

"Roller Coaster"

By

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We begin on

THE SUN

Seen through a window, shining down on Miami as it peaks over the horizon.

DEXTER (V.O.)
A killers life is supposed to be certain.

PAN DOWN

and follow the rays of light along the floor, past a scattering of clothes, a pair of shoes.

DEXTER (V.O.)
As consistent as the rising and setting of the sun. Cycles of hunger and release -- without regret or doubt.

PULL BACK to reveal:

INT. RITA'S BEDROOM, MORNING

DEXTER MORGAN is lying awake in bed. He turns away from the window and stares at the ceiling.

DEXTER (V.O.)
These days, however, things are not that simple. Every experience only raises more questions.

He turns to look at RITA BENNET, his girlfriend, who is draped over him. He sighs.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Like: *how do I get out of bed?*

A beat, and then a faint BUZZING. Dexter squints, looking around the room.

DEXTER'S SHIRT

is off on the other side of the room -- the buzzing is his phone ringing. Dexter looks over at it and groans, then gets out of bed. we see his

FEET

as he moves across the room, and reaches down to pick up his shirt.

(CONTINUED)

DEXTER (V.O.)

Yeah?
I'll be right there.

He hangs up, and then picks up the rest of his clothes. Rita stirs as he begins to button up his shirt.

RITA

...Leaving so soon?

Dexter turns to look at her, awkwardly.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Am I being cold? Most people just know these things... but not me.

Dexter turns back and forth, unsure.

DEXTER

Yeah. Yeah. I have to --

Rita smiles.

RITA

Hey, don't worry, I understand.

Dexter pauses. Then, he nods. Finishing buttoning his shirt, he heads towards the door.

RITA

Hey, Dexter?

Dexter turns back to look at her. She has propped herself up in the bed, and smiles shyly.

RITA

I was thinking... we should do something special for the kids. You know, the two of us.

Dexter looks at her, not sure where this is going. He needs to get to work.

RITA

Are you up for taking them to the amusement park this Saturday?

Dexter looks at her for a moment, and then nods.

DEXTER

That would be... nice. We should.
(beat)
But now, I really have too...

RITA
Yeah. Yeah, go.

Dexter turns and leaves through her door. Rita sinks into her bed again, smiling.

EXT. JUNK YARD

A male body lies sprawled on the ground, his cheeks discolored, a purple bruise running in a line around his neck. A tattoo of a Griffin can be seen on his arm.

His shirt is ripped open. On his chest, a cross has been carefully carved. VINCE MASUKA paws over the body, examining it.

MARIA LAGUERTA walks up to him.

LAGUERTA
What do we have, Masuka?

Masuka glances up at her. Standing behind her is

MIAMI METRO HOMICIDE

Dexter, DEBRA MORGAN, SERGENT DOAKES, and ANGEL BATISTA, all present. Masuka looks up at them and nods.

MASUKA
Victim was strangled a few days ago, likely with a length of wire, and then dumped here. Identification says he's Raul Márquez. Arrested once for possession, but otherwise clean.

Doakes doesn't buy it.

SGT. DOAKES
Clean? That griffin says "gang member" to me.

Angel nods, solemnly.

ANGEL
Knowing the area, this killing is probably the work of *La Humanidad*.

Everyone grimaces, except for Dexter and Debra, who the conversation has gotten away from.

(CONTINUED)

DEBRA
What the fuck is *La Humaneedahd*?

Angel looks at her, amused.

ANGEL
La Humanidad. "The Brotherhood of Men."

SGT. DOAKES
One of the most dangerous gangs in the area. Shits like that shouldn't be allowed to walk the street.

Masuka stands up and shakes his head.

MASUKA
Yeah, but I don't think we can finger them for this. Nothing concrete.

Doakes scowls.

SGT. DOAKES
We shouldn't *have* to finger them. This matches their M.O!

Angel glares at Doakes. Dexter however, is more interested in the

CROSS

cut into the mans chest. He tilts his head as he looks at it.

DEXTER
Is the cross important?

Angel turns away from Doakes, looking at the Cross curiously before responding.

ANGEL
We've seen it before, but its not a consistent motif. More likely the call sign of one particular enforcer.

Dexter raises an eyebrow, impressed.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Looks like the Ice Truck Killer isn't the only monster with a flair for presentation.

LaGuerta bites her lip for a moment, and then nods.

LAGUERTA
Alright team, lets get the body
back to the lab.

FADE TO

INT. RITA'S KITCHEN

Rita is in the kitchen, having just finished making scrambled eggs for ASTOR and CODY, when PAUL BENNET enters through the front door, followed by his SUPERVISOR.

PAUL
Hey, hey!

CODY
Daddy!

Cody runs over to him, and Astor gets up and joins him. Rita however, gets to her feet and begins to clean up, ignoring her ex-husbands entrance.

PAUL
Astor, Cody, How would you feel
about going to the beach today?

ASTOR
Can we go to a pool instead?

PAUL
Why not?

The kids run over to the supervisor. Paul, however, ventures further inside, looking at Rita.

PAUL
Why don't you come along, Rita?

Rita shakes her head and continuing to clean.

RITA
I'm sorry, Paul... I have chores to
do.

Paul moves closer to her, more insistent.

PAUL
(quietly)
Hey. Give me a chance, huh? You
can't pretend you didn't have a
good time last time.

(CONTINUED)

RITA
I have chores to do.

Then, something within her snaps. She puts the plates down and glares at her ex-husband.

RITA
Also, I'm with Dexter now, so you should really just... *stop.*

Paul stares at her, dumbfounded. Rita returns to cleaning up. Astor looks from parent to parent uncomfortably.

SUPERVISOR
Come on, Paul.

Paul throws his hands up in the air, and backs out the door.

INT. CRIME LAB, DAY

Dexter sits at his computer, typing away furiously, a box of Chinese take-out by his side.

DEXTER (V.O.)
La Humanidad may cover its tracks well, but that doesn't mean we don't have suspects.

Dexter takes a bite as a list of names appears, a shield like gang sign appearing in the background.

DEXTER (V.O.)
There have been seven cross killings. The first was in March of 2002. Narrow the list to suspects who's gang activity was first recorded around then...

He hits the enter key. The list narrows down to a list of five or so people. Dexter smirks and begins to click through them.

MASUKA (O.S.)
Hey, Dexter.

Dexter quickly closes the window and spins around to meet Masuka. Masuka blinks -- Dexter's reaction to his entrance is familiar.

MASUKA
Dude, were you watching porn?

Dexter can't think of anything to say.

(CONTINUED)

MASUKA

Don't worry, I won't tell anyone.
We all have needs, right?

Dexter blinks. There are no words.

DEXTER

What do you want, Masuka?

Masuka smiles.

MASUKA

Well, since you ask -- I'm planning
to go to this party tonight. Score
some ass, right?

Dexter raises his eyebrows.

DEXTER

...on a weekday?

Masuka beams.

MASUKA

Yeah, dude, you should come. We
work together every day, right? We
need some bro time! Maybe we could
find some girl and --

Dexter winces. Enough of this.

DEXTER

I'm sorry, Masuka, but... I have
plans.

He tilts his head, a little.

DEXTER (V.O.)

And a girlfriend.

Masuka's smile falters.

MASUKA

Oh. Okay.

A beat, and then he smiles skeezily.

MASUKA

More babes for me.

He exits. Dexter waits a beat, and brings up the the list of
suspects again.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Where to begin?

He clicks on a name and brings it up.

FADE TO

EXT. POOL -- DAY

Paul Bennet sits on the bench, watching Astor and Cody somewhat distractedly. The Supervisor sits beside him, reading a book.

Cody waves to his father from the side of the pool.

CODY
Dad, look at me!

Cody jumps into the water in a cannonball, splashing a nearby couple.

Paul smiles at him as the couple scowls.

PAUL
Nice going, Cody!

But his smile slips off his face. After a beat:

SUPERVISOR
Why don't you join them?

Paul looks over at her, and after a moment, shakes his head.

PAUL
...I'm feeling a little off.

The Supervisor glances up from her book at Paul.

SUPERVISOR
You still moping?

PAUL
I'm not moping.

SUPERVISOR
(firmly)
Yes, you are.

A beat, and then Paul frowns.

(CONTINUED)

PAUL
"I'm with Dexter now."

SUPERVISOR
Well, I'm not sure how long that
will last.

PAUL
What do you mean?

The supervisor looks up at Paul, surprised.

SUPERVISOR
Her boyfriend? He's detached.
Haven't you noticed?

Paul turns to her. Now that she mentions it...

The supervisor snorts at Paul's confusion, and turns back to her book.

SUPERVISOR
I deal with messed up couples every
day. Trust me, that man is
uncomfortable.

Paul continues to look at the supervisor for a moment, and then back at the pool.

Cody is splashing Astor. They both are laughing. A smile crosses Paul's face.

Suddenly Paul stands up, running towards the edge of the pool.

PAUL
Watch out, kids! Here comes the
Dad-monster!

He gives a cheesy growl and dives in after Cody, who jumps away, laughing. The two of them splash around in the water.

EXT. MIAMI STREETS, DAY

A CAR

stuck in the traffic of Miami. RICARDO CALAVERA, a 32 year old hispanic man with an athletic build, is at the wheel.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Suspect one: Ricardo Calavera, Age
32. Involved in *La Humanidad* for
the last seven years.

(CONTINUED)

PULL TO THE SIDE

to reveal Dexter in the car behind Ricardo, watching him carefully.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Could he be our Monster of the
Week?

Rico pulls off, and Dexter follows.

EXT. CHURCH, DAY

Rico gets out of his car, heading towards a somewhat run-down church -- the "Santa Maria" church.

PULL BACK

to reveal Dexter sitting in his car, watching the entire scene skeptically.

DEXTER(V.O.)
Church on a Tuesday...

Rico heads into the church. Dexter looks ahead, drumming his fingers on the wheel.

DEXTER(V.O.)
That would explain the crosses.

He puts the car into gear and pulls away.

EXT. RICO'S HOUSE, EVENING

Rico's house is medium sized, if slightly run down. There is no car in the driveway.

DEXTER(V.O.)
A kill requires absolute proof...
luckily Rico will be busy for the
next hour or so. Plenty of time to
get what I need.

Dexter picks the side lock. The door creaks open, and Dexter slips inside.

INT. STUDY, EVENING

Dexter enters the study, and begins his search by turning over file after file. Most things he just sets aside without a thought, moving quickly.

Finally, he opens the drawer. There, he finds a

LEDGER

with the shield of *La Humanidad* on it. He opens it -- the book contains a list of names. He runs his finger down the

PAGE

to the very last entry -- Raul Márquez. Date: two days ago.

Dexter smirks.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Well, this looks promising...

But then, a second thought. He puts the book back.

DEXTER (V.O.)

But not good enough for my code.
Anyone could keep a list of dead
gang victims.

INT. KITCHEN, EVENING

Dexter looks through drawer after drawer. Finally, he finds a length of wire, twisted and stained, with the grips on both sides.

Quickflash: The body from earlier; focus on the bruises around the neck.

DEXTER (V.O.)

That's more like it.

Taking out a bag, he scrapes off a bit of the wire and drops it inside.

Taking the bag with him, he leaves -- passing a large

BOOKCASE

on his way out.

INT. CRIME LAB, NIGHT

Dexter sits at his equipment, dropping the scraping from the wire onto a slide.

Clicking a button, he runs a side by side analysis, comparing the blood to the blood of the victim, Raul. The

SCREEN

displays the results -- it's a match.

Dexter smirks.

DEXTER

Bingo.

INT. CLUB, NIGHT

A bustling club. Masuka is sitting at the bar, slowly taking sips from one of his drinks.

Behind him, many young couples are dancing, but no one has joined him at the bar. Masuka actually looks rather miserable.

VANESSA

Vince?

Masuka jumps and turns around. A brunette woman, pretty and dressed somewhat provocatively, has approached him. This is VANESSA. She smiles excitedly upon seeing his face.

VANESSA

Oh my god, it *is* you!

Masuka stares at her, uncomprehendingly. Vanessa's grin widens.

VANESSA

Vanessa Hughes. From High School?

Masuka's eyes widen.

MASUKA

Yeah, yeah! Wow, I didn't recognize -- you look so --

He ogles her obviously, and then drags his eyes back to his face.

(CONTINUED)

MASUKA

-- Wow.

Vanessa tilts her head, and then laughs.

VANESSA

As charming as ever, I see.

Masuka raises his eyebrows suggestively and smiles.

MASUKA

So the ladies tell me. Sit down,
let me get you a drink.

She hesitates for a moment, and then grabs a seat beside him. The two strike up an animated conversation.

EXT. RICO'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

There is no movement inside, but the lights are all on.

Dexter, dressed in his kill clothes, surveys the scene from a car parked across the street.

DEXTER (V.O.)

9:00 PM -- *La Humanidad's* regular
meeting time. Rico should be going
any moment now.

A scan of the house. Rico's car is still there, but the man is nowhere to be seen. Dexter looks up, concerned.

DEXTER (V.O.)

So where is he?

Suddenly, movement -- a bookshelf. Dexter focuses in on it as it slides aside, and RICARDO steps out, looking around cautiously.

Dexter furrows his brow. This is an unexpected development.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Well, that's new.

Rico closes the bookshelf back into place, turns of the lights, and leaves. Soon he has pulled out in his car.

Dexter slinks towards the house.

INT. RICO'S HOUSE -- DAY

Creeping carefully forward, Dexter approaches the bookcase. He runs his hands against the edges of the case.

DEXTER (V.O.)
How did I miss this? A killer has
to avoid unknown factors. Unknown
factors get you caught.

With a heave, Dexter pushes aside the bookcase, slipping into the opening before he pushes the case back into place behind him.

INT. HIDDEN ROOM -- NIGHT

Darkness. Dexter turns on his flashlight, shining it downwards to reveal a long set of downwards stairs.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Well then, Calavera, let's see
whats hidden in your Batcave.

Carefully, he descends the stairs towards a dim glow. He steps over a

BAG

at the bottom of the stairs. A few more steps, and then Dexter stops, stunned.

THE WALLS

of the room are lined with photos of the men and woman Ricardo has killed. A flower stands vigil by each.

Quickflash: Dexter setting up a killroom for the Costellos

Dexter turns around, shining his light upon more pictures. This is--

DEXTER
(muttering)
Impossible.

Quickflash: Dexter laying out photos in a similar fashion, a reminder of the people the Costello's have killed.

Dexter holds one of the photo's in his hand, examining it.

(CONTINUED)

DEXTER (V.O.)
Did I set this up?

A beat, and then a wince at the idiocy of the thought.

DEXTER (V.O.)
No, Dexter, what are you thinking?
That's ridiculous. Is this some
sort of shrine?

A CLUNK of the bookcase moving from upstairs. Dexter spins.

UPSTAIRS

Rico is heading down the steps.

Quickly, Dexter turns off his light, and in his haste to put the photo back he knocks over the vase. Then, he slips into the shadows.

Rico walks back down, grabbing the bag that he left on the floor.

He turns to leave, and then stops, turning towards the

UPSET VASE

A frown crossing his face. He looks around, suspiciously, but Dexter sinks into the shadows under the counter.

After a moment, Rico turns back to the vase. He reaches towards it, his hand shaking, and resets it.

He drops to one knee in front of the photo, bowing his head in shame, muttering a prayer in Spanish.

Dexter is confused. There are tears on Rico's cheek.

A beat, then Rico rises to his feet and hastily leaves. we hear the SCRAPE of the BOOKCASE, and then the SLAM of a door.

Dexter steps out of the shadows slowly, staring after Rico.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Not a shrine... a memorial.

INT. RICO'S HOUSE, NIGHT

Dexter peaks out the window of Rico's house -- he watches Rico get in his car, and then ducks away from the window as he sees him drive off.

DEXTER(V.O.)

I work by a code -- only kill those
who truly deserve it.

Dexter moves away from the window and towards the door.

DEXTER(V.O.)

My targets have always been like me
-- hollow shells who do not feel.

EXT. RICO'S HOUSE, NIGHT

Dexter slips inside his car. He sits at the wheel for a moment, and glances back at the house.

DEXTER(V.O.)

Whatever Rico is, it's something
new. And I don't know what that
means.

He starts up the gas, pulling out of the enclave and driving away.

FLASHBACK

INT. CAFE, DAY

...Through the lens of a security camera. People sit around tables, dealing cards. Not every member of the crowd is particularly wholesome.

Suddenly, the doors burst open, and a squad of police enter. In the front of the group of policemen is HARRY MORGAN, Dexter's father.

HARRY

Police! Nobody Move.

The room freezes. People put their cards on the table, raising their hands in the air.

Then one man -- a WAITER -- bolts towards the door.

Harry, acting on instinct, turns towards him and fires -- the man topples to the ground. The footage freezes.

PULL BACK

INT. MORGAN HOUSE, LIVING ROOM -- DAY

TEENAGE DEXTER is sitting on the couch, staring at the television. A REPORTER now appears on the screen:

REPORTER
This shocking clip comes from the
scene of the latest police raid,
where...

A creak, and the door opens. Dexter turns around and sees his father enter, looking somewhat disheveled.

HARRY
Dexter --

He spots the

TELEVISION

playing the clip again, with commentary. He winces.

HARRY
Oh. You've heard already, then.

Dexter turns off the television, quickly.

TEENAGE DEXTER
Dad, what happened?

Harry sits down next to him, somehow smaller than usual. He shrugs, and then:

HARRY
I... misjudged the situation. I was
tired. I assumed he was with the
gang, and I fired.

TEENAGE DEXTER
Is he okay?

A beat.

HARRY
He's dead.

A moment of silence follows this proclamation.

(CONTINUED)

TEENAGE DEXTER
...It wasn't your fault.

Harry looks at Dexter for a moment, curious. Then, he reaches out and tussles his hair, smiling sadly.

HARRY
Everyone makes mistakes, Dexter.
Even your old man.

END FLASHBACK

INT. RITA'S HOUSE -- DAY

Rita and Dexter are sitting on the couch, cuddling.

Cody and Astor pass by, both with backpacks. Rita looks up at them at them.

RITA
 Are you two ready for school?

ASTOR
 Yes, mom!

CODY
 Yes, mom!

They head for the door --

RITA
 Wait, kids!

Astor and Cody stop, looking perplexed. Rita gets to her feet, smiling.

RITA
 Dexter has something to ask you.

Dexter looks back at her, and Rita nods "go ahead."

A beat, and then Dexter gets to his feet.

DEXTER
 Astor, Cody...

Dexter walks over to them, crouching down so he will be at their height.

DEXTER
 How would you two feel about going
 to the amusement park this
 Saturday?

The children's eyes widen.

(CONTINUED)

ASTOR
(slowly)
The amusement park?

CODY
(quickly)
Like, with roller coasters?

Dexter nods.

DEXTER
Yes. And Bumper cars.

Cody's mouth drops open. He and his sister share an excited glance.

CODY
Cool!!

Astor glances back at Dexter, smiling.

ASTOR
Thanks, Dexter!

Rita beams at both of them.

RITA
Alright, now, let's get you two off to school! Go ahead, I'll meet you at the car!

Still smiling, Cody and Astor run out the door towards the car.

Rita turns to Dexter, beaming as she closes the door. Together, they began to walk down the path.

RITA
Did you see how excited they were?

DEXTER
Practically jumping for joy.

RITA
This is great. Paul was never able to--

She stops, catching herself. They have reached the car. She stops, smiling at Dexter.

RITA
Will I see you again tonight?

DEXTER

Of course. Wouldn't miss it for the world.

Rita smiles and gets into the car. She waves at him, and he waves back. And then, when she is gone:

DEXTER (V.O.)

Now, back to business.

FADE TO

INT. STORE -- DAY

A common supermarket. Masuka is in the card aisle, flipping through product after product. Occasionally, he laughs at one.

Angel comes over and glares at him.

ANGEL

Que Haces? We are here to pick up donuts, *amigo*, nothing else.

But Masuka holds up the card he was currently looking at.

MASUKA

Hey, Angel, what do you think of this?

He clears his thought and begins to read it.

MASUKA

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways --

He opens the card.

MASUKA

--Starting with number 69!

He looks up at Angel, a big smile on his face. Angel just stares at him, then shakes his head.

ANGEL

Really, *amigo*? No *chica* would go for that.

Angel leaves. Masuka's face falls, and he puts the card back and walks off after Angel.

INT. CHURCH, DAY

Rico is kneeling on the pew in the church, rocking and praying intently as the PREACHER gives his liturgy in Spanish.

DEXTER(V.O.)
Another day, another hour in church.

Dexter sits a few seats behind Rico, watching him intently.

DEXTER(V.O.)
Could everything I saw Rico do be explained by faith? Maybe guilt isn't involved at all.

Suddenly Dexter starts. Reaching into his pocket, he finds his phone buzzing.

The caller ID reads as UNKNOWN.

EXT. CHURCH, DAY

Dexter steps outside the church, and answers his phone.

DEXTER
Hello?

PAUL (O.S.)
Dexter!

Dexter's eyes open wide in surprise at the sound of Paul's voice.

EXT. PAUL'S BEDSIT

Paul Bennet leans against the wall of his apartment, fake casualness.

PAUL
Hey, buddy -- Are you free later today? I need to ask you something.

EXT. CHURCH, DAY

Dexter looks confused for a moment.

(CONTINUED)

DEXTER(V.O.)
I'll admit, my curiosity is peaked.

DEXTER
...What?

PAUL (O.S.)
Can we meet up later today? It's
important.

Dexter's phone vibrates. Pulling it away from his ear, he glances down at it -- he has another call coming.

DEXTER
Look, I have to go. Meet me at the
station later. Parking lot.

PAUL (O.S.)
Wait--

DEXTER
Bye!

But Dexter presses the button and hangs up. He returns the phone to his ear.

DEXTER
Hello?

LAGUERTA (O.S.)
Dexter? We missed you this morning.

Dexter hesitates for a moment, and then:

DEXTER
Yeah, sorry, I forgot to set my
alarm.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME, DAY

A Miami home. In the background, Doakes is talking to the mother, MRS. MÁRQUEZ.

LAGUERTA
Well, we are about to conduct
interviews with the Márquez
family... I'd like you to be here.

Mrs. Márquez turns away from Doakes and wipes her cheeks.

EXT. CHURCH, DAY

Dexter nods.

(CONTINUED)

DEXTER
Of course. I'll be there shortly.

INT. VICTIM'S HOUSE. DAY

Mrs. Márquez is sitting on the couch. Her face is blank, expressionless -- she is overwhelmed by grief, and unable to show it.

LaGuerta kneels in front of her, listening with concern. Doakes stands behind her.

MÁRQUEZ
Raul was such a quiet boy... it seems like only yesterday that I was putting his drawings on my fridge.

DEXTER

stands off to the side. He is not interested in her story, really, and is glancing around the room.

LAGUERTA (O.S.)
Do you know anything that might help us catch his killer?

Dexter's eyes fall upon a trio of open

ENVELOPES

sitting on a nearby table. Curiously, he reaches them.

MÁRQUEZ (O.S.)
No... I'm sorry... I had never even heard of *La Humanidad* until you told me about my son...

He opens up one of the envelopes. Inside are a few 20 dollar bills. Dexter stares at the sum. He turns towards Márquez:

DEXTER
Where did you get these?

Márquez glances up at Dexter. A beat, and then she gives a shrug.

MÁRQUEZ
No idea. They started arriving last Saturday; no note, no nothing.

Dexter stares at her for a moment.

(CONTINUED)

DEXTER(V.O.)
The date of death. Can it be a
coincidence?

He glances back at the envelopes, putting them on the
counter.

DEXTER(V.O.)
No. I think I know what that ledger
was for.

LaGuerta glances at Dexter and sighs. She turns back towards
the mother.

LAGUERTA
Thank you, Laura. Once again, I'm
sorry for your loss... we'll be in
touch.

The woman nods. LaGuerta rises to her feet, and walks past
Dexter. Doakes looks at Ms. Márquez.

SGT. DOAKES
I promise we are going to do
whatever we can to catch these
little shits.

Márquez nods at him. Doakes leaves after LaGuerta.

Dexter, however, is staring ahead.

DEXTER(V.O.)
I don't know much about religion,
but I'm pretty sure God never told
Moses to "give cash to the kin of
your slain."

EXT. RICO'S HOUSE, DAY

Dexter pulls up to Rico's house, glancing around to see if
anyone is watching.

DEXTER(V.O.)
These pieces I've found don't fit
together... I need a way to test
Rico myself.

He glances down at the pamphlet in his hand. the

PAMPHLET

is adorned with the logo of Rico's church reads "*Special confessions with traveling Bishop: Wednesday Night after 10:00 PM.*"

DEXTER

looks back up, and then slips the pamphlet into Rico's mailbox.

DEXTER(V.O.)
Hopefully, this will do the trick.

EXT. PARKING LOT, AFTERNOON

Paul Bennett is sitting on a bench, looking bored, smoking a cigarette.

Dexter walks down the sidewalk towards him. Paul spots him and gets to his feet, throwing his cigarette to the ground and stomping it out.

PAUL
I was beginning to think you ditched me.

DEXTER
I never gave a time. What do you want to talk about?

PAUL
Rita.

Dexter scowls and turns away. He should have known. Paul reaches out for him, desperately.

PAUL
No, listen. I really need you to understand. Not a day goes by when I don't... I don't regret being apart from Rita. I would do anything to make it up to her.

Dexter turns back to him:

DEXTER
You abused her.

PAUL
Men can change. I mean, that's why we feel bad, right?

Dexter looks at Paul, harshly.

(CONTINUED)

DEXTER(V.O.)

Is it?

PAUL

Rita won't give me a second chance,
Dexter. Not while you are around.

DEXTER

What would you have me do?

Paul takes a breath.

PAUL

You know it can't work between you
two. That's why you are so detached
from her, right?

Dexter stares at him -- somehow, he has said exactly what he
feared people would. How did he see this when Rita didn't?

PAUL

Just give me a second chance.

Dexter backs away.

DEXTER

I'm not going to listen to this.

PAUL

Wait, hold on --

But Dexter just keeps walking. Behind him, Paul clenches his
fists and yells:

PAUL

Those kids need their real father!

But Dexter keeps on walking.

DEXTER(V.O.)

I don't have time to figure out
whether Paul is serious or not. I
have more important things to deal
with right now.

Dexter turns off camera. Behind him, Paul paces back and
forth, running his hands through his hair to contain his
frustration.

INT. CAFE, NIGHT

A regular Cafe. Masuka and Vanessa sit across from each other. Masuka fidgets with his napkin as Vanessa stirs her drink with a straw.

VANESSA
So poking dead bodies turned out to be your thing, huh?

MASUKA
(mock offense)
What are you implying?

Vanessa smiles.

VANESSA
Nothing. It makes sense. You always volunteered for the dissections.

MASUKA
Yeah, predictable Asian man.
Whatever. So what do you do?

VANESSA
I'm a maid, actually.

MASUKA
Like one of the french ones?
(grinning)
That's hot.

Vanessa laughs.

VANESSA
Yeah, John says the same thing.

Masuka pauses, unsure if he should be concerned. Finally, as calmly as possible:

MASUKA
Who?

Vanessa herself pauses, and then smiles kindly.

VANESSA
Oh, just another friend of mine.

She reaches under the table and places a hand on Masuka's leg, squeezing it.

(CONTINUED)

VANESSA

He's nowhere near as cute as you
are, though.

Masuka looks down at his leg, and then back up at her.

EXT. CHURCH, NIGHT

Dexter, dressed in his kill clothes, slips towards the side door of Ricardo's small Church.

DEXTER(V.O.)

Rico's church is always deserted
during week nights; a measure taken
to sooth its strained budget.

Dexter fiddles with the side door, jimmying the lock.

DEXTER(V.O.)

Tonight, however... at least one
devil will lurk these halls.

The door pops open. Dexter smirks with self-satisfaction.

INT. CHURCH, NIGHT

The church is lit only dimly by the lights from the side of the aisles.

Dexter glances around the chamber, his eyes falling upon the

CONFESSIONAL BOOTH

He walks up to it, running his fingers down the wood as he glances around.

DEXTER(V.O.)

If Ricardo is half as religious as
he acts, I'll have him tonight.

He opens the confessional door and slips inside the priest side of the box.

DEXTER(V.O.)

Maybe for forgiveness...

The door swings shut behind him.

DEXTER(V.O.)

More likely in a body bag.

INT. CONFSSIONAL, NIGHT

Dexter sits in the priest side of the pew, leaning against the box, looking bored. He glances at his watch.

Suddenly, the sound of a DOOR opening. Dexter's eyes light up.

RICARDO

Forgive me padre. It has been a month since my last confession, and I have sinned.

DEXTER(V.O.)

So you have.

Dexter readies himself, he adopts a false warmness:

DEXTER

How so, Child?

RICARDO

I have... hurt others. My brothers require me to do things, and... I do them. I *have* to do them.

DEXTER

What sort of things?

Several moments of silence. Dexter wants to get to the point. His warmness begins to crack.

DEXTER

Tell me, Child.

Another moment of silence. Beside Dexter, REVEAL:

KILL TOOLS

in their case, polished and gleaming.

DEXTER

It's your only chance at salvation.

Rico is scared. Dexter is cold. A few more beats, then, Rico's voice with a sharp edge:

RICARDO

...I have committed mortal sins, Father. I have taken the lives of others... and I do it without hesitation.

(CONTINUED)

DEXTER

I see.

Dexter's hand runs against his kill tools, ready to act. But then Rico continues, slowly:

RICARDO

But afterwords... afterwords, I
always feel awful, Padre...

Dexter lifts his hand away from his tools, exhaling deeply and closing his eyes.

RICARDO

(voice cracking)

...I try to distance myself, to be
good to *mi hermanos*... but... every
time, my heart is pulled out of my
chest.

A few moments stretch on.

RICARDO

Do I have a penance, Padre?

Dexter struggles with something within himself, then:

DEXTER

(intensely)

Do you wish to be saved?

RICARDO

...More than anything.

Dexter's hands clench. He really wants to kill this man, but:

DEXTER

Then *listen to me*. No amount of
penance can help you if you
continue down this path; You *must*
change your ways.

Silence greets this.

DEXTER

(firmly)

Do you understand?

Several more moments, and then:

(CONTINUED)

RICARDO
(scared)
Yes, father.

A beat. Dexter slumps.

DEXTER
Go.

We hear the confessional door open and close again, and Ricardo leaving hurriedly.

DEXTER (O.S.)
And suddenly, everything changes.

Dexter opens his eyes, waits long enough to avert all risk, and then steps outside himself.

INT. RITA'S HOUSE, DAY

Dexter is sitting at the table, dressed for work, stirring a cup of coffee with his knife.

Rita comes in, glowing. She kisses Dexter on the cheek.

RITA
Hello, handsome.

Dexter looks up at her, not sure how to react.

DEXTER
Hey.

Smiling, Rita goes to the fridge and the cupboard and begins to make herself something simple.

RITA
So... I was thinking, for the trip
on Saturday, it might be a good
idea if we packed our own lunches.

She glances at Dexter, giving him a bashful smile.

RITA
I mean, park food is so expensive.
Might as well save what we can,
right?

Dexter looks up from his mug, doing his best to look like this is painful.

(CONTINUED)

DEXTER
Yeah, about that...

She glances at him, confused. Dexter sighs. This *is* somewhat painful.

DEXTER
Rita, I'm sorry but... I don't think I'm going to be able to do this Saturday.

Rita's smile falters.

RITA
Oh?

DEXTER
It's just... Things have been really busy in homicide lately. LaGuerta wants us to put in extra hours to wrap up the gang murders, so I've got a bunch of extra lab work to do.

Rita stares at him. Just then, the front door opens -- Paul enters. He spots Dexter and scowls briefly -- but not as stony as Rita's expression upon seeing Paul.

RITA
What do you want, Paul?

Paul throws his hands up in the air.

PAUL
Relax. I think I left some of my stuff here when I dropped off the kids. I just came by to get it.

RITA
Well, hurry up.

Paul continues into the living room. Dexter takes an obnoxiously loud sip from his mug, glancing towards Paul:

DEXTER
I'm really sorry. I know taking the kids to the amusement park was important to you...

Rita smiles sadly.

RITA

No, it's okay, I understand. You have to do what you have to do, right?

Suddenly, Paul slips back into the kitchen.

PAUL

Did I hear amusement park? Because I could take the kids to the amusement park.

Rita's smile melts off her face, but Dexter is entirely unsurprised.

RITA

Oh, no, I don't think so.

DEXTER

...actually, that might be a good idea.

Rita starts. Paul looks equally astonished, they both turn towards Dexter. He shrugs.

DEXTER

We don't want to disappoint Astor and Cody.

Rita looks at Dexter, pleading.

RITA

...But, Dexter...

DEXTER

I mean, it's... something to consider.

Rita says nothing. For several beats, there is an awkward silence between all three. Then Dexter rises to his feet.

DEXTER

Well, I guess I should be going. LaGuerta already chewed me out once this week.

He moves over to the door and opens it. Rita looks up at him, opens her mouth, pauses, and then:

RITA

Right. Well, see you later, Dexter.

Dexter smiles awkwardly at them both--

DEXTER

...Later.

--and then he closes the door.

INT. CAR, DAY

Dexter is driving down the streets of Miami, watching the people around him like a cat watches mice.

DEXTER (V.O.)

I should feel bad about lying to Rita, making up work that doesn't exist, but I don't... I never feel bad about anything.

Dexter pulls up, parking his car in the lot.

DEXTER (V.O.)

If remorse is what redeems us, then Paul is far more human than I will ever be.

He gets out of the car, looking coldly up at the door to Paul's apartment.

DEXTER (V.O.)

And if a Cuban enforcer deserves a second chance... so does he.

FLASHBACK:

INT. MORGAN HOUSE -- LIVING ROOM, DAY

Teenage Dexter sits at the table in the living room, working on his homework. Harry leans over him, helping him out.

The doorbell rings. Harry glances up.

HARRY

Hold on, son.

Harry gets to his feet. Dexter leans over to watch him as he leaves the living room and heads into the entry way.

Harry opens the door, revealing LIEUTENANT MATTHEWS, a younger version of the Chief we have come to know.

HARRY

Lieutenant?

(CONTINUED)

LT. MATTHEWS
Hello, Harry. Do you have a moment?

Harry hesitates.

HARRY
...of course. Come in.

Harry looks over at Dexter, who hastily returns to his work.

HARRY
Go finish your work in your room,
son.

DEXTER
But--

HARRY
(Sternly)
Now, son.

Reluctantly, Dexter gathers up his things and then starts to leave. However, after taking a few steps up the stairs, he stops and backs up, watching the pair again.

Harry and the Lieutenant have moved into the living room. Dexter's awkward viewing angle means half the action is cut off.

LT. MATTHEWS
I'm sorry to intrude, Harry, but
the Chief wanted to do this as soon
as possible.

Harry nods.

HARRY
This about Monday?

LT. MATTHEWS
...I'm afraid so.

The Lieutenant pauses for a moment, and then continues.

LT. MATTHEWS
The Chief thinks it would be best
if you... volunteered to take a
leave of absence.

Harry sighs. He was expecting this. He turns and sinks onto the couch.

(CONTINUED)

LT. MATTHEWS

Just a week or two, that's all he's asking.

After a tense moment:

HARRY

It was a mistake, Tom. You know that.

LT. MATTHEWS

I know, Harry, but the media isn't spinning it that way.

Matthews pauses, and then finally makes a decision:

LT. MATTHEWS

Listen... I can try to talk the Chief down. Convince him to consider giving you another chance -- everyone knows you are a good cop.

HARRY

...Thank you, Lieutenant.

Matthews nods.

Back to Teenage Dexter. His face is blank, but his fists are clenched.

END FLASHBACK

INT. CRIME LAB, DAY

Dexter is sitting at his desk, looking at a blood sample. Suddenly, a plastic bag SLAMS onto his desk, causing Dexter to jump a bit.

PAN UP to reveal Doakes, typically irritated.

SGT. DOAKES

Take a look at this.

Dexter looks up at Doakes, confused.

DEXTER

What is it?

SGT. DOAKES

What does it look like? It's evidence. Found it at the crime

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SGT. DOAKES (cont'd)
scene after the rest of you gave
up.

Dexter looks back at the bag and picks it up. Inside,
wrapped in plastic, we see

A RUSTY NAIL

With a small amount of dried blood on it.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Well, this complicates things.

He looks back at Doakes and smiles.

DEXTER
I'll get the results to you by
tonight.

Doakes scowls.

SGT. DOAKES
I'd hope so. I'm sick of letting
these punks walk free.

Doakes leaves. Dexter sits in the lab for a moment, looking
thoughtful.

INT. POLICE OFFICE HALL

The Police station hallway, where the bathrooms are located.

Debra Morgan walks down the hall, headed for the woman's
bathroom. As she passes the mens bathroom door, however, she
stops and stares at it.

Masuka's VOICE can be heard, but his voice is reduced to
mumbling by the muffling by the door.

Without reservation, Debra pushes the door open slightly...

INT. MEN'S BATHROOM

Masuka is standing in front of the mirror, reciting to his
reflection.

MASUKA
My heart moves for you, the way you
make me feel, there is no way to
heal --

He stops, looking concerned. Then starts over:

(CONTINUED)

MASUKA
My heart. *Beats* for you, the way
you make me feel--

INT. POLICE OFFICE HALL

Debra has seen enough. Caught somewhere between amusement and horror, she slips away from the door.

INT. CRIME LAB, DAY

Dexter scrapes some of the blood off the nail and runs it through the computer.

The computer displays its results: Rico Calavera. The blood is a match.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Well that's not good.

Suddenly, Dexter's pocket buzzes. He reaches down and pulls out his phone. The caller is Rita.

Minimizing the window, Dexter answers.

DEXTER
Hello?

INT. KITCHEN

Rita is pacing back and forth, the receiver in her hand.

RITA
Dexter? Paul just told the kids he
would be taking them instead.

DEXTER (O.S.)
Well, that's good, isn't it? Makes
things easier?

But Rita is *not* happy. She stops, her face very serious.

RITA
No, Dexter, it doesn't.

INT. CRIME LAB

Dexter frowns. This is not going as he hoped.

DEXTER
Oh.

INT. KITCHEN.

(CONTINUED)

Rita sighs. There is clearly something very wrong here. She pauses for a moment, biting her lip, and then:

RITA
We need to talk.

DEXTER
...Do we?

RITA
Can you meet me tonight? Please?

INT. CRIME LAB

Dexter frowns, but he doesn't really have a choice.

DEXTER
Of course. I'll see you then.

Dexter hangs up the phone.

ANGEL
Trouble at home?

Dexter spins around in his chair. Leaning against the doorway is Angel.

ANGEL
Sorry... I couldn't help
overhearing.

DEXTER
It's okay. Rita isn't exactly happy
with me.

ANGEL
I feel you, *amigo*. Come on, let's
grab a bite.

Dexter looks up, and nods.

EXT. FOOD VENDER

The food vender outside the police station is always busy -- several officers sit around at picnic tables.

Angel and Dexter are close to the front of the line.

ANGEL
My wife? She hasn't spoken to me in
months. But I know you and Rita,
you'll work it out.

(CONTINUED)

The line moves, and Angel and Dexter are in front. The VENDER looks at Angel, waiting.

ANGEL
Dos chorizos. Gracias, señor.

The Vender nods and retreats into his truck.

DEXTER
I'm sure your wife will come around eventually. Everyone deserves a second chance, right?

Angel glances back at Dexter, uneasy.

ANGEL
You think I *deserve* a second chance?

This question legitimately surprises Dexter. A beat, then:

DEXTER
Well, don't you?

Another beat, and then Angel looks at the floor. He shakes his head and laughs sadly.

ANGEL
(quietly)
Just because I'd like a second chance doesn't mean I deserve one, amigo.

Dexter opens his mouth to respond, but no words come, so he closes it again, looking thoughtful.

The Vender returns, and hands Angel his food. Angel looks at Dexter queerly.

ANGEL
Hey, I just remembered I have some reports I need to take care of, so I have to head back. Take care, okay, compadre?

Angel heads off, clearly upset. Dexter watches him leave, somewhat sadly.

DEXTER (V.O.)
No matter how close I get... Tact always slips through my fingers.

INT. CRIME LAB, DAY

Dexter at the crime scene, examining the evidence of the rusty nail.

DEXTER (V.O.)
 But Angel is wrong. Whatever
 mistakes he's made, the guilt he
 feels will keep him in the right.

Carefully, Dexter begins to clean off the nail with a cloth.

DEXTER (V.O.)
 Regret makes the difference between
 men like Angel, and monsters.

EXT. POLICE OFFICE, DAY

Masuka is sitting at his desk, doodling on a piece of paper.

Debra moves over to his desk, and sits down across from Masuka. He glances up at her as she smiles slyly.

DEBRA
 So...

Masuka doesn't understand.

MASUKA
 Yeah?

Debra's smile broadens.

DEBRA
 ...Whose the girl?

Masuka throws his hands in the air.

MASUKA
 Chicks just *know* these things,
 don't they? You all have Vaginal
 Sensory Perception or something.
 "V.S.P."

Debra recoils, amused.

DEBRA
 Gross. No, we don't, you're just
 fucking obvious.

Masuka considers this for a moment, and then nods. He has been wanting to talk about this, anyway.

(CONTINUED)

MASUKA

Her names Vanessa. I knew her in high school... but something's clicked, now -- I think she wants to bang me.

Debra raises her eyebrows and looks caught between amusement and disgust+++.

DEBRA

Wow, really romantic, Masuka.

MASUKA

(determined)

No-- wait, it's more than that... look, I feel happy when I'm around her. I want to make her happy. It's weird. Like Romeo and Juliet.

Debra's face softens.

DEBRA

So have you asked her out yet?

Masuka deflates a little.

MASUKA

No... I mean, I'm not exactly dating material.

DEBRA

Says who?

Masuka stairs at her in disbelief.

MASUKA

Everyone. You.

Debra brushes this off.

DEBRA

Whatever. Go for it anyway. If you don't fucking try, how can you expect anything?

MASUKA

But--

DEBRA

Go for it.

She rises, and begins to walk away from him. Suddenly, she has a thought:

(CONTINUED)

DEBRA

Oh, but -- the bad poetry will
freak her the fuck out. Bit of
advice: try chocolates.

Satisfied with the expression upon Masuka's face, Debra
heads back to her desk.

INT. CRIME LAB, DAY

Doakes stands over Dexter as he goes through page after page
of 'results' from the tests -- actually the results of his
previous test.

DEXTER

The blood was the victims. The body
must have scraped against the nail
in transit.

Doakes pivots on the spot, running his hand across his chin.
He had been *sure* this was the break.

SGT. DOAKES

You're shitting me.

Doakes quickly conceals a smirk, and then gives Doakes his
most genuine innocent face.

DEXTER

I wish I wasn't.

Doakes stares at Dexter, and then sighs.

SGT. DOAKES

Fuck!

(beat)

...Alright, Morgan, you're
dismissed.

Dexter glances up at him.

SGT. DOAKES

You heard me! Go home and screw
your girlfriend or something.

Dexter nods, grabbing his stuff, and heads for the door.

INT. LAGUARTA'S OFFICE, DAY

LaGuerta sits at her desk, doing paperwork. A creak of her door, and Masuka enters. LaGuerta doesn't even glance up at him.

LAGUERTA
Masuka. What can I do for you?

Masuka flashes his usual sketchy smile.

MASUKA
Oh, so many things.

LaGuerta looks up at him in exasperation. Masuka backpedals. This is serious.

MASUKA
Uh. Sorry boss. Look, um, I have a request.

LaGuerta looks up from her paperwork.

LAGUERTA
Is it about the girl?

Masuka is baffled. He opens his mouth to comment--

LAGUERTA
No, its not "V.S.P," Masuka.
Detective Morgan's voice carries.

Masuka shuts his mouth again, and nods. A beat, and then he says, all too quickly:

MASUKA
Can I take the rest of the day off?
I'd like, you know, tell her. And
I'd like time to do it right --
which you know, I will need time to
do, because... Please?

For a moment LaGuerta says nothing. She returns to her paperwork, flipping through a document and signing another page.

LAGUERTA
Sure.

MASUKA
Huh?

Finally, LaGuerta puts her paperwork aside and looks up at him, smiling, wryly.

(CONTINUED)

LAGUERTA
Sure. Take your day off, Masuka.
Live a little.

Masuka is absolutely stunned.

MASUKA
You mean it?

LaGuerta nods.

MASUKA
Sweet! I'll name the kid after you.

He exits. LaGuerta stares after him, shakes her head, and resumes her paper work.

INT. RITA'S HOUSE, EVENING

A knock at the door. Rita opens it. Before her stands Dexter.

INT. LIVING ROOM, EVENING

Rita leans against the counter. Dexter stands opposite of her.

RITA
I guess... I just don't understand,
Dexter.

DEXTER
What?

RITA
You never liked Paul. Why would you
ever encourage him?

Dexter looks away and nods.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Trust me, it's weird for me too.

Dexter looks at her, and shrugs.

DEXTER
He's the father of your children.
People can change.

RITA
What about *me*? What about *us*? I
don't want Paul, I want --

And then, the truth dawns on her.

RITA
(quietly)
...You don't really have that much
work, do you?

DEXTER
I have... work.

RITA
Enough to keep you from taking the
kids to the park Saturday?

Dexter says nothing. After a moment, Rita turns away from him, her suspicions confirmed.

RITA
(sternly)
Dexter... if you don't want to be
with me anymore, you should just
tell me.

Dexter looks over at her. Her face is pained, almost desperate.

Suddenly, Dexter's pocket begins to buzz. He reaches for it, pulling out his phone and glancing at it. He looks up at Rita, embarrassed.

DEXTER
I'm sorry, Rita... I have to take
this.

With a slight beep, Dexter answers his phone. Looking distressed, Rita turns away and walks out of the kitchen.

DEXTER
Morgan.
(beat)
Hey, Lieutenant, what's up?

He listens to the response, and ZOOM IN as his face falls.

DEXTER (V.O.)
No...

SMASH CUT TO:

A BODY

(CONTINUED)

draped against a chain length fence, its arms at awkward angles... a cross cut into his chest.

TILT AWAY to reveal...

EXT. ALLY WAY -- EVENING

Dexter is kneeling over the corpse. Police are standing around him, taking pictures.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Rico, what have you done?

Angel, LaGuerta, Debra and Doakes push their way into view. Doakes looks furious.

SGT. DOAKES
Well?

A glance up at the Sargent -- Dexter is still in his own world.

DEXTER
(Absently)
What?

SGT. DOAKES
What the *fuck* do you mean 'What?'
Was it the same perp?

Dexter blinks and then looks down at the body again. He hesitates, and then:

DEXTER
Victim was strangled with a length
of wire -- you can see the welt
marks left along the neck.

The group shifts uncomfortably. They've heard this before.

DEBRA
And the cross?

DEXTER
...Cut into the chest post-mortem,
with a small knife, possibly a
pocket knife.

LAGUERTA
So just like the others, then?

Dexter grimaces and rises to his feet.

DEXTER
Looks like it.

Angel groans. LaGuerta sighs. They knew already, of course.

LAGUERTA
And *La Humanidad* claims another
victim. ...I hate these gangs.

Doakes swears, unable to contain his frustration.

SGT. DOAKES
I was this close, *this* fucking
close to catching the little shits.

LAGUERTA
Relax, Sergeant. We'll nail them
this time.

SGT. DOAKES
Yeah? Because our track record
ain't too hot, Lieutenant.

LaGuerta glares at him for a moment. Then, snap back to
command:

LAGUERTA
Alright guys, Search the scene.
Look for anything, *bring me*
anything!

The officers begin to disperse, spreading out around the
lot. Dexter, however, is in his own world.

DEXTER (V.O.)
I trusted Rico's guilt could change
him.

He begins to walk, slowly, towards the exit of the parking
lot.

DEXTER (V.O.)
I should have gone with my
instinct, done what I was meant to
do the first time.

His pace increases, a small smirk crossing his face, each
step filled with renewed purpose.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Tonight, he meets my table.

INT. PAUL'S BEDSIT

Paul Bennet is lounged on his bed, flipping through a car magazine.

A KNOCK on the door. Throwing the magazine aside, Paul gets out of bed and opens the door. Seeing Dexter, he smiles sleazily.

PAUL
Dexter! Come in.

Dexter comes in. Paul begins to make a show of tidying up. He grabs the magazine and throws it aside.

PAUL
I just wanted to thank you for what you have done for me. For Rita and me.

Dexter cocks an eyebrow.

DEXTER
Oh?

PAUL
Stepping aside to give me a chance to make things work, to let the kids have a happy family? You are a better man than I.

DEXTER (V.O.)
I doubt it.

PAUL
I can't tell you how much I'm looking forward to taking the kids to --

DEXTER
Paul, I'm not going to stop seeing Rita.

Paul stops, his expression slipping. He turns around to face Dexter, and already he is back to his usual confrontational self.

PAUL
Excuse me?

DEXTER
I'm not going to stop seeing Rita.

Paul grits his teeth.

(CONTINUED)

PAUL
Hold on. You told me --

DEXTER
I know what I told you. I
reconsidered, and I'm taking it
back.

Paul sinks back onto his bed, clutching his head in his hands.

PAUL
(quietly)
You can't do that.

DEXTER
Yes I can.

PAUL
It isn't fair.

Then suddenly, Paul turns back to dexter, his face a mask of rage.

PAUL
It ISN'T FAIR!

Paul grabs the vase next to him, hurtling it towards Dexter, who dodges it by stepping out the door.

Paul breathes heavily. Then, finally, he collapses.

INT. RICO'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Most of the lights are off. The twist of a lock, and the door swings open, Ricardo Calavera steps inside.

Throwing his keys to the side, he begins to walk towards the kitchen when, suddenly, he stops.

a FLOWER

from his penance room sits upon the floor, its stem still wet.

Rico reaches down to pick the flower up. He turns it over in his hands, bewildered, then worried. We PAN with his attention as he turns towards the bookcase.

Slowly he walks towards it.

We see movement behind him -- Dexter silently slipping out from behind the furniture.

(CONTINUED)

Dexter moves in, Rico is in a choke hold, Rico gasps, spluttering --

DARKNESS

FADE IN to Rico's closed eye. Drowsily it begins to open, then it snaps wide.

RICO

is tied to the table, duct tape binding his arms and legs and mouth. He looks around -- we are, of course, in

INT. KILL ROOM

...which is recognizable as Rico's Penance Room, covered in plastic. The pictures of his victims are still there, flowers sitting by all but one.

A gloved hand places the flower from earlier into the empty vase.

PULL BACK to Dexter, dressed to kill in a surgeon's scrubs and welding mask, leaning casually against the counter.

DEXTER

It's a nice set up, really. You saved me the trouble of decorating the place.

Rico's eyes widen as he struggles against his bonds. He knows that voice. He tries to speak through the tape --

Dexter holds a finger to his lips.

DEXTER

Shhhhhhh.

Dexter pushes away from the counter and moves over his kill tools, lightly picking up the scalpel.

DEXTER

I honestly thought there was a chance we wouldn't wind up here.

He leans over Ricardo, making a small incision in his cheek. Rico whimpers.

DEXTER

That you could change.

(CONTINUED)

A single line of blood streams from the cut -- carefully, lovingly, Dexter collects a sample, placing it upon a slide and holding it up to the light.

DEXTER

But here you are... Just like the others.

He lowers the slide, satisfied.

DEXTER

You're conscience didn't amount to much in the end.

Suddenly, Dexter is leaning over Rico. He rips the tape off Ricardo's mouth, slamming it into the table beside him.

DEXTER

Well, *what do you have to say for yourself?*

Ricardo gasps for air. Dexter slaps him on the cheek.

DEXTER

Speak up!

But Rico says nothing. Straightening, Dexter heads back over to the counter, placing the scalpel and sample back inside his bag.

Finally, Rico finds his words.

RICARDO

You... you were the priest. In... in the confessional.

Dexter glances back at Ricardo, then turns back to his tools.

DEXTER

I warned you, Calavera; There would be no saving you if you continued down this path.

Dexter pulls a new object out of his bag -- a power drill. Dexter holds it up, revving it for emphasis as he leans over Rico once more.

DEXTER

Now I have no choice. No control. You must pay for what you've done.

(CONTINUED)

RICARDO
(softly)
I know.

Dexter pauses, tilting his head a little. Rico looks up at Dexter. He is shaking, but he is no longer struggling.

RICARDO
Thank you, Padre.

A beat, and then Dexter nods. He places the tape firmly back over Ricardo's mouth, and pulls down the welding mask. Rico closes his eyes...

(Tango music starts playing)

Rico's body convulses and spasms as Dexter drills a hole through his brain...

BLOOD

gurgles up and splashes across Dexter's mask. He smiles to himself.

FADE TO

INT. MASUKA'S CAR -- NIGHT

Vincent Masuka is sitting inside his stopped car, dressed in a tacky idea of a nice outfit, looking nervous but excited.

He looks out the window, at the

APARTMENT COMPLEX

where, presumably, Vanessa is waiting inside.

He looks ahead for another moment, and then he finally works up the nerve.

Grabbing some of the chocolates off his seat, he pushes open the door...

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX -- DAY

Masuka strides up to the door, chocolate in hand.

He knocks. The door opens, and Vanessa is revealed... dressed in a revealing bathrobe. She sees Masuka and smiles.

(CONTINUED)

VANESSA
Well, hello there.

MASUKA
Well... hey.

Awkwardly, he offers up the gifts.

MASUKA
I brought you these.

Vanessa's face lights up.

VANESSA
Oh, how sweet! You are such a dear.

She takes the gifts and puts them on the counter inside. Masuka smiles weakly, fidgets, and then:

MASUKA
Hey, Vanessa...

JOHNATHAN (O.S.)
Vanessa! Who is it?

Masuka's smile melts off his face, what he was about to say dead in his throat.

VANESSA
It's Masuka, Johnny!

She turns back to Masuka, smiling coyly. Masuka however, is confused.

VANESSA
Hey, why don't you come inside?
There's always room for one more.

MASUKA
One more?

Vanessa's smile broadens. She taps him on nose, playfully.

VANESSA
Yeah. I told you I have other
friends.

Masuka says nothing. This is not what he imagined from her.

VANESSA
Is there a problem?

A beat, and then Masuka shakes his head, dazed.

MASUKA

No. No... I'm sorry. I just
forgot... something... I need to
go.

He backs away from the door, slowly, and heads back down the stairs. Vanessa shrugs and heads back inside.

FADE TO

EXT. SLICE OF LIFE -- NIGHT

Dexter stands at the controls of his boat. Pulling down on a lever, he brings it to a halt.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Every choice we make creates
ripples.

With a heave, he throws a bag containing the remains of Rico into the dark water.

DEXTER (V.O.)

We can't always stop the waves from
splashing back onto us.

Dexter looks down into the dark water as the bag sinks out of view, his reflection wavy.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Even if we hate getting wet.

FLASHBACK:

INT. MORGAN HOUSE, DAY

Teenage Dexter turns into the kitchen to find Harry frying up breakfast, out of uniform. When he sees Dexter, he gives him a smile.

HARRY

Good morning, Son.

Dexter approaches his Dad, cautiously, confused. This is not normal routine. This is wrong.

TEENAGE DEXTER

Dad? Why aren't you ready for work?

Harry glances up, and then back at the food all too quickly.

(CONTINUED)

HARRY
 ...I decided to take a week or two
 off.

Dexter knows the truth, however.

TEENAGE DEXTER
 You're kidding.

HARRY
 (sternly)
 Dexter--

But he will not be deterred.

TEENAGE DEXTER
 It was an accident, Dad! They can't
 punish you for that!

HARRY
 The Chief made his decision. It is
 not my place to challenge him.

TEENAGE DEXTER
 But you don't want... you don't
deserve --

Harry cuts him off when he sets the frying pan down a little
 too forcefully.

HARRY
 No, Dexter. I do.

He fixes Dexter with a firm gaze.

HARRY
 When we make mistakes, we deserve
 whatever punishment society gives
 us. That's what I believe as a cop,
 and if I raise you right, that's
 what you will believe as well.

Dexter shies away, breaking eye contact.

TEENAGE DEXTER
 But you already feel bad. Isn't
 that enough?

Harry sighs.

HARRY
 How I feel won't help the family of
 the man I shot.

A beat, and then suddenly Harry smiles again, turning back to his cooking.

HARRY

Now, how do you feel about eggs?

END FLASHBACK.

RESUME EXT. SLICE OF LIFE -- NIGHT

Dexter is still looking at his reflection.

DEXTER (V.O.)

People who feel... they react differently.

He straightens up, heading back the controls of the boat. He hesitates.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Harry, Angel, even Rico... Their guilt allowed them to accept the consequences of their actions -- Recognize their punishment as something they deserved.

Finally, he starts the boat up, and it pulls away.

DEXTER (V.O.)

And though I can't feel as they do, it is time for me face my own consequences.

INT. RITA'S HOUSE -- KITCHEN, NIGHT

Rita sits in a poorly-lit kitchen, dressed in her bathrobe, a mug of tea in front of her. She has been crying.

A KNOCK on the door. Rita sighs.

RITA

Who is it?

DEXTER

It's me.

Rita freezes for a moment -- then she sighs, dabbing at her cheeks with her robe.

(CONTINUED)

RITA
...Just a moment.

INT. RITA'S HOUSE -- LIVING ROOM, NIGHT

Dexter is sitting on Rita's couch, his hands folded in his lap. Rita is sitting in the arm chair opposite him, the mug in her hand. Neither are looking at each other.

DEXTER
I'm sorry, Rita.

RITA
Are you?

DEXTER
I had no right to suggest you let Paul back in your life. Not after he's put you through.

Rita looks over at him.

RITA
What did I do to make you pull away, Dexter?

Dexter sighs. He spreads his hands in a gesture of confusion, unable to make eye contact.

DEXTER
Nothing. I've been in a strange place lately. Being so sure of some things has made me... question others.

Rita frowns. A moment stretches on, and she looks away again. Her cheeks are wet again.

RITA
...And what exactly are you sure about?

Dexter pauses. The next words, while true, are still strange to him:

DEXTER
That I want to be with you.

Rita pauses for a moment, and then looks over at him.

(CONTINUED)

RITA
And... unsure...?

Dexter looks up, finally meeting her gaze. He hesitates for a moment, and then:

DEXTER
...that I have any right to be.

A moment. Dexter looks away. Rita shakes her head slowly, putting the mug down on the coffee table.

RITA
Oh, Dexter...

She pushes away from her seat and moves to the place beside him.

RITA
Dexter...

She scoots closer to him, laying a hand on his cheek.

RITA
That's my decision to make.

She kisses him, softly at first, then more passionately.

DEXTER (V.O.)
I know I don't deserve her
forgiveness. Paul certainly didn't
deserve mine.

She begins to unbutton his shirt, and as they collapse together...

DEXTER (V.O.)
But apparently, she's forgiving me
anyway.

FADE TO

EXT. AMUSEMENT PARK, DAY

The amusement park is bustling with life. Roller coasters can be seen, whisking up and down.

DEXTER (V.O.)
I can't feel like other people, but
I can still appreciate being given
another chance.

(CONTINUED)

PULL BACK to reveal Dexter and Rita leading a visibly excited Cody and Astor towards the ticket booth. The kids forward to get in line. Dexter smiles at Rita as she rushes up to join them.

DEXTER (V.O.)

And I don't need guilt to tell me
that I should make the most of it.

Rita finishes paying, and together all four of them enter the park.

FADE OUT

END OF EPISODE