

The Great Southern Trendkill Tour: Houston, Texas

September 12, 2025 | NRG Arena - Houston, TX

Introduction

*The broadcast fades in from black to a sweeping aerial view of downtown Houston, Texas -- the skyline glowing under a humid Friday night sky. As the camera drops toward the NRG Arena, the noise begins to swell. Inside, a sea of fans packs the building to the rafters. Signs wave, flashbulbs pop, and the crowd is already red-hot as another stop on the *Great Southern Trendkill Tour* prepares to ignite.*

*The stage bursts to life with red and gold pyro, showering the LED boards with sparks. The *WrestleUTA* logo pulses onscreen before fading into a thunderous wide shot of the arena floor.*

John Phillips: "Houston, Texas -- welcome to *The Great Southern Trendkill Tour*! We are coming to you live from the NRG Arena, and folks, this place is absolutely electric tonight!"

Fans shout and clap behind the announce desk, some holding signs reading "TEXAS IS TOUGH," "IN MARIE WE TRUST," and "HARRISON HITS HARD." The camera lingers on a family of four, all in matching UTA t-shirts, before cutting back to ringside.

Mark Bravo: "They always say everything's bigger in Texas -- and tonight, that includes the fights, the egos, and the crowd noise! I've got goosebumps already, Johnny."

John Phillips: "We've got a packed house here in Houston, and while no full card has been announced yet, we *can* confirm that two major names in the women's division will be competing in singles action tonight -- Amy Harrison and Marie Van Claudio."

Quick clips play on the screen -- Amy tying up her boots backstage, focused and silent. Marie arriving earlier in the day, sunglasses on, a stern expression as she walks through the hallway without acknowledging the cameras.

Mark Bravo: "Two high-profile competitors. Two very different paths. But make no mistake--when either one of them steps into the ring, the temperature rises by at least ten degrees."

John Phillips: "The women's division has been heating up in recent weeks, and with appearances like these, it's clear UTA is investing heavily in that spotlight."

The titantron flashes with images from recent events -- faces locked in conflict, titles raised high, bitter glares traded across the ring. The crowd noise surges as chants begin to build for several names at once.

Mark Bravo: "We don't know who they'll be facing, but we *do* know this -- these women came here tonight to prove a point. To remind everyone exactly why their names matter."

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John Phillips: "And while all eyes may be on those two matchups... let's not forget, there are plenty of other stories bubbling beneath the surface tonight. After everything that went down in Lafayette, you have to wonder -- will Jarvis Valentine appear tonight? Will Valkyrie Knox speak out after defending her title? Will Maxx Mayhem or Chris Ross make waves again?"

Highlight reel cuts show Jarvis with the UTA Championship clutched against his chest, Valkyrie holding the Women's title under the spotlight, and Maxx Mayhem storming through a hallway with a steel pipe in hand.

Mark Bravo: "It's Trendkill season, Johnny. That means anything can happen. And usually does."

Suddenly, the lights dim slightly. The crowd rises to its feet as music hits over the PA system. The camera swings toward the stage, the first competitor of the night ready to make their entrance.

**The Great Southern Trendkill Tour: Houston* is officially underway.*

Brick Bronson vs. B.R. Ellis

The camera cuts back to ringside. The crowd hums in anticipation as the arena lights dim to a single spotlight atop the stage. Strings swell sharply. A militaristic drumline kicks in -- precision, rhythm, purpose.

John Phillips: "Ladies and gentlemen, we're about to witness a clash in styles. Technical precision against raw force. B.R. Ellis makes his Trendkill Tour debut right here in Houston."

B.R. Ellis appears at the top of the ramp in a crisp, royal blue singlet trimmed in gold. His boots are laced high, wrists freshly taped, and his eyes are laser-focused. He bows respectfully to the audience before heading down the ramp with deliberate, fluid steps -- not rushed, not showy. Pure discipline.

Mark Bravo: "I love this guy's approach. All business. No distractions. He's not trying to impress you -- he's trying to outwrestle you. And more often than not, he does."

Ellis slides into the ring, pops up quickly, and paces the mat like a surgeon studying his workspace. He cracks his knuckles once and turns toward the entrance.

The lights drop to blood red.

A heavy industrial bassline booms from the speakers like a slow march to war. Brick Bronson walks out through a flood of smoke, fists clenched, jaw set. His gait is unhurried but heavy, like the floor should be concerned. He doesn't glance at the crowd -- his eyes are fixed straight ahead on the ring, and more importantly, on Ellis.

John Phillips: "And now... the storm. Brick Bronson. Stoic. Brutal. Unshakable. This man has made a career out of reducing his opponents to splinters -- and he's not smiling about it."

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Mark Bravo: "Let's not sugarcoat it -- Brick *hurts* people. And he likes it that way."

Brick steps through the ropes with a slow exhale. He doesn't posture. Doesn't shout. Just stalks toward the corner, where he leans his forearms into the turnbuckle pad and stares over his shoulder at Ellis with quiet malice.

The referee checks both men. Ellis gives a respectful nod -- which Brick does not return. The bell rings.

John Phillips: "Here we go! First-time meeting between two very different kinds of warriors."

The opening seconds are tense. Neither man rushes. They circle, measuring distance. Ellis feints a level change; Brick doesn't bite. The crowd is quieter now, watching closely.

Mark Bravo: "You feel that? That's what anticipation sounds like."

Ellis steps in -- shoots for a low single. Brick sprawls instantly, dropping his weight and muscling Ellis off-balance. Ellis rolls away, pops to his feet. Reset. Respect shown, even in silence.

They lock up again -- this time collar-and-elbow. Brick immediately muscles Ellis backward, forcing him into the corner. The ref calls for the break -- and Brick gives it... slowly. Forearm pressed against Ellis' throat for just a second too long.

John Phillips: "Bronson not doing anything illegal -- but make no mistake, that's a message. You don't belong in *my* corner."

*Ellis doesn't react. He rolls his shoulders, comes back to center. This time, he ducks the lock-up and hits a deep **arm drag**, sending Bronson sliding across the mat.*

*Brick gets up fast, but Ellis is already in position -- textbook **headlock takeover**, grounding the bigger man. Brick shoves a forearm under the jaw to create space, but Ellis maintains control, adjusting his base, grinding down.*

Mark Bravo: "That's how you dismantle a monster -- one limb, one breath, one inch at a time."

*Brick powers to a knee -- then suddenly *launches* Ellis backward into the ropes. On the rebound -- **back elbow!** It lands flush, dropping Ellis instantly.*

John Phillips: "Big-time answer from Bronson! That elbow had weight behind it!"

*Brick follows up -- dragging Ellis to his feet and slamming him down with a thunderous **snap spinebuster**! He doesn't go for the pin. He kneels beside Ellis, studying his breathing.*

Mark Bravo: "This isn't ego. It's not showboating. Brick's analyzing. Calculating what broke -- and how to

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break it again."

*Brick Bronson rises from his knees, dragging Ellis up by the wrist. He jerks Ellis forward into a short-arm ****Iariat**** -- but Ellis ducks under and counters into a deep ****waistlock**** from behind. Brick swings an elbow, but Ellis drops his base and hits a quick ****German Suplex**** with a beautiful bridge--*

1...

2-- Brick powers out!

*Ellis doesn't waste time -- he immediately cinches a ****wristlock****, pressing his weight down over Brick's shoulder. The crowd starts to buzz, appreciating the control game unfolding in front of them.*

John Phillips: "That's where Ellis thrives. He gets you on the mat, and he makes you earn every breath. Every angle. Every escape."

Mark Bravo: "But he better watch out. Brick only needs **one** opening to make a big man's mistake look fatal."

*Brick grits his teeth and pushes to a knee, then surges upward, muscling Ellis into the ropes. The ref calls for a break -- and this time Brick fires a clubbing ****forearm to the chest**** before backing off, drawing heat from the crowd.*

John Phillips: "That wasn't clean -- but it was legal. And effective."

*Ellis stumbles out of the ropes, gasping -- Brick pounces. ****Corner avalanche.**** The ring rattles on impact. Ellis slumps to one knee, chest heaving. Brick drags him up again -- ****exploder suplex**** into the opposite corner!*

The Houston crowd groans in unison.

Mark Bravo: "GOOD GOD! He damn near folded him inside out!"

Brick hooks the leg--

1...

2-- Ellis kicks out!

Brick grabs Ellis by the head and presses a heavy palm into his temple, grounding him with a slow, suffocating side headlock. He leans in close -- not talking, just applying brutal pressure. Breathing down his neck.

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John Phillips: "That's the difference here. Ellis works angles. Brick? He just *suffocates* you."

The referee checks for the choke -- it's legal. Barely. Ellis starts inching toward the ropes, digging his feet in. The crowd claps in rhythm, trying to will him back to life.

*Ellis fires a punch to the ribs. Another. Then rolls -- using Brick's weight to shift the headlock into a **float-over cradle!***

1...

2-- Brick kicks out and *immediately* blasts Ellis with a stiff **headbutt!**

Ellis crumbles to the mat, dazed. The crowd groans again. That one sounded awful -- and looked worse.

Mark Bravo: "That's not a move. That's assault. That's a heat-seeking missile from a man who *likes* watching you wobble."

*Brick stands over his opponent, breathing steady. He shakes out his wrists and pulls Ellis up again. Gutwrench position -- the crowd stirs -- but Ellis slips free! **Drop toehold!** Brick falls forward, catches himself--*

*Ellis grabs the arm -- floats into a **modified Fujiwara armbar!***

John Phillips: "He's got it! Lockjaw Lock -- center of the ring!"

The referee drops to check -- Brick thrashes, trying to twist out -- but Ellis adjusts, putting more torque on the elbow and shoulder. Brick growls, trying to roll... and manages to drag himself toward the ropes inch by inch.

Mark Bravo: "Ellis is hanging on with everything he's got. That's tendon-snapping torque!"

Brick reaches... and gets his foot on the rope! The ref calls for the break. Ellis immediately lets go and backs away, hands raised. No cheap shots. No delay. Respect for the rules, even here.

John Phillips: "And that's the difference in philosophy. Brick *survives*. Ellis *competes*."

*Both men stay down a moment -- breathing heavy. The crowd claps again, louder this time. This is competition. This is chess with fists. This is *pro wrestling*, Houston style.*

The referee checks both men. They rise at the same time... and we're back to square one.

Brick and Ellis both rise slowly, sweat dripping, eyes locked. No words. Just mutual understanding -- it's going to take more than usual to put the other man down.

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John Phillips: "Neither one's blinked yet. It's power versus precision... and both are starting to crack."

*They circle again. Brick throws a heavy forearm -- Ellis ducks and **counters with a shoulder pick** that flips Brick to the mat. The crowd pops. Ellis transitions immediately into a **front facelock** -- but Brick powers up with a roar and shoves Ellis backward into the corner with force!*

Brick charges -- but Ellis rolls out, and Brick hits the turnbuckles chest-first!

*Ellis grabs him from behind -- **German Suplex!** Brick lands hard. Ellis floats into a cover--*

1...

2-- NO!

*Ellis wastes no time. He grabs the arm, wraps under -- trying to set up his **Northern Lights Headlock Driver**, but Brick deadweights and spins out -- **back elbow!** Right to the cheekbone! Ellis drops to a knee!*

Mark Bravo: "That was flush! And this is the turning point where you find out what a guy like Ellis is really made of."

*Brick grabs Ellis by the wrist and YANKS him into a short-arm **lariat**. Ellis hits the mat hard. Brick doesn't go for a cover -- he drags Ellis up again, this time into the **corner.***

*He fires off a trio of heavy **shoulder thrusts** into the ribs -- each one deeper than the last. Ellis is barely upright when Brick lifts him to the second rope... and follows.*

John Phillips: "This is rare! Brick almost *never* goes to the ropes!"

*The crowd rises -- tension in the air. Brick grabs Ellis -- looking for a **superplex** -- but Ellis fights back! Elbows to the temple! Then a headbutt! Brick wobbles... and drops back down to the mat!*

*Ellis stays perched -- then suddenly FLIES with a **missile dropkick**!*

It lands square! Brick's down! Ellis covers--

1...

2...

--TWO AND THREE-QUARTERS!

The crowd gasps, then applauds. Ellis slaps the mat once -- not in anger, but to center himself. He grabs

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*Brick's left arm and begins ****torquing the elbow and wrist****, dragging Bronson toward center.*

Mark Bravo: "Smart. Ellis knows he can't outslug Bronson. But if he can damage that arm, that gutwrench powerbomb becomes a **lot** harder to pull off."

Ellis moves methodically, wrapping into a standing wristlock -- but Brick uses his free hand to grab Ellis by the waistband and shove him through the ropes!

Ellis tumbles to the outside -- hard -- landing on his left shoulder!

John Phillips: "And just like that, the pendulum swings again."

The referee starts counting. Brick doesn't pursue -- he stays inside, rolling his wrist, catching his breath. Meanwhile, Ellis is on one knee at ringside, holding the shoulder, trying to shake the stinger out.

Mark Bravo: "This is high-level stuff. You want an indie spotfest, go watch something else. This is a **fight**. You feel every second of it."

*Ellis gets to his feet at five. He rolls under the bottom rope -- only to be met with a brutal ****stomp**** to the shoulder from Bronson! Then another! Brick peels him off the mat and lifts -- ****URANAGE SLAM!*****

Ellis bounces on impact. Brick hooks the leg--

1...

2...

THR--NO!!

*Bronson sits up, jaw clenched, unamused. He slaps his own thigh once and grabs Ellis for the ****Gutwrench Powerbomb**** -- the beginning of the end.*

*But Ellis **deadweights it**. Drops to a knee. Then WRAPS Brick'S ARM with his legs -- ****Lockjaw Lock**** from the **mat!***

John Phillips: "ELLIS HAS IT! Lockjaw Lock is in again!"

Brick rolls -- scrambles -- almost reaches the ropes, but Ellis pulls him BACK TO CENTER!

*Brick tries to stand with Ellis hanging off the arm -- his face **contorted**. The crowd is LOUD now. The camera zooms tight on Brick's face -- pain etched in the brow... and **rage** boiling underneath.*

Mark Bravo: "This is it! Tap or snap!"

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*Brick *roars* -- lifts Ellis *off the ground* -- and SLAMS him back-first into the turnbuckles! The hold breaks -- but both men collapse in opposite corners, barely moving.*

The crowd stands and applauds. Houston knows what it's watching. This isn't just another opener -- this is a statement match.

The crowd remains standing. Both men stir in opposite corners -- soaked in sweat, heaving air, battered. The referee checks on them both... and then steps back as they drag themselves upright.

John Phillips: "We're deep in the fourth quarter now. Neither man has anything left... but they're both still swinging."

Mark Bravo: "This is where reputations are made. It's not about highlight reels -- it's about who keeps standing when the pain doesn't stop."

*Brick stumbles forward first, clutching his arm. Ellis answers, still favoring the shoulder. They meet center-ring -- Ellis throws a chop, sharp and fast. Brick fires back with a forearm. Then another. Then a *headbutt* -- but this time, Ellis stays standing... and grabs the arm!*

*He spins under -- traps it -- **Northern Lights Headlock Driver!***

Ellis bridges --

1...

2...

--KICKOUT!

The crowd groans! Ellis sits up, stunned. That move has ended matches -- tonight, it's not enough.

John Phillips: "Ellis *nearly* stunned the monster... but Brick Bronson is still breathing, and that might be the scariest part."

*Ellis slaps the mat once, not in frustration -- in rhythm. He slowly pulls Brick up... wraps both arms for his **Gut-Wrench Lift** -- but Brick *plants his feet*. He powers out, spins, and hits a **back elbow to the jaw.** Ellis drops to a knee.*

*Brick scoops him -- **snap powerslam!** The ring shakes!*

Cover--

1...

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2...

--Ellis rolls the shoulder!

Bronson now visibly frustrated. He yanks Ellis up by the waistband -- locks the arms -- sets...

John Phillips: "He's going for it. He's going for the *Concrete Ending!*"

*Bronson hoists Ellis into position -- **Gutwrench Powerbomb**--*

But Ellis breaks the grip mid-air! Rolls over the shoulder -- lands behind--

Backslide!

1...

2...

--NO! Brick kicks out!

*They scramble -- Ellis runs the ropes -- goes for a **flying shoulder block**--*

*Brick *sidesteps* -- grabs the waist -- and this time, **drives Ellis down with the Gutwrench Powerbomb** full-force!*

Ellis bounces off the mat, arms splayed. Bronson drops into the pin -- both legs hooked deep.

1...

2...

3!

The bell rings and Bronson doesn't rise right away. He rolls to his knees, chest heaving. No smile. No expression. Just exhaustion and the job finished.

Mark Bravo: "That wasn't domination. That was survival. That was a war between styles -- and the bruiser from Pittsburgh just barely pulled it out."

Brick stands. The referee raises his hand. A mixed reaction from the Houston crowd -- respect for the performance, uncertainty about the man.

Ellis rolls to his side, blinking through the lights, trying to push himself up. Brick stares at him. The crowd

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holds its breath.

And then -- Bronson turns and leaves the ring.

John Phillips: "No handshake. No gesture. No need. That's not who Brick Bronson is. But if Ellis earned something tonight... it wasn't just respect. It was **eyes**. People will be watching him now."

Ellis finally makes it to one knee. The crowd begins to clap -- and he nods slowly, acknowledging them with a brief lift of his hand before rolling out under the bottom rope.

Mark Bravo: "If that's the first chapter of B.R. Ellis' UTA story, I want the whole damn book."

John Phillips: "We are just getting started here in Houston... and after a war like that, the bar has been set **very** high."

Sending a message

The scene shifts backstage. A quiet tension lingers in the air as the camera steadies on UTA interviewer Melissa Cartwright, standing poised with a microphone. Beside her -- commanding attention in black and silver ring gear -- is Marie Van Claudio. A dramatic cape drapes from her shoulders. Her stance is regal, her eyes unwavering.

Melissa Cartwright: "Ladies and gentlemen, I'm here backstage with Marie Van Claudio -- moments away from her first match since **WrestleUTA: 25.** Marie, welcome back. The floor is yours -- how are you feeling heading into tonight's return?"

Marie doesn't answer right away. She nods slowly, inhaling with quiet control before speaking -- voice calm, yet smoldering underneath.

Marie Van Claudio: "Focused. That's how I feel. There's no nerves. No rust. Just readiness. UTA 25 wasn't a retirement. It was a reminder. And since then? I've stayed sharp. I've stayed dangerous."

Melissa Cartwright: "Some fans online have wondered about the time away -- if ring rust is a concern, or if the situation with Amy Harrison has played a part in the delay. Care to respond?"

Marie's eyes flicker -- the first crack in the polished exterior. There's heat now. Controlled, but unmistakable.

Marie Van Claudio: "No. Ring rust isn't real for me. You don't forget how to breathe. And as for Amy Harrison? Let's not flatter her. She hasn't kept me from **anything.**"

She pauses. The silence is brief -- just long enough to make what comes next sting harder.

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Marie Van Claudio: "But what she said about my daughters? That wasn't just heat. That wasn't business. That was personal. And it was a mistake."

Melissa Cartwright: "So this is about more than competition now?"

Marie steps closer -- no longer just answering. Now declaring.

Marie Van Claudio: "It always was. This is about my family. About respect. About the name I've built in this company. And tonight -- I'm not walking to that ring as a mother. I'm not walking as some returning veteran. I'm walking as a woman with something to prove... and someone to *make remember.*"

She brushes the cape back off her shoulders with one smooth motion, eyes locked forward. The camera follows her as she walks away -- not fast, not slow. Just deliberate. Composed. A storm dressed in silence.

The camera lingers on the empty hallway as the lights dim -- fading.

Different Views

The camera cuts to a dimly lit hallway backstage. Chris Ross is seated alone on a production crate, elbows on his knees, fists clenched. His eyes stare down at the concrete floor -- not focused, just simmering. Brooding. Somewhere between regret and rage.

Suddenly --

Maxx Mayhem: "CHRISSY-BABY! There you are!"

The camera swings wide as Maxx Mayhem barrels into frame with chaotic energy. He's grinning ear to ear, bouncing on the balls of his feet like a kid who just set off a firecracker. Ross doesn't move. Doesn't smile. Doesn't look up. Maxx doesn't notice -- or doesn't care.

Maxx Mayhem: "You did it! You planted that cold, hard steel right across Jarvis Valentine's skull! You didn't flinch, didn't hesitate -- you just let that rage out! You didn't care about the rules, the title, the moment -- just the violence!"

Maxx spreads his arms like he's describing a masterpiece.

Maxx Mayhem: "If it hadn't been for Dane, you'd be polishing that title right now though."

Ross finally lifts his head -- slowly.

Chris Ross: "If it hadn't been for Dane?"

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Maxx stops mid-bounce. Ross rises from the crate. There's no sarcasm. No fire -- not yet. Just a slow burn as he steps forward.

Chris Ross: "How about... if it hadn't been for *you.*"

Maxx grins wider. He doesn't flinch. He leans in a little, like he's savoring it. Ross steps even closer -- the tension now crackling in the air between them.

Chris Ross: "If you hadn't jumped Valentine before the bell... if you hadn't slid that chair into the ring... maybe, just *maybe*, I would've proven something. I would've *earned* it. Earned my moment. Earned my shot. I would've shown every single one of these pathetic pieces of trash out there that I belonged at the top."

The volume rises with every word. His voice cracks with frustration -- and then drops.

Chris Ross: "But nah... it's still the same old Chris Ross they expect me to be. Still the guy flying off the handle, swinging steel, getting fined, getting overlooked... *because of you.*"

There's a pause. Maxx tilts his head, absorbing every word. For just a moment -- a flicker of something almost human. A quiet sadness crosses his face.

Then --

Maxx Mayhem: "You're welcome, buddy boy!"

Chris stares, dumbfounded -- like he just got punched in the logic. Maxx spins once and claps his hands in delight.

Maxx Mayhem: "Don't you see? It doesn't matter what they expected. What matters is what they *got.* We closed that show in a cloud of chaos. No rules. No answers. Just Mayhem. Just anarchy!"

He throws both arms up in the air like he's conducting an orchestra made of car crashes.

Maxx Mayhem: "Art, my man! Pure, beautiful destruction!"

He leans in and slaps a hand onto Ross' shoulder.

Maxx Mayhem: "Now just picture it, eh? Smearing Eric Dane Jr's blood across the mat. The man who stole your title shot. The man who ruined your moment. That canvas -- painted in crimson. It's gonna be *beautiful.*"

Maxx claps once -- loud, sharp -- and backs away with a theatrical twirl.

Maxx Mayhem: "I can't wait for the next chapter!"

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With that, he disappears around the corner, humming some broken tune. Chris Ross doesn't follow. He just stares after him, jaw slack, stuck between disbelief and rage.

The camera lingers on Ross -- unmoving. Unsure. Unsettled.

Fade out.

The Challenge

*The camera switches as **Maxx Mayhem** bursts out of the locker room, grinning ear to ear. He yells back toward the door, his voice echoing down the hallway.*

Maxx Mayhem: "I'll catch ya later, Chrisy-baby!"

*Maxx skips down the hall in his usual animated fashion -- until he suddenly freezes. The camera pans back, and standing in his path is none other than the UTA Champion, **Jarvis Valentine**. The crowd inside the arena pops loud, their reaction bleeding through backstage microphones.*

Maxx Mayhem: "Well looky, looky... the champion of make-believe land himself!"

Maxx sneers, rocking on his heels like a child mocking authority. He points at Jarvis's championship belt with a dramatic scoff.

Maxx Mayhem: "Don'tcha got some illegals to round up for yer orange God or somethin'?"

Jarvis doesn't flinch, his eyes locked dead on Maxx. His tone is sharp, cutting through the foolishness.

Jarvis Valentine: "Mayhem."

Maxx leans forward with a wide grin, feigning innocence.

Maxx Mayhem: "Yessa, boss?"

Jarvis Valentine: "You and me... we've got something to settle. You poked your nose where it didn't belong. Not only did you cost your so-called friend a legitimate title shot... but you stuck your nose in *my* match."

Maxx rolls his eyes, wagging his finger in mock disapproval. Jarvis's intensity only grows.

Jarvis Valentine: "You want chaos? Fine. But next week, you get me. One on one. No games. No cheap shots. No sneak attacks. Just me and you in that ring."

The background noise swells as the crowd reacts inside the arena, a cheer building at the challenge. Maxx

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clutches his chest with an over-the-top "scared" face before breaking into laughter.

Maxx Mayhem: "Ohhh, I'll be delighted to face you, chump... err..."

He cackles, tilting his head mockingly at Jarvis.

Maxx Mayhem: "...champ."

Jarvis steps closer, his face dead serious, the championship glinting under the lights. Maxx doesn't back down, his grin stretched wide as ever.

Maxx Mayhem: "See you soon."

The camera lingers on the tense stare-down -- Jarvis stone-cold, Maxx smiling like a lunatic -- before fading to black.

Marie Van Claudio vs Kaida Shizuka

The lights inside the NRG Arena slowly begin to fade to a cool indigo hue as a slow, resonant taiko drum echoes throughout the building. The crowd murmurs with intrigue. A soft shower of artificial cherry blossom petals begins to fall from the rafters above the stage. The stillness is purposeful. Controlled. Reverent.

From behind the curtain, a figure steps forward -- calm, composed, unwavering. Clad in black and crimson with matte wraps along her wrists and boots, Kaida Shizuka emerges beneath the falling petals. A faux katana is sheathed across her back. Her gaze is pointed toward the ring, not the crowd. Her movements are exact.

John Phillips: "Listen to that silence. It's not disinterest -- it's respect. Kaida Shizuka isn't the type to shout about her purpose. She shows it. Every strike. Every bow. Every step forward is earned."

Mark Bravo: "She's a mystery to most fans here in the States -- but she's no rookie. This woman is a ghost in the ropes. Strong-style precision. Surgical striking. And a killer instinct most people mistake for stoicism."

Kaida pauses at ringside. She removes the katana from her back and holds it out in front of her, lowering into a kneel before bowing toward the apron in one smooth, ritualistic motion. She sets the sword aside and wipes the soles of her boots before ascending the steps and entering the ring without fanfare.

The house lights remain low as Kaida moves to the center of the ring. She drops to one knee, lowers her head... then slowly stands, cracking her neck once before backing into her corner. She doesn't acknowledge the crowd. She doesn't acknowledge the camera. She's not here for them.

John Phillips: "Kaida Shizuka has the discipline of a soldier and the body control of an artist. But she's not

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here for theater. She's here to test herself... and, tonight, to test a legend."

Mark Bravo: "Marie Van Claudio's return match isn't a warm-up. She's stepping straight into a storm of technique and cold fury. This is a hell of a statement."

The drums fade. The petals have stopped falling. The hush remains... for now.

The arena lights remain dim -- until a sudden flicker of gold dances across the stage. A single spotlight cuts through the low haze, sweeping slowly toward the curtain.

*The haunting opening notes of "**Forever & Ever**" by Lacey Sturm and Lindsey Stirling begin to play -- slow, ethereal, almost ghostly. A distant violin stirs. The crowd begins to murmur. Then rise. Then erupt.*

*As the beat swells, **Marie Van Claudio** steps through the curtain.*

Elegant. Commanding. The long, flowing black and crimson of her ring attire glistens softly under the spotlight. Her cape trails behind her, just brushing the ramp. Her eyes are clear. Her jaw set. She is composed... but not cold.

John Phillips: "Listen to this place! Marie Van Claudio has returned to in-ring action for the first time since *WrestleUTA: 25.* And you can *feel* it in the air -- this isn't just a comeback. It's a coronation."

Marie stops halfway down the ramp. She turns -- slowly -- looking across the sea of fans on both sides. Her gaze rises to the rafters. She closes her eyes for a moment. She lets the moment wash over her. Her chest rises. And when she exhales... she smiles.

Mark Bravo: "That's a woman who knows who she is now. No noise. No doubt. She's not chasing spotlight -- she *is* the spotlight."

*The violin swells again as she resumes walking, hips swaying subtly, purposefully. Every step is smooth. Measured. Elegant. She doesn't rush -- she doesn't need to. The crowd is *with her* the entire way.*

As she reaches the ring, the referee parts the ropes for her. Marie ascends the steps slowly, brushing one hand along the top rope before gliding between them. She walks toward the center, raises one hand... and gently sweeps her cape off her shoulders.

The camera captures her face as she turns in a slow circle -- drinking in the cheers, the chants, the emotion. Her expression softens for a moment -- almost overwhelmed. But then she turns toward Kaida Shizuka... and her posture shifts.

Poise becomes readiness. Elegance becomes edge.

John Phillips: "Marie Van Claudio helped build the foundation of the UTA Women's Division. And tonight,

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she doesn't just wrestle for nostalgia -- she wrestles to prove she still belongs at the very top."

Mark Bravo: "And she picked one hell of a test in Kaida Shizuka. This is the kind of match that defines eras. I don't care who wins -- I just want to *feel* this one."

Marie backs into her corner. No music now. Just the crowd -- buzzing, alive, electric. The referee checks both women. Neither moves. Neither blinks.

The bell rings -- and yet no one moves.

Marie Van Claudio remains in her corner, eyes locked across the ring. Kaida Shizuka hasn't shifted either -- hands at her sides, chest still, the same stoic figure who bowed moments ago.

John Phillips: "Listen to this. No rush. No scramble. No collar-and-elbow. Just... presence."

Mark Bravo: "We talk about ring generalship like it's something that happens during a wristlock. No. This is it. Just *standing there.* And the entire damn arena is on edge."

Both women step forward -- slowly. The fans begin to stir. A chant starts. Distant, then louder.

CROWD: "MA-RIE! MA-RIE!"

CROWD: "KA-I-DA! KA-I-DA!"

*Kaida stops mid-step and *bows* toward Marie -- short, respectful, exact. Marie doesn't return it. Instead, she tilts her head and gives Kaida the faintest of smirks.*

John Phillips: "Kaida, true to form. Respect above all else. And Marie? That smirk's not disrespect -- that's her accepting the weight of the moment."

They circle. Slow. Deliberate. Kaida fakes a low step-in -- Marie shifts her footing, tracking her. A few fans whistle. Another chant tries to build but dies just as quick. The tension resets.

Mark Bravo: "Nobody's even touched yet and this crowd's already boiling. It's like watching two chess grandmasters hover over the first pawn."

*Finally, they close the distance. A feint. A step. *Lock-up.* Collar-and-elbow center-ring.*

The crowd reacts like a move was hit.

John Phillips: "And there it is. First contact. And listen to the people! You'd think she hit a moonsault!"

Neither gains control. They push, twist -- nothing clean. Kaida breaks, resets. Marie backs off, fixing her

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gear. Another circle.

Mark Bravo: "You want to talk about ring rust? That's the test right there. Marie's got to readjust to pressure like that. Not from a rookie -- from a buzzsaw like Kaida."

Kaida steps in -- low kick to the thigh. Sharp, cracking. Marie winces, just slightly. No sell. She absorbs it, takes a deep breath... and the crowd pops for it.

John Phillips: "Kaida Shizuka doesn't just throw strikes. She *places* them. That kick wasn't to hurt -- it was to see how Marie reacts."

Marie slowly circles again, then SLAPS her own thigh -- telling Kaida to bring it. The crowd eats it up.

Mark Bravo: "Okay! Okay! There's fire in the First Lady!"

*Kaida obliges -- steps in for a second kick -- but Marie dodges, spins behind her, and places a *light* slap across the back of Kaida's head before backing away, smiling.*

The fans go nuts. Kaida turns slowly, her expression unchanged. No anger. No smirk. Just recognition.

John Phillips: "That wasn't about pain. That was Marie telling Kaida: *'I'm not your warm-up.'*"

Another circle. Kaida tries a rolling elbow -- Marie ducks. Marie goes for a snap DDT -- Kaida steps out. They reset again. The crowd roars for the stalemate.

Mark Bravo: "It's not even about who lands the move right now. It's about who blinks. This is poker played at full speed."

*Marie paces toward a corner, lifting her arms slowly. The camera catches her mouthing to the front row: *'I still got it.'* The fans respond instantly--*

CROWD: "YOU STILL GOT IT! *clap clap clapclapclap*"

*Kaida watches. Silent. Still. Then charges -- not reckless, but with urgency. Marie sidesteps -- drop toe hold! Kaida stumbles, but rolls through and *snaps back up* to her feet. The crowd pops again at the pure fluidity.*

John Phillips: "You can already tell this isn't going to be about power. Or even pace. It's going to be about *timing.* About who sets the tone at the right time."

They circle again. Sweat now visible on both foreheads. Kaida suddenly changes level -- shoots in -- single-leg attempt -- Marie hops back, rolls through, and goes for a quick schoolgirl pin--

1...

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2-- Kaida kicks out!

They both scramble to their feet -- and pause, standing across from each other once more. Breathing heavier now. The crowd claps rhythmically, alive with anticipation.

Mark Bravo: "We've barely scratched the surface -- and this place is losing their minds. That's not hype. That's *earned.*"

John Phillips: "Marie wanted to see if she could still go. Kaida wants to prove she's ready to surpass a legend. This match might not come down to a finisher. It might come down to who *wants it more.*"

Kaida wipes her mouth. Marie tightens her wrist tape. They both step forward.

Now the match truly begins.

Marie and Kaida step in again, slowly. This time, they tie up tight -- collar-and-elbow. Kaida sinks her hips, trying to wrench Marie off balance. Marie grits her teeth, fighting to hold her ground, but Kaida shifts into a quick side headlock.

John Phillips: "There it is -- Kaida pulling the pace down, making it her match."

Marie pushes her into the ropes, forcing a break. Kaida comes back off the rebound -- shoulder tackle! Marie stumbles, but doesn't fall. The crowd pops for the standoff.

Kaida hits the ropes again. Another tackle -- Marie absorbs it! Kaida tries a third -- this time Marie sidesteps and trips her with a drop toe hold, sending Kaida down to the mat. Marie immediately floats over into a front facelock.

Mark Bravo: "Beautiful chain from Van Claudio! That's not ring rust -- that's ring instinct."

Kaida stays calm, working her way back up to a knee. She slips behind Marie -- waistlock -- and takes her down with a quick mat return. Now Kaida's on top, cinching a chinlock tight. She doesn't yank. She controls.

John Phillips: "Notice the difference. Kaida isn't looking for a submission yet -- she's making Marie carry her weight. Every breath a little harder."

Marie shifts, rolling to her side. She digs her knees into the canvas and forces herself up. The crowd claps along, sensing the struggle. Marie fires an elbow to Kaida's ribs -- then another -- breaking the grip. She spins free and whips Kaida to the ropes -- Kaida ducks a clothesline -- rebound -- and both women stop dead in front of each other.

The crowd explodes with applause for the stalemate. Both women breathe heavy, sweat beading on their foreheads already.

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Mark Bravo: "This is the kind of wrestling you savor. It's not about flash yet. It's about control. Dominance. Who's gonna set the rhythm first?"

Marie brushes her hair back again, smirking faintly at Kaida. Kaida, as always, remains stoic. She bows her head once more -- acknowledging the test. Marie nods back this time, subtle, almost reluctant.

John Phillips: "That nod right there -- that's important. Marie isn't just wrestling Kaida. She's acknowledging her. That's not something she's always been willing to do in her career."

The crowd begins a rhythmic clap, urging them forward. They circle once more. This time, Kaida shoots in -- single leg takedown! Marie scrambles, sprawling to block it -- Kaida transitions smoothly into a hammerlock on the mat.

Mark Bravo: "Like a snake. You think you've stuffed her, and suddenly you're caught in something worse."

Marie grimaces, reaching for the ropes -- just short. She rolls, slipping under and reversing into a wristlock of her own. Kaida kips up effortlessly, flipping through the hold and breaking free. The crowd reacts big for the exchange of technical mastery.

John Phillips: "This is world-class wrestling. Marie showing her timing. Kaida showing her technique. Nobody giving an inch."

Both women stand, and for a moment they pause -- listening to the rising applause. Marie exhales, flexing her taped wrist. Kaida adjusts her stance, eyes never leaving her opponent.

Mark Bravo: "You can feel the dam starting to crack, Johnny. These two can only hold back the storm for so long."

Marie points to the center of the ring, calling Kaida in. The crowd roars. Kaida steps forward without hesitation.

The chess game is almost over. The fight is about to begin.

Marie and Kaida meet center-ring once more. This time, there's no feeling out. They go forehead-to-forehead -- the crowd reacting before a strike even lands.

John Phillips: "Oh boy... here we go. Respect's out the window. This is about pride now."

*Kaida is first -- **shoot kick to the thigh**. Marie flinches, but doesn't move. Another kick. Marie answers with a sharp **slap across the chest** that echoes in the rafters.*

Mark Bravo: "WHOO! That sounded like a gunshot! And look at Kaida -- not even blinking!"

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*Kaida fires back with another thigh kick, then a **rolling elbow**. Marie ducks under -- hooks from behind -- **German suplex!** She bridges--*

1...

2-- Kickout!

*Marie sits up, chest heaving. She wipes the sweat from her forehead, pulls Kaida up by the wrist -- but Kaida snaps into a **snap Saito suplex!** The ring shakes. She rolls Marie into a pin of her own--*

1...

2-- Marie powers out!

John Phillips: "Back-and-forth! Back-and-forth! Neither one keeping momentum for more than a heartbeat!"

*They both scramble up -- Kaida with a **rope-hung double stomp** attempt in the corner -- but Marie moves! Kaida crashes, clutching her midsection. Marie spins -- **spinning heel kick!** She drops Kaida cold!*

The crowd erupts as Marie crawls over and hooks the leg--

1...

2...

--NO!! Kaida kicks out!

Marie stays down on her knees, staring out at the sea of fans. They're chanting loud now -- half for her, half for Kaida.

CROWD: "LET'S GO MA-RIE!"

CROWD: "KAI-DA! KAI-DA!"

Mark Bravo: "You can feel the split in this building! Half want Marie's comeback, half want Kaida's breakthrough -- but everybody's losing their minds for this fight!"

*Marie gets to her feet, waving Kaida up. She measures -- looking for the **Poisonrana** -- but as Kaida rises, she shoves Marie forward instead. Marie rebounds off the ropes -- and Kaida launches -- **Silent Flash spinning back-kick!** It lands flush across Marie's face!*

The crowd gasps -- Marie collapses into the mat. Kaida dives for the cover!

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1...

2...

--NO! Marie kicks out!

The fans explode with a standing ovation, applauding the exchange. Both women lie on the mat, sucking in air. The referee checks them both. The commentary team has to raise their voices to be heard over the noise.

John Phillips: "These two are emptying the tank! Marie Van Claudio proving she can still hang, Kaida Shizuka proving she belongs at this level -- and Houston is eating it up!"

Slowly, both women stir. Kaida clutches her ribs. Marie wipes blood from the corner of her mouth. They crawl toward each other, meeting in the middle on their knees.

They trade strikes -- forearm from Kaida. Slap from Marie. Forearm. Slap. Each one louder, harder, until both struggle just to stay upright.

Mark Bravo: "This is turning into a war of attrition. Who's got more left in the gas tank? Who's gonna push past that wall first?"

Both collapse to their sides, then roll away toward opposite ropes. The crowd is on their feet, clapping in rhythm again. The referee counts as both women slowly pull themselves up by the ropes.

Marie looks across the ring at Kaida. Kaida looks back. Neither breaks eye contact. Both women, exhausted, stagger forward.

The escalation is far from over.

Marie and Kaida stagger toward each other, trading tired but heavy strikes -- a forearm from Kaida, a slap from Marie, a rolling elbow that nearly drops Marie, and then a desperate clothesline that spins Kaida to the mat. Both collapse, flat on their backs. The referee begins to count.

John Phillips: "They've thrown everything at each other -- and the tank's running on fumes!"

*At six, both stir. At eight, they're on their knees again, leaning into each other. The crowd is roaring. Kaida grabs Marie's wrist and yanks her forward into a stiff **knee to the jaw** -- the setup for the Rising Dragon! She hits the ropes to launch -- but Marie ducks under and counters with a sudden **snap DDT!***

Marie hooks the leg!

1...

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2...

--NO! Kaida kicks out!

*Marie sits up, clutching her own neck, exhaustion painted across her face. She shakes her head, then waves Kaida up -- signaling for the **Poisonrana**.*

Mark Bravo: "She's calling for it -- the move that can end this in a heartbeat!"

*Kaida rises unsteadily. Marie charges, leaps -- but Kaida blocks! She plants her feet, holds Marie in place -- then spins into a **Kusanagi Driver!** She spikes Marie hard and bridges!*

1...

2...

--MARIE KICKS OUT!!

*The roof nearly blows off the NRG Arena. Kaida sits back, expression unchanged, but her breathing ragged. She bows once toward Marie before dragging her upright again. She positions her for another suplex, but Marie twists free -- shoves Kaida into the ropes -- and on the rebound catches her flush with a **spinning heel kick!***

*Kaida stumbles back to her feet -- dazed. Marie steps in, pulling her deep into position -- and suddenly whips back with the **Poisonrana!***

The crowd erupts as Kaida spikes, rolling across the canvas clutching her neck. Marie scrambles into the cover, hooking both legs tight.

1...

2...

3!!

The bell rings and the crowd leaps to its feet, chanting loud and long. Marie stays down for a moment, chest rising and falling, overwhelmed. The referee kneels beside her, raising her hand as the fans cheer even louder.

John Phillips: "What a return for Marie Van Claudio! Tested by fire, by one of the sharpest strikers in Kaida Shizuka -- and tonight, she proves she's still every bit as dangerous as ever!"

Mark Bravo: "But let's not undersell Kaida -- she went toe-to-toe with a living legend in just her second

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match back. That's no small feat. That's credibility. That's arrival."

*Marie slowly rises to her feet, the referee steadying her. She looks out at the crowd -- smiling faintly now, humbled by the ovation. She touches her heart with one hand, then points outward, mouthing *thank you* as the fans chant her name.*

Kaida rolls to the ropes, pulling herself up. She doesn't argue. She doesn't complain. She simply bows toward Marie before slipping out of the ring, still clutching her neck but standing tall in her own dignity.

The camera lingers on Marie, standing in the center of the ring, bathed in spotlight. A woman reborn, with a division watching... and a storm still ahead.

No Crying over Spilled Coffee

*The camera fades in on a close-up: hot coffee pouring into a styrofoam cup, steam curling upward. A weathered hand adjusts the spout, sleeve cuff showing a faded, wrinkled suit. The shot slowly pans back, revealing the full jacket... and finally the unmistakable blue-and-red mask of **Madman Szalinski**.*

He raises the cup to his lips, takes a long sip, and exhales with exaggerated satisfaction.

Madman Szalinski: "Ahhh... now that's a good cup of Joe."

*As he turns around, he's met with a face only inches away. It's **El Fantasma Oscuro**. Madman jolts, coffee splashing out of the cup and onto his hand.*

Madman Szalinski: "JESUS--! Son of a..."

He drops the cup, shaking his hand and blowing on the burn.

Madman Szalinski: "We really outta put a bell on you. Can't go sneakin' up on guys like that."

He glares down at the spilled coffee on the floor, then back at Fantasma. He shrugs, shaking his head, and turns back toward the machine. As he does --

*BAM! El Fantasma Oscuro is there again, standing uncomfortably close. Madman nearly jumps out of his skin, stumbling backward-- right into another **El Fantasma Oscuro** behind him.*

Madman freezes, then slowly composes himself, standing between both masked figures. He looks at one. Then the other. Then back again. Finally, he mutters--

Madman Szalinski: "God damn, son."

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He rubs his temples, chuckling to himself in disbelief.

Madman Szalinski: "You boys sure know how to make the flashbacks creep up. For a second there, I thought I'd stumbled into a whole damn room of La Flama Blancas."

The Fantasma remain silent, still, almost statuesque. Madman sighs, looks back down at the coffee mess, then back at them.

Madman Szalinski: "Tell ya what... I'll leave this for you fellas to clean up. I got a meeting with Stevens."

With a grin, he raises his hands, shaping them into finger guns. He fires a playful "bang bang" at each Fantasma before strolling off down the hall.

The camera lingers on the two El Fantasma Oscuros. They turn their masked faces toward one another in eerie unison. Then they both glance down at the spilled coffee at their feet. Neither moves. Neither speaks.

Fade out.

Not tonight, suckers!

The screen glitches to static. Suddenly, the Trust Fund logo slaps across the feed in gaudy gold and silver. Cut to a lavish suite: velvet ropes, catered spread, Jacoby Jacobs in oversized designer shades holding his phone at arm's length. Darian Darrington looms behind him, flexing in a tank top that looks custom-stitched out of hundred-dollar bills. Between them sits one of the gaudy white-croc "Trust Fund Tag Titles," perched on a glass pedestal under a spotlight.

Jacoby Jacobs: "UTA, don't touch that dial. You're tuned in to premium content -- live from Birmingham, where we're about eight minutes from winning those Iron City tag straps too! Sorry-not-sorry, Texas."

Darian guffaws, slapping the belt plate with a meaty hand.

Darian Darrington: "Facts, baby! Why would the Grapplerz waste a second sweatin' in some barbecue shack when we got bigger fish to fry? Iron City gold. ICW Tag Team Tournament. That's the only meal worth eatin' right now!"

Jacoby swivels the camera to show a velvet rope blocking off the door, then back to his face, smirking.

Jacoby Jacobs: "Priorities, y'all. UTA's fine for a vacation, but history? Legacy? That's made in Birmingham. That's where the Grapplerz are busy upgrading ICW with these hips, these lips, and these trips."

TD3 struts into frame in a paisley jacket, golf clap loaded with mockery. He leans into the camera, smirk dialed to eleven.

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Todderick Davenport III: "UTA, don't be sad. Don't pout. Your time is coming. Because next week, live and in person, the Rich Young Grapplerz will grace your little show. And when they do? The very first-ever **Trust Fund Tag Team Championship Open Challenge** will shake your tag division down to its broke, busted foundations."

Darian flexes again, nearly knocking the belt pedestal over. Jacoby spins the phone back to himself, lips curled in a fake apology.

Jacoby Jacobs: "So shine up your best team, UTA. It doesn't matter who. It doesn't matter how. Because once you step into our boardroom... you're already bankrupt."

Jacoby snaps his fingers; the feed cuts to a gaudy "Trust Fund Incorporated" bumper, then back to the live crowd, who are already booing the arrogance off the screen.

Amy Harrison vs. Shannon Ray

The cameras return to ringside as the crowd buzzes, still charged from Marie Van Claudio's victory earlier in the night.

John Phillips: "What a night it's been already here in Houston -- and folks, up next, it's time for Amy Harrison to step back into a UTA ring for the first time in nearly a decade."

Mark Bravo: "And she's not just stepping back into any ol' match, Johnny. Let's not forget -- at *WrestleUTA: 25*, Harrison shocked the world when she returned, only to blindside Marie Van Claudio after the Women's Championship match. It was one of the most vicious attacks we've ever seen -- and to this day, nobody knows why."

John Phillips: "Marie answered that return tonight with a hard-fought win over Kaida Shizuka -- her second match since coming out of retirement. But now the question is this: can Amy Harrison do the same here against one of the most precise, cold, and calculated competitors in Shannon Ray?"

*The crowd hums as the house lights dim. A red dot laser suddenly appears, darting across the crowd like a sightline. The arena falls silent in anticipation. The red dot stops on the stage -- and through the curtain walks **Shannon Ray**, tall and composed, her stride as smooth and deliberate as her reputation suggests.*

Mark Bravo: "Talk about focus. That woman's background as an Olympic-level archer isn't just a fun fact -- it's who she is. Precision. Patience. Aim small, miss small."

Ray steps into the center of the stage, her eyes fixed on the ring. She raises one hand and traces the laser across her own chest before slowly lowering it toward the squared circle, as though sighting in her target. Then, without a word, she begins her walk down the ramp -- calm, deliberate, ice-cold.

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John Phillips: "Ray isn't here to get caught up in the drama between Amy Harrison and Marie Van Claudio. She's here to win. She's here to expose flaws and exploit weaknesses -- and she'll dissect you piece by piece if you let her."

At ringside, Ray climbs the steps with measured precision. She wipes her boots carefully on the apron, then enters between the ropes. Once inside, she paces a slow circle around the ring, expression blank, before retreating to her corner. She crouches slightly, loosening her wrists, waiting for the moment her opponent arrives.

Mark Bravo: "And this is what Amy Harrison has waiting for her. A sniper. A hunter. A woman who doesn't waste bullets. If Amy thought this return would be easy -- she's dead wrong."

*The house lights dim again, this time to a sultry crimson wash. A haunting guitar riff cuts through the noise, followed by the opening chords of "**Sanctify Me**" by **In This Moment**. The crowd stirs -- some rising to their feet, others already booing, waiting to see her.*

John Phillips: "Here we go. The last time we saw this woman inside a UTA ring, she was standing over a battered Marie Van Claudio at *WrestleUTA: 25.*"

*The curtain parts -- and **Amy Harrison** steps out, bathed in red light. Her gear shimmers black with silver trim, cut sleek and sharp. Her eyes are locked forward, smirk tugging at her lips, hips swaying in deliberate rhythm as she struts onto the stage. She pauses, tilting her head toward the crowd, soaking in the mix of cheers and venomous boos.*

Mark Bravo: "And there it is -- that look. That confidence. Amy Harrison feeds on this. Every jeer, every cheer. She doesn't care which way the energy flows, as long as it's all for her."

Amy slowly runs her hands through her hair, tossing it back as she begins her walk down the ramp. On her way, she mouths something inaudible at a group of fans in the front row -- they shout back, and Amy just smirks wider. She isn't rattled. She's reveling in it.

John Phillips: "She calls herself tough as nails -- and she's proven it over the years. But let's not forget, Marie Van Claudio picked up a big win earlier tonight against Kaida Shizuka. That shadow looms large here. Amy's return won't mean much if she can't back it up against Shannon Ray."

Amy climbs onto the apron and pauses, stretching her arms across the top rope, leaning back with her head tilted and eyes closed, as though savoring the spotlight. Then, with a deliberate slide between the ropes, she enters the ring.

Inside, Amy walks a slow circle, her gaze never leaving Shannon Ray. She blows a mocking kiss in her direction before backing into her corner, the smirk never leaving her face. The crowd continues to buzz -- some chanting for Shannon, others booing Amy outright.

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Mark Bravo: "We've already seen Marie rise to the occasion tonight. Now it's Amy's turn. The question is -- can she match the moment, or is Shannon Ray about to spoil the party?"

The referee steps between both competitors, checking them quickly before signaling to the timekeeper. The crowd noise swells again, knowing the action is about to begin.

The bell rings. The crowd immediately comes alive, dueling chants echoing through the NRG Arena.

CROWD: "LET'S GO SHANNON!"

CROWD: "HARRI-SON! HARRI-SON!"

John Phillips: "The people are split -- and that's no surprise. Amy Harrison has always been polarizing. Beautiful, dangerous, and divisive."

Mark Bravo: "Shannon Ray doesn't give a damn about any of that. She's not here for drama -- she's here to take apart one of the most cunning veterans in the business, piece by piece."

Amy smirks at the noise, leaning casually into her corner, rolling her shoulders like she's already in control. Shannon stands tall across the ring, eyes unblinking, laser-focused. She raises her arm and traces an invisible target in the air, pointing at Amy like a bullseye. The crowd pops.

John Phillips: "That's the story right there. One woman is trying to get into your head with theatrics. The other? She's aiming right between the eyes."

*They circle slowly, Amy feinting in and out, trying to bait Shannon. Shannon doesn't bite. Amy finally steps in for a collar-and-elbow tie-up, but Shannon immediately turns it into a **wristlock**, twisting hard and snapping Amy down to a knee.*

*Amy grimaces, reaching for the ropes, but Shannon yanks the arm down tighter. A sharp **kick to the ribs** keeps her grounded. The fans clap for Shannon's precision.*

Mark Bravo: "That's what I mean. No wasted movement. She's not gonna run around, she's gonna lock onto a limb and carve you up with it."

Amy twists, manages to roll forward, and kips up to her feet -- breaking free of the hold. She struts back a few steps, wagging her finger at Shannon with a cocky grin, earning a chorus of boos.

John Phillips: "There's that Harrison arrogance. She escaped, sure, but she wants everyone in this arena to know it too."

Shannon doesn't react. Cold. Stoic. She just steps forward again. Amy, annoyed by the lack of response, slaps her across the face. The crowd gasps. Shannon doesn't flinch -- she just turns her head back slowly,

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eyes narrowing.

Mark Bravo: "Ooooh, that might've been a mistake. Amy thinks she's in control of the pace -- but that's the kind of thing that wakes up the sniper."

*Shannon unloads with a series of **Sharpshooter's Chops**, each one landing like a rifle crack. Amy staggers back into the ropes. Shannon whips her across -- Amy ducks under a clothesline, rebounds -- and nails a sudden **running clothesline** of her own, dropping Shannon to the mat. The crowd boos loudly as Amy blows a mocking kiss toward the fans.*

John Phillips: "That's Harrison in a nutshell. She takes your precision and turns it into her opportunity. Beautiful execution, ugly intent."

Amy struts to Shannon, stomping her down once before dragging her up by the hair. She taunts the front row, smirking, then whips Shannon into the corner. Amy charges -- but Shannon slips out at the last second. Amy collides with the turnbuckle chest-first!

*Shannon is quick to capitalize -- she hooks Amy's arm and wrenches her down into a **Precision Armbar**, stretching the limb back tight. Amy screams, clawing for the ropes. The crowd comes alive as Shannon cranks the hold deeper.*

Mark Bravo: "Bullseye! She's got the arm trapped -- and this could end it early if Harrison can't find a way out!"

Amy thrashes, finally rolling and hooking her foot onto the bottom rope. The referee calls for the break. Shannon releases instantly and backs away, stone-faced. Amy sits against the ropes, clutching her arm, glaring daggers at her opponent.

John Phillips: "The precision of Shannon Ray is dangerous. Amy Harrison may have the experience, but if Shannon locks onto that arm -- it's target practice the rest of the way."

The two women reset, circling again, the crowd buzzing with anticipation for the next exchange.

Amy shakes out her arm, rubbing at the shoulder as she paces along the ropes. Shannon stays dead-center, not moving, her eyes tracking Harrison's every step like a hawk. The contrast is striking -- one woman animated, the other stone.

John Phillips: "You notice the body language? Amy's trying to sell confidence, but she keeps checking that arm. Shannon Ray doesn't need to gloat -- she just waits, patient, calculating."

*Amy steps forward, raising her hands for a lock-up. Shannon accepts -- only for Amy to yank her into a quick **side headlock**, grinding her weight down. Amy smirks at the front row as she cranks the hold, mouthing something about "watch and learn."*

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Mark Bravo: "There's the Harrison playbook. She'll talk to the fans, she'll make faces, anything to make you forget she's still twisting your head like a jar lid."

*Shannon doesn't resist wildly -- instead, she calmly digs her elbow into Amy's ribs. One strike. Then another. Amy grits her teeth, but hangs on. Shannon shifts, shoots her off to the ropes, and drops flat. Amy hops over, hits the ropes again -- Shannon pops up with a **Deadeye Dropkick**--*

No! Amy grabs the ropes, halting herself. Shannon hits nothing but canvas.

John Phillips: "Clever. Harrison saw it coming. That's the experience advantage -- awareness of when to stop instead of rushing headlong."

Amy struts toward Shannon, blowing a kiss, then plants a boot arrogantly onto her chest as if to pin. The referee doesn't even count -- Shannon slaps the foot away and rolls back, regaining her stance. The crowd boos Amy heavily for the stunt.

Mark Bravo: "That right there? That's Amy Harrison in a nutshell. She'll toy with you. She'll toy with the crowd. It's not about humiliation -- it's about making you hesitate the next time."

*The two circle again, but this time Shannon drops low, feigning a limp in her knee. Amy tilts her head, smirking, pointing at her as if she's caught her slipping. She lunges forward -- only for Shannon to snap up instantly, grabbing Amy's arm and twisting her into a **hammerlock takedown**.*

The crowd pops loud for the trap as Amy shouts in pain, pounding the mat. Shannon wrenches the arm again, her face expressionless, almost surgical.

John Phillips: "And turnabout is fair play! Shannon Ray feigns weakness -- and Harrison fell right into the trap!"

Amy claws her way to the ropes again. The referee calls for the break. Shannon obeys, standing up and stepping back immediately. Amy clutches her shoulder, glaring at her opponent as the crowd cheers Ray's precision.

Mark Bravo: "That's the difference. Amy wants to rattle you. Shannon? She wants to disable you. Cold. Calculated. And right now she's got the bullseye locked on Harrison's arm."

Amy rolls to the outside, walking along ringside while massaging her shoulder. The fans at ringside heckle her, shouting for Shannon. Amy points at one, wagging her finger, and yells, "She's nothing! You'll see!" The referee begins a count, but Amy takes her time.

John Phillips: "This is a psychological timeout. Amy knows she needs to reset. She doesn't want to walk back into another trap."

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Shannon doesn't follow her out. She just stands in the middle of the ring, calm, stoic, staring through Amy like she's already dismantled her. The crowd claps in support of Shannon's patience.

Mark Bravo: "That's the worst thing you can do to a mind-gamer like Amy Harrison. Don't play. Don't chase. Just wait. That silence is louder than any trash talk."

Amy finally rolls back in, smirking, shaking her head like she's brushing off the crowd. She extends her hand toward Shannon as if to offer a handshake. The crowd boos, sensing the trick. Shannon just stares at it, expression unchanged.

John Phillips: "I don't buy it. Amy Harrison and a handshake? That's a wolf asking a sheep to dinner."

*Shannon doesn't move. After a few seconds, Amy shrugs, smirks again... and swings a sucker punch. Shannon ducks it clean, hooks the arm, and drags her down into another **Precision Armbar** attempt!*

Amy scrambles like her life depends on it, rolling frantically until she slips free. She scoots back into the corner, clutching her arm again, shouting in frustration.

Mark Bravo: "Every time Harrison thinks she's got the upper hand, Shannon Ray zeroes in on that arm. It's target practice, Johnny. And Amy's running out of places to hide."

The crowd applauds again as both women reset -- one smirking through pain, the other stoic and unreadable. The psychological war rages on, but the storm is brewing.

Amy pulls herself up in the corner, flexing her shoulder with a grimace. Shannon stays centered, crouched low, eyes narrowed. The crowd begins to buzz again as Amy forces herself forward, jaw tight.

John Phillips: "Amy Harrison has been rattled early -- Shannon Ray's precision has made this a surgical dissection so far."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah, but don't forget -- Amy's been around the world, she's been a champion. She's made a career out of turning pain into opportunity."

*Amy and Shannon lock up again -- but this time, Amy quickly drives a knee into Shannon's midsection. She smirks as she pulls Shannon forward and plants her with a **snap DDT**. Amy floats into the cover--*

1...

2-- Kickout!

*Amy smacks the mat once and sits up, brushing her hair back with a confident sneer. She mounts Shannon and starts raining down forearms -- but Shannon covers up tight, then rolls her into a **crucifix pin!***

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1...

2-- NO! Amy kicks out and pops up furious.

*Amy charges -- Shannon sidesteps -- and drops her with a **sniper suplex**, high and tight. Shannon bridges--*

1...

2-- Amy kicks out!

John Phillips: "And there it is! That's what makes Shannon Ray so dangerous -- one moment of over-aggression, and she makes you pay for it."

*Shannon grabs Amy's arm again and twists into a **Precision Armbar**, wrenching it back at a brutal angle. Amy screams, thrashing wildly. The crowd is roaring now, sensing the danger.*

Mark Bravo: "She's got that arm locked again! If Amy can't find the ropes, this one's over!"

Amy claws and finally drapes her foot over the bottom rope. The referee calls for the break. Shannon releases immediately and backs away, her face as unreadable as ever. Amy rolls to the apron, clutching her arm, cursing under her breath.

John Phillips: "Every time Shannon targets that arm, it's like she's chiseling away at Harrison's foundation."

*Amy uses the ropes to get back in. Shannon steps in -- but Amy suddenly yanks her forward throat-first into the top rope! Shannon stumbles back, clutching her neck, and Amy pounces with a **running clothesline** that sends her down hard. Amy sprawls across her for the cover--*

1...

2...

--NO! Shannon kicks out!

Amy slaps the mat in frustration, then grabs Shannon by the hair, dragging her up. She throws her into the corner and drives a series of stiff shoulders into her midsection. Amy steps back, blowing a kiss to the crowd, then charges again -- but Shannon slips out, and Amy collides shoulder-first with the ring post!

Mark Bravo: "OHH! Shoulder-first into steel! That's the same arm Shannon's been targeting all match!"

*Amy staggers back, clutching her arm, and Shannon pounces with a vicious **targeted knee strike** to the bad shoulder. Amy screams, collapsing to the mat as the fans roar their approval.*

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John Phillips: "That could be the turning point! Shannon Ray has her target in the crosshairs -- and Amy Harrison is in deep trouble!"

*Shannon drags Amy toward the center and sets up the **Eye of the Storm**, wrenching back into her deadly submission hold. The crowd leaps to its feet as Amy thrashes wildly, screaming in pain.*

Mark Bravo: "She's got it locked! Eye of the Storm -- dead center of the ring! If Amy taps, this comeback's dead in the water!"

Amy fights desperately, twisting her body, clawing at the canvas, dragging herself inch by inch toward the ropes. The crowd is thunderous as she stretches -- stretches -- and finally hooks the bottom rope with her fingertips! The referee calls the break, and Shannon lets go reluctantly but cleanly.

Amy rolls to the outside again, clutching her shoulder, screaming at the referee to give her space. Shannon stays in the ring, calm, breathing steady, waiting for her prey to come back.

John Phillips: "Amy Harrison survived, but how much more can that arm take? Shannon Ray has carved her up piece by piece, and the bullseye just keeps getting clearer."

Amy leans against the guardrail outside the ring, clutching her shoulder and snarling at ringside fans who heckle her. The referee counts, but Amy rolls back in at eight, sliding on her side and using the ropes to stand. Shannon doesn't charge -- she waits. Patient. Surgical.

John Phillips: "This has been the story all night. Shannon Ray waiting for her shot. Amy Harrison trying to twist the pace to her own rhythm."

*Amy shouts at Shannon to "come on," raising her fists. Shannon obliges, stepping in. Amy lashes out with a sudden **kick to the midsection**, doubling her over, then plants her with a crisp **facebuster**. Amy flips her hair back, crawling into the cover.*

1...

2...

NO! Shannon kicks out!

*Amy slams the mat and drags Shannon up again, whipping her into the ropes. On the rebound, Amy leaps for a **spinning heel kick** -- but Shannon ducks, hooks the waist, and drives her down with a **Sniper Suplex!** Both women crash hard.*

Shannon rolls over, clutching her ribs, then crawls across for the cover.

1...

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2...

KICKOUT! Amy survives!

Mark Bravo: "It's still anyone's match! And look at Shannon -- she's not flustered. She's recalculating the angles. She's finding her next shot."

*Shannon pulls Amy up, twisting into the **leg hook abdominal stretch** -- her setup. Amy screams, the bad arm pulled tight across her chest. The referee checks her, but Amy grits her teeth and claws at Shannon's face, forcing a break. The crowd boos heavily as Amy slips free.*

John Phillips: "Classic Harrison -- bend the rules, take the cheap way out. But it might've just saved her match."

*Amy staggers back, bouncing off the ropes -- and nails Shannon with a desperate **clothesline**. Both women collapse to the mat, exhausted. The referee begins to count as the crowd claps rhythmically, urging them on.*

*At seven, both rise. Amy goes for another clothesline -- Shannon ducks -- fires a **Sharpshooter's Chop** that cracks across Amy's chest. Another. Another. Amy stumbles, gasping. Shannon grabs her arm and spins her into the **Critical Hit DDT!** The crowd explodes as Shannon crawls for the cover.*

1...

2...

--NO! Amy kicks out at the last second!

*Shannon pounds the mat once, finally showing a flicker of frustration. She drags Amy up, signaling for the **Eye of the Storm**. The fans roar in anticipation.*

*But as Shannon tries to cinch it in, Amy suddenly rolls through, twisting Shannon into a **small package!***

1...

2...

3!!

The bell rings and the crowd erupts in mixed reaction -- cheers from her supporters, loud boos from those who wanted to see Shannon Ray claim the win. Amy immediately rolls out of the ring, clutching her shoulder but smirking devilishly as the referee tries to raise her hand from inside.

John Phillips: "Just like that! Amy Harrison survives her first match back in UTA -- but let's be honest,

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Shannon Ray controlled long stretches of this contest."

Mark Bravo: "Controlled it, yeah, but didn't finish it. That's the difference. Amy Harrison isn't here to play fair or put on a clinic -- she's here to win, by any means necessary. Tonight, she did."

Amy backs up the ramp, blowing mocking kisses to the jeering fans. She yells something about Marie Van Claudio into the camera, though the words are drowned out by the crowd noise. Inside the ring, Shannon Ray sits up, staring coldly after Amy, clutching her ribs but showing no outward frustration. Her eyes simply follow Harrison, calculating.

The camera cuts back to ringside -- the story clear: Marie Van Claudio and Amy Harrison are both victorious tonight. Their paths are destined to cross again.

Broken Dreams

*The scene opens inside the office of UTA General Manager **Scott Stevens**. He sits at his desk, flipping through a stack of papers with a furrowed brow. Across from him, slouched comfortably in a chair, is the masked enigma himself -- **Madman Szalinski**.*

Stevens reads aloud, squinting as he scans the page.

Scott Stevens: "Says here... cartilage in your knees is, and I quote... non-existent. Your neck has no real range of motion."

Madman nods casually.

Madman Szalinski: "Yep. Sounds 'bout right."

Scott Stevens: "You have no strength in either hand. Your back and hips are... well, the doctor suggests the fact you can even stand is a miracle."

Stevens sets the papers down, looking at Madman with a mix of disbelief and concern.

Scott Stevens: "And you would like to wrestle..."

Madman nods again.

Madman Szalinski: "Yep. Think I got one more good run in me."

Stevens blinks, perplexed.

Scott Stevens: "You know, putting you in the ring like this would be nothing but a liability. I'm sorry. There's

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just nothing I can do for you."

He sighs and leans back in his chair. Madman looks down at his lap, quiet for a moment.

Madman Szalinski: "What if I signed a waiver?"

Stevens laughs -- once, then louder, until it's almost ridiculous.

Scott Stevens: "A waiver? A waiver to cover all of *this*? No -- seriously, it would be gross negligence to even consider. I'm sorry, there's just nothing I can do."

Madman mutters, pushing his chair back slowly.

Madman Szalinski: "Oh. I guess... thank you or something."

He stands, shoulders slumped. Stevens looks genuinely guilty.

Scott Stevens: "Look, I'm sorry."

*Madman waves him off, turning toward the door -- and stops dead in his tracks. Right in front of him, inches away, stand not one... but two **El Fantasma Oscuros**. He yelps, leaping backward and clutching Stevens' desk to keep from falling.*

Madman Szalinski: "HOLY GOAT BALLS!"

He steadies himself, adjusting his jacket, before gesturing toward the masked duo.

Madman Szalinski: "These guys... am I right?"

Stevens suddenly perks up, an idea flashing in his eyes.

Scott Stevens: "WAIT! I got it. The Fantasmas here -- they aren't exactly the talkative type. And you... well, you don't know how to shut your mouth."

Madman Szalinski: "Sure don't."

Scott Stevens: "See? I was just about to talk to them about entering the tag division. They could use a manager... what if that manager was you? You could guide them. Teach them. A former champion, a future Hall of Famer -- passing on the wisdom."

Madman looks at both Fantasmas, then back at Stevens, scratching his chin.

Madman Szalinski: "Not really my thing... but why not? There's a paycheck in it for me, isn't there?"

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Scott Stevens: "Oh, absolutely. On top of your legends deal."

Madman freezes, tilting his head.

Madman Szalinski: "Wait... legends deal?"

Scott Stevens: "Yeah. We've been sending you checks every month for years."

Madman's eyes widen behind the mask.

Madman Szalinski: "Not to the Parkersburg address, right?"

Stevens fumbles through his desk, pulling out a note.

Scott Stevens: "Umm... yeah, why?"

Madman drops his head into his hand with a groan.

Madman Szalinski: "No wonder Ariel hasn't hit me up for money since '22. God damn, son."

Stevens looks both concerned and sympathetic.

Scott Stevens: "Maybe your first stop should be HR -- get that address changed."

Madman shakes his head, sighing.

Madman Szalinski: "Yeah, I think so."

He turns toward the Fantamas, pointing at them with a wag of his finger.

Madman Szalinski: "Come on, boys. First lesson starts now -- how to make sure you get a call from a woman you don't want to hear from in about two weeks."

He gestures for them to follow, and the three exit together. Stevens just sits back down, shaking his head in disbelief as the scene fades out.

Chris Ross vs. Brandon Henderson

The camera cuts back to ringside, the buzz in Houston still carrying after Amy Harrison's controversial win. The commentators reset the tone as the next match looms.

John Phillips: "Up next, ladies and gentlemen, we've got a battle between one of the most violent,

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dangerous men to ever step foot in a UTA ring -- Chris Ross -- and the rising underdog out of Pittsburgh, Brandon Henderson."

Mark Bravo: "You said it, Johnny. Chris Ross is a walking rap sheet. A man with nothing left to lose, and that makes him more dangerous than anyone in this business. But don't sleep on Stormborn -- Henderson's got that never-say-die energy, and sometimes that's the kind of fire that can rattle even the nastiest opponent."

*The lights dim, and lightning flashes across the titantron in stark white bolts. The arena rumbles with a low thunder effect as the crowd rises. From the curtain strides **Brandon Henderson**, denim vest flapping like storm clouds as the arena pops in support.*

John Phillips: "And here comes Stormborn! Brandon Henderson, the hometown pride of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He's traded the gridiron for the squared circle, and every time he steps in that ring, he brings that same unrelenting drive."

Henderson stops at the top of the ramp, pounding his chest with both fists, then raises his arms high as the thunderclaps on the screen sync to his pose. He begins his walk, slapping hands with fans on either side, his intensity building with every step closer to the ring.

Mark Bravo: "The man's not just out here to wrestle -- he's out here to inspire. Stormborn fights like his back's against the wall every single night. If there's one guy who can rally a crowd against a monster like Chris Ross, it's him."

Henderson reaches ringside, sliding under the bottom rope before popping up with a burst of energy. He climbs the middle turnbuckle, pointing to the crowd as the fans cheer louder. Dropping back down, he sheds the vest and bounces on his toes, shadowboxing briefly before leaning into his corner. His eyes stay locked on the entranceway -- waiting for the fight that's about to storm down.

John Phillips: "Brandon Henderson is locked in. But let's be real -- the storm outside those ropes is nothing compared to the hurricane of violence Chris Ross is about to bring with him."

*The lights drop to a deep crimson as the opening riff of "**Black Flame**" by **Bury Tomorrow** tears through the arena. A cold wave of boos rains down before the man even steps through the curtain. After a beat, **Chris Ross** emerges, head lowered, a screwdriver clenched in his fist. His disheveled frame, his heavy gait, and the aura of anger that surrounds him send an uneasy hush through parts of the crowd.*

John Phillips: "And there he is -- Chris Ross. The Keystone State Killa. A man whose reputation precedes him -- and not in a good way. Since his return to the United Toughness Alliance, he's been as violent, as unpredictable, and as ruthless as ever."

Mark Bravo: "Ruthless is putting it lightly, Johnny. Let's not forget -- this is a guy who's made a career out of leaving scars, ending careers, and crossing every line possible. From Harrisburg to DEFIANCE, everywhere

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he's gone, he's left a trail of destruction. And the scariest part? He looks like he's enjoying it less now... and that makes him even more dangerous."

*Ross trudges halfway down the ramp, his eyes locked on the ring, screwdriver glinting under the lights. Suddenly, the crowd pops with confusion as another familiar figure bounds out onto the stage -- **Maxx Mayhem**. He dances, almost doing a jig, clapping along to the beat that isn't there. He grins wide as he skips down the ramp, trailing behind Ross, who stops mid-stride and glares over his shoulder.*

John Phillips: "Wait a second... that's Maxx Mayhem! What the hell is he doing out here?"

Mark Bravo: "Oh, this is rich! Look at him -- he's having the time of his life! But Ross? Ross doesn't look thrilled at all to have company."

Maxx dances right up behind Ross, still jiggling with wild energy until he finally catches up. Ross stares him down with a glare that could melt steel, but Mayhem just beams, throwing his arm around Ross's shoulders for a second before Ross shoves him off. With a grunt, Ross continues his march to the ring, clearly annoyed but unwilling to break stride. Mayhem, undeterred, trails behind, hyping up the crowd with exaggerated claps and finger guns.

John Phillips: "Chris Ross has been laser-focused since stepping back into a UTA ring. But Maxx Mayhem? He's chaos embodied. He doesn't care about focus -- he cares about mayhem, plain and simple. And you have to wonder if that's something Ross even wants near him right now."

Ross reaches the apron, sliding under the bottom rope and immediately heading for the corner, where he slumps down, screwdriver still in hand, eyes fixed coldly on Brandon Henderson. Meanwhile, Maxx remains on the outside, pacing and smirking, leaning against the barricade as though he owns the space.

The camera suddenly cuts to the crowd -- where the mysterious woman from previous shows is spotted again. Notebook in hand, she scribbles furiously, her eyes never leaving the ring. The fans around her point and murmur, but she doesn't acknowledge anyone, her focus entirely locked on the action about to unfold.

Mark Bravo: "And there she is again, Johnny. That woman -- we've seen her taking notes during matches the last few weeks. She hasn't said a word, hasn't revealed who she is, but she's watching every move Ross, Mayhem, and others make. Something's going on here."

John Phillips: "Between Ross's rage, Mayhem's madness, and a mysterious set of eyes on this whole thing... Brandon Henderson may be stepping into a storm bigger than even he can handle."

Inside the ring, Ross stares daggers across at Henderson, his chest heaving with quiet intensity. Henderson bounces on his toes, ready for the fight. Maxx Mayhem continues to strut on the outside, clapping and shouting nonsense toward the crowd. The stage is set for chaos.

*The bell rings, but Brandon Henderson barely takes a step out of his corner before **Chris Ross explodes***

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across the ring. He plows into Henderson with a stiff forearm that snaps Brandon's head back, sending him crashing into the turnbuckles.

John Phillips: "And just like that -- Chris Ross doesn't waste a second! Absolute blitz out of the gate!"

Ross unloads with a barrage of **mounted forearm shots**, hammering Henderson down into a seated position. The referee shouts for a break, but Ross ignores him, planting his boot into Henderson's throat and choking him viciously against the bottom turnbuckle. The crowd rains boos down as the referee starts a count.

Mark Bravo: "This is Chris Ross in a nutshell. He doesn't give a damn about rules, about referees, about the crowd -- he only cares about punishment."

Ross lets up at four, smirking coldly, then drags Henderson out of the corner by the hair. Without hesitation, he scoops him up and slams him hard with a **spinebuster** that rattles the canvas. Henderson arches in pain, clutching his back, but Ross isn't done. He stomps down on him repeatedly, each shot more vicious than the last.

John Phillips: "This is absolute domination. Brandon Henderson hasn't even had a chance to breathe since that opening bell."

Ross yanks Henderson up again, snarling, and whips him hard into the ropes. On the rebound, Ross plants him with a **ripcord headbutt -- the 12 Gauge!** Henderson collapses to the mat in a heap. The referee drops down for the count--

1...

2-- Henderson kicks out!

The crowd erupts, rallying behind the underdog. Ross doesn't show frustration -- he just drags Henderson up again, muttering curses under his breath before sending him overhead with a **release German suplex** that folds Henderson in half.

Mark Bravo: "That's not a wrestling hold, that's a car crash! Henderson's getting tossed like dead weight out there!"

On the outside, Maxx Mayhem applauds wildly, hooting and hollering as though Ross's violence is a masterpiece. He even slaps the apron, shouting encouragement like a proud coach, though Ross never once acknowledges him.

John Phillips: "And look at Mayhem -- he's practically celebrating this beating. But Ross? Ross doesn't care. This is his world. Mayhem just happens to be enjoying the show."

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Ross stalks Henderson, who's crawling toward the ropes, clutching his ribs. He stomps down on the back of Henderson's hand, then sneers as the young star writhes in pain. Ross leans down, muttering something inaudible before dragging him back to center ring.

The referee warns Ross again, but he brushes past him, lifting Henderson into position. Ross hooks him and drills him with a **running muscle buster**, slamming him down violently. Henderson bounces off the mat and lies motionless, gasps coming from the crowd.

Mark Bravo: "This isn't just control -- this is cruelty. Ross is dissecting this kid before our eyes."

Ross crawls into the cover, pressing a forearm hard across Henderson's face as the referee counts--

1...

2...

--NO! Henderson kicks out again!

The crowd explodes in support of the resilient underdog, chanting his name. Ross sits up, breathing heavy, his eyes narrowing in frustration for the first time. He glances to the outside where Maxx Mayhem is dancing and clapping again, almost mocking the situation. Ross shakes his head and turns back to his prey, grabbing Henderson by the hair to drag him up once more.

John Phillips: "Brandon Henderson is taking an absolute beating here, but every time he kicks out, every time he refuses to stay down, this crowd gets louder and louder. Can he find an opening against a monster like Chris Ross?"

Chris Ross drags Henderson upright by the hair, sneering as he clubs him with a series of short, stiff forearms across the back of the neck. Henderson stumbles, trying to stay upright, but Ross hooks him again and launches him with another **German suplex**. Henderson lands hard, rolling to his stomach, gasping for air.

John Phillips: "Another suplex -- Ross is tossing Brandon Henderson around like a rag doll! This is getting hard to watch."

Ross stomps down on Henderson's ribs, then pulls him up only to hurl him shoulder-first into the steel ring post. Henderson screams out in pain, clutching his arm, collapsing against the turnbuckles. The referee warns Ross, but he just smirks, brushing past as if the official doesn't exist.

Mark Bravo: "That's Chris Ross for you. He doesn't just beat you -- he tries to break you. And the scary part is, he's damn good at it."

On the outside, Maxx Mayhem slaps the apron and howls with laughter, shouting things like "Beautiful!" and

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"Art!" at the chaos inside. Ross shoots him a glare, but Mayhem only grins wider, clapping his hands together like he's conducting the destruction.

Back in the ring, Ross mounts Henderson and begins raining down vicious **forearm strikes**, each one echoing through the arena. Henderson tries to cover up, but Ross drives an elbow into his jaw, then bites at his forehead, drawing a loud gasp from the crowd. The referee yells, counting, and Ross finally pulls away at four with a twisted grin.

John Phillips: "This is brutality. Henderson is barely moving, and Ross looks like he's enjoying every second of it."

Ross stalks him again, yanking him up, dragging him toward the center of the ring. With a roar, he lifts Henderson high and plants him with a **Tempest-sized sidewalk smash**, spiking him face-first into the mat. Henderson bounces limply, and Ross immediately crawls into the cover, pressing all his weight down.

1...

2...

NO!! Henderson kicks out again!

The crowd explodes in unison, stomping and clapping, chanting his name with newfound energy.

CROWD: "HEN-DER-SON! HEN-DER-SON!"

Mark Bravo: "Listen to Houston! They know this kid's in trouble, but they're willing him to fight back!"

Ross sits up, incredulous, his face twisted with anger. He shouts at the referee, slamming his hands on the mat, then grabs Henderson again, dragging him into position for another suplex. The crowd only grows louder, the chants shaking the arena.

John Phillips: "Brandon Henderson may be broken, battered, and barely standing -- but this crowd refuses to let him quit! And if he can just find one opening, one moment--"

As Ross hauls Henderson up, Brandon suddenly fires back with a desperate **Thunderclap Chop**, catching Ross across the chest! The crowd roars. Ross staggers back a step, only to lunge forward again -- but Henderson chops him a second time! The sound cracks like a gunshot. Ross stumbles, his chest red from the strikes.

Mark Bravo: "There it is! The rally! Henderson's alive!"

Henderson drops to a knee, clutching his ribs, but the crowd claps louder, urging him on. Ross snarls and swings a wild lariat -- but Henderson ducks, hitting the ropes, and bursts back with a **Lightning Bolt Lariat** of

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his own that sends Ross stumbling for the first time all match!

John Phillips: "Ross is rocked! Brandon Henderson is still in this fight!"

The crowd is on their feet, stomping and chanting for Henderson as he rallies with the Lightning Bolt Lariat. Ross staggers back a step, shaking his head, chest heaving. Henderson clutches his ribs, grits his teeth, and charges again--

*--but Ross steps forward and drills him with a **12 Gauge Ripcord Headbutt** that nearly knocks him out cold. Henderson crumples to the mat in a heap as the entire arena gasps.*

John Phillips: "Oh my God! That headbutt just stopped Henderson's rally dead in its tracks!"

*Ross doesn't cover. He kneels over Henderson, snarling, then mounts him and unloads a hailstorm of **forearm shots**, each one louder and stiffer than the last. The referee shouts for him to ease up, but Ross ignores it, spitting curses as he pounds Henderson into the mat.*

Mark Bravo: "This isn't a match anymore, Johnny. This is an execution. Ross isn't here to win -- he's here to destroy."

*Ross finally yanks Henderson up by the hair, dragging his limp body upright. He heaves him onto his shoulders, then runs forward and plants him with a sickening **running muscle buster**. Henderson bounces violently on impact, rolling to his stomach and clutching at nothing.*

Ross stalks him, screwdriver in hand now, pointing it toward Henderson as the crowd boos furiously. The referee warns him sternly, threatening disqualification. Ross smirks coldly, sliding the weapon back into his vest, then yanks Henderson up again.

*With a roar, Ross spikes him with a **sidewalk smash**, face-first into the canvas. Henderson is motionless. Ross doesn't even hesitate -- he grabs him again, hauls him upright, and plants him with another. Then another. The crowd is booing relentlessly, some even throwing trash near the ring as Ross continues to ragdoll his opponent.*

John Phillips: "This is disgusting. Henderson can't even defend himself anymore -- but Ross refuses to stop!"

On the outside, Maxx Mayhem is clapping and dancing like a maniac, yelling "BRAVO!" and "PURE ART!" as if he's watching a masterpiece unfold. Inside, Ross drops to his knees, pressing his forearm across Henderson's jaw in a cover.

1...

2...

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Ross lifts Henderson's head off the mat himself.

The crowd explodes with heat, raining down boos. Ross shakes his head slowly, smirking. He isn't finished.

Mark Bravo: "He could've ended it right there -- but this man wants to make a statement. He wants to humiliate Brandon Henderson in front of the world."

*Ross drags Henderson up one last time, hooks him, and launches him across the ring with a **release German suplex**. Henderson crashes, barely moving. Ross stands over him, breathing heavy, screwdriver in hand again as the referee warns him once more. Finally, with a sneer, Ross tosses the weapon aside, plants his boot on Henderson's chest, and orders the referee to count.*

1...

2...

3.

The bell rings, but Ross doesn't move. He keeps his boot pressed to Henderson's chest, sneering down at him, until the referee forces him off. The boos grow louder, nearly deafening, as Ross finally steps back, screwdriver in hand once again.

John Phillips: "Chris Ross didn't just win this match -- he dismantled Brandon Henderson. That wasn't wrestling, that was annihilation."

Mark Bravo: "And with Maxx Mayhem at ringside practically celebrating it, and that mystery woman still taking notes in the crowd... this is starting to feel less like a match and more like a movement, Johnny. A dangerous one."

Ross slides out of the ring, brushing past Mayhem without a word. Maxx still follows, strutting and hollering like a lunatic, clapping for his new "buddy." In the crowd, the mystery woman scribbles faster than ever, her eyes cold and focused on Ross as security keeps fans back. The camera lingers on Henderson, barely stirring in the ring, before fading out on the image of Ross and Mayhem heading up the ramp -- chaos trailing in their wake.

Time to Show Up

*The camera cuts backstage where **Melissa Cartwright** stands with a microphone in hand. Next to her, dressed in her gear and the UTA Women's Championship draped proudly over her shoulder, is **Valkyrie Knox**. The champion looks calm but determined, her eyes fixed on Melissa as the interview begins.*

Melissa Cartwright: "Ladies and gentlemen, I'm here with the reigning UTA Women's Champion, Valkyrie

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Knox. Valkyrie, earlier this week Angela Hall accused you of not being a fighting champion, saying you haven't defended your title since *WrestleUTA: 25.* How do you respond to those accusations?"

Valkyrie adjusts the belt on her shoulder, nodding with a slight smirk, as though the question doesn't surprise her.

Valkyrie Knox: "Angela's right. I haven't defended this championship since WrestleUTA: 25. But let's not pretend it's because I didn't want to. The truth is -- I haven't been medically cleared to compete. That night, after I went to war with Marie Van Claudio, I walked out with this championship... and a shoulder injury that's kept me sidelined ever since."

The crowd in the arena reacts audibly, the background noise filtering into the shot. Valkyrie's tone hardens as she continues.

Valkyrie Knox: "I didn't want to make a big deal about it. I didn't want to turn it into excuses. But since Angela wants to bring it up, here's the reality -- I've been rehabbing, I've been waiting, and now... I'm 100% cleared. Tonight, I'm ready to go."

The fans can be heard cheering loudly in the background now, reacting to the news. Valkyrie smirks, adjusting her belt again.

Valkyrie Knox: "Angela says she wants to see a true fighting champion? Then she doesn't have to wait long. She can watch the main event tonight. Because I'm not just coming back to wrestle -- I'm coming back to defend this title. And I'm going to do it in a gauntlet match."

The crowd in the arena erupts, their roar cutting through even backstage. Melissa's eyes widen as Valkyrie leans closer, her voice sharp and confident.

Valkyrie Knox: "I didn't fight my way back from injury just to sit around and hold onto this belt. Tonight, I prove exactly what kind of champion I am."

Valkyrie adjusts the championship on her shoulder once more and steps out of frame, leaving Melissa stunned. The cheers from the live crowd are deafening as the scene fades.

Pride over Jealously

The camera fades into a quiet corridor backstage. Amy Harrison stands in front of a long mirror, adjusting her gear with a satisfied smirk. She smooths out her hair, brushes a hand along her shoulders, and tilts her head, admiring her reflection. The expression on her face says it all -- confidence, vindication, pride. Her first victory in UTA since 2015, and she's savoring it.

Amy Harrison: "Still got it. Not bad at all."

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*She gives herself a nod of approval, running her fingers through her hair one more time. Just then, the sound of footsteps echoes in the hall. **Susanita Ybanez** walks past, her eyes catching Amy in the mirror. She slows, her expression hardening into disdain. After a beat, Susanita turns on her heel and steps back toward Amy, her voice sharp and rising.*

Susanita Ybanez: "How dare you, Amy. How dare you say those things about Marie? Someone who was nothing but a friend to you. You're supposed to be a legend... and this is what you've become?"

Amy chuckles lightly, her smirk widening as she glances at Susanita through the reflection without turning around.

Amy Harrison: "'Legend,' huh? Cute. But let's clear something up real quick. Marie and I? We were never friends. Don't get it twisted."

She finally turns to face Susanita, confidence radiating in her stance.

Amy Harrison: "And I sure as hell don't need a lecture from you. I don't care what you think. I'm here to stay, and whether you like it or not, I'm going to show the world why I was always better than Marie Van Claudio. You can take that to the bank."

Susanita's fists clench. She takes a step closer, her voice lowering, her tone sharp as a blade.

Susanita Ybanez: "No, Amy... lo que tienes es celos. Estás celosa del éxito de Marie. You're jealous of her success."

Amy blinks, cocking her head with a touch of confusion.

Amy Harrison: "What? The hell did you just say?"

Susanita's glare intensifies, her words now cutting like fire.

Susanita Ybanez: "I said you're jealous, Amy. And if you think you can keep running your mouth about Marie without consequences, you're wrong. Next week... you and me. Let's see who's really better."

Amy studies her for a moment, then lets out a dry laugh. She tilts her head, sizing Susanita up with a cold grin.

Amy Harrison: "A match with me? Are you sure about that? ... Fine. You want it? You got it. But just know this -- challenging me? Biggest mistake of your career."

Amy brushes past Susanita, heading for the exit. As she reaches the door, she glances back one last time,

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smirk sharp as ever.

Amy Harrison: "See you next week, 'queen.'"

The camera lingers on Susanita, her fury boiling over as she stares after Amy, fists clenched tight at her sides. The tension in the air is palpable as the scene fades to black -- the stage set for a showdown next week.

A Few Words with Angela Hall

*The camera cuts backstage where **Melissa Cartwright** stands, microphone in hand. Next to her is the UTA Women's United States Champion, **Angela Hall**, with the red, white, and blue plated title draped proudly over her shoulder. The crowd inside the arena buzzes at the sight of her.*

Melissa Cartwright: "Ladies and gentlemen, I'm here with the UTA Women's United States Champion, Angela Hall. Angela, we've just learned that in just a few moments Valkyrie Knox will defend her Women's Championship in a gauntlet match. What are your thoughts heading into tonight's main event?"

Angela adjusts her championship on her shoulder, her expression sharp, her tone firm and unwavering.

Angela Hall: "My thoughts? Real champions don't sit on the sidelines. Real champions push through the pain. They don't hide behind excuses about injuries. And Valkyrie Knox? All we've heard are excuses since WrestleUTA: 25. Tonight's gauntlet match? It's too little, too late."

Melissa tilts her head, pressing further.

Melissa Cartwright: "Does that mean you plan to be part of the gauntlet tonight?"

Angela shakes her head slowly, smirking, almost offended by the suggestion.

Angela Hall: "Why would I? I defend this title almost every week. I've already proven myself. Tonight isn't about me proving anything -- it's about Valkyrie proving whether she deserves to even call herself champion. Let's see if she even walks out of Houston still holding that belt."

Angela adjusts the Women's U.S. Championship once more, her smirk unwavering as she stares directly into the camera. Melissa nods beside her as the scene fades back toward ringside.

UTA Women's Championship Gauntlet Match

The arena plunges into darkness. A low rumble of thunder echoes through the NRG Arena, rolling across the

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speakers. Suddenly, a haunting war-horn blares, the sound deep and resonant, shaking the rafters. Purple light floods the stage, cutting through a wall of smoke as the champion makes her arrival.

*Through the haze steps **Valkyrie Knox**, the UTA Women's Championship strapped proudly around her waist, her steel-spiked gauntlet raised high in her right hand. She marches with deliberate, powerful strides, her gaze locked on the ring ahead, her presence commanding every eye in the building.*

John Phillips: "Listen to this place! The champion has returned to action for the first time since *WrestleUTA: 25!* Valkyrie Knox is walking into the fight of her life -- the gauntlet match for the Women's Championship!"

Mark Bravo: "She's tough, Johnny, no doubt about it. Nordic strength, Muay Thai grit, she's got all the tools. But a gauntlet? That's not just one opponent -- that's multiple challengers, one after another. If she wants to prove she's a fighting champion, she's picked the hardest way possible."

Valkyrie climbs the steel steps slowly, then pauses on the apron. She turns toward the crowd, raises her gauntlet once more to the heavens, and snarls. The thunder rumbles again as the lights flare brighter. The fans erupt in unison, chanting her name.

CROWD: "VAL-KYR-IE! VAL-KYR-IE!"

She steps through the ropes, unbuckles the championship, and lifts it high overhead for all to see before handing it to the referee. Valkyrie then stalks into the corner, testing the ropes once with her hands before planting her boots and staring back up the ramp. The champion is ready. The gauntlet is about to begin.

John Phillips: "The women's division has been waiting for this moment. The champion is back, she's cleared, and tonight we find out if she truly is the standard-bearer. Who's going to step through that curtain first to face her?"

The champion waits in her corner, eyes locked on the entranceway. The arena goes black again -- and this time, the crack of thunder splits the air. Blue strobes flicker like lightning across the NRG Arena as the crowd erupts in anticipation.

*A tropical-house beat drops heavy, and from the curtain bursts **Athena Storm**. She twirls a glowing staff above her head, spinning it with precision before tossing it to the side. Her movements are quick, fluid, alive -- like electricity running through her veins. The fans explode with their chant.*

CROWD: "LET IT RAIN! LET IT RAIN!"

Athena pumps her fists in time with the chant, sprinting down the ramp, her energy unmatched. She leaps onto the apron in one motion, grabbing the top rope and springboarding lightly into the ring with a flawless landing. She raises her arms, pointing to the ceiling as the crowd keeps the chant alive.

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John Phillips: "Here we go! The first challenger is Athena Storm -- and what a way to kick this gauntlet off! This young woman is fearless, fast, and brings a striking game that could overwhelm even the powerhouse Valkyrie Knox!"

Mark Bravo: "Fearless is right, Johnny. If you blink, you miss her. But let's not kid ourselves -- Valkyrie is fresh, she's powerful, and Athena is walking straight into the teeth of the storm. The only question is -- can lightning strike early tonight?"

Athena and Valkyrie lock eyes from across the ring -- one brimming with fiery energy, the other stoic and unflinching. The referee holds up the UTA Women's Championship once more, then signals for the bell. The gauntlet has officially begun.

The bell rings. The crowd is hot, split between chanting "VAL-KYR-IE!" and "LET IT RAIN!" as the two women circle. Valkyrie's eyes never blink, her jaw set, while Athena bounces lightly on her toes, her energy practically vibrating out of the ring.

John Phillips: "This is what the gauntlet is about. Valkyrie Knox, the champion, finally back in action after being cleared -- and her first test is a whirlwind in human form, Athena Storm."

Mark Bravo: "Power versus speed. Anchor versus lightning. If this goes long, Valkyrie's strength is the hammer -- but Athena's the kind of fighter who can pick you apart before you even know what's happening."

*Athena darts in first, testing the waters with a **roundhouse kick**. Valkyrie blocks with a raised forearm, the sound echoing. Athena tries again -- a **jumping knee strike** -- but Valkyrie sidesteps, shoving her backward with raw force. Athena stumbles, rolls to her feet, and smiles, pumping her arms in the "Let it rain!" motion to rally the crowd.*

*They circle again. Athena feints low, then dives in with a **tilt-a-whirl headscissors**, flipping Valkyrie across the mat. The fans roar. Valkyrie sits up immediately, unfazed, her expression unchanged, though she rolls her shoulder once as if to test it.*

John Phillips: "Athena Storm takes her off her base! That's what she has to do -- don't meet power with power, use speed, use precision."

*Athena rushes the ropes, rebounding with a **standing shooting star press**, but Valkyrie catches her in mid-air like a boulder snatching a bird from the sky. With the crowd gasping, Valkyrie plants her with a thunderous **powerslam**, the ring shaking on impact. Valkyrie hooks the leg--*

1...

2-- Athena kicks out!

The crowd erupts again, chanting for Athena. Valkyrie rises slowly, looming over her challenger. She grabs

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*Athena by the hair and drags her to her feet, whipping her into the corner. Valkyrie charges in with a **corner body avalanche**, crushing Athena against the turnbuckles. Athena collapses to her knees, clutching her ribs.*

Mark Bravo: "That's the danger, Johnny. You get caught once by Valkyrie Knox, and she'll squeeze the air right out of you. Storm's in trouble already."

*Valkyrie hauls Athena up again, setting for a **deadlift German suplex** -- but Athena flips free mid-air, landing on her feet! The crowd explodes as Athena sprints forward, rebounding off the ropes and landing a **springboard dropkick** right to Valkyrie's chest. The champion staggers back, shaking it off but visibly rocked.*

John Phillips: "And there's the counter! Athena Storm is not going to be intimidated. She's going to keep firing until Valkyrie stays down!"

Athena motions again to the crowd -- "Let it rain!" -- and the fans join in, stomping and clapping. She lines up Valkyrie, waiting for her to rise, as the energy in the arena swells.

Athena claps above her head, motioning "Let it rain!" as the crowd joins in rhythm. Valkyrie adjusts her stance, her expression unchanging -- calm, focused, almost daring Athena to try again. The contrast between them is electric: one brimming with movement and energy, the other a stoic wall of power.

John Phillips: "This is what makes Valkyrie Knox so intimidating -- she doesn't flinch, doesn't rattle. She absorbs what you give her, and then makes you pay double."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah, but don't underestimate the storm. Athena's not gonna outmuscle her, but she can dance around her all night if she keeps her feet moving."

*Athena darts in again, throwing a low kick to Valkyrie's thigh, then a second. Valkyrie takes both without budging. On the third, Valkyrie snatches Athena's leg out of the air, glaring down at her. For a split second, the crowd gasps--then Athena springs up, twisting into a sudden **enzuigiri** that cracks Valkyrie in the side of the head! Valkyrie stumbles to a knee as the crowd roars in approval.*

John Phillips: "Athena's finding ways to chip away at the armor! That quickness is going to be her equalizer."

*Athena doesn't waste time -- she sprints to the ropes, rebounds, and launches herself into a **tilt-a-whirl headscissors**, sending Valkyrie sprawling across the mat again. Athena pops up instantly, arms raised as the crowd chants along.*

CROWD: "LET IT RAIN! LET IT RAIN!"

Valkyrie sits up, shaking her head slowly, one hand brushing her jaw. She rises deliberately, locking eyes with Athena, who bounces on her toes, fired up. Valkyrie steps forward -- and suddenly bursts with surprising

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speed into a **running big boot** that floors Athena mid-motion! The sound echoes, and the crowd gasps in unison.

Mark Bravo: "Ohhh! Just like that, Valkyrie reminds everyone that she doesn't need five moves in a row -- one shot from her can end a party in a heartbeat!"

Valkyrie doesn't cover. Instead, she drags Athena up, driving a heavy forearm across her back before muscling her into the corner. With ease, she hoists Athena up for a **gorilla-press slam** attempt, but Athena wriggles free, slipping down Valkyrie's back. She lands on her feet and shoves Valkyrie chest-first into the turnbuckles, then runs to the opposite corner to set up a charge.

Athena sprints in, looking for a **flying knee** -- but Valkyrie turns and catches her in mid-air, twisting into a crushing **sidewalk slam!** Valkyrie hooks the leg--

1...

2-- Athena kicks out!

The crowd exhales in relief, applauding Athena's resilience. Valkyrie sits up slowly, breathing deep, her eyes narrowing now. The champion pulls Athena to her feet again, clearly starting to shift gears from patience to punishment.

John Phillips: "Athena Storm is staying alive, but every time Valkyrie gets her hands on her, it's like being hit with a thunderclap. The longer this opening round goes, the more energy Valkyrie spends -- and remember, she's got more challengers waiting."

Valkyrie hauls Athena up by the arm, pulling her into a tight side headlock. She drives a heavy forearm into the top of Athena's back, grinding her down. The champion muscles her toward the ropes, looking to whip her across, but Athena suddenly plants her feet and fires back with a quick **roundhouse kick** to the ribs. Then another. The crowd comes alive.

John Phillips: "Athena's still got fight! She's digging deep here!"

Athena ducks under Valkyrie's swing and rebounds off the ropes, exploding with a **jumping knee strike** that snaps Valkyrie's head back. The crowd roars as Athena follows with a **snap German suplex**, bridging--

1...

2-- Valkyrie powers out!

Athena slaps the mat once and pops up, pumping her arms to the crowd. The chant fills the arena again.

CROWD: "LET IT RAIN! LET IT RAIN!"

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*She points to the sky, signaling for the end. Valkyrie rises slowly, shaking the cobwebs, as Athena charges. She leaps for the **Storm Front** bicycle kick--*

*--but Valkyrie catches her leg mid-air, hoists her up in one swift motion, and drives her down with the **Ragnarok Bomb!** The ring shakes violently as Athena crashes to the canvas. Valkyrie holds for the cover--*

1...

2...

3!

The bell rings as the referee raises Valkyrie's hand briefly before she pulls it away, breathing heavily. She doesn't celebrate -- she simply drags herself to the ropes, using them to stand tall, her eyes already fixed back on the entranceway.

John Phillips: "Athena Storm gave her everything she had, but one mistake and Valkyrie Knox made her pay. The champion survives the first wave -- but how much energy did she spend to do it?"

Mark Bravo: "That's the problem with a gauntlet, Johnny. This is just the beginning. Valkyrie may still be champion right now... but she's got more storms coming her way."

The crowd buzzes with anticipation, their eyes turning to the stage. Who will be the next challenger to step into the gauntlet?

Valkyrie Knox steadies herself against the ropes, breathing deep, her chest rising and falling after surviving Athena Storm. The arena lights suddenly shift to a pulsing violet, shadows crawling across the NRG Arena as a slinky trip-hop beat creeps in. The reaction from the crowd is immediate -- boos and uneasy murmurs.

*Through the curtain emerges **Dahlia Cross**, violet hair spilling across her shoulders, dragging a long violet scarf behind her. She moves with deliberate slowness, sneering at fans on either side of the aisle. The scarf trails across the floor like a snake, her lips curling into a wicked smile as she locks eyes on the ring.*

John Phillips: "Oh no... here comes trouble. Dahlia Cross, one of the cruelest technicians we've seen in the women's division. She doesn't just beat you -- she enjoys bending you, twisting you, humiliating you."

Mark Bravo: "She's a venomous one, Johnny. You give her a limb, she'll make it scream. And Valkyrie's already got mileage on that shoulder from WrestleUTA: 25 -- that's a bullseye Dahlia's going to paint all over her."

Dahlia stops at ringside, slowly coiling the scarf around her hand as she stares at Valkyrie. The champion stands tall in the corner, belt already defended once tonight, her eyes narrowing but her posture unbroken. Dahlia smirks, sliding into the ring with deliberate grace. She rises to her knees, smirking directly at Valkyrie

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before slinking back into her corner, still clutching the scarf like a predator playing with its prey.

John Phillips: "The champion is battered but not broken. But make no mistake -- Dahlia Cross is the kind of challenger who can turn one bad joint into a nightmare. If Valkyrie thought the storm was tough, she's about to step into the serpent's nest."

The referee checks both women, then signals for the bell. The gauntlet continues -- Valkyrie Knox versus Dahlia Cross.

The bell rings, and Dahlia Cross slinks out of her corner, her violet smile spreading as she circles Valkyrie. The champion stands stoic, still heaving from her battle with Athena Storm, but her eyes never leave Dahlia's. The crowd buzzes nervously, sensing Dahlia's intent.

John Phillips: "Valkyrie Knox survived Athena Storm's speed, but now she faces something entirely different -- Dahlia Cross, a predator who will target one body part and dismantle you piece by piece."

Mark Bravo: "And Valkyrie's already got a bullseye painted on that shoulder she injured at WrestleUTA: 25. If Dahlia gets her claws on it, this could get ugly in a hurry."

*Dahlia extends a hand mockingly, as if offering a handshake. Valkyrie snarls, swatting it away -- but in that instant, Dahlia strikes, jabbing a **palm thrust** straight into Valkyrie's throat. The champion stumbles back, gasping, and Dahlia pounces, wrenching her injured shoulder into the ropes with a cruel yank. Valkyrie grimaces in pain as Dahlia leans back, smiling while the referee counts for a break.*

*Dahlia steps away at four, arms raised innocently, but her grin never fades. She slithers back in, stomping down hard on Valkyrie's arm before snapping her down with a **single-leg dropkick** directly to the shoulder. Valkyrie clutches at the joint, rolling to her side as Dahlia struts in a slow circle, taunting her prey.*

John Phillips: "She's going right after it! Dahlia Cross doesn't waste motion -- everything is designed to torture and exploit."

Dahlia kneels beside Valkyrie, taking her wrist and twisting it with sadistic glee. She wrenches the arm behind Valkyrie's back, pressing a knee between her shoulder blades, forcing her into the mat. The champion snarls through gritted teeth, shaking her head as the referee hovers.

With deliberate cruelty, Dahlia stands, still holding the arm, and drapes it across the middle rope. She pulls down sharply, using the rope to torque the shoulder. Valkyrie shouts in pain as Dahlia smiles, waving mockingly to the booing crowd before releasing just before the referee's count of five.

Mark Bravo: "That's vintage Dahlia. She'll milk every second of the rules -- smile while she's choking the life out of you -- and act like it's all fair play."

*Valkyrie tries to push off the ropes, but Dahlia cuts her down with another **leg sweep**, planting her flat on the*

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mat. Immediately, Dahlia slides into a **Violet Vice**, wrenching back on Valkyrie's arm and shoulder, twisting the joint at an unnatural angle. The crowd roars, stomping their feet, trying to will Valkyrie out of the hold.

John Phillips: "Violet Vice! Dahlia Cross is trying to tear that shoulder apart -- Valkyrie may not even make it to the next challenger if she doesn't find a way out!"

The referee asks Valkyrie if she wants to quit, but the champion snarls through the pain, shaking her head furiously. Her free arm claws at the mat, her boots kicking, inching her way toward the ropes. Dahlia cackles, wrenching harder, twisting the shoulder like a vice grip. The crowd claps in rhythm, rallying louder and louder for the champion.

Mark Bravo: "She's in serious trouble here, Johnny. Dahlia's dissecting that shoulder, and every second in this hold drains Valkyrie more for the challengers still waiting."

With one final surge, Valkyrie stretches out and hooks her boot onto the bottom rope! The referee forces a break, but Dahlia keeps the hold cinched until the count of four, releasing with a wicked grin. She stands, arms spread wide, sneering at the booing fans as Valkyrie clutches her shoulder in agony.

Dahlia circles Valkyrie like a vulture, her violet hair swaying as she leans down to grab the champion's wrist again. With precision, she yanks Valkyrie up just enough to drive her shoulder-first into the top turnbuckle. Valkyrie cries out, staggering back into Dahlia's waiting arms, where she's met with a snapping **fisherman's neckbreaker with the double-knee spike -- the Black Dahlia setup!** The crowd gasps as Valkyrie bounces off the canvas, clutching her shoulder and neck.

John Phillips: "That Black Dahlia setup nearly broke her in half! Valkyrie's shoulder is screaming, and Dahlia is savoring every second of this."

Dahlia doesn't cover. Instead, she presses a boot down on Valkyrie's shoulder joint, smirking as the referee warns her. She leans down, almost whispering into Valkyrie's ear before yanking her up and sending her into the corner. There, she drives in repeated **knees to the injured shoulder**, each one slower and crueler than the last. Valkyrie roars in pain, but refuses to fall.

Mark Bravo: "She's not just hurting Valkyrie -- she's making a statement. She wants to expose the champion, to make her look vulnerable heading into the rest of this gauntlet."

Dahlia pulls Valkyrie out, wrapping her scarf around her hands as she feigns another choke, earning loud boos. She smirks, tossing the scarf to the mat, before yanking Valkyrie down into a **Viper Coil** neckbreaker. She sprawls across for the cover--

1...

2-- Valkyrie kicks out!

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*The crowd explodes, stomping and clapping. Dahlia sits up, wide-eyed, but then her grin returns as she licks her lips. She slaps Valkyrie across the face, mocking her, then drags her into another attempt at the **Violet Vice**, trying to lock in the submission again. Valkyrie thrashes, fighting desperately to stop the hold from being applied fully.*

John Phillips: "Valkyrie's in danger again! If Dahlia cinches that Violet Vice in the middle of the ring, the champion's reign could end right here!"

*But just as Dahlia wrenches back, Valkyrie plants her boots and with a guttural roar lifts Dahlia clean off the mat in a sudden **deadlift powerbomb counter!** The crowd erupts as Dahlia crashes down, folding in half, clutching her back in shock.*

Mark Bravo: "What the--?! That's raw power! Valkyrie just tore Dahlia off her own arm and planted her like a nail in the floor!"

Valkyrie collapses to her knees, holding her shoulder, but the fans chant her name, willing her back to her feet. Dahlia writhes on the mat, momentarily stunned, as Valkyrie steadies herself against the ropes, snarling through the pain.

*Valkyrie clutches her shoulder, forcing herself upright as the crowd roars her on. Dahlia stumbles to her feet, snarling, and charges with a wild **single-leg dropkick** aimed right at the shoulder. Valkyrie sidesteps, gritting through the pain, and answers with a crushing **short-arm lariat** that nearly turns Dahlia inside out. The fans erupt, chanting loud for the champion.*

CROWD: "VAL-KYR-IE! VAL-KYR-IE!"

*Dahlia scrambles to the ropes, trying to crawl away, but Valkyrie yanks her up and hurls her across the ring with a devastating **deadlift German suplex**. Dahlia lands hard on the back of her head and rolls into the corner, her violet scarf tangled beneath her. Valkyrie, breathing heavy, lets out a guttural snarl, the fire in her eyes returning.*

John Phillips: "The champion is digging deep! Every slam takes a toll on that shoulder, but she knows this is what it takes to survive a gauntlet!"

*Dahlia clutches the ropes, barely able to stand. Valkyrie charges forward and smashes her with a **corner body avalanche**, sandwiching her into the turnbuckles. The impact leaves Dahlia limp as Valkyrie hoists her up onto the top rope. With deliberate force, she climbs alongside her, hooks the arm, and roars out to the crowd before delivering a thunderous **top-rope superplex** that rattles the ring!*

Mark Bravo: "Superplex from the heavens! But can Valkyrie even capitalize? Look at her shoulder, Johnny -- she's barely holding it together!"

Both women lie sprawled in the ring as the referee begins a count. At seven, Valkyrie rolls over, dragging

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herself across Dahlia's chest for the cover.

1...

2...

NO! Dahlia kicks out!

*The crowd gasps, some booing, others applauding Dahlia's resilience. Valkyrie slams the mat once, snarling in frustration, then drags Dahlia upright one more time. With one arm, she hauls her challenger into position, spinning her around into the devastating **Valknut Driver** -- a crushing high-angle sit-out Michinoku Driver II. Dahlia's head bounces off the canvas as Valkyrie covers, clutching her shoulder but pressing down with all her weight.*

1...

2...

3!

The bell rings again, and the referee raises Valkyrie's hand. She pulls it away quickly, wincing as she massages her shoulder. The fans cheer thunderously, giving her a standing ovation for surviving another round. Valkyrie pushes herself up against the ropes, sweat dripping down her face, her breaths coming heavy. She snarls once more, glaring back at the entranceway -- ready, but clearly showing the wear and tear of the gauntlet.

John Phillips: "That's two challengers down! Athena Storm and Dahlia Cross have pushed Valkyrie Knox to the limit, and her shoulder is barely holding together. The question now -- how much does she have left for whoever comes next?"

Mark Bravo: "She's a machine, Johnny, but even machines break down. Valkyrie Knox is fighting like a champion, but you can see it in her eyes -- she's running on grit and fury right now. And there's more women waiting to take that title."

The crowd's energy builds again, anticipation hanging thick in the air as they wait for the next challenger's music to hit...

Valkyrie Knox leans against the ropes, sweat dripping, her chest rising and falling with heavy breaths. She's already survived two challengers, but her shoulder hangs lower now, clearly aching. The crowd stirs with anticipation, waiting for the next opponent.

*Suddenly, the arena dims. A soft blue light washes over the stage as the minimalist electronic hum of **"Resonance" by HOME** pulses through the speakers. The energy in the arena shifts -- quiet, eerie, clinical.*

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*The fans murmur as **Juno Sage** emerges, her eyes cold, her demeanor detached. She cracks her knuckles one by one like switches being flipped, never once glancing at the crowd.*

John Phillips: "And here comes Juno Sage -- the cerebral assassin of the women's division. A submission specialist who treats this ring like an experiment. She's cold, she's calculated, and she may be the worst possible opponent for Valkyrie right now."

Mark Bravo: "You're not kidding. Juno doesn't need to beat Valkyrie in a sprint, Johnny. All she needs is one limb, one mistake, and she'll pick the champion apart like a machine. And with that shoulder already mangled? She's walking into a lab rat's nightmare."

Juno walks with unhurried steps, her arms loose at her sides, gaze fixed on Valkyrie like a specimen under glass. She pauses at ringside, tilts her head ever so slightly as though running equations in her mind, then climbs the steps and slips between the ropes with clinical precision. Once inside, she doesn't pose or taunt -- she simply stares at Valkyrie, unblinking, calm, calculating.

Valkyrie snarls, rolling her shoulder as best she can, pacing in her corner with the belt long handed off. The referee checks both women, the tension thick in the air, then signals for the bell.

John Phillips: "The gauntlet continues -- Valkyrie Knox versus Juno Sage. This is going to be a battle of power against precision."

*The bell rings, and immediately Juno Sage tilts her head, watching Valkyrie like a predator dissects prey. She slowly extends her arms, offering a lock-up. Valkyrie, breathing heavy, snarls and accepts -- but it's a trap. Juno shifts instantly, snapping Valkyrie down with a **quick arm drag**, isolating the injured shoulder. She rolls through, keeping wrist control, and cranks the joint at a vicious angle.*

John Phillips: "And there it is -- Juno Sage wastes no time going right after that shoulder! This is what she does, Johnny -- every movement has intent."

*Juno presses Valkyrie's arm flat against the mat, driving a sharp knee into the joint, then calmly stands, twisting the arm around like she's tightening a screw. Valkyrie roars, trying to push her off, but Juno transitions seamlessly into a **short hammerlock**, grinding her down face-first.*

Mark Bravo: "It's almost unsettling how calm she is. No wasted energy, no yelling, no playing to the crowd. It's just pressure, leverage, and math. Valkyrie's not fighting a wrestler -- she's fighting an equation."

*The referee checks on Valkyrie, who shakes her head furiously, refusing to submit. With mechanical precision, Juno floats over into a **standing STO**, spiking Valkyrie to the mat and maintaining control of the arm as they land. She wrenches back into a modified cross-armbar, the champion writhing in pain.*

Juno briefly glances at her wrist, as if checking an invisible watch, before twisting the shoulder back again. The fans boo heavily, stomping their feet to rally Valkyrie, who claws desperately for the ropes. Finally,

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Valkyrie stretches out and hooks the bottom rope with her boot, forcing the break.

John Phillips: "Rope break! Valkyrie buys herself a little breathing room, but Juno Sage is dissecting her in there!"

*Juno releases the hold cleanly, but rises without expression, calmly pacing a circle while Valkyrie clutches her shoulder. Then, in one sudden motion, Juno drives a **low roundhouse kick** directly to the injured joint. Valkyrie collapses to her knees, howling in pain, as Juno kneels beside her, hooking the arm again, twisting it like a lever.*

Mark Bravo: "That's the worst part about a gauntlet, Johnny. Every challenger sees what the one before exposed. Dahlia softened the shoulder -- and now Juno is making it her playground."

*Valkyrie forces herself to her feet, trying to shake Juno loose with raw strength. She swings her free arm for a desperate lariat -- but Juno ducks, dragging her down into a **snapmare driver** that spikes Valkyrie onto her back. Juno floats into a cover, pressing her forearm into Valkyrie's face.*

1...

2-- Valkyrie kicks out!

The fans cheer loudly, stomping and chanting her name. Juno simply sits back, expression blank, her chest rising calmly as though this is all data collection. She stands slowly, circling, waiting for Valkyrie to rise again.

John Phillips: "The champion refuses to quit, but she is clearly fading fast. And Juno Sage isn't here to brawl -- she's here to break her down piece by piece."

Juno Sage stalks Valkyrie like a scientist over a specimen. She crouches low, eyes never leaving the champion, then snakes around to grab Valkyrie's wrist again. With cold precision, she drags Valkyrie into the ropes and yanks her arm through the middle strand, twisting it until the champion howls. The referee counts, but Juno releases at four -- expressionless, almost bored -- before reapplying the same maneuver in another variation.

John Phillips: "It's clinical. It's cruel. Juno Sage isn't interested in pinfalls -- she's testing limits, seeing how far that shoulder can bend before it snaps."

*Valkyrie stumbles away, clutching her arm, but Juno pounces again, dragging her down with a **reactive stomp** to the shoulder blade. Valkyrie writhes on the mat, but Juno calmly kneels beside her, threading the champion's arm between her legs and cinching in a short **Binary Lock variation**, hyperextending the joint while pressing her elbow against Valkyrie's temple. The champion snarls in agony, but Juno stares blankly at the referee's position, like she's running numbers in her head.*

Mark Bravo: "That's the scary part, Johnny. No wasted motion. No emotion. Just a human calculator figuring

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out the quickest path to dissection."

*The crowd begins clapping in rhythm, stomping hard to will Valkyrie back to her feet. With sheer force, she pushes up, straining to break free, but Juno transitions seamlessly into a **standing neckbreaker**, spiking Valkyrie back down. Another cover--*

1...

2-- Valkyrie kicks out!

*Juno doesn't blink. She calmly pulls Valkyrie up by the hair, measuring her. A sudden **dead code combo** -- spinning backfist into a leg sweep -- drops Valkyrie flat again. Juno hovers over her, glances at her wrist as though checking invisible calculations, then twists the champion's arm once more, driving her knee down sharply into the joint. Valkyrie's face twists in agony as she clutches at her shoulder.*

John Phillips: "Valkyrie's fading fast! That shoulder's barely holding together, and every second Juno Sage is in control drains what little energy she has left!"

*Juno traps the arm again, rolling into the center of the ring, where ropes aren't an option. She sits back deep, cinching the **Binary Lock** in fully now. The crowd explodes, stomping, clapping, screaming Valkyrie's name as the champion shakes her head wildly, refusing to tap. She pounds the mat in defiance, her boot searching desperately for any leverage.*

Mark Bravo: "She's dead center! If Valkyrie can't find a way out of this, her reign ends right here!"

Valkyrie roars, summoning every ounce of strength, and begins dragging herself inch by inch toward the ropes, Juno wrenching tighter all the while. The fans grow louder, the noise deafening as Valkyrie inches closer, the pain etched on her face.

*The crowd is thunderous as Valkyrie claws her way toward the ropes, Juno Sage cinching the **Binary Lock** tighter with every inch. The champion's face is twisted in agony, her shoulder screaming under the torque. The referee kneels low, asking if she wants to submit. Valkyrie snarls through gritted teeth and shakes her head furiously, pounding her free fist into the mat in defiance.*

John Phillips: "She won't quit! Valkyrie Knox refuses to give up the Women's Championship!"

Her boot drags across the canvas, reaching out desperately -- and finally hooks the bottom rope! The crowd explodes as the referee forces the break. Juno holds until four, her face unreadable, before slowly releasing, rolling her neck as though recalibrating her calculations.

Valkyrie collapses to her side, clutching her arm, sweat dripping into her eyes. Juno rises calmly, brushing imaginary dust off her hands, then turns back to stalk the champion again. She bends down to grab the injured arm --

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--but Valkyrie surges to life! With a guttural roar, she powers up from her knees and blasts Juno with a **short-arm lariat** out of nowhere! The impact flips Juno inside out as the crowd erupts!

Mark Bravo: "Where did that come from?! Valkyrie just about tore her head off!"

Valkyrie collapses to her knees again, clutching her shoulder, but the crowd rallies behind her. She forces herself up, yanking Juno by the hair and muscling her up with a one-armed **deadlift German suplex**, screaming in pain as she bridges with everything she has left!

1...

2-- Juno kicks out!

The fans gasp, some holding their heads, others pounding the barricades to keep the noise alive. Valkyrie slams her fist into the mat, snarling, sweat flying as she pulls herself upright again. She leans back against the ropes, her chest heaving, eyes burning through the exhaustion.

John Phillips: "The champion is running on fumes, but she is digging deeper than we've ever seen! She knows one burst might be the only thing keeping her in this gauntlet!"

Juno rises slowly, wobbling but still calm, her eyes narrowing as though recalculating. Valkyrie, clutching her shoulder, stumbles forward, lifts Juno high -- and spikes her down with the **Ragnarok Bomb!** The ring shakes as Valkyrie sprawls across her challenger for the cover.

1...

2...

3!

The bell rings and the crowd explodes, chanting Valkyrie's name as she rolls to her side, clutching her shoulder. The referee raises her hand briefly, but Valkyrie immediately pulls it back down, wincing in pain. She crawls toward the ropes, using them to drag herself up, her face a mix of fury and exhaustion.

Mark Bravo: "That's three down, Johnny! But look at her -- Valkyrie's barely standing. That shoulder's hanging by a thread. How much more can she take?"

John Phillips: "She's proving to the world she is a fighting champion, but this gauntlet isn't over yet! Who's going to step through that curtain next?"

The camera pans to the entranceway as the fans buzz with anticipation, waiting for the next challenger in the gauntlet.

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*Valkyrie Knox leans heavy on the ropes, her chest heaving, sweat dripping down her face as the referee checks on her. Suddenly, neon red flares ignite the stage as razor blades flash across the tron. The crowd reacts with a mixed roar as **Nancy Rhodes** storms through the curtain, jaw tight, eyes sharp, marching toward the ring with her fists clenched.*

John Phillips: "Here comes Detroit's own Nancy Rhodes! Brutality personified -- she'll hit you with every elbow she has until you're unconscious."

Mark Bravo: "Valkyrie's on fumes, Johnny. Nancy Rhodes is ruthless, and if she smells weakness, she'll carve the champion up in a hurry."

*Nancy slides under the ropes and immediately charges Valkyrie with a flurry of **knife-edge chops**, the sharp cracks echoing through the arena. Valkyrie staggers back into the corner as Nancy lights her up, then connects with a **spinning razor elbow** to the jaw! Valkyrie slumps, clutching the turnbuckles as the referee warns Rhodes back.*

*Nancy snarls, grabbing Valkyrie by the hair and yanking her forward into a crushing **shark bite suplex**, bridging for the cover!*

1...

2-- Valkyrie kicks out!

*The crowd stomps and claps, trying to rally the champion as Nancy stalks her again. Rhodes grabs Valkyrie's arm, looking for the **Carcass Crossface**, but Valkyrie fights it, muscling to her feet. Nancy goes for another **razor elbow** -- but Valkyrie ducks, spins her around, and plants her with a crushing **Ragnarok Bomb!***

The crowd erupts as Valkyrie sprawls across for the pin, clutching her shoulder.

1...

2...

3!

The bell rings again as Valkyrie rolls to her side, grimacing and clutching her injured shoulder. Nancy Rhodes stares up from the mat, stunned, as the referee signals for the next competitor. The crowd gives Valkyrie a thunderous ovation, rallying her on as she drags herself to her feet once again.

John Phillips: "That's four challengers down! Valkyrie Knox just survived Nancy Rhodes, but every victory is costing her more and more!"

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Mark Bravo: "She's barely hanging on, Johnny. Her shoulder's hanging by a thread, her chest is heaving... how much more can she endure? Who's next?"

The lights shift again as the anticipation builds -- the next challenger is about to be revealed.

Valkyrie Knox leans heavy against the ropes, sweat dripping, her injured shoulder hanging low. She's already battled through four challengers, and the toll is clear. The crowd hums with anticipation -- who's next?

*Suddenly, the arena lights ignite into a blazing orange. A thunderous bass drop shakes the arena as **"Firestarter" by The Prodigy** blasts through the speakers. Flames roar on the tron, and the crowd comes alive as **Valentina Blaze** bursts onto the stage, her energy infectious. She traces a spark in the air with her finger before exploding into a sprint down the ramp, feeding off the fire of the fans.*

John Phillips: "Here she comes -- Valentina Blaze! Born in the fire of Miami's underground rings, she's explosive, fearless, and she's got the speed to push Valkyrie Knox past her breaking point!"

Mark Bravo: "And look at her, Johnny -- she's fresh, she's fired up, and she's got nothing to lose. Valkyrie's been through hell already tonight. This is gasoline on an open flame!"

Valentina hits the apron in one leap, grabs the top rope, and springboards herself into the ring with a flawless twist. She lands perfectly, throwing her arms skyward with her signature "Light it up!" gesture. The fans roar back, some even holding up lighters and phone screens to mimic flames in the crowd.

Valkyrie steadies herself in the corner, snarling through the pain, her eyes locked on the fiery challenger across from her. The referee steps between them, holds up the UTA Women's Championship once again, and signals for the bell as the crowd volume swells to a fever pitch.

John Phillips: "The gauntlet continues! The champion Valkyrie Knox versus Valentina Blaze -- and the Women's Championship hangs in the balance!"

The bell rings. Valkyrie pushes off the ropes, her face twisted in pain, but she steps forward, towering presence intact. Across the ring, Valentina Blaze bounces on her toes, her eyes locked on the champion. The crowd comes alive, split down the middle with chants.

CROWD: "VAL-KYR-IE!" *clap clap clap* "BLAZE! BLAZE! BLAZE!"

*Valentina darts in first, throwing a **spinning back kick** that thuds into Valkyrie's ribs. Valkyrie grits her teeth and answers with a heavy **short-arm lariat**, but Blaze ducks under, rebounding into a **running bulldog** that plants Valkyrie face-first into the mat! The fans erupt as Blaze pops to her feet, pointing both hands to the sky: "Light it up!"*

John Phillips: "Valentina Blaze just took the champion down! Look at that fire -- she's seizing the moment in front of a sold-out NRG Arena!"

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Mark Bravo: "And Valkyrie's been in there for what feels like an hour. She's tough, Johnny, but she's human. Blaze is smelling smoke -- she might light a fire and burn this house down!"

*Valkyrie pushes up to her knees, but Blaze is relentless -- a **drop-toe-hold into a sharp kick** to the temple! The crowd gasps as Valkyrie slumps sideways. Blaze scales the ropes quickly, walking the strand with balance before twisting into a **rope-walk arm drag** that flings the champion across the ring!*

*The crowd roars, and Blaze immediately sprints, diving through the ropes with a **firefly plancha** that takes Valkyrie down to the floor. Both women crash, but Blaze is up quick, slapping hands with fans at ringside.*

John Phillips: "Valentina Blaze is fearless! High risk, high reward -- she's putting her body on the line to take the champion out!"

*Blaze rolls Valkyrie back in, quickly climbing the turnbuckles. She launches with a **springboard roundhouse -- the Flashpoint!** It connects flush to Valkyrie's jaw! Blaze scrambles into the cover--*

1...

2-- Valkyrie powers out!

*The crowd is split, half cheering the near fall, half rallying the champion. Blaze sits up, eyes wide but smiling, pumping her fists as the fans chant her name again. She rises, motioning for Valkyrie to stand, setting up the **Blaze Trigger**.*

*Valkyrie stumbles up, groggy, and Blaze springs off the middle rope -- but Valkyrie catches her in mid-air, gritting through the pain to slam her with a crushing **gorilla press powerslam!** Both women are down as the crowd explodes.*

Mark Bravo: "Ohh! That's the equalizer! Blaze had the champ dead to rights, but Valkyrie just ripped her out of the sky!"

*The referee counts as both women lie on the mat. Valkyrie clutches her shoulder, writhing, while Blaze kicks her feet, trying to rally herself back up. At six, Valkyrie pulls herself upright by the ropes, glaring through her sweat-soaked hair. Blaze is up at the same time, firing a **tilt-a-whirl headscissors** that nearly flings Valkyrie out of the ring! The crowd is molten hot, stomping in rhythm, chanting for both women.*

John Phillips: "This has broken down into a war of attrition! Blaze is giving Valkyrie everything she can handle -- and the champion is running on fumes!"

The arena is electric as both women rise slowly. Valentina Blaze wipes sweat from her brow, her chest heaving, eyes wild with fire. Across from her, Valkyrie Knox snarls, her shoulder hanging lower than ever but her jaw set. The crowd is split, dueling chants shaking the NRG Arena.

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CROWD: "VAL-KYR-IE!" *clap clap clap* "BLAZE! BLAZE! BLAZE!"

*Blaze charges first, unleashing a **flurry of kicks** -- low to the thigh, midsection, then a spinning high kick that staggers Valkyrie to one knee. Blaze screams out, pointing skyward in her "Light it up!" taunt, and rebounds off the ropes for a **running bulldog**. Valkyrie shoves her off at the last second, Blaze hitting the mat hard.*

*Blaze scrambles up fast, springing to the second rope, and launches with the **Blaze Trigger** -- but Valkyrie sidesteps, clutching her shoulder with one hand while scooping Blaze into position with the other. With a guttural roar, she plants Blaze with a thunderous **Ragnarok Bomb!** The ring shakes on impact as both women collapse, Valkyrie holding her shoulder in agony.*

John Phillips: "Ragnarok Bomb! But can Valkyrie even cover her?!"

Valkyrie crawls desperately across the mat, finally draping one arm across Blaze's chest. The referee counts.

1...

2...

3!

The bell rings, and the referee raises Valkyrie's hand -- but she immediately jerks it back down, clutching her shoulder. Blaze rolls onto her side, eyes wide, the fans applauding her valiant effort. Valkyrie drags herself to the ropes, sweat pouring, her chest rising and falling like a furnace as the crowd gives her a roaring ovation for surviving another round.

Mark Bravo: "That's five challengers, Johnny. Five. And Valkyrie Knox is still the Women's Champion -- for now. But she's wrecked. She's hurt. And she's got to go through at least one more competitor!"

John Phillips: "Whoever steps through that curtain next... they're walking into the biggest opportunity of their career. The question is -- can Valkyrie Knox survive what's left?"

The camera lingers on Valkyrie, grimacing as she leans against the ropes, eyes darting to the stage. The fans buzz, anticipation building as the final competitor prepares to emerge...

Valkyrie Knox drapes herself across the ropes, her body heaving, her shoulder barely hanging together. She's survived five challengers, but the gauntlet isn't done yet. The crowd buzzes with anticipation -- and then the arena plunges into red light.

The heavy drums of Susanita Ybáñez's theme thunder through the speakers. Red lights strobe across the stage as the violin line kicks in, the tension building with every note. A spark of flame flickers at the stage, swelling larger as the piano strikes crash. Then -- with a guttural growl over the track -- a loud explosion rips

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across the stage, fire bursting skyward.

Announcer: "Hailing from Lambaré, Paraguay... **'La Reina Silenciosa'... Susanita Ybáñez!**"

The crowd comes alive as Susanita steps onto the stage, her eyes locked on the ring, her face fierce but focused. She pauses, looking out at the fans who rise to their feet in approval, before starting her march down the ramp. Fire erupts on either side as she walks, the spectacle matching the enormity of the moment.

John Phillips: "And there she is! The pride of Paraguay -- Susanita Ybáñez! What a journey she's taken to get here, and now she's the final competitor in this gauntlet!"

Mark Bravo: "Talk about storybook, Johnny! Valkyrie Knox has been through hell tonight, she's running on fumes, and now she's got to deal with someone as explosive and resilient as Susanita Ybáñez. The whole world is watching this moment!"

Susanita climbs onto the apron, her gaze never leaving Valkyrie. She leans back, raising her hands high before snapping them down -- BOOM! Pyro blasts from each turnbuckle, red and gold sparks raining down. She steps into the ring, standing tall in the center as the lights flash and the crowd roars around her.

Valkyrie glares across the ring, her chest rising and falling like a furnace, sweat dripping, her shoulder hanging low but her spirit unbroken. Susanita stares back, fierce and unshaken, a woman carrying her country's pride into the biggest match of her career.

John Phillips: "This is it, folks. The final stage of the gauntlet. Valkyrie Knox, the UTA Women's Champion, against Susanita Ybáñez, making history as the first South American woman to reach this point. The title is on the line -- and the crowd is on fire!"

The referee holds up the Women's Championship high one last time. The fans are deafening as the bell rings -- the gauntlet's final chapter begins.

The bell rings. The sound alone brings the crowd to their feet, their roar swelling into a wall of noise that shakes the rafters of the NRG Arena. Valkyrie Knox stands in her corner, chest heaving, her face twisted in equal parts exhaustion and defiance. Across the ring, Susanita Ybáñez stares straight at her, motionless, hands clenched at her sides. The two warriors don't move -- they just absorb the moment.

John Phillips: "You can feel it, Mark. This is what it's all about. One final challenger. One final test. The UTA Women's Championship hangs in the balance."

Mark Bravo: "The crowd knows it, Johnny. Valkyrie's survived five challengers, but Susanita's standing fresh, with the biggest opportunity of her life. This is history unfolding in front of us!"

The fans begin stomping and chanting, the noise reverberating like thunder.

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CROWD: "VAL-KYR-IE! SU-SA-NI-TA! VAL-KYR-IE! SU-SA-NI-TA!"

Both women step forward, slowly, deliberately. Valkyrie snarls, rolling her battered shoulder, while Susanita cracks her knuckles and nods at the champion. They circle once, eyes locked, neither willing to be the first to blink. The energy in the arena builds to a fever pitch.

Susanita suddenly extends her hand -- an offer of respect. The crowd reacts with a wave of cheers. Valkyrie looks down at the hand, sweat dripping from her face, then back up at Susanita. For a long moment, she hesitates. Finally, she slaps the hand away and lets out a guttural roar, stepping chest-to-chest with her challenger. The crowd erupts again, half booing the disrespect, half cheering the intensity.

John Phillips: "Valkyrie's not here for handshakes tonight! That's the battle-weary champion in her -- this isn't about respect, this is about survival!"

Susanita smirks, unshaken, and steps right back into Valkyrie's space. They stand nose-to-nose as the crowd surges louder and louder, their chants shaking the floor. Both women slowly back away into their corners, then lunge forward into a collar-and-elbow tie-up. The place explodes, not for the move, but for the sheer spectacle of the moment.

Mark Bravo: "This feels like one of those matches you'll remember for years, Johnny. The kind where you remember exactly where you were when it happened!"

Neither woman gains the immediate advantage in the lock-up. Valkyrie strains, her power undeniable, but her shoulder gives way and Susanita twists free, backing into the ropes and raising her arms as the crowd cheers. Valkyrie snarls, shaking out her shoulder, glaring across the ring. Susanita points at her, mouthing: "Come on." The fans roar louder, sensing the powder keg about to explode.

The lock-up resets. Valkyrie snarls and barrels forward again, wrenching Susanita into a side headlock, grinding down with her raw strength. Susanita winces but drops to one knee, adjusting her stance. The crowd claps in rhythm, rallying her as she shoves Valkyrie off toward the ropes.

*Valkyrie rebounds with a thunderous **shoulder tackle** that flattens Susanita. The champion stomps once, glaring out at the fans, but her right arm dangles at her side -- that shoulder clearly compromised. Susanita rolls, pops up quick, and faces Valkyrie again, her expression calm but defiant. The fans roar in approval at the stalemate.*

John Phillips: "That's the story right there. Valkyrie still has the raw power edge, but every slam, every strike comes at a cost to that shoulder."

Mark Bravo: "And Susanita knows it. She's quick, she's scrappy -- she's gonna make Valkyrie chase, and every time she does, that shoulder screams louder."

*They circle again. Valkyrie lunges, but Susanita ducks, slipping behind with a **waistlock**. Valkyrie swings her*

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*elbow back, but Susanita ducks the strike and rolls her into a quick **schoolboy pin!***

1...

2-- Valkyrie powers out!

*The crowd pops as both women scramble up. Susanita fires off a stinging **snap DDT** that spikes Valkyrie to the mat! The fans roar as Susanita springs to her feet, raising her fists and yelling to the crowd, who chant along with her.*

CROWD: "SU-SA-NI-TA! SU-SA-NI-TA!"

*Valkyrie sits up slowly, snarling, her eyes narrowing. She rises, stalking Susanita, who meets her with a barrage -- a **rip cord knee smash** to the jaw, followed by a **belly-to-belly suplex** that rattles the ring! The crowd erupts as Susanita scrambles for the cover!*

1...

2-- Valkyrie kicks out!

The fans gasp at the near fall. Susanita pushes up to her knees, her face lit with fire, as Valkyrie clutches her shoulder, grimacing. The champion forces herself up, snarling through the pain. Susanita charges again, leaping for a corkscrew moonsault --

*--but Valkyrie catches her in mid-air! With a roar, she plants Susanita with a **powerslam**, the ring shaking as the crowd explodes. Valkyrie rolls over, clutching her shoulder in agony, the exertion nearly crippling her as both women lie on the canvas.*

John Phillips: "Oh my! Valkyrie just turned Susanita's momentum inside out, but look at her shoulder -- the toll is almost too much!"

Mark Bravo: "This is high drama, Johnny! The fire of Susanita Ybáñez colliding with the power of Valkyrie Knox -- and the UTA Women's Championship hangs in the balance!"

Both women rise slowly, sweat dripping, the crowd deafening. Valkyrie snarls, clutching her shoulder, while Susanita pounds her chest and points skyward, rallying the fans behind her. The dueling chants erupt again, the atmosphere molten.

CROWD: "VAL-KYR-IE!" *clap clap clap* "SU-SA-NI-TA!"

*Valkyrie charges with a **big boot**, but Susanita ducks and springs off the ropes -- **flying crossbody!** Valkyrie catches her, straining, but Susanita wriggles free and nails a **snap DDT** that spikes the champion! The crowd explodes as Susanita kips up and throws her arms wide, "La Reina Silenciosa" feeding off the*

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energy of the arena.

John Phillips: "Susanita Ybáñez has this crowd on fire! She's quicker, she's fresher, and she's making the most of every second!"

*Valkyrie forces herself up, staggering, but Susanita pounces with a **suicide dive** through the ropes, crashing into the champion and sending both women tumbling against the barricade! The fans erupt in unison as Susanita pops up, slapping hands with the front row, her fire only growing.*

Mark Bravo: "This is what makes her dangerous, Johnny! Susanita's not just fighting Valkyrie -- she's fighting for every fan in this building, and that energy's contagious!"

*She shoves Valkyrie back inside the ring, then leaps to the apron. With a deep breath, she slingshots into a **450 splash!** She lands flush, covering instantly!*

1...

2-- Valkyrie kicks out!

*The near fall shakes the arena. Susanita sits up, her face flashing disbelief, but she quickly shakes it off, pounding the mat to keep the crowd alive. Valkyrie drags herself to the ropes, her body clearly breaking down. Susanita charges again, this time hitting the **rip cord knee smash** that drops Valkyrie flat on her back. Another cover!*

1...

2...

No! Valkyrie gets the shoulder up at the last second, grimacing in agony.

*The fans are losing their minds now, half on their feet for Susanita's surge, half pounding the barricades for the champion to rise. Susanita shakes her head, determination in her eyes, then signals for the **619**. The arena explodes as she kicks Valkyrie into the ropes, lining her up...*

John Phillips: "If she hits this, we could have a new Women's Champion!"

*Susanita sprints, swings around the ropes for the 619 -- but Valkyrie ducks under at the last moment! Susanita lands awkwardly on the apron, just enough hesitation for Valkyrie to stumble forward and catch her with a **huge forearm smash** that rattles the challenger. The champion, running on fumes, muscles Susanita up onto her shoulders.*

*With a primal roar, Valkyrie drives her down with a brutal **apron powerbomb!** The crowd gasps as Susanita folds against the edge of the ring, the referee yelling warnings. Both women lie wrecked, the match tipping*

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into sheer survival mode.

Mark Bravo: "Oh my God! Valkyrie just pulled that out of pure desperation! But she's down too -- the gauntlet is taking everything out of her!"

Both women are wrecked on the outside after Valkyrie's desperate apron powerbomb. The referee's count climbs as the champion stumbles, dragging Susanita back into the ring by sheer instinct. Valkyrie collapses over her, hooking the leg.

1...

2-- Susanita kicks out!

*The crowd erupts -- they can feel how close it was. Valkyrie, gasping for air, tries to sit up, her face twisted in agony. Susanita claws to her knees, then lashes out with a stiff kick to Valkyrie's damaged shoulder. The champion howls and drops flat again. Susanita pounces, hooking the legs and twisting her opponent over -- into a **sharpshooter!***

The NRG Arena explodes as Susanita sits deep, wrenching back with all her strength, her face screaming with effort. Valkyrie's arms tremble against the mat, her face contorted in agony, her shoulder screaming as the pressure radiates through her back and legs.

John Phillips: "Sharpshooter! Susanita Ybáñez has the champion dead center -- Valkyrie Knox could tap out right here!"

Valkyrie claws at the canvas, dragging herself inch by inch toward the ropes. The fans rise as one, stomping and clapping, the noise deafening. Susanita grits her teeth, shaking her head, leaning back deeper, the veins in her arms bulging as she cranks the hold. Valkyrie stretches -- fingertips brushing the bottom rope --

--but Susanita drags her back to the middle of the ring!

Mark Bravo: "She pulled her back! That might be it, Johnny -- Valkyrie Knox is trapped, there's nowhere to go!"

The crowd is thunderous, some screaming for Susanita to finish it, others begging Valkyrie not to quit. The champion's hand hovers over the mat, trembling, the referee's eyes locked in. She pounds the mat once in defiance, her scream echoing through the arena as she refuses to give in.

John Phillips: "Look at her hand! Valkyrie's so close to tapping -- this could be the end of her championship reign!"

Susanita sits deep on the sharpshooter, wrenching back with all her strength. Valkyrie howls in agony, clawing toward the ropes, her hand hovering inches from the mat. The crowd is losing their minds, half

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screaming for Valkyrie to tap, half begging her to hold on.

John Phillips: "Look at her hand! Valkyrie's so close to tapping -- this could be the end of her championship reign!"

*Suddenly, the crowd gasps. From out of nowhere, **Amy Harrison** leaps the barricade, sliding under the ropes like a bullet. Before anyone can react, she charges forward and blasts Susanita across the face with a **running knee strike!** The impact flips Susanita off balance, breaking the submission instantly. The referee immediately calls for the bell as chaos erupts.*

Amy mounts Susanita and rains down brutal punches, her face twisted with rage. The referee tries to intervene, but Amy shoves him away, unleashing a furious volley until Susanita goes limp beneath her.

*Across the ring, Valkyrie struggles to rise, using the ropes for leverage, her body screaming with pain. She tries to stagger toward Amy to stop the assault, but Amy turns and meets her with a vicious **boot to the face**, dropping the champion flat on her back. The crowd explodes in boos as Amy stands tall over both women.*

Mark Bravo: "What the hell did we just see?! Amy Harrison just ruined the match -- she took out Susanita, and then she just leveled Valkyrie too!"

John Phillips: "The referee's made it official -- Susanita Ybáñez is the winner of this match by disqualification... but Valkyrie Knox will retain the Women's Championship! This is a travesty!"

Amy stomps both women repeatedly, her fury unrelenting, before finally ripping the UTA Women's Championship out of the referee's hands. She holds it high above her head, standing over the broken bodies of Valkyrie and Susanita. The boos rain down as Amy smirks, reveling in the chaos she's created.

The last image is Amy Harrison, clutching the championship belt with both hands, standing tall above her fallen rivals as the screen fades to black.

The Great Southern Trendkill Tour: Houston, Texas

Show Credits

Segment: "Introduction" - Written by Ben.

Match: "Brick Bronson vs. B.R. Ellis" - Written by Ben.

Segment: "Sending a message" - Written by meagan.

Segment: "Different Views" - Written by Ben.

Segment: "The Challenge" - Written by Ben.

Match: "Marie Van Claudio vs Kaida Shizuka" - Written by Ben.

Segment: "No Crying over Spilled Coffee" - Written by Ben.

Segment: "Not tonight, suckers!" - Written by justin.

Match: "Amy Harrison vs. Shannon Ray" - Written by Ben.

Segment: "Broken Dreams" - Written by Ben.

Match: "Chris Ross vs. Brandon Henderson" - Written by Ben.

Segment: "Time to Show Up" - Written by Ben.

Segment: "Pride over Jealously" - Written by meagan, dave.

Segment: "A Few Words with Angela Hall" - Written by Ben.

Match: "UTA Women's Championship Gauntlet Match" - Written by Ben.

Results Compiled by the eFed Management Suite