CREED

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Based on,
Characters from the ROCKY Series
Written by Sylvester Stallone

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We open on a mural of Jesus Christ, painted on the wall of the bar. We pan down to reveal dank surroundings where disinterested patrons are watching a brutal flyweight match between two Hispanic fighters.

More of a water stained box where Adonis Johnson (20’s, Black) leans from one side to another, attempting to stay loose. Flores (30’s) a battle scarred Mexican fighter, stands across from Adonis, thick and menacing, with a neutral expression. Adonis glances at his opponent, who stares back emptily. The door opens off screen.

Refferee (O.S.)

Vamanos!

The two fighters stand up.

Adonis, prances around the ring, avoiding Flores who is struggling to make contact, and growing tired. Flores corners Adonis up against the ropes, and after missing a few jabs, WHAM he ducks into Adonis and lands a pretty deliberate head but above his left eye, opening a deep gash. As Adonis tries to recover: WHAM WHAM, he lands two bone crunching hooks to the gut.

Adonis takes an airless breath and stumbles back to the middle of the ring, wiping blood from the gash as the bell sounds.

Adonis heads to the corner, where a Waitress (40’s) puts a stool down. He sits and she squirts water into his mouth.

The bell for Round 3 sounds. He starts towards Flores, with more bounce in his stance. Flores takes a swing at his head, and Adonis evades. Flores swings again, and again, even harder, and Adonis ducks both and then crushes a left uppercut into Flores' chin, followed by a flurry of alternating punches that send Flores crashing to the mat-conscious.

The ref flies in waving, and Adonis spits his mouthpiece out and heads to the corner.

Ref
(in Spanish)

6-7-8-9-10
Adonis looks on and starts biting at his glove to take it off. The ref walks over and pulls $500 out of his pocket, hands it to Adonis right there.

EXT. US MEXICO BORDER—DAY

Several cars line up at the inspection booths. Adonis, drives in a primer colored 1967 Mustang, holding a T-shirt to his eye. He hands his passport to the BORDER PATROL AGENT, who looks at him, shakes his head, and signals him through.

INT. ER WAITING ROOM—LOS ANGELES COUNTY HOSPITAL—EVENING

Adonis sits in a crowded ER waiting room.

NURSE (O.S.)
Donnie Johnson?

EXT. BALDWIN HILLS STREET—NIGHT

Adonis’ Mustang pulls into a hillside driveway. He punches a code into a keypad, and a large iron gate opens. As he drives up the cobblestone driveway we pull back to reveal a breathtaking mansion, we notice the fresh bandage over his eye.

INT. CREED MANSION—KITCHEN—CONTINUOUS

A hand wearing a massive wedding ring scoops beef stew into a bowl. We pull up to reveal MARY-ANNE CREED (70s), dressed modestly, but a regalness about her.

She slides the bowl in front of Adonis, who sits at the kitchen island, and pours herself a glass of vodka. She puts her hand to his cut.

MARY ANNE
Do you have to come here after your fights? It’s like you want to rub my nose in it.

ADONIS
It’s tradition.

(beat)

Don’t you want to know if I won?

MARY ANNE
It doesn’t matter. Even when you win, you’re losing.

(beat)

(MORE)
MARY ANNE (CONT'D)
You given any more thought to going back to school?

Adonis doesn’t say anything.

MARY ANNE (CONT’D)
What about the internship?

ADONIS
Maybe... if it works with whatever schedule Duke puts me on.

MARY ANNE
Have you even talked to him?

ADONIS
Tomorrow... what you got on TV?

MARY ANNE
Watching our boy.

INT. CREED MANSION- LIVING ROOM- HOURS LATER

ON SCREEN- Walter White, in a desert standoff with members of a rival cartel, when... it cuts to credits.

Mary Anne and Adonis sit next to each other on the couch. Adonis’ shoes off, his white socks dangling like a toddler.

ADONIS
You got another one in you?

MARY ANNE
Naw, grandma’s gotta head off to bed... you gonna stay the night?

ADONIS
Naw, I’m gonna get to the house...

Beat.

MARY ANNE
How’s your mom?

ADONIS
She cool, I guess.

MARY ANNE
Good... that’s good.

Adonis stands up, and gives her a big hug.
MARY ANNE (CONT’D)
See you tomorrow?

He nods.

EXT. CLABSADDLE HOUSE- DRIVEWAY- LATER THAT NIGHT

Adonis’ Mustang parks next to a Subaru SUV in front of the two car garage of a small house in Silverlake.

INT. CLABSADDLE HOUSE- ADONIS’ BEDROOM- NIGHT- ONE HOUR LATER

Adonis sits in his room (a converted two car garage). He puts his winnings into a large duffle bag, slides it under his futon, plops down on it, and turns on HBO ON DEMAND. He hits play on a Boxing Documentary. ON THE SCREEN WE SEE-

INT. PORTER’S CAR- DAY- TOXTETH, LIVERPOOL, UNITED KINGDOM

The camera shoots “PRETTY” RICKY PORTER (White, mid 30’s, Scouse accent)- the unanimous #1 pound for pound fighter in the world- as he walks around his old neighborhood with his sons JUNIOR (8), and G (6, and small for his age) surrounded by a nefarious entourage.

PORTER
See I’m from Toxteth. Nothin wrong with it, it made me.

At the mention of Toxteth, some members of his entourage mock firing pistols at the camera. Porter, and his crew walk up to a boxing gym, nestled in the corner of a decaying neighborhood.

PORTER (CONT’D)
(motions to Junior)
I was a lot smaller than him, a cheeky little bastard I was. I used to get me ass kicked coming home from school every day.

A wiry, bespectacled man sticks his head out of the doorway and looks into the camera with disdain- this is GILES HOLIDAY (55, White) despite his slight build, he demands respect.

HOLIDAY
You gonna train or be a movie star?

Porter turns to Holiday and smiles.
PORTER
Come down here, mate.

Holiday reluctantly obliges. He pats G on the head.

PORTER (CONT’D)
He found me, after some Evertonians
bashed me head in.
(motions to Holiday)
So he brought me in ere. Taught me
how to fight... Stopped pickin’ on
me after that didn’t they?

INSIDE THE GYM we cut to Porter- working drills with Holiday.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Porter is expected to be sentenced
within the year on a handgun charge
that could land him behind bars for
up to 7 years.

We see Porter being interviewed in a close-up.

PORTER
I feel like I could fight another
20 years. But numbers catch up to
everybody, so I’m treating this
like its me last...

Junior- wearing his Dad’s gold chain around his neck (it’s
huge on him) standing outside of the ring, mimicking his
dad’s moves. G watches him closely.

NARRATOR
His opponent, Danny Wheeler, is
arguably his most formidable
challenge, yet.

IN A HIGHLIGHT REEL we see shots of DANNY “STUNTMAN” WHEELER
(Late 20s, Black) taking out several opponents in the ring.
There is a cut to TONY “DUKE” BURTON standing next to him as
he holds up a belt post-fight.

Adonis looks on at the screen, anger flashing over his face.
He turns it off, picks up his dumbbells, and starts lifting.

INT. ADONIS BEDROOM - DAY
Adonis sleeps under a blanket. The bedroom door creaks open, and small set of eyes peek through. KAYLA CLABSADDLE (8, Biracial, curly hair, DEAF) walks into the room. She walks over to Adonis and gently pushes his shoulders. He opens his eyes. (They talk in American Sign Language w/ subtitles.)
KAYLA
Wake up. Breakfast is ready.

He rolls back over and puts the pillow over his face. Kayla jumps on top of him, landing right on his sore ribs.

ADONIS
Ahh, shit!

He pushes her, sending her to the carpet, laughing.

ADONIS (CONT’D)
You’re too heavy for that.

As she stands Adonis sits up, and she catches sight of his bandage.

KAYLA
You were fighting again!

ADONIS
Don’t tell mom.

KAYLA
What’s in it for me?

Adonis stares her down for a beat, then motions to his wallet on the coffee table. Kayla grabs it, and brings it back to him. He pulls out a $5 bill and gives it to her. She puts it in her pocket.

KAYLA (CONT’D)
Mom made you breakfast, what are you gonna do?

Adonis looks at his phone, and sees that he overslept.

ADONIS
I’m running late. Go make me a shake, and bring it to me.

Kayla nods and takes off.

INT. CLABSADDLE KITCHEN – DAY

Sunlight streams into a modest kitchen. LISA CLABSADDLE (Black, a young looking 40) scrambles eggs next to DARYL CLABSADDLE (White, 40’s) who pours coffee. Lisa watches intently as Kayla scoops powder from Adonis’ muscle milk jug, pours it into shake thermos and then adds water.

She closes it up and starts shaking it. Lisa looks at Daryl, who is watching as well, and walks away shaking his head.
Lisa taps Kayla. Who turns to her, innocently, shaking away at the shake.

LISA
Is your brother awake?

Kayla guiltily looks back, still shaking the milkshake. She shrugs "I don’t know".

LISA (CONT’D)
Is he still in his room?

Kayla shrugs again. Lisa gives her the mother’s stare of death.

INT. ADONIS’ BEDROOM

Adonis, pulls a hoodie over his head and preps his bag.

LISA (O.S.)
How could anybody drink this first thing in the morning? It’s disgusting.

Adonis turns around to see Lisa standing in the doorway, holding his thermos. Kayla standing next to her guiltily.

Lisa walks down the steps into the room and hands Adonis the thermos. He takes it, trying to hide his face, but he’s too late.

LISA (CONT’D)
Jesus, what happened to your eye?

ADONIS
Stiches.

LISA
I’m talking about before the stitches smart ass.

ADONIS
I got into a fight at a bar.

LISA
You’re 23 years old. At some point you gotta stop solving problems with your fists. You need to get a job. Working out at the gym everyday doesn’t count.

Having heard enough, he heads for the door.
LISA (CONT’D)
Wait.

Adonis stops. Turns around.

LISA (CONT’D)
I’m sorry, just come and eat some real food. I cooked your favorite. Sit down, and have some family time.

ADONIS
Family time?

LISA
Yeah...

ADONIS
(beat)
You know I saw your mom last night.

LISA
Oh yeah? How’d that go?

ADONIS
You mean, “How is she?”
(beat)
She’s alone...

This lands on Lisa, hard. Adonis walks over to her, gives her a kiss on the cheek, and heads out.

EXT. DUKE’S BOXING GYM PARKING LOT—SOUTH LOS ANGELES—DAY-15 CONTINUOUS

Adonis’ car turns into a gravel parking lot, in a dilapidated neighborhood. He parks, hops out with his duffle bag. We track up to reveal the sign. “DUKE’S BOXING GYM: WORLD CLASS.”

INT. DUKE’S BOXING GYM—DAY—CONTINUOUS

Adonis changes into his boxing shoes and heads towards a large ring where SEVERAL BOXERS are paired up, working drills. Sitting outside the ring is DUKE (70s, black). Adonis walks over to him.

ADONIS
I’m ready to train. Let me know what warm-ups you want me starting with.
DUKE
What are you talking about?

Adonis tosses the open duffle bag on the edge of the ring, right in front of Duke.

ADONIS
That’s my training fees for a year up front.

Duke peers into the bag for a beat, sighs, then hands it back.

DUKE
Go home, son.

Duke goes to turn back, and Adonis grabs his shoulder.

ADONIS
I’m not leaving this gym today until you agree to train me.

Duke looks into Adonis’ eyes closely. And turns back to the ring, verbally coaching up the athletes inside. Adonis pushes past Duke and jumps into the ring.

INT. RING- DUKE’S BOXING GYM- CONTINUOUS

The boxers stop sparring, and they look at Adonis, who turns to the corner and shakes the contents of his gym bag out—gloves, a mouthpiece, and $10,000 cash.

ADONIS
I got 10 stacks right here. Cash! Ready for whoever wants to come get it.

Adonis puts on his gloves and turns around to the fighters in the ring. They look at him, but none are up for the challenge.

DUKE
Adonis!

ADONIS
Easy money, right?

Outside the ring, fighters have stopped their workouts and inch closer to the brewing spectacle. A fighter, tall and lean, about Adonis’ age starts to approach the ring, this is KEV. Adonis locks eyes with him.
ADONIS (CONT’D)
Kev, you gonna be first up?

KEV
Look at your eye, cuz. Looks like somebody beat me to it.

The room guffaws... Adonis doesn’t.

ADONIS
So it should be easy for you right?? I’ll put my money where my mouth is.

Adonis bends down and clumsily grabs a rubber banded stack of money. He places it in his mouth, biting down on it like a mouthpiece.

Kev shakes his head at this, bites down on his mouthpiece, and slides into the ring. The two fighters circle each other: Kev’s stance high and tight—Adonis’ low, flamboyant, and taunting.

Kev swings a right jab, but Adonis easily evades it. Kev swings again, Adonis leans back drops his guard, and starts to rock side to side. Frustrated, Kev takes two more swings, and Adonis parries one, ducks the other and comes hard with a right cross to Kev’s chin. Kev’s jaw rattles and he hits the floor in a heap, face down, unconscious.

Adonis spits the money out and it lands on Kev’s back.

ADONIS (CONT’D)
C’mon! Who next, huh? Which one of ya’ll want it with the rich kid. You pick em Duke! You pick which one!

MAN’S VOICE
I’m next.

Adonis turns to see DANNY WHEELER (who we recognize from HBO) standing in the crowd outside the ring. A hush falls over the gym as Wheeler stares Adonis down with silent confidence.

Danny steps into the ring, and straps up his gloves, while Adonis bends down and puts his mouthpiece in. Adonis reaches out to touch gloves with Wheeler, who knocks them away and moves in quick.
Adonis backs up, sends a couple of left jabs. Wheeler ducks one, parries the other, and sends a quick flurry back at Adonis. Adonis dodges them but is forced into the ropes in retreat.

WHEELER
Stop runnin’, boy...

Adonis reloads, and starts back at Wheeler. He creeps in cautiously, sends two jabs at Wheeler, the first (head) misses, the second (Body) connects. He follows with hook, and Wheeler ducks, and comes up with an uppercut, followed by a straight shot to Adonis’ forehead. Adonis goes crashing to the matt—ass first. The gym ROARS.

He shakes it off and bounces up to his feet.

WHEELER (CONT’D)
Stay down...

He stands back up, gets into his stance, and moves in on Wheeler who cages up, and leans on the ropes, blocking Adonis shots with his arms.

WHEELER (CONT’D)
You ready, rich boy?

Wheeler strikes back with two quick jabs to Adonis’ face, sidesteps Adonis’ counter and lands a left hook to the gut that doubles him over. Then WHAM! He slams a right hook into Adonis’ face, reopening his wound.

Adonis drops to one knee, trying to find his bearings.

WHEELER (CONT’D)
Stay down!

Adonis stands up, trying to shake the hit off, and bangs his gloves together. He puts his hands up to fight again. He goes at Wheele, swinging wildly. Wheeler ducks the shots, then slams a left uppercut into his body, then sends a right cross, knocking his mouthpiece out.

WHEELER (CONT’D)
Go down!

Adonis, nearly out on his feet, puts his hands up to keep fighting. He takes another swing. Wheeler evades easily and bangs another punch into Adonis’ jaw. He stumbles back, and chokes on something, then spits out a bloody molar.

WHEELER (CONT’D)
Go down.
He puts his hands back up, and moves in Wheeler, barely on balance. He swings hard, but Wheeler slips him, and connects with a stiff left to his face, sending him crashing to the mat.

HARD CUT TO BLACK

FADE IN- ADONIS’ POV WHILE LAYING ON HIS BACK IN THE RING-
SERIES OF SHOTS

- Wheeler picking up Adonis’ cash.
- Other fighters giving Wheeler pats on his back.
- Duke standing over Adonis- looking at him with concern.

DUKE
Get the medic...

INT. DUKE’S OFFICE

The MEDIC (Black, 60’s) has just finished stitching up Adonis’ eye and heads out of the room. Duke walks in and sits down across from Adonis.

ADONIS
Why won’t you help me, man.

DUKE
Besides you disrespecting me in my own gym?

ADONIS
I gotta get your attention somehow.

DUKE
You got it, and you’ve got my answer.

ADONIS
Then I’ll go to somebody else.

DUKE
It’s not gonna matter. I promised your grandmother that I’d do everything in my power to keep you from boxing. And that’s what I’m gonna do.

(beat)
Now you want to go out to Mexico and get yourself killed in one of those bar fights, I can’t control that. But around here, my word is law.
Adonis looks at Duke.

DUKE (CONT’D)
All that aside, kid. You’re not even that good.

INT. CREED MANSION LIVING ROOM- DAY

Mary Anne sits on the couch, sipping from a glass, and smiling at the television.

ON THE SCREEN- a home video of the Creed family, circa 1980.

ADONIS (O.S.)
Grandma!

Adonis storms into the living room, and turns off the TV. Mary Anne gives him a look that could kill as he sits down next to her.

ADONIS (CONT’D)
I need you to call Duke.

MARY ANNE
I just got off the phone with him. He told me Wheeler tore you a new one.

ADONIS
I need you to call him and tell him to train me.

MARY ANNE
Must be your concussion talking.

ADONIS
You going behind my back telling people not to touch me? That stops today.

MARY ANNE
A woman protects her family. Even from themselves.

ADONIS
I’m a grown man. This is what I want to do with my life.

MARY ANNE
You don’t know what you want. Look at your face.

(MORE)
MARY ANNE (CONT'D)
I can’t tell you how many times I had to sit up feeding Appolo because his eyelids were swollen shut. Or wiping his ass because he couldn’t move his arms. Apollo gave his life, so you wouldn’t have to do this.

ADONIS
Oh, so that’s why he took that last fight?

Mary Anne cuts Adonis a cold look.

ADONIS (CONT’D)
He didn’t need the money. Why’d he do it? Maybe he was sick of being cooped up in this house with your controlling ass-

WHAP! Mary Anne slaps the taste out of his mouth. Adonis turns his head back to her for a beat, then storms out.

INT. CREED MANSION / TROPHY ROOM - DAY
Adonis is surrounded by the success of his grandfather Apollo Creed. His eyes track the framed items on the walls: Apollo’s American Flag Shorts, championship belts, humanitarian awards, and pictures shaking hands with Presidents. His eyes fall on a newspaper article with a picture of Apollo and Rocky Balboa the clipping reads, “CREED TRAINS FORMER RIVAL”.

He goes over to a cabinet underneath the newspaper clippings, and digs through a box. He takes an unseen object and storms out.

INT. CLABSADDLE HOUSE / ADONIS ROOM - NIGHT
Adonis looks at the Wikipedia page for Rocky Balboa on his iPad. He taps the link to Adrian’s, website “CONTACT”. The address is in Philadelphia.

INT. USED BOOKSTORE- PHILADELPHIA
Massive hands pick up a worn, paperback romance novel off the display rack. The hands belong to ROCKY BALBOA (60’s, Italian-American). He looks at the cover, through his glasses, and mouths along to the title.

He slaps the book down on the checkout counter.
STORE OWNER (O.S.)
That’ll be all champ?

ROCKY
Yup. Till next time.
(touches his stomach)
You think I could use your bathroom.

INT. BOOKSTORE BATHROOM

On Rocky, leaning up against the walls of the stall, vomiting into the toilet. He stands up, wipes his mouth.

EXT. USED BOOKSTORE- PHILADELPHIA

Rocky exits the store, book in tow headed towards his industrial, white van parked on the sidewalk. He crosses the street towards a corner-store

INT. LIQUOR STORE- PHILADELPHIA

Rocky walks up to the CLERK (40’s Palestinian), eyeing the liquor on display behind him.

ROCKY
How ya doin. Let me get a little bottle of Four Roses.

The clerk grabs a pint of the cheap stuff, puts it in a paper bag, and sits it on the counter in front of Rocky.

CLERK
Gonna have to see some ID, champ.

Rocky smiles as he counts out $15 and hands it over. The clerk tries to give him change back, but Rocky declines it.

EXT. CEMETERY- ADRIAN’S PLOT- DUSK

The bouquet sits next to ADRIAN BALBOA’s headstone. Rocky sits in a chair across from it, glasses on, reading the book out loud. He comes to the end of the chapter, dog ears the page and closes the book. He stands up, hides his folding chair in the a tree, and starts off.

He stops at another headstone, and pulls the bottle of Four Roses out of the bag, and sits it down, unopened on the tombstone. We see it reads “PAULIE PENNINO” 1940-2012. Rocky heads off towards his car.
INT. CALIFORNIA MEN’S COLONY- SAN LOUIS OBISPO

We find Adonis, waiting in a line of visitors going through processing. Guards look on, past the metal detectors, as Adonis places his personal items in the X-Ray machine trays.

INT. VISITING ROOM- CMC SLO

Adonis sits down in a row of plastic chairs on the visitors side of the glass panel. Several visits are going on on either side of him, with INMATES, speaking with visitors through black phones.

A BUZZ is heard, and TERREL JOHNSON (40’s) a man of slight build but intense eyes, emerges from the prison door and sits down across from Adonis. They stare at each other through the thick glass. He picks up the phone. Adonis picks up his.

TERREL
Look at you. All that hair on your face. What are you now, 22?

ADONIS
23.

Terrel takes this in.

ADONIS (CONT’D)
I’m leaving tomorrow. Going to the East Coast. Not planning on coming back.

TERREL
That’s good. Wish I had some cool advice to give you... but you done outgrew mine.

ADONIS
I didn’t come for advice. Just wanted to tell you face to face.

Terrel nods.

TERREL
Did you win?

Adonis nods. Terrel smiles.

TERREL (CONT’D)
I’ll look for you, in the papers, and on ESPN.
ADONIS
I aint even got nothin’ set up out there. Don’t know if I ever will...

TERREL
Hey. It aint like I don’t got time.

ADONIS
Alright man.

TERREL
Aight.

They hang up their phones, and stand up on opposite sides of the glass. Adonis watches as Terrel heads back to the hallway.

EXT. CLABSADDLE FRONT LAWN - DAY

Adonis, stands next to his car and several bags of luggage holding an envelope full of cash. He’s staring at a CRAIGSLIST CUSTOMER (40’s, Hispanic), who sits in the driver’s seat. He fires up the engine, tosses a peace sign up to Adonis, and drives off into the distance.

Kayla runs out of the house towards him and grabs his leg. Adonis grabs her back and squeezes her tight. He bends down to her.

KAYLA
Are you ever coming back?

ADONIS
I’m not sure.

KAYLA
How will we talk?

ADONIS
We’ll use the computer.

KAYLA
Are you gonna fight?

ADONIS
Yes.

KAYLA
You better win.

Adonis forces a smile as the cab pulls up. Kayla heads back towards the house, and he gets in.
EXT. PHILADELPHIA SKYLINE- SUNRISE- SIX HOURS LATER

A commercial plane moves along the horizon, with downtown Philadelphia’s skyscrapers looming in the foreground.

EXT. ADONIS’ PHILADELPHIA APARTMENT BUILDING

A yellow cab lets Adonis out at the corner. He looks up at a sparse brick apartment complex.

INT. ADONIS’ APARTMENT HALLWAY

Adonis stands next to his LANDLORD (Filipina, 50s) who finds the keys to his unit.

LANDLADY
A lot of young people here, students, artists. Not too many families. You’ll like it.

Adonis looks down the hallway as a WHITE GUY gets onto the elevator. At the last second a WOMAN (Black, 20’s long dreadlocks, stunning) carrying a subwoofer catches the elevator doors. She gets on, not noticing Adonis staring her down as the elevators close. He turns his attention back to the Landlady, as she opens his door.

Series of shots

–Adonis has just finished moving into a studio apartment–. It’s modest. Adonis grabs his phone, and exits.

–Adonis stands at the top of the Art Museum steps, looking up at the Rocky statue, the sun setting behind it.

INT. ADRIAN’S RESTAURANT

Rocky places large boxes onto a rack. FRIEDA, the hostess, enters the narrow staircase and near the bottom sees Rocky at the stove in discussion with the HISPANIC CHEF, and TWO KITCHEN WORKERS.

FRIEDA
Rocky?

Rocky turns towards the staircase.

ROCKY
Yeah?
FRIEDA
There’s some guy who wants to talk with ya.

ROCKY
Kinda late...

FRIEDA
Want me to tell him you already left?

ROCKY
I got it.

INT. ADRIAN’S RESTAURANT

Upstairs Adonis stares at the many pictures depicting Rocky’s career. On the wall are his title belts too.

His eyes settle on a large dynamic painting of Rocky and Apollo, about to exchange blows.

Because of the hour, there are only four remaining diners as usual, opera music is faintly heard.

Adonis hears heavy footsteps coming up the basement stairs. His eyes travel from the vibrant painting to Rocky appearing at the top of the stairs. Rocky removes his glasses as he approaches.

Adonis is slightly taken aback by the “present” Rocky, and the colorful youthful image seen on the painting.

ROCKY
How ya doin’?
(off Adonis’ non-answer)
I hear you wanna talk to me?

ADONIS
(glancing at the painting)
Painting’s cool... who landed first?

ROCKY
That’s a secret...

Rocky notices the stitches.

ROCKY (CONT’D)
You a fighter, huh?
(off Adonis’ nod)
That from a punch or a butt.
ADONIS
Butt.

ROCKY
Terrible feeling, you know? Like ya been kissed by a rock...

ADONIS
I seen a lot of your old fights.

ROCKY
Don’t ya got nothin better to do? What’s ya name?

ADONIS
Adonis. Everybody calls me Donnie though.

ROCKY
Different-

ADONIS
I didn’t pick it. It’s Greco-Roman. My grandfather had a name like that.

ROCKY
That’s nice-

ADONIS
I never met him. But you did.

ROCKY
Oh yeah?

ADONIS
They say you never really know somebody till you fight them, so you probably knew him better than anybody.

Rocky does the math, while Adonis looks back towards the painting.

ROCKY
Where you say you were from, kid?

ADONIS
Los Angeles.

Rocky stares.
ROCKY
Apollo? Apollo’s your GRANDfather?!
Wait, he had two little girls and..

ADONIS
Lisa.

ROCKY
Little Lisa? You’re Lisa’s kid? Has it been that long...

Rocky smiles and covers his hand with his mouth. He can’t believe it. Then it hits him.

ROCKY (CONT’D)
What are you doing fighting?

Adonis looks around for a beat.

ADONIS
You think we could sit down somewhere and talk?

ADRIAN’S RESTAURANT- LATER

Everyone is gone, only the back lights are on. Rocky and Adonis sit at a table. Rocky drinks wine, Adonis water.

ROCKY
Apollo was something that was like invented. Had all the good stuff, heart, brains, power, forget it. Hit so hard, you felt like you were on a rocket to planet pain. And he had this mental thing... called it “The Eye of The Tiger”

ADONIS
Eye of the Tiger? Sounds corny.

ROCKY
Corny? It saved my life. The hunger, the drive. He could make things happen out of nothing. He’d be loosing, then BAM, one shot, one special move, now he’s won— it was magic.

ADONIS
Then how’d you beat him?
ROCKY
It was just my time. He had won fifty fights. Nobody stays strong forever.
(beat)
So why’d you come here?

ADONIS
I want you to train me.

ROCKY
Train ya? I’m no trainer.

ADONIS
Be my teacher, then. Why should I have to go to some other lame, when we could keep it in the family.

ROCKY
Family? Well...

He’s at a loss for words.

ADONIS
You gotta miss it...

ROCKY
Miss it? No. I got it all outta my system, and I don’t look back.

ADONIS
Why’d you do it in the first place?

ROCKY
I had nothin. Less than nothin.

ADONIS
And it gave you something, right? And I’m not talking about the money.

ROCKY
Yeah it gave me something. But it made me loose a lot of things too. That’s the thing about boxing, it takes more than it gives, you know?

ADONIS
Can say that about life.
(beat)
Look, it’s something inside of me, telling me I gotta do this. But I’m missing something that can take me to the next level.
(MORE)
I think that’s you. You can show me how to do it right.

ROCKY
Y’know- Apollo died in my hands. I watched my friend die, knowing I shoulda stopped it. That was what it was; now you’re here. I don’t want it. He wouldn’t either.

Adonis takes this in. Digs into his bag and pulls out a VHS tape. He sits it down in front of Rocky.

ADONIS
Brought you this, check it out, if you still got something that can play it.

Adonis stands up.

ADONIS (CONT’D)
I’ll be at your old gym tomorrow. Check me out if you feel up to it.

ROCKY
Sold that place, haven’t been there in years.

He starts towards the door, and on his way out he stops by the painting again.

ADONIS
So who landed first?

ROCKY
He did.

ADONIS
Figures...

Adonis exits as Rocky stares after the departing young man, trying to make sense of it all.

INT. ADONIS’ APARTMENT- NIGHT

Adonis lays on his back in his bed struggling to sleep as LOUD music can be heard in the room above his head.

He pulls the pillow from over his ear, and looks up at the ceiling.
Adonis, now wearing a T shirt and shorts, knocks on the door that the music is coming from. After a beat, the music stops.

The door opens, but is stopped by the security chain, and BIANCA (20’s, Black, dreadlocks) peeks her head out and looks at Adonis with a confused look. Adonis looks back caught off guard. It’s not who he expected to be there.

She looks at him, eyebrows raised. Adonis snaps out of it.

ADONIS

Hey.

BIANCA

Yeah?

ADONIS

I just moved in downstairs.

BIANCA

Yeah?

ADONIS

I can hear your music through the ceiling.

BIANCA

Oh! You must be right under me.

ADONIS

Yeah.

BIANCA

That unit’s been empty for a while... Got used to it.

ADONIS

Yeah, I gotta workout early in the morning... so.

BIANCA

Gotchu. You gotta wake up early and do ya jawns.

(mimes doing pushups)

Keep your body tight... I’ll turn the bass waay down you won’t hear a peep.

Bianca closes the door, almost in Adonis’ face.
INT. ADONIS’ APARTMENT- MOMENTS LATER

Adonis lays down on his back looking up at the ceiling. The music still plays, but so quietly that he has to strain to hear it.

EXT. ROCKY’S HOUSE- MORNING

On the same street Rocky’s row house blends in with all the others. The door leading to the tiny back yard open, and Rocky exits. Dressed in modest, out of style clothing, and an old sweatshirt, he sits down on the top step and looks at the incredibly old, cracked heavy bag that still hangs from its rusted chain. He sips coffee from a mug and thinks.

INT. MICKEY’S GYM- DAY

Several FIGHTERS warm up inside. Adonis walks past a small SIX YEAR OLD fighter sitting at the edge of the ring, putting on his hand wraps.

Adonis turns to the larger ring, where LEO “THE ASSASSIN” SPORINO JR. (20’s Italian American) works drills with his father “PISTOL” PETE SPORINO (40s Italian) who still looks like he may have a couple of fights left in him. Above the ring a large banner reads “2012 Golden Gloves Champion Leo “THE ASSASSIN” Sporino Jr. . Leo’s entourage looks on.

INT. MICKEY’S GYM- MOMENTS LATER

Adonis and Sporino talk ringside, between rounds.

SPORINO
The membership is $50 dollars a month. You get unlimited access to the gym, and all the equipment. You with a trainer?

ADONIS
Not yet.

SPORINO
You amateur?

ADONIS
Pro.

SPORINO
Oh yeah? Where you from?
ADONIS
LA.

SPORINO
Hollywood!
(beat)
Which gym? I know all those guys.

This stops Adonis in his tracks.

ADONIS
More self taught than anything.

SPORINO
Self taught... pro...
(long beat)
Well most members just work
themselves out. For an extra $20 a
month. I can give you drills, and
check in with you when I can. You
want to do that?

Adonis nods.

MOMENTS LATER- We find Adonis in the corner, doing step and
punch on air, next to the six year old fighter, and a couple
of other young BOXERS. He looks over at Leo working drills,
envious.

EXT. PHILADELPHIA STREET- NIGHT

Adonis walks down the sidewalk, looking around, questioning
if he made the right move coming out to Philly.

As he approaches a building, he sees a line of hipsters,
mostly black standing outside. Hip- Hop music plays from
inside. He keeps walking: not his type of crowd, but as he
passes the window, he sees that stops him in his tracks. He
looks back at the line, and heads towards it. The camera
tracks over to reveal a large flyer with a photo of Bianca on
it.

INT. PENN CAFE- MOMENTS LATER

Adonis, holding a beer, stands in the back of the crowd
watching Bianca finish up her set.

BIANCA
This last song, is for anyone who
has ever had their heart broken.
The HOUSE BAND starts, and Bianca closes her eyes, moving to the beat. She sings, with a beautiful edge to her voice. Adonis watches her closely, she opens them and they seem to catch eyes.

INT. PENN CAFE– MOMENTS LATER

Adonis watching the musicians packing up. We see his POV: Bianca giving the guitarist a hug. She walks over to the bar, and the BARTENDER hands over her purse from behind the counter.

ADONIS
Wussup, neighbor.

Bianca looks up and sees Adonis, recognizing him immediately. She turns back to her purse. Putting the pack of cigarettes back inside.

BIANCA
Workout boy. I thought that was you.

Adonis smiles this off.

ADONIS
Nice show.

BIANCA
(disinterested)
Thanks.

ADONIS
Yeah... Can I buy you a drink?

BIANCA
No.

ADONIS
Wussup, you don’t drink?

BIANCA
I drink. I’m just not drinking with you.

ADONIS
Why not?

BIANCA
Cause I know your type.

ADONIS
My type?
BIANCA
The type who hits the gym in the morning and picks up broads in bars at night.

She’s got him, he tries to regroup.

ADONIS
I’m not trying to pick you up, I’m extending an olive branch... Last night, I didn’t know you were...

BIANCA
Working?

ADONIS
Yeah.

(beat)
And I don’t just go to the gym for the hell of it... I’m a boxer.

Bianca looks at him for a quick beat.

BIANCA
A boxer, like pro?

ADONIS
Yeah.

BIANCA
I thought boxers weren’t supposed to drink.

Adonis looks down at his cup.

ADONIS
I’m off the clock.

BIANCA
Oh...

(checks the time on her phone)
Well I’m not... see you around.

She heads off.

ADONIS
Wait...

She’s already too far to hear him. Adonis looks down at his drink, then around the club.
INT. ADONIS’ APARTMENT - NIGHT

Adonis sits on his back, video chatting with Kayla on his iPad. He says goodnight to her and hangs up. Just as Bianca’s music starts up again. Adonis listens for a bit. Then gives up on any chance of sleeping, and rolls out of bed and starts doing pushups.

INT. BT CONVENTION CENTER / BACKSTAGE – DAY

It’s a PACKED HOUSE- a sellout crowd has gathered the around the weigh- in stage. A banner reads: PORTER VS WHEELER: FIGHT OF THE CENTURY. Wheeler and Porter, wearing only black briefs, approach each other for the stare down. Nose to nose, the two mumble threats at each other, until Porter pushes his forehead against Wheeler’s face. Wheeler gives him a hard shove back and, WHAM! Porter cracks Wheeler across his face with a right, crumpling him. A melee breaks out as both camps descend on each other. FREEZE FRAME ON THE CHAOS

ESPN ANCHOR (V.O.)
That was the scene earlier today at the weigh in for the Porter-Wheeler fight.

INT. MICKEY’S GYM- DAY

We pull back to reveal Adonis and a few other patrons watching Sportscenter in between rounds.

ESPN ANCHOR
Wheeler, who suffered a broken jaw in the fight, and has already announced plans to sue both Porter, and the WBC.

Adonis goes back over to the heavy bag, and works drills away from all of the action of Sporino, Leo, and their entourage.

INT. ADONIS’ APARTMENT - NIGHT

Adonis paces his apartment, bored. Bianca’s music can be heard from upstairs. He walks over to his kitchen and looks inside of the refrigerator- nothing but bachelor food. He looks up at his ceiling.

INT. ADONIS’ APARTMENT HALLWAY–

Adonis knocks on Bianca’s door. This time she doesn’t stop the music, and just opens the door and stares at him blankly.
ADONIS
I’ve been hearing you up here working for a while.
(beat)
I was wondering if, you wanted to grab a bite?

Bianca looks at him suspiciously.

BIANCA
You asking me out on a date? Or are you extending another olive branch?

ADONIS
I’m asking you if you’re hungry.
(beat)
I know how I am when I’m focused. Sometimes I forget to eat... It’s not a date...

Bianca stares at him. Then looks back into her room.

BIANCA
I can’t do more than an hour. Where did you want to go?

ADONIS
I was hoping you could tell me. Maybe we go somewhere in your hood.

BIANCA
My hood?
(beat)
You sure you ready for that?

Adonis nods. Bianca smiles.

EXT. WEST PHILLY STREET CORNER- NIGHT

Adonis follows Bianca closely as they walk towards a florescent soaked Chinese Food Restaurant on a gritty, graffiti stained street corner.

Several young, tough looking, kids stand outside on the street, staring Adonis down.

ADONIS
Where are we right now?

BIANCA
West Philly.
ADONIS
So this is why the Fresh Prince’s mom sent him to Bel Air.

Bianca chuckles at this.

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INT. CHINESE FOOD RESTAURANT—PHILLY

It’s a gritty restaurant. Graffiti stained windows, mostly African-American patrons, Chinese American staff serves the register.

We find Bianca and Adonis sitting down near a window, tearing into their food with their chopsticks.

BIANCA
I been coming to this jawn since I was a kid. My parents own a store a couple blocks over.

She scrapes pieces of general chicken onto his plate.

ADONIS
What’s a jawn?

BIANCA
Jawn... that’s Philly for anything.
(Pointing out each item of food)
See these, is jawns. These is jawns. That shirt you’re wearing, that’s a jawn.

Adonis smiles at his cultural tour guide.

ADONIS
You got a dude?

Bianca shakes her head.

BIANCA
Too much going on right now. Don’t have the time.

ADONIS
Booking a lot of shows?

Bianca nods.

BIANCA
Need about 5 a month just to pay the rent. Also making a ton of music.
(MORE)
BIANCA (CONT'D)
Tryna finish this EP by next week. 
Got a shot at opening for Rihanna

ADONIS
Word, is that a big one?

BIANCA
Huge, all the big acts from here played there first. Jill, Legend, the Roots...

ADONIS
That’s wussup!

BIANCA
It’s a long shot.

ADONIS
I got faith in you. 
(beat)
How long have you been singing?

BIANCA
Since I was young... how long have you been boxing?

ADONIS
I’ve been boxing pro for like two years.

Bianca looks at him.

BIANCA
You don’t seem like a boxer to me. 
You look like one, you know... but ain’t most boxer’s like...

ADONIS
What?

BIANCA
Street? Not saying you’re a square... but how’d you get into to doing this?

Adonis looks at her for a long beat. Deciding whether or not to tell her the truth.

ADONIS
I had a lot of anger issues when I was young. Something about boxing always calmed me down.

She looks at him, seeing him a bit differently now.
BIANCA
Why you come out here?

ADONIS
I got like an uncle out here who was a real dope boxer. Trying to get him to train me.

BIANCA
He doesn’t want to?

Adonis shakes his head.

BIANCA (CONT’D)
You seem pretty convincing to me. I think you’ll get him to come around.

ADONIS
I don’t know...

BIANCA
Just be honest with him.

ADONIS
What do you mean.

BIANCA
Do you want him to train you because he was a good boxer... or do you want him to train you because he’s your family?

ADONIS
Because he’s my family, I guess.

BIANCA
Come at him like that.

Adonis thinks on this.

ADONIS
When is your next show? I wanna come and support.

BIANCA
You don’t gotta do that.

ADONIS
Too late. First show was too dope... I’m a groupie now.

Bianca smiles at Adonis for a bit, trying to figure him out. He looks down at the food, noticing its all gone.
ADONIS (CONT’D)
Well. Should we blow this jawn?

Bianca nods and they get up.

INT. BUS- NIGHT- MOMENTS LATER

Adonis and Bianca sit next to each other on the bus riding back. Bianca falls asleep. Adonis slowly puts his arm around her. Just as it touches her, she wakes up, and he subtly plays it off. He smiles.

INT. ADONIS’ APARTMENT HALLWAY-

Adonis walks Bianca to the door of her apartment. Bianca stops at her door and turns around.

BIANCA
Thanks for the food. Good night.

ADONIS
You gonna work some more?

BIANCA
I’ll use the headphones, don’t worry.

ADONIS
Naw, I was gonna see if it was cool to come in and listen.

BIANCA
Ha. You move fast, don’t you?

Adonis smiles, taking the loss.

ADONIS
I only got one gear...
Good night.

BIANCA
Nite.

She opens the door and goes inside. Adonis heads down the hall. Bianca pops back out of the door.

BIANCA (CONT’D)
What’s your name.

ADONIS
Oh, Donnie.
BIANCA
I need your government. For the guest list. I gotta a show Friday night at the Luxe. No pressure.

Adonis pauses for a moment.

ADONIS
Adonis Johnson.

Bianca chuckles at this.

BIANCA
Seriously? That’s a practical joke of a name. Might as well be named Guapo.

ADONIS
Don’t. My mom had me young. It’s a long story.

BIANCA
Alright, Adonis. I’ll put you down.

ADONIS
See you then.

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INT. RING MICKEY’S GYM- DAY

TITO (Hispanic, 20s), Leo’s sparring partner stands in the corner of the ring where CUT MEN attempt to stop his nose from bleeding.

TITO
I can still go...

CUT MAN
We can’t stop it.

SPORINO
Jesus. Take him out of here... (looks around for another person) Hollywood!

Adonis looks up.

SPORINO (CONT’D) (under his breath to Leo)
Says he’s pro... (to Adonis)
Let’s go, it’s your lucky day.
INT. RING- MICKEY’S GYM- MOMENTS LATER

Adonis adjusts his headgear, trying to warm up. In the other corner, Leo stands already good to go.

The bell sounds, and the fighters head towards each other. Adonis comes out with a lot of bounce, evasive but Leo, focused and methodical, quickly cuts the ring off on him and begins to punish him with jabs and hooks to the body.

INT. MICKEY’S GYM- BACK

A door unlocks and opens in the back corner of the gym, away from the commotion of the ring, and Rocky steps in keys in hand. He’s dressed even more modestly than usual, as he walks towards the commotion of the sparring match, hanging back, out of sight.

INT. RING- CONTINUOUS

Adonis is leaning up against the ropes, his back to Rocky, caged up against an all out barrage of hooks from Leo.

SPORINO
C’mon Hollywood, lets see that West Coast swag.

He leans back on the ropes and counters, the first one lands, but Leo ducks the second and lands a three hit combo on Adonis’ head. The last one sending him to a knee.

Leo backs off holding his hands up in the air.

LEO
Pro, what? Get me another one, pops!

Adonis tries to shake off the blow, and he looks outside the ring and catches eyes with, Rocky. Who looks back at Adonis with a worried look. Almost on- sight, Adonis stands up. He bangs his gloves together.

ADONIS
Come’ on. I thought philly was tough, them love taps, boy!

Leo turns around to Adonis. Rage in his eyes. He comes at Adonis swinging hard. Adonis ducks the punches, and counters with two hard left jabs to his nose, each one snapping his head back. Leo stumbles back, then counters with a hook to Adonis’ gut.
The round buzzer sounds and Adonis backs off, but Leo comes forward wanting more. Blood trickles out of his left nostril.

LEO
Come’ on!

Sporino comes into the ring and quickly steps between the two fighters.

SPORINO
Hollywood, you’re good for the day.

He grabs Leo’s face, looking at his nose.

LEO
Naw, let us keep rockin.

SPORINO
Chill out. What are you gonna have World War III in a sparring session...

Adonis turns back to where Rocky was standing, and finds: no one. He bites at his glove tape, dejected.

EXT. ADRIAN’S RESTAURANT—NIGHT

Rocky is seen turning out the lights, then exits. He begins to cross the street when he hears a familiar voice.

ADONIS (O.S.)
Why’d you leave?

ROCKY
Whatya doin out here?

ADONIS
Taking a walk... that was you at the gym, right?

ROCKY
Yeah that was me. Had to get back to some things here.

ADONIS
Why didn’t you stay.

ROCKY
I had seen enough.
(beat)
Seeing you take punches in there, brought back memories. Not so good ones, you know?
ADONIS
What was I doing wrong?

ROCKY
I don’t know...
(beat)
Off the top of my head... you can’t
lean on the ropes against a fighter
like that... tall like. You drop
your weight, and spin keeping him
close. Go right through him.

Adonis looks at Rocky for a long beat.

ADONIS
See... that’s what I’m talking
about... You’ve got all this
knowledge in there...
(points to Rocky’s head)
but you sell spaghetti? Walk around
here like a ghost?

Rocky looks down.

ADONIS (CONT’D)
Mickey... he trained you right? And
my grandpa, and Duke? It’s selfish
of you not to give back. Especially
with us being like family.

ROCKY
Why you keep saying that, kid.

ADONIS
What?

ROCKY
Family... we just met.

ADONIS
But you and my grandpa was like
brothers right?

Rocky sighs.

ADONIS (CONT’D)
He died and left me with a bunch of
people that don’t get me. But I
think he would have. And I know you
do.

ROCKY
I don’t get you, kid. Boxings the
worst sport there is.
(MORE)
ROCKY (CONT' D)
People slap you on the back,
telling ya how great you are, but
up them three steps... scariest
place in the world. Just you, and
another guy who wants to bury you.
You don’t want that to be your
life.

(beat)
It’s for people whose lives can’t
get no worse. People with no
choices.

(beat)
Just talking to you, I can tell
you’re smart. Ya got choices kid.

Adonis quickly moves closer to Rocky. Almost sizing him up.

ADONIS
Look at me.

Rocky postures a bit.

ROCKY
What are you talking about, I’m
looking at you.

ADONIS
Look in my eyes.

Adonis moves even closer, the two standing off, like two
fighters before a 12 round bout.

ADONIS (CONT’ D)
You talk about choices. I made my
choice. I’m need this. Tell me you
don’t see it in my eyes.

They stare each other down for a beat. Adonis turns away.

ADONIS (CONT’ D)
(without turning around)
Watch that tape, man...

He heads off down the street, leaving Rocky with his
thoughts.

INT. ROCKY’S HOUSE- BASEMENT

It’s what’s left of Rocky’s man- cave. Mostly a storage
space. Rocky sits on an old incline weight bench, in front of
the small television and VCR.
We see that he is looking down at the tape that Adonis gave him. He takes a deep breath, turns the television on and puts the tape into the VCR.

ON THE SCREEN- Grainy footage of the televised first fight between Apollo Creed and Rocky. The tape picks up the fight between rounds, close-up footage

BACK TO ROCKY

Who looks at the footage, almost as if watching people he doesn’t recognize. We hear the bell, and the round begins. A subtle memory comes over his eyes. He stands up, parallel with his younger self in the fight, and starts to mirror his old movements...

INT. MICKEY’S GYM- NEXT MORNING

Sporino takes Leo through a weightlifting routine in the corner of the gym. He looks up at the entrance and notices Rocky, walking through the door. And people acknowledging his presence.

    SPORINO
    Champ.

    ROCKY
    How ya doin.

The two embrace.

    SPORINO
    Didn’t know you were comin’ by.

    ROCKY
    Me either. Place looks okay.

    SPORINO
    Yeah I do what I can.

Sporino calls Leo over.

    SPORINO
    Here’s my kid I was telling you about. I don’t know if you guys ever had a chance to meet, but he’s the next big thing outta here.
    (sotto voce)
    Option’s still open, should you want to get involved...

Leo and Rocky shake hands.
ROCKY
How ya doin.

LEO
It’s an honor, champ.

Rocky spots Adonis stepping out of the dressing room, already sweating from hours of training. He spots Rocky talking to Sporino and Leo.

ADONIS
Unc.

Rocky lifts his head at Adonis. Sporino and Leo’s snap around. Their jaws hit the floor.

ADONIS (CONT’D)
You made it.

ROCKY
Was in the neighborhood.

SPORINO
How do you know Hollywood?

ADONIS
It’s Donnie... And I’m a good friend of the family.

SPORINO
You guys working together?

ADONIS
I don’t know...
(to Rocky)
Are we?

Rocky shrugs. An uncomfortable silence between the four of them.

SPORINO
You guys let me know if you need anything.

He and Leo head back over to the weights, staring at Rocky and Adonis.

Rocky and Adonis start towards the bags.

ROCKY
You didn’t tell them who you are?

Adonis shakes his head.
ADONIS
I don’t wanna go broadcasting that.
Keep it between us, you know.

Rocky nods.

ROCKY
So, you ready to roll?

61 TRAINING MONTAGE 1

A. Dawn- we see the sun rising in the mist, over the
dramatic landscape of Philadelphia.

B. Schuylkill River- Dawn. We see Adonis running along the
majestic river. Vapor expels from his mouth on this brisk
morning. We see Rocky watching from a vantage point along the
adjacent road. Behind him is the van.

ROCKY
Keep up the pace!!

As Adonis moves on, the city outline is seen looming before
him.

C. Int. Gym

Rocky is seen holding the bag as Adonis pounds away. Under
the music we can faintly hear Rocky giving instructions.

ROCKY (CONT’D)
A hundred a round.

Sporino looks on, as does Leo who shadow boxes in front of a
stained mirror.

D. Adonis has just completed wrapping his knees as he leaps
up from the floor to the 2nd step leading into the boxing
ring. He does this repetitively as Rocky keeps count.

E. Bianca’s Concert

Adonis stands in the front row, while Bianca rocks the crowd.
She eyes him as she performs.

F. Rocky Home

Rocky is again studying the old film of he and Apollo boxing.
It seems to re affirm his belief in Apollo and his grandson.

G. Int. Gym
Rocky has Adonis performing an unusual task. Hitting the heavy bag with his shoulders, no hands. Adonis is dripping sweat.

H. Ext. Street- night

It is quite cold as Adonis runs through the deserted South Philly marketplace. He passes by Rocky, who stands beside his van.

I. Hogie shop- Night.

Adonis stands with Bianca as they have their cheese steak dinner in the famous Pat’s Cheesesteaks. People watch as they share bites of each other’s sandwiches and share a playful kiss.

J. Int. Gym

Adonis is doing one arm pushups in the ring. People look on, especially Sporino and Leo.

    ROCKY (CONT’D)
    Time!

    ADONIS
    When we gonna spar?

    ROCKY
    When ya ready,

K. Int. Bianca’s Apartment- night

The clock reads 4:15am as she looks out the window... down below she sees Adonis getting into Rocky’s van and departing.

L. Ext. Deserted Backyard- Morning

Adonis looks at a pair of chickens standing nervously in front of him and Rocky.

    ADONIS
    Man, seriously?

    ROCKY
    Old school- go!

Adonis starts after the fleeing chickens, and surprisingly quickly snatches one up.

    ADONIS
    Old schools out!
Adonis, now wearing his gloves, throws the left jab against weathered, horizontal heavy bag.

Rocky stands behind him, watching the impact of each punch. The end of round bell sounds. Adonis sits down, trying to catch his breath.

ROCKY
You rest on your feet.

He pops up as Sporino approaches Rocky.

SPORINO
Kid’s lookin’ good.

ROCKY
We got a ways to go...

Adonis walks over.

SPORINO
(to Adonis)
Whattya weigh right now?

ADONIS
180, why?

SPORINO
(to Rocky)
If he could get down to a buck 75 in a month, we might be able to put something together
(to Adonis)
If you’re interested that is.

ADONIS
Hell yeah, I’m interested-

ROCKY
(to Adonis)
Hey, you do the fightin’ alright?

Rocky walks Sporino out of earshot of Adonis.

ROCKY (CONT’D)
You talkin about going up against your kid?
SPORINO
He could use a fight to keep warm. And people will come out to see you in the corner again. We could get it done at the Blue Horizon. Make a few bucks for everybody.

Rocky thinks on this.

ROCKY
I’m just starting to get used to this kid being around, know what I mean?

SPORINO
Yeah but he’s hungry. Let him eat. Think about it, Rock. Lemmie know by tomorrow.

Sporino pats Rocky on the shoulder and walks away.

EXT. MICKY’S GYM- DUSK

Adonis and Rocky, just finishing up their workouts, walk towards Rocky’s van.

ADONIS
You don’t think I can beat him?

ROCKY
He fought golden gloves, open class an won it-

ADONIS
I fought a guy who won gloves in Mexico.

ROCKY
You win?

ADONIS
Close enough...
(beat)
Things get rough in Mexico, trust me. With you training me, I know I can take this guy, Unc. Trust me.
(Italian Gangster voice)
Let me make you an offer you can’t refuse.

Rocky shakes his head at this.
ADONIS (CONT’D)
We take this match. And I got six
weeks to get in shape. I’ll do
whatever it takes, and if at the
end of six weeks, you don’t think
I’m ready: call it off.

Rocky scratches his head.

ADONIS (CONT’D)
I didn’t fly 3,000 miles from home
to play around. This is what I’m
here for. I’ll go 24/7 with this
shit. Matter of fact, we can stop
playing around, we can go to crib
throw all my stuff in the van right
now.

ROCKY
For what?

ADONIS
We can take it to your place.
That’s how camp is right? You live
with the trainer... old school.
Let’s go, right now.

ROCKY
Slow down. It’s been some time
since there’s been other people at
the house, since my Brother- In Law
passed away. Might be uncomfortable
for ya.

ADONIS
Is it haunted?

ROCKY
Course not.

ADONIS
I’ll be alright then, let’s roll.

EXT. ADONIS’ PHILADELPHIA APARTMENT

Rocky sits in the driver’s seat while Adonis loads the last
of his stuff into the back. He walks around the sidewalk and
looks up at Bianca, who sits in her second story bedroom
window watching him.

BIANCA
You sure you don’t need any help?
I’ll put these guns to use.
She flexes her biceps. Adonis smiles and shakes his head.

    ADONIS
    Done now.

    BIANCA
    (sarcastically)
    Darn.

Adonis knocks on the hood of the car. Getting Rocky’s attention.

    ADONIS
    Come meet my... my neighbor.

Rocky gets out of the van and takes a look at Bianca.

    ROCKY
    How ya doin- somebody forgot to gimmie ya name.

Rocky walks over to the sidewalk.

    ADONIS
    Bianca, this is my Uncle I was telling you about.

Bianca squints her eyes at Rocky for a beat.

    BIANCA
    He’s White...

    ROCKY
    Yeah, there is that...

Bianca points at Rocky.

    BIANCA
    Holy shit... are you Rocky Balboa!

    ROCKY
    Yeah. Listen I’m just helpin’ him out. Anytime you wanna drop in, if he aint trainin it’ll be okay.

    ADONIS
    I’ll call you.

    BIANCA
    Yeah... I won’t hold my breath...

She flashes a smile, Rocky blows her a kiss, and does a phony bow. Adonis throws her a peace sign.
She playfully rolls her eyes and closes the window on him. They jump in the van and blast off.

INT. ROCKY’S HOUSE- NIGHT

Adonis and Rocky move boxes into a vacant room. Rocky struggles with one, grows tired and sits it down.

ROCKY
(rubs his back)
You don’t ever want a bad back.

ADONIS
I got it

Adonis picks up where Rocky left off. He comes out of the room and sees photos and signs of Paulie everywhere. Old booze bottles, bar signs, and vintage Playboys mags.

ADONIS (CONT’D)
This your brother-law’s room?

Rocky nods.

ROCKY
Paulie.

Adonis looks at the sagging bed.

ADONIS
Guess he spent alot of time in here.

Adonis leaps on it, and stretches out.

ADONIS (CONT’D)
Still comfy though.

EXT. PHILADELPHIA SKYLINE - DAY

The sun rises over the city. A garbage man collects trash on the street corner.

INT. ROCKY’S HOUSE- ADONIS’ ROOM- EARLY MORNING

Adonis sleeps in a bed in the spare bedroom. THE SPINNERS plays from old record player speakers, pumped to the max. Adonis snaps up and checks his phone: 3:45am. He looks up to see Rocky, fully dressed singing and dancing along to the music.
Rocky and Adonis walk up to the van.

ROCKY
I’m taking you to another gym in North Philly. Tough joint. Very difficult. They take no crap there. Kinda what Apollo did with me.

Rocky gets in. Adonis tries the passenger side door and it doesn’t open. Adonis knocks on the window, Rocky rolls it down.

ADONIS
Can ya unlock the door?

ROCKY
You’re gonna run. I’m antique, so I’ll just be drivin’ along side keepin company.

ADONIS
How far away is the new gym?

ROCKY
Close enough.

He fires up the engine, and starts rolling down the street. Adonis runs along side of him.

INT. JOE HAND BOXING GYM- CONTINUOUS

The gym is the roughest that we have seen so far. The GUYS are already in there working.

We find Rocky introducing Adonis (who looks like he just ran a marathon) to his team: JOE HAND III (50s, Black, Owns the gym), AMIR HAND (20’s, Black, Joe’s Son same build as Adonis), MARCEL (60s, HISPANIC, short and stocky, glasses). They size Adonis up with excitement. Rocky points to Joe.

ROCKY
This is Joe. We go way back. Spared a little, fought some of the best. Got alotta knowledge in here.

Joe shakes hands with Adonis.

JOE
Champ told me a lot about you. Excited to help get you ready. (points to Marcel) (MORE)
This is Marcel, the best cut man in Philly. (points to Amir) And this my son, Amir, who’s gonna be helping you out with sparring.

Adonis shakes hands with Marcel and Amir.

INT. JOE HAND BOXING GYM – AN HOUR LATER

Rocky and Adonis work the hand bags, while Amir, Joe, and Marcel look on. Adonis punches from a flamboyant stance, hands low. Every so many punches, Rocky swings at Adonis’ head with the hand bags. But Adonis ducks and dodges out of the way, leaving Rocky just missing him.

ROCKY
Hands up... Keep your hands up!

Rocky swings on him again, fast as he can, but still misses. Adonis smiles. Rocky stops.

ROCKY (CONT’D)
Amir.

Amir jogs over.

AMIR
Sup Rock?

Rocky takes off the hand bags, and hands them to Amir. He subtly leans forward to him.

ROCKY
I’m takin a break. (sotto voce) Yo, Make him keep his hands up, know what I mean?

Amir nods. And walks over to Adonis.

ROCKY (CONT’D)
Same drill, but forget gravity, and keep em up, even higher.

They start. The pace of the drill is twice as fast as it was with Rocky, then Amir swings, and WHAM! he catches Adonis in the side of the face with the handbag.

Adonis cuts Amir a look.
ROCKY (CONT’D)
Hey! Nobody said stop and give looks. Let’s go!

They start again, and WHAM! Adonis is caught again even harder this time.

ADONIS
(threatening)
Watch my eye, bruh!

ROCKY
You supposed to watch your own eye.
Keep movin!

The drill starts again and after a few exchanges, Amir swings once, Adonis ducks it but when he comes up he is caught by another swing, SMACK right into his left eye.

Adonis explodes, and shoves Amir in his chest, sending him back fifteen feet.

ADONIS
I told you homie! Take the gloves off!

Adonis rips off his gloves and squares up with Amir, who stares at him like he’s crazy.

ADONIS (CONT’D)
Let’s go homie!

Amir looks at Rocky and at his Dad, and calmly takes the bags off his hands. He hands them to Rocky.

AMIR
Call me when this dude is ready to train, man.

Amir heads over to the other side of the gym.

Rocky pulls Adonis to the other side of the gym.

ROCKY
Yo, what the hell are you doing?

ADONIS
That dude is trying to take real shots at me, I don’t play that shit.
ROCKY
Y’know, ya tell people stuff like, don’t touch that fire, cause it burns. And lo and behold, they do it anyway. Guess what, some people just gotta learn the hard way. Now this Leo guy aint superman, but he’s got fast combos that will punch holes in ya face, if ya don’t keep ya hands up!

Adonis takes this in.

ROCKY (CONT’D)
Now go apologize to him.

Adonis looks off.

ROCKY (CONT’D)
Apologize to him, now, or I walk.

Adonis takes a long beat, then begrudgingly walks over to Amir.

ADONIS
My bad bro, I took a nasty butt to my eye, never healed right.

AMIR
It’s all good, bro, happens to the best of us. Just keep them jawns up when you roll, like this.

Amir shows Adonis what he is talking about. Adonis mirrors it.

AMIR (CONT’D)
And I’ll watch the eye.

JOE HAND
You two kiss and make up? (beat)
Now back to work!

INT. JOE HAND BOXING GYM- MOMENTS LATER

Series of shots with Rocky talking over them.

ROCKY
Keep reversing them gears- you keep coming forward. Be outside, then close the gap. Be ready to jump in his pocket!
Adonis shadow boxes with Amir, both wearing hand wraps. Angle on their feet as they step, replace and pivot with large rubber bands binding their ankles together.

Adonis hits the heavy bag.

ROCKY (CONT’D)
Good, straighter. Work that Jab!
Every fighter must have a jab!
Stich and hook, catch a punch and let a punch go, nail the guy...

Adonis spars with Amir

ROCKY (CONT’D)
Close that fist! Close it, good or you’re slappin, and slappin don’t cut it!

Adonis and Amir shadow box.

ROCKY (CONT’D)
Everything is impossible without footwork!!! In and out, side to side, back and forth, it’s what will take you in for the kill, and take you out of trouble.

Adonis punches at the mirror, 5lb dumbbells in each hand.

Adonis works the heavy bag, throwing three jabs and then a right. Rocky and Joe look on.

JOE HAND
Okay shape, damn fast hands. But I don’t know what’s in here yet (points at his chest) Don’t know about that at all.

ROCKY
Only one way to find out about that.

Joe, Amir, and Marcel head out, calling it a night. Rocky and Adonis are still hard at work. Adonis throws punches at Rocky, who wears focus mitts on each hand, and a body bag.

ROCKY
You gotta bring it back to protect!
Bring it back!
The end of round buzzer goes off.

ROCKY (CONT’D)
Nice, take a break.

Adonis is gassed. Rocky, starts to exit the ring, but starts to feel sick. He goes over to the garbage can, and dry heaves.

ADONIS
Unc, you alright?

ROCKY
I’m fine, keep working.

Adonis doesn’t. Rocky turns away from the can, and starts back towards him and his leg seem to give out from under him. Smack! He falls down to the ground.

ADONIS
Shit!

Adonis sprints over.

ADONIS (CONT’D)
You okay?

Rocky, pissed with himself, nods.

ROCKY
Yeah. Just a little dizzy. Comes and goes, no big deal, really.

ADONIS
Naw man. That shit didn’t look right, we’re going to the doctor.

ROCKY
The doctor for what?

Adonis helps Rocky to his feet with his free hand. Rocky stands up, but his leg gives out again.

INT. PHILADELPHIA HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Rocky sits on the edge of the hospital bed in a gown. He looks pissed off. Adonis leans up against the wall across from him.

The door opens and DR. SHAHANI (mid 30s, Indian woman) walks in holding a clipboard.
Mr. Balboa! How are you feeling?

Nervous. When is the doc coming in?

Adonis makes a face like he’s about to see a car accident.

Actually, I am the doctor.

Sorry.

(to Adonis)

Doctors have changed.

She turns to Adonis.

And you are...

His nephew. I was just here to make sure he didn’t sneak out of the window before you showed up.

I’ll be outside.

Dr. Shahani chuckles at this. Rocky doesn’t. Adonis leaves the room.

So what brings you in to us?

Probably nothin- The kid saw me get sick, and sorta fall a little.

Dr. Shahani nods at this.

Was that the first time you’ve fallen?

Rocky shakes his head.

Any other symptoms?

Get tired sometimes, but that’s normal in life, right?
DR. SHAHANI

Your appetite?

Rocky shakes his head.

ROCKY

Medium... I would say.

DR. SHAHANI

Well you have a history of head trauma. And some of the symptoms you describe are consistent with dimentia pugilistica.

(off Rocky’s look)

But what has me worried is the loss of appetite, and the vomiting. We should run some tests.

ROCKY

I’m sure you got allotta people really needin your help. I’m good, really. You should check out somebody else.

DR. SHAHANI

I believe we should do it now, just to be on the safe side.

ROCKY

Gotta be fast, okay? Me and that kid, we got allota work to do.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM- NEXT MORNING

Adonis sits in the waiting room asleep. Rocky walks in with a slight limp (from the muscle biopsy). He wakes Adonis up.

ROCKY

All done kid. Let’s go.

Adonis pops up.

ADONIS

Shit. What time is it?

ROCKY

I don’t know...

ADONIS

We going home?

ROCKY

No, we’re going to the gym.
They walk side by side, down the hospital hallway.

SUPER: FIGHT NIGHT AKBAR VS. JOHNSON

INT. BLUE HORIZON- CONTINUOUS

The air is electric in the packed house. Two welterweight boxers move around in the ring. It is an intimately designed space, with an upper level of rowdy fans, that seems to sit right on top of the ring.

The crowd is mixed, mostly Black and Italian though, and standing room only.

We reveal that we are looking at the gym from Adonis’ POV, stares out beyond the door of his locker room.

ROCKY (O.S.)
One more.

Adonis turns back into-

INT. BLUE HORIZON- CHALLENGER LOCKER ROOM- CONTINUOUS

Adonis squares up with Rocky, who takes him through a complicated series of combinations. Adonis nails them with pinpoint accuracy. Joe, Amir, Marcel, and Bianca look on.

ROCKY
(to Adonis)
Listen, what you do here is forever. It’s part of ya history. You can’t change it, so use everything I believe ya got. Keep that jab constantly on him. Hit, and not get hit. Joe, can ya warm him up?

Joe hand steps forward with the focus mitts. Rocky glances into the hallway and spots Sporino, who motions for him to come and talk. As Rocky gets closer, we see Sporino looks like the cat who ate the canary.

ROCKY (CONT’D)
What’s going on?

SPORINO
I knew there had to be something with this kid. I mean, I tried to get you to come work with us for years. And this Hollywood kid just brings you out of the shadows?
ROCKY
Whattaya gettin at?

SPORINO
I made some calls to LA. Aint no Donnie Johnson. Kid’s name is Adonis. Kid’s Creed’s blood.

Rocky sighs deeply.

SPORINO (CONT’D)
(smiling)
Fight just got big time...

ROCKY
Yo, the kids tryna make it on his own name. Don’t tell anybody.

SPORINO
(without turning around)
Secret’s safe with me...

INT. BLUE HORIZON- RING- CONTINUOUS

Adonis and Leo meet in the middle of the ring, the ref between them, their corners behind them.

REFEREE
Touch em up!

Adonis touches gloves with Leo, and heads back to his corner. Joe, Amir, and Marcel head out of the ring. Rocky turns back to face Adonis, he grabs him by the face and pulls him close.

ROCKY
It’s you now okay? It’s all you, this is what you’ve been waiting for. I’m gonna be right here.

Adonis nods, intensely. Rocky steps out of the ring and looks back.

Adonis turns around, and the SOUND of the crowd fades out for a bit, while he looks and sees that only he, Leo, and the referee remain in the ring. Leo looks at Adonis, bouncing, looking relaxed and focused. DING! DING!

The NOISE of the stadium rushes back as the fighters head towards each other, coming within arms reach right in the middle of the ring. They stop and posture, Leo in perfect stance.
He throws the first punch, a stiff left jab, Adonis blocks it and sends one back, Leo ducks it and catches Adonis clean with two counters.

**SPORINO**
Nice! Nice!

Adonis quickly shakes off the hits and grabs him. The ref comes in.

**REFEREE**
Alright, break it up, break it up.

The fighters back up, and then the Ref sends them back at each other. Adonis bounces in on Leo, sends out a couple of jabs. Leo blocks all of them, and sends a couple back at Adonis, Adonis ducks the first few and tries to counter with a left jab, Leo slips it, and gets Adonis into the corner. He begins sending shot after shot at Adonis. Adonis dodges a few of them, and tries to do a hard slip to the right, when BLAM! He is caught flush in the side of the head by a left hook from Leo. Adonis is wobbled by this. The crowd explodes and Leo raises his fists to show the crowd that he is about to finish him off.

**ROCKY**
Tie him up, and bang him on the ropes!

Adonis does just that.

**ROCKY (CONT’D)**
The body now! Touch the body!

Adonis jabs three times to work his way in. Leo throws a big right, which Adonis slips beautifully, and drives a hard wide left hook to the ribs. Leo emits an audible grunt of pain. Leo is hurt, as he spins out, Adonis throws a five punch combo as the bell rings.

**INT. ADONIS’ CORNER- BLUE HORIZON RING- CONTINUOUS**
Joe Hand flips the chair over for Adonis to sit down into it. Adonis sits down and Rocky takes out his mouthpiece. Marcel works on the right side of his face with an ice pack.

**ADONIS**
What do you think?

**ROCKY**
Very good, what do you think?
ADONIS
I’m gonna move around a little.
Till my head clears.

ROCKY
I like what you’re doing. Get ya
senses back, then drop ya left
below his radar, and come up with a
shovel hook. If you see the openin,
park ya right on his chin. Your
grandfather dropped me with that
combo. Works very good.

Adonis nods. Rocky puts his mouthpiece back in and Adonis
stands up. The team jumps out of the ring. DING! DING!

Adonis punches his gloves together and takes off.

INT. RING- BLUE HORIZON

Adonis and Leo approach each other and begin to circling.
Adonis keeps his right hand cocked creeps up on Leo with more
patience.

Two quick jabs from Leo, but Adonis slips both of them. He
continues to creep in- patient, not bouncing like before. He
takes a quick jab at Leo, who sidesteps it and reverses his
footing, cornering Adonis. He sends rapid shots at Adonis,
who goes into defense mode, caging up. Leo fakes backing off,
and then comes in with a rapid fire combo. Adonis narrowly
slips the hard left of Leo.

ROCKY
Take it!

Adonis goes for the combo, dropping his left low, faking the
right, and brings up the shovel hook, driving Leo’s chin
upward, and BANG, a piledriving right lands with audible
force. Leo crumbles.

Adonis backs off, right hand still cocked as the Ref runs in
waving his hands, KO.

The ref waves his hands- TKO

Adonis quickly raises his hands and runs to the corner. Rocky
lifts his hands and runs into the ring.

ROCKY (CONT’D)
Way to go, kid! That was something!

ADONIS
We got em, Unc. We got em.
Leo’s team rushes into the ring to aid him. Sporino eyeing Rocky.

INT. RINGSIDE SEATS—BLUE HORIZON

Bianca jumps out of her seat, rushes through the crowd, and into the ring. She embraces Adonis, elated.

Leo comes back to his senses.

ADONIS
Whooo, let’s tear this city up!

INT. LIVING ROOM—ROCKY’S HOUSE

Adonis and Bianca sit on the couch next to Rocky watching SKYFALL. All of them look super sleepy. Bowls of Ice Cream are everywhere. Bianca leans on Adonis’ chest. Rocky does a sleepy head droop, then stands up.

ROCKY
I’m gonna call it a night.
Congratulations, kid.

He walks down the hallway, and comes back with a blanket that he places over Adonis and Bianca.

ADONIS
Thanks Unc.

ROCKY
No problem.

He goes to the back of the house. Bianca turns to Adonis. She whispers.

BIANCA
Hey.

Adonis opens his eyes, and looks at Bianca.

BIANCA (CONT’D)
I made something for you.

ADONIS
Oh yeah?

Bianca nods.

BIANCA
Close your eyes.
Adonis closes his eyes. And Bianca pulls out her headphones and places them in his ears. Adonis smiles, tries to peek.

BIANCA (CONT’D)
Keep em closed.

She presses play on her phone and a Beautiful, Haunting Song starts to play. We hear it as Adonis does, all encompassing. Bianca’s voice starts. Adonis keeps his eyes closed affected by this. Bianca watches him closely. Adonis opens his eyes. And kisses her. She straddles him, keeping their faces close.

INT. ROCKY’S KITCHEN- NEXT MORNING

Rocky, Adonis and Bianca make breakfast together. The Local News plays on the TV in the living room. On screen, we see a newscaster standing in front of the Blue Horizon Gym.

LOCAL NEWSCASTER
Local boxing fans got a blast from the past when Rocky Balboa made a return the ring last night. This time, as a trainer. Balboa was in the corner of Adonis Johnson, an otherwise unknown light heavyweight middleweight, who defeated local bronze medalist Leo Sporino, with a second round TKO.

Bianca’s eyes grow wide with excitement, and she rushes into the living room, followed by Rocky and Adonis.

LOCAL NEWSCASTER (CONT’D)
But things took a dramatic twist on reports that Johnson is the biologic grandson of Apollo Creed the late great heavyweight champion, and close friend of Rocky Balboa.

Bianca turns to Adonis, shock in her eyes. Adonis looks back at her- busted. She heads back into the living room and grabs her things.

ADONIS
Wait.

She heads out of the door. Rocky looks on at the news as Adonis follows them out.
EXT. PHILADELPHIA STREET - DAY

Bianca walks briskly while Adonis tries to catch up.

ADONIS
Slow down...

She walks faster.

ADONIS (CONT’D)
Hey.

Adonis tries to grab her hand, but Bianca pulls away and continues to walk. She goes to the corner and tries to catch a cab. The cab pulls up, Adonis pushes past Bianca and closes the door, telling the driver to take off.

Bianca tries to catch another one.

ADONIS (CONT’D)
What are you doing?

BIANCA
Going home.

ADONIS
Why? What you trippin for?

BIANCA
Are you seriously asking me that? (beat)
I made love to you last night...
and then I turn on the news and find out you’ve been lying to me.
You have any idea how that makes me feel? Do you even care?

ADONIS
I didn’t lie to you.

BIANCA
I distinctly remember asking why you’re a fighter. That would have been the perfect time to say, “You know, I’m related to the most famous boxer who ever lived...”

Adonis searches for an answer.

ADONIS
People look at me different when they know. I didn’t want you looking at me like that.
BIANCA
I’m not people... I don’t care about that kind of shit. I care about you keeping it 100 with me.

ADONIS
Alright. From here on out, 100 percent honest and up front. Just come back to the house with me.

Bianca rolls her eyes at this.

ADONIS (CONT’D)
I’m serious! On my grandfather’s grave.
(beat)
We can start right now. Ask me anything.

BIANCA
Anything?

ADONIS
Anything.

Bianca smiles. She can’t help but to be intrigued.

BIANCA
How many girls you been with before me?

Adonis winces.

ADONIS
You’re different.

BIANCA
How?

ADONIS
Cause I want to be around you all the time. I never felt like that with anybody.

BIANCA
It’s cause it’s new.

ADONIS
But it doesn’t feel new. It’s like I’ve known you forever. When I’m close to you, it’s like I can do anything.

Bianca crosses her arms, and looks off for a beat.
ADONIS (CONT’D)
Tell me you don’t feel the same way. Tell me you don’t and I’ll drive you home myself.

BIANCA
That’s passion, it’s infatuation. That fades.

ADONIS
I can’t see that.

BIANCA
Why not?

ADONIS
Shit feels too right. You make me want to work hard. Want to win.

BIANCA
So I’m just a good luck charm?

ADONIS
You could find an insult in a box of roses, huh?

BIANCA
Naw, I just find the real.
(beat)
It’s cool though. Maybe you’re my good luck charm too.

Bianca stares at him. She smiles.

ADONIS
What?

BIANCA
You do look like him.

Adonis quickly points at Bianca’s face, smiling.

ADONIS
See! I knew it!

Adonis quickly grabs her by her knees and lifts her up high into the air inducing a playful shriek. Her phone buzzes. And she answers it while Adonis is holding her.

BIANCA
(into phone)
Hello... Yeah this is she...
(to Adonis)
Put me down! Put me down!
Adonis obliges. She puts her finger in her ear to hear the phone better.

**BIANCA (CONT’D)**
Are you serious? Of course... Of course... This is foreal, right? Absolutely. Thank you so so much.

Bianca hangs the phone up, and takes off running at full speed, screaming in joy. Adonis, confused, sprints after her.

**ADONIS**
What?! What’s going on?

She stops and bends over out of breath.

**BIANCA**
I got the gig... You’re looking at the opening act!

Adonis screams at the top of his lungs. Bianca jumps onto his waist.

A TRANSIENT MAN (White, 60s) stares at these two idiots like they’ve lost their minds.

**SERIES OF SHOTS**

- Mary Anne Creed at her house, watching a report on Adonis.
- Lisa, Daryl, and the Kayla, who promptly puts her hands up in celebration.
- Terrel in the Rec room, watching the report.
- Holiday, in his house in the UK, watching a similar report.

**INT. ROCKY’S HOUSE- DUSK BACKYARD**

Rocky and Adonis work the hand bags. Adonis sends quick, fluid jabs at Rocky’s hands and stomach. The buzzer goes off, and Rocky stops, and rubs his sore hands.

A plastic kitchen timer goes off. And Adonis stops. Rocky takes off his hand pads and resets the timer.

**ROCKY**
Relax. I’m on your side.

**ADONIS**
Everybody knows...

**ROCKY**
So what? You ashamed or something?
ADONIS
I wanted this on my own.

ROCKY
Who’s in here punchin? Last time I looked at you, you were on ya own. Truthfully, I’m glad this happened. Now everybody’ll be gunnin for you. Makes you very alert.

The gym’s buzzer goes off.

ROCKY (CONT’D)
Time, and this time, don’t break my hands.

INT. ROCKY’S HOUSE- KITCHEN- CONTINUOUS

Rocky walks in and picks up the house phone.

ROCKY
I don’t know how you got this number but...

HOLIDAY
Easy, Stallion, it’s Niles Holiday... I used to fight on your undercards, but now represent Ricky Porter.

ROCKY
Wow... Sorry about that... the reporters... you know...

HOLIDAY
Yeah, I know how it is... Forgive me for skipping the pleasantries... is it true, about the kid?
(off Rocky’s silence)
What are you doing tomorrow?

ROCKY
We’re training.

HOLIDAY
Think you and the kid can spare 30 minutes for a business meeting?

INT. ADRIAN’S- DAY

Daylight streams into the back of the restaurant, that is closed for business for the time being.
Rocky Adonis, and Holiday sit around a table.

HOLIDAY
My guy has to fight within the next 12 months, and we’ve beaten everybody. I’ve been at my wits end trying to find somebody worthy of a payday. Until I heard about you two.

ADONIS
You want me to fight Porter?

Rocky cuts Adonis a look. Adonis mimics “what?” back at him. Holiday observes this, and moves forward gingerly.

HOLIDAY
I think it could be a very smart move.

ROCKY
I don’t know about that, we’re still working on things.

HOLIDAY
Good. You were fighting pro fights in Mexico, huh?

ADONIS
Yeah.

HOLIDAY
I got you with a record of 11-1-1 out there. Your victory over Sporino’s kid puts you at 12-1. Nobody needs to know those fights were in some bloody hole in the wall.

(beat)
I’m not saying it isn’t going to be difficult to convince the board. But my camp is in a special position right now.

ROCKY
Curious. How’s your fighter feel about this?

HOLIDAY
He’s thrilled about it. He likes thinking out of the box, giving people chances. You can relate, I’m sure.

(beat)
(MORE)
HOLIDAY (CONT'D)
I just want to make sure you two are on board with this before we put our weight behind it. We don’t have time to muck about.

ADONIS
We’re game to go-

Rocky holds up his hand. Adonis, frustrated stops talking.

ADONIS (CONT’D)
What you want me to sit in on the meeting for if I can’t talk.

ROCKY
Talk.

ADONIS
How soon would this happen?

HOLIDAY
2 months, 3 max.

ADONIS
(to Rocky)
We can do this, right?

ROCKY
Not sure.

ADONIS
I think so.

ROCKY
Let’s not debate in front of this man.

ADONIS
Look at this chance.

ROCKY
Chance to get broken. He’s here cause to them you’re a sure thing, sure victory.

HOLIDAY
Not true.

ROCKY
Course it is.

HOLIDAY
Okay let’s be up front. This could be his last gig. 
(MORE)
HOLIDAY (CONT'D)
We gotta make it count.
(beat)
We’re talking about something the whole boxing world would want to see., we got the undisputed champion of today, we got the Icon in you
(motions to Rocky)
and we got the name of the best fighter ever all in one event? It’ll be bloody historic.

ROCKY
We’ll talk about it.

HOLIDAY
Sure, Champ. Take some time to think on it.
(to Adonis)
In the mean time, if this thing’s gonna go, I’m gonna need you to do something on your end. We need you to take on the "Creed" name, formally.

ADONIS
I can’t do that. Not my name.

HOLIDAY
Then that’s a non-starter for us. Without the name, there’s no fight. Take a day to toss it around.

Holiday stands up as Rocky and Adonis exchange looks.

ADONIS
Can I get the day off?

ROCKY
I was gonna suggest the same thing.

INT. BIANCA’S APARTMENT
Adonis and Bianca post-coital on Bianca’s air mattress. Bianca takes pulls off a roach, while Adonis looks up at the ceiling.
BIANCA
Patriarchy drives me insane. We carry the baby for nine months, wreck our bodies, almost die squeezing it out, only for society to slap the baby on the ass and name it after the man?

(beat)
The kid should at least get both names.

ADONIS
Which one goes first?

Bianca cuts him a look that says 1,000 words. Adonis laughs about this.

ADONIS (CONT’D)
So I’d be Creed–Johnson. And you’d be...

BIANCA
Franklin–Taylor.

ADONIS
But if you got pregnant...

BIANCA
We

ADONIS
If we got pregnant, our kid’s last name would be... Franklin–Taylor–Creed–Johnson?

BIANCA
I didn’t think that far ahead... but you need to get over this name thing?

ADONIS
Can’t do it. Gotta make my own way.

BIANCA
You’ve got a funny way of showing it. Weren’t Rocky and Apollo, like best friends? Seems like you’re trying to tap into whatever it is he left behind.

(beat)
That’s nothing to be ashamed of, right?

Adonis thinks about this for a beat. Then shakes his head.
BIANCA (CONT’D)
What are you afraid of?
(beat)
I’ll start it off for you, “I’m afraid of blank” Say it with me, I’m afraid of....

Adonis looks at her, almost as if to see if he can trust her. She looks back, waiting for his answer.

ADONIS
I’m afraid that...
(beat)
If I take the name on, and I loose. They’ll say I’m a let down. And not worthy of the name.

BIANCA
Who cares what people say.

ADONIS
You don’t know what it’s like.

BIANCA
I know what it’s like to be called a fraud. An embarrassment.

Adonis looks over at her. She does understand.

BIANCA (CONT’D)
Don’t you think it’s weird, that I do all these shows, and not once have you seen my family there? My parents aint 3,000 mi away. They’re down the street.

Adonis thinks on this.

ADONIS
What’s they deal.

BIANCA
We Sunni, like everybody else out here. But my parents is just mad conservative. Once I started performing, and doing the music about life, they disowned me. Told me I was destined to fail. My own parents want to see me fail at what I love to do.

Adonis thinks on this.
BIANCA (CONT’D)
I never knew what it was like to have somebody in the crowd that I knew truly cared about me. Until you started coming to my shows. It changed everything for me.

ADONIS
It’s crazy that they wouldn’t support you... I’ve seen you sing...

BIANCA
And I’ve seen you fight. So what if people don’t think you’re as great as Apollo. Who was? Think about what’s true. You love to box. It makes you happy, right?

Adonis nods.

BIANCA (CONT’D)
And you are Apollo Creed’s grandson right?

He nods again.

BIANCA (CONT’D)
Use the name. It’s yours. Fuck what they say about you. I’ll be there for you, win or lose. Rocky’ll be there for you, win or lose. To hell with everybody else.

INT. ADRIAN’S RESTAURANT- DAY

Rocky stands in the stock room looking over merchandise, the back door is open to the parking lot. Through the door, we see Adonis approach. He walks up to Rocky.

ADONIS
So what do you think?

ROCKY
Ya really care?

ADONIS
Yeah, what are your thoughts on this.

ROCKY
Fighter’s only got ten good years, tops.

(MORE)
ROCKY (CONT’D)
Every battle takes something outta ya, and trust me, this one could take more than you’re willing to give.

Adonis nods.

ROCKY (CONT’D)
But I can’t help but to think how jumpin into the deep end of the pool is how I got the best opportunities in my life. Chances like this are one in a lifetime...

ADONIS
So what are you saying?

ROCKY
Let’s do it.

Adonis nods.

ROCKY (CONT’D)
One call and we’re in.

ADONIS
Make the call.

Rocky shrugs. Adonis looks at Rocky blankly for a beat, then is overwhelmed with emotion and takes off running out the door.

ADONIS (CONT’D)
(shouting)
I’M FIGHTING PRETTY RICKY PORRRTERRRRR!!!!

He jumps up and down and pumps his fist into the air. Rocky looks on at this, smiling.

90
EXT. CREED MANSION- LIVING ROOM- MORNING

A HOUSEKEEPER brings the Wall St. Journal to Mary Anne, who eats breakfast at the kitchen island. She opens it up and flips to the front page. We see they have a photo of Adonis smiling in an interview, right next to a photo of a young Apollo in an article about the bizarre nature of the upcoming title fight. Their resemblance is breathtaking.
INT. CREED MANSION- WORKSHOP

Mary Anne wears a smock, and works on something. She takes a sip from a cup, but her eyes remain on the unseen project.

INT. CREED MANSION- TROPHY ROOM

Mary Anne mounts her project to the wall, revealed to be Adonis’ article in a custom frame. She steps back and admires it. Her eyes scan the wall and fall on something else.

INT. ROCKY’S HOUSE- KITCHEN

Adonis is in the corner making a salad, while Bianca and Rocky meal around in the Kitchen cooking.

Bianca checks on a pot bubbling on the stove, while Rocky stirs a pot of tomato sauce.

   ROCKY
      I don’t know... I’ve had sweet potatoes before.

   BIANCA
      Not like this, you haven’t.

Rocky smiles.

Bianca opens the stove and pulls out a large baking sheet, foil covering it. She sits it down on the counter and peels the foil back, revealing the orange dish.

   ROCKY
      Smells good.

Bianca dips a small spoon into it, blows on it, hands it to Rocky, who eats it. His face says it all.

   ROCKY (CONT’D)
      Tastes better.

Bianca smiles, as her cell phone rings. She answers it.

   BIANCA
      (brightly)
      Hey... uh, yeah, give me a second.

She heads towards the front door, past Adonis who notices something off in her voice. Adonis heads out after her.

Rocky looks on, then takes another bit of sweet potatoes.
Adonis looks at Bianca, who paces on the porch, wrapping up what looks to be a very serious phone call.

**ADONIS**
What’s going on?

**BIANCA**
I just talked to one of the top tour managers in the country.

**ADONIS**
And...

**BIANCA**
He’s gonna be at the show tomorrow.

**ADONIS**
(beat)
That’s amazing, right?

**BIANCA**
It’s just... It just feels like even more pressure.

**ADONIS**
Pressure’s good, it’s what you work so hard for.

Bianca looks at Adonis for a beat, and smiles at him.

**ADONIS (CONT’D)**
Come’on. I’m smelling that food you guys have been cooking up.

They head inside.

The four of them eat dinner, and talk. It’s unconventional, but a family nonetheless.

Adonis washes the dishes, while Rocky dries them and puts them away. Bianca walks over to Adonis.

**BIANCA**
I’m gonna take off, babe. Got the tech rehearsal early.
ADONIS
I’ll drive you.

BIANCA
Cab is already outside.
(beat)
Come early tomorrow, it’s gonna be crazy.

ADONIS
I’ll come straight from workouts. I won’t even shower.

BIANCA
Gross. I’ll disown you...

She gives him a hug, and a kiss.

BIANCA (CONT’D)
Bye Rocky.

ROCKY
Knock em dead sweetheart.

She playfully shadow boxes the air, then heads out.

EXT. PHILLY SOUL MUSIC FESTIVAL- SUNRISE NEXT MORNING

Workers drink coffee and bring equipment inside for the concert.

INT. JOE HAND BOXING GYM- AFTERNOON

Marcel sits at the counter watching Rocky work out Adonis in the distance and the phone rings. He answers.

MARCEL
Hello... yeah... who is this? Okay hold on.

Marcel heads over to the ring where Rocky watches Adonis work out.

MARCEL (CONT’D)
Rock... its the hospital on the phone.

This catches Adonis’ ear. Rocky looks around and sees everyone’s concern. He heads over to the phone and picks it up.
ROCKY

Yeah.

DR. SHAHANI

Mr. Balboa, this is Dr. Shahani—would you be able to stop by today?

ROCKY

What’s up?

DR. SHAHANI

It would actually be better if you came in to talk with us in person.

Rocky looks over at his camp for a beat.

INT. HOSPITAL - EXAMINATION ROOM - DAY

Rocky, wearing street clothes, sits in the consultation room. Dr. Shahani sits across from him.

DR. SHAHANI

Well, we went through your test results. And the neurological tests came back as I had expected. But your MRI and blood tests came back showing signs of Hodgekins lymphoma.

ROCKY

What’s that do?

DR. SHAHANI

Well Hodgekins is a very rare form of cancer.

ROCKY

Cancer?

DR. SHAHANI

The good news is, we caught while there is still a chance... We’ll have to remove the tumor in your lymph nodes, and start chemotherapy immediately.

Rocky takes all of this in for a beat, while Dr. Shahani continues the prognosis. He stands up, grabs his coat.

ROCKY

Chemo- my wife tried that stuff. Didn’t work out so good for her.
DR. SHAHANI
Mr. Balboa... I’d like to go over our options for treatment. Come up with a plan of action.

ROCKY
Thanks, but I gotta go.

DR. SHAHANI
What?

ROCKY
Gotta go. I’m very busy, Dr.

DR. SHAHANI
Mr. Balboa, we caught this early enough that with treatment, you still have a very good chance of recovery. Without it, you have less than a 5% chance.

ROCKY
Got commitments. Can’t do it now.

Rocky puts his coat on, and opens the door.

DR. SHAHANI
Wait, at least take these. It has information on your diagnosis, and options for treatment...

Rocky turns and looks at her for a beat, while holding the door open. He takes the pamphlets and heads out.

100  INT. JOE HAND BOXING GYM- AFTERNOON  100

Adonis and Joe Hand work drills. Rocky reenters the ring as they finish up the round. Adonis walks over to him.

ADONIS
What they say? You good to go?

ROCKY
Low iron. Gave me some pills- no problem.

Adonis punches his gloves together, excited. Joe hands Rocky the focus mitts, as the buzzer starts for a new round. He and Adonis go at it with the drill.
INT. JOE HAND BOXING GYM—LOCKER ROOM

Rocky gets ready to head into the showers, towel around his waist. He sits his clothes down on the bench and goes into the shower area.

Adonis and Amir come into the locker room, laughing, but exhausted. They go over to their perspective lockers. Adonis looks down at Rocky’s coat, hanging on the hook—notices the pamphlets sticking out.

He picks them up and starts to read them.

INT. JOE HAND BOXING GYM—LOCKER ROOM—MOMENTS LATER

Rocky enters the room to get his jacket, and notices Adonis waiting on him, staring him down.

ADONIS
This shit foreal?

He pulls out the pamphlets. Rocky snatches them from him and throws them in the trash.

ROCKY
Don’t worry about that.

ADONIS
Don’t worry?!! I thought you said the tests came back good.

ROCKY
What does it matter how the tests came back. You got Porter coming up, and can’t afford to get distracted.

ADONIS
To hell with Porter. When do you start treatment?

ROCKY
I’m not doing no treatment.

ADONIS
What?

ROCKY
You wanted me with ya trainin ya, and I appreciate that. But you gotta live ya own life. Don’t worry about mine, not at all.
ADONIS
You don’t do the treatment, this will kill you. You fine with that?

ROCKY
It’s alright!

ADONIS
What? How is it alright? Why would anybody say that?

ROCKY
Cause dying is easy; Cause living the way I do, is very hard.

ADONIS
What do you mean, living the way you do?

ROCKY
Look around. Anybody who every loved me, anybody who ever knew me, is gone. Mickey, Apollo, Adrian, Paulie, I got my son, who I haven’t seen in years. It’s like I was listening to some good song and it ended before it was suppose to. And I’m still dancin. I got nothing to hang around for.

ADONIS
I’m still here...

ROCKY
So what? You just showed up! You don’t know me! You’re just some fighter, you’re not family to me.

This cuts Adonis deep. He takes off brushing past Rocky, who watches him leave, then puts his face in his hands for a beat. He then pushes the locker, open handed- HARD. Again, and again.

EXT. JOE HAND BOXING GYM- DUSK

Adonis walks out of the gym, distraught. He puts his hands to his head not knowing what to do, so he takes off jogging out of frame. We hold for a few beats, and Rocky comes out looking for him. He’s nowhere to be found.
Rocky walks out of the front door looking for Adonis. He opens the door and sticks his head in.

ROCKY
Kid?

A UPS LADY walks up behind Rocky, with a package for him. He turns and takes it, looking at it with suspicion.

Series of shots

Adonis jogs the familiar route. Several miles through the city of Philadelphia. Tears in his eyes.

He arrives at the museum steps and sprints up them without hesitation. He gets to the top, lays down on his back, and passes out.

Bianca, wearing leggins and a beautiful top, paces behind the stage, getting ready to perform. She peeks out at the crowd, looking to see everyone getting seated.

On Bianca- having a panic attack. She pukes into the toilet, wipes her mouth, takes some deep breaths, and pulls out her cellphone and calls a number.

Adonis’ cellphone buzzes on his bed. “BIANCA CALLING” flashes on the screen.

Bianca talks into the phone, leaving a message.

BIANCA
Hey, you here yet? I’m freaking out over here... I gotta see you before I go on. I guess I’ll keep trying you.
Bianca hangs up. She starts dialing again.

110 EXT. MUSEUM STEPS- NIGHT

Adonis, still asleep on his back. A SECURITY GUARD wakes him up. Adonis takes a deep breath in, and looks around. Slowly realizing where he is. He looks down at his phone and fear flashes over his face.

ADONIS
Shit! Shit!

He takes off running down the steps and hails a cab.

111 EXT. PHILLY SOUL FESTIVAL

We open close on Bianca’s face. She’s looking off into the crowd, where Adonis is nowhere to be found. The music starts, and she starts singing, and she struggles... She looks into the crowd for a beat, then starts again.

112 EXT. PHILLY SOUL MUSIC FESTIVAL- ENTRANCE- NIGHT

A cab pulls up on the street corner of the club, and Adonis hops out.

113 EXT. PHILLY SOUL MUSIC FESTIVAL-VIP SECTION

Rihanna plays on stage as Adonis cuts through the sizeable crowd towards the VIP section where we see Bianca and a few other musicians standing by the large metal fold up chairs behind metal fencing.

ADONIS
(screaming over the music)
Bianca! Bianca!

Bianca sees him, and looks at him for a beat, before turning her back and disappearing deeper into the crowd. Two Security Guards head over to the Adonis.

ADONIS (CONT’D)
Say bro, my girl is back there.

SECURITY GUARD
No standing over here bro...

The Security Guard firmly pushes Adonis against his chest. Adonis knocks his hand away. And looks towards where Bianca disappeared to.
He rushes the gate, in an attempt to get past the guards, and one of them bear hugs Adonis across the neck. Adonis slips out, and punches him in the nose, dropping him.

The Security Guard, his nose bleeding, picks up a folding chair. More guards run over to Adonis, grabbing him and punching him SMASH! One brings the folding chair right to the side of Adonis’ face. Adonis falls as a guard pulls out handcuffs.

114 INT. ROCKY’S HOUSE- ROCKY’S BEDROOM- NIGHT

Moonlight streams into the bedroom, where Rocky lies atop the bed, half awake, half sleep. The house phone RINGS on his night stand, and he rolls over to answer it.

    ROCKY

   Yeah...

Rocky listens to the other end of the phone. He sighs deeply.

115 INT. PHILADEPHIA CITY JAIL- HOLDING CELL- NIGHT

Adonis sits in a solitary holding cell looking through pale bars. His face shows the signs of picking a fight with 2,000 lbs of security and a metal folding chair.

   COP (O.S.)

   Right over here...

He looks up towards the door as we hear the door buzz.

We cut to the reverse to see Rocky standing outside the bars, with a COP (40’s, Italian American) who keys open the holding cell. Rocky walks in and closes the door behind him.

Rocky walks over and sits down next to Adonis on the bench. The two are silent for a beat. Rocky looks around at the room.

   ROCKY

   They fixed this place up; use to be just one big cell. Very crappy.
   Maybe twenty upset guys in there at the same time. It got tense in a sense.

   ADONIS

   What are you doing here?
ROCKY
I know a few people, they say your friend’s downtown.

ADONIS
I’m not your friend. You’re just a trainer to me, remember?

This stings Rocky a bit.

ADONIS (CONT’D)
You need to stay away from me man.

ROCKY
What are you talking about?

ADONIS
Something about me. I fuck everything up.

ROCKY
Kid, that’s crazy talk.

ADONIS
It’s true. My mom don’t talk to my grandma because of me. My dad got locked up soon as I was born... anybody who I ever get involved with, I fucked their lives up. Thought it’d be different out here. Thought it’d be me you, and Bianca, for years. Make our own family.

(beat)
It was never about one fight for me. It was about 20 fights, 20 years, day in day out. Us living, making memories. I never had that.

Rocky reaches out to pat Adonis on the shoulder.

ADONIS (CONT’D)
Don’t touch me.

He knocks Rocky’s hand away.

ADONIS (CONT’D)
Just leave, man.

ROCKY
Kid...

ADONIS
Get outta here!

(standing up)

(MORE)
ADONIS (CONT'D)
Get your old cripple ass outta here. We aint family. You let my real family die.

This cuts Rocky to the core. Rocky stands up and stares Adonis down for a beat. Then heads towards the bars.

ROCKY
You got so much anger inside, kid. It makes you train hard. It makes you fight hard in the ring. But anger is poison. You can only run on it for so long, before it destroys you. But love... If you fill your heart up with love, you can fight forever. You’re too hard on yourself. You got so much good inside.

Rocky turns and walks out of the cell, while Adonis sits alone, with only the sound of the bars slamming to comfort him.

116   EXT. PHILADELPHIA MORNING SKYLINE
The sun rises over the city.

117   INT. MICKEY’S GYM- MORNING
Fighters preparing to work out look at the television, where SPORTSCENTER is on the screen. The ANCHOR runs down the morning’s news.

   ESPN ANCHOR 2
In boxing news light heavyweight contender Adonis “Creed” Johnson, was arrested late last night after his involvement in a brawl at the Union Transfer Music Club. Reportedly no charges are being filed against Johnson, who was not intoxicated at the time. Neither Johnson nor his trainer Rocky Balboa could be reached for comment.

118   INT. PHILADELPHIA CITY JAIL- HOLDING CELL- DAY
Adonis stands up by the door, and a different COP (30s Hispanic, Female) unlocks the bars.
Let’s go, Johnson. You’ve been bailed out.

Balboa?

No. Some lady.

Adonis quickly pops up out of his seat at this news.

Adonis, excited, walks outside of the doors and sees Lisa on the sidewalk, arms crossed, staring him down.

Adonis and Lisa walk and talk.

A part of me always knew this day was coming.

You got it honest.

Adonis looks at Lisa.

I wanted to be a fighter too. I think if daddy hadn’t had died, I would definitely have gotten into it.

Really?

She nods.

But I haven’t been able to watch a match since.

Adonis takes this in.

Why didn’t you ever tell me that.
LISA
Why do you think?
(beat)
So how bad is it, with Balboa?

ADONIS
If he gets chemo, he has a chance...

LISA
But he doesn’t want to...

Adonis nods. Lisa shakes her head.

LISA (CONT’D)
Of course not... That old macho shit is what got Daddy killed. You gotta talk to him.

ADONIS
I did. It was hard enough getting him to go to the hospital and get checked up.

LISA
You have to put it in terms that he understands...

They stop.

LISA (CONT’D)
You talk to mom?

He shakes his head.

ADONIS
Have you?

She shakes hers.

LISA
Something we can agree on now, I guess.

Adonis smiles.

121  EXT. PHILADELPHIA AIRPORT- DEPARTURE- SUNSET

Lisa and Adonis embrace. And Adonis watches as Lisa goes through the glass sliding doors. He jumps back into the cab, and it pulls off.
Adonis walks up the steps and keys into the front door.

Rocky sits at the dinner table, eating pasta and salad. He looks up as Adonis enters the door and walks in. There is a beat of silence between Rocky and Adonis.

Rocky gets up, and walks over to the cabinet and grabs a bowl. He puts some salad into it, some pasta, and then sits it down on the table. Adonis sits down and starts eating.

**ADONIS**
I’m not training if you don’t get treatment.

**ROCKY**
Eat. You look like you lost five pounds.

**ADONIS**
Can’t be taking orders from a quitter. You can’t throw the towel in to this cancer shit.

Rocky thinks on this.

**ADONIS (CONT’D)**
What makes this different than any of your other fights?
(beat)
If I fight, you fight.

Rocky takes a long beat. And nods.

Adonis extends his closed fist towards Rocky. Rocky punches it, and they eat.

Rocky and Adonis sit across from Dr. Shahani

**DR. SHAHANI**
Dr. Warren is going to walk you through the procedure.

Rocky nods.
DR. WARREN
So we’ll be putting you under general anaesthesia, and removing the tumor from right here. Now once we’re in there, if we see any other questionable tissue, we will remove that too.

ROCKY
When?

DR. WARREN
As soon as possible.

Rocky looks on at the CT Scan. Adonis standing beside him.

INT. RECOVERY ROOM- AFTERNOON
Rocky wakes up, hooked up to IVs in the dim room. He looks over, and sees Adonis sitting in the corner looking back at him.

Rocky stiffly sits up, and starts pulling at his IVs, as if he’s trying to leave.

Adonis springs up.

ADONIS
Chill, chill, chill. It’s all good.

ROCKY
Did you get your workout in?

Adonis shakes his head.

ADONIS
I stayed.

Rocky feels at his neck. There is a large bandage on the side of it.

ROCKY
They get it all?

ADONIS
I don’t know. They said they’ll come and talk to us about it when you wake up.

Rocky starts feeling around his bed again.
ADONIS (CONT’D)
Chill out man, what you looking for.

ROCKY
Jacket... my jacket.

Adonis reaches over to the chairs and grabs Rocky’s coat. He hands it to him. Rocky digs in it and pulls out his stopwatch.

ROCKY (CONT’D)
Let’s go, pushups, burpies, sit-ups, shadow box super-sets.
(beat)
Let’s go!

Adonis looks at him like he’s fucking crazy.

ADONIS
Right here?

ROCKY
You think Porter aint working out right now? You think he doesn’t want to dismember you in front of his people?
(beat)
Go!

BEEP. Rocky hits the stopwatch. Adonis obliges.

START MONTAGE

Adonis works out at Joe Hand’s with Amir. Rocky sits in a chair, ringside still bandaged on his neck.

Rocky gets hooked up to the chemotherapy machine. Two large IV’s hooked up to his arm. On the other side of the room, Adonis sets up a standing speed bag, and a standing body dummy. He installs a pullup bar in the door jam.

Adonis works out, while Rocky receives treatment

Adonis helps Rocky, weakened from the chemo session to the van.

Adonis lifts weights in the gym.

Adonis hauls massive bags of fertilizer in Rocky’s backyard.

Rocky, bed ridden from the treatment, sits in bed, Adonis sits in the chair next to him. They watch tape on Porter.
Adonis holds Rocky as he vomits into the toilet.

Adonis collapses while lifting bags of fertilizer. He stays down on all fours for a beat, then gets back up, and lifts it.

Rocky, having lost a bit of weight, wearing his hat, body bag, and gloves stands in the ring with Adonis, working him through blinding fast drills. Amir and Joe Hand, stand on either side of Adonis, throwing punches that Adonis parrys.

Adonis jogs through North Philly. Several young black kids come out, and follow him. A group of Dirt bike riders follow suit, popping wheelies as a salute to Adonis. A young kid drives up next to Adonis on a mini-bike. Adonis, nearing the end of his route, takes off at full speed. The kid smashes on the gas. And all of the dirt bikes and ATV’s catch up and slow down to keep right along Adonis, who is sprinting now. They arrive at the gym and the bikers circle around Adonis, some even shadow box with him, others with each other.

END MONTAGE

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM- DAY

Adonis and Rocky sit, Rocky in a hospital gown. They watch tape of Porter on Adonis’ iPad.

ROCKY
His defense is so tough, you gotta stay patient kid, get him to come to you.

On screen, Porter is picking his opponent apart. The door opens, and Dr. Shahani enters.

DR. SHAHANI
How are you feeling?

ROCKY
Worse body shots I ever took. Don’t recommend it, but thanks Doctor.

DR. SHAHANI
Well you should be feeling better now, and just in time. A bunch of us here at the hospital are getting the fight next weekend. We feel apart of the team! When do you guys take off?
ADONIS

Tomorrow.

DR. SHAHANI
So exciting... Well let’s get you going for this catscan.

Adonis looks down at video, just in time to see Porter knock his opponent out, cold.

Dr. Shahani walks Rocky out.

ADONIS
Hey Unc.

Rocky turns around.

ADONIS (CONT’D)
Think I can do this?

Rocky takes a long beat.

ROCKY
Yo you ever heard that story about the guy who said, “I Can” and the guy who said, “I Can’t”?

ADONIS
Naw, how’s it go.

ROCKY
They were both right.

Adonis smiles at this. Rocky heads out of the door.

INT. ADONIS’ APARTMENT HALLWAY

Adonis knocks on the door to Bianca’s apartment.

BIANCA
I’m gonna need you to not come over here unannounced.

ADONIS
I just wanted to apologize.

BIANCA
Okay.

ADONIS
I didn’t mean to let you down.
BIANCA
What you meant to do don’t matter.

ADONIS
Look, Uncle Rock’s got cancer.

BIANCA
What?

ADONIS
I found out right before your show, and I freaked out. It’s why I didn’t make it in time.

BIANCA
Jesus. How bad is it?

ADONIS
It’s bad. Putting him through a whole round of chemo, and radiation.
(beat)
Tough son of a bitch is fighting, still has every hair left on his head.

Bianca shakes her head.

BIANCA
I’m sorry to hear that.
(beat)
Make sure you send him my love.

She starts to close the door.

ADONIS
B.

She stops.

ADONIS (CONT’D)
What do I gotta do? To get you to forgive me.

BIANCA
It’s my fault for letting you in. For putting so much in whether or not you show up. I can’t forgive myself for that. You’ve got allot going on. And I’m gonna focus on mine.

Adonis takes this in, as Bianca closes the door.
INT. BIANCA’S APARTMENT

Bianca leans up against the other side of the door, holding back tears.

INT. ADONIS’ APARTMENT HALLWAY- CONTINUOUS

Adonis knocks on the door.

ADONIS

Bianca... open the door...

He sighs, and leans on it with his palms placed high. He steps back and pulls an envelope out of his pocket. Then slides it under the door.

ADONIS (CONT’D)

That’s everything you need to get out to Liverpool in there. It would mean a lot to me and Unc if you could make it. But if not, promise me you’ll at least watch.

He waits for an answer from the other side of the door, and receives none. He heads off.

INT. BIANCA’S APARTMENT

Bianca leans up against the other side of the door and listens to Adonis leave, holding back tears.

INT. PHILADELPHIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Adonis, Rocky and their team stand in the boarding gate of the airport. Adonis holds his cellphone to the side of his face, looking towards the escalator.

Joe Hand, Marcel and Amir are preparing to board, looking back at Adonis.

Adonis, frustrated, hangs up the phone. He starts to dial again when Rocky touches him on his shoulder.

ROCKY

We gotta roll, kid. Plane aint gonna wait for us.

Adonis looks back to his phone.

ROCKY (CONT’D)

She needs time, that’s all.
Adonis puts his phone back into his pocket and boards the plane with the group.

EXT. LONDON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

We track a large international commercial airplane from underneath as it lands on the runway, we then boom up to reveal the London Skyline.

INT. LONDON CONVENTION CENTER—PRESS CONFERENCE

Porter’s camp sits at the press conference table on one side, while Rocky, and Adonis sit on the other.

Several reporters clamor for attention and have intense questions for Adonis and Rocky.

REPORTER 1
Porter can we expect any more fireworks at the weigh in?

PORTER
I’ve been doing a lot of anger management. And learning how to turn the other cheek, and whatnot.

HOLIDAY
I just gotta make sure he unlearns all of this before Sunday morning.

The crowd laughs.

REPORTER 2
Balboa, there are rumors circulating back in the states about your health, some sources saying that you have been diagnosed with a serious health issue.

ROCKY
Yeah, it’s called ageing. Very contagious, so watch out.

The crowd guffaws.

REPORTER 3
I here has been questions raised about the odd nature of having a 5am start time, in order to maximize pay per view profits in the states. Could you both speak to how that might affect you.
Adonis looks at Porter, a bit unsure if he should go first.

ADONIS
If anything it’s an advantage for me, because it’ll be normal fight time where I’m from.

PORTER
It’s simple for me. 5 in the morning is just as good a time for an ass whoopin as any other.

Adonis leans over and mean mugs Porter, who isn’t even looking at him.

REPORTER 4
What about the contrast between you two, you the experience, the rags to riches background, vs. Johnson’s overnight success.

ADONIS
Well I wouldn’t-

PORTER
Everybody’s path is different. Some people have it better than others. My grandfather was a fisherman. His grandpa was the heavyweight champion of the world. Some people get things handed to them, while others have to earn it... Next question.

The two fighters stare daggers at each other.

REPORTER
There’s a lot of talk about legacy in this fight. Can you guys speak to that.

ADONIS
Well-

PORTER
Legacy is an interesting term. I feel that most great boxers have a common one. We all come from the struggle. Creed, Balboa, Porter. I’m carrying that tradition better than anybody. I’m the Rocky of this generation. I’m the Creed. It’s right here. Look no further. And you won’t have to come fight night.
Porter gets up, stares daggers at Adonis, and leaves.

INT. LIVERPOOL HOTEL- ADONIS’ ROOM

Adonis closed off, wearing headphones, shadow boxes into the hotel mirror. A KNOCK! at the door. Adonis opens it, to find Rocky outside holding a large white box. He passes it to Adonis.

ADONIS
What’s this?

ROCKY
I don’t got X-Ray vision. Open it up.

Adonis sits the box down atop the hotel bed. He quickly tears it open. Adonis pulls out a pair of AMERICAN FLAG BOXING SHORTS with an insignia that reads CREED.

ADONIS
Are these...

ROCKY
Your grandmother sent them to me, before we left Philly. You’ll want to try ’em on. I had to get them taken in quite a bit.

Adonis tosses them up and down in his hands. He notices a white card inside the box, he pulls it out and we see that it reads WIN in Mary Anne’s regal handwriting.

ROCKY (CONT’D)
Also, win or loose, I need you to do me a favor when we get back to Philly.

ADONIS
Anything.

ROCKY
You promise?

ADONIS
For sure. What’s up?

ROCKY
Don’t worry about it. Just wanted to make sure we were locked in before the fight. You might be mad at me tomorrow, I don’t know.
Adonis laughs.

**ADONIS**
(motions to the restroom)
I’m gonna go in there and try these on...

INT. LIVERPOOL HOTEL—ADONIS’ BATHROOM

Adonis slips the trunks on. They fit perfectly. He admires them in the mirror for a bit the size of the moment, the figurative weight of the shorts he now wears, hits him and he’s overwhelmed.

The hotel phone ring from inside the bathroom.

INT. LIVERPOOL HOTEL—ADONIS’ ROOM

Rocky walks over to the hotel phone and picks it up.

**ROCKY**
Hello... this is Rocky... Oh hey... you call to wish us luck?

Rocky’s face changes, and he sits down on the bed.

**ROCKY (CONT’D)**
Okay... Okay... Thanks.

Rocky hangs up the phone and thinks for a long beat.

INT. BIANCA’S APARTMENT

Bianca, her cellphone pinched between her shoulder and her ear, talks into it while frantically packing a small bag.

**BIANCA**
Yeah, I’ll be out of my concert at about midnight. There is a flight at 12:45? Amazing.

INT. INTIMATE PHILADELPHIA CONCERT VENUE

It is a modest club, but the crowd is at capacity. Bianca finishes up a solo ballad, killing it. Her eyes open and she scans the crowd, as she finishes, watching them clap. Her and the band, head off stage.
INT. INTIMATE PHILADELPHIA CONCERT VENUE—BACKSTAGE

Bianca and the band get backstage. The crowd can be heard chanting, “ENCORE, ENCORE, ENCORE”

MANAGER
You guys have to go back out. A couple more songs.

Bianca looks down at her phone.

EXT. CONCERT VENUE

Bianca frantically jumps into a taxi cab, with her carry on luggage. It looks as if she ran straight from the stage.

INT. PHILADELPHIA AIRPORT—MOMENTS LATER

Bianca runs through the airport as fast as she can move with her rolling luggage. She comes up to the gate just as the flight attendant closes the door.

BIANCA
Wait!

The attendant ignores her. Bianca looks around, in panic mode.

INT. PHILADELPHIA AIRPORT—MOMENTS LATER

Bianca talks to a flight attendant behind a desk.

AIRLINE AGENT
Our best bet would be to put you standby on a flight to Manchester.

BIANCA
That’s fine, I just have to get there, you don’t understand.

The agent continues to search through options for Bianca.

EXT. ANFIELD STADIUM—DAY

Adonis, Rocky, and camp arrive at the stadium. Security is getting in place for the match and Adonis and Rocky get out of the car and look at massive entrance of the iron gates.
EXT. ANFIELD STADIUM— NIGHT

The parking lot is full, and the exterior of the stadium is alive with the electricity of a soccer match. Rowdy fans swarm the doors.

INT. ANFIELD STADIUM— VISITOR’S LOCKER ROOM— NIGHT

Adonis, Apollo shorts and a modest robe rolls his neck, warming up. Rocky, Joe, and Amir sit in chairs behind him.

INT. ANFIELD STADIUM— HOME LOCKER ROOM

Porter shadow boxes into the mirror, Holiday watches through the reflection.

INT. ANFIELD STADIUM— VISITOR’S LOCKER ROOM

Rocky laces his gloves his hands moving slowly.

INT. ANFIELD STADIUM— HOME LOCKER ROOM

Holiday wraps the tape around Porter’s glove, with expert precision. When done, Porter stands, Holiday sticks out his hand, and Porter punches it, hard. He turns to Junior, and G close by.

    PORTER
    Let’s give em a little action, for good luck now.

Junior smiles and pounds his father’s gloves with all his might, top then bottom. Next, G, who does the same.

INT. ANFIELD STADIUM— VISITOR’S LOCKER ROOM

Rocky finishes the tape on Adonis’ glove. He struggles to tear the roll off... Amir sees this, and jumps in and quickly tears it off.

Rocky and Adonis lock hands Adonis matches him, and they sway back and forth like cobras.

    ADONIS
    One step... one punch... one round... one fight.

    ROCKY
    Again.
ADONIS
One step... one punch... one
round... one fight...

Rocky throws soft jabs at Adonis. They come slow but
rhythmic. Adonis ducks each one with the same rhythm.

ROCKY
It’s gonna be more people than
you’ve ever seen before in your
life...

ADONIS
One step... one punch... one
round... one fight...

ROCKY
But they don’t matter...

Adonis continues saying the mantra.

ROCKY (CONT’D)
We’re a long ways from home... but
that don’t matter... all that
matters is how much you want it...
And you want it more than him, kid.
I can see it in your eyes.

INT. CALIFORNIA MEN’S COLONY- SAN LOUIS OBISPO

Terrel, in his cell, eats dinner off a tray, across from his
CELLY (Black, 50s). A Corrections Officer walks up to him,
and motions for him to come out.

INT. CALIFORNIA MEN’S COLONY- SAN LOUIS OBISPO- HALLWAY

The CO leads Terrel down a hallway and opens a small room for
him.

INT. CALIFORNIA MEN’S COLONY- SAN LOUIS OBISPO

Terrel walks inside the rec room, to find a chair sitting
across from a small TV, with the fight on. He nods at the CO,
who nods back, and closes the door. He walks over and sits
down.
INT. CLABSADDLE HOUSE

Daryl and the kids sit on the couch watching cartoons. He sneaks off to Adonis’ room, where the fight is already cued up.

INT. CREED MANSION- LIVING ROOM- NIGHT

Mary-Anne her tumbler next to her on the side table looks on at the pay per view broadcast of the match.

The Door Bell rings. She opens the door to find Lisa. Who walks straight to the couch and sits down in front of the television. Mary Anne thinks for a beat, then goes and sits down next to her.

INT. ANFIELD STADIUM- VISITOR’S LOCKEROOM

Adonis continues to run drills with Rocky. The door opens in the locker room, and a STADIUM STAFF MEMBER waves at them.

    JOE HAND

    It’s time.

INT. ANFIELD STADIUM- VISITOR’S TUNNEL

Adonis walks into view slowly, Rocky behind him, slower than we’ve seen him. His hand rests on Adonis’ shoulder for balance.

    Joe Hand, Amir, and Marcel walk out as well. The entire camp a ball of nerves but they hide it well. Adonis’ INTRO MUSIC plays. It is the song Bianca made for him.

INT. MANCHESTER AIRPORT

Bianca is going through customs. The lines are massive.

INT. BULLET TRAIN

Bianca looks at the time on her phone, then stares out of the window of the train.

INT. ANFIELD STADIUM- VISITORS LOCKER ROOM

Adonis, Rocky and camp are walking through the entrance tunnel, and now approaching the stadium ramp. Stone faced, walking in unison at a slow pace.
It’s a sea of Red Liverpool FC jerseys and some of the fans are wearing face paint. They boo, but the sound system drowns most of it out.

ROCK
It’s your night kid. This is what it’s all about.

They arrive at the ring. Adonis bounces. He looks out and the reality of the size of the stadium sets in.

ADONIS’ POV FROM THE RING

40,000 screaming fans. The stadium is open up top, over the ring. Clouds circle overhead— a modern day Roman Coliseum, fit to feed gladiators to lions.

BACK TO SCENE

Rocky limps over to Adonis, places his hand on his shoulder.

ROCKY
You freaking out?

ADONIS
Yeah.

ROCKY
Very normal. First title fight, I almost passed out.

ADONIS
What’d you do to stay cool?

ROCKY
Faked it. Like everybody does.

Adonis nods. He throws some punches. Stay loose.

Music starts, and the ENTIRE STADIUM SINGS “YOU’LL NEVER WALK ALONE”— the Liverpool F.C. Anthem.

Porter enters the stadium, with G sitting on his shoulders wearing a title belt, Holiday to his left, and Junior to his right holding a belt in the air. Around him seems to be at least 40 of his friends and at least 10 championship belts. The crowd is deafening.
Porter springs into the ring. His entourage floods into the ring and all of them stare down Adonis.

Porter immediately comes out of his robe and we see his trunks, Red and Gold, a skirt with an English flag over it.

INT. RING- ANFIELD STADIUM- MOMENTS LATER

Adonis and Porter in the middle of the ring, alone, the REFEREE pulls them in. He talks in a thick Scouse accent.

REFEREE
Watch the hits below the belt, make sure you guys honor my commands, honor each other. We’ll make it a good fight, make it a hard fight, sound good?

Both fighters nod.

REFEREE (CONT’D)
Go’on and touch em’ up.

PORTER
Nice shorts. Too bad your grandpa ain’t here to fight for ya. I’m gonna send you home, boy.

Adonis’ eyes tighten in anger. Before he can respond Porter sprints back to his corner. Adonis retreats to his.

ROCKY
Move your feet! Use the jab to keep him off of you!

Adonis nods, the sound of the stadium fades out. DING DING. The fight begins.

Porter closes the gap on Adonis at a near sprint, he’s fast, and quickly sends two jabs at Adonis’ body, both connect.

Adonis tries to counter, but Porter parries, and steps, pinning Adonis against the ropes. He goes to the body again then swings a hook, that Adonis ducks and then grabs him.

PORTER
Don’t hold on too tight ol’ boy.
I’m just getting started.

The Referee breaks up the hold.
PORTER (CONT’D)

Come here mate. A little closer so
you can learn a thing or two..

Adonis moves in slowly, when WHAM!, a lightning fast jab
lands flush. Adonis stumbles, but before he can regain his
balance Porter sends a left hook, Adonis ducks just in time.
He pops an uppercut to Porter’s body, but Porter blocks and
slams Adonis with two more jabs before he knows what hit him.

THE “10 SECOND CLAPS” SOUND as Adonis retreats, but Porter
cuts him off, and sends a barrage of punches at Adonis’ head.
Adonis blocks most but when the round dings, but Porter slams
him across the face with a left hook.

ROCKY
C’mon, that’s after the bell!

The Ref signals that it was simultaneous. Adonis’ corner is
furious.

163 INT. ADONIS’ CORNER

Adonis heads back to the corner, completely shaken up.

ROCKY
(to Joe)
Give me the ice, give me the ice!

Joe hands Rocky an ice pack, he slaps it over Adonis’ head
while the guys work on him.

ADONIS
(out of breath)
He’s fucking fast!

ROCKY
We knew that. We watched the tape
but you’re still just watching.
Okay? Don’t watch, take the fight
to him!

164 INT. PORTER’S CORNER

Holiday pours water into Porter’s mouth. The rest of the team
isn’t doing much, because “Pretty” Ricky is still just that—
Adonis hasn’t so much as touched him.

HOLIDAY
Don’t play around with this kid? I
want you to put him away. Don’t
care that it’s early. Put him down.
INT. ADONIS’ CORNER
Rocky gives Adonis water.

ROCKY
He really is that fast, he really is that good... but you know what? You belong in this ring with him, tonight. Go prove it.

He puts his mouthpiece back in. The bell sounds.

INT. RING- ANFIELD STADIUM- CONTINUOUS
The fighters approach each other quickly. Adonis dodges a couple punches then cages up, putting his hands over his face and body to protect.

Porter pounds Adonis’ body. A hard left connects with Adonis’ ribs, causing Adonis’ mouthpiece to pop out. A thunderous right hook connects with Adonis’ jaw. Sending his mouthpiece flying. He fakes the left hook, then hits Adonis with a right hook over the eye, opening his stitches.

ANNOUNCER
Johnson is hurt.

The ref slides in to save Adonis, and he stumbles over to grab his mouthpiece and replace it.

ANNOUNCER 2
Johnson is saved by loosing his mouthpiece. He looks to be out on his feet.

ANNOUNCER
That gash above his left eye is leaking. Look for Porter to start attacking that side.

Adonis smiles at Porter.

ADONIS
Let’s go! Is that all you’ve got? Let’s go!

PORTER
(smiling back)
I got plenty more.

The ref gives them the clear sign.
Porter approaches, Adonis sways, like a cobra. He drops his hands, Ali style, baiting. Porter comes in, WHAM! Adonis sends a lightning fast jab that slips between Porter’s hands and catches him in the face. Porter stumbles back.

ANNOUNCER
Whoa. Johnson lands his first punch of the night on Porter.

ANNOUNCER 2
Yeah but it’s gonna have to take a lot more than that.

Adonis comes back in on Porter and goes on the attack—Adonis throws combos, every third punch seems to land right on target. Hard. Adonis dodges Porter’s counter punches Adonis swings a left jab to the body. CRACK! A hard right to the bridge of Porter’s nose, opens him up.

ANNOUNCER
Porter’s hit, he looks to be cut!

Porter bobs back but stays on his feet, Adonis gets greedy, and swings wildly. Porter ducks and hits Adonis with a straight shot, that sends down to the mat.

The crowd erupts.

ROCKY
Get up!

The referee counts. Adonis bounces back to his feet.

ANNOUNCER
First knockdown of the night for Porter, but Johnson is back on his feet. We’re gonna see a little more of this dynamite round 2.

ANNOUNCER (CONT’D)
Thank God for that. This was just getting good.

The ref stops and checks with Adonis. Adonis straightens up. “10 SECOND CLAPS” sound. Porter’s wound bleeds over his eye.

The fighters go right back at each other. Adonis is nicked with an uppercut to the chin, but comes back with two hard straights to Porter’s face.
The Bell sounds but Porter punch catches Adonis, who throws another set. They continue to box until both camps clear the corners and jump into the ring to break them up.

During the commotion Rocky is pushed down to the mat. Adonis sees Rocky fall and snaps.

**ADONIS**
Let’s go, I ain't worried about the bell. Let’s do this right now!

**PORTER**
(smiling)
I’m right here, mate. Don’t let those chumps hold ya back!

**ADONIS**
Take the gloves off! Fuck the bell! You gonna catch my fade!

The two groups successfully get the fighters back to their respective corners, but Adonis fumes.

**ANNOUNCER**
These two guys are trying to destroy each other.

**ANNOUNCER 2**
Something has flipped here. Not to sound cliche but this just became and all out war. It’s gonna come down to who wants it more.

Replays are shown of the devastating hits the two fighters delivered to each other.

167** INT. ADONIS’ CORNER**

Rocky, hurting from the fall, keeps his composure and pulls Adonis’ mouthpiece out of his mouth.

**ADONIS**
You okay?

**ROCKY**
I’m good, but I’m gonna have a heart attack if you don’t keep your damn hands up, kid.

Marcel, goes to work on his eye, trying to stop the bleeding.
ROCKY (CONT’D)
You see, you made him bleed. None of that Pretty Boy stuff matters. You get him to move his hands, and you stick him. You do that enough times, and he goes down just like anybody else!

168 INT. PORTER’S CORNER
The Cut Man struggles to put petroleum jelly on the gash on Porter’s nose.

HOLIDAY
I told you not to play around with him? What did I say now?

PORTER
I’m gonna bash his head in.

HOLIDAY
You’re gonna go back to what got us here, is what you’re gonna do. I don’t want you going shot for shot with this kid, his right is too strong. Protect yourself, keep him at a distance and score face and body. When he loses his patience and comes at you, make him pay!

169 ADONIS’ CORNER
Joe and Amir jump out of the ring. Adonis’ wound still isn’t all the way closed up.

ROCKY
It’s okay to get mad. Use it, but stay in control. Remember, one step at a time.

ADONIS
One punch at a time... One round at a time.

DING, DING.

Adonis and Porter exchange blows, with Porter consistently getting the best of Adonis.

ANNOUNCER
Another solid combination landed by Porter... a surgeon in the ring.

(MORE)
ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
He’s picking the novice fighter apart.

BELL SOUNDS A RING girls holds up a card for round 5.

170 ADONIS’ CORNER
Rocky places the ice pack on Adonis’ head.

ROCKY
Then put your hands up. You gotta protect yourself.

171 INT. RING
A Ring Girl holds up ROUND 7.

Adonis, against the ropes, dodges machine-gun like assault from Porter, his hands drop, Porter connects flush with an uppercut, and a bodyshot. Another jab to Adonis’ face, causing blood to flow from his left eye.

ANNOUNCER 2
Johnson is in big trouble now.

The bell rings. Adonis knocks his own gloves together in frustration. He face swelling.

ANNOUNCER
It’s like watching reruns of the same fight, over, and over, and over again. It’s Porter just dismantling Johnson.

ANNOUNCER 2
Early on, we thought we were in for something special, but Porter is settling into that rare form, and just like he has proven time and time again, no one still has found the answer to that defense.

172 ADONIS’ CORNER
Adonis is swollen and bleeding badly. The cut man sticks a large cotton ball up his nose, and Adonis winces in pain.

ANNOUNCER
Johnson’s corner is really in trouble over there.
(MORE)
ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
If they can’t stop that bleeding, they’re gonna have to cancel this fight.

ANNOUNCER 2
What we’re seeing right now, is the difference between someone who’s good, and someone who’s great. It’s that simple.

The Ring Girl Holds up a sign for ROUND 11.

ROCKY
I don’t know what you’re doing kid. But you’re killing me.

ADONIS
I can slip him. He’s slowing down.

ROCKY
You can’t let him get you up against the ropes again, every time you try to slip, he gets you up against them. He’s pounding you. You gotta take them to the body.

INT. RING- ANFIELD STADIUM- MOMENTS LATER

Porter has Adonis against the ropes, Adonis ducks a hook from Porter and delivers a nasty straight shot followed by a bone-crunching hook to the body. The hook doubles Porter over, he ties up. While tied up, Adonis throws body shots to the same spot. He breaks loose, Porter ducks down, and their heads to collide. The wound above Adonis’ left eye opens up even more. Adonis stumbles back in pain. The ref runs up to Adonis.

REFEREE
You okay?

Adonis nods, grimacing, blood flowing into his left eye. The Referee turns to Porter.

REFEREE (CONT’D)
That’s a warning.

The fight resumes. Porter’s in attack mode. Adonis, who can barely see dodges the first couple, but some connect. Porter pounds away at his left glove, working the cut. DING DING Adonis is saved by the bell.

Adonis’ corner is furious, shouting at the Ref.
INT. STADIUM RINGSIDE
Bianca, following a stadium escort, runs down to her ringside seat. She sees Adonis’ condition and tries to run past the ring security, who stop her.

BIANCA
Rocky! Rocky!

INT. RING
Rocky snaps his head around and sees Bianca.

ROCKY
Let her through! She’s with us! Let her through!

INT. STADIUM RINGSIDE
The security turns to Rocky, and obliges. Bianca runs up to ringside gate, just out of reach.

INT. ADONIS’ CORNER
Adonis’ cut is in bad shape. They work on it. Rocky bends down to talk to him.

ROCKY
Look at me... look at me!
(Adonis looks up at Rocky)
Look who made it...

Rocky turns Adonis’ head towards Bianca. Adonis looks at her, and his eyes grow wide with recognition.

INT. RINGSIDE
Bianca is moved to tears by the condition of his face. She covers her mouth to try to hide it.

INT. RING
ROCKY
Hey...

Rocky turns his head back to the fight.
ROCKY (CONT’D)
She’s here because she loves you. I’m here because I love you. Your family back home loves you. You’ve got nothing else to prove. Nothing to prove to me, nothing to prove to yourself. I’m gonna stop this fight.

ADONIS
(quickly)
Don’t. Let me finish-

ROCKY
Just finishing ain’t worth it!
(beat)
I lied to you last night... It was the hospital that called.

Adonis’ eyes grow wide.

ROCKY (CONT’D)
They say they found more...

Adonis winces at this. It’s too much for him to take right now.

ROCKY (CONT’D)
I never got to tell Apollo thank you, for what he did for me. He gave me a title shot, when I was a piece of shit leg breaker, he trained me after Mickey died. But those gifts were nothing compared to you, kid. You showed me how to fight again... Gave me something to look forward to. And I’m gonna go home and fight this thing. Just like I been doing. But if I fight, you fight! Now if you tell me all you want to do is finish, to prove something to yourself, goddamn it, I’ll throw this towel in right now...

ADONIS
No!

ROCKY
So you’re telling me you’re gonna go back in there and knock that son of a bitch out?

Adonis nods.
ROCKY (CONT’D)

Say it!

ADONIS
(out of breath)
I’m gonna knock that son of a bitch out.

ROCKY
It’s three minutes! One punch at a time. All your pain, all your love. Turn it loose kid, don’t hold anything back.

REFEREE (O.S.)
Times up. Let’s go.

Adonis stands up, battered and bruised, left eye closed.

ADONIS’ POV-Porter stands at his corner, barely in focus. Porter’s face wounded, but confident. He’s been here before. DING, DING!

INT. RING–ANFIELD STADIUM–CONTINUOUS

The two fighters approach each other slowly. Adonis drops his gloves baiting Porter. He beckons Porter with his right hand.

ADONIS
Come on!

Porter comes in swinging, quick left jabs, Adonis parries them all, and bounces back. He taunts Porter again.

ADONIS (CONT’D)
You the champ, right? Come show me!

Hands dropped, Porter leads with Jabs. Adonis dodges; counters with a straight right to Porter’s nose and a left hook to Porter’s right temple, cutting him again.

Adonis, smelling blood, attacks. Rapid fire head shots at Porter; it has digressed into a street fight.

Porter regains his balance, then matches Adonis intensity. The two men swing wildly at each other.

Adonis lands another punch. Porter ties him up, blood spilling on Adonis’ shoulder. Adonis pushes him off hard, sending Porter back to the middle of the ring.
HOLIDAY
Stay away from him! Stay away and win out the bloody round!

Adonis bangs his gloves together, and Porter bangs his together in response. Both men ready to brawl to the finish. Porter throws hard jab which lands, but Adonis un-phased, leans in and throws a left hook; Porter ducks, but it lands on the crown of his head; Adonis follows with a right cross right to Porter’s face. It connects flush, hard, sending Porter to the mat in a heap.

ADONIS
LET’S GO!

The ref moves a still screaming Adonis and counts.

REFEREE
One... Two... Three...

Porter, on his hands and knees, tries to shake himself back to his senses, blood leaking from his face onto the mat.

REFEREE (CONT’D)
Four... Five... Six...

He pushes up from the ground to his feet. He shakes his head off again, opens his eyes wide for the ref to take a look.

REFEREE (CONT’D)
You good to go?

Porter nods convincingly. The Ref lets it continue.

Holiday screams his head off at Porter.

HOLIDAY
Keep away from em’ Ricky!

Porter ignores Holiday. He looks at Adonis with a lion’s eyes. They charge towards each other.

Adonis leads in with a haymaker, Porter ducks it and tags him with one of his own, sending Adonis stumbling back into the ropes. Porter attacks Adonis while he is off balance.

It looks bad for Adonis, until he SLIPS a haymaker ducks low, pivots, leaving Porter’s left side wide open;

Adonis unleashes a vicious four hit combination to Porter’s head and face LEFT-RIGHT-LEFT-RIGHT sending Porter off the ropes and crumpling to the mat like a rag doll.

The Ref sprints to stop the fight.
SERIES OF SHOTS

-Mary-Anne and Lisa going nuts.
-Kayla and Daryl watching at home, running around like crazy.
-Terrel watching in the Rec room, overjoyed.

BACK TO ANFIELD

The crowd is raucous. Adonis raises his hands in celebration—joy—exhaustion. Bianca hurdles the gate and jumps into the ring, overjoyed. Both corners clear out. Rocky and Joe dash in the ring, run up to Adonis embracing him. They can’t believe it. As the usual post-fight crowd of officials and reporters bombard the ring. The two fighters embrace. Adonis breaks away, Bianca on one side, Rocky on the other, holding him up.

RINGSIDE ANNOUNCER
And your winner, by way of Technical Knockout. Adonis “Creed” Johnson!

MAX KELLERMAN
A year ago, you were sitting in a Los Angeles dorm room. Now you stand before us a World Champion. Walk us through what was going through your head tonight...

ADONIS
(out of breath, fractured)
I just wanted to show my loved ones (long beat)
who I am.

Adonis looks up to the sky, points to the heavens. He leans on Amir and Joe Hand. A faint chant in the crowd can be made out, and starts to pick up volume.

ROCKY
Listen to em’.

STADIUM ATTENDEES
CREED... CREED... CREED... CREED

Adonis looks around the stadium and sees the standing ovation.

EXT. PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM STEPS—SUNRISE—ONE WEEK LATER

The long flight of stairs. A Rocky’s van pulls up. Adonis and Bianca hop out, dressed in street clothes.
Small white bandages on his face cover his wounds. He opens the passenger door and helps Rocky, who wears a gray sweat suit, and black beanie. He is slower and a bit thinner—he has started the chemo treatments again.

Rocky balances himself with his left hand on Adonis’ right shoulder. They stand at the foot of the steps. Rocky takes a deep breath. One step at a time...

EXT. PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM STEPS- MOMENTS LATER

The two are about halfway up the steps. Sweat has built up around Rocky’s neckline, his feet weigh a ton. He stops, turns away from Adonis, frustrated. He puts his hands over his eyes. Adonis puts his hands around his shoulder.

ADONIS  
(sotto voce)  
You got this... come on...

Rocky gathers himself with Adonis’ help, and they continue.

EXT. PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM STEPS- THE TOP- MOMENTS LATER

Adonis and Rocky take the last step up to the top plaza. Rocky completely out of breath, smiles. He pats Adonis on the back, and walks towards the center of the plaza. Adonis gives him his space and looks down at Bianca, who leans up against the car and smiles at them.

Rocky takes a couple more steps and smiles, he turns around to face the city below, and raises his arms in victory.

CUT TO BLACK.