscar staring at his face in deep contemplation.

TÍO OSCAR
I miss my nose...

At the end of the walkway are doors emblazoned with
"DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY REUNIONS." The family passes through.

INT. DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY REUNIONS

Inside, they find case workers helping travelers work out
holiday snafus.

40.

DISTRESSED TRAVELER
C'mon! Help us out amigo... We
gotta get to a dozen ofrendas
tonight...

CUT TO:

MIFFED WIFE
We are NOT visiting your ex-wife's
family for Día de Muertos!

CUT TO:

In a far corner, one traveler in particular is raising hell.

MAMÁ IMELDA
I demand to speak to the person in
charge!

A beleaguered CASE WORKER cringes as Mamá Imelda tears into
her.

CASE WORKER

I'm sorry, señora, it says here no
one put up your photo--

Mamá Imelda coldly eyes the Macintosh 128k on the woman's
desk.

MAMÁ IMELDA

My family always -- ALWAYS -- puts
my photo on the ofrenda! That
devil box tells you nothing but
lies!

In a swift movement, Mamá Imelda removes her shoe and smacks
the computer.

PAPÁ JULIO

Mamá Imelda?

She turns her shoe on Papá Julio, who leans back and yelps.
Mamá Imelda softens.

MAMÁ IMELDA

Oh, mi familia! They wouldn't let
me cross the bridge! Tell this
woman and her devil box that my
photo is on the ofrenda.

PAPÁ JULIO

Well, we never made it to the
ofrenda...

41.

MAMÁ IMELDA

What?!

PAPÁ JULIO

We ran into... um...

Mamá Imelda's eyes fall on Miguel.

Miguel looks at Mamá Imelda. Her photo flashes before him.

MAMÁ IMELDA

Miguel?

MIGUEL
Mamá Imelda...

MAMÁ IMELDA
What is going on?

Just then, a door opens and a CLERK pokes his head out.

CLERK
You the Rivera family?

The computer short circuits.

CUT TO:

INT. CLERK'S OFFICE

CLERK
Well, you're cursed.

The family gasps.

MIGUEL
What?!

The clerk searches through a huge stack of papers.

CLERK
Día de los Muertos is a night to
GIVE to the dead. You STOLE from
the dead.

MIGUEL
But I wasn't stealing the guitar!

MAMÁ IMELDA
Guitar...?

42.

MIGUEL
It was my great-great

grandfather's, he would have wanted
me to have it--

MAMÁ IMELDA
Ah-ah-ah! We do not speak of
that...
(disgust)
...musician! He is DEAD to this
family!

MIGUEL
Uh, you're all dead.

Dante balances his paws at the edge of the clerk's desk and
tries to reach a plate of food.

CLERK
ACHOO! I am sorry, whose alebrije
is that?

Miguel steps up, trying to pull Dante away from the treats.

MIGUEL
That's just Dante.

TÍA ROSITA
He sure doesn't look like an
alebrije.

Tía Rosita gestures to the fantastical creatures fluttering
on the other side of the window.

TÍO OSCAR
He just looks like a plain old
dog...

TÍO FELIPE
...Or a sausage someone dropped in
a barbershop.

CLERK
Whatever he is, I am -- ACHOO! --
terribly allergic.

MIGUEL
But Dante doesn't have any hair.

CLERK
And I don't have a nose, and yet
here we are -- ACHOO!!

43.

MAMÁ IMELDA

But none of this explains why I
couldn't cross over.

Miguel realizes something. He sheepishly pulls out the
folded photo.

MIGUEL

Oh...

He unfolds the photo.

MAMÁ IMELDA

You took my photo off the ofrenda?!

MIGUEL

It was an accident!

Mamá Imelda turns to the clerk, fire in her eyes.

MAMÁ IMELDA

How do we send him back?!

CLERK

Well, since it's a family matter...
(flipping pages)
The way to undo a family curse is
to get your family's blessing.

MIGUEL

That's it?

CLERK

Get your family's blessing, and
everything SHOULD go back to
normal. But you gotta do it by
sunrise!

MIGUEL

What happens at sunrise?

PAPÁ JULIO

Híjole! Your hand!

Miguel looks at his hand. The tip of one of his fingers has started to turn skeletal. He turns pale. He starts to faint when Papá Julio picks him up and gently slaps him awake.

PAPÁ JULIO

Whoa, Miguel. Can't have you fainting on us.

44.

CLERK

But not to worry! Your family's here, you can get your blessing right now.

The clerk searches the ground near Tía Rosita.

CLERK

Cempasúchil, cempasúchil. Aha!
Perdón, señora.

Tía Rosita titters. The clerk plucks a marigold petal from the hem of her dress. He hands the petal to Mamá Imelda.

CLERK

(to Imelda)

Now, you look at the living and say his name.

Imelda turns to Miguel.

MAMÁ IMELDA

Miguel.

CLERK

Nailed it. Now say: I give you my blessing.

MAMÁ IMELDA

I give you my blessing.

The marigold petal glows in her fingers.
But Mamá Imelda is not finished.

Miguel brightens.

MAMÁ IMELDA (CONT'D)
I give you my blessing to go
home...

The glow of the marigold petal surges.

MAMÁ IMELDA (CONT'D)
To put my photo back on the
ofrenda...

Each added condition makes the petal glow brighter. Imelda
delivers it like a scolding, but Miguel nods.

MAMÁ IMELDA (CONT'D)
And to never play music again!

The petal surges one last time.

45.

MIGUEL
What? She can't do that!

CLERK
Well technically she can add any
conditions she wants.

Miguel stares her down. Imelda is firm in her resolve.

MIGUEL
Fine.

CLERK
(to Imelda)
Then you hand the petal to Miguel.

Imelda extends the petal to Miguel, who reaches for it.

He grabs the petal. WHOOOOSH! He's consumed by a whirlwind
of petals and disappears.

DE LA CRUZ'S MAUSOLEUM - NIGHT

He reappears in a whirlwind of petals. It seems like he's

solid. He runs to the window and looks out.

MIGUEL
No skeletons!

Miguel laughs, relieved. Then, a mischievous smile on his face, he turns and eyes de la Cruz's guitar.

Miguel quickly grabs the guitar.

MIGUEL
Mariachi Plaza, here I come--

He takes two steps toward the door, then WHOOOOSH!

CLERK'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Miguel appears back in the clerk's office in another flash of the marigold whirlwind, without the guitar. The family turns, shocked to see him back so soon.

Miguel realizes his hands are still in guitar-holding position.

MAMÁ IMELDA
Two seconds and you already break
your promise!

46.

MIGUEL
This isn't fair, it's my life! You
already had yours!

Miguel grabs another petal, he marches over to Papá Julio.

MIGUEL
Papá Julio, I ask for your
blessing.

Papá Julio shakes his head and pulls his hat down.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)
Tía Rosita? Oscar? Felipe? Tía
Victoria?

They all shake their heads.

MAMÁ IMELDA
Don't make this hard, mijo. You go
home my way, or no way.

MIGUEL
You really hate music that much?

MAMÁ IMELDA
I will not let you go down the same
path he did.

Miguel gets an idea. He pulls the photo out and turns from
the group.

MIGUEL
The same path he did.

He gazes at the man with no face.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)
(to himself)
He's family...

TÍA VICTORIA
Listen to your Mamá Imelda.

TÍO OSCAR
She's just looking out for you.

TÍA ROSITA
Be reasonable.

Miguel starts back toward the door.

47.

MIGUEL
Con permiso, I... need to visit the
restroom. Be right back!

Miguel sees himself out. The family waits for a beat.

CLERK

Uh, should we tell him there are no
restrooms in the Land of the Dead?

INT. STAIRCASE - MOMENTS LATER

Miguel hustles down a staircase with Dante. Once on the ground floor, they huddle beneath the staircase. He looks to the upper floor. The Dead Riveras are there. Tío Oscar asks a PATROLWOMAN about a boy of Miguel's height. The patrolwoman picks up her walkie-talkie.

Miguel scopes the ground floor and spies a revolving door exit.

MIGUEL

Vámonos.

Miguel puts up his hood, tightening it to a tiny eye hole, and heads out. Dante pads after him.

PATROLWOMAN

We got a family looking for a
LIVING BOY.

MIGUEL

If I wanna be a musician, I need a
MUSICIAN'S blessing. We gotta find
my great-great grandpa.

The exit gets closer when Miguel is stopped by a PATROLMAN.

PATROLMAN

Hold it, muchacho.

Miguel's hoodie loosens to reveal his living face.

PATROLMAN

Ahh!

The patrolman frantically grabs for his walkie-talkie.

PATROLMAN

I've found that living boy!

A large family passes between Miguel and the officer, chatty, arms full of offerings.

PATROLMAN

Uh whoa, excuse me, excuse me
folks! Excuse me--

Once the family clears, Miguel is nowhere to be seen.

CUT TO:

INT. NEARBY CORRIDOR

Miguel and Dante hide from the patrolman. But Dante wanders off to inspect a side room.

MIGUEL

No, no -- Dante!

INT. DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Miguel catches up to Dante. He overhears an exchange in a nearby cubicle.

CORRECTIONS OFFICER

...disturbing the peace, fleeing an
officer, falsifying a unbrow...

HÉCTOR

That's illegal?

CORRECTIONS OFFICER

VERY illegal. You need to clean up
your act, amigo.

HÉCTOR

Amigo?

(verklemt)

Oh, that's so nice, to hear you say
that, because...

(misty)

I've just had a really hard Día de
Muertos, and I could really use an
amigo right now.

Héctor leans gratefully toward the officer, overwhelmed with

mock emotion.

49.

HÉCTOR (CONT'D)

And amigos, they help their amigos.
Listen, you get me across that
bridge tonight and I'll make it
worth your while.

Héctor spies a de la Cruz poster at the officer's
workstation.

HÉCTOR (CONT'D)

Oh, you like de la Cruz? He and I
go way back! I can get you front
row seats to his Sunrise
Spectacular Show!

Miguel perks at the mention of de la Cruz.

CORRECTIONS OFFICER

Uh--

HÉCTOR

I'll -- I'll get you backstage, you
can meet him!

(beat)

You just gotta let me cross that
bridge!

The corrections officer pulls away.

CORRECTIONS OFFICER

I should lock you up for the rest
of the holiday...

(beat)

But my shift's almost up, and I
wanna visit my living family... so
I'm letting you off with a warning.

HÉCTOR

Can I at least get my costume back?

CORRECTIONS OFFICER

Uh, no.

In a huff, Héctor marches out of the room.

HÉCTOR
Some amigo...

Miguel follows him.

50.

INT. HALLWAY

MIGUEL
Hey. Hey! You really know de la Cruz?

HÉCTOR
Who wants to--
(noticing Miguel)
Ah! You're alive!

MIGUEL
Shhh!

CUT INTO:

INT. PHONEBOOTH

Miguel pulls Héctor into a phone booth to avoid suspicion.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)
Yeah I'm alive. And if I wanna get back to the Land of the Living, I need de la Cruz's blessing.

HÉCTOR
That's weirdly specific.

MIGUEL
He's my great-great-grandfather.

HÉCTOR
He's your wha-whaat...?

Hector's eyes drop into his mouth. He pops them back up with a punch to his jaw. Miguel is a little grossed out.

Héctor turns to conference with himself.

HÉCTOR (CONT'D)

Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait.

Wait, wait...

(gasp)

Wait, no, wait, wait, wait. Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait?

(beat)

Yes! You're going back to the Land of the Living?!

MIGUEL

D'ya know what, maybe this isn't such a g--

51.

Héctor snaps his fingers rapidly, pistons firing.

HÉCTOR

No, niño, niño, niño, I can help you! You can help me. We can help each other! But most importantly, you can help ME.

Miguel suddenly spies his family hurrying down a staircase. Mamá Imelda spots Miguel.

MAMÁ IMELDA

Miguel!

MIGUEL

AH!

Héctor extends his hand.

HÉCTOR

I'm Héctor.

MIGUEL

That's nice!

Miguel grabs Héctor by the wrist and drags him to the exit, away from his family.

EXT. MARIGOLD GRAND CENTRAL STATION

Miguel and Dante burst out the door and rush down the stairs. Héctor's arm snaps to get Miguel's attention. Miguel realizes it's no longer attached to Héctor's body. The arm signals backwards to Héctor who is ten paces behind.

HÉCTOR
Espérame chamaco!

Miguel throws the arm back to Héctor and they disappear into a dense crowd.

Moments later, the Dead Riveras burst from the revolving doors. Mamá Imelda scours the crowd for Miguel. He's nowhere to be found.

MAMÁ IMELDA
Ay, he is going to get himself
killed... I need my spirit guide,
Pepita.

Mamá Imelda looks to the night sky, puts two fingers to her mouth, and lets out a piercing whistle.

52.

FWOOOMP! A giant winged jaguar lands in front of Mamá Imelda. She turns to the family.

MAMÁ IMELDA
Who has that petal Miguel touched?

PAPÁ JULIO
Here!

Papá Julio steps forward with a marigold petal. He creeps forward, jittery, holding it out for Pepita.

PAPÁ JULIO
Nice alebrije...

Pepita sniffs the petal's scent.

Suddenly Pepita's head darts, narrowing in on the scent. She
takes to the air.

EXT. UNDERPASS TUNNEL - NIGHT

Miguel sits on a wooden crate. Héctor uses his thumb to
smudge black and white shoe polish on the boy's face.

HÉCTOR

Hey, hey, hold still.

(beat)

Look up. Look up. A ver, a ver...

look up. Up, UP!... Ta-da!

Héctor opens a small mirror. Miguel's face is painted to
look like a skeleton.

HÉCTOR (CONT'D)

Dead as a doorknob.

(beat)

So listen, Miguel: this place runs
on memories. When you're well-
remembered, people put up your
photo and you get to cross the
bridge and visit the living on Día
de Muertos.

(beat)

Unless you're me.

MIGUEL

You don't get to cross over.

53.

HÉCTOR

No one's ever put up my picture...

(beat)

But you can change that!

He unfolds an old picture. In it is a young, living Héctor.

MIGUEL
This is you?

HÉCTOR
Muy guapo, eh?

MIGUEL
So you get me to my great-great
grandpa, then I put up your photo
when I get home?

HÉCTOR
Such a smart boy! Yes! Great
idea, yes!

(beat)
One hiccup: de la Cruz is a tough
guy to get to. And I need to cross
that bridge soon. Like TONIGHT.

(upbeat)
So, you got any other family here,
you know? Someone a bit more...
accessible?

MIGUEL
Mmm, nope.

HÉCTOR
Don't yank my chain, chamaco. You
gotta have SOME other family.

MIGUEL
ONLY de la Cruz. If you can't help
me, I'll find him myself.

Miguel marches out of the alley, whistling for Dante to
follow.

HÉCTOR
Okay, okay, kid, fine -- fine!
I'll get you to your great-great
grandpa...!

CUT TO:

EXT. BUSTLING STREET

They make their way through a pedestrian path.

HÉCTOR (CONT'D)

...It's not gonna be easy, you
know? He's a busy man.

(beat)

What are you doing?

Miguel slink-walks next to Héctor goofily.

MIGUEL

I'm walking like a skeleton.
Blending in.

HÉCTOR

No, skeletons don't walk like that.

MIGUEL

It's how you walk.

HÉCTOR

No, I don't.

Miguel keeps walking funny.

HÉCTOR (CONT'D)

Stop it!

Miguel notices a billboard advertising "ERNESTO DE LA CRUZ'S
SUNRISE SPECTACULAR!;" "Remember Me" blares from attached
speakers.

MIGUEL

Whoa..."Ernesto de la Cruz's
Sunrise Spectacular..." Qué
padre!

HÉCTOR

Blech. Every year, your great-
great grandpa puts on that dumb
show to mark the end of Día de
Muertos.

MIGUEL

And you can get us in!

HÉCTOR

Ahhhh--

55.

MIGUEL

Hey, you said you had front row tickets!

HÉCTOR

That... that was a lie. I apologize for that.

Miguel gives Héctor a withering look.

HÉCTOR

Cool off, chamaco, come on... I'll get you to him.

MIGUEL

How?

HÉCTOR

'Cause I happen to know where he's rehearsing!

CUT TO:

EXT. WAREHOUSE, BENEATH WINDOWS

Héctor uses his suspenders to slingshot his arm to a third floor window. The hand taps on it.

INT. COSTUME ROOM

CECILIA, a costumer, turns from a costume to look at the window. Héctor's hand waves. She rolls her eyes and goes to open the window.

CECILIA

You better have my dress, Héctor!

HÉCTOR

Hola, Ceci!

EXT. BENEATH WINDOW

She lowers a ladder so Héctor, Miguel and Dante can climb up.
Héctor grabs his arm and reattaches it.

INT. COSTUME ROOM

They all crawl in through the window.

56.

MIGUEL

Hola.

HÉCTOR

Ceci, I lost the dress--

CECILIA

Ya lo sabía! I gotta dress forty
dancers by sunrise and thanks to
you, I'm one Frida short of an
opening number!

HÉCTOR

Ceci -- I know, Ceci. I know, I
know. Ceci -- Ceci... Ceci.
Ceci...

As Héctor tries to talk her down, Dante wanders away from
the costume area.

MIGUEL

Dante... Dante!

Miguel chases after him.

INT. REHEARSAL AREA

MIGUEL

We shouldn't be in here...

Miguel follows Dante through a giant warehouse, divided into different artists workspaces. He passes papier-mâché sculptures, giant paper cut out banners, a skeleton posing nude for a painter...

Dante sniffs around. Suddenly an ALEBRIJE MONKEY jumps out at Dante. The monkey starts riding Dante, tormenting him. Miguel hustles after him.

MIGUEL

No, no, Dante! Ven acá!

The monkey jumps up onto the shoulder of FRIDA KAHLO, the REAL Frida Kahlo, who stands in front of a rehearsal stage. Miguel reins Dante in just as Frida turns to find them.

FRIDA

You! How did you get in here?

MIGUEL

I just followed my--

57.

Frida's eyes go wide when she sees Dante.
takes his head in her hands.

She kneels and

FRIDA

Oh, the mighty Xolo dog...! Guider
of wandering spirits...!

(beat)

And whose spirit have you guided to
me?

Frida takes a closer look at Miguel.

MIGUEL

I don't think he's a spirit guide.

FRIDA

Ah-ah-ah. The alebrijes of this
world can take many forms... They
are as mysterious as they are
powerful...

The patterns on Frida's monkey swirl and he opens his mouth to breath a blue fire. He fumbles at the end with a chesty cough.

Then they look to Dante, who is chewing his own leg. Suddenly, Frida turns back to Miguel.

FRIDA (CONT'D)

Or maybe he's just a dog. Come! I need your eyes!

Frida guides him to view the rehearsal space.

FRIDA

You are the audience.

(beat)

Darkness. And from the darkness...

A giant PAPAYA!

Lights come up on a giant papaya prop.

FRIDA

Dancers emerge from the papaya and the dancers are all me!

Leotarded, unbrowed dancers crawl around the sides of the mesh papaya. Behind the papaya is an even larger half-finished mesh structure.

58.

FRIDA (CONT'D)

And they go to drink from the milk of their mother who is a cactus, but who is also me. And her milk is not milk but tears.

(to Miguel)

Is it too obvious?

MIGUEL

I think it's just the right amount of obvious?

(beat)

It could use some music... Oh!

What if you did, like, doonk-doonk-

doonk-doonk...

Frida, inspired, cues some musicians who start playing the tune.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)

Oh! And then it could go dittle-
ittle-dittle-ittle-dittle-ittle-
dittle-ittle -- WHAAA!

The violins follow; a trombone punctuates.

FRIDA

And... what if everything was on
fire? Yes! Fire everywhere!

The dancers gasp and look at each other, now concerned.

FRIDA

Inspired!
(leaning in)
You... you have the spirit of an
artist!

Miguel brightens. Frida turns back to the rehearsal.

FRIDA

The dancers exit, the music fades,
the lights go out! And Ernesto de
la Cruz rises to the stage!

A silhouette rises from a trap door. Miguel leans forward.

A spotlight shines on the silhouette revealing it to be a
mannequin.

MIGUEL

Huh?

59.

FRIDA

He does a couple of songs, the sun
rises, everyone cheers--

Miguel hustles up to Frida.

MIGUEL

Excuse me, where's the real de la Cruz?

FRIDA

Ernesto doesn't do rehearsals.
He's too busy hosting that fancy party at the top of his tower.

She gestures out a large window to a GRAND ESTATE lit up in the distance, atop a steep hill.

Suddenly Héctor rounds the corner, out of breath.

HÉCTOR

Chamaco! You can't run off on me like that! C'mon, stop pestering the celebrities...

Héctor pulls Miguel away, but Miguel won't be wrangled.

MIGUEL

You said my great-great grandpa would be here! He's halfway across town, throwing some big party.

HÉCTOR

That bum! Who doesn't show up to his own rehearsal?

MIGUEL

If you're such good friends, how come he didn't invite you?

HÉCTOR

He's YOUR great-great grandpa. How come he didn't invite YOU?

Héctor walks away from Miguel toward the musicians.

HÉCTOR

Hey Gustavo! You know anything about this party?

GUSTAVO

It's the hot ticket. But if you're
not on the guest list you're never
getting in, Chorizo...

MUSICIANS

Hey, it's Chorizo! / Choricito!

HÉCTOR

Ha ha, very funny guys. Very
funny.

MIGUEL

Chorizo?

GUSTAVO

(to Miguel, re: Héctor)

Oh, this guy's famous! Go on, go
on, ask him how he died!

Miguel looks to Héctor, eyebrow cocked.

HÉCTOR

I don't want to talk about it.

GUSTAVO

He choked on some CHORIZO!

The musicians laugh. Miguel tries to stifle a giggle.

HÉCTOR

I didn't choke, okay -- I got food
poisoning, which is a big
difference!

More laughter.

HÉCTOR

(to Miguel)

This is why I don't like
musicians... bunch of self-
important jerks!

MIGUEL

Hey, I'm a musician.

HÉCTOR

You are?

61.

GUSTAVO

Well, if you really want to get to Ernesto, there IS that music competition at the Plaza de la Cruz. Winner gets to play at his party...

Miguel's wheels start turning.

HÉCTOR

No, no, no, chamaco, you are loco if you think--

Miguel looks to his hands, progressed in their skeletal transformation.

MIGUEL

I need to get my great-great grandfather's blessing.

Miguel looks up to Héctor.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)

You know where I can get a guitar?

Héctor sighs.

HÉCTOR

I know a guy...

CUT TO:

EXT. UNDERPASS TUNNEL - NIGHT

Pepita sweeps across the sky, landing in a darkened corner. She casts a shadow on the wall, then lurches into the light. She sniffs out the spot where Héctor painted Miguel's face, finding a canister of shoe polish. She lets out a low growl.

The Dead Riveras follow after her.

MAMÁ IMELDA
Have you found him, Pepita? Have
you found our boy?

Pepita breathes on the ground, revealing a footprint. It
glows for a moment. The family leans in to inspect.

TÍA ROSITA
A footprint!

62.

PAPÁ JULIO
It's a Rivera boot!

TÍO OSCAR
Size seven...

TÍO FELIPE
...and a half.

TÍA VICTORIA
Pronated.

MAMÁ IMELDA
Miguel.

Pepita leans forward, breathes again, and the glow spreads to
reveal a trail of footprints.

CUT TO:

EXT. NARROW STAIRWAY

Miguel follows Héctor down a steep stairway. Miguel looks to
his bony knuckles, concern on his face.

HÉCTOR
Why the heck would you wanna be a
musician?

MIGUEL
My great-great grandpa was a

musician.

HÉCTOR

...Who spent his life performing
like a monkey for complete
strangers. Blech, no, no thank
you, guácala, no...

MIGUEL

Whadda you know?

As Miguel descends the staircase, de la Cruz's distant
glowing tower is obscured by old forgotten buildings.

MIGUEL

So, how far is this guitar anyway?

HÉCTOR

We're almost there...

63.

Héctor jumps from the stairway and crashes on the ground
below. But his bones reassemble immediately.

HÉCTOR (CONT'D)

Keep up, chamaco, come on!

Héctor leads Miguel through a stone archway.

EXT. SHANTY TOWN

Graffiti on the archway depicts skeletal angels with wings
the color of marigolds.

Inside the archway, a group of ratty skeletons huddle around
a burning trashcan and laugh raucously. They are gray and
dusty, not unlike Héctor, but there's a camaraderie about
them.

RATTY GROUP

COUSIN HÉCTOR!!

HÉCTOR

Eh! These guys!

RATTY MEMBER
HÉCTOR!!

HÉCTOR
Hey Tío! Qué onda!

MIGUEL
These people are all your family?

HÉCTOR
Eh, in a way... We're all the ones
with no photos or ofrendas, no
family to go home to. Nearly
forgotten, you know?
(beat)
So, we all call each other cousin,
or tío, or whatever.

They approach three old ladies playing cards around a wooden
crate. One, TÍA CHELO looks up.

TÍA CHELO
Héctor!

HÉCTOR
Tía Chelo! He-hey!

Héctor hands them a bottle.

64.

OLD TIAS
Muchas gracias!

HÉCTOR
Hey, hey! Save some for me! Is
Chicharrón around?

TÍA CHELO
In the bungalow. I don't know if
he's in the mood for visitors...

HÉCTOR
Who doesn't like a visit from

Cousin Héctor?

INT. SHANTY BUNGALOW TENT

Héctor holds the curtain open. Miguel and Dante walk in.

The tent is cramped, dark, and quiet. Piles are organized everywhere: stacks of old dishes, a drawer full of pocket watches, magazines, records. This place belongs to a collector of things. Miguel almost knocks one stack over.

Héctor spies a hammock piled with old junk, a dusty hat on top. He lifts the hat and finds the grumpy face of CHICHARRÓN.

HÉCTOR
Buenas noches, Chicharrón!

CHICHARRÓN
I don't want to see your stupid
face, Héctor.

HÉCTOR
C'mon, it's Día de Muertos! I
brought you a little offering!

CHICHARRÓN
Get out of here...

HÉCTOR
I would, Cheech, but the thing
is... me and my friend, Miguel, we
really need to borrow your guitar.

CHICHARRÓN
My guitar?!

HÉCTOR
Yes?

65.

CHICHARRÓN
My prized, beloved guitar...?

HÉCTOR

I promise we'll bring it right
back.

Chicharrón sits up, incensed.

CHICHARRÓN

Like the time you promised to bring
back my van?

HÉCTOR

Uh...

CHICHARRÓN

Or my mini-fridge?

HÉCTOR

Ah, you see--

CHICHARRÓN

Or my good napkins? My lasso? My
femur?!

HÉCTOR

No, no, not like those times.

CHICHARRÓN

Where's my femur?! You--

Chicharrón raises his finger to give a tongue lashing. But
then he weakens and collapses in his hammock, a golden
flicker flashing through his bones. Héctor rushes forward.

HÉCTOR

Whoa, whoa -- you okay, amigo?

CHICHARRÓN

I'm fading, Héctor. I can feel it.

(looking to guitar)

I couldn't even play that thing if
I wanted to.

(beat)

You play me something.

Héctor looks surprised.

HÉCTOR

You know I don't play anymore,
Cheech. The guitar's for the kid--

CHICHARRÓN

You want it, you got to earn it...

Héctor sighs, then reaches over Chicharrón and takes the instrument.

HÉCTOR

Only for you, amigo. Any requests?

Héctor begins tuning the guitar.

CHICHARRÓN

You know my favorite, Héctor.

Héctor begins a lovely, lilting tune. Chicharrón smiles. Miguel's eyes go wide at Héctor's skill.

HÉCTOR

(singing)

WELL EVERYONE KNOWS JUANITA,
HER EYES EACH A DIFFERENT COLOR.
HER TEETH STICK OUT,
AND HER CHIN GOES IN,
AND HER...

Héctor eyes Miguel.

HÉCTOR (CONT'D)

...KNUCKLES THEY DRAG ON THE FLOOR.

CHICHARRÓN

Those aren't the words!

HÉCTOR

There are children present.

(continuing)

HER HAIR IS LIKE A BRIAR,
SHE STANDS IN A BOW-LEGGED STANCE.
AND IF I WEREN'T SO UGLY,
SHE'D POSSIBLY GIVE ME A CHANCE!

Héctor finishes with a soft flourish.

Chicharrón is tickled, joyful. For a moment he's present and bright.

CHICHARRÓN
Brings back memories. Gracias...

His eyes close. He looks at peace. Héctor looks sad.

Suddenly, the edges of Chicharrón's bones begin to glow. A soft, beautiful light. Then... he dissolves into dust.

67.

Miguel is stunned, concerned.

Héctor picks up his shot glass, lifts it in honor, and drinks. He places it rim down next to Chicharrón's glass, which is still full.

MIGUEL
Wait... what happened?

HÉCTOR
He's been forgotten.
(beat)
When there's no one left in the living world who remembers you, you disappear from this world. We call it the "Final Death."

MIGUEL
Where did he go?

HÉCTOR
No one knows.

Miguel has a thought.

MIGUEL
But I've met him... I could remember him, when I go back...

HÉCTOR
No, it doesn't work like that, chamaco. Our memories... they have to be passed down by those who knew

us in life -- in the stories they
tell about us. But there's no one
left alive to pass down Cheech's
stories...

Miguel is deep in thought.

Héctor puts his hand on Miguel's back, suddenly cheerful.

HÉCTOR (CONT'D)

Hey, it happens to everyone
eventually.

He gives Miguel the guitar.

HÉCTOR (CONT'D)

C'mon "de la Cruzcito." You've got
a contest to win.

68.

Héctor throws open the curtain and exits. Miguel looks back
at the glasses, then turns and follows.

EXT. LAND OF THE DEAD

Héctor and Miguel hang off the back of a moving trolley.
Miguel holds Héctor's photo in his hands, scanning it, while
Héctor fiddles on the guitar idly.

MIGUEL

You told me you hated musicians,
you never said you were one.

HÉCTOR

How do you think I knew your great-
great grandpa? We used to play
music together. Taught him
everything he knows.

Héctor plays a fancy riff, but botches the last note.

MIGUEL

No manches! You played with

Ernesto de la Cruz, the greatest musician of all time?

HÉCTOR

Ha-ha, you're funny! Greatest eyebrows of all time maybe but his music, eh, not so much.

MIGUEL

You don't know what you're talking about...

The trolley arrives at the stop for the PLAZA DE LA CRUZ. There's a giant statue of Ernesto de la Cruz in the center. Miguel pockets Héctor's photo.

HÉCTOR

Welcome to the Plaza de la Cruz!
(beat)
Showtime, chamaco!

Héctor hands the guitar to Miguel.

QUICK CUTS: Energetic plaza shots. Lights and colors, beautiful dresses, violins, pyrotechnic bullfight, dancing. A t-shirt vendor is selling "de la Cruz" shirts.

VENDOR

Llévelo! T-shirts! Bobble-heads!

69.

A stage is set up in the plaza.

EXT. ON STAGE

An EMCEE greets her audience.

EMCEE

Bienvenidos a todos! Who's ready for some música?

The audience whoops.

EMCEE (CONT'D)

It's a battle of the bands, amigos!
The winner gets to play for the
maestro himself, Ernesto de la
Cruz, at his fiesta tonight!

The audience cheers. Héctor elbows Miguel as they head
backstage.

HÉCTOR
That's our ticket, muchacho.

EMCEE
Let the competition begin!

QUICK MONTAGE: Acts perform on stage -- a tuba/violin act, a
saxophone player, a hard-core metal band, a kid who plays
marimba on the back of a giant iguana alebrije, a DJ with a
laptop and keyboard setup, a dog orchestra, nuns playing
accordions...

EXT. BACKSTAGE

Miguel and Héctor stand amongst other contestants.

HÉCTOR
So what's the plan? What are you
gonna play?

MIGUEL
Definitely "Remember Me."

Miguel plucks out the beginnings of de la Cruz's most famous
song. Héctor clamps his hand over the fretboard.

HÉCTOR
No, not that one. No.

70.

MIGUEL
C'mon, it's his most popular song!

HÉCTOR
Ehck, it's too popular.

Elsewhere backstage, they notice multiple other acts rehearsing their versions.

SKELETON MUSICIAN

(singing)

REMEMBER ME, THOUGH I HAVE TO TRAVEL FAR,
REMEMBER ME...

OPERA SINGERS

(singing)

REMEMBER ME!
DON'T LET IT MAKE YOU CRY!

One man plays water glasses to the famous tune. Héctor looks at Miguel as if to ask, "Need I say more?"

MIGUEL

Um... what about "Poco Loco?"

HÉCTOR

Epa! Now that's a song!

STAGEHAND

De la Cruzcito? You're on standby!
(to another band)
Los Chachalacos, you're up next!

ON STAGE

An impressive banda group steps onto stage.

CROWD

LOS CHACHALACOS!

They burst into a mighty introduction and the audience goes wild. They're very good.

BACKSTAGE

Miguel peeks at the frenzied audience from backstage. He looks sick and begins to pace, fidgety.

HÉCTOR

You always this nervous before a
performance?

MIGUEL

I don't know -- I've never
performed before.

HÉCTOR

What?! You said you were a
musician!

MIGUEL

I am!

(beat)

I mean I will be. Once I win.

HÉCTOR

That's your plan?!

(beat)

No, no, no, no, no, you have to
win, Miguel. Your life LITERALLY
depends on you winning! AND YOU'VE
NEVER DONE THIS BEFORE?!

Héctor reaches for the guitar.

HÉCTOR (CONT'D)

I'll go up there--

Miguel recoils, keeping hold of the instrument.

MIGUEL

No! I need to do this.

HÉCTOR

Why?

MIGUEL

If I can't go out there and play
one song... how can I call myself a
musician?

HÉCTOR

What does that matter?!

MIGUEL

'Cuz I don't just want to get de la
Cruz's blessing. I need to prove

that... that I'm worthy of it.

HÉCTOR

Oh. Oh, that's such a sweet
sentiment... at SUCH a bad time!

Héctor looks in Miguel's eyes. The kid is sincere. Despite
himself, Héctor softens.

72.

HÉCTOR

Okay... okay, okay, okay. Okay.

Okay.

(beat)

Okay.

(beat)

Okay you wanna perform? Then
you've got to PERFORM!

Miguel perks, surprised that Héctor wants to help.

HÉCTOR (CONT'D)

First you have to loosen up. Shake
off those nerves! Sáquenlo
sáquenlo, sáquenlo!

Héctor does a loose-bone skeletal shimmy and Miguel copies.

HÉCTOR (CONT'D)

Now gimme your best grito!

MIGUEL

My best grito?

HÉCTOR

Come on, yell! Belt it out!
OOOOOOH HE-HE-HEY! Ha! Ah, feels
good! Okay... now you.

MIGUEL

(uncertain)

Ah -- ah -- ayyyyy yaaaaayyyyay...

Dante whimpers.

HÉCTOR
Oh, c'mon kid...

On stage, Los Chachalacos wrap up to raucous applause.

STAGEHAND
De la Cruzcito, you're on now!

HÉCTOR
Miguel, look at me.

STAGEHAND
Come on, let's go!

HÉCTOR
Hey! Hey, look at me.
(beat)
(MORE)

73.

HÉCTOR (CONT'D)
You can do this. Grab their
attention and don't let it go!

EMCEE (O.S.)
We have one more act, amigos!

MIGUEL
Héctor...

HÉCTOR
Make 'em listen, chamaco! You got
this!

EMCEE (O.S.)
Damas y caballeros! De la
Cruzcito!

The crowd applauds as Miguel is led on stage.

HÉCTOR
Arre papá! Hey!

Héctor's face contorts with a mix of encouragement and dread.

ON STAGE

Miguel slowly takes the stage, guitar in hand. He's blinded
by the lights and squints out at the audience. He's frozen
stiff.

OFF STAGE

HÉCTOR
(to Dante)
What's he doing? Why isn't he
playing?

ON STAGE

Panic is painted across Miguel's face.

AUDIENCE MEMBER (O.S.)
Bring back the singing dogs!

The crowd begins to murmur impatiently. Miguel looks to
Héctor in the wing.

Héctor makes eye contact with Miguel and does the "loosen up"
bone shimmy.

74.

On stage Miguel shakes off his nerves. Deep exhale and...

MIGUEL
HAAAAAAAII-YAAAAAAAAAAAAII-YAAAAAAAAAAI!

The sound is full-throated and resonant. People in the
audience whistle and whoop. Some return the grito, some
applaud lightly. His brows go up and he begins his guitar
intro.

MIGUEL
(singing)
WHAT COLOR IS THE SKY?
AY MI AMOR, AY MI AMOR
YOU TELL ME THAT IT'S RED
AY MI AMOR, AY MI AMOR

WHERE SHOULD I PUT MY SHOES?
AY MI AMOR, AY MI AMOR
YOU SAY PUT THEM ON YOUR HEAD
AY MI AMOR, AY MI AMOR

As the audience warms up, so does Miguel. Héctor perks up,
he's got this!

MIGUEL (CONT'D)
YOU MAKE ME UN POCO LOCO
UN POQUI-TI-TI-TO LOCO
THE WAY YOU KEEP ME GUESSING
I'M NODDING AND I'M YES-ING
I'LL COUNT IT AS A BLESSING
THAT I'M ONLY UN POCO LOCO...

INSTRUMENTAL INTERLUDE. Dante grabs Héctor by the leg and
drags him onto the stage with Miguel.

HÉCTOR
No, no, no, no...

Once in the spotlight, Héctor warms up and busts out some
percussive footwork to Miguel's guitar.

MIGUEL
Not bad for a dead guy!

HÉCTOR
You're not so bad yourself,
gordito! Eso!

CUT TO:

75.

EDGE OF AUDIENCE

A ripple of glowing footprints leads Pepita and the Dead
Riveras to the edge of the audience.

MAMÁ IMELDA
He's close. Find him.

The Dead Riveras fan out through the audience.

ON STAGE

Héctor gets more creative with his dancing, head coming off, limbs spinning around. The audience hoots!

HÉCTOR
(singing)
THE LOCO THAT YOU MAKE ME
IT IS JUST UN POCO CRAZY
THE SENSE THAT YOU'RE NOT MAKING...

MIGUEL
(singing)
THE LIBERTIES YOU'RE TAKING...

HECTOR	MIGUEL
LEAVES MY CABEZA SHAKING	LEAVES MY CABEZA
SHAKING	
YOU ARE JUST UN POCO LOCO	YOU ARE JUST UN POCO LOCO

The audience starts clapping in time with the song. Dante lets out a howl.

The Riveras continue their search in the audience.

TÍO FELIPE/TÍO OSCAR
We're looking for a living kid...
about 12?

CUT TO:

TÍA ROSITA
Have you seen a living boy?

ON STAGE

HECTOR	MIGUEL
UN POQUI-TI-TI-TI-TI-TI-TI-TI-	UN POQUI-TI-TI-TI-TI-TI-TI-TI-
TI-TI-TO LOCO!!	TI-TI-TO LOCO!!

The audience erupts into applause!

Miguel smiles, soaking in the moment. He feels like a real musician.

HÉCTOR

Hey, you did good! I'm proud of you! Eso!

Miguel swells and looks back out the crowd when he suddenly spots Oscar and Felipe talking to a stranger. He looks over and there is Tía Rosita talking to someone else! Miguel looks to stage right, where he sees Papá Julio talking to the Emcee!

AUDIENCE

Otra! Otra! Otra!

Panicking, Miguel pulls Héctor off stage. Héctor tries to pull back.

OFF STAGE

HÉCTOR

Hey, where are you going?

MIGUEL

We gotta get outta here.

HÉCTOR

What, are you crazy? We're about to win this thing!

ON STAGE

The Emcee takes the microphone.

EMCEE

Damas y caballeros, I have an emergency announcement.

(beat)

Please be on the lookout for a living boy, answers to the name of Miguel. Earlier tonight he ran away from his family. They just want to send him back to the Land of the Living...

Murmurs of concern rumble through the audience.

77.

OFF STAGE

EMCEE (O.S.)

...If anyone has information,
please contact the authorities.

HÉCTOR

Wait, wait, wait! You said de la
Cruz was your ONLY family. The
ONLY person who could send you
home.

MIGUEL

I do have other family, but--

HÉCTOR

You could have taken my photo back
this whole time?!

MIGUEL

--But they hate music! I need a
musician's blessing!

HÉCTOR

You lied to me!

MIGUEL

Oh, you're one to talk!

HÉCTOR

Look at me. I'm being forgotten,
Miguel. I don't even know if I'm
gonna last the night!

(beat)

I'm not gonna miss my one chance to
cross that bridge 'cause you want
to live out some stupid musical
fantasy!

MIGUEL

It's not stupid.

Héctor grabs Miguel's arm and pulls him toward the stage.

HÉCTOR
I'm taking you to your family.

MIGUEL
Let go of me!

HÉCTOR
You'll thank me later--

78.

Miguel yanks his arms away.

MIGUEL
You don't wanna help me, you only
care about yourself! Keep your
dumb photo!

He pulls Héctor's photo out of his pocket and throws it at him. Héctor tries to grab it but it catches a breeze and drifts into the crowd.

HÉCTOR
No -- no, no, no! No...

MIGUEL
Stay away from me!

As Héctor scrambles to catch his photo, Miguel runs away. Héctor looks up but Miguel is gone.

HÉCTOR
Hey, chamaco! Where did you go?!
Chamaco! I'm sorry! Come back!

EXT. PEDESTRIAN THOROUGHFARE

Miguel hustles to get away from Héctor. Dante bounds after him, but looks back and whimpers. He barks to get Miguel's attention.

MIGUEL
Dante, cállate!

But Dante is insistent. He tugs at Miguel's pants, pulling him back to Héctor.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)
No, Dante! Stop it! He can't help me!

Dante grabs onto his hoodie sleeve. Miguel tries to shake him off, but his hoodie slips off, revealing the arms of a living boy. Dante redoubles his efforts.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)
Dante, stop! Stop it! Leave me alone! You're not a spirit guide, you're just a dumb dog! Now get out of here!

Miguel yanks his hoodie away from Dante, who shrinks back, rebuffed. The scuffle has drawn the eyes of the crowd.

79.

Startled skeletons see Miguel's arms. He hurries to get his hoodie back on.

CROWD MEMBERS
It's him! / It's that living boy! /
I heard about him. / Look! / He's
alive! / The boy's alive.

Miguel runs and jumps down some scaffolding. In the distance, he sees de la Cruz's tower. After only a few paces, Pepita lands in front of Miguel, cutting off his path! He skids to a stop.

MIGUEL
AAHH!

Then, peeking over the jaguar's head is an even more terrifying sight: Mamá Imelda riding atop.

MAMÁ IMELDA
This nonsense ends now, Miguel! I

am giving you my blessing and you
are going home!

MIGUEL
I don't want your blessing!

Miguel scrambles upright and bounds for a narrow alley
staircase.

MAMÁ IMELDA
Miguel! Stop!

Not able to get through on her spirit guide, Imelda is forced
to pursue Miguel on foot.

EXT. NARROW STAIRCASE

MAMÁ IMELDA (CONT'D)
Come back! Miguel!

He wriggles through an iron gate.

MAMÁ IMELDA (CONT'D)
I am trying to save your life!

She is stopped by the gate.

MIGUEL
You're ruining my life!

80.

MAMÁ IMELDA
What?

MIGUEL
Music's the only thing that makes
me happy. And you, you wanna take
that away!
(beat)
You'll never understand.

Miguel heads away from her up the stairs.

MAMÁ IMELDA
(singing)
Y AUNQUE LA VIDA ME CUESTE,
LLORONA... NO DEJARÉ DE QUERERTE...

Miguel stops in his tracks. When Imelda finishes, he turns back, confused.

MIGUEL
I thought you hated music.

MAMÁ IMELDA
Oh, I loved it.
(reminiscing)
I remember that feeling, when my
husband would play, and I would
sing and nothing else mattered.
But when we had Coco, suddenly...
there was something in my life that
mattered more than music. I wanted
to put down roots. He wanted to
play for the world.

Mamá Imelda pauses for a moment, lost in a memory.

MAMÁ IMELDA (CONT'D)
We each made a sacrifice to get
what we wanted. Now you must make
a choice.

MIGUEL
But I don't wanna... pick sides!
(beat)
Why can't you be on MY side?
That's what family's supposed to do
-- support you.
(beat)
But you never will.

81.

Miguel wipes the corner of his eye, frustrated. Imelda is shocked to see him so hurt, but Miguel turns away before she can answer and ascends the narrow staircase toward de la Cruz's tower.

EXT. BOTTOM OF THE TOWER

Miguel arrives at the foot of the hill to de la Cruz's tower.

Vehicles from all eras (limousines, motor cars, carriages) drop off finely dressed guests who line up to get aboard a funicular that scales the tower to the mansion.

A couple at the front of the line show a fancy invitation to a SECURITY GUARD, who then lets them onto the funicular.

SECURITY GUARD

Have a good time.

GUEST

Oh, how exciting!

EL SANTO, the silver-masked luchador, produces a fancy invitation to the security guard.

SECURITY GUARD

Oh! El Santo!

(giddy)

I'm a big fan.

The security guard sheepishly holds up a camera.

SECURITY GUARD

You mind if I--

El Santo nods. The security guard removes his head and hands it to the luchador for a selfie. His body proceeds to take the photo.

SECURITY GUARD

Gracias, señor!

The security guard puts his head back on and El Santo heads past the velvet rope. Miguel is revealed waiting in line behind him.

SECURITY GUARD

Invitation?

MIGUEL

It's okay. I'm Ernesto's great-great grandson!

Miguel strikes de la Cruz's signature pose with his guitar.

CUT TO:

Miguel is tossed out of the line. Just then he sees Los Chachalacos unloading their instruments from their van. He runs up to them.

MIGUEL
Disculpen, señores...

BAND LEADER
Hey guys, it's Poco Loco!

BAND MEMBER #2
You were on fire tonight!

MIGUEL
You too! Hey, musician to musician, I need a favor...

CUT TO:

The Band Leader hands an invitation to the security guard.

SECURITY GUARD
Ooo, the competition winners!
Congratulations chicos!

Los Chachalacos file onto the funicular, the sousaphone player angling his instrument away from the security guard. After they get onto the funicular, he turns to reveal a pair of legs hanging out of the bell of the sousaphone. With a deep "TOOT!" Miguel spills out onto the floor of the funicular.

MIGUEL
Thanks guys!

The funicular ascends.

EXT. DE LA CRUZ'S MANSION

The doors of the funicular open to reveal de la Cruz's lavish

mansion. Los Chachalacos all file out.

MIGUEL

Whoa...

BAND LEADER

Enjoy the party, little músico!

83.

MIGUEL

Gracias!

Miguel heads off toward the mansion.

On the stairs leading up, the party is bustling -- performers, servers and guests dressed to the nines.

A fire breather lets out flames that transform into a flurry of butterflies.

GUEST

Look, it's Ernesto!

Miguel catches a glimpse of de la Cruz heading deeper into the party. Miguel pursues.

MIGUEL

De la Cruz...

INT. DE LA CRUZ'S MANSION

Miguel heads into the foyer but loses de la Cruz in the crowd.

MIGUEL

Señor de la Cruz!

Miguel elbows his way through the room.

MIGUEL

Pardon me, Señor de la Cruz! Señor
de la--

He finds himself in a huge hall with hundreds of guests, the heart of the party. Film clips play all around the room from de la Cruz's movies.

DE LA CRUZ (FILM CLIP)

When you see your moment, you
mustn't let it pass you by. You
must seize it.

Miguel takes it all in. Synchronized swimmers make formations in a sparkling indoor pool. A DJ lays a decades-spanning mash-up soundtrack.

A clip of de la Cruz riding his noble steed plays behind Miguel.

DE LA CRUZ (FILM CLIP)

We're almost there, Dante.

84.

Miguel jumps to see above the crowd.

MIGUEL

Señor de la Cruz! Señor de la--

Miguel is unable to get his great-great grandfather's attention. Meanwhile, a clip behind Miguel features de la Cruz as a good-natured priest:

NUN (FILM CLIP)

But what can we do? It is
hopeless...

DE LA CRUZ (FILM CLIP)

You must have faith, sister.

NUN (FILM CLIP)

Oh but Padre, he will never listen.

DE LA CRUZ (FILM CLIP)

He will listen... to MUSIC!

The passionate words embolden Miguel. He climbs a pillar to the landing of a grand staircase, he stands above the crowd.

Miguel takes a breath and throws out a grito as loud as he can. It echoes through the space, and party guests turn. The DJ fades the music.

Garnering some attention, Miguel plays his guitar. More guests turn.

As a hush falls on the crowd, the sound of Miguel's guitar becomes singular.

MIGUEL
(singing)
SEÑORAS Y SEÑORES
BUENAS TARDES, BUENAS NOCHES
BUENAS TARDES, BUENAS NOCHES
SEÑORITAS Y SEÑORES
TO BE HERE WITH YOU TONIGHT
BRINGS ME JOY! ¡QUÉ ALEGRÍA!
FOR THIS MUSIC IS MY LANGUAGE
AND THE WORLD ES MI FAMILIA

Miguel continues to play and sing as he nervously walks forward; the crowd parting, he moves closer to DLC.

MIGUEL
FOR THIS MUSIC IS MY LANGUAGE
AND THE WORLD ES MI FAMILIA

85.

He passes a movie screen where a clip features de la Cruz singing the same song in one of his films, the songs overlapping for a brief moment.

MIGUEL & DE LA CRUZ
FOR THIS MUSIC IS MY LANGUAGE
AND THE WORLD ES MI FAMILIA

Miguel's soul pours into the strings as he approaches his hero--

MIGUEL
FOR THIS MUSIC IS MY LANG--

SPLASH! Miguel tumbles into the indoor pool.

The party-goers gasp, but it's Ernesto who rolls up his sleeves, and, in true movie hero fashion, jumps into the pool and lifts a coughing Miguel to the edge.

DE LA CRUZ
Are you all right, niño?

Miguel looks up, mortified. His painted face begins to run, revealing him to be a living boy. De la Cruz's eyes go wide. The crowd gasps and murmurs.

DE LA CRUZ
It's you... you, you are that boy,
the one who came from the Land of
the Living.

MIGUEL
You... know about me?

DE LA CRUZ
You are all anyone has been talking
about! Why have you come here?

MIGUEL
I'm Miguel. Your great-great
grandson.

More murmuring from the crowd. De la Cruz is shocked.

DE LA CRUZ
I... have a great-great grandson?

MIGUEL
I need your blessing. So I can go
back home and be a musician, just
like you.
(beat)
(MORE)

86.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)
The rest of our family, they
wouldn't listen. But I... I hoped
you would?

DE LA CRUZ
My boy, with a talent like yours,

how could I not listen?

Miguel hugs de la Cruz who sweeps Miguel up onto his shoulders, showing him off to the room.

DE LA CRUZ
I HAVE A GREAT-GREAT GRANDSON!

The crowd roars.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOTTOM OF THE TOWER

CROWD
Look, it's Frida!

The silhouette of Frida Kahlo steps up to the security guard.

HÉCTOR
Yes, it is I. Frida Kahlo.

The security guard lets her in immediately. No need to check the list.

SECURITY GUARD
It is an honor, señora!

HÉCTOR
Gracias...

Hector steps onto the funicular, readjusting his unibrow to maintain his disguise.

CUT TO:

EXT. DE LA CRUZ'S MANSION

Quick cuts over instrumental version of "Remember Me:"

De la Cruz barges into several conversations, proudly introducing Miguel. He seems almost giddy. They wedge themselves into a group laughing in the garden (which includes Jorge Negrete & Pedro Infante):

87.

DE LA CRUZ
Hey Negrete! Infante! Have you
met my great-great-grandson?

CUT TO:

De la Cruz and Miguel ride up on horseback while guests play
polo:

DE LA CRUZ
My great-great grandson!

CUT TO:

In the parlor:

DE LA CRUZ
He's alive! And a musician to
boot!

CUT TO:

Miguel chats away with de la Cruz and guests.

MIGUEL
Dimple. No dimple. Dimple. No
dimple.

De la Cruz laughs, delighted.

DE LA CRUZ
No dimple!

CUT TO:

A film clip is projected in the main hall.

ON SCREEN: Don Hidalgo turns raising two glasses. Miguel
acts along with the clip.

DON HIDALGO (FILM CLIP)
To our friendship!...

DON HIDALGO (FILM CLIP)
...I would move Heaven and
Earth for you, mi amigo.

MIGUEL
...I would move Heaven and
Earth for you, mi amigo.

Salud!

Salud!

In the clip Don Hidalgo and de la Cruz drink. De la Cruz spits.

MIGUEL
Poison!

DE LA CRUZ (FILM CLIP)
Poison!

88.

Miguel and de la Cruz gleefully act out the ensuing fist fight.

DE LA CRUZ
You know, I did all my own stunts.

CUT TO:

A small crowd sways, arms around shoulders, as Miguel and Ernesto lead them in a chorus of "Remember Me."

INT. DE LA CRUZ'S OFRENDA ROOM

De la Cruz gestures to the massive piles of gifts from his fans: bread, fruits, flowers, instruments, etc. All piled up to the ceiling.

DE LA CRUZ
All of this came from my amazing
fans in the Land of the Living!
They leave me more offerings than I
know what to do with!

Miguel takes in the room, it's almost too much to absorb. Something seems to be on the boy's mind.

DE LA CRUZ
Hey, what's wrong? Is it too much?
You look overwhelmed...

MIGUEL
No -- it's all great.

DE LA CRUZ
But...?

MIGUEL

It's just -- I've been looking up
to you my whole life. You're the
guy who actually did it! But...

(beat)

Did you ever regret it? Choosing
music over... everything else.

De la Cruz kneels down and looks into Miguel's eyes.

DE LA CRUZ

It was hard. Saying goodbye to my
hometown. Heading off on my own...

MIGUEL

Leaving your family?

89.

DE LA CRUZ

Sí. But I could not have done it
differently.

(beat)

One cannot deny who one is meant to
be. And you, my great-great
grandson, are meant to be a
musician!

Miguel smiles, chest swelling. He feels validated for the
first time in his life.

DE LA CRUZ (CONT'D)

You and I, we are artists, Miguel!
We cannot belong to one family.
The world is our family!

De la Cruz gestures to the sparkling city beyond his hilltop
estate. Fireworks go off on the veranda.

DE LA CRUZ (CONT'D)

Ooo, the fireworks have begun!

CUT TO:

EXT. VERANDA

The party guests move outside to watch the light show.

INT. DE LA CRUZ'S MANSION

The hall has emptied, the lights are turned down. Bursts of color from outside flash across the walls. The only light coming from inside the hall are de la Cruz's film clips that continue to play on the walls.

De la Cruz and Miguel descend the staircase into the empty hall.

DE LA CRUZ

Soon, the party will move across
town for my "Sunrise Spectacular!"

(beat)

Miguel, you must come to the show!
You will be my guest of honor!

Miguel's eyes light up.

MIGUEL

You mean it?!

90.

DE LA CRUZ

Of course, my boy!

Miguel's chest swells. Then deflates. He lifts his shirt, revealing the skeletal transition partway up his torso.

MIGUEL

I can't... I have to get home
before sunrise.

DE LA CRUZ

Oh, I really do need to get you
home.

De la Cruz plucks a marigold petal from a vase.

DE LA CRUZ (CONT'D)

It has been an honor. I am sorry
to see you go, Miguel. I hope you
die very soon.

(beat)

You know what I mean.

(beat)

Miguel. I give you my bles--

HÉCTOR (O.S.)

We had a deal, chamaco!

They are startled.

DE LA CRUZ

Who are you? What is the meaning
of this?

From the shadows, Héctor, dressed as Frida, steps into the
light.

DE LA CRUZ (CONT'D)

Oh, Frida! I thought you couldn't
make it.

Héctor takes off the wig and throws his outfit off.

HÉCTOR

You said you'd take back my photo.
You promised, Miguel.

Miguel turns, backing into de la Cruz's arms. De la Cruz
rises to his feet, hands defensively on Miguel's shoulders.

DE LA CRUZ

(to Miguel)

You know this, uh... man?

91.

MIGUEL

I just met him tonight. He told me
he knew you--

As Héctor steps forward with the photo, de la Cruz slowly
recognizes him.

DE LA CRUZ
Hé-- Héctor?

HÉCTOR
Please Miguel, put my photo up.

Héctor pushes the photo into Miguel's hands. De la Cruz
intercepts it.

He looks from the picture to the gray, faded skeleton who
kneels before him. Héctor looks weak.

DE LA CRUZ
My friend... you're being
forgotten...

HÉCTOR
And whose fault is that?

DE LA CRUZ
Héctor, please--

HÉCTOR
Those were MY songs you took. MY
songs that made YOU famous.

MIGUEL
W-What?

HÉCTOR
If I'm being forgotten, it's
because you never told anyone that
I wrote them--

MIGUEL
That's crazy, de la Cruz wrote all
his own songs.

HÉCTOR
(to de la Cruz)
You wanna tell him, or should I?

DE LA CRUZ
Héctor, I never meant to take
credit.
(beat)
(MORE)

DE LA CRUZ (CONT'D)

We made a great team but -- you died and I -- I only sang your songs because I wanted to keep a part of you alive.

HÉCTOR

Oh, how generous.

MIGUEL

You really did play together...

HÉCTOR

Look, I don't want to fight about it. I just want you to make it right. Miguel can put my photo up--

DE LA CRUZ

Héctor...

HÉCTOR

--And I can cross over the bridge. I can see my girl.

De la Cruz looks at the photo, deliberating.

HÉCTOR

Ernesto... Remember the night I left?

DE LA CRUZ

That was a long time ago.

HÉCTOR

We drank together and you told me you would move heaven and earth for your amigo. Well, I'm asking you to now.

MIGUEL

Heaven and earth? Like in the movie?

HÉCTOR

What?

MIGUEL

That's Don Hidalgo's toast... in

the de la Cruz movie, "El Camino A Casa."

HÉCTOR
I'm talking about my real life,
Miguel.

93.

MIGUEL
No, it's in there. Look.

Miguel looks around and points to the movie clip projected across the room.

FILM CLIP:

DON HIDALGO (FILM CLIP)
Never were truer words spoken.
This calls for A TOAST! To our
friendship! I would move Heaven
and Earth for you, mi amigo.

MIGUEL
But in the movie, Don Hidalgo
poisons the drink...

DON HIDALGO (FILM CLIP)
Salud!

In the clip Don Hidalgo and de la Cruz drink. De la Cruz
spits his drink.

DE LA CRUZ (FILM CLIP)
Poison!

Héctor's gears are turning too.

HÉCTOR
That night, Ernesto. The night I
left...

FLASHBACK:

INT. MEXICO CITY HOTEL ROOM

Héctor throws a songbook in a suitcase, shuts it. He grabs his guitar case like he means to leave.

HÉCTOR (V.O.)

We'd been performing on the road
for months. I got homesick -- and
I packed up my songs...

YOUNG DE LA CRUZ

You wanna give up now? When we're
this close to reaching our dream?

YOUNG HÉCTOR

This was your dream. You'll
manage.

94.

YOUNG DE LA CRUZ

I can't do this without your songs,
Héctor--

De la Cruz grabs young Héctor's suitcase, but Héctor pulls away.

YOUNG HÉCTOR

I'm going home, Ernesto.

(beat)

Hate me if you want, but my mind is
made up.

De la Cruz looks angry. For a moment his face darkens. But he composes himself.

YOUNG DE LA CRUZ

Oh, I could never hate you. If you
must go, then I'm... I'm sending
you off with a toast!

De la Cruz pours a couple of drinks. He gives one to Héctor.

YOUNG DE LA CRUZ (CONT'D)

To our friendship. I would move
Heaven and Earth for you, mi amigo.
Salud!

They both drink.

EXT. EMPTY STREET

HÉCTOR (V.O.)

You walked me to the train station.

They walk down an empty street at night, Héctor with suitcase and guitar case in tow. Héctor stumbles, de la Cruz steadies him, takes his guitar case.

HÉCTOR (V.O.)

But I felt a pain in my stomach. I
thought it must have been something
I ate...

YOUNG DE LA CRUZ

Perhaps it was that chorizo my
friend...

HÉCTOR (V.O.)

Or something I... drank.

95.

A few more steps and Héctor collapses in the street. FADE TO
BLACK.

HÉCTOR (V.O.)

I woke up dead.

BACK TO:

INT. DE LA CRUZ'S MANSION

HÉCTOR

You... POISONED me.

DE LA CRUZ

You're confusing movies with
reality, Héctor.

HÉCTOR
All this time I thought it was just
bad luck.

FLASHBACK:

EXT. EMPTY STREET

Héctor's suitcase is opened. A hand reaches in to take the
songbook.

HÉCTOR
I never thought that you might
have... that you...

BACK TO:

INT. DE LA CRUZ'S MANSION

Héctor clenches his jaw. Then he bounds at de la Cruz,
tackling him to the ground.

HÉCTOR
How could you?!

MIGUEL
Héctor!

DE LA CRUZ
Security! Security!

Miguel watches as Héctor and Ernesto scuffle on the floor.

96.

HÉCTOR
You took everything away from me!

Security guards rush in to pull Héctor off Ernesto. Héctor
struggles, but it's no use.

HÉCTOR
You rat!

DE LA CRUZ
Have him taken care of. He's not
well.

The guards drag Héctor through a wide doorway.

HÉCTOR
I just wanted to go back home! No,
no, NO!

The doors slam shut and cut off his shouts. Miguel is left
alone with de la Cruz.

DE LA CRUZ
I apologize. Where were we?

MIGUEL
You were going to give me your
blessing...

DE LA CRUZ
Yes. Uh... sí.

De la Cruz pulls up a marigold petal, but hesitates.

DE LA CRUZ
Miguel, my reputation, it is very
important to me. I would hate to
have you think...

MIGUEL
That you murdered Héctor... for his
songs?

DE LA CRUZ
You don't think that. Do you?

MIGUEL
I -- no! Everyone knows you're
the... the good guy.

Doubt enters Miguel's mind. De la Cruz darkens, he places
the photo of Héctor in his coat pocket, gears turning in his
mind.

MIGUEL
Papá Ernesto? My blessing?

De la Cruz crumples the marigold petal.

DE LA CRUZ
Security!

De la Cruz's guards appear in the doorway.

DE LA CRUZ (CONT'D)
Take care of Miguel. He'll be
extending his stay.

The guards grab Miguel by the shoulder.

MIGUEL
What?! But I'm your family!

DE LA CRUZ
And Héctor was my best friend.

Miguel goes pale.

DE LA CRUZ
Success doesn't come for free,
Miguel. You have to be willing to
do whatever it takes to... seize
your moment. I know you
understand.

Miguel is dragged away.

MIGUEL
No, NO!

EXT. DE LA CRUZ'S TOWER

The guards drag Miguel out the back of de la Cruz's mansion.

MIGUEL
Let go!

They throw him into a cenote, an inescapable sinkhole behind
the estate.

INT. CENOTE

MIGUEL
NO! AHHHHHH!

98.

He falls four stories and splashes into the pool at the bottom of the hole. He breaks the surface and swims to a stone island in the center.

MIGUEL
Help! Can anyone hear me? I wanna
go home!

Miguel collapses on the stone island.

His soaked hoodie sags off his shoulders. The skeletal transition is almost complete.

A moment of silence. He is alone.

Suddenly, Miguel hears a noise. Footsteps. Héctor emerges from the darkness, looking beat up. Héctor stumbles.

MIGUEL
Héctor?

HÉCTOR
Kid?

MIGUEL
Oh, Héctor!

They run to each other. Héctor embraces Miguel. But Miguel is overcome with shame.

MIGUEL
You were right. I should have gone
back to my family--

Héctor tries to calm him but Miguel is shaking.

HÉCTOR
Hey -- hey, hey...

MIGUEL

They told me not to be like de la Cruz, but I didn't listen--

HÉCTOR

Hey, it's okay...

MIGUEL

I told them I didn't care if they remembered me. I didn't care if I was on their stupid ofrenda.

Héctor holds Miguel to his chest. Miguel is tense.

99.

HÉCTOR

Hey, chamaco, it's okay. It's okay.

MIGUEL

I told them I didn't care.

Suddenly, a golden flicker flutters through Héctor's bones, and he falls to his knees.

HÉCTOR

Hhuuh!

MIGUEL

Héctor! Héctor--

HÉCTOR

She's... forgetting me.

Miguel looks at Héctor with concern.

MIGUEL

Who?

HÉCTOR

My daughter...

MIGUEL

She's the reason you wanted to
cross the bridge...

HÉCTOR

I just wanted to see her again...

(beat)

I never should have left Santa
Cecilia. I wish I could apologize.

I wish I could tell her that her
papá was trying to come home. That
he loved her so much.

(beat)

My Coco...

A chill runs through Miguel.

MIGUEL

Coco?

Miguel reaches into his hoodie and pulls out the photo of
Imelda, Coco, and the faceless musician.

Miguel shows the photo to Héctor. Héctor is confused; it's
like he's seen a ghost.

100.

HÉCTOR

Where... where did you get this?

MIGUEL

That's my Mamá Coco. That's my
Mamá Imelda. Is that... you?

Gears turn in both of their heads.

HÉCTOR

We're...

HÉCTOR

...family?

MIGUEL

...family?

Héctor is as shocked as Miguel. He looks at his great-great
grandson.

He looks to the photo, touches the image of baby Coco, and he becomes saddened.

HÉCTOR

I always hoped I'd see her again.
That she'd miss me... maybe put up
my photo. But it never happened.

(beat)

You know the worst part?

(beat)

Even if I never got to see Coco in
the living world... I thought at
least one day I'd see her here.
Give her the biggest hug...

(beat)

But she's the last person who
remembers me. The moment she's
gone from the living world...

MIGUEL

You disappear... from this one.
You'll never get to see her...

HÉCTOR

...Ever again.

Héctor is quiet for a moment.

HÉCTOR

You know, I wrote her a song once.
We used to sing it every night at
the same time, no matter how far
apart we were. What I wouldn't
give to sing it to her... one last
time.

101.

Héctor sings softly, plaintively.

DISSOLVE TO:

FLASHBACK:

INT. YOUNG COCO'S BEDROOM - DAY

HÉCTOR
(singing)
REMEMBER ME
THOUGH I HAVE TO SAY GOODBYE
REMEMBER ME
DON'T LET IT MAKE YOU CRY
FOR EVEN IF I'M FAR AWAY
I HOLD YOU IN MY HEART
I SING A SECRET SONG TO YOU
EACH NIGHT WE ARE APART
REMEMBER ME

YOUNG COCO
(giggling)
Papá!

HÉCTOR
(singing)
THOUGH I HAVE TO TRAVEL FAR
REMEMBER ME
EACH TIME YOU HEAR A SAD GUITAR

Father and daughter sing the song together.

HÉCTOR	YOUNG COCO
(singing)	(singing)
KNOW THAT I'M WITH YOU	KNOW THAT I'M WITH YOU
THE ONLY WAY THAT I CAN BE	THE ONLY WAY THAT I CAN BE
UNTIL YOU'RE IN MY ARMS AGAIN	UNTIL YOU'RE IN MY ARMS
AGAIN	
REMEMBER ME	REMEMBER ME

FADE TO:

INT. CENOTE

The echo of Héctor's song fades to silence.

MIGUEL
He stole your guitar... He stole
your songs...
(beat)
(MORE)

MIGUEL (CONT'D)

You should be the one the world
remembers, not de la Cruz!

HÉCTOR

I didn't write "Remember Me" for
the world... I wrote it for Coco.
I'm a pretty sorry excuse for a
great-great grandpa.

MIGUEL

Are you kidding? A minute ago I
thought I was related to a
murderer. You're a total upgrade!

Héctor doesn't smile. Miguel kneels close.

MIGUEL

My whole life, there's been
something that made me different...
and I never knew where it came
from.

(beat)

But now I know. It comes from you.

(beat)

I'm proud we're family!

Miguel looks up defiantly at the hole in the cenote.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)

I'm proud to be his family!
TRRRRRRAI-HAY-HAY-HAY-HAAAY!

Héctor perks up.

HÉCTOR

TRRRRRRRAAAAAI-HAAAI-HAAAAAY!
I'm proud to be HIS family!

They trade off their gritos until the cenote echoes with the
sound. Soon though, the echoes fade. They're still stuck.
Suddenly they hear a distant howling.

DANTE (O.S)

Rooo-rooo-roooooooooo!

Miguel and Héctor look up.

MIGUEL

Dante?

DANTE (O.S.)
(louder)
Roooooooo-roo-roo-rooo!

103.

Up at the top of the cenote, Dante pokes his head in the opening.

MIGUEL
Dante! It's Dante!

Dante pants and wags his tail happily. Behind him Pepita peeks down through the hole and gives a powerful roar. Pepita's call shakes the cavern. She lowers her head to reveal Mamá Imelda riding atop her. Miguel and Mamá Imelda laugh with joy. Until her gaze falls upon Héctor.

HÉCTOR
Imelda!

MAMÁ IMELDA
(icy)
Héctor.

HÉCTOR
You look good...

EXT. CENOTE - MOMENTS LATER

Pepita flies out of the cenote; Imelda, Héctor, Miguel, and Dante ride on her back. She ascends above the clouds.

EXT. NIGHT SKY

Miguel, wind in his hair, hugs Dante fiercely.

MIGUEL
Dante, you knew he was my Papá
Héctor the whole time! You ARE a
real spirit guide!
(doggy-praise)

Who's a good spirit guide? You
are!

Dante smiles at Miguel dumbly. Suddenly, before Miguel's
eyes, neon patterns spread outward from the dog's paws.
Dante begins to freak out.

MIGUEL
Whoa...

A pair of little wings sprout on the dog's back. He spreads
them. He jumps up to fly... and plummets beneath the clouds!

MIGUEL
Dante!

104.

But then he's back up, flapping goofily and barking his head
off, a full-blown spirit guide!

EXT. SMALL PLAZA

Pepita flies in, landing in a small plaza where the other
Riveras wait.

PAPÁ JULIO
Look, there they are!

The Dead Riveras come rushing up.

FAMILY
Miguel! / Miguelito! / Ay, gracias
a Dios! / It's Miguel! / He's all
right! / Oh thank goodness! /
Gracias, Dios mío!

They dismount from Pepita. Héctor falls off first but gets
up and raises his arm to help Imelda. She gives him a
withering stare and dismounts without his help. Miguel pets
Dante and Pepita gives Miguel a big lick.

Imelda rounds Pepita's shoulder and folds Miguel into a tight
hug.

MAMÁ IMELDA

Mijo, I was so worried! Thank
goodness we found you in time!

Imelda's eyes fall on Héctor, who holds his hat in his hands
sheepishly.

MAMÁ IMELDA

And you! How many times must I
turn you away?

HÉCTOR

Imelda--

MAMÁ IMELDA

I want nothing to do with you. Not
in life, not in death!

(beat)

I spent decades protecting my
family from your mistakes. He
spends five minutes with you and I
have to fish him out of a sinkhole!

Miguel steps between Imelda and Héctor.

105.

MIGUEL

I wasn't in there `cause of Héctor.
He was in there `cause of me.

(beat)

He was just trying to get me
home... I didn't wanna listen, but
he was right... nothing is more
important than family.

Mamá Imelda looks at Héctor, shocked to hear the sentiment.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)

I'm ready to accept your
blessing... and your conditions.
But first, I need to find de la
Cruz. To get Héctor's photo.

MAMÁ IMELDA

What?

MIGUEL

So he can see Coco again. Héctor
should be on our ofrenda. He's
part of our family--

MAMÁ IMELDA

He left this family!

MIGUEL

He tried to go home to you and
Coco... but de la Cruz murdered
him!

Startled, she looks to Héctor for confirmation.

HÉCTOR

It's true, Imelda.

Imelda wrestles with her emotions.

MAMÁ IMELDA

And so what if it's true? You
leave me alone with a child to
raise and I'm just supposed to
forgive you?

HÉCTOR

Imelda, I--

Héctor's body suddenly shimmers, leaving him winded. Imelda
gasps.

106.

MIGUEL

Héctor?

HÉCTOR

I'm running out of time. It's
Coco...

MAMÁ IMELDA

She's forgetting you...

MIGUEL

You don't have to forgive him...
But we shouldn't forget him.

MAMÁ IMELDA

(to Héctor)

I wanted to forget you. I wanted
Coco to forget you too, but--

HÉCTOR

This is my fault, not yours.

(beat)

I'm sorry, Imelda.

Mamá Imelda, holding in her emotions, turns to Miguel.

MAMÁ IMELDA

Miguel, if we help you get his
photo... you will return home? No
more music?

MIGUEL

Family comes first.

Mamá Imelda considers. She turns to Héctor.

MAMÁ IMELDA

I -- I can't forgive you. But I
will help you.

Miguel smiles.

MAMÁ IMELDA

(to Miguel)

So how do we get to de la Cruz?

Miguel furrows his brow.

MIGUEL

I might know a way...

Crowds are congregated at de la Cruz's Sunrise Spectacular which takes place in an open air amphitheater. They hurry to their seats as the lights begin to dim.

ON STAGE

Frida's performance piece begins. Dramatic symphonic music plays as a giant papaya appears to ignite on stage. The "seeds" in the body of the papaya unfurl to reveal that they are dancers, each dressed like Frida Kahlo, right down to the painted on unibrow.

The dancers roll out of the "flaming" papaya and gyrate their bodies nonsensically.

A giant cactus that resembles Frida is illuminated, and all the dancers slink to it.

In the midst of this, eight familiar looking dancers (the Dead Riveras and Miguel) inch their way out of the spotlights and to the wings of the stage.

STAGE WING

FRIDA
Good luck, muchacho.

MIGUEL
Gracias Frida!

INT. BACKSTAGE CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

The Dead Riveras congregate in a hidden backstage corridor, shedding their Frida outfits. Miguel rips off his unibrow.

MIGUEL
Ow!

Dante has snuck in under Tío Oscar's skirt. Héctor sees that Imelda is tangled up in her outfit.

HÉCTOR
Here, let me help you with--

MAMÁ IMELDA
Don't touch me.

The family joins together in a huddle.

108.

MIGUEL
Everyone clear on the plan?

TÍA VICTORIA
Find Héctor's photo.

PAPÁ JULIO
Give it to Miguel.

MAMÁ IMELDA
Send Miguel home.

HÉCTOR
Got your petals?

Each family member raises a marigold petal. Imelda leads the way out of the corridor.

MAMÁ IMELDA
Now, we just have to find de la Cruz--

Right around the corner is de la Cruz who turns with a smile.

DE LA CRUZ
Yes?

MAMÁ IMELDA
Ah!

The family stops in their tracks, still hidden from de la Cruz's view. It's just him and Imelda. His smile drops.

DE LA CRUZ
Don't I know you?

Imelda pulls off her shoe and slaps de la Cruz across the face with it.

MAMÁ IMELDA
That's for murdering the love of my

life!

DE LA CRUZ
(disoriented)
Who the?

Héctor leaps out from around the corner.

HÉCTOR
She's talking about me!
(to Imelda)
I'm the love of your life?

109.

MAMÁ IMELDA
I don't know! I'm still angry at
you.

DE LA CRUZ
Héctor?! How did you--

Imelda slaps de la Cruz again.

MAMÁ IMELDA
And that's for trying to murder my
grandson!

DE LA CRUZ
Grandson?

Now Miguel leaps out of the corridor.

MIGUEL
She's talking about me!

De la Cruz sees the three of them and puts the pieces
together.

DE LA CRUZ
You! Wait, you're related to
Héctor?

Miguel sees the photo in de la Cruz's pocket.

MIGUEL

The photo!

The rest of the Riveras emerge from the corridor.
Outnumbered, de la Cruz turns and runs.

MAMÁ IMELDA
After him!

INT. BELOW STAGE

De la Cruz knocks over a group of giant sugar skull dancers.
He emerges at a full sprint to where his rising platform is
set up.

DE LA CRUZ
Security! Ayúdenme!

The Riveras flood out after him. Héctor jogs next to Imelda.

HÉCTOR
You said "love of your life..."

110.

MAMÁ IMELDA
I don't know WHAT I said!

MIGUEL
That's what I heard...

A brawl ensues between the family and the guards.

De la Cruz runs to a stage door.

STAGEHAND
Places, señor, you're on in 30
seconds!

De la Cruz shoves the stagehand out of the way.

As security guards try to wrangle the Riveras, Imelda reaches
de la Cruz and gets her hands on Héctor's photo. De la Cruz
scuffles with her to get it back, when Miguel tackles de la
Cruz to the ground. De la Cruz loses his grip; Imelda
tumbles backward, photo in hand.

MAMÁ IMELDA
Miguel! I have it!

Miguel turns toward Imelda but is chased by guards.

Suddenly, Imelda rises into the air. She is on de la Cruz's rising platform! She is lifted through the ceiling and up to the stage.

De la Cruz hurries up the stairs after her.

Miguel is detained by a security guard when Dante flies in and knocks the guard's head clean off. Miguel, Héctor, Tía Victoria, and Tía Rosita hurry up the stairs after de la Cruz.

MIGUEL
Hurry, come on!

Papá Julio, Tío Oscar, and Tío Felipe block the guards from following the others.

ON STAGE

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Ladies and gentlemen... the one,
the only... ERNESTO DE LA CRUZ!

111.

The platform rises onto the stage and the spotlight falls on Imelda. Neon letters blast brightly behind her, spelling "ERNESTO!" The audience bursts into applause!

CROWD MEMBER
Nesto!

Imelda appears onscreen for all to see.

STAGE WING RIGHT

De la Cruz rushes up a staircase and arrives in the wings.

He gets the attention of his guards and points to Imelda.

DE LA CRUZ
Get her off the stage!

His guards hustle onto the stage, scaling the set to get to her.

STAGE WING LEFT

Miguel, Héctor, Victoria, and Rosita emerge to see Imelda spotlit above them.

ON STAGE

De la Cruz's guards begin to approach Imelda. She is frozen, unable to move.

MIGUEL (O.S.)
Sing!

Mamá Imelda looks down and sees Miguel in the wing.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)
SING!

Imelda, seeing that the guards are approaching, closes her eyes, grasps the mic, and follows Miguel's instructions.

MAMÁ IMELDA
(singing)
AY DE MÍ, LLORONA
LLORONA DE AZUL CELESTE...

112.

STAGE WING LEFT

Héctor's mouth gapes open. Tía Victoria and Tía Rosita go wide-eyed.

Miguel sets Héctor up with a guitar, then adjusts a mic stand in front of him. Héctor plays the guitar, its sound

amplified through the stage speakers.

ON STAGE

MAMÁ IMELDA
AY DE MÍ, LLORONA
LLORONA DE AZUL CELESTE...

The guards reach the edge of her spotlight but stop short, not wanting to interrupt the performance.

Imelda takes the spotlight with her as she descends the on stage staircase. As she comes down, she makes eye contact with her husband in the wing. He smiles as he accompanies her. Imelda's eyes glint, touched to see him supporting her.

MAMÁ IMELDA
Y AUNQUE LA VIDA ME CUESTE, LLORONA,
NO DEJARÉ DE QUERERTE.
NO DEJARÉ DE QUERERTE!

As Héctor accompanies Imelda, she becomes more confident. The audience begins to clap.

De la Cruz grunts in frustration.

Soon, the stage conductor joins with more instrumentation, which kicks into high gear.

MAMÁ IMELDA
ME SUBÍ AL PINO MÁS ALTO, LLORONA,
A VER SI TE DIVISABA.

She doubles down on her performance, taking the spotlight with her as she moves to put distance between her and the guards.

Imelda continues to vamp, trying to navigate away from the guards and toward her family. One guard blocks her way, but she grabs him and forces him to dance. Scared of the spotlight, he runs away.

MAMÁ IMELDA
COMO EL PINO ERA TIERNO, LLORONA
AL VERME LLORAR, LLORABA.
(MORE)

MAMÁ IMELDA (CONT'D)
AY DE MÍ, LLORONA, LLORONA,
LLORONA DE AZUL CELESTE...

She heads to leave the stage when she is stopped by a hand on her wrist. A voice joins her in harmony, the spotlight widens to reveal Ernesto de la Cruz singing too. The crowd goes wild.

DE LA CRUZ/MAMÁ IMELDA
AY DE MÍ, LLORONA, LLORONA
LLORONA DE AZUL CELESTE...

He dances Imelda around the stage, all the while trying to get to Héctor's photo.

DE LA CRUZ/MAMÁ IMELDA
Y AUNQUE LA VIDA ME CUESTE, LLORONA,
NO DEJARÉ DE QUERERTE.

DE LA CRUZ
Y AUNQUE LA VIDA ME CUESTE, LLORONA,
NO DEJARÉ DE QUERERTE.
NO DEJARÉ DE QUERERTE!

MAMÁ IMELDA
Let go of me!

DE LA CRUZ
NO DEJARÉ DE QUERERTE!
...AY, AY, AY!

At the finale of the song, Imelda stomps her heel into de la Cruz's foot on his high note, causing him to let her go. She runs off stage with the photo.

BACKSTAGE

Imelda arrives off stage and, somewhat high on adrenaline, she embraces Héctor.

MAMÁ IMELDA
I forgot what that felt like.

Héctor is taken by surprise. Imelda, realizing the impropriety, pulls away from him awkwardly.

HÉCTOR

You... still got it.

They smile at each other, softening. Miguel, off to the
side, clears his throat.

114.

MIGUEL

Ahem.

MAMÁ IMELDA

Oh!

Imelda, now reminded, gives Miguel the photo. She pulls out
her petal.

MAMÁ IMELDA

Miguel, I give you my blessing.

The petal glows.

MAMÁ IMELDA (CONT'D)

To go home... to put up our
photos...

(beat)

And to never...

Miguel looks slightly saddened, anticipating the condition.

MIGUEL

Never play music again...

Imelda smiles.

MAMÁ IMELDA

To never... forget how much your
family loves you.

The petal surges. Miguel brightens, touched.

HÉCTOR

You're going home.

DE LA CRUZ

You're not going anywhere!

Suddenly Miguel is yanked away from his great-great grandparents by de la Cruz. De la Cruz has grabbed Miguel by the scruff of his hoodie.

Imelda lunges at de la Cruz, but he pushes her to the floor.

HÉCTOR
Imelda--

De la Cruz drags Miguel away as his family encroaches.

DE LA CRUZ
Stay back! Stay back. All of you!

115.

De la Cruz drags Miguel further and further back on the stage.

DE LA CRUZ
Stay back! Not one more step.

Dante growls and tries to grab Miguel.

MIGUEL
Dante!

De la Cruz pulls Miguel away, closer to the ledge of the building.

Héctor struggles but continues pursuing de la Cruz.

HÉCTOR
(winded)
Ernesto, stop! Leave the boy
alone!

Héctor stumbles, shimmering like before. He falls to the ground.

DE LA CRUZ
I've worked too hard, Héctor...
Too hard to let him destroy
everything...

In the stage wings, Tía Rosita commandeers one of the cameras and points it toward de la Cruz. Tía Victoria sidles up to a control board and pushes a volume dial up.

HÉCTOR

He's a living child, Ernesto!

DE LA CRUZ

He's a threat!

CUT TO:

STADIUM

The image of de la Cruz holding Miguel hostage is projected on the stadium screens, the audience falls to a hush as they watch.

BACK TO:

116.

BACKSTAGE

Miguel struggles against de la Cruz.

DE LA CRUZ

You think I'd let him go back to
the land of the living with your
photo? To keep your memory alive?

(beat)

No.

MIGUEL

You're a coward!

DE LA CRUZ

I am Ernesto de la Cruz, the
greatest musician of all time!

MIGUEL

Héctor's the real musician, you're
just the guy who murdered him and

stole his songs!

CUT TO:

STADIUM

The crowd is gobsmacked by what they are hearing.

CROWD
Murder?

BACK TO:

BACKSTAGE

DE LA CRUZ
I am the one who is willing to do
what it takes to seize my moment...
(darkening)
Whatever it takes.

Suddenly, de la Cruz throws Miguel off of the structure.

MIGUEL
AHHH!

HÉCTOR
NO!

The family runs to the ledge, horrified.

117.

TÍO OSCAR/TÍO FELIPE
Miguel!

MAMÁ IMELDA
Miguel!

CUT TO:

STADIUM

The audience gasps. Some shrieks.

BACK TO:

BACKSTAGE

De la Cruz crosses from the ledge, past Héctor, who remains collapsed on the floor, breathless.

DE LA CRUZ
Apologies old friend, but the show
must go on...

CUT TO:

Miguel is in free fall, the photo still in his hand. As the wind whips against his face, he hears a faint howling.

Dante slices downward through the air, catches Miguel's shirt in his teeth, and opens his wings. He and Miguel jerk upward, but the photo falls from Miguel's hands and is gone from sight.

Miguel and Dante twist in the air, Dante trying to slow their decent but the two of them are too heavy. Miguel's shirt rips and Dante loses him.

Miguel plummets toward the base of the tower. Suddenly Pepita flies in and scoops up Miguel. Dante follows close behind. Miguel looks over the side of Pepita down towards the water.

The photo is lost.

BACK TO:

BACKSTAGE

De la Cruz steps up to the curtain, slicks back his hair, and emerges to his audience.

ON STAGE

De la Cruz is found by a spotlight.

DE LA CRUZ
Ha ha!

He is met with boos. He looks confused.

CROWD
Boo! Murderer!

DE LA CRUZ
Please, please, mi familia...

AUDIENCE MEMBER
Get off the stage!

More booing. De la Cruz tries to kick up the orchestra.

DE LA CRUZ
Orchestra! A-one-A-two-A-one--

The conductor snaps his baton. More booing.

DE LA CRUZ
(singing)
REMEMBER ME, THOUGH I HAVE TO--
(beat)
Hey!--

The crowd pelts de la Cruz with fruit and offerings.

CROWD MEMBER
Look!

Crowd members point up to the screen. Pepita rises above the ledge with Miguel on her back. Miguel slides off her wing and runs to his family.

CROWD MEMBER
He's alright!

The crowd cheers. There are sighs of relief.

De la Cruz, seeing this play out on screen, realizes his backstage treachery has been projected to the whole world. He watches horrified as the image of Pepita grows larger and larger on the screen as she prowls past the camera.

De la Cruz begins to back up just as Pepita emerges through

the curtain, eyes locked on him.

119.

DE LA CRUZ
Nice kitty...

Suddenly Pepita head-butts de la Cruz and lifts him into the sky, flinging the singer in the air like a kitten playing with a ball of yarn.

DE LA CRUZ
AAAHHHH! Put me down! No, please!
I beg of you, stop! Stop! NO!

She swings him around to gain momentum, then throws him over the audience.

DE LA CRUZ
NO! AAAHHH!

He flies out of the stadium, hitting a giant church bell in the distance. The stadium erupts in cheers.

In the midst of the cheering, an unsuspecting crowd member returns from concessions.

CROWD MEMBER
What did I miss?

BACK TO:

BACK STAGE

Miguel is surrounded by family, safe. He hugs Dante.

MIGUEL
Good boy, Dante.

Imelda runs to Miguel and embraces him.

MAMÁ IMELDA
Miguel!

Behind them, Héctor struggles to get to his feet but stumbles with a flicker. Miguel runs to support him.

MIGUEL

Héctor! The photo, I lost it...

HÉCTOR

It's okay, mijo. It's--

Suddenly Héctor suffers his most violent flickering yet. He collapses. Miguel kneels by him.

120.

MIGUEL

Héctor! Héctor?!

Héctor can barely move his limbs.

HÉCTOR

Coco...

MIGUEL

No! We can still find the photo...

Mamá Imelda looks to the horizon, the first rays of sunlight peeking over.

MAMÁ IMELDA

Miguel, it's almost sunrise!

MIGUEL

No, no, no, I can't leave you. I promised I'd put your photo up. I promised you'd see Coco!

Héctor looks at Miguel. The skeletal transformation is creeping in on the edges of Miguel's face. He's almost full skeleton now.

HÉCTOR

We're both out of time, mijo.

The shimmering of Héctor's bones advances.

MIGUEL
No, no... she can't forget you!

HÉCTOR
I just wanted her to know that I
loved her.

Héctor musters the strength to grab the marigold petal.

MIGUEL
Héctor--

HÉCTOR
You have our blessing, Miguel.

MAMÁ IMELDA
No conditions.

The petal glows.

Héctor struggles to lift the petal to Miguel. Mamá Imelda
takes his hand in hers.

121.

MIGUEL
No, Papá Héctor, please!

Imelda and Héctor move their joined hands toward Miguel's
chest.

MIGUEL
No...

Héctor's eyelids begin to close.

HÉCTOR
Go home...

MIGUEL
I promise I won't let Coco forget
you! Aaahh!--

WHOOOOSH! A whirlwind of marigold petals, and everything
goes white.

FADE IN:

INT. DE LA CRUZ'S MAUSOLEUM - SUNRISE

Miguel finds himself back in de la Cruz's tomb.

Dazed, he looks through the windows; day has broken.

On the floor is the skull guitar. Miguel grabs it. He exits the tomb and takes off out of the cemetery.

EXT. PLAZA

Miguel races through the plaza, past the statue of de la Cruz.

Miguel races through the streets towards home. He blows right past his Tío Berto snoring and Primo Abel sleeping on a bench.

TÍO BERTO
(jolting awake)
There he is!

Abel falls off the bench.

Papá comes from around a corner as Miguel is running.

PAPÁ
Miguel!? Stop!

122.

EXT. RIVERA COMPOUND

Miguel rounds the corner and follows the trail of marigolds through the front gate.

He runs for Mamá Coco's bedroom. Just as he makes it to the doorway, Abuelita steps up and blocks him.

ABUELITA
Where have you been?!

MIGUEL
Ah! I need to see Mamá Coco,
please--

Abuelita spies the guitar in Miguel's hand.

ABUELITA
What are you doing with that? Give
it to me!

Miguel pushes past Abuelita, and slams the door shut.

ABUELITA
Miguel! Stop! Miguel! Miguel!
Miguel! MIGUEL!

INT. MAMÁ COCO'S ROOM

Miguel locks the door and goes up to Mamá Coco. She stares
into space, eyes completely vacant.

MIGUEL
Mamá Coco? Can you hear me? It's
Miguel.

Miguel looks into her eyes.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)
I saw your papá. Remember? Papá?
Please -- if you forget him, he'll
be gone... forever!

She doesn't respond. Miguel's father bangs on the door.

PAPÁ (O.S.)
Miguel, open this door!

Miguel shows her the guitar.

123.

MIGUEL
Here -- this was his guitar, right?
He used to play it to you? See,

there he is.

Still nothing. Her eyes are glazed.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)
Papá, remember? Papá?

Mamá Coco stares forward, as if Miguel isn't even there.

PAPÁ (O.S.)
Miguel!

MIGUEL
Mamá Coco, please, don't forget
him.

With a rattle of keys, the door flies open. The family pours
in.

ABUELITA
What are you doing to that poor
woman?

Abuelita brushes Miguel aside to comfort her mother.

ABUELITA
It's okay, Mamita, it's okay.

PAPÁ
What's gotten into you?

Miguel looks down, defeated. Tears drip off his nose.
Papá's anger gives way to relief. He embraces his son.

PAPÁ
I thought I'd lost you, Migue...

MIGUEL
I'm sorry, Papá.

Mamá steps forward.

MAMÁ
We're all together now, that's what
matters.

MIGUEL
Not all of us...

Abuelita returns from consoling Mamá Coco.

124.

ABUELITA

It's okay, mamita.

(beat)

Miguel, you apologize to your Mamá
Coco!

Miguel looks at Mamá Coco and approaches her.

MIGUEL

Mamá Coco...

His toe accidentally taps against Héctor's skull guitar, a
soft hollow ringing resonates.

ABUELITA

Well? Apologize.

He comes to a realization.

MIGUEL

Mamá Coco? Your papá -- he wanted
you to have this.

He picks up the guitar. Abuelita steps forward to intervene
but Papá places a hand on her shoulder.

PAPÁ

Mamá, wait--

Miguel starts to sing "Remember Me" the way Héctor sang it...
softly, from the heart.

MIGUEL

(singing)

REMEMBER ME
THOUGH I HAVE TO SAY GOODBYE
REMEMBER ME
DON'T LET IT MAKE YOU CRY

MAMÁ

Look...

The glimmer in the Mamá Coco's eyes grows brighter with every

note. Memories flood in, filling the vacancy of her expression with life. Her cheeks soften and plump. Her lips arc into a smile.

MIGUEL
FOR EVEN IF I'M FAR AWAY,
I HOLD YOU IN MY HEART
I SING A SECRET SONG TO YOU
EACH NIGHT WE ARE APART
(MORE)

125.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)
REMEMBER ME
THOUGH I HAVE TO TRAVEL FAR

Miguel sings gently, with love.

Mamá Coco's brows slope up, delighted. The song seems to
bring her back to life.

Abuelita can't speak. None of them can.

Brimming, Mamá Coco joins Miguel in song -- her voice
scratchy with age, his clear with youth.

MAMA COCO	MIGUEL
REMEMBER ME	REMEMBER ME
EACH TIME YOU HEAR A SAD	EACH TIME YOU HEAR A SAD
GUITAR	GUITAR
KNOW THAT I'M WITH YOU	KNOW THAT I'M WITH YOU
THE ONLY WAY THAT I CAN BE	THE ONLY WAY THAT I CAN BE
UNTIL YOU'RE IN MY ARMS AGAIN	UNTIL YOU'RE IN MY ARMS
AGAIN	
REMEMBER ME.	REMEMBER ME.

Tears stream down Abuelita's face; she's witnessing a
miracle.

Mamá Coco looks to her daughter, and is troubled by her
tears.

MAMÁ COCO
Elena? What's wrong, mija?

ABUELITA
Nothing Mamá. Nothing at all.

Mamá Coco turns to Miguel.

MAMÁ COCO
My papá used to sing me that song.

MIGUEL
He loved you, Mamá Coco. Your papá
loved you so much.

A smile spreads across Mamá Coco's face. She's waited a long
time to hear those words.

She turns to her nightstand, hand shaking. She opens a
drawer and pulls out a notebook.

MAMÁ COCO
I kept... his letters... poems he
wrote me... and...

126.

Mamá Coco leafs through the book to reveal a torn scrap of
paper. She hands it to Miguel. It's the missing face from
the photo -- Héctor's face.

Miguel pieces the picture back together, finally seeing
Héctor as he was in life, a young, handsome man.

Mamá Coco smiles. She finds the words slowly, but she speaks
with fondness and love.

MAMÁ COCO
Papá was a musician. When I was a
little girl, he and Mamá would sing
such beautiful songs...

The family gathers close to listen.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - MORNING

TITLE CARD: ONE YEAR LATER

The cemetery is once again filled with families cleaning off head stones and laying flowers.

EXT. DE LA CRUZ'S MAUSOLEUM

Not as many offerings this year, not as many fans. No mariachi band. Someone has hung a sign "FORGET YOU" on the bust of de la Cruz.

TOUR GUIDE (O.S.)
And right over here, one of Santa Cecilia's greatest treasures...

EXT. RIVERA WORKSHOP

The tour guide stands in front of the Rivera shoe shop. Tourists crowd in, taking pictures of the skull guitar and framed letters Héctor wrote to Coco.

TOUR GUIDE (CONT'D)
The home of the esteemed songwriter Héctor Rivera! The letters Héctor wrote home for his daughter Coco contain the lyrics for all of your favorite songs, not just "Remember Me".

127.

EXT. COURTYARD

We travel through the courtyard catching glimpses of holiday preparation. Prima Rosa and primo Abel hang papel picado. Papá and Mamá work on tamales. Tío Berto sweeps the cobblestones as the little cousins play.

MIGUEL (O.S.)
And that man is your Papá Julio...

INT. OFRENDA ROOM

Miguel holds his baby sister SOCORRO (10 months) in his arms

and points out all of the family members.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)

...And there's Tía Rosita... and
your Tía Victoria... and those two
are Oscar and Felipe. These aren't
just old pictures -- they're our
family -- and they're counting on
us to remember them.

Abuelita approaches and smiles to see her grandson passing on
the tradition. Then she places a picture frame on the
ofrenda, a photo of Mamá Coco. She looks to Miguel who puts
his arm around her.

Next to Mamá Coco's picture sits the photo of Mamá Imelda and
Héctor, taped back together. Restored.

CROSS FADE TO:

EXT. MARIGOLD GRAND CENTRAL STATION

Héctor waits in the departures line nervously.

MIGUEL (O.S.)

(singing)

SAY THAT I'M CRAZY
OR CALL ME A FOOL

DEPARTURES AGENT

Next!

Héctor steps up to the monitor. The agent recognizes him.
Héctor chuckles nervously. The monitor scans him. DING!

DEPARTURES AGENT

Enjoy your visit, Héctor!

128.

MIGUEL (O.S.)

(singing)

BUT LAST NIGHT IT SEEMED
THAT I DREAMED ABOUT YOU

Héctor's chest swells.

EXT. FOOT OF THE BRIDGE

Héctor exits from the Marigold Grand Central Station. Mamá Imelda waits on the cobblestones to greet him. They kiss. Then he hears a familiar voice.

MAMÁ COCO

Papá!

Héctor turns to see his daughter approaching. He opens his arms to give Coco the biggest hug.

HÉCTOR

Coco!

MIGUEL (O.S.)

(singing)

WHEN I OPENED MY MOUTH
WHAT CAME OUT WAS A SONG
AND YOU KNEW EVERY WORD
AND WE ALL SANG ALONG

Every moment together is a miracle and he holds Coco like he knows it. Soon Coco, Héctor, and Imelda join hands. The petals of the bridge glow as they step forward. The family crosses together.

MIGUEL (O.S.)

(singing)

TO A MELODY PLAYED
ON THE STRINGS OF OUR SOULS
AND A RHYTHM THAT RATTLED US
DOWN TO THE BONE
OUR LOVE FOR EACH OTHER
WILL LIVE ON FOREVER
IN EVERY BEAT
OF MY PROUD CORAZÓN

Dante and Pepita fly through the night sky in the Land of the Dead. They alight on the marigold path and bound across into the Land of the Living.

EXT. STREETS OF SANTA CECILIA

Dante's shadow is cast against a wall. When he rounds the corner, he is just a normal xolo dog, no wings or vibrant colors. Pepita's shadow looms large, but as she rounds the corner it shrinks to reveal that she is a little alley cat in the Land of the Living.

EXT. RIVERA COURTYARD

They enter the Rivera compound. Abuelita greets Dante and tosses him a sweet treat. In the courtyard, the family is gathered as Miguel plays his guitar and sings. Dante hops up to give him a lick on the cheek.

MIGUEL
(singing)
OUR LOVE FOR EACH OTHER
WILL LIVE ON FOREVER
IN EVERY BEAT
OF MY PROUD CORAZÓN

Amongst the living Riveras are the spirits of their loved ones, Tía Rosita, Tía Victoria, Papá Julio, Tío Oscar and Tío Felipe, all present and enjoying the reunion.

MIGUEL
(singing)
AY MI FAMILIA!
OIGA MI GENTE!
CANTEN A CORO!
LET IT BE KNOWN...
OUR LOVE FOR EACH OTHER
WILL LIVE ON FOREVER
IN EVERY BEAT
OF MY PROUD CORAZÓN

Abel and Rosa accompany Miguel with instruments of their own. Papá cradles Miguel's new baby sister as Mamá leans on his shoulder. Abuelita listens proudly to her grandchildren while the spirit of Mamá Coco stands beside, arm around her shoulder.

MIGUEL
(singing)
AY MI FAMILIA!
OIGA ME GENTE!
CANTEN A CORO!

LET IT BE KNOWN...
OUR LOVE FOR EACH OTHER
WILL LIVE ON FOREVER
IN EVERY BEAT
OF MY PROUD CORAZÓN

130.

The courtyard is full of Riveras, living and dead. Héctor and Imelda stand arm in arm, listening to Miguel play. As Miguel sings, the whole family, living and dead, all sing, play and enjoy the music.

The whole family, brought together by a song.