

THE LONG COUNT
Issue 4

The Permanence of Stains
Part One

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PAGE ONE

ROW ONE: ONE PANEL

Panel One: Carmen is fighting against sleep as the train jostles and rocks along its track. The LITTLE GIRL sits next to her, quietly reading from her book. Her mother is flipping through her copy of Inversiones magazine. The other passengers are engaged in their activities: some are readings, others deep in conversation. A man with thick black glasses scrolls through his PDA.

TEXT BOX (NARRATIVE)

Chaac, the cloud striker, gave us the rain and the thunder.

The violent anger of the great sky.

But snow is not violent; it is gentle.

ROW TWO: THREE PANELS

Panel One: Carmen's groggy eyes looks outside the window of the train. Her warm breath creates fog on the glass.

TEXT BOX (NARRATIVE)

A kiss upon the cheek.

Panel Two: IN THE PAST: A MCU of Young Carmen's face. Her cheeks and nose are red. A white cloud of breath escapes from between her chattering teeth.

Panel Three: IN THE PRESENT: Carmen lazily draws a pattern in the fog.

TEXT BOX (NARRATIVE)

The gentle brush of a familiar touch.

ROW THREE: ONE PANEL

Panel One: IN THE PAST: Young Carmen--street thief Carmen--is running toward her home. Her friends, the African girl and the other Mayan girl, are following her.

TEXT BOX (NARRATIVE)

It has always snowed in Nueva Cempoala.

PAGE TWO

ROW ONE: THREE PANELS

This a shot of the seat, split three ways, but the images are continuous: left side of the seat; middle; aisle seat.

Panel One: Carmen's head lolls against the window. Her eyes close.

TEXT BOX (NARRATIVE)

And the snow, it hides...

Panel Two: The LITTLE GIRL looks up, her book falling to her lap, at Carmen's sleeping form.

Panel Three: Her mother continues to read her magazine.

TEXT BOX (NARRATIVE)

...so much.

ROW TWO: THREE PANELS

Panel One: IN THE FAR PAST: A baby, wrapped in a thick deer pelt, looks up at her mother lovingly.

TEXT BOX (NARRATIVE)

In the 1500th year of the European Calendar,
a little girl was born into a life without choice.

Panel Two: SAME ERA: That baby, now grown to all of 10 years, holds the bleeding body of a large grey squirrel. She holds it high, like a trophy, as she smiles victoriously toward the viewer. Behind her, her tribe's settlement looms.

TEXT BOX (NARRATIVE)

Her companionship was promised
to the greatest warrior in her tribe.

Panel Three: The child gone, she is now a young woman, aged 15. In her time, she is prime for mating. The arm of an UNSEEN MAN is draped over her shoulder. She is looking down, dismayed perhaps, or resigned toward a life of hardship and pain. This girl, this young woman, bares a striking resemblance to Carmen.

TEXT BOX (NARRATIVE)

Legend states that, as she grew,
her beauty became unparalleled.

That the men of not only her tribe,
but all neighboring tribes,
fought to blood for her hand.

ROW THREE: TWO PANELS

Panel One: IN THE FAR PAST: A young Mayan man in Spanish armor kneels at the foot of a temple. Around him, there is war. The Tribes have descended upon Nieuw Amsterdam, a prominent Dutch settlement and the last bastion of European military force in the land. Bloodied bodies lay face-down in the ground.

What once was mud is now freezing. It has begun to snow.

In the distance, another Mayan soldier in Spanish armor rushes to his friend.

TEXT BOX (NARRATIVE)

Even more than a hundred years after her death,
men continued to wage war...

Panel Two: The rushing Mayan soldier reacts as a metal ball collides with his head. Bits of brain and bone splatter.

TEXT BOX (NARRATIVE)

...simply for a glimpse of her face.

PAGE THREE

ROW ONE: THREE PANELS

Panel One: The girl approaches her father, who is knelt beside a fire, warming his hands. As in 1625 and 2012, it is snowing.

GIRL (SPOKEN)

Father, I need to speak with you.

FATHER (SPOKEN)

Yes, girl?

Panel Two: The girl kneels behind her father, reverently.

GIRL (SPOKEN)

Father, when will I be allowed to marry?

It has been so long now--

Panel Three: Her father, offended, turns his head suddenly.

FATHER (SPOKEN)

Do not question your elder, girl.

ROW TWO: THREE PANELS

Panel One: Her father returns his attention to the fire.

FATHER (SPOKEN)

Your maidenhood is our greatest asset.

Panel Two: Girl's reaction: stoic, quietly seething.

Panel Three: Father, smirking.

FATHER (SPOKEN)

You are worth more prized than possessed, I assure you.

PAGE FOUR

ROW ONE: THREE PANELS

Panel One: IN THE PRESENT: On the train, Carmen stirs. Her one good eye opens.

Panel Two: Eye wider, panicked.

Panel Three: She sits up in her seat, quickly.

CARMEN (SPOKEN)

Why have we stopped?

ROW TWO: THREE PANELS

Panel One: The little girl answers, not looking up from her book.

LITTLE GIRL (SPOKEN)

Some soldiers are looking for someone.

Panel Two: The girl's mother puts her magazine away. Down the aisle, visible over the woman's shoulder: A guard, dressed the same as the ones at the station, walks down the aisles of the train, eying the passengers suspiciously.

Panel Three: Carmen shrinks in her seat, calculating her moves.

ROW THREE: THREE PANELS

Panel One: The little girl reads her history book, contented.

Panel Two: In 1500EC, the little girl holds her bloody prize, grinning.

Panel Three: Carmen, today. Her bandaged eye starts dripping black blood.

PAGE FIVE

ROW ONE: TWO PANELS

Panel One: Carmen rises suddenly, clutching her bleeding eye, panicked, embarrassed.

Panel Two: She shuffles her way out of the seat.

CARMEN (SPOKEN)

Pardon me.

ROW TWO: TWO PANELS

Panel One: Back shot of Carmen, walking forward down the aisle.

Panel Two: Pull back, the guard down the aisle clutches a PDA. On the left side: A picture of Carmen, On the right side: Spanish text reads:

Nombre: Carmen Maria de la Tierra Sandoval
Date of Birth: 09/29/1988
Altura: 5'8"
Peso: 128 lbs
Detenciones Anteriores: <Armed Theft, Manslaughter>
Direction: Suspect is Armed. Permission granted to shoot on sight.

ROW THREE: ONE PANEL

Panel Three: CU of PDA, focusing on:

ENVIRONMENT (PDA)

Permission granted to shoot on sight.

PAGE SIX

ROW ONE: TWO PANELS

Panel One: 1620EC: The Mayan in Spanish Armor knocks on a temple door.

MAYAN SOLDIER (SPOKEN)

Padre, are you in?

Panel Two: An old Mayan dressed in Spanish robes decorated in Mayan symbols opens the door.

PADRE (SPOKEN)

Yes, Xaman, come in.

ROW TWO: THREE PANELS

Panel One: Padre and the soldier—Xaman—walk down the aisles of a mission-style church.

PADRE (SPOKEN)

We have a task of the utmost importance, my son.

Panel Two: Soldier's face, stern, serious.

XAMAN (SPOKEN)

Of course, Padre.

Panel Three: Padre reaches the pulpit, bends down to pick up something out of frame.

PADRE (SPOKEN)

Our Spanish allies have heard tales—superstitious nonsense, really

ROW THREE: THREE PANELS

Panel One: Padre's hand gripping an old, yellowed scroll.

PADRE (SPOKEN)

--but disturbing nonetheless.

Panel Two: Xaman looks at the padre quizzically.

XAMAN (SPOKEN)

What tales, your holiness?

Panel One: The scroll, unfurled: A picture of a death mask, from a young, feminine face.

PADRE (SPOKEN)

The legend of some dead whore bride.

PAGE SEVEN

ROW ONE: TWO PANELS

Panel One: 1500EC: The young woman is preparing supper for her father. She pulls back the skin from a hanged deer with a stone knife. The cut is clean, skillful. The blood pools underneath her feet.

ROW TWO: THREE PANELS

Panel One: A Mayan warrior enters. His malicious intent is evident in his eyes.

Panel Two: The woman reacts, startled, turns about to face him. She is clutching her stone knife in her hand.

Panel Three: The Mayan warrior produces a long rough-edged sword.

ROW THREE: THREE PANELS

Panel One: The man advances.

MAYAN WARRIOR (SPOKEN)

Your father has no intention of letting you go.

Panel Two: The woman's horrified eyes.

Panel Three: CU of the blade in his large, scarred hands.

MAYAN WARRIOR (SPOKEN)

And when I am through, you will not
be worth fighting for, anymore.

PAGE EIGHT

ROW ONE: THREE PANELS

Panel One: 2012EC: Carmen in the cramped bathroom of the train. Her blood-brownd bandages are draped over the edge of the sink.

Panel Two: Carmen's eyes, reflected in the mirror. Her right one is fine, but the left one is sealed shut by a large, purplish-black blood bubble that is draining down her cheek.

Panel Three: Carmen's hands running a paper tower under the faucet.

ROW TWO: TWO PANELS

Panel One: She winces as she attempts to clean the wound.

Panel Two: She stops, leans on the sink, exhausted and unsure.

TEXT BOX (QUETZALCOATL, SPOKEN)

“Mi hija, I have give so much.”

“And never asked for anything in return.”

ROW THREE: THREE PANELS

Panel One: Flashback: Carmen, in the house, facing Quetzalcoatl on his screens. Carmen has just returned from the bathroom. Any minute, Paqok's soldiers will burst through the door.

CARMEN (SPOKEN)

Mi guia, I love you with all I am.

Panel Two: Quetzalcoatl's screen; Carmen's down-turned face is reflected in it.

Panel Three: Quetzalcoatl's POV: Carmen's face, tilted up a bit. Her eyes are avoiding his.

CARMEN (SPOKEN)

But this I cannot do.

PAGE NINE

ROW ONE: TWO PANELS

Panel One: 2012EC: A guard advances another row, stands right next to the little girl and her mother.

Panel Two: The girl looks up from her book, smiling.

ROW TWO: THREE PANELS

Panel One: The guard looks over from his PDA.

GUARD (SPOKEN)

Where is the passenger who was in that seat?

Panel Two: The girl puts her book in her back, preparing.

Panel Three: The mother answers:

MAMI (SPOKEN)

She's in the restroom, I think.

ROW THREE: THREE PANELS

Panel One: Guard signals to another.

Panel Two: Shot of the summoned guard marching toward his caller. In the distance, Carmen exits the bathroom.

Panel Three: Shot of Carmen's face, reacting to the attention.

PAGE TEN

ROW ONE: TWO PANELS

Panel One: Flashback: Carmen, in the house, standing before Quetzalcoatl's screens.

QUETZALCOATL (SPOKEN)

I am greatly disappointed, Carmen.

Panel Two: A cultist in the room, screen as he looks outside the window.

CULTIST (SPOKEN, EXCITED)

We have company!

ROW TWO: THREE PANELS

Panel One: Carmen, to Quetzalcoatl, is bowed low before his grace.

CARMEN (SPOKEN)

This cannot be how we part, mi guía.

Panel Two: Quetzalcoatl answers:

QUETZALCOATL (SPOKEN)

My time is over, Carmen.

Panel Three: Carmen places her hand upon the screen.

CARMEN (SPOKEN)

What can I do, mi guía? What--

ROW THREE: THREE PANELS

Panel One: On the train, present: Carmen rushes the guard, leading with her left arm—the good arm.

TEXT BOX (QUETZALCOATL, SPOKEN)

“Find the temple, mi hija.”

Panel Two: Carmen takes the guard as a shield. A harsh glow comes from the right side of the panel.

TEXT BOX (QUETZALCOATL, SPOKEN)

“It is the heart of our land.”

Panel Three: Same shot, but the glow is brighter, harsher—blinding.

TEXT BOX (QUETZALCOATL, SPOKEN)

“It is there you must--”

PAGE ELEVEN

ROW ONE: ONE PANEL

EXTERIOR SHOT: The train was passing over the water, from the mainland of Nueva Cempoala on the left —with its beautiful skyscrapers and the Kowloon-like expanse of el Barrio—to the contiguous soil that serves as home to the majestic domes.

The different compartments of the train are decorated with myriad graffiti styles. It would actually be beautiful on any other day.

On this day, at this moment, three-quarters of the right side of the train is engulfed in flame. Near the back, the second to last train compartment explodes.

PAGE TWELVE

ROW ONE: TWO PANELS

Panel One: People running, panicked. Fire is eating away the inside of the train car. Grey ash dances through the air.

Panel Two: The guards look through the bustling crowd for Carmen.

TEXT BOX (CARMEN, SPOKEN)

All I hear are the cries of human beings.

ROW TWO: THREE PANELS

Panel One: Through the smoke and confusion, Carmen stands.

TEXT BOX (CARMEN, SPOKEN)

There is so much ash in the sky, I can barely see a foot in front of my face.

Panel Two: She clasps her head, obviously in pain. Fire and smoke are all around her.

Panel Three: She looks down, a horrified experience contorts her face.

TEXT BOX (CARMEN, SPOKEN)

But what I can see--

ROW THREE: ONE PANEL

Panel One: The little girl's mother, dead. Her magazine lays at her feet. Her daughter leaning against her mami, crying.

TEXT BOX (CARMEN, SPOKEN)

--is enough.

PAGE THIRTEEN

ROW ONE: TWO PANELS

Panel One: In Carmen's past, as a young teen: A continuation of the previous scene has Carmen running toward her home. Carmen has a rough sack slung over her shoulder. Her two friends follow her. They have mischievous grins on their faces. Her father stands in the doorway. It is snowing.

YOUNG CARMEN (SPOKEN)

Papi! Papi!

Panel Two: Young Carmen just feet from her father. His face is low, concerned.

YOUNG CARMEN (SPOKEN)

Papi, it happened--

ROW TWO: THREE PANELS

Panel One: Papi looks at his daughter, sad. He begins to speak:

PAPI (SPOKEN)

Carmen, I have--

Panel Two: Carmen cuts him off, shoving the sack toward his face.

YOUNG CARMEN (SPOKEN)

No, Papi, look.

Panel Three: Papi's POV: The dull-eyed stare of a dead rabbit from within the sack.

ROW THREE: THREE PANELS

Panel One: Papi's tortured reaction, his pained face.

YOUNG CARMEN (SPOKEN)

Carmen, how--?

Panel Two: In 1500EC, the little girl holds her bloody prize, grinning.

Panel Three: Young Carmen's face, grinning a crooked smile.

YOUNG CARMEN (SPOKEN)

Ixchel has blessed me, father.

PAGE FOURTEEN

ROW ONE: THREE PANELS

Panel One: Papi stares at his daughter, wanting to cry but needing to be strong.

TEXT BOX (YOUNG CARMEN, SPOKEN)

Papi?

Panel Two: In 1500EC, the young woman grabs her knife slowly.

Panel Three: In Young Carmen's time: CU: Carmen's smile drops.

YOUNG CARMEN (SPOKEN)

You look so sad, Papi.

ROW TWO: ONE PANEL

Panel One: In 1500EC, the young woman stands over the body of her fallen “suitor.”

ROW THREE: TWO PANELS

Panel One: Papi cups his daughter's chin in his hands.

Panel Two: He turns to her friends.

PAPI (SPOKEN)

Go home, girls.

PAGE FIFTEEN

ROW ONE: ONE PANEL

Panel One: 2012EC: A modern room, well-decorated. Whoever lives here has high taste, expensive taste. There is a chair near the center, facing a large bay window. From the other side, sun shines brightly. It is not snowing here.

From the side of the chair, a hand rests, holding a cigarette. Its smoke curls toward the ceiling.

ROW TWO: TWO PANELS

Panel Two: CU on the hand, the smoke. The smoke is grey; the hand is Paqok's.

TEXT BOX (CHANTICO, SPOKEN)

“Is this part of your plan, then?”

Panel One: Paqok's shark-like grin, his other hand holds a cellular phone against his cheek.

PAQOK (SPOKEN)

Is *what* part of my plan, Chantico?

ROW THREE: ONE PANEL

Panel One: Chantico stands before a giant television screen. The newscaster is running a report about the train explosion. Chantico is standing next to an ornate end table upon which is set an elegant, old-style phone.

Inset: Chantico spitting his words into the phone.

CHANTICO (SPOKEN)

Turn on your damned television.

PAGE SIXTEEN

ROW ONE: THREE PANELS

Panel One: Paqok's clawed hand pushes a button on a square, black remote control.

Panel Two: CU of the news footage, shows the carnage of the train from a distance. Smoke billows out.

PAQOK (SPOKEN)

Tell me what I'm looking at, old man.

Panel Three: Paqok's passive face.

ROW TWO: THREE PANELS

Panel One: CU of the news footage: A continuation of the coverage but the screen has an inset picture of Carmen Sandoval.

NEWSCASTER (SPOKEN)

**(her speech continues over the panels as a continuing narrative;
possibly as a newsticker-style text box?)**

A teller at Santa Maria de la Tierra says she was involved--

Panel Two: Paqok's reaction.

PAQOK (SPOKEN)

Oh my.

NEWSCASTER (SPOKEN)

--in an altercation with the woman believed to be--

Panel Three: Chantico, scowling.

NEWSCASTER (SPOKEN)

Carmen Sandoval prior to the train leaving the station.

ROW THREE: THREE PANELS

Panel One: News footage: Security image of Carmen trying to purchase a ticket.

TEXT BOX (PAQOK, SPOKEN)

As I assured you earlier, I would never
resort to such vulgar tactics, my good sir.

NEWSCASTER (SPOKEN)

It is believed that Ms. Sandoval, 23--

Panel Two: Chantico, getting angrier.

CHANTICO (SPOKEN)

If not you--

NEWSCASTER (SPOKEN)

--is a member of the terrorist group responsible for the explosion.

Panel Three: More news footage: Security image showing the lead Dragon Cultist addressing the crowd.

TEXT BOX (CHANTICO, SPOKEN)

--then who?

PAGE SEVENTEEN

ROW ONE: THREE PANELS

Panel One - Three: 1500EC: The young woman is dragging the body of her victim to the outskirts of the camp. She is dressed for the weather, with a stick slung to her back.

ROW TWO: ONE PANEL

Panel One: She has dumped his body on the ground of a clearing.

ROW THREE: THREE PANELS

Panel One: She grabs the stick from her back.

Panel Two: CU of her marking the soil with it. The stick digs deep into the soil as it scratches an arc in the dirt.

Panel Three: Another scratch, the other direction.

PAGE EIGHTEEN

ROW ONE: ONE PANEL

Panel One: Pull back to show the man's body surrounded with ancient Mayan symbols. It is evident now that she is performing some sort of ritual.

ROW TWO: THREE PANELS

Panel One: She stands, her hands together, holding the staff as straight up and down as she can. Her eyes are closed. She is praying.

Panel Two: A hand, from behind her, clutches her face. The surprise causes her to drop the staff.

Panel Three: A conquistador stands, smugly observing her. He is partially obscured by the darkness.

CONQUISTADOR (SPOKEN)

I was looking for a gift for Senor Colón.

ROW THREE: THREE PANELS

Panel One: The conquistador takes a step into the moonlight, his hands on his waist.

CONQUISTADOR (SPOKEN)

But how unfitting it would be to give him such a prize--

Panel Two: The woman's wide eyes; a conquistador's rough hand over her mouth. She is mortified.

Panel Three: The conquistador looks over the woman, lasciviously.

CONQUISTADOR (SPOKEN)

--without ensuring its quality.

PAGE NINETEEN

ROW ONE: THREE PANEL

Panel One: 2012EC, inside the burning train: Carmen takes a step toward the girl.

Panel Two: The girl looks at Carmen. Her tears cut through the soot stains on her face.

Panel Three: Carmen extends her hand toward the little girl.

ROW TWO: TWO PANELS

Panel One (3/4 ROW): Suddenly, a guard lunges into Carmen.

GUARD (SPOKEN)

Get her! Get her!

Panel Two (1/4 ROW): The girl, surprised, frightened.

ROW THREE: THREE PANELS

Panel One: A guard has Carmen in a headlock. Carmen's left arm is flailing upward, trying to latch onto something—anything.

Panel Two: Two other guards. One looking at the first guard in disbelief. The other guard has his gun drawn.

OTHER GUARD (SPOKEN)

Don't you move a fuckin' *inch*!

Panel Three: The little girl kisses her mom's cheek, goodbye.

PAGE TWENTY

ROW ONE: ONE PANEL

Panel One: The guard holding Carmen draws his arm free; he's going to go for the gun at his side.

Panel Two: CU of his hand inches from the pistol.

Panel Three: This gives Carmen the split second she needs to weasel out. She is pushing her free when--

ROW TWO: TWO PANELS

Panel One: CU of the gun-wielding guard, yelling.

OTHER GUARD (SPOKEN, YELLING)

I mean it!

Panel Two: Carmen's eye. Her brow furrowed. She's not backing down.

Panel Three: Panicking, surrounded by chaos, the guard fires.

ROW THREE: THREE PANELS

Panel One: Carmen's eye—wide as the moon.

TEXT BOX (NARRATIVE)

Outside the train, the snow is falling lightly.

Panel Two: The guard who fired, his jaw slacked. What has he done?

Panel Three: The little girl, standing, stumbling. A clean shot straight through her chest. Blood trickles from the wound. She's in too much shock to move, to respond.

TEXT BOX (NARRATIVE)

Around me, it is burning.

PAGE TWENTY-ONE

ROW ONE: ONE PANEL

Panel One: Carmen faces the guards, standing over the fallen body of the little girl.

TEXT BOX (NARRATIVE)

And inside, I am a raging thunderstorm.

ROW TWO: TWO PANELS

Panel One: The guards do not move.

TEXT BOX (NARRATIVE)

I am Chaac.

Panel Two: Carmen raises her fist.

TEXT BOX (NARRATIVE)

I am the violent anger of the great sky.

ROW THREE: THREE PANELS

Panel One: Carmen settles into a battle stance. She is ready to fight, and two barely-armed guards are no match--

TEXT BOX (NARRATIVE)

I feel the rage of a thousand years
of pain surge through my body.

Panel Two: --but she has forgotten that there is a third. The original guard settles his gun against her temple.

TEXT BOX (NARRATIVE)

Then suddenly--

Panel Three: Carmen's face snaps out her trance.

TEXT BOX (NARRATIVE)

--it is gone.

PAGE TWENTY-TWO

ROW ONE: ONE PANEL

Panel One: 1500EC: The woman is shackled, dragged in chains, by her captors. The snow is falling gently around them.

TEXT BOX (XAMAN, SPOKEN)

“Padre, what am I to do
once I have this mask?”

ROW TWO: THREE PANELS

Panel One: 1620EC: The padre rolls up the scroll.

PADRE (SPOKEN)

Bring it to me, my son.

Panel Two: Xaman nods.

Panel Three: The padre reaches under the pulpit again.

PADRE (SPOKEN)

It must be destroyed.

ROW THREE: THREE PANELS

Panel One: Padre produces a long, thin blade from behind the pulpit.

PADRE (SPOKEN)

But you must be careful, Xaman.

Panel Two: He hands it to Xaman.

PADRE (SPOKEN)

Enemies exist around every corner...

Panel Three: Xaman examines the sword, impressed.

PADRE (SPOKEN)

...beyond every door.

PAGE TWENTY-THREE

ROW ONE: ONE PANEL

Panel One: In Carmen's past: Papi kneels by his daughter, head down.

Panel Two: His rough hands run up and down his face. He is trying with all his might to hold in his pain.

PAPI (SPOKEN)
Carmen, how could you?

Panel Three: Carmen looks confused.

YOUNG CARMEN (SPOKEN)
Papi, this is what I wanted.

ROW TWO: THREE PANELS

Panel One: Papi rises, angered.

PAPI (SPOKEN)
You don't know what you want, **stupid girl**.

Panel Two: Carmen, silently seething, bites her tongue.

PAPI (SPOKEN, OS)
Girl, I told you, that there is only one way out of *el Barrio*.

Do not get trapped here, as I have been.

Panel Three: Papi, cooling, trying to reason with his daughter.

PAPI (SPOKEN)
As tu madre was.

ROW THREE: THREE PANELS

Panel One: Papi stands in front of a door.

PAPI (SPOKEN)
A man is here who can get you out.

I want you to speak with him.

Panel Two: He places his right hand on his daughter's shoulder, leading her.

YOUNG CARMEN (SPOKEN)
Papi, I don't want--

Panel Three: Papi tries to compose himself.

PAPI (SPOKEN, WHISPERED)

Hush, girl.

PAGE TWENTY-FOUR

ROW ONE: TWO PANELS

Panel One: They emerge from the door into a modest, sparsely decorated living room. Carmen's father fakes a smile as best he can.

PAPI (SPOKEN)

Carmen, dear, I want you to meet someone.

Panel Two: Carmen doesn't try to fake anything. She glares at her father.

ROW TWO: THREE PANELS

Panel One: A man rises from the sunken cushion of a threadbare sofa. He is facing away, his head down. But his dark suit is perfectly pressed.

PAPI (SPOKEN, OS)

Sir, you already know of my *beautiful* daughter.

Panel Two: Papi looks down at his daughter.

PAPI (SPOKEN)

Carmen, this is Senor--

Panel Three: A frail hand sets stubs out a cigarette in an earthen tray.

THE MAN (SPOKEN, OS)

Please, Rafael, no honorifics.

ROW THREE: TWO PANELS

Panel One: Thin, pale fingers adjust a black tie.

THE MAN (SPOKEN)

You may call me, simply--

Panel Two: Those sinister eyes, those shark-like teeth, that evil smirk. It can only be--

PAQOK (SPOKEN)

--Paqok.