

SAVING GLORY

by Farook Qais

Action/Drama/Family

The daughter of a failing Pro Wrestling tycoon worries that her dad will sell the family business. She recruits a martial artist in order to boost ratings.

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INT. DANIEL'S HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

TING, TING, TING goes the spoon stirring the coffee cup.

DANIEL HURST (late 60s, stone-faced), wearing a vest and boxer shorts, completes making his coffee.

Daniel stands in the kitchen archway with his coffee in his hand. Eyes on the TV -- pro wrestling is on.

Deep breath as he makes his way to the couch.

INT. DANIEL'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The space is large and exceptionally well furnished. A rich man's home. Photos on shelves indicate a family; Daniel, his wife and daughter.

Daniel turns up the volume as he sits.

ON THE TV

Two generic wrestlers compete.

INT. ARENA - WRESTLING RING - NIGHT

Audience capacity is 2/3 full and they're sat, seemingly engaged.

PAT, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)

What a move! Ladies and gentlemen
what a night this has been, full of
action and exuberance --

CRAIG, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)

Exuberance? My, you know big words.
Careful Pat, go lay down before you
hurt yourself.

Action continues.

MONTAGE

- wrestling clips of two other guys battling in and out of the ring.

- clips of four women completing moves in a tag team match.

END MONTAGE

INT. ARENA - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

NATALIE HURST (late 20s, a pixie in a world of giants, just about recognizable from the family photos) is sat on an equipment box by Ground Control -- a TECHNICIAN team of two, surrounded by monitors and equipment that runs the show.

Natalie applauds as the ladies from the tag match pass.

NATALIE
Way to go girls!

The Techs concentrate as an amber light above a monitor signals --

TECH 1
Commercial.

Natalie waits a beat, listening in on the Techs' conversation.

TECH 2
Match is scheduled for two spots,
but they might do three.

TECH 1
Depends how quickly the entrances
are done.

Natalie is literally overshadowed by a giant of a man. TITAN (wears an intimidating mask, has mane-like dreadlocks. No way of telling his age. Stands near 7 feet tall) places a document at Ground Control's station.

Tech 2 nods at Tech 1.

TECH 1 (CONT'D)
(To Titan)
All good with the format?

NB: Format = a script of how a televised show is supposed to go. The match/segment running order, winners/losers etc.

TITAN
Yeah, I'm good. Gimme a count.

TECH 1
We know the drill.

Tech 2 stands to fist-bump Titan.

TECH 2
Big night man, good luck.

TECH 1

Back from commercial. Lights down,
ten seconds.

Titan takes a deep breath. Looks at Natalie as he passes her.
He walks toward the stage curtain...

INT. DANIEL'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Daniel's eyes drift as a cat walks over his feet -- he jumps -
- spills a little coffee.

DANIEL

Damn it.

MEOOOWW the cat scurries off.

Daniel grabs tissue to wipe himself.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Damn cat.

ON THE TV

MUSIC hits as the crowd murmur for the main event.

Either side of the TV, Daniel's eyes catch family photos.
Him, his wife and daughter.

A beat. A sense of longing.

INT. ARENA - WRESTLING RING - NIGHT

Titan makes his entrance. He carries an intimidating aura.
His theme music is sombre. Every step he takes, precise.

Cellphones/torches from the fans help amplify the mood and
atmosphere. Like fireflies at a demonic ceremony.

INT. DANIEL'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Daniel sips what's left of his coffee. The cat is close by
staring at him. "Predator" on his collar.

DANIEL

Go away.

Predator understands the tone and leaves.

ON THE TV

Fans cheer and coo at Titan's presence.

INT. ARENA - WRESTLING RING - NIGHT

All eyes on Titan.

PAT, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
Titan. The one that makes you
question everything in life.

CRAIG, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
No doubt about it. I wouldn't wanna
meet this guy in a dark alley at
night. Are these people morons Pat?
How can they cheer something they
can't possibly understand?

A beat as Titan completes his entrance and the arena lights
return to normal.

MUSIC hits. Out comes CHALK (30s, flat-top haircut. A brute.
Skin as white as chalk and just as dusty). The crowd boo.

CRAIG, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.) (CONT'D)
Now here's a good guy --

PAT, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
Oh come on, good guy? Chalk's a
menace. We can't sit here and
condone his behavior.

CRAIG, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
What behavior? Chalk's our
Champion. He should garner respect
from everybody, including all the
peasants in this damn town.

Chalk marches to the ring, a bull ready to rage. He raises
the Championship in Titan's face. The REFEREE stands between
them and takes Chalk's belt.

TITAN
(To Chalk)
Tonight's the night.

CHALK
So I've heard.

The ref hands the belt off to ringside. He turns back to
start the match.

REFEREE

Alright guys, you ready? Twelve minutes tops. Make this a good one.

The ref signals for the bell -- DING DING DING.

Collar and elbow tie-up as the crowd cheer Titan's name.

MONTAGE

- the action goes back and forth.
- Chalk hits a GERMAN SUPLEX into a cover -- Titan kicks out.
- Titan gets back into the match.
- SIDEWALK SLAM from Titan, a cover -- Chalk grabs the bottom rope and the count is stopped.

END MONTAGE

INT. DANIEL'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Daniel brings a bowl of food from the kitchen and places it in the kitty corner. Predator comes along and eats.

Daniel stands, arms folded watching the TV.

INT. ARENA - WRESTLING RING - NIGHT

Chalk is at ringside. He goes to grab a steel chair.

PAT, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)

See now this is what I'm talking about -- he cheats! How can you call yourself a legit Champion?

CRAIG, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)

Oh can it, of course he's legit -- and frankly, if you're not cheating, you're not trying.

The referee goes to ringside to halt Chalk from bringing the chair into the ring.

REFEREE

No! No! That's not allowed!

CHALK

Screw you ref!

Chalk marches around the ref.

REFEREE

(Instructs)

Swing the chair, then take a dropkick.

CHALK

Get outta my way! Distraction?

REFEREE

No, you can't! -- Yeah, I'll clear the chair. Then he'll counter your low blow.

CHALK

Got it --

Chalk storms into the ring with the chair and swings to miss. Titan downs him with a dropkick. The ref comes in to pick up the chair and remove it from the action. While his back is turned Chalk attempts a low blow on Titan --

CHALK (CONT'D)

Here it comes.

Titan blocks the low blow, counters, grabs Chalk by the throat and lifts him to plant him with a devastating CHOKESLAM. He makes a cover.

TITAN

A minute to spare.

CHALK

Enjoy the celebrations.

The ref runs back in to count --

AUDIENCE

One! Two! Three!

The fans cheer in their most exciting moment of the night.

TITAN

Thanks.

Chalk rolls onto his side.

CHALK

Don't mention it.

PAT, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)

He did it! He did it! Titan's our new Glory Champion!

CRAIG, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)

Aw come on.

The crowd are on their feet as the referee hands Titan the Championship belt. He raises it.

PAT, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)

What Craig, what is it? No *Chalk's gonna win*? No *Chalk is the best*? No -- Titan is the best, he proved it here tonight. Glory Wrestling finally has a Champion we can be proud of!

CRAIG, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)

A four-month Title reign doesn't come down like a stack of cards, idiot. Titan's won tonight, but this ain't over. Look at Chalk, he's furious.

Chalk marches around ringside and throws a few chairs in anger before storming off backstage.

INT. DANIEL'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Daniel turns off the TV. He seems indifferent.

Predator eats. Daniel strokes him before leaving the room.

DANIEL

Night you little brat.

INT. ARENA - WRESTLING RING - NIGHT

Titan continues his celebrations.

INT. ARENA - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

A number of wrestlers are gathered, applauding as Chalk emerges from the curtain. Chalk nods to acknowledge them, but doesn't seem happy.

TECH 1

Nice job.

Chalk nods. Tech 2 sits with a lollipop in his mouth.

TECH 2

And we're off the air.

Wrestlers and other GW staff applaud. Natalie hops off the equipment box.

NATALIE
Great job Chalk, great job.

CHALK
Yeah thanks.

NATALIE
You good? Nothing broken?

CHALK
All good, just gotta clean up.

Titan emerges from behind the curtain and the wrestlers congratulate him. He approaches Natalie and Chalk. The huge GW Championship prominent over his shoulder.

NATALIE
Hey Champ.

A glance from Chalk, to Natalie then at the Title.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
Congratulations.

A half-hug from Natalie to Titan.

TITAN
(To Chalk)
Good match.

They shake hands.

CHALK
Great match. Thanks for selling my strength like you did.

TITAN
Nothing to sell. You're the biggest and baddest around.

Titan is called over by others looking to congratulate him.

CHALK
(Sotto)
Not anymore.

Natalie takes her leave.

NATALIE
(To Chalk)
See you in the morning?

She walks.

CHALK

Sure.

Chalk looks toward Titan, disappointed and dejected.

Natalie picks up her tablet from Ground Control. Bids farewell to the Techs.

NATALIE

Night guys.

INT. DANIEL'S HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Daniel's in bed. He looks at the clock. It's late. He looks at his phone almost dreading it. Opens an app called "TV Metrics" and goes to Glory Wrestling. The numbers on a graph barely line up to the average viewership mark.

Daniel goes to a news website and sees Glory Wrestling is making headlines -- not because they have a new Champion -- TV ratings are low.

Daniel rolls his eyes as he closes the app.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

HOUSE MUSIC plays loudly as tons of people bounce on the dancefloor. They dance, drink and flirt. HWANG (late 30s, Indonesian, average build) stands in a cheap suit, watching the punters. His eyes are skeptical and suspicious.

Hwang sees his security colleagues allow a few guests access up the stairs to the floor above. They are followed by an entourage of goons.

Through the noise --

CHALK (O.C.)

They don't even know your name.

Hwang turns to see Chalk at the bar. Chalk's almost 3x the average man's size.

CHALK (CONT'D)

Go ahead. Go up there --

Chalk pushes Hwang, clearly tipsy.

CHALK (CONT'D)

Go on.

HWANG

I need you to stop doing that.

Chalk holds his hands up, beer in one hand. He's accidentally nudged from behind and he spills some drink. He turns to yell at the punter --

CHALK

Hey!

He goes to reach for his collar -- Hwang grabs Chalk's arm.

HWANG

Don't. It was an accident.

Chalk looks at Hwang, shocked.

CHALK

Accident?!

Chalk shrugs him off.

CHALK (CONT'D)

Get the hell off me.

Chalk turns back to the bar.

Hwang's eyes meet the floor above. The balcony to the floor up is open, where the BOSS (50s, sleazy, *if The Penguin were real*) and his guests can see over the dancefloor. Hwang sees the guests make themselves comfortable. There are a few women present. The guests become handsy and pushy with them.

Hwang quickly makes his way past punters, through his colleagues and up the stairs.

Chalk meanwhile orders --

CHALK (CONT'D)

Another beer!

UPPER FLOOR

The MUSIC pumps as Hwang disrupts. His boss looks furious. Hwang holds out a hand to one of the women, she tries taking it, but the guests' goon swats his hand -- a fight ensues.

The goons and Hwang scuffle. For them it's a brawl, but for Hwang it's an exercise. He performs martial arts moves, is fast with his hands and his feet -- he has goons on their knees or knocked out before they can blink.

SMASH goes a table as Hwang front-flips a goon.

The boss waves up his own team from down the stairs. Chalk notices the commotion.

EXT. NIGHTCLUB - REAR EXIT - NIGHT

Hwang is thrown out of the rear door, into a parking lot. A flashy motorcycle close by. His hair is out of place and his clothes a little tattered.

Hwang's boss stands at a window above, opens it.

BOSS
You're fired you hear me?

Hwang's angry, (broken English) --

HWANG
They were disrespectful!

The boss sets to close the window.

Hwang finds a pipe and looks at the motorcycle. Boss quickly reopens the window.

BOSS
No, don't you do it. I'll f--
(Calls to his men)
Hey! Call the cops!

Meanwhile Hwang unleashes a few whacks with the pipe on the motorcycle. He kicks the bike to topple it and wreck it.

POLICE SIRENS emerge.

INT. HOTEL - NATALIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Natalie enters. Her phone's RINGING (an unmistakable classic wrestling theme song) as she shuts the door.

She answers.

VIDEO CALL/SPLIT SCREEN

Daniel's at home in bed.

NATALIE
Hi dad.

DANIEL
Nat. Have you eaten?

Natalie slips off her shoes.

NATALIE
Not yet. Just got in from the show.

DANIEL
Nutrition is important. Every
muscle responds to food like --

NATALIE
Dad please. I'm not a wrestler. I'm
not on one of their diets.

Natalie flicks on the TV, sits at the edge of her bed,
removes her tights. The headline "Not So Glorious" and her
dad's face are on the news.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
Why are you on TV?

DANIEL
Ah, you saw that?

NATALIE
Seeing that. This isn't sports news
either, it's --

DANIEL
Business.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
Business.

Natalie stares at the TV, trying to decipher the figures.

EXT. NIGHTCLUB - REAR EXIT - NIGHT

Chalk is surrounded by three COPS. He's in handcuffs, but the
officers keep their distance.

An officer opens the squad car door. Hwang is cuffed and sat
on the far side.

COP 1
(To Chalk)
Alright, get in.

The three cops guide Chalk into the back seat.

INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

Hwang shakes his head. Chalk realizes it's him.

CHALK
You?

Hwang shakes his head again.

CHALK (CONT'D)
 You got yourself into trouble huh?
 While on the job,
 (Laughs)
 How embarrassing.

Hwang looks at him.

HWANG
 And what of you? Drunk and
 disorderly?

CHALK
 Hey I came up there to help you.
 Think I don't have better things to
 do?

Two cops fill the front seats.

COP 2
 Knock it off you two.

COP 1
 Yeah, shut up.

CHALK
 Hey why don't you kiss my --

INT. HOTEL - NATALIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

VIDEO CALL/SPLIT SCREEN

Natalie continues talking to her dad.

NATALIE
 Ass! This report is bogus.

DANIEL
 It's not, Nat.

NATALIE
 Well they can't have the full
 figures, not from tonight's show.

DANIEL
 They don't, but I do. That's what I
 was calling about. Our ratings are
 low.

NATALIE
 But the crowd loved it.

DANIEL

At the time. No one expected a title change.

NATALIE

Maybe next week it'll pick up. After everyone learns what happened tonight, people will wanna see the aftermath.

DANIEL

Maybe. But we have to do better.

Natalie raises her brow.

NATALIE

Better writers might help.

DANIEL

Nat.

A beat.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Half the writers have been with us since before you were born. They're friends. I can't just turf them out.

Natalie shakes her head.

NATALIE

Wasn't it you who told me never to mix business with pleasure.

DANIEL

(Scoffs)

Pleasure? You think my pals are a pleasure?

Natalie shakes her head. Realizes her phone is flashing. She looks at it.

NATALIE

I have another call.

DANIEL

Alright. Get some sleep.

NATALIE

Will do. Night.

END VIDEO CALL/SPLIT SCREEN

Natalie answers the other call.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Hello?

A beat as a voice speaks on the other end of the line.
Natalie turns off the TV.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Arrested?

She looks toward her shoes. A sigh.

INT. POLICE STATION - HOLDING CELL - NIGHT

There's commotion -- a fight within a cell.

Natalie enters the area with a SENIOR OFFICER.

In a cell Natalie sees Chalk and a much smaller man. REVEAL:
Hwang. Other detainees are cheering them on. Two guards watch
from beyond the bars.

NATALIE

Chalk?

Chalk is in fight mode, but he's losing. The Indonesian kicks
at Chalk's knee to bring him down to his size. An elbow to
the jaw, a swift palm over the forehead.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Stop this!

An impressive display of martial arts from Hwang. The Senior
Officer berates his colleagues.

SENIOR OFFICER

Get in there. Break this up, now!

As the two guards step in, the fight has reached a natural
ending. Hwang wins as Chalk is laid flat on his stomach.
Blood drips from his mouth.

Hwang looks at Natalie. She returns the gaze. He doesn't *seem*
the violent type.

The guards gradually get Chalk to his feet. He's angry, but
the guards manage to walk him out. The Senior Officer locks
the cell. Other detainees become rowdy and plead for their
freedom.

SENIOR OFFICER (CONT'D)
 Alright calm down, ingrates.
 (To Hwang)
 And you just earned yourself
 another night.

A look of defiance from Hwang.

Natalie follows the Senior Officer but continues looking in
 Hwang's direction.

NATALIE
 Who is that guy?

EXT. POLICE STATION - STREET - NIGHT

Two guards walk away as Chalk is left with Natalie.

NATALIE
 (To the guards)
 Thank you.

She turns to Chalk. He can't look at her as he dabs tissue on
 his mouth.

A beat.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
 Well? A bar fight?

Chalk exhales --

CHALK
 It was. I was winning and --

NATALIE
 I don't care who won! How the hell
 did you get arrested?

CHALK
 I was, so...
 (He searches for the right
 words)
 Was having a beer. I saw a guy need
 help and I must'a joined in for
 some reason.

NATALIE
 For some reason? Some reason?

Chalk nods. Natalie shakes her head.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
Unbelievable.

Natalie's angry, but she doesn't have time for this. She hails a cab.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
Get to the hotel. Sober up.

CHALK
I'm --

NATALIE
What, you lost your belt and went off on a civilian?

Chalk looks directly at her, *she nailed it on the head.*

NATALIE (CONT'D)
You should know better.

Chalk's apologetic look is followed by --

CHALK
I'm sorry.

A cab stops. Natalie opens the door.

NATALIE
I don't care. You work for us, you represent the company at all times -
- you know how lucky you are that you weren't recognized in there?

Chalk gets in the cab.

A beat. An unimpressed look from Natalie.

Chalk nods, ashamed. Natalie slams the door shut.

Natalie marches back into the police station.

INT. POLICE STATION - RECEPTION - NIGHT

Natalie sits waiting. Her eyes drift as she sees the clock pass 1AM. Hwang is brought out by the guards. They uncuff him. He looks toward Natalie. She stands.

Hwang begins to walk.

NATALIE
You're not gonna say thanks?

She walks toward him.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
Or at least hello?

Natalie puts out her hand. Hwang looks at it.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
I'm Natalie.

INT. 24-HOUR DINER - NIGHT

Natalie and Hwang are sat in a booth. Her plate is full as she casually eats.

NATALIE
Sorry. This isn't professional of me. I was hungrier than I thought.

She sips her water. She looks at Hwang's tea.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
Sure you don't want anything else?

HWANG
I'm fine.

NATALIE
Cops said you didn't have anyone to bail you out. No friends?

Hwang looks at his tea.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
What did you even do?

Hwang is uneasy. He barks --

HWANG
Got fired.

Natalie looks at him. His broken English is apparent in his accent. He moves to leave.

NATALIE
Hey -- alright, no questions.

Hwang stays seated.

HWANG
I don't like wasting time.

A look from Natalie. She raises her brow toward his tea.
Hwang lifts the cup and sips.

HWANG (CONT'D)

Thanks.

A look from Natalie.

NATALIE

So you do know gratitude?

Hwang looks at her beyond his cup.

HWANG

What is it you want?

Natalie wipes her mouth.

NATALIE

I got you out 'cause I saw how you
took down my guy back there.

HWANG

He was swearing to the guards.
Riled up all the others.

NATALIE

So you started a fight?

HWANG

He did. I asked that he shut up.

Natalie drinks her soda.

NATALIE

Well I liked how you handled
yourself. Unafraid.

A beat as Hwang drinks more tea.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

I want you to consider working for
us. Your fighting skills can be
something that we haven't touched
on before. All goes well, TV
ratings will rise and we'll make a
lot of money.

HWANG

TV? What is it? Boxing? MMA?

NATALIE

No. It's much wilder than those.

INT. FUMIO'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Hwang enters and turns on a light. The apartment is a little messy, though not a reflection of *his* style.

The radio is on, low volume. He sees the clock pass 3AM.

He walks to

INT. FUMIO'S APARTMENT - FUMIO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hwang's mother FUMIO (70s, looks much older) is asleep. A medication pack is open on her bedside table. Hwang takes a look at the pack. Pills are designated Morning, Afternoon and Night. Not all of them have been taken.

He steps out of the room, leaving the door wide open.

INT. FUMIO'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Hwang makes himself tea and opens a laptop. He pulls a note out of his pocket. REVEAL: Glory Wrestling website log-in.

INT. FUMIO'S APARTMENT - HWANG'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Door's wide open. Hwang's in bed watching wrestling matches on his laptop.

He clicks on "Roster" and takes a look. Notices Chalk. He clicks on "Staff" and sees Daniel Hurst at the top of the list: Chairman. He notices Natalie to be Daniel's daughter. Her official title: GW Talent Manager.

Hwang switches back to watching matches. A woman with purple hair in action, fierce and impressively cheered on by the fans.

INT. AIRPORT - DEPARTURE GATE - DAY

A busy Departures area full of GW wrestlers and staff. Natalie wanders through the crowd, dragging along her carry-on as well as a backpack. She nods at the Tech guys.

NATALIE
Anyone seen Chalk?

Answers are muffled. Her phone RINGS. Unknown number.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
Hello? Natalie Hurst. Please tell
me this isn't the cops?

HWANG (O.S.)
It's Hwang.

NATALIE
Hwang, hi. You didn't sleep?

HWANG (O.S.)
Not yet. Been watching your shows.
This is different to the fighting I
know.

Natalie walks, searches and talks.

NATALIE
I know. And you understand that you
don't actually hurt anyone right?

HWANG (O.S.)
Yes, but why?

NATALIE
Why? -- Hey, has anyone seen Chalk?

Most people shake their heads, but one points her toward the
back of the group. Chalk enters the Departures area. Natalie
slows down, breathes a little easier.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
Why is for entertainment purposes.
It's like anything you see on
screen, except it's live and in
front of an audience.

HWANG (O.S.)
Theatre.

NATALIE
Exactly.

HWANG (O.S.)
And you want me to --

NATALIE
Look you don't have to do anything
with it. But if you want to know
more and to learn -- hold on --

Natalie approaches Chalk and looks at him. He smiles.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

You good?

Chalk nods. He walks past her and goes to talk to others.

Natalie brings up the calendar on her phone. She looks.

CHYRON/GRAPHIC: "Turmoil" is every Wednesday. House shows almost every other day --

NB: House show = untelevised wrestling, usually in front of a smaller audience.

HWANG (O.S.)

Hello?

NATALIE

Sorry. You wanna learn more; come to our compound. It's a training facility. I'll get you to learn how to wrestle. Tuesday. Address is on the website.

HWANG (O.S.)

It's not local. I can't get there.

Natalie thinks.

NATALIE

Do you drive?

HWANG (O.S.)

Yeah.

NATALIE

Go to my hotel. Ask for keys left by me. Tell'm you're my chauffeur. The car's a rental, so don't kick it's ass.

Natalie finds a spot to sit. Pulls her tablet out her backpack.

INT. FUMIO'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Hwang's had Natalie on loudspeaker as he makes eggs.

Fumio emerges by the kitchen counter, listening in.

HWANG

I'll be driving between states?

NATALIE (O.S.)
It's part of the job. You might as
well get used to it.

Fumio goes to the sink. SHHHHHH -- purposely gets the tap
going. Hwang notices.

HWANG
Alright. See you Tuesday.

Hwang hangs up. A beat.

He continues cooking the eggs.

FUMIO
Leaving?

Hwang turns to look at her. Her eyebrows raise.

(Subtitled = in Indonesian) Fumio's English is limited.

HWANG
(Subtitled)
It's --

FUMIO
(Subtitled)
You're leaving the state? You'll be
hours away.

HWANG
(Subtitled)
Maa, don't be ratty. Come, sit.
I've made breakfast.

Fumio's stern scolding expression remains as she takes her
plate, her glass of water and marches to the

INT. FUMIO'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Fumio sits on the couch. Puts her plate on the coffee table.

Hwang puts his plate on the coffee table, but steps out of
the room.

Hwang returns with Fumio's medication pack. She almost gives
the pack a snarl.

Hwang sits on the floor, begins to eat.

HWANG
 (Subtitled)
 It's important you take those on
 time. After every meal --

FUMIO
 (Subtitled)
 I know the rules.

All goes quiet as they eat for a beat. Fumio turns on the TV.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Natalie is on her tablet making notes. Her page is headlined "potential names." She jots a few ideas down. Another tab is labelled "stories."

A girl with a bandana and sunglasses sits beside her. *Purple hair* shines around her neck. This is CLARA (early 30s, caramel skin, slight dabs of make-up). She removes her sunglasses and leans over.

CLARA
 Xeng Xzi?

A look from Natalie.

CLARA (CONT'D)
 Ich Ni Zeng Shi? What's a
 Hwangortang?

Natalie smiles.

NATALIE
 Clara.

Clara smiles, sits back.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
 Did well on Turmoil last night.
 Your last one?

A look from Clara.

CLARA
 Ain't that up to your dad? Or HR?

A beat.

NATALIE
 The write-off was good. Really puts
 the Champ over as a heel.

CLARA

Yeah, good for her, but the fans will want me back soon. Hope the writers know that.

NATALIE

I'm sure they do. Contract negotiations can take time.

Clara nods. Natalie goes back to her tablet.

CLARA

Who's the character?

NATALIE

Potential new recruit.

CLARA

Anyone I know?

NATALIE

No. He's totally raw. But I think he could lead to significantly improving the show.

Clara nods.

Natalie ponders.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

You know, while you're off screen you wanna be helpful?

CLARA

How?

A beat.

NATALIE

Train him.

An ambiguous smile from Clara.

CLARA

Train a guy? Me?

Natalie nods, almost convincing herself it's a good idea.

CLARA (CONT'D)

We have actual trainers for that.

NATALIE

Yeah but they'll be tough on him. I need him to enjoy the process.

Clara looks at Natalie; *are you serious?*

NATALIE (CONT'D)

To the point where he knows the basics. Later he'll mix it with the guys. Just ease him in. What do you think?

Clara is indifferent.

CLARA

Guess I got nothin else to do.

Big smile from Natalie, proud of herself.

NATALIE

Great.

Natalie's smile remains. Clara puts her sunglasses back on as the seatbelt lights turn on.

INT. GLORY WRESTLING HQ - DANIEL'S OFFICE - DAY

Daniel stands as MALIK (late 30s, British South Asian, suited and well presented) enters. Malik is swift in heading over to shake Daniel's hand.

MALIK

Morning. Saw the e-mail?

DANIEL

I saw. They're going to offer her more money.

They sit.

MALIK

You can match their offer, but you'd need to cut expenses elsewhere.

DANIEL

HR's looking into it?

Malik nods.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Good. I presume --

MALIK

She doesn't know. But there's something else.

A beat as Daniel waits.

MALIK (CONT'D)
You know your ratings are low?

Daniel nods. Eye contact made.

MALIK (CONT'D)
Well, WAW's ratings are doing
really well. And this may be the
best time for you to...

A look between them lingers. Daniel knows where this is
going. Malik is reluctant to say it.

Daniel moves to the edge of his seat. Reaches for a photo of
himself, his wife and Natalie when she was much younger.

MALIK (CONT'D)
If it's not something you want to
discuss right now --

DANIEL
It's fine. I asked you to keep on
top of it.

Daniel looks up from the photo.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
This is the right time?

Malik nods.

MALIK
Only because now is when you'll get
the best price. If the ratings drop
any lower, offers won't be rolling
in at all. You still want to ensure
people keep their jobs?

DANIEL
(Nods)
Yes. That's my only condition.

A beat.

MALIK
WAW will be first in line. With
their ratings, they have money to
burn. Are you ready for that?

Daniel sits back, sighs. Dejected. He looks at his family
photo again.

DANIEL

Find out what they'll offer. I'll
take it into consideration.

His eyes don't leave the photo.

INT. GW COMPOUND - ENTRANCE HALL - DAY

Hwang enters the hall carrying a gym bag. The hall is huge, with a high ceiling. The walls are plastered with posters and art depicting Glory's wrestlers. Hwang looks at them, noticing dates painted indicating decades prior.

NB: opportunity here for artwork depicting real-world wrestling heroes; Sting, The Rock, John Cena et al. *If we can get the rights.*

There's a guard at the far end of the hall. Natalie half enters from a door, sees Hwang.

NATALIE

(To the guard)

He's with me.

A beat as Hwang absorbs his immediate surroundings.

Natalie calls over

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Hey. Want a tour?

Hwang walks in Natalie's direction and she lets him through the door. A nod between Hwang and the guard.

INT. GW COMPOUND - GYM - DAY

Natalie takes Hwang around the premises. The gym is half the size of a football field. Many wrestlers/GW employees occupy it early in the morning.

INT. GW COMPOUND - LOCKER ROOMS - DAY

Hwang enters. Natalie follows him in.

NATALIE

Nobody gets their own locker, but people have their favorites. If you're gonna be out of town for at least three days, you gotta leave the locker you had open.

HWANG
So choose another next time?

NATALIE
Right. The padlock's the most
important thing.

Hwang looks around and notices men and women roaming.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
The showers are separate. Girls on
the right, guys on the left. Change
within the cubicle.

Hwang notices some comedic posters:

"No genitals on Show!"

"Tidy as you go!"

"Do NOT have sex in here!"

INT. GW COMPOUND - HALL - DAY

Hwang and Natalie exit the gym and he looks through the glass
down toward an open space a level below. He sees numerous
wrestling rings, some occupied by wrestlers.

INT. GW COMPOUND - RING HANGAR - DAY

Clara is in a ring by herself, stretching.

Hwang and Natalie enter the hangar. Clara sees them and goes
to the ropes.

Hwang is in awe of the space.

NATALIE
Let me introduce you to Clara.
She'll be training you initially.

Hwang looks up at Clara from ringside. *Purple hair*. Her
hair's tied back and she's in regular gym attire.

Natalie and Clara speak, but Hwang's seemingly entranced.
Clara says

CLARA
(To Hwang)
Wanna get in the ring?

Natalie nudges him with her elbow --

HWANG

Hmm?

Clara looks at Natalie, then at Hwang.

CLARA

I said get in the ring.

Clara steps back to allow Hwang some space. He climbs the ring apron and steps under the middle rope.

CLARA (CONT'D)

Woah, no no -- get out, get out.

Natalie hides a laugh.

HWANG

What? What did I do?

CLARA

The way you entered. You gotta enter like a man.

HWANG

A man? Even here?

CLARA

Especially here. Every bit of swagger about you has to ooze your character and your confidence.

Hwang looks at Natalie for answers. She takes her leave.

NATALIE

You'll be fine.

Hwang looks up toward Clara. She waves him back in.

CLARA

You did some homework right?

Hwang looks toward Natalie/the exit. Looks back at Clara.

HWANG

Yeah.

CLARA

So; step into the ring like it's your arena. Own it.

Hwang looks toward other rings and wrestlers performing various moves.

CLARA (CONT'D)

Come on.

Hwang climbs into the ring, steadfast and upright, over the middle rope this time.

HWANG

Better?

Clara gives an indifferent expression as she circles Hwang.

CLARA

Better, not perfect, but better.

INT. GW COMPOUND - RING HANGAR FOYER - DAY

Natalie exits the hangar and sees Chalk coming. She puts a hand on his chest to stop him.

NATALIE

Chalk.

CHALK

Yeah.

NATALIE

Going in there?

CHALK

Yeah?

NATALIE

Why don't you come with me. Lets talk a little.

CHALK

Look I said I'm sorry for what happened, I --

NATALIE

It's not about that. Walk with me.

Chalk trails Natalie away from the hangar.

INT. GW COMPOUND - RING HANGAR - DAY

Clara leads basic stretches.

CLARA

Before I get you into the wrestling aspect of things, you need to know how to sell and how to commit.

Hwang nods, concentrates.

CLARA (CONT'D)
Committing is a commitment to hit,
or a move to show the audience that
you are actively trying to hurt
your opponent.

Clara stands upright and faces up to Hwang.

CLARA (CONT'D)
And the biggest part of wrestling
that makes it all work is
communication.

HWANG
Alright.

CLARA
So --

She puts her fists up into fighting stance.

CLARA (CONT'D)
This is how I go. You'll find your
own stance, but here's the
communication; I tell you right
hand and you take the hit from my
right hand.

Clara swings to hit him in slow motion, but Hwang ducks --

CLARA (CONT'D)
No.

She smiles.

CLARA (CONT'D)
You gotta take it, absorb it.
Depending on the velocity of the
punch, you take the hit
accordingly.

Hwang's confused.

HWANG
Are we learning commitment or
selling?

CLARA
Both.

Clara guides Hwang's arms up. She backs off and instructs.

CLARA (CONT'D)

Hit the air, but communicate. Tell me what you're gonna do before you do it.

HWANG

Now I learn communication?

CLARA

Yeah, see how it all ties in? It'll make sense, just --

HWANG

Kick --

Hwang kicks.

HWANG (CONT'D)

Punch -- sweep --

Hwang punches the air and instantly turns his back to sweep his leg. Clara waves her arms --

CLARA

Alright stop stop. Too fast.

A look from Hwang.

HWANG

Fast?

CLARA

Yeah. I like it, but you gotta give your opponent a chance to sell, otherwise you'll hit them and they won't move, making you look weak.

HWANG

I can hit them?

Clara smiles.

CLARA

Not with a closed fist. This is wrestling.

INT. GW COMPOUND - OFFICE - DAY

Natalie and Chalk are in the office with other GW staff. It's almost as busy as a newsroom. TV screens make a wall, some covering CCTV of the compound, others showing GW shows. Some cover fan response and GW social media.

One social media column shows positive fan reaction from the previous week's Turmoil. Another column shows a negative slant in GW TV ratings.

Natalie is sat as she hands a design piece to a costume maker; of a mask and singlet.

NATALIE

(To the costume maker)

That's good, thanks.

Chalk's pacing. He and Natalie watch Hwang's progress on the screens. Other wrestlers compete and practice in the other rings. Chalk shakes his head.

CHALK

That guy? What the hell's he even doing here?

NATALIE

He might be one of us. That's why I asked you up here instead of being down there.

An expression of anger and confusion from Chalk.

CHALK

That guy? Why? Are you trying to embarrass me?

Others in the office go quiet as Chalk's voice is raised. Natalie shakes her head.

NATALIE

Chalk, no.

She pulls out a chair.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Sit down.

Chalk sits.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

There's nothing about this that's personal, you know that.

CHALK

It will be. I owe that guy a busted nose at least.

NATALIE

No, you don't. His name is Hwang.

CHALK
Like I care.

NATALIE
Listen. You remember who bailed you
out? You remember why you still
have a job?

Chalk is angry as he watches Hwang on the screens.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
Chalk?

CHALK
What?

A beat.

NATALIE
Look at me.

He looks.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
I need you to prove yourself. I
need you to be a model pro.

CHALK
For that guy?

NATALIE
No, for me. For the locker room.
You think it's easy being nanny to
a grown man? To fifty of you?

A look from Chalk, defiant, but accepting. Natalie smiles,
somewhat easing the tension.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
Do as I ask alright? No trouble, no
bar fights, no prison fights. Be a
model pro. Treat Hwang like a
colleague.

A beat.

CHALK
And what, I'll have to wrestle him?

NATALIE
He may not even make it. He's
totally green. He has to learn to
not hurt people, that won't be easy
for him.

Chalk calms, but remains annoyed.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
 You'll get him in the ring. But you
 can't hurt him. That'll be your
 test. You'll win the match.

Chalk calms more.

CHALK
 Really?

Natalie nods.

CHALK (CONT'D)
 What about your dad?

NATALIE
 Like I said, he's green. The match
 will likely be on a House show. But
 it's your chance to prove yourself.
 We got a deal?

A beat as Natalie waits on a response.

CHALK
 Fine.

Natalie watches the screens. Chalk stands.

CHALK (CONT'D)
 You sure I can't hurt him a little?

Natalie smirks, smiles, shakes her head and mouths "no."

Chalk leaves.

CHALK (CONT'D)
 I'm gonna hit the gym.

INT. GW COMPOUND - RING HANGAR - DAY

Hwang is centre of the ring. Clara runs against the ropes.
 She's a natural.

Hwang runs against the ropes and he's awkward. He flings off
 them without any control. Clara approaches him and he leans
 his back against the top rope.

CLARA
 All GW ropes are the same. Wired
 exactly the same way so you gotta
 get used to them here.

Hwang nods.

CLARA (CONT'D)
Use your body to control your
momentum. The rope is a slingshot,
but a guided one.

Clara goes against the ropes and steps toward the centre --

CLARA (CONT'D)
Two paces.

She goes against the ropes and steps again --

CLARA (CONT'D)
Three paces. Get that? You gotta be
in control.

Hwang bounces off the rope and goes further than three paces,
uncontrolled. He tries again.

Clara perches herself up on the top turnbuckle to watch.

Other wrestlers compete far more emphatically in other rings.

INT. GW COMPOUND - OFFICE - DAY

Natalie watches Hwang in training. She has her tablet open,
the "stories" page. Her phone RINGS. She taps the screen.

VIDEO CALL/SPLIT SCREEN

Daniel is in his office at Glory Wrestling HQ.

NATALIE
Hi dad.

DANIEL
Nat, where are you?

NATALIE
Compound dad. What's up?

DANIEL
What's up is nothing. Nothing
including our damn ratings.

Natalie continues to work on her tablet.

NATALIE
What can we do dad? Have you and
the writers got anything new?

DANIEL

Their best idea is to go the legends route. I reminded them that it's costly, not to mention risky to the legends' health.

Natalie shakes her head.

Daniel taps his phone screen --

DANIEL (CONT'D)

You there? Is this thing glitching?

NATALIE

It's not glitching.

Natalie looks at the screens surrounding her; a deeper look at Hwang in training.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

I never agree with bringing legends back. If we don't elevate our stars today the fans will never forget the legends.

DANIEL

Forget them? Damn it Natalie I'll have you know --

NATALIE

I know Dad, they paved the way. But if we keep bringing them back, the stars of today will never have a chance to reach legendary status themselves.

A beat.

Natalie absorbs the other screens; lots of wrestlers in training. She watches Clara, then Hwang.

DANIEL

The lawyer's look --

NATALIE (CONT'D)

What if I have an idea?

DANIEL (CONT'D)

An idea? You have something workable? Don't say new writers.

NATALIE

What were you?... Yeah, an idea. It could boost ratings.

Natalie watches Hwang. He's fast on his feet.

ON THE SCREEN

Hwang gets the knack of using the ropes. He's in a martial arts stance and shows Clara some moves. Clara shows him how she would sell his attacks.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
I may have an ace up my sleeve.

INT. GW COMPOUND - RING HANGAR - DAY

Hwang performs a Karate chop --

NATALIE (POSTLAP V.O.)
Or maybe; an Axe.

Hwang and Clara are high-fives and all-smiles. They clearly get along.

INT. ARENA - WRESTLING RING - NIGHT

Pyro goes off on the stage as the opening video to "Glory Wrestling's Wednesday Night Turmoil" plays. The video showcases top wrestlers and moves of the industry.

After the video the fans are in focus, holding up signs in support of their favorite wrestlers.

PAT, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
Another night, another Wednesday
and we are live from New Orleans!

CRAIG, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
That's Nawlins to those of us hip
enough to know. Welcome to Turmoil
everyone, we have a fantastic show
lined up for you.

MONTAGE

- action in the ring between a couple of high flying luchadors. Both extremely athletic -- as if Cirque Du Soleil is performing.
- crowd reactions to high octane moves.
- an interviewer backstage talks to Chalk, who's angry on the mic. He's not over losing his Title.
- action in the ring; two women put on an exciting match.
- action from a meat contest; two huge wrestlers go at it.

- Titan wins his match and raises his Championship. Chalk appears on the big screen and warns Titan that he won't be holding the Title for long. Titan snarls toward the screen. The crowd try to warn him as he's attacked from behind -- Chalk with a brutal blindsiding. The audience boo heavily.

END MONTAGE

INT. DANIEL'S HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Daniel gets into bed and looks at his phone. The TV Metrics app only has slightly better news than before. Daniel exits the app to go to a text conversation with Natalie. His message was sent a few hours prior.

CHYRON/DANIEL'S MESSAGE: "How's the new guy?"

No response from Natalie. Daniel sighs, puts his phone away.

INT. GW COMPOUND - LOCKER ROOMS - NIGHT

Hwang sits in the corner of the room on a sleeping bag. He has Turmoil highlights on his phone. His mom RINGS.

FUMIO (O.S.)
(Subtitled)
Hwang?

HWANG
Hi Maa.

FUMIO (O.S.)
(Subtitled)
When are you coming home?

HWANG
I'm at GW Maa, we discussed this.

FUMIO (O.S.)
(Subtitled)
Wrestling. It's dangerous.

HWANG
More dangerous than what I was
doing before?

FUMIO (O.S.)
(Subtitled)
Why can't you settle in a simple
job? You worked the Club and --

HWANG
Maa please. This is a chance at
different life --

FUMIO (O.S.)
You're not home!

Hwang looks around realizing how he's living in a bag.

FUMIO (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(Subtitled)
You have no money, you can't be
trusting of what you don't know.
The GW --

HWANG
(Subtitled)
It's an opportunity. A chance at
some real money. Money that can
change both our lives. I can get
myself a home. Get you one too.

FUMIO (O.S.)
(Subtitled)
We have our home --

Hwang shakes his head.

HWANG
Have you been taking your
medication? Properly?

Fumio seems frustrated.

FUMIO (O.S.)
(Subtitled)
I've been looking after myself
without medication my whole life.
Now they pump me with drugs.

Hwang sees Clara enter the locker room.

Clara's stride becomes slower as she walks by. She doesn't
directly look at Hwang.

Hwang and Fumio converse as Clara puts her phone into a
locker. Grabs a towel.

HWANG (O.C.)
It's not negotiable Maa. You have
to take care of yourself.

Clara walks to the showers.

Fumio dials it down.

HWANG (CONT'D)
 (Subtitled)
 Please. Take your medication, OK?

Hwang stands and walks toward the lockers. No sign of Clara.

FUMIO (O.S.)
 (Subtitled)
 You worry about you. And come home
 once in a while.

Steam comes from the women's shower cubicles.

HWANG
 Bye Maa. I'll call again.

FUMIO (O.S.)
 Come home!

Hwang hangs up and stops by the shower entry.

SHOWER CUBICLE

Clara pauses having heard Hwang's footsteps approach.

LOCKER AREA

A beat as steam exits Clara's cubicle.

HWANG
 Clara?

SHOWER CUBICLE

Clara smiles.

CLARA
 Yeah?

She waits.

HWANG (O.C.)
 (Tentative)
 You er, not on Turmoil tonight? I
 didn't see you.

She continues showering.

CLARA
Well either that or I teleported
here from wherever they are.

HWANG (O.C.)
You're not on TV?

CLARA
Not right now.

LOCKER AREA

Hwang wonders where to take the conversation.

A beat.

He opens the search bar on his phone.

CHYRON/TYPES: "how to talk to women"

CLARA (O.C.) (CONT'D)
You been staying in here?

Hwang closes the search.

HWANG
Yeah. Gym use comes easy here.

CLARA (O.C.)
Most hotels have gyms you know.

Hwang looks embarrassed.

SHOWER CUBICLE

Clara pauses, wondering about the silence.

CLARA (CONT'D)
You wanna know more, about why I'm
not on TV?

Clara turns the shower off and grabs her towel, wrapping it
around herself before exiting.

LOCKER AREA

Clara steps out of the shower area and sees Hwang's phone in
his hand. She looks sharply at him.

CLARA (CONT'D)
You weren't filming me were you?

Hwang's shocked.

HWANG
No. Of course n--

CLARA
Pictures?

An inquisitive yet playful look from Clara.

HWANG
No.

Clara smiles and passes him to grab her bag from her locker. She heads back into the cubicle.

CLARA (O.C.)
Well we can grab a bite to eat? If you do wanna know more.

HWANG
No. I mean yes. Lets.

Hwang shakes his head and puts the phone in his pocket. He rushes to his corner, grabs cologne out of his bag and sprays himself. He rushes back to where he was.

Clara exits the cubicle fully dressed, bright wet purple hair and a smile. Hwang is taken aback.

INT. FAIRGROUND - NIGHT

SCREAMS as Hwang and Clara are mid-ride on a rollercoaster, arms up and they're enjoying themselves.

The atmosphere is populated and busy as they finish the ride. They exit the gate.

Clara smiles as she pulls her hood over her head.

HWANG
That was nothing.

CLARA
That's the best they have in this town. And don't act like you weren't scared, I heard you.

HWANG
Me?

Clara playfully pushes Hwang.

A few FANS suddenly approach them.

FAN 1
Clara, Clara is that you?

FAN 2
Clara? Oh my God --

CLARA
Hey guys.

Hwang steps back as Clara puts her hood down to enable the fans to take selfies with her.

FAN 2
Thanks, hope you feel better.

The fans run off and Clara re-ups her hood.

A look of admiration from Hwang.

HWANG
Fame?

CLARA
Part of the job. I keep my hood up -
-

HWANG
But your hair and your figure kind
of give you away.

Clara looks at him.

CLARA
What do you know about my figure?

Hwang searches for words, but Clara runs off, toward the Chair-O-Planes.

MONTAGE

- Hwang and Clara on the Chair-O-Planes.
- Hwang and Clara shooting arrows.
- Hwang and Clara hooking ducks. They win a prize. Clara chooses a purple teddy bear.
- Hwang and Clara eat. She forces a hotdog in his face.
- Hwang and Clara leave the fairground.
- Clara leads the way into a bar.

END MONTAGE

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Clara sits at the bar first and asks the barkeep for the TV remote. She flicks the channel on to a wrestling show: World Alliance Wrestling. Hwang sits beside her. She plants the purple teddy bear in his lap.

CLARA
(To the barkeep)
And gimme two beers --

HWANG
No. I don't drink.

CLARA
(To the barkeep)
Cancel that.

Clara looks at Hwang.

CLARA (CONT'D)
No alcohol, so what do you drink?
Wait wait, let me guess...

She studies him.

CLARA (CONT'D)
Cherry pop.

Hwang's expression is indifferent.

CLARA (CONT'D)
No, wait -- Ginger Ale.

Hwang smiles and shakes his head looking at the bartender.

HWANG
Water. Thanks. Cherry pop for her.

CLARA
Water? Are you serious?

HWANG
Yes, but you still owe me.

CLARA
(Feigning shock)
Why?

HWANG
I ate that spicy hotdog.

CLARA
Right, half of it was on your face!

They laugh as Hwang sees wrestling action on the TV.

HWANG
What is this? WAW?

CLARA
This, is what we call *the rival company*.

The drinks are delivered as Clara begins to explain wrestling nuances to him.

EXT. GW COMPOUND - STREET - NIGHT

Hwang and Clara walk and talk, Clara carries the bear.

HWANG
And your contract is up soon?

CLARA
Yeah, that's why I'm off-screen right now. They wrote me out so there's time to work out my contract and buy time on the story. Plus it gives time to the current Champ to have the spotlight so...

HWANG
Wrote you out?

CLARA
In the story, I got injured.

HWANG
But you're not injured.

CLARA
No.

HWANG
When you return you will remain baby?

A look from Clara.

CLARA
Babyface, yeah. Well probably. Remember babyface is good, and bad?

HWANG
Bad is Beal.

Clara shakes her head.

CLARA

Heel --

HWANG

Heel.

A beat as they walk.

HWANG (CONT'D)

You are always babyface?

CLARA

Not always, but to be honest being heel is when I have the most fun. I find it easier to be hated.

Hwang looks at her suspiciously.

CLARA (CONT'D)

I'm serious. Getting cheered happens when you wrestle well and put your life on the line with some crazy moves. As heel all you have to do is insult someone's hometown and there's uproar about it.

HWANG

OK, but when fans see you in the street, then? Better to be babyface and take selfies no?

CLARA

Well yeah, that's all real nice. Don't get me wrong, as babyface I'll get the bitch back for injuring me. When there's a retribution story and when you win the title as a babyface, that crowd reaction is amazing. Nothing can beat it.

They arrive at the entrance gate to the GW compound. Hwang looks at it. Clara swipes her ID and leans against the gate to push it open.

A car pulls up.

HWANG

Your Uber?

Clara nods as she gently pushes Hwang through the opening of the gate.

HWANG (CONT'D)
More training tomorrow?

CLARA
On what, spicy food?

Clara opens the car door and half gets in.

HWANG
Wrestling.

Hwang is on the other side of the gate.

Clara nods as she gets in the car. A small smile at Hwang as the car drives off.

INT. GLORY WRESTLING HQ - MEETING ROOM - DAY

Four suits (the WRITERS. Three men in their late 60s. A woman mid 50s) sit and focus toward Natalie and Daniel at the head of the table.

Natalie has the room's attention as she's giving a presentation about the potential of Hwang. A screen behind her shows Hwang in training.

NATALIE
As you can see, his fighting skills
can give us something different.

Daniel nods, pleased.

WRITER 1
Certainly impressive.

WRITER 4
He's so fast on his feet.

WRITER 3
I can't wait to see more.

WRITER 2
We can use this.

Natalie meets eyes with Writer 2. She looks at her dad.

DANIEL
What did you suggest for his name?

NATALIE
Axe.

DANIEL
Axe?

NATALIE

Yeah. An axe is a martial arts weapon and it goes with the rest of Hwang's aura.

The writers look at one another. Some have papers in their hands. Others have tablets. They make notes.

Daniel wraps Natalie up.

DANIEL

The name works, but he'll need a finisher. And you gotta get him in the ring with some men. He needs to be able to take a hit. Chops, chairshots, bodyslams, the works.

NATALIE

Sure, of course.

WRITER 1

Perhaps getting him in front of an audience would help as well.

NATALIE

I was going to suggest House shows actually, if you think that's best.

Natalie looks at the room; they're agreeable.

Daniel stands up, shakes his daughter's hand.

DANIEL

Good.

Natalie picks up her tablet and promptly leaves.

INT. GLORY WRESTLING HQ - HALL - DAY

Natalie walks, looking back over her shoulder. She reaches an office with her dad's name on and walks in.

INT. GLORY WRESTLING HQ - MEETING ROOM - DAY

Daniel feigns a casual attitude as he sits in his chair and puts his feet up.

WRITER 2

Seem awfully relaxed.

DANIEL

Why wouldn't I be? I trust my daughter, trust you guys. There's plenty here to make Axe work.

WRITER 1

What about working with what we already have? Is there still no resolution on Clara's contract?

Daniel puts his feet down and sits forward. He looks fed up.

WRITER 4

Let it run down I say. She'll get desperate and accept the terms.

DANIEL

No no, I can't have that. WAW have already threatened to offer her a better contract --

Eyeballs from the writers to one another. Daniel notices.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

What? I miss something?

A beat.

WRITER 2

Office talk. There are rumors you're selling? GW?

Daniel sits back. Sighs.

Eyes exchange looks between him and the writers.

DANIEL

It's possible.

He nods.

WRITER 3

What will other companies matter if you sell? It becomes the next company's problem, not ours.

Daniel looks at writer 3.

DANIEL

It'll still be your problem. You guys are part of a deal if a sale happens. You won't lose your jobs.

Something clicks.

WRITER 3

If we won't lose our jobs, the only company you could be selling to is...

A look of realization between the writers. *Damnation.*

DANIEL

Unless of course you guys can write better formats? Or maybe we can get Clara to stay. What is it that she wants?

WRITER 3

Money.

WRITER 4

Money I think.

Daniel shakes his head.

DANIEL

Damn it. I'll talk to her.

INT. GLORY WRESTLING HQ - DANIEL'S OFFICE - DAY

Natalie loiters by cabinets full of wrestling memorabilia.

Daniel enters.

DANIEL

You alright?

He goes to sit at his desk. Natalie nods. Walks over.

NATALIE

Everything good in there?

DANIEL

Fine. Just spoke about Clara. I need to meet with her. A show that's convenient to her and I both.

NATALIE

I'll arrange it.

DANIEL

Good. What are you doing now?

NATALIE

Off to the next House show --

DANIEL

Jacks --

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Jacksonville.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Get er, Axe, get him on House shows
soon as you can.

NATALIE
Is there a rush?

Daniel looks at her.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
Right. Ratings... I better get
going.

DANIEL
Stop by the house when you're next
in town. It's been a while since
you came home.

Natalie notices a photo frame. She turns it to see her mom.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Nat?

NATALIE
I'll think about it, dad. You know
how busy things get.

She promptly puts the photo back and leaves.

INT. GW COMPOUND - GYM - DAY

Hwang is on a treadmill listening to MUSIC via earbuds. He sees Clara enter the gym with a few other female wrestlers, including the current WOMEN'S CHAMPION. Hwang turns down his music in order to eavesdrop.

CLARA
It was great when that happened.
The fans loved it.

WOMEN'S CHAMPION
Too bad it's not the done thing now
right? Otherwise you could be
superbitch.

Clara laughs.

Hwang's phone RINGS. Natalie's name on the screen. He slows the treadmill to walking pace and taps the phone screen.

HWANG
Hello.

NATALIE (O.S.)
Hey. How's it going?

Hwang's eyes follow *that figure* of Clara's.

HWANG
Good.

NATALIE (O.S.)
I got some news. Your name's been approved; we can start calling you Axe --

HWANG
Axe?

NATALIE (O.S.)
Yeah. Figure out a finishing move. Maybe try incorporate your name into it, some kinda axe wielding move, I guess.

Hwang nods. His eyes are on Clara, who's on an air bike. He tries not to stare too long.

HWANG
Alright.

NATALIE (O.S.)
Next week you'll train with some of the guys. Do well and it won't be long before you're on House shows.

Hwang gets off the treadmill, grabbing his phone.

HWANG
So, a few weeks?

NATALIE (O.S.)
Maybe.

HWANG
Will Clara be back on screen by then?

A beat.

NATALIE (O.S.)
That might be up to her.

Hwang ponders as he makes his way past Clara. They exchange smiles. Hwang lands by the weights.

INT. GW COMPOUND - RING HANGAR - DAY

Hwang runs, bouncing off the ropes with ease. He goes to the top turnbuckle, perfectly balanced. He leaps off and lands without a stumble.

Male wrestlers almost line up to enter the ring -- his new training buddies.

MONTAGE

- Hwang trains with male wrestlers. He performs martial arts skills and they teach him how best to show connection with his moves without hurting his opponent.

- Hwang is BODYSLAMMED -- a shock to his system. He looks hurt. A wrestler tells him how to brace for impact.

- Hwang is SUPLEXED -- same result; he's jolted in a bad way.

- Hwang's training is exhausting, but he becomes increasingly confident with the men -- Hwang takes a BACK-BODY-DROP and lands hard. The wrestlers gather around to check on him, but he's smiling. They pull him to his feet. He's OK.

END MONTAGE

INT. ARENA - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Hwang loiters by the entrance curtain wearing an orange singlet. He takes a deep breath knowing what's about to happen. Natalie approaches holding her tablet and a mask. She studies Hwang's body.

NATALIE
No tattoos. Good.

She hands him the mask.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
Here, put this on.

Hwang takes the mask, orange too.

HWANG
This?

Natalie nods.

NATALIE
Yeah, matches your singlet.

Natalie seems to be making notes on her tablet.

HWANG
I'm not going out as Axe?

NATALIE
Not yet. This isn't on TV. House shows give us a chance to put you in front of an audience that's all.

HWANG
But they can know me?

NATALIE
They won't know you. Hence the mask. You're what we'd call a jobber. Someone for one of the main guys to beat up.

A look from Hwang to Natalie; he isn't happy.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
Relax. A loss here means nothing to Axe. You're out there in a practice match, that's all it is. Enjoy it. We'll see how you do with the audience. You've seen the shows. Go with their flow.

Hwang nods, trusting her.

INT. ARENA - WRESTLING RING - NIGHT

Hwang is in the ring having had no introduction, no music nor pyro. His eyes look stern under the mask. He looks the crowd over before MUSIC hits. It's familiar from what he's seen on GW streaming...

Out comes Chalk.

Hwang looks to ringside and looks at the referee, somewhat nerve-stricken by the surprise.

HWANG
(To the referee)
Chalk?

REFEREE
That's his name.

HWANG
He know I'm under here?

REFEREE

Dude, I don't know who you are under there.

Hwang seems appeased. Chalk enters the ring to a chorus of boos. Hwang looks around realizing his opportunity: *he's the babyface.*

Chalk stands menacingly across the ring.

AUDIENCE

(Chant)

Chalk is cheese! Chalk is cheese!

Hwang takes their cue and steps closer to Chalk and leans in to sniff him. Hwang backs off feigning a whiff, swatting the air around him. The audience respond well.

INT. ARENA - EXECUTIVE BOX - NIGHT

Natalie watches along with the crowd. She laughs.

The bell DINGS.

INT. ARENA - WRESTLING RING - NIGHT

Chalk and Hwang circle one another.

CHALK

Very funny. Lock.

They tie up, collar and elbow.

HWANG

You lead?

CHALK

Yup. Headlock, then push me off.
Run against the ropes.

Chalk puts a headlock on Hwang and he's quickly pushed off. Hwang runs against the ropes and simply barges into Chalk. Chalk is unmoved as he looks down at his own shoulder and then at Hwang.

INT. ARENA - EXECUTIVE BOX - NIGHT

Natalie watches nervously. Her tablet with notes is beside her. She observes the crowd just as much as the match.

INT. ARENA - WRESTLING RING - NIGHT

CHALK
What was that?

Hwang looks around at the audience.

HWANG
You said you're leading.

Hwang circles Chalk.

CHALK
Yeah, but you gotta do your
moveset, just tell me what's
coming.

HWANG
OK. Same again.

CHALK
What?

Natalie watches from the executive box.

Hwang runs against the ropes and barges into Chalk, who barely moves.

CHALK (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

The crowd respond as Hwang goes against the ropes and barges him again. Chalk just stands there as Hwang bounces off him and backflips to land in a superhero pose.

The crowd applaud.

HWANG
After the next barge kick me in the
head. Then cover.

Hwang goes against the ropes and barges. He backflips and doesn't land on his feet before Chalk boots him in the face --

INT. ARENA - EXECUTIVE BOX - NIGHT

An "ouch" facial reaction from Natalie.

INT. ARENA - WRESTLING RING - NIGHT

Chalk makes a cover.

REFEREE

One! Two! --

Hwang kicks out.

Chalk gets him in a headlock.

CHALK

Not bad. Did I getcha, Hwang?

HWANG

(Partly choking/oh shit)
Mmhmm.

REFEREE

Alright guys pick up the pace.

INT. ARENA - EXECUTIVE BOX - NIGHT

Natalie watches with a grimace. *Perhaps regretting a decision.*

NATALIE

(Sotto)
Come on Chalk, ease up.

INT. ARENA - WRESTLING RING - NIGHT

Chalk loosens the headlock and Hwang gets to his feet quickly while Chalk's on all fours.

HWANG

Punt --

Chalk moves his arm -- Hwang misses.

HWANG (CONT'D)

Ropes. Catch me.

Hwang runs against the ropes, as he returns to the centre of the ring Chalk is to his feet. He lifts Hwang into a BOSS-MAN SLAM. A cover --

REFEREE

One! Two! --

Hwang kicks out.

CHALK

Cool it. I'm leading, remember?

INT. ARENA - EXECUTIVE BOX - NIGHT

Natalie watches as she studies Hwang's ring presence and his moves. She takes video on her tablet, particularly of when Hwang is on the canvas. He seems stiff.

The contest goes on as Chalk decks Hwang and then goes to ringside to rip up a sign from a fan.

INT. ARENA - WRESTLING RING - NIGHT

Chalk remains at ringside mouthing off to the front row.

Hwang is in the ring readjusting his mask having taken a beating. The referee "checks" on him.

REFEREE

Top turnbuckle? You good to fly?

Hwang nods.

REFEREE (CONT'D)

Talk to me, we need communication in here.

HWANG

Yeah yeah, I'm good ref. To fly.

REFEREE

Get up on the buckle, wait until he turns then launch yourself at him. He'll catch, then brace yourself. Got it?

Hwang doesn't respond. The ref goes closer to him.

REFEREE (CONT'D)

Hey, what's the issue?

HWANG

He'll slam me? At ringside?

REFEREE

Yeah, are you good?

Hwang looks across the ring and between the ropes at Chalk. He looks into the audience toward the executive box. *Can he trust anyone?*

Hwang nods --

HWANG

Got it.

The ref goes toward the ropes to tell Chalk --

REFEREE
Incoming on four.

The ref begins to administer a "count out" on Chalk.

REFEREE (CONT'D)
One!

Hwang gets up and goes over to the turnbuckle.

REFEREE (CONT'D)
Two!

Hwang climbs, slowly.

REFEREE (CONT'D)
Three!

Chalk begins to turn toward Hwang's ringpost. On the count of --

REFEREE (CONT'D)
Four! --

Hwang launches himself at Chalk. Chalk catches him only to plant him firmly on his back at ringside -- with his arms tucked under, protecting Hwang's back --

INT. ARENA - EXECUTIVE BOX - NIGHT

Another expressive "ooooh" response from Natalie in her Box.

INT. ARENA - WRESTLING RING - NIGHT

Chalk kneels by Hwang to pose and absorb the boos. He leans over Hwang to seemingly badmouth him.

CHALK
Wang. You good?

Hwang's smiling under the mask. *I'm fine.*

HWANG
(Nods)
I'm great. Finish?

CHALK
In a few. You're on top for two moves, then I'll finish. CSI Bomb --

HWANG
I know the move.

Chalk gets up. Poses to absorb more boos before picking Hwang to his feet to roll him into the ring.

INT. ARENA - EXECUTIVE BOX - NIGHT

Natalie watches as Chalk and Hwang complete their match. She seems happy with how it's gone.

INT. ARENA - WRESTLING RING - NIGHT

Chalk lifts Hwang for a CSI Bomb (POWERBOMB), planting Hwang on his back as if he's knocked out.

Chalk covers, hooks the leg and the ref counts.

REFEREE
One! Two! Three!

Hwang lays still as the crowd boo Chalk's celebrations. Chalk's MUSIC plays as the ref kneels by Hwang.

REFEREE (CONT'D)
Roll out. It's over.

The ref guides Hwang, pushing him toward the ropes. Hwang goes under the bottom rope and lands on his feet. The ref goes with him and puts Hwang's arm over his shoulders, helping him walk out, keeping the illusion of the damage Chalk has done.

REFEREE (CONT'D)
Not bad kid.

Hwang holds his lower back as he walks with the ref to the back. Fans either side of the walkway applaud him.

INT. ARENA - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Natalie applauds as the referee and Hwang walk through the curtain. The ref walks past giving a nod.

NATALIE
(To the ref)
Good work.

Hwang approaches, removing his mask. He looks at Natalie and her smile decreases.

Chalk walks through the curtain -- tension rises -- and he shoulder-bumps Hwang as he approaches Natalie. Hwang shoves him back, but the push is weak due to Hwang's exhaustion. Chalk laughs.

CHALK

You wanna go for real Wang? You ain't gettin lucky again.

HWANG

It's Hwang, cheese boy --

Natalie literally steps between them.

NATALIE

Guys please.
(To Chalk)
Chalk, stop, you did good.

Chalk stares daggers at Hwang. Hwang's expression remains serious. A beat. Chalk concedes;

CHALK

(To Hwang)
You did alright.

Tension eases. Hwang looks at him, *perhaps with respect*. Chalk walks off.

Natalie tries putting her smile back on. A beat.

HWANG

You didn't tell me it'd be him.

Natalie shakes her head.

HWANG (CONT'D)

But he knew?

Natalie nods.

NATALIE

He knew. But he had to. Believe it or not he's tough on new guys. I think he went easy on you.

Hwang cracks his jaw.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

That kick hurt?

Hwang nods. He looks at Natalie. Then looks at his mask.

HWANG

I don't like wearing this.

Natalie smiles. She takes the mask as she opens videos on her tablet. They walk and talk.

NATALIE

I need you to work on your mat skills.

INT. DANIEL'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Natalie finishes her food, Chinese Take-out. Daniel sits and finishes gradually.

DANIEL

Thank you for coming to eat with me.

Natalie shrugs. She picks up the plates and takes them to the

INT. DANIEL'S HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

NATALIE (O.C.)

The next event plan is away from here for a while, so, you were right, I don't get to see you.

Daniel loiters by the kitchen archway. He takes a deep breath.

INT. DANIEL'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Right by Daniel's shoulder are the shelves with the family photos. His eyes gaze at them. Particular focus on his wife.

DANIEL

I have to tell you something.

INT. DANIEL'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Natalie washes up.

NATALIE

Sure?

DANIEL

It's about GW.

Focus is on Natalie's expression. She seems to be in a content place, maybe even happy.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
I'm selling.

Natalie's initial response is covert, as if she wants to hide her true reaction. *Maybe she thinks her dad is joking.*

Daniel walks over.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Nat, you hear me?

INT. DANIEL'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Natalie is sat on the couch, uncharacteristically slouched. Predator lays with her. *Has she been crying?* Her eyes graze the family photos by the TV, seemingly by accident.

She sits up, Predator in her lap.

Eventually --

NATALIE
Why?

Daniel is by the window. He shakes his head.

DANIEL
After your mother died, I, I stopped taking interest in the formats. I haven't been vetting them. That's why the ratings have been in decline.

NATALIE
So? An easy fix -- Hwang's almost ready. You can dive into working properly --

DANIEL
Your mom. She was always mad at me. Taking work to bed. Talking about it at breakfast. I used to vet everything. Then I lost her and stopped. I had the hope of making up for lost time with you, but, it was too late. You'd already grown up.

Natalie looks sad. She takes a moment to comprehend what's happening. She puts Predator to the floor and stands to go and approach Daniel.

NATALIE

Mom wasn't always mad at you. She used to spew wrestling stories to me on the way to school. Or when I was brushing my teeth, or doing homework. She was proud of you.

Daniel turns to face his daughter. He puts his hands on Natalie's shoulders. He talks at her in all seriousness, probably deeper than he ever has.

DANIEL

I didn't mean to let you down. And I can't let you down now.

Natalie shakes her head.

NATALIE

What are you talking about?

DANIEL

You. Don't you see? I can't have it all happening again. I can't have this lack of connection between us, when I was so far from home --

A beat.

Natalie begins to well up. She sees her mom in the photo frames. Shakes her head.

NATALIE

No. You're selling, cuz you regret working? Dad that's not what mom would have wanted. You don't wanna continue, let me do it. I can vet the formats --

DANIEL

That's my point Nat. I can't have you turn into me. Your mom would never forgive me for that. You have to understand that this is an opportunity for you, for you to have a clean break, for you to live your own life outside of the industry --

NATALIE

And I don't get a say?

DANIEL

This is best for you. Nat... I
wasn't here when your mom passed.
You had to deal with that on your
own --

Natalie shrugs his hands off her shoulders and heads to the

INT. DANIEL'S HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Natalie pours herself a glass of water. Begins drinking.

Daniel's at the archway.

DANIEL

Getting out can give you a normal
life honey. One where you can
settle down, have a family --

Natalie gulps her water.

NATALIE

That's not what I want.
(Business mode)
You're selling? Meaning everyone
loses their jobs?

INT. DANIEL'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Daniel walks toward the couch. Slumps on it.

DANIEL

No. Everyone will keep their jobs.
If we sell to WAW --

Natalie marches out of the kitchen --

NATALIE

(Loud and angry)
To WAW? What the -- dad! No. You --
no!

DANIEL

What you have with Axe, I don't
think we'll be giving him a
contract. Shareholders were
notified of the potential sale and
the writers seem to be all in.
Everyone already holding a contract
with Glory will be transferred over
to WAW. Minus you.

Natalie's furious.

NATALIE

Dad, don't. Honestly, some of this is a quick fix, I'll vet --

DANIEL

It doesn't matter. It's best, for you to get out of the business before it swallows you whole. Think about that opportunity, alright?

Daniel sits back, sighs.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Wrestling hasn't been fun for me Nat. Not in a long time. The sale is best for you, you're the only family I have left. There'll be a pot for you when I die, a great opp --

NATALIE

When you die? Die? Something else you're not telling me?

A look of disappointment from Natalie. Hurt.

DANIEL

No Nat. Just that Glory is a problem you'd have after I'm gone. At least this way, everything is in place for you to live well now. You can be there for people you love.

Natalie fumes. Uncalculated, she bursts --

NATALIE

I live fine. Mom wouldn't be happy with this. Glory Wrestling is our family's legacy -- you're supposed to be easing me in, not pushing me out --

DANIEL

You don't have to. All the staff will keep their jobs --

NATALIE

Dad, dad, you're not listening --
(Yells)
This is where I want to be!

MEOOOW, Predator bellows. A moment to take a breath for father and daughter.

INT. GW COMPOUND - GYM - DAY

Hwang flexes on dumbbells. Fumio's name is on his phone as he speaks to her through his earbuds.

HWANG
(Subtitled)
Each pack is important Maa. They stabilize you --

FUMIO (O.S.)
(Subtitled)
I know when I need them! Not that you care to come home. You probably haven't had a decent meal in --

She continues in her native tongue.

Clara steps through the door and gazes at Hwang's muscles. Hwang sees her, but continues his reps.

CLARA
Axe.

She smiles.

CLARA (CONT'D)
Wanna fight me?

Hwang's body opens up. Fumio continues yelling.

FUMIO (O.S.)
(Subtitled)
Who is that? A girl?

Hwang makes eye contact with Clara.

HWANG
Actually, yeah.

Hwang finishes his rep and picks up his phone.

HWANG (CONT'D)
I have to go Maa.

Fumio continues talking --

HWANG (CONT'D)
Maa?

FUMIO (O.S.)
Fine, bye. Go!

Hwang hangs up and grabs his towel.

CLARA
Your mom alright?

Hwang smiles. Wipes sweat from his brow.

HWANG
She sounded, how you say, high
spirits.

Clara smiles.

HWANG (CONT'D)
Natalie said I don't have mat
skills. What does this mean?

Clara leads the way as they exit the gym.

INT. GW COMPOUND - RING HANGAR - DAY

Axe and Clara in the ring. Clara smiles as she approaches Axe and sits cross-legged at his feet. He looks down at her. Axe goes to sit, but Clara goes to trip him. He just stands there smirking.

CLARA
Go down.

AXE
What?

She locks his leg and trips him *harder*.

CLARA
Go down.

Axe falls forward and Clara reaches to lock his neck to then roll with him into a "small package."

CLARA (CONT'D)
One! Two! --

Axe kicks out. Their bodies separate. They face off.

CLARA (CONT'D)
Small package. Pinning predicament.

AXE
OK.

CLARA

Now, we're still on the mat. What are you gonna do?

Axe is clueless.

Clara smiles.

CLARA (CONT'D)

You have to go through a variety of mat-wrestling holds. These are usually done to buy time, but some of them can hurt if you do submissions.

AXE

Like Sharpshooter or Figure Four.

CLARA

Right, but those are signature finishers, not for what we're gonna do here.

Clara reaches for his leg and he complies. She locks it over her own.

CLARA (CONT'D)

Basic leg lock. Hold my ankle, then apply pressure --

Axe does --

CLARA (CONT'D)

Ow!

Axe eases --

CLARA (CONT'D)

Don't actually apply pressure. Just make it look like you are.

Axe takes it slowly as Clara watches him. He puts on a mean face and "applies pressure." Clara hides a smile.

CLARA (CONT'D)

Good. Now mat-wrestling is all about keeping your body loose and counters, so stay loose and --

Clara rolls from being in the leg lock on the canvas to turning her back and grabbing Axe's arm to hold it under her arm. Axe seems like he's in a trance with how her body is positioned over him.

CLARA (CONT'D)
 Alright? Stay loose, onto your back
 --

Clara rolls to her side, Axe to his back and she's suddenly administering an arm bar.

CLARA (CONT'D)
 See?

Axe's eyes are wide as he nods from under Clara's thigh.

CLARA (CONT'D)
 Now you.

Axe rolls out of the armbar and into another hold --

MONTAGE

- Clara rolls out of that move and administers another.
- Clara teaches Axe single and double-leg takedowns.
- Clara teaches Axe how to switch.
- How to sprawl.
- Sit-outs.
- Clara and Axe enjoy the physicality, sharing high-fives between moves. They become sweatier as they go on. The steam that ascends from them is a sign of the passion between them. *Perhaps personally, rather than professionally.*

END MONTAGE

INT. GW COMPOUND - OFFICE - DAY

Natalie arrives at the office. Her demeanor is low as she sees Axe and Clara in training. She looks toward the other screens and sees GW highlights. Shakes her head.

INT. GW COMPOUND - RING HANGAR - DAY

Natalie, Hwang and Clara are sat on the ring apron. Natalie addresses Hwang.

NATALIE
 All I can say is I'm sorry.

No eye contact.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
 I'll make sure you're paid, but
 there won't be a contract for you.

Hwang looks at Clara. No words.

A beat.

Hwang hops off the apron, body language spews anger.

HWANG
 What am I supposed to do?

A sorry look from Natalie.

HWANG (CONT'D)
 This was supposed to be a career,
 something I enjoy.

Clara puts a hand on his chest, over his heart.

CLARA
 It's alright --

HWANG
 It's not. This job gave me dreams,
 what am I supposed to do now?

Natalie gets her tablet out of her bag, unlocks it and goes to her stories.

NATALIE
 Look I have a few stories for you.
 With your training and these,
 there's plenty here for you. You
 can have all of it, try --

Hwang shakes his head and marches off.

Clara sees all of Natalie's story documents. She even scrolls past a few formats.

CLARA
 Axe wait.
 (To Natalie)
 I'll talk to him.

Clara hops off the ring apron --

CLARA (CONT'D)
 You're good you know. Would've been
 cool to see one of your formats.

Clara goes after Hwang. Natalie looks toward them, an *epiphany*. Natalie hops off the apron, stuffs the tablet in her bag and rushes past them before they make the door.

NATALIE
Keep training.

Clara looks at Hwang, he's bewildered. Hwang looks toward Natalie as she continues her stride.

CLARA
Are you OK?

Natalie's already half through the door.

NATALIE
Keep training!

INT. ARENA - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

MONTAGE

- Natalie speaks to Ground Control, directing them with what to do regarding a *new* format.

- Natalie shows Ground Control her tablet. They nod, understanding her instructions.

- Wrestlers backstage are on their phones reading the new format. There's a pile of copies at Ground Control that some wrestlers take. They seem interested, excited.

END MONTAGE

Axe is backstage looking like a dapper warrior. He's in a white and gold two-piece Abayas outfit.

Natalie emerges in a bright yellow dress.

MUSIC hits. Natalie looks at Axe.

NATALIE
Are you ready?

Axe nods confidently.

Behind them down the walkway there are at least twelve men with "SECURITY" t-shirts on.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
You guys good? Know what to expect?

The men nod.

Natalie leads the way through the curtain. Axe nods to the men, then follows Natalie.

INT. ARENA - WRESTLING RING - NIGHT

Natalie and Axe walk from the stage to the ring. They have the spotlight shining brightly on them as the crowd wonder who they are.

CRAIG, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
Well this is a surprise. You know
who that is Pat?

PAT, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
Only the boss' daughter!

CRAIG, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
What is she doing here? And who is
that guy?

Focus remains on Natalie and Axe as they enter the ring.

Natalie is handed a microphone as the crowd simmer. She takes a breath.

A beat.

NATALIE
You guys... I'll introduce myself
and I'll get to our business here,
but on behalf of my family I just
wanna say; wow. And thank you. You
fans are amazing.

A moment for the crowd. Many stand and cheer.

CRAIG, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
Pandering, very good.

PAT, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
Shhh!

The crowd calm.

NATALIE
Some of you may recognise me. Many
of you won't. The last time I was
on TV I was yay high and my dad
would allow me to sit on the
announcers desk during matches.

A beat for the crowd.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Now, I stand before you a grown woman. And I ask for your astounding support to continue for this amazing company.

She waits. She looks toward the fans.

Axe meanwhile stands unmoved.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Ladies and gentlemen, I am Natalie Hurst. Daughter of Daniel Hurst. The support I ask of you is support of the family business because it has come to light... that Glory Wrestling may not exist for much longer.

A collective gasp between the audience and the commentators.

CRAIG, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)

What? Is she serious?

PAT, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)

I can't believe this.

NATALIE

The Board of Directors are trying to sell this company right from under my father's nose.

INT. DANIEL'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Daniel suddenly moves to the edge of his seat and turns up the volume.

DANIEL

Natalie?

ON THE TV --

NATALIE

What would really help is all your support in making sure it's my dad's name that remains as chairman of this company.

Natalie taps her microphone twice.

INT. ARENA - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Ground Control are at their screens.

TECH 1
Alright guys, that's your cue.

TECH 2
Go go go.

The men make their way through the curtain.

INT. DANIEL'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Daniel sees the security entering on stage.

ON THE TV

Security rushes down to the ring.

PAT, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
Now hang on, what is this? She
wasn't finished!

CRAIG, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
Forget whatever she had to say --
she obviously has no right to be
here. Good on our Board for sending
Security to kick her out of the
arena --

INT. ARENA - WRESTLING RING - NIGHT

As "security" staff enter the ring Natalie stays exactly
where she is, looking at Axe.

Axe ducks a guard, kicks him, backhand chops him to the
canvas. A moment of awe from the fans.

Axe takes one step to the right, stopping another guard from
entering, thwarting the guy with expert martial arts moves.

Another guard enters from the left side -- yet still doesn't
get close to Natalie as Axe kicks him down.

Natalie beams as Axe is the bubble around her, protecting
her.

INT. DANIEL'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Daniel watches intently, impressed by Axe.

INT. ARENA - WRESTLING RING - NIGHT

More guards come in, but they don't stand a chance -- Axe neutralizes them all.

Martial arts moves on display as Axe tears a sleeve off his own outfit; he uses it to whip one guy and choke the next.

Axe then tears off his other sleeve and uses it to tie a guard into make-shift handcuffs.

Some guards get up and come again, but that adds to the burst of action and the impressive display from Axe.

All the guards are down and the fans are on their feet, applauding this new character.

Axe looks at Natalie and directs her to leave the ring. Natalie addresses the audience on the microphone.

NATALIE

Folks, for my own safety I'm gonna get outta here. Obviously the Board aren't too happy with my presence. I'm leaving before the cops turn up to arrest me.

She drops out of the ring. Axe leads the way up the ramp toward the stage as Natalie steps over bodies.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Fans. Keep coming to our shows. Stay in support of Glory Wrestling. We'll win this fight, together!

The crowd cheer. A smile from Natalie to Axe as they make it to the stage, but they stop abruptly.

INT. DANIEL'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Daniel watches --

ON THE TV

Two more security guards enter onto the stage. Natalie stays behind Axe as he gets ready for battle. The guards look down the ramp and see the bodies Axe has left behind...

The guards part ways. Axe instructs Natalie to walk freely.

Daniel sits back, smiling.

INT. ARENA - WRESTLING RING - NIGHT

A graphic comes up on the big screen above the stage: "AXE."

Axe looks over his shoulder toward the crowd before exiting. The two guards are too scared to go near him.

The audience are definitely intrigued.

INT. ARENA - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Axe opens a flask and sips as Natalie paces, ensuring the microphone is off. She breathes deeply.

Tech 2 approaches.

TECH 2
Great job, that was very well done.

NATALIE
Yeah?

TECH 2
You're a natural.

He looks at Axe.

TECH 2 (CONT'D)
And holy S-balls.

Axe looks at him.

TECH 2 (CONT'D)
You. You are, woah. You just made me a fan man.

Tech 2 pats him on the arm. Axe gives him a look. Tech 2 is nervous all of a sudden. Axe smiles.

NATALIE
Did his graphic come up in time?
Show me.

They walk over to Ground Control. Tech 1 is there. He fist-bumps Axe.

TECH 1
Yo, those were some sick moves.

NATALIE
Can you rewind?

Tech 1 and Tech 2 sit in their places and rewind the footage. Axe's name was revealed the moment he looked over his shoulder to acknowledge the fans.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
Back from commercial?

Tech 1 nods.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
Show me live.

INT. ARENA - WRESTLING RING - NIGHT

The crowd are on their feet and security guards gradually come to.

AUDIENCE
Axe! Axe! Axe! Axe!

PAT, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
Welcome back ladies and gentlemen, if you missed it, watch it over and over online -- the bodies hit the floor Craig.

CRAIG, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
Would you -- you're such an action junkie! Tell these people what happened. Tell'm why there are security guards picking themselves up. Not professionals, not wrestlers -- actual guards -- they were damn near killed by Glory's newest menace to society.

PAT, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
Menace? What are you talking about? -- Ladies and gentlemen we'll revisit the footage as the night goes on, but let me assure you Axe is no menace -- he was protecting the boss' daughter! And these fans recognize that.

AUDIENCE
Axe! Axe! Axe! Axe!

CRAIG, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
The fans are stupid. And can you get to the part where we may or may not have jobs?!

INT. ARENA - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Natalie smiles as she walks away from Ground Control. Some of the "Security Guards" pass her as they return to the back.

NATALIE
Thanks guys. Good job.

Axe walks with Natalie. She's shaking.

AXE
You alright?

Natalie takes a deep breath.

NATALIE
Nervous. Live TV gives a crazy
kinda adrenaline rush you know?

She looks at Axe.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
You don't know.

She smirks.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
Not fazed at all are ya?

Axe shrugs and smiles.

AXE
It was fun.

Natalie nods in agreement. *Maybe he was born for this.*

INT. DANIEL'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Daniel emerges from the kitchen, putting a bowl of food down for Predator.

The TV replays the scene of Axe defending Natalie. Daniel looks content, albeit conflicted.

INT. GLORY WRESTLING HQ - DANIEL'S OFFICE - DAY

Daniel sits pondering.

Malik enters. They shake hands as Malik sits.

MALIK
Talk to the writers?

Daniel nods.

MALIK (CONT'D)
All Nat's idea?

Daniel nods.

A beat.

MALIK (CONT'D)
I suppose it's a good thing they were willing to go with it. Even better that it worked out -- ratings are up.

DANIEL
I know that.

MALIK
You don't seem happy.

DANIEL
Just adds a layer of guilt if I go through with the sale. As if the company is a toy and I'm taking my daughter's favorite play thing away from her.

MALIK
May I speak openly?

Daniel looks at him, nods.

DANIEL
It's what I pay you for.

Malik treads softly.

MALIK
Nat's not a kid. I'm sure she'll be able to stand on her own two feet after the sale.

Daniel nods confidently.

MALIK (CONT'D)
But.

Daniel looks at him.

DANIEL
But?

MALIK

Glory's not a toy. The odd sporadic idea may bump ratings for a week or two, but to be above WAW and others, Nat will have to be all-in. Is she ready for that?

Daniel nods, still pondering. He thinks out loud

DANIEL

I don't know if she's ready. But it is what she wants. Every father wants to give their daughter what she wants. Harder thing to do is to do what's best for his daughter, even though she may hate him afterward.

Daniel eyes photos of his wife.

MALIK

Will you still sell?

Looks exchange.

DANIEL

Probably. Let the last day be the pay-per-view I think. You sure WAW's proposal was good?

Malik nods.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

I'll look it over one more time.

MALIK

What about Natalie in the meantime? I'm sure she has ideas she's already pitched to the writers. Casino Warfare's not far away.

DANIEL

I know what I have to do. She's pushed me to it. I have to vet the formats.

INT. ARENA - WRESTLING RING - NIGHT

Action in the ring as another Turmoil is in full flow.

INT. ARENA - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Natalie walks with her father, bringing him to Axe.

Daniel reaches out his hand.

DANIEL
You're the one stirring up trouble?

AXE
Mister Hurst. Pleased to meet you.

DANIEL
Pleasure's mine young man. You
gonna down six or seven guards
again tonight?

AXE
Eleven.

NATALIE
Actually last time it was twelve.

AXE
Twelve.

Axe smiles.

NATALIE
But that's not a road we're allowed
to take now, are we dad?

DANIEL
Honey. Don't start.

Natalie taps on her tablet.

NATALIE
Clara's on her way.

Daniel nods. Natalie walks to Ground Control, leaving Axe
with her father.

AXE
She's good at what she does. Big
passion for this business.

DANIEL
Business is what I wanted to talk
to you about. Hwang is it?

AXE
Axe, if that's OK? It helps me.

Daniel nods.

DANIEL

Axe. There isn't going to be a push for merchandise in your name. No posters, no t-shirts. That graphic with your name is all you're gonna get. The company's being sold and you're not on the docket of transferrable assets.

Natalie returns.

NATALIE

He knows that.

Axe is unmoved.

DANIEL

He does?

Axe nods.

NATALIE

But he's here anyway.

DANIEL

Well I just wanted to... I'm here to formally apologize, Axe. That we can't take your career further.

NATALIE

Can't or won't?

DANIEL

Natalie.

Down the hall, the Techs at Ground Control wave Natalie over. She rushes toward them.

AXE

(To Daniel)

It would have been good to give her a chance. She has some great ideas.

DANIEL

Your intro last week was pretty fun. Can't say I didn't enjoy that.

UPROAR FROM THE AUDIENCE.

AXE

So did they.

There seems to be commotion at Ground Control. Axe and Daniel walk over. They reach Natalie and the Techs.

DANIEL
What's going on?

ON THE TV

Titan is down at ringside.

Daniel looks at the Techs.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Well?

TECH 1
He's hurt. Ref says it's bad. A leg injury.

NATALIE
Can he finish the match?

Tech 2 shakes his head. Medics pass them as they rush out of the entry curtain.

INT. ARENA - WRESTLING RING - NIGHT

Medics rush to Titan at ringside.

The referee listens in his earpiece.

TECH 2 (O.S.)
Count him out. Copy?

The ref climbs into the ring.

REFEREE
Copy.

The ref holds Titan's opponent back. REVEAL: Chalk.

REFEREE (CONT'D)
He's out. He's hurt. Hold off and mouth off. I gotta count him.

CHALK
Gotcha.

Chalk turns to the fans and raises his arms. They boo him intensely as --

INT. ARENA - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Natalie leans to Tech 1.

NATALIE
Shut the lights.

Tech 1 looks at her. Natalie raises her eyebrows.

INT. ARENA - WRESTLING RING - NIGHT

The referee is on the count of --

REFEREE
Five!

As medics tend to a fallen Titan -- the lights go out.

The ref stops the count, confused.

INT. ARENA - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

The monitors are pitch black.

DANIEL
What the hell? Nat, this isn't your
call.

Natalie steps by her father.

NATALIE
Hang on dad.

AXE
Who's call is it, usually?

Daniel looks at Axe. Monitors his daughter.

TECH 1
The writers. A count-out is default
if there's an injury.

Natalie takes a headset from Tech 1 and speaks to the ref.

TECH 2
Looks like we got a writer here.

Natalie instructs --

NATALIE
Get Titan to roll. Under the ring.
Tell the medics to stay exactly
where they are.

DANIEL
Nat, what are you doing?

NATALIE
Wait dad. Watch.

Natalie switches transmission on the control board to the tab
labelled "Commentators."

NATALIE (CONT'D)
(Into the headset)
Comms? The lights will come back on
and Titan will have disappeared.
Speak on that, speak on Chalk's
frustration. Tell them at home; the
match never finished.

Natalie waits a beat.

INT. ARENA - WRESTLING RING - NIGHT

Through darkness we see the referee instruct Titan to roll
himself under the ring.

The lights return to normal. The crowd coo at the fact that
Titan is no longer there.

Chalk looks around, clueless.

CRAIG, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
What just happened?

PAT, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
Titan. Mystical and majestic --
he's gone Craig, he's gone!

INT. ARENA - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Natalie beams --

NATALIE
Yes!

She watches the screens as she hands back the headset.

DANIEL
That's a risk Nat. Injuries can --

NATALIE

It's fine dad. The medics are right there, don't worry.

She looks toward the Techs. Sees the amber light.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Show over?

The Techs nod. Monitors show the fans leaving.

Natalie rushes through the curtain.

Clara comes along. Addresses everyone.

CLARA

Hey. What did I miss?

Daniel looks at her. Axe gives Clara a subtle "how you doing" look. She smiles at him.

Daniel walks in Clara's direction as Axe watches the monitors with the Techs. They see Natalie joining the medics who properly tend to Titan.

INT. ARENA - WRESTLING RING - DAY

Chalk drops to ringside as Titan rolls out from under the ring. Chalk helps the medics strap Titan to a board, able to lift Titan way better than regular people can.

CHALK

(To Titan)

Was it something I did?

TITAN

No. Awkward landing that's all.

Natalie watches the medics. Titan looks at her.

TITAN (CONT'D)

I'll be alright.

Natalie nods. Puts her hands on her hips. Becomes lost in wonderment.

INT. AIRPORT - DEPARTURE GATE - DAY

Natalie is by the window, hands on her hips exactly as they were in the previous scene. The P.A. system calls for her flight to board.

She drags her carry-on and lifts her backpack. Her phone RINGS. She answers as she gets in line.

DANIEL (O.S.)
Nat, you alright?

NATALIE
Fine dad.

DANIEL (O.S.)
Nice audible you called on Titan.
Really saves his character --

NATALIE
You want something? I'm about to board.

DANIEL (O.S.)
Well, your tone tells me you've already read your e-mails.

NATALIE
Mhmm.

DANIEL (O.S.)
The format. For next week's show.
You're on it. You'll be glad to know I've been vetting --

NATALIE
Yup. I'm booked.

A beat as Daniel sighs.

DANIEL (O.S.)
Look I know you're disappointed --

NATALIE
Can we...
(She strains)
How did it go with Clara?

DANIEL (O.S.)
Our financial situation makes things difficult honey. Her demands won't necessarily carry over to the next company.

Natalie hands over her boarding pass and passport.

NATALIE
I have to go -- can I just... Did you see the ratings?

DANIEL (O.S.)

I saw. I know they're on the rise.
It doesn't change our stance. We'll
still sell. We have until Casino
Warfare to wrap things up.

NATALIE

To WAW though dad?

The gatekeeper hands back her passport and boarding pass.
Natalie walks.

DANIEL (O.S.)

Nat what can I say? This is the
biggest bid we'll get. We have to
take the offer while it's there.

Natalie looks sad -- the signal cuts on the call as she walks
down the tunnel.

INT. ARENA - WRESTLING RING - NIGHT

DANIEL (POSTLAP O.S.)

Nat are you there?... Natalie?

All eyes on Natalie in the ring. She's holding the GW World
Championship belt, standing across the ring from Chalk. Axe
is close to Natalie.

PAT, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)

A tough lesson in growing up folks.
Miss Hurst is here to award the GW
Title to Chalk. After Titan's
injury, the Board demands the
company maintains a fighting
champion.

CRAIG, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)

And Chalk's the right man for the
job. Go on little girl, hand the
belt over.

Things seem slow motion as Chalk holds out his arm. Natalie
reaches her arm to hand the belt over. Chalk's fingers touch
the gold -- but Natalie snatches it back.

NATALIE

No.

CRAIG, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
No?

PAT, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
No?

INT. DANIEL'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Daniel's watching from his couch.

DANIEL

No?!

Daniel's angry. He watches the TV.

INT. ARENA - WRESTLING RING - NIGHT

Chalk looks at Axe as if to wonder what's going on. Natalie steps toward Chalk and talks at him.

NATALIE

You wanna be a worthy champion,
don'tcha?

(To the crowd)

Don't we all wanna see a worthy
champion?

The fans respond, cheering. Meanwhile Natalie holds a hand over the microphone and makes eye-contact with Chalk.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

(Off-mic)

Go with it. Be angry.

Chalk addresses her on the microphone.

CHALK

You have your orders and you have
your role in this place. Making
these decisions is not it. Bottom
line; Titan's injured. His loss is
my gain.

Chalk reaches for the Belt, but Axe steps in front of Natalie and the crowd cheer. A face to face showdown between Chalk and Axe.

INT. DANIEL'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Daniel has both his hands on his face, shocked.

DANIEL

Nat, Nat what are you doing?

INT. ARENA - WRESTLING RING - NIGHT

NATALIE
 (Off-mic)
 Stay there boys.

Natalie addresses the crowd as neither Chalk nor Axe move from their staredown.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
 Wouldn't we all like to see a
 champion that deserves this belt?

AUDIENCE
 Yeah!

NATALIE
 Wouldn't Titan want his successor
 to be someone that earns this belt?

AUDIENCE
 Yeah!

NATALIE
 Then be prepared ladies and
 gentlemen and that means you too
 Chalk.

She approaches the showdown and tells Chalk and the world in unison --

NATALIE (CONT'D)
 There'll be a tournament for the
 Glory Wrestling World Championship.
 Single round knockout. The winner
 will be crowned in Las Vegas at
 Casino Warfare!

INT. DANIEL'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Daniel is rocking on his couch, his head in his hands --

INT. ARENA - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Natalie is on the phone to her dad.

DANIEL (O.S.)
 (Yells)
 What are you doing?

NATALIE

Another audible. I thought it went well?

Natalie smiles, clearly happy with herself.

DANIEL (O.S.)

This isn't a damn game! We are selling the company. The buyers want a champion -- you were supposed to go out there and hand that belt over --

Natalie holds the phone away from her ear. Inaudible yelling continues from Daniel.

She puts the phone close to her ear -- more yelling. She holds it away.

Wrestlers and GW staff pass her and she puts on a smile to greet them. They can all hear the yelling as they pass.

She puts the phone close to her ear again... There's quiet.

NATALIE

Dad?

Daniel breathes heavily on the other end of the phone.

DANIEL (O.S.)

Tournaments take planning, they take graphics, build-up, TV commercials, character profiles you name it. You know all this --

NATALIE

And we can do it. Look at the buzz. And watch our ratings; they're already going up dad, I promise.

DANIEL (O.S.)

It's not our concern. The company is being sold, don't you get that? Any investment into storylines now just wastes our money and builds the characters and the brand for the next guy --

NATALIE

Then don't sell. The ratings have already boosted and I know you dad, you've enjoyed what you've seen. Am I right?

A beat.

DANIEL (O.S.)

Nat. I want to be proud of you and I am, for a lot of reasons. But the sale is happening. It's what's best for business.

Natalie looks sad. The conversation ends. She is a lonely dejected figure.

Chalk and Axe approach. She looks at them, shakes her head.

CHALK

Sounded like he doesn't wanna keep the company.

Natalie shakes her head some more. *She can't believe it.*

NATALIE

Thanks Chalk, for how you responded out there.

CHALK

Took my cue from this guy.

Chalk and Axe seem to be on banter terms. A mutual respect, of sorts.

AXE

It's easy staring you down.

CHALK

Oh yeah, sure.

Natalie smiles. A beat.

NATALIE

Looks like the fun's over. Dad won't let the tournament go ahead. I won't be part of the format. Dad will write me out himself if he has to.

Natalie looks dejected.

CHALK

(To Axe)

Suppose I can beat you up on House shows instead.

AXE

Dream on.

Chalk looks at Natalie.

CHALK

What?

NATALIE

House shows...

Axe looks at Natalie, then at Chalk.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

We can do the tournament on House shows. Fans will record it on their phones and it can be social media that carries the story.

Axe and Chalk seem agreeable. Natalie puts a hand on each of their chests.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

You guys.

She's grateful. She rushes off. Chalk and Axe stay side by side. They walk.

CHALK

It'll still be my title, Karate boy.

Axe shakes his head. Begins to do a subtle dance.

AXE

(Whispers)

Chalk is cheese. Chalk is cheese.

Chalk swats Axe's stomach. They playfight.

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT

Natalie types out an e-mail on her tablet. The recipient is "GW web designer." The subject heading: "untelevised tournament."

INT. ARENA - WRESTLING RING - NIGHT

A graphic shows the brackets of who's competing in the GW World Championship tournament.

Natalie is in an executive box, watching with the audience.

MONTAGE

- Axe competes and impressively wins his match.
- Two other main stars compete, putting on an exciting show.
- Chalk dominates in his performance.
- The brackets' graphic shows competitors advancing in the tournament. Chalk advances, as does Axe.
- Fan videos, photos and uploaded screenshots show how well the tournament is faring with the live audience and internet fanfare.
- Tournament graphics show various wrestlers on their journey to Casino Warfare.
- Chalk wins another match to advance again.
- Axe advances -- but --

END MONTAGE

INT. ARENA - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Clara is sat on equipment boxes talking to Natalie as Hwang rushes to them.

NATALIE

Hwang, what's wrong?

Hwang waves his phone.

HWANG

My mother. She had a fall. I must go to her.

NATALIE

(Nods)

Of course, go.

HWANG

The tournament. When is the next House show?

NATALIE

Two days. Bozeman, Montana.

Hwang looks conflicted.

CLARA

Two days. Flight path won't work to have you make it on time. Unless...

Clara looks at Hwang.

CLARA (CONT'D)
You still got that rental?

A look from Natalie.

NATALIE
My rental?

Hwang nods. Clara hops off the equipment box and takes Hwang by his hand. Natalie notices this.

CLARA
Come on. I'll drive.

NATALIE
Drop my rental while you're there.
I'll text you details of a flight
path to Bozeman.

CLARA
Got it.

Hwang walks with Clara still holding his hand.

HWANG
You don't have to drive. I can --

CLARA
You just had a match, Axe. Relax.
I'll drive. Rest in the car. You'll
wanna be awake for your mom when we
get there.

INT. FUMIO'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

A cane leads the way; Fumio enters through the front door. She speaks Indonesian, Hwang follows her in, carrying her bags. Then Clara enters. Hwang doesn't seem to be listening.

FUMIO
(Subtitled)
I don't want fuss. I don't want
food. I want to sleep. I didn't get
any rest in that supposed care
facility they call a hospital.

HWANG
OK Maa.

FUMIO
 (Subtitled)
 And you haven't introduced me to
 your friend.

Fumio looks over her shoulder to judge Clara.

FUMIO (CONT'D)
 You need to eat. I've seen more
 meat on a fish.

Surprisingly crystal clear English. Hwang seems embarrassed.
 Clara hides a laugh. Hwang puts Fumio's bags aside.

Clara escorts Fumio to her bedroom.

INT. FUMIO'S APARTMENT - FUMIO'S BEDROOM - DAY

The sunlight is bright through the window as Fumio staggers
 onto the bed. She waves Clara toward the windows.

FUMIO
 Shut. Shit.

Clara gets what she means, rushing over to the window to
 close the curtains.

Hwang is by the door.

HWANG
 (To Clara)
 Sorry. She meant sheet. She doesn't
 always know what she's saying.

FUMIO
 (Subtitled)
 She understood. Will you marry her?

Clara looks at Hwang.

CLARA
 What's she say now?

Hwang shrugs.

HWANG
 She's just cursing.

CLARA
 At me?

Hwang shakes his head. He goes to help his mother settle in
 bed. She keeps speaking in Indonesian.

Hwang puts on a smile and looks over his shoulder toward Clara as he tucks his mother in.

Clara signals "tea?" Hwang nods. Clara exits.

Fumio settles as Hwang sits at the foot of the bed.

A beat.

FUMIO
(Subtitled)
So? I asked you to come home.

HWANG
(Subtitled)
I've been working Maa, I'm sorry.

A *whatever* look from Fumio.

FUMIO
(Subtitles)
Working, on girls?

Hwang laughs.

HWANG
No Maa, really working.

Fumio notices Hwang's muscles. She puts a hand to his chest. Pinches at his arms.

HWANG (CONT'D)
I've been on TV. Fans are great.
(Subtitled)
It's really fun.

Fumio looks at him, a stern expression.

FUMIO
You're not here.
(Subtitled)
You were not here when I fell.

A guilty nod from Hwang. Fumio's stern expression remains. She turns to her side and lays, cold-shouldering Hwang.

FUMIO (CONT'D)
(Subtitled)
The job guarantees nothing except
not being home.

Hwang looks sad. *Maybe he thought his mother would have been proud.* Hwang slides off the bed and sits on the floor.

INT. GLORY WRESTLING HQ - DANIEL'S OFFICE - DAY

Natalie walks in. Daniel is at his desk, finishes a call.

DANIEL
Yeah. Great. Thanks Malik...
Alright. Thanks. Bye.

Natalie approaches.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Everything alright?

Natalie pauses. She has a format in her hands.

NATALIE
I...

DANIEL
What?

NATALIE
I don't get it. The semi-finals
will be televised?

Daniel nods. Natalie waits, eager.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
Dad?

DANIEL
What? This is what you wanted is it
not? TV time, exposure for the
tournament. Spotlight on the value
of the Championship. I see the
potential there.

NATALIE
You do? All of a sudden?

DANIEL
Don't disrespect me now.

NATALIE
Sorry. I didn't mean --

Daniel puts up a hand.

DANIEL
Nat. It's fine. I've watched more
Glory on the website of late than I
have Turmoil. You've got the fans
involved more than ever.
(MORE)

DANIEL (CONT'D)

We're gonna steady this ship. And you and Axe can take my thanks for that.

NATALIE

Does this mean we're not selling?

A look from Daniel. *He doesn't want to tell her either way.*

A beat.

Natalie smiles. She knows.

DANIEL

I know what you did has always been with good intention, but it's not acceptable long term. You can't go against the format -- if the wrestlers did that, the whole show would be a circus -- you wanna crash and burn like The Greatest Showman?

NATALIE

That was just a movie dad --

DANIEL

A poignant movie to stress my point damn it. Your mom loved it.

Natalie nods, hiding a smile.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

I --

Daniel loses eye contact, looks down.

NATALIE

Mom loved you.

Father and daughter gaze at one another in silence. An embrace of love and mourning. They remember Natalie's mother, together.

INT. FUMIO'S APARTMENT - FUMIO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hwang is exactly where he was. Clara stands by him, taking a mug from his hand and passing him another one.

CLARA

Tea number three.

Clara places the empty mug on the bedside table. She smiles as she sits beside Hwang. She has the purple teddy bear from the fairground in her lap. Hwang smiles.

HWANG
What's this?

CLARA
I carry him around with me.

HWANG
No you don't.

CLARA
I do. He's in my travel bag.

Hwang looks at her in disbelief.

HWANG
Always?

CLARA
Really, always. Thought he could hang out with us tonight.

Hwang smiles. Sips his tea.

MONTAGE

- Hwang and Clara talk.

- Hwang and Clara laugh together.

- Hwang and Clara fall asleep together, on the floor of Fumio's bedroom; Clara's head rested on Hwang's chest.

END MONTAGE

A phone BUZZES. Wakes Clara up, grabbing the phone out of her back pocket.

CHYRON/CALLER ID: Natalie.

Clara gets up. She takes the teddy bear and places it on the bed next to Fumio. She exits the room to talk.

INT. FUMIO'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Hwang rubs his eyes as he looks around.

HWANG
Clara?

No bags.

A glance toward the front window; the rental car is gone.

INT. FUMIO'S APARTMENT - FUMIO'S BEDROOM - DAY

Fumio's asleep. Hwang is by the door. He sees the purple teddy bear. Disappointment all over his face.

Fumio wakes. She's startled by the bear. She looks at Hwang.

HWANG
(Subtitled)
I'll make breakfast.

Hwang walks off. Fumio looks at the bear, unimpressed.

INT. FUMIO'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Hwang makes eggs. Fumio enters using her cane for balance.

HWANG
(Subtitled)
I can help --

He rushes over to Fumio. Helps her to

INT. FUMIO'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Hwang guides Fumio to sit.

FUMIO
(Subtitled)
Is she gone?

Hwang nods.

FUMIO (CONT'D)
(Subtitled)
Something else I was right about.

HWANG
(Subtitled)
What? What was you right about,
about her?

Fumio looks at him. *What was she right about?*

A beat.

HWANG (CONT'D)
Nothing. You weren't right about Clara, because you knew nothing.

FUMIO
(Subtitled)
What are you saying? Why are you shouting at me?

HWANG
(Subtitled)
I'm not shouting. But no matter what I do Maa, nothing meets your approval -- ever.

FUMIO
(Subtitled)
Well was I wrong? You were out to learn -- learn you have no full time job? Learn you left me to fall?

Hwang shakes his head. He doesn't want to argue with her. He leaves to the kitchen.

A beat. Fumio's expression shows she's mentally preparing her argument --

Hwang returns with her eggs.

FUMIO (CONT'D)
(Subtitled)
I can't believe you --

HWANG
Maa, I can't believe you. That's all I'll say, that after all this time, I've been here, I've paid the bills and I have made your life as easy as possible.

FUMIO
(Subtitled)
That's my fault?

HWANG
It's not about blame Maa, but you have to let me live for me. So what if wrestling's a mistake -- I've learned a lot. Clara's not my girlfriend, but if she was and she breaks my heart -- so what? I'll learn.

Fumio is finally silenced.

HWANG (CONT'D)
(Subtitled)
And no matter where I go, or what I
learn, I'll rush home. Because I
love my mother.

Fumio looks at him. Takes her eggs. She eats, almost in protest. Hwang stands, slowly backs off.

INT. ARENA - WRESTLING RING - NIGHT

Axe competes with one of the meat-head heavyweights. The crowd are on his side as he gets his opponent into a hammerlock and chops him across the back of his neck --

PAT, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
Hammer-Axe!

CRAIG, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
Hammer-Axe!

A devastating knock-out. Axe pins his opponent as the referee and the crowd count together --

REFEREE
One! Two! Three!

AUDIENCE
One! Two! Three!

Axe has his hand raised by the ref and he takes adulation from the fans.

PAT, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
Amazing. What a match! Axe's first
real contest on GW TV and he
absolutely nailed it.

CRAIG, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
Yeah yeah, so he belongs, big deal.
He's gonna have no chance come the
Final. He'll face --

MUSIC hits and Chalk makes an entrance. He remains on stage staring down toward the ring, fiercely locking eyes with Axe.

CRAIG, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.) (CONT'D)
Exactly this man. Chalk you don't
let us down.

PAT, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
You really think he's going to win?

CRAIG, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
That Championship is his. He
shoulda had it by default in the
first place.

PAT, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
 But come on, given how far Axe's
 come -- and his moves. Did you see
 his finisher -- the Hammer-Axe? Man
 that was cool.

CRAIG, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
 Well it's no surprise that you're
 so impressed by a damn underdog.
 Not me. I'm with Chalk all the way.

Half the crowd chant

AUDIENCE
 Chalk is cheese! Chalk is cheese!

The other half chant

AUDIENCE (CONT'D)
 Axe! Axe! Axe! Axe!

CRAIG, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
 (Yells)
 Shut up! Morons!

Axe and Chalk's staredown ends the show.

INT. DANIEL'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Daniel is sat with a half-eaten tub of popcorn, watching
 Casino Warfare on TV.

Predator lays across the couch -- seems even he's interested.

ON THE SCREEN

A video package shows build-up to the pay-per-view. Emphasis
 is on Chalk and Axe's rivalry. Emphasis is on the
 prestigiousness of Glory Wrestling's World Title.

Daniel enjoys the promo. He nods eagerly as the show reaches
 the main event.

INT. ARENA - WRESTLING RING - NIGHT

The fans chant and cheer as spotlights soar all over the
 arena. A calm before the storm...

INT. ARENA - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Chalk's MUSIC plays as he steps through the curtain.

NATALIE

Good luck!

Natalie is at Ground Control with Tech 1 and Tech 2. She has her own headset. Axe is by the table. He looks at Natalie. She removes the headset and moves around the table.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

You good?

Axe nods.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

You know the finish?

Axe nods.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Good. And your mom --

AXE

She's fine. I make sure I call.

NATALIE

Good. Enjoy it. First official day at your new job.

Axe's expression is a smile of gratitude, but he seems disconnected. Natalie retakes her seat as boos filter in from Chalk's entrance.

Axe's MUSIC hits --

Axe looks down the backstage area. *No sign of her.*

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Go!

Axe steps through the entry curtain.

INT. ARENA - WRESTLING RING - NIGHT

The crowd are on their feet as Axe makes his entrance.

CRAIG, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)

What is this like his sixth match?

PAT, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)

Six wins and counting. This will be lucky number seven -- and it could make this man. The rise of a new champion here in Glory Wrestling.

Axe enters the ring and exchanges mean looks with Chalk. The referee is close by and he addresses them both.

REFEREE

I'm excited boys, lets have fun.

The ref is handed the GW Championship belt from ringside. He raises it. Neither Chalk nor Axe can take their eyes off it. The ref passes the belt back to ringside.

REFEREE (CONT'D)

Ring the bell! --

DING DING DING

The match starts. Axe circles as the beastly Chalk holds ground in the centre.

AXE

Like our first House show?

CHALK

Put over my strength? Sure. First sequence to cover, then second.

Axe nods. They tie up.

Fans at the edge of their seats. The tension palpable.

INT. ARENA - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Natalie and the Techs watch the match, but a towering shadow overcomes them. Natalie looks up and smiles. The Techs seem excited at who they see. *Dreadlocks that form a mane.*

INT. ARENA - WRESTLING RING - DAY

Axe and Chalk go back and forth putting on a stellar match. Chalk is steadfast with his wrestling moves, but Axe is fast, hitting Chalk with numerous martial arts combinations.

PAT, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)

Jeez Craig, I'm sweatin over here.
Who the hell's gonna win this?

CRAIG, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)

I know you're sweatin 'cause I can
smell ya. Just imagine the
conditioning of these two --

PAT, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
 Is that what it's going to come
 down to? Lasting? If so Axe has got
 to be the favorite --

CRAIG, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
 Hold your stinkin horses Pat
 alright? Chalk knows what he's
 doing and it'll take just one big
 move from him to slow Axe down
 completely. Chalk needs to catch
 the damn fly --

On cue; Axe flies off the top turnbuckle only for Chalk to
 catch him and slam him to the canvas --

CRAIG, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.) (CONT'D)
 Yes! That's what I'm talking about!
 What did I tell ya?

PAT, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
 Man, what impact. And you may be
 right Craig. It's not just Chalk's
 power that's a factor here, but
 experience clearly counts too.

The contest goes on

MONTAGE

- Axe falls to ringside where Chalk follows him and rams him
 into the barricade.

- Chalk takes a drink from a fan and spits in it. The crowd
 boo, only for Axe to throw the drink in Chalk's face; the
 crowd cheer.

- Back in the ring the match goes back and forth with some
 mat wrestling.

END MONTAGE

INT. ARENA - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Natalie and the Techs watch the match at Ground Control.

INT. ARENA - WRESTLING RING - NIGHT

Axe has Chalk in a small package --

REFEREE
 One! Two! --

Chalk kicks out. Both men get to their feet and go against opposite ropes. They collide, double clotheslines in the centre of the ring.

CRAIG, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
 God that must'a hurt. But look at
 Axe, he's up --

Axe is in a hurry as he climbs to the top turnbuckle and waits for Chalk to get to his feet. Axe leaps and lands a perfect side kick to Chalk's head -- Chalk goes down.

PAT, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
 What a move! A cover!

REFEREE	AUDIENCE
One! Two! --	One! Two! --

Chalk kicks out. The crowd gasp as Chalk successfully keeps the match alive.

A beat as Axe looks to the fans and their volume increases. They cheer him on.

PAT, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
 Here it comes Craig. He's going for
 it! Hammer-Axe time! This match
 will be over.

Axe gets Chalk to his feat and moves him into a hammerlock.

AXE
 Ready?

CHALK
 Nail me.

The crowd cheer as Axe smashes the back of Chalk's neck with a martial arts chop --

CRAIG, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
 Hammer-Axe!

PAT, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
 Cover him -- cover him -- cov --

Pat counts along with the referee as does the crowd

PAT, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.) (CONT'D)	AUDIENCE
One! Two! --	One! Two! --

The ref is yanked out of the ring by two giant hands.

CRAIG, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
What the?!

REVEAL: Titan.

The crowd are in shock. Axe releases the cover and looks over his shoulder; a staredown with Titan. *He's even bigger than Chalk.*

PAT, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
Oh my God.

CRAIG, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
Titan? Titan's here? Did you know he was here?

PAT, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
No one knew he was here, but he just cost Axe the Title!

CRAIG, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)	PAT, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
Why?	(CONT'D)
	Why?

Titan stares menacingly at Axe.

INT. ARENA - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Natalie and the Techs watch the monitors and they seem pleased with how this is going. Natalie has the format in front of her.

ON THE TV

The referee is out of it at ringside. Titan enters the ring. The crowd are conflicted.

CRAIG, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
We know Titan as a fan favorite,
but Axe has taken GW to new levels -
- Titan doesn't seem too happy
about it.

PAT, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
A threat? Is that it? Titan's
turning his back on the fans 'cause
he sees Axe as a threat?!

INT. ARENA - WRESTLING RING - NIGHT

Titan goes face to face with Axe.

AXE
Cool mask.

TITAN
Thanks.

AXE
Chokeslamming me?

Titan shakes his head as he circles Axe. Chalk looks like he's coming to.

AXE (CONT'D)
Wasn't that the plan?

TITAN
There's a bogie.

Axe looks shocked --

TITAN (CONT'D)
Take a low blow in three, two, one -
-

An arm uppercuts between Axe's legs and he hits the canvas after a devastating low blow.

AUDIENCE
Ohhh!

Titan grabs Chalk and lifts him to his feet, pointing to Axe as if he's gift-wrapped him.

PAT, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
A low blow, by God -- what the? --
Who the?!

CRAIG, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
Yes! She's back!

Axe rolls to his back and looks up at the lights. He blinks and realizes that the woman who's brought him down is

REVEAL: Clara.

Axe is in shock.

Chalk bursts into action and goes to pick Axe up. Titan and Clara exit the ring. Titan throws the ref back in as Chalk completes the CSI Bomb.

PAT, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)
No, not like this. It's not fair!

The crowd boo like crazy as the referee counts.

REFEREE

One... Two... Three.

DING DING DING.

A beat of shock and awe as Ground Control focus on crowd reactions.

Clara gets back in the ring, carrying the GW Championship. Titan gets in too and he raises Chalk's hand.

CRAIG, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)

This is brilliant!

PAT, ON COMMENTARY (O.C.)

What is going on? We haven't seen Clara for months. She was a fan favorite too, and Titan -- Titan's just -- by God, this is just devastating, devastating!

The fans are in shock, some in tears. Many little girls wearing Clara t-shirts and purple wigs.

Clara hands Chalk the Championship who proudly raises it. The crowd boo immensely, probably booing Clara and Titan even more than they're booing the result of the match.

Axe exits the ring.

INT. ARENA - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Natalie applauds as Axe comes through the curtain. She's smiling and ecstatic with how everything's panned out. Axe doesn't seem happy.

AXE

Bogie?

Natalie nods eagerly. Axe wants answers. Chalk, Titan and Clara emerge through the curtain. Natalie applauds as do the Techs and other GW wrestlers and staff.

NATALIE

Woooo! Congratulations!

A few whistles and cheers from GW staff.

Before Axe can say a word -- Clara kisses him... A big smile on her face. Axe seems confused. Chalk pats him on the shoulder.

CHALK
Way to take a low blow.

TITAN
Yeah, nice job.

AXE
You're not injured?

TITAN
I am. Very. I had to hide my hobble
gettin in and out the ring.

Titan and Chalk get going. Chalk gladly carries the belt.

Axe looks at Clara who's hanging on his arm. Natalie pats Axe
on his shoulder and walks past.

NATALIE
Great job.

Axe looks at Clara, then at Natalie.

AXE
You couldn't have told me?

Natalie shrugs.

NATALIE
I wanted an authentic reaction.

A beat.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
You thought she left the company
huh? Left you?

Natalie smiles as she walks. Clara beams as she and Axe walk
a pace behind.

CLARA
Didn't hurt ya did I?

AXE
You couldn't have told me? Your
contract, it's --

CLARA
All done. New deal is signed.

AXE
Big money?

NATALIE

It wasn't about the money. All she wanted was to be a heel... And she wanted to work with you.

Clara's demeanor is putty. Axe finally smiles. Natalie looks over her shoulder and shakes her head.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Get a room you two.

She walks ahead.

Her phone PINGS.

CHYRON/DAD: Ratings through the roof!

TYPING...

CHYRON/DAD: Well done. Your mom would be proud.

Natalie smiles, victorious.

THE END