

Victory: 03.27.2026

March 27, 2026 | Lenovo Center - Raleigh, NC

Earlier Today

The screen stays black for a moment before a lower-third appears in the corner.

EARLIER TODAY

Fade in to the back loading dock of the arena.

The place is absolute chaos.

Several massive wooden crates are stacked near the open bay doors, each one stamped with bright stickers and rushed shipping labels. Workers hustle back and forth with dollies, wheeling in balloons, streamers, floral arrangements, velvet ropes, glittering backdrops, oversized decorative pillars, and all manner of ridiculous celebration props. It looks less like the backstage area of a wrestling show and more like a bizarre cross between a parade, a circus, and an awards gala gone terribly wrong.

Off to one side, a pair of jugglers rehearse their routine, tossing clubs high into the air with practiced precision. They also just so happen to be shirtless, absurdly fit men, their muscles gleaming beneath the harsh dock lights. Nearby, a line of female dancers runs through extravagant choreography, spinning, kicking, and striking dramatic poses as music blares faintly from a portable speaker.

One unlucky stagehand lugs in what looks suspiciously like a hand cannon loaded with glitter. He stumbles on the edge of a ramp.

CLUNK.

The cannon slips from his hands, hits the floor, and fires upward with a thunderous pop.

A violent explosion of glitter erupts into the air and rains down over him in a sparkling cloud, coating his face, his shirt, his hair, and half the dock in shimmering nonsense.

The workers freeze.

Then, suddenly--

Scott Stevens: "No... no... NO! ABSOLUTELY NOT!"

The camera pulls back fast.

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Standing in the middle of this ridiculous production is AMY HARRISON, the newly claimed UTA International Championship fastened proudly around her waist. Behind her, standing like a wall of smug confidence, is the new Empire--Trey Mack, Clovis Black, and Valkyrie Knoxx.

Amy folds her arms, chin raised, completely unbothered.

Scott Stevens: "We're not doing this, Amy."

Amy Harrison: "Doing what? I am the International Champion, and I have the right to celebrate!"

Scott throws both hands out toward the circus around them as if the very sight of it offends him on a spiritual level.

Scott Stevens: "No! We've already been through this once. Not happening again!"

As if things could not possibly become any more absurd, a mime suddenly pops out from behind Scott Stevens and begins silently miming beside him, trapped in an invisible box, then pretending to tug on an invisible rope.

Scott slowly turns his head, staring at the mime in utter disbelief before looking back to Amy.

Scott Stevens: "A mime, Amy? Really?"

Amy just shrugs, almost offended that he is not appreciating the vision.

Amy Harrison: "This will be the biggest, most extravagant celebration ever, Scott!"

The mime keeps performing enthusiastically next to Stevens, leaning in with exaggerated motions. Scott finally has enough and shoves him away without even looking.

Scott Stevens: "Nope."

Scott jabs a finger in every direction, barking at the workers, performers, and anyone else unfortunate enough to be standing nearby.

Scott Stevens: "Get them out of here. All of them. Every bit of this needs to be gone now!"

Amy's jaw drops.

Amy Harrison: "This is crap, Scott! This is not how you treat champions!"

Scott lets out a sharp scoff, then points directly at the title around her waist.

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Scott Stevens: "Champion? Champion? The fact that you think we should even recognize your 'championship reign'--"

He throws up exaggerated air quotes.

Scott Stevens: "--is laughable. There is absolutely no way any of this is go--"

He is suddenly cut off as an elephant's trunk snakes into frame and wraps around his upper body.

Scott Stevens: "WHAT THE HELL?"

Scott Stevens: "NO!"

The camera shifts and, somehow, yes, there is in fact an elephant just off to the side being led by a handler who looks just as confused as everyone else.

Scott jerks free from the trunk, straightens his jacket, and storms right into Amy's space, pointing a finger directly in her face.

Scott Stevens: "If any of this makes it inside the arena tonight, you're done for. Do you hear me? Done!"

Amy Harrison: "This isn't fair!"

Scott actually recoils for a second, looking genuinely stunned that the word "fair" just came out of Amy Harrison's mouth.

Scott Stevens: "I mean it, Amy. Get rid of all of this. Now."

With that, Scott turns and storms off down the dock, shaking his head in disgust as bits of glitter still drift through the air around him.

The new Empire remains behind, simmering. Trey Mack stares coldly ahead. Clovis Black clenches his jaw. Valkyrie Knox narrows her eyes. Amy stands frozen for a moment, furious, humiliated, and seething beneath the championship at her waist.

Then, from off-screen, a man casually steps into frame with his head tilted back.

He reaches into his mouth...

...and slowly pulls a sword out by the blade.

The sword swallower looks at Amy with mild concern.

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Sword Swallower: "So... am I getting paid, or..."

Amy lets out a furious grunt and storms away, brushing past the dancers and workers as the rest of the Empire follows behind her in angry silence.

The sword swallower watches them go, still holding the sword in one hand, completely unsure what to do next.

Behind him, the mime slowly reappears and shrugs at the camera.

Cut to black.

Victory begins.

Introduction

The camera fades up from black into a sweeping aerial shot of downtown Raleigh at dusk, the city glowing under the last streaks of sunlight as traffic moves through the streets below.

A sharp cut takes us outside the Lenovo Center, where thousands of fans stream toward the entrance in a sea of UTA shirts, championship replicas, homemade signs, and raised phones trying to capture the atmosphere.

Pyro erupts along the stage inside the arena as the crowd roars, the hard camera catching a wide shot of the packed building. Bright lights sweep over the audience while the Victory theme pounds through the sound system. Signs bounce in every section.

A lower third flashes onto the screen.

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Lenovo Center

Raleigh, North Carolina

The camera glides across the front rows. Fans are on their feet and loud, still buzzing from the cold open we witnessed earlier in the day. There is a restless energy in the building tonight, the kind that says everybody knows something volatile could happen at any second.

We cut to ringside where John Phillips and Mark Bravo are seated at the commentary desk, dressed sharply, headsets on, papers spread out in front of them. John sits upright, composed and focused. Mark already looks half-amused and half-ready for trouble.

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John Phillips: "Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Victory, live tonight from the Lenovo Center in Raleigh, North Carolina! I'm John Phillips alongside Mark Bravo, and after everything that went down last week, we are set for an explosive night here in UTA."

Mark Bravo: "John, I am telling you right now, this place feels different tonight. You can feel it in the air. The New Empire made a statement the entire wrestling world is still trying to process, Amy Harrison is walking around with that International Championship like she owns the place, and after what we saw earlier today in that loading dock? This show is already off the rails."

John nods seriously as the camera angle tightens a little.

John Phillips: "If you missed what happened at the end of last week's Victory, Amy Harrison left Phoenix with the International Championship around her waist in one of the most controversial conclusions we have seen in some time. Tonight, the fallout begins in earnest, and based on what we saw before we went on the air, I don't believe Amy Harrison or the New Empire are in any mood to quietly move on."

Mark Bravo: "Quietly move on? Amy had dancers, shirtless jugglers, a mime, a sword swallower, and I'm pretty sure an actual elephant in the parking area. That wasn't a celebration, that was the opening of a casino on the Las Vegas Strip."

The crowd can be heard reacting as some fans laugh and others boo at the mention of Amy Harrison.

John Phillips: "Scott Stevens made it crystal clear that none of that spectacle would be making its way into the arena tonight, and he issued Amy Harrison a direct warning. But if we know anything about Amy Harrison, it's that she does not respond well to being told no."

Mark Bravo: "No, she does not. And to be fair, John, if I paid for an elephant, I'd be upset too."

John gives Mark a look before continuing on.

John Phillips: "This evening, we have championship implications, major debuts, and a huge main event level tag team title contest on tap. It is a loaded card from top to bottom, and every match tonight carries serious significance."

A graphic fills the screen showing the first featured matchup.

John Phillips: "Later tonight, Maxwell Jett goes one on one with Tyger II. Jett has called himself the Best in the World at every opportunity, but tonight he meets a second-generation standout and former champion in Tyger II, a man who has never needed to tell people who he is because he shows them the second the bell rings."

Mark Bravo: "That one's got ego collision written all over it. Max Jett talks like he's already on top of the industry. Tyger II carries himself like a man who expects to get back there. Somebody's pride is taking a hit

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tonight."

The next match graphic appears.

John Phillips: "Bianca Page makes her UTA in-ring debut tonight against Angela Hall. What a test for a first outing. Angela Hall is one of the most accomplished competitors in this company, and if Bianca Page wants to announce herself in a major way, there may be no better opportunity."

Mark Bravo: "Or no worse one, depending on how you look at it. Angela Hall does not play tour guide for newcomers. If Bianca Page wants that classy debut win, she's going to have to earn every second of it."

Another graphic fills the screen, this time with darker tones.

John Phillips: "Samuel Scythe makes his UTA debut against former UTA Champion Brick Bronson. We know Bronson is still trying to regain footing after recent setbacks, but this debut comes with a lot of intrigue. Samuel Scythe arrives with Ace Andrews in his corner, and that is a combination that could present problems for anyone."

Mark Bravo: "That one has trap written all over it. Bronson's got the experience, the power, the résumé, all of it. But debuts are dangerous, and if Ace Andrews has something in mind, Brick Bronson may be stepping into a lot more than just a singles match."

The crowd pops as the United States Championship graphic appears on screen.

John Phillips: "And we will see the newly recognized United States Championship defended tonight as Susanita Ybanez puts that title on the line against Aaron Schaffer. Susanita's reign now carries a new look, a new presentation, and perhaps a new level of pressure. Across from her stands a former WrestleZone Champion in Aaron Schaffer, a man who knows exactly how to navigate high stakes situations."

Mark Bravo: "That's a dangerous defense for anybody, especially with all the attention on that championship right now. Susanita has represented herself like a champion from day one, but Schaffer's the kind of guy who doesn't care about the ceremony. He cares about winning and leaving with the gold."

The camera returns to the desk as the final featured match graphic appears behind them on the big screen.

John Phillips: "And in our featured championship contest, El Fantasma defend the UTA Tag Team Championships against Mack and Black, the newest additions to the New Empire. Trey Mack and Clovis Black have aligned themselves with Amy Harrison's camp at perhaps the most chaotic possible moment, and now they look to turn that momentum into championship gold."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah, but standing across from them are the tag champs for a reason. El Fantasma have chemistry, they've got momentum, and with Madman Szalinski in their corner after his Hall of Fame induction, you know they're walking in with emotion behind them too. The New Empire may have made headlines, but

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tonight they've got to back it up."

John Phillips: "Championships on the line, debuts under pressure, and the continued fallout from one of the most controversial endings in recent memory. Raleigh is ready, UTA is ready, and we are just getting started."

Mark Bravo: "No telling what's going to happen tonight, John. And after that circus backstage, I am keeping my head on a swivel."

John looks toward the ring as the crowd rises again, sensing the first entrance is moments away.

John Phillips: "Stay with us, everyone. Victory starts right now."

The camera swings away from the desk, catching another wide shot of the arena as the music transitions and the first match atmosphere begins to build.

Maxwell "Max" Jett vs. Tyger II

The arena lights begin to dim, the energy inside the Lenovo Center shifting almost immediately.

Maxwell "Max" Jett stands inside the ring, pacing with a smug confidence, but even he slows his movement as the atmosphere changes around him.

A deep taiko drum sounds through the arena.

Then another.

Cold blue light washes over the stage as a low mist begins to crawl across the entranceway. A haunting flute melody joins the drums, giving the moment an almost spiritual weight. The crowd noise softens into anticipation, fans rising to their feet as they recognize exactly who is about to emerge.

John Phillips: "And here comes one of the most unique presences in all of UTA."

Mark Bravo: "You can feel this one before you even see him, John."

A silhouette appears at the top of the stage, still and motionless in the haze.

As the lights rise just a little more, Tyger II is revealed.

The yellow tiger mask catches the blue glow, giving him an otherworldly look as he stands at the entrance, completely composed. There is no playing to the crowd. No exaggerated motion. No wasted energy. He simply stands there, centered and calm, like a man preparing for battle rather than entertainment.

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John Phillips: "Tyger II, a second-generation superstar and former champion, making his way to the ring for our opening contest tonight."

Mark Bravo: "That's legacy right there, but not the kind that leans on a famous name. Tyger II has built his own reputation in this company the hard way."

The camera cuts to Maxwell Jett inside the ring, rolling his neck and watching the stage with a smirk that doesn't quite hide the focus in his eyes.

Back on the stage, Tyger II slowly lowers into a crouch, one hand briefly touching the steel beneath his feet as the music swells around him. It feels ceremonial. Intentional. A quiet sign of respect before the violence to come.

John Phillips: "There's the discipline that defines Tyger II."

Mark Bravo: "And that's what makes him dangerous. Everything means something."

Tyger II rises and begins his walk to the ring.

Each step is deliberate. Measured. The mist parts around him as he makes his way down the ramp, his eyes locked on the ring ahead. Fans reach out from behind the barricade, some shouting his name, others simply watching in admiration, but Tyger II never breaks focus.

John Phillips: "He carries himself like a man who understands exactly who he is every second he's out here."

Mark Bravo: "Meanwhile Max Jett is in there telling himself he's the best in the world. Tyger II doesn't have to tell anybody anything."

At ringside, Tyger II stops at the foot of the steel steps and looks up toward the ring. Maxwell Jett stares back from inside, the two men sharing that first moment of eye contact from a distance.

The crowd buzzes louder.

Tyger II ascends the steel steps without hurry, then pauses on the apron. He wipes his boots carefully before stepping through the ropes, another small act that speaks volumes about the respect he has for the ring.

John Phillips: "Every single detail matters to Tyger II."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah, and when a guy treats this place like sacred ground, that usually means bad news for the person standing across from him."

Tyger II steps into the ring and turns slowly toward the crowd as the music continues to echo through the

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building. He does not grandstand, but the aura alone draws a strong reaction from the fans in Raleigh. He removes his entrance gear with practiced precision and hands it off at ringside before settling his eyes once more on Maxwell Jett.

Jett leans back in his corner, smirking, while Tyger II stands tall across from him in stoic silence.

John Phillips: "Opening contest of the night, and already the intensity is building."

Mark Bravo: "This is going to be good."

Tyger II stands in his corner, calm and composed, eyes fixed across the ring.

Then the mood changes again.

A sharp burst of flashy music hits the speakers, loud and self-important, the kind of theme built to announce that someone believes the world should stop and admire him. The crowd reaction turns instantly, a wave of boos crashing through the Lenovo Center as the camera cuts toward the stage.

John Phillips: "And now here comes a man who has never lacked for confidence."

Mark Bravo: "Confidence? John, this man wakes up in the morning and probably thanks the mirror for existing."

Maxwell "Max" Jett steps out onto the stage in a custom entrance robe, expensive, polished, and deliberately overdone. He pauses the second he emerges through the curtain, chin tilted slightly upward, soaking in the boos as though they are applause. There's a smug grin stretched across his face, the kind that says he expected this reaction and considers it beneath him anyway.

He slowly turns in place, giving the camera his preferred angle before looking out over the crowd with open disdain.

John Phillips: "Maxwell Jett has made no secret of how he sees himself. In his mind, he is not just one of the best young talents in UTA. He believes he is the standard."

Mark Bravo: "That's because he does everything with one goal in mind: make sure you know he thinks he's better than you. Better dressed than you. Better looking than you. Better in the ring than you. Better at breathing than you."

Jett spreads his arms wide at the top of the ramp, basking in the hostility coming down from every section. He mouths off at fans near the aisle, pointing at one sign in particular and laughing at it before waving it off like it personally offended him.

Inside the ring, Tyger II does not move. He just watches.

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Jett starts down the ramp with a swagger that borders on theatrical. Every step is smooth, arrogant, and measured not by urgency, but by vanity. He adjusts the cuffs of his robe halfway down, then points toward himself as the crowd rains down even louder boos.

Mark Bravo: "See, this is what I'm talking about. Max Jett doesn't just walk to the ring. He arrives like he's already won."

John Phillips: "That attitude has earned him attention, but tonight it may also put a target on him. Tyger II is not the kind of competitor who gets rattled by flash or ego."

Jett stops at ringside and stares up at the ring, eyes locking with Tyger II. A smirk creeps across his face, but there's a sharpness behind it now. This is no joke to him. For all the arrogance, Maxwell Jett knows exactly what kind of challenge is standing in front of him.

He walks up the steps, then wipes one boot on the apron with exaggerated mockery, clearly mimicking Tyger II from moments earlier. The crowd boos louder for the disrespect as Jett laughs to himself.

John Phillips: "You knew he was going to do something like that."

Mark Bravo: "Of course he was. If Max Jett sees something meaningful, his first instinct is to make fun of it."

Jett steps through the ropes and immediately demands the hard camera find him. Once it does, he opens his robe just enough to show off his gear, then mouths, "I'm the best in the world," with total certainty.

He turns and backs into the opposite corner, never taking his eyes off Tyger II. Then he slowly removes the robe and hands it off without care, still grinning, still talking under his breath.

John Phillips: "Maxwell Jett carries himself like a man who expects the world to validate everything he says."

Mark Bravo: "And the worst part is, John, he's good enough to make people wonder if he's right."

Jett steps forward from the corner and raises a microphone hand gesture to his mouth, though no mic is there, then points toward Tyger II and mouths something off-camera with a sneering smile. Tyger II remains stone-faced, refusing to give him the reaction he wants.

The tension between them grows heavier by the second.

John Phillips: "Very different men. Very different philosophies. And in just a few moments, one of them is going to have the chance to prove something."

Mark Bravo: "Max believes he's better than everybody. Tyger II believes none of that matters once the bell rings. That's a dangerous collision."

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Maxwell Jett paces to the center of the ring, turns toward the crowd, and throws his arms wide one more time as the boos pour down on him from all sides. He smirks, nodding to himself like he's hearing worship instead of hatred.

Then he turns back toward Tyger II and points right at him.

The message is clear.

He thinks this is his stage.

The referee steps in between them and looks from one man to the other.

Tyger II stands in a low, disciplined stance, balanced on the balls of his feet. Across from him, Maxwell Jett rolls his neck once, flexes his fingers, and wears the kind of smug expression that says he already knows how this is supposed to go.

The official checks both men one last time.

Referee: "Ready?"

Tyger II gives a short nod.

Jett doesn't answer at first. He just smirks and mouths something toward the referee that looks a lot like, "Of course I am."

The bell rings.

John Phillips: "And we are underway."

Mark Bravo: "Opening contest, and I'll tell you right now, this is the kind of match that can set the tone for the entire night."

The two men circle carefully at first.

No wild charge. No rushed engagement. Just patience.

Tyger II inches forward, shoulders square, eyes locked on Maxwell's hands and hips. Jett moves with an easy looseness, almost casual, but there is nothing careless about him. He keeps shifting his lead foot, changing his angle, forcing Tyger II to keep recalculating the distance.

John Phillips: "You can already see Tyger II trying to get a read here, trying to test Maxwell Jett early."

Mark Bravo: "And Max is giving him nothing easy. That's not just swagger in there. That's a guy who knows

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exactly where his body is at all times."

Tyger II reaches first, shooting in for a collar-and-elbow tie-up.

Jett meets him chest to chest.

For a brief second, the two strain for control--then Tyger shifts, looking to transition into wrist control and feel out the opening with a standing switch of pressure.

But Maxwell is already there.

He rolls with it smoothly, peeling Tyger's grip away, capturing the wrist, and turning sharply into a standing arm wringer that snaps Tyger II forward a half-step.

John Phillips: "Beautiful counter by Maxwell Jett."

Mark Bravo: "That's what he means when he says he's the best in the world. He's not just talking to hear himself talk. That was slick."

Tyger II stays calm.

He rotates through the pressure, trying to relieve the torque on the shoulder, then reaches across with his free hand to reverse the grip.

Jett anticipates it again.

He ducks under, switches his hips, and flows behind Tyger II into a rear waistlock with crisp positioning, his forehead pressed between the shoulder blades, base low and tight.

John Phillips: "Maxwell Jett a step ahead in these opening exchanges."

Tyger plants his feet, widens his stance, and fights the hands immediately. He pries at the fingers, shifts his weight, then spins suddenly to the side--

Jett releases before he can be thrown, slips around the front, and snatches a side headlock instead.

The crowd gives an appreciative murmur for the sequence.

Mark Bravo: "See, that's high-level stuff right there. Tyger's trying to test him, trying to drag him into a technical pace, and Maxwell's basically saying, 'That's cute, I can do this too.'"

John Phillips: "These are not empty fundamentals either. Maxwell Jett is executing with real precision."

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Tyger II braces both hands at Jett's waist and drives him toward the ropes. Maxwell keeps the headlock cinched in tight all the way there, then Tyger shoves him off on the rebound.

Jett hits the far ropes--

Tyger drops low, looking for a trip on the return--

But Jett hurdles over him cleanly.

Tyger pops back to his feet and turns just in time to see Jett come flying back again. Tyger leaps for a dropkick--

Maxwell halts his run on a dime.

Tyger lands on his back with no target there.

The crowd boos as Maxwell casually steps over his legs and dusts imaginary lint off his own shoulder.

Mark Bravo: "Oh, that's nasty."

John Phillips: "Not just athletic, but tactical. Maxwell Jett baited that reaction."

Tyger II rolls backward to a knee almost instantly, not embarrassed so much as sharpened. He resets, eyes narrowing behind the mask.

Jett just smiles and taps the side of his head with one finger.

Maxwell Jett: "You've gotta be quicker than that."

The crowd showers him with boos.

Tyger comes forward again, this time with less feeling-out and more purpose. He feints high, then reaches low for a single-leg grip.

Jett sprawls just enough to kill the leverage, then stuffs Tyger's head under his arm and pivots into a front facelock before snapping him down to the mat.

Tyger catches himself on his forearms before Maxwell can fully flatten him out, but Jett has already floated behind, dragging him into another grounded side headlock and keeping his weight distributed perfectly.

John Phillips: "Again, Maxwell Jett with the answer."

Mark Bravo: "And Tyger II's not being reckless here. He's trying different looks, different entries, and Max is

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just... solving them."

Tyger II shifts his hips, works to a seated base, then to a knee. Jett squeezes tighter and grinds down on the hold, keeping control while jawing at the crowd.

Maxwell Jett: "This your guy? This is who you believe in?"

The boos get louder.

John Phillips: "That is classic Maxwell Jett. Talk while he wrestles, needle the crowd, and make sure everyone knows he thinks he's in complete control."

Tyger slips one arm inside, posts with the other, and forces himself up to vertical again. He digs a forearm into Maxwell's ribs, then another. Jett's grip loosens just enough--Tyger shoots him off to the ropes once more.

This time Tyger stays upright.

Jett rebounds back toward him and Tyger steps in for a hip toss--

Maxwell blocks it in mid-turn.

He drops his weight, clamps onto Tyger's arm, and counters the attempt with a sharp arm drag that sends Tyger skidding across the canvas.

The crowd reacts again, this time with grudging admiration mixed into the noise.

John Phillips: "Another counter. Maxwell Jett is winning the chess match right now."

Mark Bravo: "That's because he believes he's the smartest man in the room, and so far? He's wrestling like it."

Tyger II pops back up, landing in a crouch.

Maxwell remains standing.

He straightens his wrist tape, smirks, and gives a little shrug like none of this is especially difficult for him.

Across from him, Tyger II stays composed, but the test phase has clearly told him something important.

Maxwell Jett is not just talk.

He can go hold for hold with him.

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John Phillips: "Early on, Tyger II came in looking to probe, to test, to measure Maxwell Jett's technical ability."

Mark Bravo: "And he found out real fast that Max belongs in that conversation."

The two men circle again, the pace still measured, but now with a little more edge than before.

The feeling-out process is over.

Tyger II knows he's in there with a real wrestler.

And Maxwell Jett looks thrilled that everyone else is starting to realize it too.

The two men circle once more, slower now, each of them more aware of what the other brings to the table.

Tyger II lowers his stance and reaches in again, this time with far less curiosity and far more intent. Maxwell Jett mirrors him, hands up, weight shifting lightly on the balls of his feet.

John Phillips: "The respect level has changed already. Tyger II tested Maxwell Jett early, and now both men are settling into a very serious technical battle."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah, there's no more feeling-out. Now it's about who can out-think the other guy one move at a time."

They tie up again in the center of the ring.

This time Tyger II gets the better position first, slipping slightly to the side and trapping Maxwell's arm into a standing hammerlock. He keeps it tight and high, chest close to the shoulder blades, forcing Jett to bend forward just enough to break posture.

John Phillips: "Nicely done by Tyger II. Good positioning there."

Maxwell winces, but only for half a second. Then he turns with the pressure instead of fighting it, rolls his shoulder under, and somersaults forward out of the hammerlock, popping back to his feet behind Tyger II. He immediately captures the wrist and twists into a standing wristlock of his own.

The crowd lets out a quick appreciative murmur.

Mark Bravo: "That's smooth. That's really smooth."

John Phillips: "Maxwell Jett continuing to show tremendous poise in these exchanges."

Tyger II doesn't panic. He steps in instead of away, reducing the tension on the wrist, then rotates under

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Maxwell's arm and reverses into a tight arm wringer that snaps Jett down onto one knee.

The moment Jett touches down, Tyger transitions seamlessly, stepping over the arm and threatening a grounded hold--

But Maxwell slips his head through the gap before Tyger can fully trap him, bridges backward, and rolls free into a headscissors around Tyger's neck.

John Phillips: "What a sequence."

Mark Bravo: "This is beautiful wrestling right here."

Tyger II posts on his hands, keeping his neck from getting fully cinched, then shifts his hips and rolls forward, trying to stack Jett's shoulders and force a break. Maxwell releases before being pinned in place, kips his legs apart, and both men spring backward to create space.

They rise at nearly the same time.

The crowd applauds the exchange.

John Phillips: "Neither man getting a clean advantage there, but the pace and complexity of this match are climbing."

Mark Bravo: "And now you're seeing why Max talks the way he does. You may hate him, but there's skill behind every word."

Jett gives a smug little clap toward Tyger II, mocking but also just honest enough to feel annoying.

Maxwell Jett: "Okay. That was decent."

Tyger II ignores him completely and moves back in.

Another lock-up. This one tighter, grittier.

Tyger II gets inside control with both forearms, steering Jett backward, then abruptly changes levels and snakes around behind for a rear waistlock. He locks his hands and drops his base, threatening control on the mat.

John Phillips: "Tyger II in good position now."

Maxwell spreads his stance to block any lift, then starts peeling at the grip. Tyger keeps it sealed. Jett plants a boot behind Tyger's ankle and tries to trip him backward. Tyger steps over it. Jett then quickly hooks Tyger's wrist, turns his hips, and drops down into a sit-out switch that breaks the waistlock and puts him

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behind Tyger instead.

Mark Bravo: "Oh, that was slick as hell."

Now Maxwell has the rear waistlock.

Tyger reaches down, catches the fingers, and shifts into a standing switch of his own, spinning behind Jett again. Maxwell immediately rolls through, grabs a leg, and transitions into a grounded single-leg attempt. Tyger sprawls his free leg back just enough to keep balance, then drops both hands onto Maxwell's shoulders to smother the entry.

Jett uses that exact pressure to roll through underneath and come up with a side headlock again, catching Tyger standing.

John Phillips: "Chain wrestling at a very high level from both competitors."

Mark Bravo: "Nobody's guessing out there anymore. They're reacting on instinct."

Tyger digs a hand into Maxwell's clasped grip and tries to pry space open. Jett keeps the hold snug and grinds the side of his head into the temple for a little extra irritation. Tyger plants a palm against Maxwell's back and shoots him off to the ropes.

Jett rebounds.

Tyger drops flat to the canvas.

Jett hops over him clean.

Off the far side again--Tyger pops up and leapfrogs this time.

Jett keeps running, comes back one more time--Tyger steps in for an arm drag.

Maxwell cartwheels through the momentum before he can hit fully, lands on his feet, and answers with an arm drag of his own.

Tyger rolls through that one instead of taking it flat, rises, and swings for another go-behind--

Maxwell catches the wrist, drops to a knee, and flips Tyger forward with a Japanese-arm-drag style throw that sends him turning across the mat.

The crowd gives another loud reaction.

John Phillips: "Incredible exchange."

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Mark Bravo: "And still no real separation. Every answer gets answered."

Tyger II is back up quickly, this time with a little more fire in the eyes behind the mask. He circles left. Maxwell circles right, grinning, breathing under control, completely convinced he's proving his point.

Maxwell Jett: "Come on. Keep up."

Tyger steps in again, faster now, and they engage in another tie-up that turns immediately into hand fighting and positional wrestling. Wrist control. Elbow control. Inside biceps. Quick slips, short turns, subtle balance checks. Tyger briefly traps Maxwell in a standing side headlock, but Jett shoots his arm through and counters into a hammerlock. Tyger rolls under that and comes up into a wristlock. Maxwell spins beneath it and hooks Tyger's head. Tyger slips free before the headlock is set. Both men reset without either one fully taking over.

John Phillips: "This is excellent. There's so much happening in such a short span, and none of it is wasted motion."

Mark Bravo: "That's the kind of stuff that separates guys. Anybody can throw a punch. Not everybody can do this."

The applause rises again from parts of the crowd that recognize exactly what they're watching.

Tyger and Maxwell each pause for just a half-second, breathing a little heavier now, eyes locked, both men recognizing that the other is every bit as polished as advertised.

John Phillips: "What an opening few minutes. Tyger II and Maxwell Jett are putting on a clinic in chain wrestling."

Mark Bravo: "And the scary part? Neither one has even really opened up yet."

The two men begin to circle once more, the technical chess match continuing as the tension in the ring grows thicker with each exchange.

The circling tightens again, but the pace has changed.

What had been a respectful technical stalemate now carries a sharper edge, and Maxwell Jett is the first man to truly seize on it.

Tyger II steps in looking to re-engage at the wrist--

Jett doesn't meet him with another measured tie-up.

He snaps forward first.

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A quick boot to the midsection folds Tyger II over just enough, and Maxwell immediately yanks him down into a tight front facelock before spinning behind into a rear waistlock with far more aggression than before.

John Phillips: "And there's the switch. Maxwell Jett changing gears."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah, enough of the feeling-out. Max just decided it was time to stop proving he can wrestle and start proving he can control the match."

Tyger tries to widen his base, but Jett stays attached, chest tight to the back, hands locked low around the waist. Tyger reaches down to peel the fingers apart--

Maxwell jerks him backward with a sudden mat return, dragging him to the canvas hard and riding him down into control.

Tyger lands on his hip and forearm, immediately trying to turn in, but Jett floats with him, slides up the body, and hooks a grounded side headlock again, this time grinding down much harder with his weight.

John Phillips: "This is the most sustained control we've seen from either man so far."

Mark Bravo: "And look how heavy Jett is laying on him now. Early on he was showing off. Right here, he's making Tyger carry him."

Tyger plants a hand and starts trying to build upward, but Maxwell keeps dragging him back down, shifting his hips and keeping the pressure tight against the side of the head and neck. Every little movement from Tyger is met with a correction from Jett, a pull here, a shift there, just enough to ruin the escape before it begins.

Maxwell Jett: "This is your guy? Huh? This is the legend?"

The crowd rains boos down on him.

Tyger II powers back to a knee, trying to create space with a forearm to the ribs. Jett answers by clubbing him across the upper back, then snapping him over with a crisp takeover that sends Tyger rolling to the mat again.

John Phillips: "Maxwell Jett now dictating where this match takes place."

Mark Bravo: "And that's where he's dangerous. Max doesn't just want to beat you. He wants to make you wrestle his kind of match."

Tyger kicks his legs, turns his hips, and finally manages to force enough separation to push Jett off toward the ropes.

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Maxwell rebounds--

Tyger pops up, maybe hoping for another opening--

But Jett beats him there with a sharp shoulder block right through the chest.

Tyger crashes to the mat.

Maxwell stays standing.

He looks down at Tyger II with a smirk, then casually spreads his arms to the crowd as though that collision should have settled the conversation.

Mark Bravo: "Oho, there we go."

John Phillips: "That was emphatic. Maxwell Jett not only in control technically, but beginning to impose himself physically as well."

Tyger rolls to a knee, one hand on the mat, and Jett is already on him again.

He grabs a wrist, yanks Tyger upward, and whips him hard into the corner.

Tyger hits the buckles chest-first, turns, and Jett is right there with a knife-edge chop that cracks through the Lenovo Center.

The crowd lets out a loud "Wooooo!" on instinct.

John Phillips: "Listen to that shot."

Tyger absorbs it, jaw tightening behind the mask.

Maxwell doesn't let him recover. He grabs the wrist again, steps back, and sends him corner to corner with another whip. Tyger hits hard, stumbling out of the turn--

Jett catches him with a drop toehold that sends him face-first into the middle rope.

Before Tyger can fully react, Maxwell bounces off the ropes and drives both boots into the side of Tyger's head with a low basement dropkick that snaps him sideways under the rope.

John Phillips: "Basement dropkick by Maxwell Jett, and Tyger II is in trouble here."

Mark Bravo: "That's firm control, JP. This is Max at his best right now. Quick, sharp, and always one step ahead."

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Tyger spills onto the apron, trying to gather himself.

Maxwell rises and immediately starts talking again, because of course he does.

Maxwell Jett: "Best in the world! I told you!"

The boos only grow louder, which seems to delight him.

He steps through the ropes, reaches down, and pulls Tyger up by the mask and the back of the head, dragging him just enough to leave him vulnerable. Then, with total disregard for subtlety, Jett drives a forearm across the upper chest and throat area, forcing Tyger backward against the edge of the ring.

John Phillips: "Now Maxwell Jett walking right up to that line."

Mark Bravo: "That line exists for everybody else, John."

The referee leans through the ropes and starts the count. Maxwell gives him a dismissive wave and backs off at four, but not before sneaking one more cheap little shove that sends Tyger awkwardly into the apron edge.

Jett slips back into the ring and soaks in the jeers with another arrogant grin.

John Phillips: "Everything Maxwell Jett is doing now is calculated. He's breaking rhythm, controlling space, and forcing Tyger II to react."

Mark Bravo: "Exactly. Early on, they were equals in the exchange. Right now? Max has turned this into his match."

Tyger II climbs back through the ropes, and the moment he does, Jett stomps him down before he can stand fully upright.

One stomp to the shoulder.

Another to the ribs.

A third to the upper back that drives Tyger flat again.

Jett quickly drops into a cover, not because he expects the win, but because forcing Tyger to kick out means making him spend more energy.

Referee: "One!"

Tyger kicks out.

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Jett sits up with a smug expression, nodding like even the kickout only reinforces his own greatness.

John Phillips: "Tyger II out at one, but the story right now is Maxwell Jett's control."

Mark Bravo: "And he's not giving Tyger any room to breathe. That's the difference."

Maxwell grabs Tyger in a seated chinlock now, planting a knee between the shoulder blades and wrenching back with deliberate cruelty. Tyger's hands immediately come up to fight it, but Jett has him exactly where he wants him--grounded, slowed, and forced to work from underneath for the first time in this match.

John Phillips: "Maxwell Jett has taken firm command of this opening contest."

Mark Bravo: "And if Tyger II doesn't find an answer soon, this thing is going to get away from him."

In the center of the ring, Maxwell Jett leans back on the hold and smiles, completely convinced the match is unfolding exactly as it should.

Maxwell Jett keeps the chinlock cranked in tight, knee buried between Tyger II's shoulder blades, forcing him to carry every bit of the weight.

John Phillips: "This is exactly where Maxwell Jett wants this match right now. He's got Tyger II grounded, slowed down, and working uphill."

Mark Bravo: "And Max is smart enough not to get greedy. He doesn't need some huge risk here. He just needs to keep making Tyger uncomfortable."

Jett wrenches back harder, teeth gritted now, no longer just showing off but actively trying to wear Tyger II down. Every time Tyger reaches for the hands, Maxwell adjusts the grip. Every time Tyger tries to shift his hips, Jett drags him back into the center of the ring.

Maxwell Jett: "You're not on my level. You never were."

The crowd boos loudly.

Tyger II stays on one knee for a moment, then plants a boot. Then the other.

He begins to rise.

Maxwell feels it and immediately changes strategy, releasing the chinlock just enough to grab Tyger by the wrist and shoulder, then whipping him hard toward the ropes to keep momentum firmly on his side.

John Phillips: "Jett not letting him build any sustained offense."

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Tyger hits the ropes and comes back.

Jett drops down early, looking for Tyger to run over him and continue the sequence--

But Tyger stops himself short.

The crowd reacts as Tyger catches the ropes, checks his footing, and refuses to play into it.

Mark Bravo: "Oh, that was smart."

Maxwell pops back up, slightly annoyed that the rhythm broke, and charges in anyway.

He reaches for Tyger's wrist, looking to sling him across the ring again--

Tyger plants his feet.

Jett tries to force the Irish whip.

Tyger yanks him in instead.

Maxwell stumbles a half-step forward and Tyger II catches him with a tight arm drag, snapping him across the canvas with authority.

John Phillips: "There it is! Tyger II with the reversal!"

Jett rolls through quickly and pops back up, but Tyger is already on him again.

A second arm drag, even cleaner than the first, sends Maxwell skidding toward the corner. The crowd comes alive as Jett scrambles to a knee, surprise flashing over his face for the first time tonight.

Mark Bravo: "That got his attention!"

Maxwell rises fast and swings for a quick clothesline to shut it down before it grows--

Tyger ducks under it.

He spins behind Jett, locks on a rear waistlock, and this time when Maxwell tries to pry the hands apart, Tyger lifts and dumps him to the mat with a controlled but forceful takedown.

Tyger floats right over the top and into a grounded side headlock of his own, chest low, legs spread, weight perfectly centered so Jett cannot immediately slip free.

John Phillips: "And now it's Tyger II taking over."

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Mark Bravo: "That's how quick it can change. One guy gets a little too sure of himself, one reversal later, and suddenly he's underneath."

Jett kicks his legs in frustration and tries to turn into the hold, but Tyger shifts with him, keeping the pressure firm against the head and neck. There is no panic in Tyger II. No wasted emotion. Just measured, disciplined control.

John Phillips: "That may be the biggest opening Tyger II has found in this match."

Maxwell tries to fight up, posting on one hand, but Tyger transitions smoothly, releasing the head just long enough to trap the arm and wrench it behind the back into a grounded hammerlock. Jett winces now, his confidence momentarily replaced by irritation as Tyger leans his weight down across the shoulder blades.

Mark Bravo: "Now Tyger's making him work. This is more his kind of pace."

The crowd applauds as Tyger II stays glued to him, one step ahead in the sequence now. Jett reaches for the ropes, but they're too far away. He tries rolling through, but Tyger rides him over and keeps hold of the arm, then pulls him back to center.

John Phillips: "Excellent response from Tyger II. Maxwell Jett had firm control, but all it took was one smart counter to change the complexion of this match."

Tyger pulls Jett upward by the arm and twists into another crisp arm wringer, leaving Maxwell standing but bent and forced to follow Tyger's lead for once.

The crowd buzzes louder now.

Tyger II has weathered the storm.

And now, for the first time in a while, Maxwell Jett is the one being forced to react.

Tyger II keeps the arm trapped and twisted, trying to stay methodical now that he's finally shifted the momentum. He steps in close, looking to continue working the limb, keeping Maxwell Jett bent forward and off-balance as he starts guiding the pace where he wants it.

John Phillips: "Tyger II doing exactly what he needs to do here. Slow it down, stay connected, and build on that reversal."

Tyger gives the arm another sharp wrench, then starts to transition, looking to roll Maxwell down to the mat and fully settle into extended control--

But this time Maxwell does not try to out-wrestle his way free.

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He lashes out.

A sudden back elbow catches Tyger II high across the jaw and cheekbone area, snapping his head to the side and forcing a break in the hold.

Mark Bravo: "There it is. That's the change right there."

John Phillips: "Maxwell Jett just turned mean."

Tyger stumbles a half-step, and Maxwell pounces immediately.

He spins around and drives a hard forearm into the side of Tyger's face, then another to the upper chest, then shoves him backward with enough force to send him reeling toward the ropes.

Mark Bravo: "That technical chess match is over, John. Max is done playing around."

Tyger tries to steady himself and comes back in--

Maxwell meets him with a thumb to the eye out of the referee's view.

The crowd erupts in boos as Tyger recoils and reaches for his face.

John Phillips: "Oh, come on!"

Mark Bravo: "He wants out of the exchange, and he found a shortcut."

Jett wastes no time.

He grabs Tyger by the head and drives him face-first into the top turnbuckle, then follows with a series of furious stomps in the corner, no more swagger now, no more showmanship, just ugly intent. The referee gets in close with the count, but Maxwell barely even acknowledges him.

Referee: "One! Two! Three! Four!"

Jett backs off at four, hands up for half a second like he's done nothing wrong--then charges right back in with a running knee strike to the midsection that folds Tyger II against the buckles.

John Phillips: "This is no longer about proving he's the better wrestler."

Mark Bravo: "No. This is Max getting offended that Tyger had the nerve to take control, and now he wants to punish him for it."

Tyger drops to one knee in the corner, trying to cover up.

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Maxwell grabs both wrists and yanks him up, only to hammer him with a vicious knife-edge chop across the chest. The sound cracks through the building. Tyger absorbs it--then Maxwell immediately answers with another, louder than the first, leaving angry red across Tyger's chest.

Maxwell Jett: "You think you're on my level? You think you belong with me?"

He doesn't wait for an answer.

He whips Tyger hard across the ring into the opposite corner. Tyger hits with force, stagger-steps out--

And Maxwell cuts him in half with a running lariat.

Tyger flips backward and crashes to the mat.

The crowd gasps.

John Phillips: "What a lariat by Maxwell Jett!"

Mark Bravo: "That's rage. That's not showboating anymore. That's a guy trying to put somebody down right now."

Jett doesn't even go for the cover immediately.

Instead he stands over Tyger, chest heaving, jaw clenched, eyes wide with that dangerous mix of ego and anger. He pulls Tyger up by the mask and hairline, dragging him to his feet only to snap him down with a violent short-arm clothesline that turns him inside out.

John Phillips: "Maxwell Jett is getting more aggressive with every passing second."

This time Jett drops into a cover, but it's less about winning cleanly and more about forcing the referee to count while he smothers Tyger down with forearm pressure across the face.

Referee: "One! Two!"

Tyger kicks out.

Jett slaps the mat in frustration.

Mark Bravo: "See? That's what I'm talking about. Competitiveness is out the window. Max doesn't want to outscore Tyger anymore. He wants to finish him and move on."

Maxwell is up quickly, dragging Tyger with him again before he can fully recover. He hooks him for what looks like a suplex, but instead of executing right away, he holds him there just long enough to talk in his ear

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first.

Maxwell Jett: "You should've stayed down."

Then he snaps him over with a hard vertical suplex, floating through into another fast cover.

Referee: "One! Two!"

Tyger kicks out again.

Jett sits up immediately and rakes both hands back through his hair in disbelief, then pounds the mat once in anger before rising to a knee and glaring at the referee like the count itself offended him.

John Phillips: "That frustration is setting in now for Maxwell Jett."

Mark Bravo: "Because he thought once he turned it up, this would be over. But Tyger's still here."

Maxwell grabs Tyger's wrist and jerks him back upright with no patience whatsoever. He shoves him chest-first into the ropes, then hammers him with a forearm to the back of the neck as Tyger rebounds off them, sending him spilling awkwardly down to the canvas again.

Jett stalks behind him like a man trying to erase a problem.

John Phillips: "Maxwell Jett is wrestling with a real edge now, and that makes him even more dangerous."

Tyger II tries to get to all fours.

Maxwell steps in from the side and drives a sharp kick into the ribs, then another to the back, then reaches down and drags Tyger upward one more time, clearly unwilling to let him recover on his own terms.

Mark Bravo: "This is what happens when a guy with Max's skill decides he doesn't want to be clever anymore. He just wants to end your night."

The crowd roars, trying to rally Tyger II back into it as Maxwell Jett keeps hold of him, aggressive, angry, and now fully consumed with the idea of putting this match away by force.

Maxwell Jett keeps a tight grip on Tyger II, dragging him up from the canvas with an urgency that has completely replaced the smug theatrics from earlier. The boos raining down from the crowd do nothing to slow him. If anything, they seem to feed him.

John Phillips: "Maxwell Jett has become absolutely relentless here. He is not interested in extending this any longer than he has to."

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Mark Bravo: "Nope. He got pushed, he got annoyed, and now he wants the exclamation point."

Tyger II is still fighting through it, still trying to regain his footing, but he is clearly battered now. Jett hammers him with another forearm to the upper back, then shoves him toward the ropes. Tyger catches himself, turns back in--

And Maxwell steps right into him with a hard kick to the midsection that doubles him over.

Jett immediately hooks both arms.

The crowd rises, sensing something big coming.

John Phillips: "Maxwell Jett has him set--"

Tyger II fights it.

He plants his feet and tries to resist the lift, twisting his hips, trying to create just enough daylight to break free. For a second, it looks like he might. The crowd swells, rallying behind him.

Mark Bravo: "Tyger's still got fight left!"

But Maxwell drives a knee up into the body to kill that resistance.

Then, with a sharp jerk of the arms and a violent snap of his own body, he spikes Tyger II down with a devastating double-arm underhook piledriver.

The impact is sickening.

Tyger II bounces off the canvas and collapses flat on his back.

The Lenovo Center erupts with a stunned mixture of gasps and boos.

John Phillips: "What a piledriver! What an absolutely brutal finish from Maxwell Jett!"

Mark Bravo: "That'll do it. That'll do it right there."

Jett doesn't waste a second.

He rolls over on top of Tyger II and hooks both legs deep, folding him up tightly in the center of the ring.

Referee: "One! Two! Three!"

The bell rings.

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John Phillips: "It is over. Maxwell Jett picks up the victory."

Jett lets go and rolls to his knees, breathing heavily, the intensity still written all over his face. Then, little by little, that anger gives way to a grin. The grin becomes a smirk. The smirk becomes full-blown self-satisfaction.

His music hits.

Maxwell rises to his feet and throws his arms wide, soaking in the hostile reaction from the crowd as if they are giving him a standing ovation.

Mark Bravo: "Love him or hate him, John, once Maxwell Jett decided to stop playing with his food, this thing changed in a hurry."

John Phillips: "Tyger II gave him a tremendous fight tonight, especially in those technical exchanges, but in the end Maxwell Jett turned the aggression up to another level and put this match away with authority."

The referee checks on Tyger II while Maxwell backs into a corner and climbs to the middle rope, pointing to himself and shouting toward the hard camera.

Maxwell Jett: "Best in the world! I told you! Better than him! Better than all of you!"

The fans rain boos down on him, but Maxwell only laughs, shaking his head like the crowd is too stupid to appreciate what they just witnessed.

John Phillips: "A statement win for Maxwell Jett to open Victory tonight."

Mark Bravo: "And the worst part? He's going to be unbearable after this."

Jett hops down from the ropes and takes one last long look at Tyger II still recovering in the ring before smugly brushing imaginary dust off his gear.

With that, Maxwell Jett exits the ring and heads up the ramp, all swagger once again, victorious and convinced the world has just seen exactly what he has been saying all along.

Weighing Options

The scene cuts backstage.

We open on ERIC DANE JR. standing in front of a black-and-gold UTA backdrop, one hand tucked casually into the pocket of an expensive jacket, the other adjusting the cuff at his wrist. He looks completely at ease, completely in control, and completely convinced the camera should feel lucky to be pointed at him.

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Dark sunglasses sit on his face despite the indoor lighting. His posture is loose, but there is a coldness to him underneath the polish. Beside him stands MELISSA CARTWRIGHT, microphone in hand, trying to keep pace with the sheer ego radiating off the man next to her.

Melissa Cartwright: "Eric, over the last couple of weeks, you've made repeated claims that Scott Stevens has promised you a one-on-one championship opportunity, but you haven't exactly elaborated beyond that."

Dane Jr. slowly turns his head toward Melissa, a smug smile already forming before she even finishes the question.

Eric Dane Jr.: "That's because, Melissa, unlike most people around here, I don't feel the need to explain myself before I'm ready."

He gives a light chuckle to himself, then straightens the lapel of his jacket.

Eric Dane Jr.: "But yes. It's true. When I won the bounty for bringing the WrestleZone Championship home from Iron City, my reward was a one-on-one title shot that I could use at my discretion."

He says it like it should be obvious. Like everyone should have remembered. Like everyone should have known better than to question him in the first place.

Eric Dane Jr.: "And after some discussion, Scott Stevens has agreed to live up to his end of the bargain."

Melissa nods carefully, though there is still a hint of uncertainty on her face.

Melissa Cartwright: "But a lot of people believed you already used that reward when you inserted yourself into the Triple Threat Championship match at No Love Lost."

Dane's smirk fades just enough for him to stop her with a raised hand.

Eric Dane Jr.: "No, no, no. Let's stop right there."

He leans in slightly, not angry, but almost amused that he even has to clear this up.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Everyone assumed I cashed my reward in. And yeah... maybe in all the confusion, Scott Stevens thought he was getting out of his obligations."

Dane shrugs, lips curling into another arrogant little smile.

Eric Dane Jr.: "But no. I saw an opportunity, and I put myself in that match. Not one person told me no."

He lets that sit for a second before tilting his head and grinning wider.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Why would they? Who could, really?"

He laughs once, short and cocky.

Eric Dane Jr.: "I'm Eric Dane Jr."

Melissa blinks, almost caught off guard by the sheer confidence of the answer, then quickly regains her footing.

Melissa Cartwright: "So it's true? You have a singles championship opportunity to use at the time of your choosing?"

Dane gives her a look over the top edge of his sunglasses, as if the question itself is beneath him, but not beneath his patience.

Eric Dane Jr.: "That's exactly what I'm telling you."

Melissa Cartwright: "Do you have an opponent in mind? We did see you interacting with Susanita Ybanez just last week."

Dane Jr. smiles again, slower this time. More dangerous. More deliberate.

Eric Dane Jr.: "I'm weighing my options."

He takes a half-step toward the camera now, turning away from Melissa and addressing the audience directly.

Eric Dane Jr.: "But don't worry."

He lowers his sunglasses just enough to peer over them into the lens.

Eric Dane Jr.: "When I decide who I'm going to face..."

He pauses, letting the silence do the work for him.

Eric Dane Jr.: "They'll know."

With that, Dane slides the sunglasses back into place, gives the faintest smirk, and walks off without another word, leaving Melissa Cartwright standing there alone, microphone still in hand, visibly stunned by both the revelation and the absolute certainty with which Eric Dane Jr. delivered it.

The camera lingers on Melissa for a beat before cutting away.

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What Did I Tell You?

The scene cuts backstage just moments after the opening contest.

Maxwell "Max" Jett storms through the hallway, still riding the adrenaline of victory. A towel hangs around his neck, and there is still a light sheen of sweat on his face from the match. He wipes a bead from his forehead with the back of his hand as the camera closes in on him.

He notices it immediately.

And he starts talking.

Maxwell Jett: "What did I tell you, huh? What did I tell every single one of you?"

Jett gets even closer to the lens, his voice heated, his expression arrogant and charged up from the win.

Maxwell Jett: "I told you I'm the best in the world. I told you! And if any of you idiots still had doubts, all you had to do was watch what I just did to Tyger II."

He points back over his shoulder, toward the arena behind him, jaw tight and eyes intense.

Maxwell Jett: "Second-generation superstar. Former champion. All that legacy, all that mystique, all that respect. And what happened?"

He jabs a finger toward the camera.

Maxwell Jett: "I beat him. I beat him because I am better than him. Better than everybody in this company. Better than everybody watching at home. Better than every so-called 'star' they keep trying to put in front of me."

His breathing is still heavy, but his words come faster now, fueled by ego and anger in equal measure.

Maxwell Jett: "Management needs to stop wasting my time. Stop handing me names you think are supposed to impress me. Stop feeding me people so I can embarrass them on national television and then act shocked when I do exactly what I said I was going to do."

Jett is nearly nose-to-lens at this point, the whole exchange raw and ugly and live-wire hot.

Maxwell Jett: "You want to know the problem with this place? They keep pretending I need to prove myself. To who? To Chris Ross? To Scott Stevens? To anybody? Please."

Maxwell Jett: "Give me a real challenge. Give me something worthy of my time. Give me somebody at the top."

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He suddenly stops mid-rant.

His eyes shift past the camera.

Something in the distance catches his attention.

Maxwell Jett: "Oh... oh, there we go."

A grin spreads across his face, sharp and dangerous.

Maxwell Jett: "Come on. Come on!"

The camera swings and follows as Maxwell Jett starts striding down the hallway with purpose.

Up ahead, standing with his back turned, is the UTA Champion, Chris Ross.

Ross appears to be in conversation with Valentina Blaze off to the side when Jett starts shouting.

Maxwell Jett: "Ross! Hey, Ross! Yeah, I'm talking to you!"

Chris Ross slowly turns around.

The second he sees Jett approaching, his expression hardens. Valentina steps back.

Jett doesn't slow down. Not for a second.

Maxwell Jett: "You see that? You see what I just did out there?"

He points down the hall toward the arena, then points right at the championship belt slung over Ross's shoulder.

Maxwell Jett: "I'm the best in the world, and that--"

He stabs a finger toward the title.

Maxwell Jett: "--is my god damn belt."

Ross steps forward immediately, jaw set, not backing down an inch.

Chris Ross: "Yeah? Best in the world? Huh? Yeah?"

Maxwell Jett: "Yeah!"

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And just like that, they are chest to chest.

Then forehead to forehead.

The tension is instant and explosive, both men barking right into each other's faces in the middle of the hallway.

Chris Ross: "You got a lot to say when there's a camera in your face."

Maxwell Jett: "I'll say it to you, too! I'm better than you, and you know it!"

Ross shoves forward. Jett shoves right back. The hallway erupts as officials and road agents come running in from both sides.

Official: "Hey! Hey! Break it up!"

Official: "Come on! Get them apart!"

Hands get between them. Shoulders slam into the walls. The whole scene devolves into chaos as multiple officials try to separate the two men before fists start flying. Blaze is yelling for them to stop it.

Maxwell Jett: "Stop running, Chris! Stop running!"

Chris Ross: "I'm right here!"

The hallway fills with shouting as both men lunge forward again, reaching over and through the officials trying to hold them back. Ross is being dragged one way. Jett is being pulled the other. Neither man is calming down.

Maxwell Jett: "You can't hide behind that title forever!"

Chris Ross: "Then come take it!"

The officials barely keep them apart as the shouting continues, bodies surging in every direction, the camera shaking slightly from the commotion as the segment comes apart in pure backstage chaos.

Cut away.

A True Statement

We return to ringside where John Phillips and Mark Bravo are still visibly processing everything we just witnessed backstage.

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John Phillips: "We are back live on Victory, and Mark, things are already spiraling tonight."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah, no kidding. Maxwell Jett just got done screaming into a camera about being the best in the world, then practically started a war in the hallway with UTA Champion Chris Ross. I don't know if that was a challenge, a meltdown, or both."

John Phillips: "One thing is certain, Maxwell Jett clearly believes he belongs in the championship picture, and after what we just saw, I don't think Chris Ross is going to forget that confrontation anytime soon."

Before Phillips can continue, the arena suddenly fills with the eerie opening of Amy Harrison's theme.

The crowd erupts into immediate, sustained boos.

Mark Bravo: "Oh, come on."

The camera swings to the stage.

Amy Harrison steps out wearing the International Championship around her waist, chin high, posture proud, basking in the hatred pouring down from every side of the Lenovo Center. She pauses at the top of the stage and strikes a pose, one hand on her hip, the other brushing her hair back as if the reaction belongs to her.

Behind her emerges Valkyrie Knoxx.

Then Trey Mack.

Then Clovis Black.

The New Empire stands together on the stage, soaking in the heat.

John Phillips: "And here they come. Amy Harrison and the New Empire."

Mark Bravo: "Still hard to believe what we saw last week. Trey Mack handing Amy Harrison the International Championship, and just like that, this whole thing took a turn nobody saw coming."

John Phillips: "A shocking ending to Victory last week, and one that is still sending shockwaves through UTA."

Mark Bravo: "And don't forget, Amy had the whole circus lined up earlier today for that ridiculous celebration before Scott Stevens shut it down cold. Honestly, that may have been the best decision he's made all year."

The fans boo even louder as Amy starts down the ramp, walking with smug confidence while Valkyrie, Trey, and Clovis fan out behind her like an armed escort. Amy pats the title around her waist and smirks at the disgust on the faces in the crowd.

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John Phillips: "Whatever your opinion may be, Amy Harrison is carrying herself like a woman who believes she has regained power."

Mark Bravo: "Believes it? She thinks she runs the place."

The group enters the ring to an even louder wave of boos.

Amy steps through the ropes first and slowly turns in a circle, looking out at the crowd with complete arrogance. Trey Mack and Clovis Black take up positions behind her while Valkyrie Knox heads back toward ringside.

The ring announcer barely has time to react before Valkyrie steps right up to him and rips the microphone out of his hand.

He jumps backward immediately, startled, while Valkyrie fixes him with a cold, icy stare that stops him dead in his tracks.

Mark Bravo: "Yeah, smart move. I'd back up too."

Valkyrie turns and climbs back into the ring, then walks the microphone over and places it directly into Amy Harrison's hand like she is presenting a queen with her scepter.

Amy smiles.

The boos continue.

She raises the mic.

Amy Harrison: "Before we begin..."

She pauses dramatically, shaking her head in disgust.

Amy Harrison: "I had the grandest... most extravagant... most beautiful celebration planned for tonight before Scott Stevens ruined it!"

The crowd immediately breaks into a chant.

Crowd: "THANK YOU STEVENS! THANK YOU STEVENS! THANK YOU STEVENS!"

Amy freezes, then slowly lowers the microphone and looks out into the sea of fans with a deeply irritated expression. Behind her, Trey Mack folds his arms, Clovis Black looks disgusted, and Valkyrie Knox narrows her eyes.

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John Phillips: "Listen to this crowd."

Mark Bravo: "Oh, they love this."

Amy tries to speak again, but the chant only gets louder.

Crowd: "THANK YOU STEVENS! THANK YOU STEVENS! THANK YOU STEVENS!"

Amy grits her teeth, forces a smile that clearly is not real, then raises the mic again.

Amy Harrison: "Oh, it's okay."

She shrugs and waves a dismissive hand.

Amy Harrison: "I have all the time in the world."

With that, Amy leans into an exaggerated bored pose, one hip cocked out, microphone extended away from her as she rolls her eyes and waits for the crowd to finish. The boos mix with the chant, and she just stands there acting like everyone in the building is beneath her.

Finally, the chant dies down enough for her to continue.

Amy Harrison: "As I was saying... every empire goes through changes."

She slowly paces the ring now, microphone in hand, title still around her waist, every word delivered with superiority.

Amy Harrison: "The weak ones are exposed. The weak ones are discovered. And then the weak ones are banished."

Heavy boos.

Amy Harrison: "That is exactly what happened to Dahlia Cross, Selena Vex, and Rosa Delgado."

The crowd reacts loudly at the mention of the three former Empire members.

Amy Harrison: "They were not championship material. They were not Empire material. They were not worthy of standing beside me."

She brushes a strand of hair from her face and smirks.

Amy Harrison: "But all of that is in the past. Last week, I made a true statement."

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Amy Harrison: "I put those peasants in their place..."

She gestures behind her toward the group.

Amy Harrison: "And I found real talent to stand beside me."

Amy motions toward Valkyrie first.

Amy Harrison: "The former UTA Women's Champion... Valkyrie Knoxx."

Heavy boos crash down. Valkyrie doesn't react outwardly. She just stares into the crowd with cold contempt.

Amy Harrison: "Trey Mack... and Clovis Black..."

Amy points to both men as the crowd roars with hatred.

Amy Harrison: "Who, after tonight, will be your new UTA Tag Team Champions."

John Phillips: "Bold words with a championship match still ahead of them tonight."

Mark Bravo: "That's Amy. She talks like the future already happened."

Amy pauses, then slowly reaches down and unfastens the International Championship from around her waist.

She lifts it high into the air.

The boos become thunderous.

Amy Harrison: "And then... there is the constant variable."

Amy Harrison: "The one who has proven herself time and time again..."

She raises the belt even higher.

Amy Harrison: "ME!"

Amy Harrison: "THE INTERNATIONAL CHAMPION!"

Trey Mack applauds slowly behind her. Clovis nods once. Valkyrie smirks.

Amy Harrison: "This is what power looks like. This is what leadership looks like. This is what happens when you stop surrounding yourself with weak links and start building something worthy of rule."

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She walks to one side of the ring and points toward the back.

Amy Harrison: "No one back there is going to stop us."

She points to another side.

Amy Harrison: "No one in this company is going to stop us."

She points to the hard camera.

Amy Harrison: "And before this is over, every single person in that locker room is going to bow a knee to the New Empire."

Massive boos.

Amy slowly lowers the title and then looks directly into the camera.

Amy Harrison: "And don't think I forgot about you, Marie. Not for a second."

The crowd reacts loudly at the mention of Marie Van Claudio.

Amy Harrison: "Keep your little Women's Championship."

Amy Harrison: "Enjoy being a champion to none."

Amy steps closer to the camera, her voice colder now.

Amy Harrison: "I have a world to rule."

The boos are deafening.

Amy lets the moment sit for a second, then casually tosses the microphone down to the mat. The New Empire closes in behind her, forming up as one unit before turning toward the ropes.

John Phillips: "Amy Harrison making her intentions crystal clear."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah, and somehow she managed to get even more unbearable with that title around her waist."

Amy exits the ring first, the rest of the New Empire following behind her as the crowd continues to boo them all the way up the ramp.

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Bianca Page vs. Angela Hall

Victory rolls on as the camera returns to ringside, where the crowd is still buzzing from everything that has already unfolded tonight.

John Phillips: "Up next, we are set for singles competition as Bianca Page makes her UTA in-ring debut."

Mark Bravo: "And talk about getting thrown right into it. No easy landing here. Bianca Page's first match in UTA is against Angela Hall, and Angela is the kind of woman who can ruin your debut in about thirty seconds if you're not ready."

John Phillips: "Bianca Page arrives with plenty of credentials and a growing reputation, but tonight is about proving she belongs on this stage."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah, and she's not walking in alone either. Anytime Ace Andrews sticks his nose into something, I automatically trust it less."

The lights in the Lenovo Center soften as a polished, almost dreamy pop instrumental hits the speakers.

The crowd reaction turns sour fast.

A mix of boos and dismissive jeers rolls through the arena as "Classy" Bianca Page steps out onto the stage, dressed in expensive-looking ring gear with the kind of presentation that practically screams wealth, vanity, and entitlement. She pauses at the top of the ramp with a bright smile that feels just a little too rehearsed.

John Phillips: "And here she is. Bianca Page making her first appearance in UTA competition."

Bianca places one hand on her hip and blows a kiss out toward the crowd, smiling wider as the boos grow louder. Beside her, Ace Andrews steps into view in a sharp suit, looking completely at home in the role of adviser, manipulator, and opportunist.

Mark Bravo: "You can already see the influence. She's got the confidence, the polish, the attitude... and standing next to her is a man who's made a career out of helping talented people become even more insufferable."

Bianca looks out over the arena like she's judging it and finding it beneath her standards, but she never loses that pageant-perfect smile. Ace says something quietly to her off-mic, and Bianca nods once without taking her eyes off the ring.

John Phillips: "Bianca Page calls herself classy, but there's a very sharp edge beneath all of that presentation."

Mark Bravo: "That's the dangerous part. People see the smile, the posture, the elegance... and then

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suddenly they're eating a boot and wondering what happened."

Bianca begins her walk down the ramp with slow, measured confidence. Every step is deliberate. She carries herself like a woman who expects attention and assumes admiration should come with it. She glances toward a few fans along the barricade, smiling as if she appreciates them, though the look in her eyes says otherwise.

Ace Andrews follows a half-step behind, hands clasped in front of him, posture calm and smug. He occasionally looks out toward the crowd with the same expression a man might wear while inspecting a room he already owns.

John Phillips: "Bianca Page has seen success in multiple promotions before arriving here, but UTA presents a very different spotlight."

Mark Bravo: "And if she wins tonight, especially with Ace Andrews standing there nodding like a proud supervillain, people are going to pay attention in a hurry."

At ringside, Bianca slows and turns slightly toward the hard camera. She gives a subtle twirl, showing off the full presentation, then looks back toward the ring with a self-satisfied smile.

The crowd boos louder.

Mark Bravo: "Oh, she knows exactly what she's doing."

Bianca ascends the ring steps with perfect posture and stops on the apron. Rather than entering right away, she turns to the referee and motions with her fingers for him to hold the ropes open for her.

The referee hesitates for half a second, then does it.

Bianca smiles as though this is simply the natural order of things.

John Phillips: "Already making herself comfortable."

Mark Bravo: "That's one way to put it."

Bianca steps through the ropes and into the ring with grace, never once rushing. She walks to the center of the ring and slowly extends both arms out to her sides, chin tilted upward, soaking in the hostile reaction as though it were applause at a gala.

Ace Andrews remains at ringside, looking pleased with what he sees.

John Phillips: "A poised entrance for Bianca Page, but now comes the hard part. Standing across from her tonight is a woman who is all action and very little patience."

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Mark Bravo: "Yep. Looking classy is one thing. Surviving Angela Hall is something else entirely."

Bianca lowers her arms and backs into her corner, still smiling, still composed, but now with her eyes fixed on the stage as she waits for her opponent.

The music cuts.

For one beat, the arena hangs in anticipation.

Then a violent crack of thunder blasts through the Lenovo Center sound system.

The lights flash blue-white like lightning, and the crowd immediately comes alive.

John Phillips: "And here comes Angela Hall."

Mark Bravo: "Now this is a totally different kind of entrance. Bianca Page glides into the building like she's arriving at a photo shoot. Angela Hall hits the scene like a storm warning."

Another thunderclap rolls through the arena as the tron bursts with blue lightning graphics.

Angela Hall steps onto the stage with determined focus, all business from the second she appears. There is no posing. No vanity. No wasted movement. She strides out with purpose, shoulders squared, jaw set, and eyes locked directly on the ring.

John Phillips: "Angela Hall is one of the most explosive athletes in all of UTA, and tonight she looks ready to make sure Bianca Page's debut becomes a very rough first lesson."

Mark Bravo: "And that's the thing with Angela. She doesn't ease into anything. Once the bell rings, it's pressure from the jump."

Bianca Page watches from inside the ring, arms folded loosely, trying to maintain that polished smile. But even from the distance, there is something about Angela's walk that makes the mood feel different. More dangerous. More immediate.

Angela keeps moving down the ramp, not once looking away from the ring. The crowd is firmly behind her now, feeding off her energy as the storm sound effects continue to roll underneath the music.

John Phillips: "This woman traded track-and-field excellence for success inside the ring, and you can see it every time she moves. The burst, the suddenness, the ability to cover ground in an instant."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah, and Bianca Page may be classy, but Angela Hall is the kind of woman who ruins classy in a hurry."

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At ringside, Angela doesn't hesitate. She breaks into a short burst and slides under the bottom rope in one clean motion, popping to her feet almost instantly inside the ring.

The crowd cheers louder as Angela turns toward Bianca.

Bianca takes a half step back, expression tightening just slightly, while Ace Andrews watches from ringside with narrowed eyes.

John Phillips: "There's the intensity. Angela Hall wastes absolutely no time."

Mark Bravo: "And Bianca just got a very up-close introduction to it."

Angela walks to her corner and bounces lightly in place, loose and ready, never taking her eyes off her opponent. Bianca adjusts her posture and smooths out her gear, trying to reassert that composed, superior image, but the contrast between the two women could not be clearer now.

John Phillips: "Poise and polish on one side. Explosiveness and relentless pressure on the other."

Mark Bravo: "Welcome to UTA, Bianca."

The camera settles on both women in their corners as the referee steps toward the center of the ring, ready to call for the bell.

The referee steps into the center of the ring and looks from one woman to the other.

Referee: "Alright, let's keep it clean. Ready?"

Angela Hall gives a quick nod, never taking her eyes off Bianca Page.

Bianca offers a slow, almost offended look back, then lifts one hand with a graceful little flourish as if she's doing the referee a favor by participating at all.

The bell rings.

John Phillips: "And here we go. Bianca Page's UTA debut is officially underway."

Mark Bravo: "And she's got no warm-up round either. Angela Hall is about as unforgiving a first opponent as you can get."

The two women circle carefully at first.

Angela keeps a low, athletic stance, feet active, shoulders forward, already looking for the quickest path into contact. Bianca, by contrast, is upright and composed, every movement neat and deliberate, one hand

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slightly extended as if she's measuring distance without wanting to fully commit.

John Phillips: "Bianca Page looks calm early, but you can tell Angela Hall wants to push this pace immediately."

Angela steps in first for a lock-up--

Bianca slips back and raises a hand.

Bianca Page: "Whoa, whoa. Back up."

The crowd boos immediately.

Mark Bravo: "Oh, here we go."

Bianca turns toward the referee and motions toward Angela like she's complaining about the pace before they've even properly engaged. Then she turns and asks the official to make Angela give her space.

Bianca Page: "Can you control her, please?"

Angela just stares at her from across the ring, unimpressed.

John Phillips: "Bianca Page trying to dictate the tempo in her own way."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah, by stalling."

Bianca turns back and steps in again, this time offering a collar-and-elbow tie-up.

Angela meets her in the center and immediately drives forward with surprising force, walking Bianca backward two full steps. Bianca's face changes in an instant, the poise cracking just a little as Angela muscles her toward the ropes.

John Phillips: "Angela Hall wasting no time asserting herself physically."

The referee calls for the break. Angela gives it cleanly, hands up.

Bianca adjusts her hair, smirks like nothing happened, then suddenly slaps Angela across the face.

The crowd erupts.

Mark Bravo: "Oh, that was a mistake."

Angela's head turns with the shot.

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Then she turns right back.

Bianca's smile vanishes as Angela explodes forward with a deep arm drag that sends Page flipping across the canvas. Bianca scrambles up, only for Angela to catch her with a second arm drag even faster than the first.

Page tumbles into a seated position near the ropes, eyes wide, and the crowd roars its approval.

John Phillips: "Bianca Page just found out how quick Angela Hall can be."

Mark Bravo: "Welcome to UTA."

Bianca rolls out under the bottom rope in a hurry and lands at ringside beside Ace Andrews, immediately throwing her hands up in frustration. She starts venting to him while trying to recompose herself, clearly furious that things didn't go according to her script.

John Phillips: "A rough opening exchange for Bianca Page, and she is already looking to regroup on the outside."

Ace speaks calmly to her, pointing toward the ring and reminding her to slow things down. Bianca takes a breath, nods once, and fixes the expression on her face before turning back toward the action.

Mark Bravo: "That's where Ace helps. Angela wants this match to feel like a sprint. Bianca needs to make it something else."

Back inside the ring, Angela paces near the ropes, energized and ready, waving Bianca back in with both hands as the crowd cheers her on.

Angela Hall: "Come on!"

Bianca glares at her from the floor, then slowly climbs onto the apron. She starts to step through the ropes--and immediately catches Angela with a shoulder to the midsection through the ropes.

The crowd boos as Bianca quickly slings herself inside, grabs Angela by the head, and snaps her down by the hair to the canvas.

John Phillips: "And there's Bianca Page taking advantage of the moment."

Mark Bravo: "Pretty? No. Smart? Absolutely."

Bianca drops into a mounted position and throws sharp forearms down into Angela's upper chest and shoulder line, not wildly, but with clear intent. The polished smile is gone now. In its place is a colder, more

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frustrated edge.

Angela tries to cover up and turn away, but Bianca stays on her, dragging her back by the hair and forcing her upright before driving a knee into the spine.

John Phillips: "Bianca Page came in with a lot of polish and presentation, but she's showing something mean here too."

Mark Bravo: "That slap may've woken her up in the worst possible way. Now she knows she actually has to fight."

Bianca yanks Angela to her feet and sends her into the corner. Angela hits hard and turns just in time to eat a running back elbow from Page that drives into her jaw. Bianca follows with a sharp snapmare out of the corner, then runs the ropes and drives a low boot into Angela's upper back as she sits up from the mat.

Bianca rises and throws both arms out with a smug smile, as though the crowd should appreciate the quality of what she's doing.

Bianca Page: "Classy enough for you?"

The crowd buries her in boos.

John Phillips: "Bianca Page beginning to settle in now."

Mark Bravo: "And Angela Hall's got her first real adversity of the match."

Bianca reaches down, pulling Angela up by the wrist, clearly looking to continue building momentum as the debutante starts finding her footing inside a UTA ring.

Bianca Page keeps hold of Angela Hall's wrist and pulls her fully back to her feet, her expression now far more focused than it was at the opening bell. Whatever nerves may have existed in her debut have been replaced by something colder and more deliberate.

John Phillips: "Bianca Page weathered that early burst from Angela Hall, and now she's beginning to put together something meaningful."

Mark Bravo: "That's the danger with someone this polished. Once she gets her feet under her, she can start making you wrestle her match."

Bianca twists Angela's arm into a standing wristlock, then steps through and rolls into a sharp takedown that drags Angela to the canvas by the trapped arm. Bianca kneels over the shoulder and wrenches back, forcing Angela to work from underneath while Ace Andrews nods approvingly from ringside.

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John Phillips: "Good control here from Bianca Page."

Mark Bravo: "And she's doing exactly what Ace would want her to do. Slow Angela down. Take away that speed advantage. Keep her grounded."

Angela grits her teeth and starts trying to rise, but Bianca yanks her back down by the arm and floats into a front facelock, grinding her forearm across the back of Angela's head before transitioning into a grounded headlock. It is not flashy. It is not dramatic. It is simply effective.

The crowd starts clapping, trying to rally Angela back into it.

John Phillips: "Angela Hall needs to find a way to create separation here."

Angela plants a hand, then a knee, then muscles her way upward. Bianca stays attached, but Angela powers her toward the ropes and shoves her off. Bianca rebounds--Angela ducks for a back body drop--

Bianca sees it coming and halts just in time, then drives a hard kick into Angela's chest that stops her cold.

Mark Bravo: "Oho, that was nice."

Angela stands upright from the kick just in time for Bianca to catch her with a swinging neckbreaker that drops her cleanly to the mat.

John Phillips: "Neckbreaker by Bianca Page!"

Bianca floats into the cover.

Referee: "One! Two!"

Angela kicks out.

Bianca sits up with a frustrated exhale, then quickly regains her composure, brushing a hand through her hair as though even the kickout cannot disrupt her presentation for long.

Mark Bravo: "That was close, though. Bianca's starting to connect now."

Bianca drags Angela up and backs her into the ropes, then whips her across the ring. Angela rebounds and Bianca catches her with a beautiful dropkick right to the upper chest, sending Hall tumbling backward to the mat. The crowd boos, but there is a grudging appreciation in the noise for how cleanly Bianca hit it.

John Phillips: "Very well-executed dropkick there."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah, I hate to admit it, but that was picture perfect."

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Bianca rises and again lifts both arms to the side, soaking in the heat as if it only confirms that people are paying the attention she deserves.

Ace Andrews applauds from ringside, slow and smug.

Bianca turns back to Angela and pulls her up into the corner, then drives a pair of hard shoulders into the midsection. Angela doubles over against the buckles as Bianca backs off and casually wipes her hands together, proud of her work.

Bianca Page: "This is what greatness looks like."

The crowd boos louder.

John Phillips: "Bianca Page looking more and more comfortable with every passing moment."

Mark Bravo: "And Angela Hall has to be careful here. If Bianca keeps stacking clean offense like this, that debut is going to become a huge statement."

Bianca grabs Angela by the arm and tries for another Irish whip into the opposite corner--

But Angela plants her feet.

The crowd comes to life a little.

Bianca tries again to force the whip.

Angela blocks it a second time.

John Phillips: "Angela digging in here!"

Bianca pulls once more--

Angela suddenly yanks Bianca toward her instead and catches her with a stiff forearm to the face.

The crowd pops.

Bianca staggers but comes right back in, swinging wildly with a clothesline--Angela ducks under, hits the ropes, and comes back with a running shoulder tackle that knocks Bianca flat on her back.

Mark Bravo: "There we go! Angela needed that badly."

Bianca scrambles up quickly, a little stunned, and Angela meets her with another forearm. Then another. Bianca gets backed toward the ropes and Angela whips her across. Bianca rebounds--Angela leapfrogs her

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on the return, then catches her coming back with a deep arm drag that sends Bianca skidding across the mat.

The crowd cheers loudly as Bianca pops up again, only to eat a second arm drag from Angela Hall, this one with even more snap than the first.

John Phillips: "Angela Hall firing back with that explosiveness we talked about earlier."

Mark Bravo: "And Bianca just lost that comfortable little rhythm she had going."

Bianca rolls to a knee, visibly annoyed now, and Angela doesn't give her room. She rushes in and hits a running back elbow that knocks Bianca into the corner, then follows with a burst of stomps to the midsection as the referee starts his count.

Referee: "One! Two! Three! Four!"

Angela breaks at four and immediately grabs Bianca by the wrist, whipping her hard into the opposite corner. Bianca hits and stumbles forward--Angela scoops her up and plants her with a powerslam in the center of the ring.

The crowd erupts.

John Phillips: "Powerslam by Angela Hall!"

Angela hooks the leg.

Referee: "One! Two!"

Bianca kicks out.

Mark Bravo: "That was close! Bianca Page nearly had that debut spoiled right there."

Angela gets back to her feet quickly, energized now, and the crowd is firmly behind her. Bianca rolls toward the ropes, trying to create space, while Ace Andrews moves a little closer on the outside, watching carefully.

John Phillips: "Momentum swinging again in this match, and Angela Hall has completely changed the feel of this thing."

Angela reaches down and grabs Bianca by the wrist, trying to bring her up and keep the pressure on as the match continues to build.

Angela Hall keeps hold of Bianca Page's wrist and pulls her up off the mat, the crowd in Raleigh fully behind her now as the momentum continues to swing in her direction.

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John Phillips: "Angela Hall has fought her way back into this one in a big way, and now Bianca Page is the one being forced to respond."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah, and Bianca doesn't like that at all. She was feeling herself a minute ago. Now she's getting run over."

Angela pulls Bianca in and hammers her with a stiff forearm to the side of the face, then another that rocks Bianca backward toward the ropes. Bianca covers up and tries to sidestep away, but Angela stays on her, driving her into the ropes and sending her across the ring with an Irish whip.

Bianca rebounds--Angela catches her with a high back body drop that launches her into the air before she crashes down hard on the canvas.

The crowd pops loudly.

John Phillips: "Angela Hall is rolling now!"

Mark Bravo: "That's the kind of burst that changes everything. Once Angela gets moving downhill, good luck stopping her."

Bianca scrambles toward the corner, trying to gather herself, but Angela is already on her. She charges in with a running splash that crushes Bianca against the turnbuckles, then quickly grabs her and snaps her over with a quick snap suplex out of the corner.

Angela floats into another cover.

Referee: "One! Two!"

Bianca gets the shoulder up.

John Phillips: "Bianca Page still alive, but Angela Hall has completely taken command of this match."

Bianca rolls toward the ropes again, breathing heavier now, her polished image beginning to crack under the pressure. On the outside, Ace Andrews slaps the apron once and starts shouting instructions.

Ace Andrews: "Get up! Get up, Bianca! Now!"

Angela hears him and turns, glaring out toward ringside.

Mark Bravo: "Ace Andrews trying to coach from the floor, and you know he's looking for any opening he can create."

Angela reaches down for Bianca one more time, but Bianca suddenly drops flat and rolls under the bottom

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rope to the outside before Hall can fully get hold of her. The crowd boos as Bianca lands beside Ace, using the apron to steady herself.

John Phillips: "Bianca wisely heading to the outside for a moment, trying to break Angela's momentum."

Ace steps in close, talking fast, calming Bianca down, pointing to his temple and then to Angela in the ring. Bianca nods, still clearly rattled but listening.

Inside the ring, Angela paces near the ropes, growing impatient.

Angela Hall: "Come on! Get back in here!"

The referee starts his count as Bianca takes her time.

Referee: "One!... Two!... Three!..."

Bianca starts to climb back onto the apron, one hand on the top rope, one eye still on Angela. Hall moves in to meet her--

And that's the opening Ace Andrews wanted.

As the referee's attention is on Bianca re-entering, Ace reaches in from the outside and grabs Angela Hall's ankle for just a second.

Angela stumbles and turns in frustration.

John Phillips: "Oh, come on!"

Mark Bravo: "There it is. I knew he'd get involved."

Angela points down at Ace and starts shouting at him, furious. The referee turns now too late to catch the moment. Bianca sees all of it and strikes immediately.

She steps through the ropes and catches Angela from behind with a clubbing forearm to the upper back, then spins her around and drives a sharp knee into the midsection.

Angela doubles over.

Bianca quickly hooks her arms, turns with clean balance, and drives Hall down with a beautiful sit-out facebuster in the center of the ring.

John Phillips: "Bianca Page just stole the opening she needed!"

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Mark Bravo: "And that might be the whole match right there!"

Bianca doesn't waste a second. She dives into the cover and hooks both legs tightly, folding Angela up near the center of the ring while Ace Andrews pounds the apron from the outside.

Referee: "One! Two! Three!"

The bell rings.

John Phillips: "Bianca Page wins her UTA debut!"

Mark Bravo: "And Angela Hall is going to be furious when she realizes exactly how that happened."

Bianca immediately rolls away from the cover and onto her knees, breathing hard, then slowly starts to smile as the reality of it sets in. Her music hits, and Ace Andrews slides into the ring with a look of pure satisfaction.

Angela sits up on the mat, frustrated and stunned, looking first at Bianca and then out toward Ace at ringside, putting the pieces together a second too late.

John Phillips: "Bianca Page absolutely showed talent tonight, but there is no question that Ace Andrews' involvement shifted the outcome."

Mark Bravo: "Sure did. But in the record books? It still goes down as a win in her debut."

Ace helps Bianca to her feet and raises her hand high in the air. Bianca, now fully back in her element, brushes hair out of her face and smiles proudly as the crowd showers her in boos.

Bianca Page: "Classy."

She says it to nobody and everybody at once, chin tilted high as Ace applauds beside her.

John Phillips: "Bianca Page makes a successful first impression in UTA, though not without controversy."

Bianca and Ace exit the ring together, Bianca carrying herself like she just conquered the company, while Angela Hall remains in the ring looking angry, embarrassed, and ready for payback the next time their paths cross.

How You Survive

The scene cuts backstage.

We find Emily Hightower storming through the corridor, visibly aggravated, still dressed to compete just in

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case she's needed and still carrying the lingering frustration from last week all over her face. A few steps behind her are David Hightower and the rest of the Hightower Clan, looking far less bothered by any of it.

Emily suddenly stops, spins around, and throws her hands up in disbelief.

Emily Hightower: "What was that last week?"

David slows, blinking at her like he does not understand why this is even a conversation.

Emily Hightower: "You guys are supposed to be security. You're supposed to be out there to make sure no one interferes in my matches!"

She points back over her shoulder in the general direction of the arena.

Emily Hightower: "You are not there to get involved in my matches!"

The rest of the Clan shifts awkwardly behind David, but David himself just lets out a small scoff and steps forward, completely unmoved by Emily's anger.

David Hightower: "Hey..."

He spreads his hands like he is trying to calm down a child throwing a tantrum.

David Hightower: "You won, didn't ya?"

Emily stares at him, jaw tight, clearly not interested in that logic for even a second.

Emily Hightower: "That is not the point."

David Hightower: "No, little girl, that is exactly the point."

Emily's expression hardens instantly at that.

David Hightower: "You need to learn that the Hightowers aren't afraid to bend the rules a little."

He steps closer, voice lowering just enough to sound more patronizing than loud.

David Hightower: "That's how you survive. That's how you stay ahead. That's how this family handles business. "

Emily shakes her head in disgust, clearly not buying into the lecture.

Emily Hightower: "I don't need help winning my matches."

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David Hightower: "Everybody needs help. Smart people are just honest about it."

Emily takes a step toward him now, voice sharper, more personal.

Emily Hightower: "Then maybe smart people should learn the difference between protecting me... and making me look like I can't do this on my own."

That lands.

For the first time, David's face changes just a little. Not guilt. Not regret. More like annoyance that she would even frame it that way.

David Hightower: "You wear our name. That means when you're out there, you're not on your own. You think I got my reputation by playing by the rules and being a corporate guy?! I carried a chain with a tow hook! I EARNED the name The Toughest Dog In The Yard!"

Emily Hightower: "Maybe that's the problem."

The air changes immediately.

The rest of the Clan straightens up behind David, suddenly far more alert now that the argument has crossed into dangerous territory.

David narrows his eyes.

David Hightower: "Careful."

Emily doesn't back down, but she doesn't push it further either. She exhales through her nose, shakes her head, and looks away for a second, trying to cool herself off before she says something she can't take back.

Emily Hightower: "Just stay out of my matches."

David tilts his head, clearly unconvinced that he owes her that.

David Hightower: "We'll do what's necessary."

Emily glares at him for one last beat, then turns and walks off, still furious, leaving David and the rest of the Hightower Clan standing there behind her.

David watches her go, expression cold and unreadable.

The tension inside the family is no longer hiding beneath the surface.

Cut away.

Platinum Made Society

Ace Andrews and Sione Maivia are in Gorilla Position with "Classy" Bianca Page who is breathing heavily after her match.

Bianca Page: Did you all see that? Did you see the performance I just displayed out there and how I dog walked a former United States Champion? Angela Hall will just be the first of many that I'll make an example of many on my way to becoming a UTA champion. So whether you hold the international, the United States, or the Women's Champion you can all rest assure I'll be a champion sooner rather than later.

Ace and Sione nod their heads in agreement as Samuel Scythe walks into Gorilla Position.

Ace Andrews: Great job, Classy one. I'm going to go handle business with Samuel.

"Classy" Bianca Page: Go get him, Samuel! You got this!

Bianca and Samuel give each other a fist bump then Ace and Samuel walk away as Bianca as Sione exit the Gorilla Position.

Bianca Page: Whoever wants to step up to Samuel or I the fact remains your efforts will be in total vein because the Platinum Made Society are the standard bearer and true class of UTA.

Bianca has a cocky smile on her face, she turns to Sione and nods her head that it's time to go. The two of them walk away.

Calm Down

The scene cuts to Scott Stevens' office already in progress.

Scott Stevens: "Now, Chris, calm down."

The camera pans out to reveal a furious Chris Ross standing in front of Stevens' desk, the UTA Championship slung over his shoulder. Behind him stands Valentina Blaze, one hand lightly on his back, trying to keep him grounded while he paces with barely controlled rage.

Chris Ross: "No, Scott, I won't calm down."

He turns sharply, pointing back toward the hallway like the entire building has become a list of personal

insults.

Chris Ross: "Every week it's somebody new, coming in here thinking they're owed something while I get dumped on!"

Chris Ross: "First Trey Mack. Then you got this Reaper guy taking the name you approved a month ago. Who the hell is Samuel Scythe!? I AM THE REAPER OF HARRISBURG!!!! The real Reaper! Oh hell at this point I am so pissed off at everyone I don't even know who to address first!"

He takes a moment.

Chris Ross: "Now Jett wants to run around and work his pole smoker screaming about how he's the best in the world and how the UTA Championship is his."

He shakes his head, seething.

Chris Ross: "I'm done with it all!"

Valentina steps in a little closer, rubbing his arm and trying to settle him.

Valentina Blaze: "Chris..."

But Ross is too wound up to hear much of anything.

Scott Stevens leans back in his chair, watching him carefully before speaking again.

Scott Stevens: "Look... I remember someone else coming into UTA and taking it upon themselves to put on a mask and start attacking people over their perceived position."

The implication lands immediately.

Chris stops pacing and turns toward Stevens, jaw clenched.

Chris Ross: "It's not the same."

Scott gives him a look that says he does not entirely agree.

Scott Stevens: "It kinda is."

Chris exhales sharply through his nose, trying and failing to calm himself. Scott folds his hands on the desk.

Scott Stevens: "And now you're the champion. Of course everyone is going to want a shot. You've got a target on your back."

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Chris runs a hand through his hair, pacing again, trying to find words that match the anger boiling in him.

Chris Ross: "This guy though... I just want... I just..."

He suddenly grabs a chair near the wall and hurls it across the office.

It slams violently into the wall and crashes to the floor.

Chris Ross: "I JUST WANT TO BREAK HIM IN TWO!"

Valentina immediately moves in closer, shushing him, one hand on his shoulder and the other on his arm, trying to bring him down from the ledge.

Valentina Blaze: "Hey... hey... breathe. Chris. Chris."

Scott looks at the chair on the floor... then back at Chris.

Scott Stevens: "This reaction right here? This is exactly what he--and everyone else--is looking for."

Chris steps up to the desk, staring a hole through Stevens.

Chris Ross: "Well, he wanted my attention, Scott. Now he's got it."

Scott Stevens: "Look, Chris. Why don't you and Valentina go ahead and take the rest of the night off. We can talk abo--"

Chris Ross: "NO!"

The word explodes out of him.

Chris Ross: "We're going to talk about this now. I want you to set the match."

Scott Stevens: "Chris, I can't d--"

Chris Ross: "God damn it, Stevens, for once in your worthless, spineless life do what needs to be done."

Ross slaps a hand down on the desk.

Chris Ross: "I want him next week in St. Louis."

Scott sits up straighter now, his own patience beginning to fray.

Scott Stevens: "Now wait a minute. I already had a main event planned."

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Chris leans forward over the desk, getting right in Stevens' face.

Chris Ross: "And you're going to change it, you hear me, Scott?"

Valentina looks uneasy now, not because she disagrees, but because she can see this is becoming something else entirely.

Scott shakes his head, trying to regain a little control.

Scott Stevens: "How about in three weeks at Victor--"

Chris Ross: "NO! Next week! Me and that mouthy bastard!"

The room goes quiet for a beat.

Scott stares at Chris.

Chris stares right back.

Valentina keeps a hand on Ross' arm, trying to keep him from exploding all over again.

Finally, Stevens exhales, defeated more than convinced.

Scott Stevens: "Fine, Chris..."

He glances down, then back up.

Scott Stevens: "Fine."

Chris says nothing. He just nods once, jaw still tight, then turns away from the desk. Valentina follows with him, giving Stevens one last look before they head for the door.

Scott remains seated behind the desk, staring at the fallen chair and the mess in his office, knowing full well he just gave Maxwell Jett exactly what he wanted.

Cut away.

Brick Bronson vs. Samuel Scythe

The arena lights dim until the Lenovo Center is swallowed in near-total darkness.

A low murmur ripples through the crowd as the atmosphere shifts from anticipation to unease. The giant

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screen flickers once... twice... then bursts into a wash of grim, distorted imagery. Dead trees. Blackened earth. Rusted steel. The brief flash of a sharpened blade.

Then the music hits.

It is heavy. Ominous. Suffocating.

A single cold spotlight drops onto the stage.

Samuel Scythe stands in the center of it.

He is motionless, hood pulled low, head bowed just enough to shadow his face. There is no pose. No taunt. No attempt to draw in the crowd. He simply stands there, silent and still, like something summoned rather than introduced.

John Phillips: "It is time for the UTA debut of Samuel Scythe."

Mark Bravo: "And this is already one of those entrances that makes a building feel colder."

A second figure steps out from the darkness behind him.

Ace Andrews.

Immaculately dressed, smug as ever, Andrews looks completely comfortable in the chaos around him. He pauses just behind Scythe, hands loosely folded, a faint smile on his face like a man unveiling his latest acquisition to the world.

John Phillips: "And once again tonight, Ace Andrews is at ringside. Earlier, he guided Bianca Page to a successful debut. Now he stands beside another newcomer to UTA."

Mark Bravo: "That's what makes this interesting. Bianca Page came in polished, smug, and dangerous. Samuel Scythe looks like the part of the night you're supposed to survive."

Scythe slowly raises his head.

The camera catches his face beneath the hood. His expression is cold, vacant, and focused. There is no excitement in it. No nerves. No adrenaline. Just a dead calm that somehow feels more threatening than rage ever could.

John Phillips: "There does not appear to be a trace of hesitation in Samuel Scythe."

Mark Bravo: "No. He looks like he already decided exactly how this is supposed to go."

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Scythe begins his walk to the ring.

Each step is slow and deliberate. Heavy. Purposeful. He does not look left. He does not look right. He does not acknowledge the fans leaning over the barricade or the noise crashing down around him. He just keeps moving forward.

Ace Andrews follows half a step behind, saying nothing, wearing the kind of expression that suggests complete confidence in the monster he has brought with him.

John Phillips: "For a man making his debut, Samuel Scythe is carrying himself like he has been here before."

Mark Bravo: "Or like he thinks this place has been waiting on him."

The boos continue to build as Scythe makes his way down the ramp, but there is something more than hate mixed into the reaction now. Curiosity. Uncertainty. Maybe even a little discomfort.

At ringside, Samuel Scythe stops at the foot of the steel steps.

He looks up at the ring for a long moment.

Then he ascends the steps without hurry and steps onto the apron.

He pauses there, one hand resting on the top rope, the arena lights catching the outline of his hood and shoulders.

Then, slowly, he steps through the ropes and into the ring.

Once inside, he walks to the center and reaches up with both hands.

He pulls the hood back.

The crowd boos louder.

Scythe turns his head toward the hard camera, then drags his thumb slowly across his throat in one cold, deliberate motion.

Mark Bravo: "Yeah. I don't love that."

John Phillips: "A chilling first impression from Samuel Scythe as he enters UTA competition for the first time."

Ace Andrews settles into position at ringside while Samuel Scythe backs into his corner, eyes fixed forward,

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waiting for the next part of his debut to begin.

Samuel Scythe stands in his corner, still as stone, while Ace Andrews paces slowly at ringside with the calm confidence of a man who believes he has already changed the balance of the night.

Then the arena erupts.

A hard, pounding burst of music blasts through the Lenovo Center, instantly changing the energy in the building from uneasy tension to raw anticipation. The crowd comes alive as the camera swings toward the stage.

John Phillips: "And now here comes the former UTA Champion, Brick Bronson!"

Mark Bravo: "And this is a whole different kind of problem. Samuel Scythe may look like a horror movie, but Brick Bronson fights like a car wreck."

Brick Bronson steps out onto the stage with no wasted motion and no theatrics, his posture broad and heavy, his expression all business. He looks like a man who has already decided this is going to be ugly and is perfectly fine with that. There is no smile on his face. No attempt to play to the crowd. Just that familiar hard stare and the unmistakable aura of someone built for violence.

John Phillips: "Brick Bronson has been through wars in UTA. Championships. Main events. Bitter rivalries. He has seen every kind of opponent this company can offer, and tonight he welcomes Samuel Scythe the only way Brick Bronson knows how."

Mark Bravo: "By trying to knock his head off."

Bronson starts down the ramp with a strong, deliberate stride, shoulders squared, never once taking his eyes off the ring. The crowd stays with him the whole way, rallying behind the former champion as he heads toward one of the more uncertain matchups of the evening.

Inside the ring, Samuel Scythe does not move. He watches from his corner, expression unreadable. Ace Andrews stops pacing and turns his full attention toward the ramp, clearly studying every step Brick takes.

John Phillips: "That is one of the most dangerous men on the roster, and he is not a welcoming committee for anybody's debut."

Mark Bravo: "No, and that's what makes this so interesting. Brick's not intimidated by the smoke, the hood, the ominous music, or Ace Andrews standing out there with that look on his face. He's just here to fight."

At ringside, Brick slows and glares up toward the apron, then toward Ace Andrews, giving the manager a look that says he has already factored the interference into the equation. Ace gives him a smug little smile in return, but Brick barely acknowledges it.

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Bronson climbs the steel steps and steps onto the apron, eyes still locked inside the ring.

For a brief moment, he and Samuel Scythe stare at one another from opposite sides of the ropes, the noise of the crowd swelling around them.

John Phillips: "And now that first real staredown between Brick Bronson and Samuel Scythe."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah, and there's no blinking in either one of them."

Brick steps through the ropes into the ring and immediately peels off his entrance gear, tossing it aside with zero ceremony. He rolls his neck once, flexes his hands, and starts pacing the length of his corner like a caged animal just waiting for the bell.

The camera cuts between the two men.

Samuel Scythe--cold, still, eerie.

Brick Bronson--intense, grounded, dangerous.

John Phillips: "A debut under the bright lights for Samuel Scythe."

Mark Bravo: "And a brutal welcome waiting for him in Brick Bronson."

Brick plants himself in his corner and leans forward slightly, eyes narrowed, jaw clenched, completely ready for the fight to begin.

The referee steps into the center of the ring and looks from one corner to the other.

Samuel Scythe stands cold and unmoving, shoulders squared, eyes fixed forward. Across from him, Brick Bronson bounces once on the balls of his feet, rolls his shoulders loose, and stares right back with the hard focus of a man who has no interest in mystery once the bell rings.

John Phillips: "And now the moment of truth for Samuel Scythe. The entrance is over. The debut becomes real right here."

Mark Bravo: "And he picked a nasty first day at the office. Brick Bronson is not here to play tour guide."

The bell rings.

The two men step forward immediately.

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No circling. No long feeling-out process. Just a straight meeting in the center of the ring as Brick walks right into Scythe's space, chin up, almost daring him to throw the first shot.

John Phillips: "Bronson wasting no time here."

Scythe answers by stepping in chest to chest.

The two big men lock eyes for a brief second--then Brick shoves him backward with both hands.

The crowd pops.

Mark Bravo: "That's one way to start a debut."

Scythe absorbs the shove, takes half a step back, then storms forward again. This time he meets Bronson with a hard forearm to the jaw that snaps Brick's head to the side.

Bronson answers instantly with a forearm of his own.

Scythe fires back.

Bronson fires back harder.

John Phillips: "And here we go!"

The exchange escalates immediately into a standing slugfest, forearms and heavy clubbing blows traded in the center of the ring. Neither man is giving up ground. Neither man is trying to be clever. This is brute force and bad intentions from the opening seconds.

Mark Bravo: "Yeah, they skipped the wrestling part and went straight to trying to dent each other."

Brick lands two quick forearms in a row and follows with a short headbutt that rocks Scythe backward. Bronson grabs the back of his neck and hurls him into the corner with raw force.

Scythe hits hard.

Brick charges in and buries a shoulder into the ribs, then another, driving the wind out of the newcomer as the crowd roars him on.

John Phillips: "Brick Bronson looking to make this debut a painful one right out of the gate."

The referee starts his count, and Bronson backs off at four. He does not give Scythe long to breathe, though. He grabs the wrist and whips him hard across the ring into the opposite buckles.

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Scythe hits and stumbles out--

Bronson catches him with a big running boot to the face that sends him sprawling to the mat.

Mark Bravo: "That'll wake you up."

John Phillips: "A very physical opening here from the former champion."

Bronson drags Scythe up by the head and hammers him with another forearm, then hooks him around the waist and muscles him over with a rough belly-to-belly suplex.

Scythe crashes hard and rolls toward the ropes.

Ace Andrews moves closer at ringside, concern creeping into his face for the first time.

John Phillips: "Brick Bronson imposing his will early."

Mark Bravo: "That's what you do to a debuting guy with spooky presentation. You punch him in the mouth and find out if he's real."

Bronson stalks toward the ropes and reaches down to pull Scythe back up--but Scythe suddenly drives a shoulder into Brick's midsection from below, ramming him into the ropes. Before Bronson can reset, Scythe rises and hammers him with a brutal uppercut that staggers the former champion backward.

The crowd reacts to the sudden shift.

John Phillips: "And there's the response from Samuel Scythe."

Scythe keeps coming, following with a heavy short-arm lariat that drops Bronson to one knee. Then a clubbing shot across the upper back. Then another to the side of the head. The shots are ugly and compact, thrown with the kind of menace that says he is more interested in damage than style.

Mark Bravo: "Okay. Yep. He's real."

Bronson tries to rise through it, but Scythe hammers him with another forearm and then drives him backward into the corner. Scythe unloads with a barrage of body shots, then a rising forearm under the chin that snaps Brick upright against the turnbuckles.

John Phillips: "Samuel Scythe showing a very violent edge here in his first UTA appearance."

Scythe grabs Bronson by the wrist and whips him out of the corner. Bronson rebounds toward center--Scythe spins and catches him with a huge spinning back elbow that floors him.

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The crowd gives a loud reaction to the impact.

Scythe does not cover. He just stands over Brick for a second, breathing through his nose, expression still cold, almost emotionless.

Mark Bravo: "That's what I don't like. Most guys hit something like that and they get excited. This guy just... continues."

Scythe drags Brick upward again, hooks him, and snaps him down with a hard sidewalk slam in the center of the ring. This time he drops into a cover.

Referee: "One! Two!"

Bronson kicks out.

John Phillips: "Brick Bronson powers out."

Scythe sits up slowly, not frustrated, not surprised, just processing. At ringside, Ace Andrews claps once and motions for him to stay on the attack.

Mark Bravo: "This is exactly what Ace wanted. Slow the veteran down, make the debut feel dangerous, and let everybody watching wonder if Brick Bronson might actually be in trouble."

Scythe reaches down and pulls Brick up by the head, but Bronson fires back with a gut shot, then another, then a hard right hand that staggers Scythe backward. Brick rises with a grimace and swings a clothesline--Scythe ducks it and shoves him toward the ropes.

Bronson rebounds--Scythe catches him with a sick-looking knee lift right under the chin.

John Phillips: "What a shot!"

Brick stumbles backward into the ropes, dazed but still upright. Scythe charges in, looking to wipe him out again--

But Brick drops his shoulder and back body drops Scythe high over the top rope to the floor.

The crowd erupts.

Mark Bravo: "There we go!"

Scythe crashes on the outside near Ace Andrews, who immediately backs up and starts barking instructions. Inside the ring, Bronson leans over the top rope, glaring down at his opponent, chest heaving as the momentum swings again.

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John Phillips: "A very physical opening few minutes between Brick Bronson and Samuel Scythe, and neither man is giving an inch."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah, and if this is what Samuel Scythe looks like in minute one of his debut, UTA may have a serious problem on its hands."

On the outside, Scythe slowly pushes himself up near the barricade, eyes already back on the ring while Brick waits inside, ready for the next collision.

Samuel Scythe pushes himself up on the outside, one hand on the apron, the other on the barricade, while Ace Andrews hovers nearby barking measured instructions instead of panic.

Ace Andrews: "Get up. Stay on him. Don't let him dictate this."

John Phillips: "Samuel Scythe sent to the outside, and that may be the first real moment of disruption for him in this debut."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah, but look at him. He's not rattled. He's annoyed."

Inside the ring, Brick Bronson paces once, then hits the ropes and charges toward the near side.

The crowd rises--

Bronson launches himself through the ropes with a suicide dive--

But Samuel Scythe steps aside at the last second.

Bronson crashes hard into the barricade shoulder-first, then spills awkwardly down to the floor.

John Phillips: "Nobody home!"

Mark Bravo: "That's the danger. One miss against a guy like Scythe and suddenly you're the one getting hunted."

Scythe is on him immediately.

He grabs Bronson by the back of the head and drives him face-first into the ring apron. The crowd groans at the impact. Brick stumbles back, dazed, and Scythe follows with a brutal forearm across the upper back that sends him down to one knee on the floor.

John Phillips: "Samuel Scythe capitalizing in a hurry here."

The referee starts his count from inside the ring, but Scythe pays him no attention. He yanks Bronson up and

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whips him hard into the steel ring steps. Brick collides knee-first and hip-first, then topples sideways with a grimace of pain.

Mark Bravo: "That's a grown man getting thrown into steel, and Scythe doesn't look the least bit satisfied yet."

Ace Andrews watches with folded arms now, a smug satisfaction returning to his face as Scythe stalks toward Bronson again. He pulls the former champion up by the head and neck, then hammers him with a short right hand to the ribs, followed by another clubbing shot to the back.

Ace Andrews: "Break him down! Piece by piece!"

Scythe rolls Bronson back into the ring under the bottom rope, then follows him in. Brick is still trying to gather himself when Scythe steps over him and drives a heavy boot into the side of the ribs.

John Phillips: "Bronson may have made the first big statement in this match, but since that miss on the dive, Samuel Scythe has taken this thing right back."

Scythe pulls Bronson up, hooks him, and drives him down with a hard snap suplex. He rolls through, keeps hold of the head, and drags Brick into a grounded front facelock, leaning all of his weight down across the neck and shoulders.

Mark Bravo: "He's smart, too. That's what makes this ugly. He's not just swinging wild. He's making Brick carry him."

Bronson plants a forearm and starts trying to rise. Scythe clubs him once across the back, then twice, then shoves him toward the ropes. Brick comes back swinging with a lariat--

Scythe ducks it and catches him from behind with a rear waistlock.

Bronson spreads his base to block the lift, but Scythe changes levels and hits a chop block to the back of the knee, taking Brick down to one leg. Before Bronson can turn, Scythe blasts him with a running boot to the side of the face that knocks him flat.

John Phillips: "A nasty combination from Samuel Scythe."

Mark Bravo: "That's the sort of thing you remember the next morning."

Scythe rolls Bronson over and hooks the far leg.

Referee: "One! Two!"

Brick powers out.

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Scythe sits up and stares at the referee for half a second, not arguing, just processing again, before turning back to his opponent.

John Phillips: "Another kickout from Brick Bronson, but this debut is getting more impressive by the minute."

Scythe drags Bronson to his feet and backs him into the corner. He drives in with a shoulder to the midsection, then another, then lifts his head and smashes a forearm under Brick's jaw. Bronson sags against the buckles, and Scythe grabs both wrists, pinning them momentarily before unloading with repeated body shots.

Mark Bravo: "This is turning from a fight into an assault."

The referee begins his count. Scythe backs off at four, but only by a step. Bronson lurches out of the corner and Scythe lifts him onto his shoulders in one sudden motion, looking for a death valley-style drop.

The crowd reacts--

Brick fights free with elbows.

One to the side of the head. Another. A third that finally forces Scythe to stumble forward and release him. Bronson lands on his feet behind him, grabs him around the waist, and muscles him over with a German suplex.

The crowd erupts.

John Phillips: "German suplex by Bronson!"

Scythe rolls through the impact and gets to a knee, clearly rattled for the first time. Bronson is up slower, favoring the shoulder from the barricade collision, but he barrels forward anyway and crushes Scythe with a short-arm clothesline. Then another. Then a big back elbow that rocks him into the ropes.

Mark Bravo: "Here comes Brick!"

Bronson whips Scythe across the ring. On the rebound, Brick catches him with a powerslam that shakes the canvas.

John Phillips: "Powerslam by Bronson!"

Brick hooks the leg deep.

Referee: "One! Two!"

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Scythe kicks out.

Bronson sits up, breathes hard, and slaps the mat once, frustration mixing with determination. At ringside, Ace Andrews is shouting again, more urgently now.

Ace Andrews: "Stay focused! Get up!"

John Phillips: "That was close, and now this match has swung again."

Brick rises and pulls Scythe with him, hooking him for what looks like another throw, but Scythe suddenly drives a thumb into the eye out of the referee's view. Bronson recoils, grabbing at his face. The crowd boos loudly.

Mark Bravo: "Oh, come on!"

Scythe wastes no time. He yanks Bronson forward and drives him down with a lifting DDT, spiking him near the center of the ring.

John Phillips: "DDT! DDT by Samuel Scythe!"

Bronson bounces off the mat and rolls onto his back, stunned. Scythe crawls into the cover, hooking both legs as Ace pounds the apron.

Referee: "One! Two!"

Brick kicks out again.

The crowd roars at the near fall while Scythe finally shows a flicker of irritation. He rises slowly, breathing harder now, then looks down at Bronson like he's deciding what level of punishment comes next.

John Phillips: "Brick Bronson refusing to go away, but Samuel Scythe continues to answer everything."

Mark Bravo: "This debut's no fluke. This guy came to wreck somebody."

Scythe reaches down and drags Bronson back to his feet, keeping a firm grip as the match barrels onward.

Samuel Scythe keeps a firm grip on Brick Bronson, dragging the former champion back to his feet with slow, deliberate force. Bronson is still fighting through it, but the effects of the apron shot, the ring steps, and the grinding pace are starting to show.

John Phillips: "Samuel Scythe is making Brick Bronson work for every breath right now."

Mark Bravo: "And that's a scary thing in a debut. Usually the new guy is the one trying to survive the

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veteran. Right now, Bronson is the one getting dragged into deep water."

Scythe hooks Bronson around the waist and tries to muscle him up again, looking for another heavy throw. Brick blocks it, spreads his base, and hammers a short elbow back into the ribs. Then another. Scythe absorbs both and answers with a clubbing forearm between the shoulder blades that buckles Bronson forward.

Scythe immediately shoves him chest-first into the corner.

Bronson hits hard against the buckles.

Scythe closes in and starts unloading with brutal body shots to the ribs and stomach, each one short, compact, and nasty. The referee begins his count, but Scythe is in no hurry to leave.

Referee: "One! Two! Three! Four!"

Scythe backs off at four, then steps right back in with a knife-edge chop that cracks through the arena.

Mark Bravo: "Good lord."

John Phillips: "Samuel Scythe is beginning to punish Brick Bronson now."

Bronson stumbles out of the corner, and Scythe catches him under the chin with a short uppercut that snaps his head back. Bronson drops to one knee. Scythe hits the ropes and comes back with a running knee strike to the side of the head that knocks Brick flat onto the canvas.

The crowd groans at the impact.

John Phillips: "Another vicious shot by Scythe."

He turns Bronson over and hooks a leg deep.

Referee: "One! Two!"

Bronson powers out again.

Mark Bravo: "Brick Bronson still in this thing, but every kickout is getting a little slower."

At ringside, Ace Andrews applauds once and motions for Scythe to stay methodical. Scythe nods faintly, then drags Bronson upright by the head. He scoops him up across the shoulders now, looking to finally land the move Bronson escaped earlier.

John Phillips: "Scythe trying for that death valley-style drop again--"

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Bronson fights with elbows.

One to the jaw. Another to the temple. A third that forces Scythe to stumble toward the ropes and lose balance just enough for Brick to slide off behind him. Bronson lands awkwardly but upright, hits the ropes, and comes charging back with a huge shoulder block that finally takes Scythe off his feet.

The crowd comes alive.

Mark Bravo: "There we go! Brick needed that in the worst way."

Scythe sits up almost immediately, but Bronson is already on him with a heavy forearm to the side of the head. Then another. Then a third that forces Scythe to one knee. Bronson grabs the wrist, whips him across the ring, and catches him on the rebound with a massive spinebuster that rattles the canvas.

John Phillips: "Spinebuster by Brick Bronson!"

Bronson hooks both legs.

Referee: "One! Two!"

Scythe kicks out.

Bronson rolls to a seated position, breathing hard, frustration creeping in. He pounds the mat once, then rises and grabs Scythe by the head, clearly sensing this may be his opening to put the debuting star down.

John Phillips: "Brick Bronson has weathered a storm and may be closing in on a big-time victory here."

Bronson pulls Scythe up and hooks him for a suplex, but Scythe blocks it. Bronson tries again. Scythe still blocks. Then Scythe drives a hard knee into the body, breaking the grip. He follows with a sharp headbutt that stuns Bronson in place.

Mark Bravo: "And just like that, Scythe shuts the door again."

Scythe backs up a step and then bursts forward with a nasty discus lariat that turns Bronson inside out.

The crowd gasps as Brick flips and crashes hard to the mat.

John Phillips: "What a lariat! Brick Bronson got turned inside out!"

Scythe doesn't cover right away.

Instead, he slowly kneels beside Bronson and pulls him back up by the head and neck, almost like he wants to make sure the veteran is conscious for what comes next. Ace Andrews watches from outside with a

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satisfied smile, urging him on with small hand motions.

Ace Andrews: "Finish him."

Scythe drags Bronson upright and traps both arms, trying to cinch in position for a double-underhook. Bronson is barely standing, but instinct takes over and he fights the hold, shifting his weight and trying to keep his footing as the struggle intensifies in the middle of the ring.

John Phillips: "Samuel Scythe looking to put this away now."

Mark Bravo: "And if he lands whatever he's setting up here, this debut may be over in a hurry."

Bronson digs in and tries one last time to fight free, while Scythe tightens his grip and muscles him toward the finish.

Brick Bronson plants his feet as best he can, legs trembling under the weight of the punishment he has taken, while Samuel Scythe tightens the double-underhook and tries to force the veteran into place.

John Phillips: "Bronson is fighting with everything he has left here."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah, but look at Scythe. He's not rushing it. He's trying to rip the last bit of resistance right out of him."

Brick jerks one arm loose for just a second and drives a short right hand into Scythe's ribs.

Then another.

The crowd rises, sensing a possible escape.

Bronson tries to wrench completely free--

Scythe slams a knee into the midsection.

Bronson folds just enough.

Scythe re-hooks both arms.

John Phillips: "He's got him again!"

With a violent jerk, Samuel Scythe hauls Brick Bronson up and spikes him down with a brutal double-underhook driver in the center of the ring.

The impact is sudden and ugly.

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The crowd gasps.

Mark Bravo: "That might do it! That might absolutely do it!"

Bronson bounces off the canvas and rolls onto his side, but Scythe grabs him immediately, rolling him flat and hooking both legs deep. Ace Andrews is pounding the apron on the outside, shouting for the count.

Referee: "One! Two! Thr--"

Bronson kicks out.

The crowd explodes.

John Phillips: "He kicked out! Brick Bronson kicked out!"

Mark Bravo: "I do not know how!"

For the first time all match, Samuel Scythe shows something close to disbelief.

He rises slowly to his knees, staring at Bronson, then at the referee, not arguing, just absorbing the fact that the match is somehow still going.

Ace Andrews immediately steps closer to the apron, jaw tight now.

Ace Andrews: "Stay on him! End it now!"

John Phillips: "That was a massive move from Samuel Scythe, and somehow Brick Bronson is still alive in this match."

Scythe gets back to his feet and drags Bronson upward again, this time with much less patience. Bronson is glassy-eyed, struggling to stand on his own, but he is still swinging as Scythe yanks him up. A weak forearm glances off Scythe's chest. Another catches the shoulder.

Mark Bravo: "That's just instinct now from Brick. Pure instinct."

Scythe answers by driving a forearm across the side of the head. Bronson stumbles into the ropes, barely staying upright. Scythe charges in for a finishing blow--

Bronson drops his shoulder and lifts him--

Back body drop.

But Scythe lands on his feet behind him.

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The crowd reacts.

Bronson turns--

Scythe blasts him with a boot to the gut.

Then another spinning back elbow to the jaw.

Bronson staggers but will not fall.

John Phillips: "Brick Bronson refusing to stay down!"

Scythe snarls now, finally showing a little edge in the face, and hits the ropes one more time. He comes back and nearly cuts Bronson in half with a running lariat flush across the throat and upper chest.

Bronson collapses backward to the mat.

The crowd groans.

Mark Bravo: "Good grief."

Scythe drops into another cover, this time less elegant and more forceful, pressing his forearm across Bronson's face while hooking the far leg.

Referee: "One! Two! Three!"

The bell rings.

John Phillips: "Samuel Scythe wins his UTA debut!"

Mark Bravo: "And that wasn't a debut, John. That was a warning."

Ace Andrews throws both arms out on the outside, a satisfied grin spreading across his face as he circles the ring. Inside, Samuel Scythe slowly rises to one knee, then to his feet, breathing hard but otherwise looking disturbingly composed for a man who just survived a war.

John Phillips: "What an impressive and violent first outing for Samuel Scythe. Brick Bronson pushed him to the limit, but in the end Scythe had just enough cruelty, just enough power, and just enough finish to put the former champion away."

The referee checks on Brick Bronson while Scythe stands over him for a moment, looking down without celebration, without relief, without joy. Just cold acknowledgment.

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Mark Bravo: "Bianca Page won earlier. Now Samuel Scythe wins here. Ace Andrews has had himself one hell of a night."

Ace climbs onto the apron and demands the referee raise Scythe's hand. The official does, and the crowd boos loudly as Samuel Scythe's arm is lifted in victory.

Scythe does not play to the fans. He does not gesture. He simply lowers his arm, turns, and exits the ring while Ace Andrews walks beside him with the look of a man whose plan is coming together nicely.

Back in the ring, Brick Bronson sits up slowly, frustrated and hurting, watching the debuting Scythe head up the ramp with a hard stare.

Samuel Scythe came to UTA and passed his first test.

And he did it by leaving damage behind him.

We Fight Back

The scene cuts backstage where Melissa Cartwright stands with microphone in hand, positioned between Rosa Delgado and Selena Vex. Both women look tense, the energy around them far more serious than promotional. This is not a routine interview. This is fallout.

Melissa Cartwright: "Ladies, thank you for joining me. I want to get right to it. Last week in the main event, the landscape of the Empire changed in shocking fashion when Amy Harrison turned on both of you and introduced what she is now calling the New Empire. I have to ask... how are you processing all of that?"

Rosa Delgado exhales sharply and looks off for a second before answering. She is trying to keep it together, but the anger is obvious.

Rosa Delgado: "How am I processing it?"

She lets out a humorless laugh.

Rosa Delgado: "I'm pissed. That's how I'm processing it."

The crowd in the arena can be heard reacting from the screen.

Rosa Delgado: "We stood beside Amy Harrison. We fought for her. We handled business for her. And the second she decided we weren't useful anymore, she threw us away like garbage."

Melissa turns to Selena Vex, who has her arms folded tightly across her chest, jaw clenched.

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Melissa Cartwright: "Selena?"

Selena Vex: "Honestly? I feel stupid."

She says it plainly, with no attempt to dress it up.

Selena Vex: "That's the truth. I feel stupid for letting someone like Amy Harrison convince me that loyalty only had to go one way. We did everything she asked. We played our role. We followed her lead. And for what?"

Selena's expression hardens.

Selena Vex: "So she could put a title around her waist, stand in the middle of the ring, and pretend none of us mattered?"

Melissa Cartwright: "Do either of you feel blindsided by Trey Mack and Clovis Black aligning with her?"

Rosa Delgado: "Blindsided? Yeah. Surprised? Not anymore."

Selena Vex: "Amy doesn't build teams. She builds shields. And the second one breaks, she reaches for another."

Before Melissa can follow up, another voice cuts into the scene from off camera.

Dahlia Cross: "Oh no she did not!"

The camera turns as Dahlia Cross storms into frame, absolutely furious. Her face is flushed with rage, and she is moving like she came here with only one thing on her mind. Rosa and Selena both tense up immediately. There is hesitation there. Distance. The wounds from Dahlia previously choosing to go her own way are still clearly fresh. But there is also empathy in their faces, because they know exactly what brought her here.

Dahlia Cross: "Amy Harrison wants to jump me from behind? Amy Harrison wants to pretend she made me? No. No, no, no, no."

Dahlia points off toward the arena.

Dahlia Cross: "She crossed a line. Last week, she crossed a line."

Rosa and Selena exchange a look. The tension is still there, but Rosa gives a small nod, not in total forgiveness, but in understanding.

Rosa Delgado: "Yeah. She did."

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Selena Vex: "That part, we can agree on."

Dahlia looks at both of them, still breathing hard, still clearly furious, but she hears it. Even if everything is not repaired, there is at least a moment of shared ground.

Then another presence steps into the shot.

The UTA Women's Champion, Marie Van Claudio.

MVC walks into frame with the title over her shoulder, carrying herself with the same calm authority she always does. She looks at the three women in front of her, not warmly, but honestly.

Marie Van Claudio: "Let's get something straight."

All three turn toward her.

Marie Van Claudio: "There's no love lost between us. Not after everything that's happened."

None of them argue that point.

Marie Van Claudio: "But I know Amy Harrison. I know exactly what she is."

MVC takes a step closer.

Marie Van Claudio: "She's a manipulator. She gets in your head, she makes you think serving her is the same thing as standing beside her, and the second you stop being useful, she cuts you loose."

She looks from Rosa... to Selena... to Dahlia.

Marie Van Claudio: "You were following orders. What Amy did to the three of you was not right."

That lands, but it does not erase reality.

Selena Vex: "Okay."

Rosa Delgado: "So what are we supposed to do about it?"

Dahlia Cross: "Yeah. What can we do?"

MVC does not hesitate.

Marie Van Claudio: "We fight back."

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The line hangs in the air.

Melissa looks between them. Rosa's expression shifts. Selena straightens. Dahlia's anger doesn't fade, but it focuses.

Marie Van Claudio: "Amy Harrison thinks she can tear people apart and never pay for it. She thinks that title makes her untouchable. She thinks this New Empire is going to roll over everyone in their path."

MVC's tone sharpens.

Marie Van Claudio: "She's wrong."

The four women stand there for a beat, tension still lingering, history still unresolved, but for the first time all segment there is a sense that the chaos Amy Harrison created may have also created something else.

A front.

A united enemy.

Melissa Cartwright, sensing the gravity of the moment, lowers the microphone slightly as the camera holds on the group before cutting away.

Very Much Real... Very Much Active...

The scene cuts elsewhere backstage.

We find newly inducted Hall of Fame member "Beautiful" Bobby Dean wandering happily through the corridor like a man living in the best weekend of his life.

He is still dressed in the same suit he wore the night before at the Hall of Fame ceremony, a little rumpled now but worn with pride. Over one shoulder sits the long-retired Hardcore Championship, polished and clutched like it is still one of the most important prizes in the world.

Bobby is all smiles.

He greets stagehands. He waves at production assistants. He stops extras and random crew members just to show off his Hall of Fame plaque and the ring on his finger, beaming every single time someone so much as glances in his direction.

Bobby Dean: "Look at that! Hall of Fame, baby!"

He holds the plaque up for a nearby lighting tech who gives him a polite nod.

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Bobby Dean: "And the ring! You see the ring? Ohhh, that's nice."

Bobby admires it himself for a second, then continues down the hall still grinning ear to ear--until he nearly bumps into Eric Dane Jr.

Eric is standing there in sunglasses and expensive clothes, looking like he has absolutely no business being in the same kind of scene as Bobby Dean.

Bobby lights up immediately.

Bobby Dean: "Eric! Eric Dane Jr.! Oh my gosh, look at you!"

He reaches out and pats Eric on the arm with genuine excitement.

Bobby Dean: "I haven't seen you in years! How's your dad doing?"

Eric blinks once, caught between confusion and disbelief.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Didn't you see him just last night at the Hall of Fame?"

Bobby Dean: "I mean, yeah. But... he's doing good, yeah?"

Eric shrugs, still trying to figure out how seriously to take any of this.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Uh... sure. I guess?"

Eric's eyes drift to the Hardcore Championship over Bobby's shoulder.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Uh... still rocking that thing, huh?"

Bobby Dean: "Yep!"

Bobby says it proudly, like there was never another possible answer.

Before the conversation can go anywhere else, Scott Stevens steps into frame.

Scott Stevens: "Bobby!"

Bobby immediately perks up even more and enthusiastically shakes Scott's hand.

Bobby Dean: "Scott! Look!"

He shoves the Hall of Fame plaque up into Stevens' line of sight, then flashes the ring finger right after it.

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Bobby Dean: "Plaque. Ring. Hall of Fame. Pretty nice, huh?"

Scott glances at Eric, then back to Bobby, doing his best to stay polite.

Scott Stevens: "Uh, yeah. I've seen them."

An awkward silence hangs there for a second.

Scott Stevens: "So... what do we owe the pleasure?"

Bobby immediately points to the belt over his shoulder with the seriousness of a man discussing corporate business.

Bobby Dean: "I'm here to work, Scott! As you know, I've been champion for over twenty-two hundred days!"

Scott slowly turns his head toward Eric.

Scott Stevens: "He hasn't."

Eric Dane Jr.: "I know."

Bobby continues as though no one said anything.

Bobby Dean: "I've defended it at Waffle House. At the Wal-Mart. I even defended it at a twelve-year-old's birthday party just three weeks ago!"

Scott lets out a deep sigh.

Bobby Dean: "I think it's time I defend it at home!"

Eric immediately jumps in.

Eric Dane Jr.: "At your house?"

Bobby laughs and lightly swats the air.

Bobby Dean: "No, silly! Here! The UTA!"

Scott rubs at his forehead.

Scott Stevens: "Bobby... that title... it's no longer ac--"

Eric's expression changes.

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A slow smile spreads across his face as an idea hits him.

Eric Dane Jr.: "You know what, Bobby? I think that's a great idea."

Bobby's eyes widen.

Bobby Dean: "You do?!"

Eric Dane Jr.: "Sure do."

Scott Stevens: "Don't encourage him."

Eric ignores Bobby for a moment and turns toward Stevens.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Scott... I think I've decided what title I'm going to use my one-on-one shot for."

Scott's entire face drops.

Scott Stevens: "Oh no... don't even thi--"

Bobby suddenly squeals in excitement.

Bobby Dean: "YES! I accept! When?! Where?!"

Scott whips toward Bobby immediately.

Scott Stevens: "No, Bobby. I'm telling you. That is not going to happen."

Eric steps past Scott, dismissing him with a flick of the hand.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Let the adults talk here, Scott."

He throws an arm around Bobby's shoulder, suddenly all charm.

Eric Dane Jr.: "How about at Victorious? I can see it now. Just picture this, Bobby..."

With his free hand, Eric gestures grandly into the air like he is painting the biggest marquee in the world.

Eric Dane Jr.: "'Beautiful' Bobby Dean makes his triumphant return to the UTA and defends his very much real... very much active... Hardcore Championship against the son of the Only Star... Eric Dane Jr."

Bobby's face lights up like a kid on Christmas morning.

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Bobby Dean: "In the main event?!"

Scott nearly shouts the answer.

Scott Stevens: "NO!"

Eric laughs.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Maybe not quite the main event... but it'll be big. What do you say?"

Bobby nods so hard it looks like his head might come off.

Bobby Dean: "Yes! A million times yes!"

Eric closes one fist and gives a small, satisfied pump, then turns back to Scott with a smug grin.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Look at that. Booking your shows for ya, Scott."

Scott rubs both temples now, exhausted by the entire conversation and somehow already regretting all of it.

Scott Stevens: "You know what? Ugh... whatever, Eric."

Scott throws a hand up and walks off, wanting no part of the disaster he apparently just allowed to happen.

Eric watches him go with a smug smile before turning back to Bobby.

Bobby is standing there with the goofiest, happiest grin imaginable, plaque in one hand, fake-champion confidence in the other, and the Hardcore Championship still over his shoulder like this is the greatest comeback story ever told.

Eric smiles right back.

The two stand there in ridiculous agreement as the scene fades out.

Susanita Ybanez vs. Aaron Shaffer

Victory returns from the backstage confrontation with the arena lights dimming ever so slightly, the energy in the Lenovo Center shifting again as the next championship contest is introduced.

John Phillips: "We are set now for championship action, and this is a very important moment for one of the rising stars in UTA."

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Mark Bravo: "No question. Susanita Ybanez is walking into this match with gold around her waist and a target on her back. Winning a championship is one thing. Proving you can keep it? That's where the job really starts."

John Phillips: "And tonight, for the very first time, Susanita Ybanez defends the United States Championship. We know the circumstances around that title changed recently, but make no mistake about it, this is still her first defense as champion, and that brings an entirely different kind of pressure."
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Mark Bravo: "Yeah, because now it's not about chasing the moment. It's about protecting it. Everybody talks about the thrill of winning the title, but the first defense? That's the one where you find out if the championship really settled into your bones."

The opening drums hit.

Red lights flood the stage.

The arena lets out a loud reaction as the first dramatic notes of Susanita Ybanez's presentation build through the speakers. Fire begins to flicker at the stage in time with the music, small at first, then growing larger as the entrance swells with theatrical intensity.

John Phillips: "And here comes the champion."

A loud explosion sounds.

Susanita Ybanez appears on the stage, the United States Championship around her waist, standing tall in the red glow. She pauses there for a moment and looks out at the crowd, soaking in the magnitude of the moment without letting it overwhelm her.

Ring Announcer: "Hailing from Lambare, Paraguay... 'La reina silencios'... Susanita Ybanez!"

Mark Bravo: "That's not the walk of a woman wondering if she belongs. That's the walk of a woman who knows she earned this."

John Phillips: "Susanita won this championship at No Love Lost, and since then she has made it clear she intends to be a fighting champion. Tonight, she gets the chance to prove that promise was more than words."

Susanita begins her walk down the ramp as fire rises around the stage behind her, the crowd reacting loudly to the champion's presence. She does not rush. She keeps her eyes forward, one hand briefly touching the title at her waist, her focus firmly on the ring ahead.

Mark Bravo: "And let's talk about the opponent for a second. Aaron Shaffer is not some tune-up defense. He's a former WrestleZone Champion, he's explosive as hell, and if Susanita isn't sharp, that first defense

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could become a very short reign."

John Phillips: "That is exactly why this match matters so much. A first defense can define a champion, and there is no easing into it tonight."

Susanita reaches ringside and circles toward the apron, the title glinting under the arena lights. She steps up, then stops and looks straight ahead, her expression hardening even more as the reality of the challenge settles in.

Mark Bravo: "This is where you really see it. The entrance is one thing. The title looks great. The crowd reaction is great. But underneath all of that, she knows what's coming."

Susanita leans back on the apron and raises her hands high.

Pyro erupts from the turnbuckles.

The crowd roars as she then steps into the ring and walks to the center, standing tall while the lights flash around her. She slowly unfastens the championship from her waist and raises it high for the crowd to see.

John Phillips: "A huge night for Susanita Ybanez. First defense. New championship identity. Big-time challenger. This is the kind of match that can tell you exactly what sort of reign a champion is about to have."

Mark Bravo: "And if she gets through Aaron Shaffer tonight, people are going to stop talking about Susanita as the new champion and start talking about her as a real problem for anybody chasing that belt."

Susanita lowers the title, hands it off to the referee, and backs into her corner, eyes locked on the stage as she waits for the challenger to make his entrance.

Susanita Ybanez stands in her corner, eyes locked on the stage, the United States Championship now in the referee's hands as the reality of her first defense settles over the arena.

Then the mood changes.

A sharp, driving burst of music hits the speakers, harder and more immediate than the champion's grand entrance. The crowd reacts at once as the camera cuts toward the stage.

John Phillips: "And now here comes the challenger, Aaron Shaffer."

Mark Bravo: "And this is exactly the kind of man you do not want standing across from you in a first title defense. Aaron Shaffer knows how to handle pressure, and he knows how to win big matches."

Aaron Shaffer steps out onto the stage with purpose, all business from the very start. There is no wasted energy in his walk, no playing to the crowd, no showboating. He looks like a man who came here for one

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reason and one reason only--to leave with championship gold.

John Phillips: "Former WrestleZone Champion, dangerous on any night, and fully capable of turning this into the biggest win of his recent career."

Mark Bravo: "That's the part people overlook when a new champion has their first defense. The challenger isn't coming in to admire the moment. He's coming in to ruin it."

Shaffer starts down the ramp with a focused, determined stride, never once taking his eyes off the ring. The camera briefly cuts to Susanita, who remains composed in her corner, but her expression is more serious now. This is not pageantry anymore. This is the fight.

John Phillips: "And that's what makes this matchup so compelling. Susanita Ybanez has all the momentum in the world as champion, but Aaron Shaffer brings experience, explosiveness, and a mentality that can change a match in an instant."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah, and he's got that look right now. That 'I've done this before' look. He's not intimidated by the title, the crowd, or the spotlight. He just sees opportunity."

Aaron reaches ringside and pauses for just a moment, looking up at the championship match in front of him. The crowd noise swells as he turns his head toward Susanita, and the two lock eyes from a distance.

The tension tightens immediately.

John Phillips: "There's the first real staredown between champion and challenger."

Mark Bravo: "And neither one of them looks like they're in the mood to blink first."

Shaffer takes the steel steps and climbs to the apron, still keeping his focus on the ring. He steps through the ropes and moves across to his corner, then turns back toward center, rolling his shoulders once and bouncing lightly on the balls of his feet.

The camera cuts between both competitors now.

Susanita Ybanez in one corner, intense and ready for the first defense of her reign.

Aaron Shaffer in the other, composed and dangerous, fully prepared to spoil the night.

John Phillips: "Champion versus challenger. Susanita Ybanez versus Aaron Shaffer. The United States Championship is on the line."

Mark Bravo: "And this one could get real serious, real fast."

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The referee steps toward the center of the ring as both competitors stare each other down, the anticipation in the Lenovo Center building with every passing second.

The referee steps to the center of the ring and raises the United States Championship high overhead as the crowd roars.

John Phillips: "This is what it's all about. The United States Championship on the line, and a huge opportunity here for both of these competitors."

Mark Bravo: "And I like this matchup a lot, John. Aaron Shaffer brings experience and grit, but Susanita isn't walking in there as some underdog champion hoping to survive. She can go. She's athletic, she's sharp, and she can absolutely match his pace."

The referee hands the title off and calls both competitors forward.

Referee: "Alright, keep it clean. Ready?"

Susanita gives a short nod, eyes locked in.

Aaron nods back.

The bell rings.

John Phillips: "And we are underway."

The two circle carefully at first, neither one wanting to overcommit too early. Susanita keeps a light bounce in her step, shoulders loose, hands active. Aaron stays grounded and composed, reading her movement, watching for the opening.

John Phillips: "This is where a first defense can be tricky. You want to prove you belong as champion, but you can't let emotion pull you out of your game plan."

Mark Bravo: "And against a guy like Shaffer, one bad reach can turn into a long night."

They meet in the center with a collar-and-elbow tie-up.

Aaron tries to muscle Susanita backward, but she shifts her hips, plants her feet, and turns him off line just enough to keep from giving up clean control. Aaron changes direction and presses again, but Susanita slips free and circles out.

The crowd applauds the opening exchange.

John Phillips: "Good strength from both sides there."

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Mark Bravo: "And a nice reminder that Susanita's not getting pushed around just because she's in there with a former WrestleZone Champion."

They reset and circle again.

Susanita steps in first this time, catching Aaron in a quick side headlock. Shaffer immediately tries to power her off, but Susanita keeps the hold tight, lowers her base, then snaps him over with a clean takeover. Aaron rolls his shoulders, trying to shift her weight, but Susanita stays attached and keeps the pressure on.

John Phillips: "Nicely done by the champion."

Mark Bravo: "That's exactly what I was talking about. She's not just fast. She's polished."

Aaron works back to a knee, then to his feet. He slips a hand at Susanita's waist and shoves her off into the ropes. She rebounds--Aaron drops low--Susanita hurdles over him. Aaron pops up and turns just in time to see Susanita spring off the far ropes again. He reaches for an arm drag--

Susanita cartwheels through the motion before it can fully take, lands on her feet, and answers with a deep arm drag of her own that sends Shaffer skidding across the canvas.

The crowd reacts loudly.

John Phillips: "Beautiful counter by Susanita Ybanez!"

Mark Bravo: "That was slick. Very slick."

Aaron rises quickly, but Susanita is already back in motion. He swings for a clothesline--she ducks it, hits the ropes, and comes back with a low dropkick to the knee that knocks his base out from under him. Before he can fully recover, she grabs the wrist and snaps into another arm drag, then holds onto the arm and transitions into a grounded armbar.

John Phillips: "Fast start for the champion here."

Mark Bravo: "And she's forcing Aaron to react. That's important."

Aaron winces, then starts fighting his way up, using his free hand to post and shift his weight. Susanita leans back harder on the arm, trying to keep him grounded, but Shaffer gets to a knee and then powers to his feet. He rolls forward to relieve the pressure, twists through the hold, and catches Susanita in a wristlock of his own.

John Phillips: "And there's the answer from Shaffer."

Aaron cranks the wrist once, then steps in and takes Susanita over with a sharp arm wringer. Susanita flips

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through the pressure, lands on her feet, and immediately somersaults to reverse the twist, leaving Aaron forced to follow her movement instead. Aaron nods once, almost impressed, before using his strength to pull her into a standing side headlock.

Mark Bravo: "This is good stuff. Neither one of them can outclass the other early, and that's making this really interesting."

Susanita shoves him into the ropes, but Aaron lowers his shoulder on the rebound and plows through her with a shoulder block that sends the champion to the canvas.

John Phillips: "Hard shoulder tackle by Aaron Shaffer!"

Aaron keeps running. Susanita rolls to her stomach, pops up, and leapfrogs him on the return. Shaffer comes back again and Susanita catches him with a beautiful standing dropkick right to the chest that sends him stumbling back into the ropes.

The crowd pops.

Mark Bravo: "See? Perfect example. Aaron hits with force, Susanita answers with speed."

Shaffer regains balance quickly and steps back toward center, now wearing a more serious expression. Susanita gestures for him to bring it on, and the crowd cheers behind her.

John Phillips: "The champion looks sharp tonight."

Mark Bravo: "And Aaron knows it now. This isn't going to be one of those matches where he just leans on experience and walks out with the title."

They tie up again, this time with more urgency. Aaron gets inside position and backs Susanita toward the ropes, but she turns at the last second and flips the angle, forcing him to catch himself against the strands instead. The referee calls for the break. Susanita gives it cleanly, hands up.

Aaron nods once, then steps back in. They lock up a third time, and now the pace really begins to pick up. Wrist control. Elbow control. A standing switch by Susanita. Aaron reverses. Susanita slips behind. Aaron catches the arm. Susanita spins free. Aaron reaches for a waistlock--Susanita hooks the head and tries for a snapmare--Aaron blocks, pulls her in, and both competitors separate at the same time without either giving up a clean edge.

John Phillips: "Excellent sequence there from both competitors."

Mark Bravo: "That's why this is working. She's athletic enough to stay with him, and he's disciplined enough not to let her just fly circles around him."

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The crowd applauds again as both Susanita and Aaron pause for a moment, breathing a little heavier now, eyes locked, each one realizing the other came ready for a real fight.

John Phillips: "A very strong opening to this championship match. Susanita Ybanez proving right away that she belongs in this moment, and Aaron Shaffer reminding everyone exactly why he is such a dangerous challenger."

The two circle again, more intensity in their movements now than there was at the bell, with the match beginning to settle into the kind of rhythm that promises something special.

The circling tightens again, and there is a little more edge in both competitors now. The mutual respect from the opening exchanges remains, but it is beginning to give way to urgency.

John Phillips: "You can feel this match settling into a real groove now."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah, and that's where it gets dangerous. Once both people realize the other one can actually hang, the tone changes."

Susanita steps in first, looking to reestablish control with another quick arm capture, but Aaron Shaffer is ready this time. He catches the wrist, pulls her forward, and shifts smoothly behind into a rear waistlock.

Susanita widens her base, reaching down immediately for the hands. Aaron keeps the grip tight and drags her backward to the canvas, then follows her down and rides the position with a grounded waistlock of his own.

John Phillips: "Nicely done by Shaffer. He may have found a way to slow the champion down here."

Mark Bravo: "That's a veteran adjustment. If she's quicker than you in open space, close the space."

Susanita tries to turn in, but Aaron stays attached. She posts on one hand, builds to a knee, then twists and switches her hips, trying to spin out behind him. Aaron reads it and floats with her, trapping the arm and shifting into a grounded side headlock. Susanita plants her boots and starts pushing her way back up, forcing Aaron to make a choice.

John Phillips: "These reversals have been crisp all match long."

Aaron chooses control over strain. He rises with her and sends Susanita off into the ropes. She rebounds--Aaron ducks his head early, looking for a backdrop--

Susanita sees it and snaps a kick up into the chest that stops him cold.

The crowd reacts.

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Mark Bravo: "Good read by the champ."

Susanita hits the ropes again and comes back with a running hurricanrana that sends Aaron rolling through to the canvas. Shaffer pops up quickly, but Susanita is already there with a spinning heel kick that catches him high and rocks him back into the corner.

John Phillips: "Susanita Ybanez showing that explosiveness!"

The crowd cheers as Susanita charges in with a running forearm smash in the corner. Aaron stumbles out of the buckles, and Susanita immediately hooks him, trying to use momentum for a snap suplex--

Aaron blocks it.

Susanita tries again. Aaron still blocks.

Then Aaron shifts his weight and snaps her over with a vertical suplex of his own.

Mark Bravo: "There's the power edge."

John Phillips: "And a very important answer from Aaron Shaffer."

Susanita sits up quickly from the impact, but Aaron is on her with a sharp kick to the back that sends her down again. He grabs a headlock from a seated position and grinds down, keeping her from building any rhythm.

John Phillips: "Shaffer doing a smart job here of cutting off the pace when Susanita starts to speed things up."

The crowd begins clapping, trying to rally the champion. Susanita reaches for the wrist, peels at the grip, and works one knee under herself. Aaron shifts his weight and clubs her once across the upper back, then tries to snap her back down--

But Susanita rolls through the pressure, slips behind him, and traps him in a rear waistlock.

Mark Bravo: "Beautiful counter."

Aaron throws an elbow behind him. Susanita ducks it and shoves him forward into the ropes. On the rebound she catches him with a monkey flip that sends him flipping across the ring. Aaron lands hard, scrambles up--and Susanita meets him with a springing arm drag that sends him tumbling again.

The crowd pops louder now.

John Phillips: "Susanita is putting it together again!"

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Aaron rolls to the apron to slow the pace, but Susanita does not let him breathe long. She runs the ropes and fires a baseball slide dropkick through the bottom strand that knocks Aaron off the apron to the floor.

The crowd erupts.

Mark Bravo: "Now we're talking!"

Aaron lands hard near the barricade and grabs at his lower back as he tries to push himself up. Inside the ring, Susanita measures the distance, then hits the far ropes. She charges back and launches herself through the ropes with a tope suicida that wipes Shaffer out on the floor.

The fans in Raleigh come to their feet.

John Phillips: "Tope suicida by the champion!"

Mark Bravo: "That's what I mean when I say she's a real athlete. She can take this thing to another gear in a heartbeat."

Both competitors are down on the outside for a moment as the referee starts his count from inside the ring. Susanita rises first, adrenaline surging, and pulls Aaron up by the wrist. She rolls him back into the ring and quickly follows, not wasting the momentum.

Shaffer gets to one knee, still trying to recover. Susanita hits the ropes and comes back with a low running dropkick to the side of the head that knocks him flat. She hooks the leg.

Referee: "One! Two!"

Aaron kicks out.

John Phillips: "A near fall for Susanita Ybanez!"

Susanita sits up, breathing hard but focused, and immediately starts planning the next sequence instead of letting frustration creep in. She rises and drags Aaron with her, then backs him toward the ropes for what looks like another whip--

But Aaron suddenly reverses.

Susanita hits the far ropes and comes back. Aaron goes for a clothesline--Susanita ducks. She keeps running, rebounds again, and this time Aaron catches her cleanly with a kitchen-sink knee lift right to the ribs that folds her in half and drops her to the canvas.

Mark Bravo: "Oof. That'll change your momentum in a hurry."

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John Phillips: "What a counter by Aaron Shaffer."

Susanita rolls toward the ropes clutching at her midsection, and Aaron takes a second to collect himself before stalking in behind her. The crowd remains loud, sensing that this match is only getting better as it goes on.

John Phillips: "This has been an outstanding championship match so far. Susanita Ybanez proving she can absolutely stand with a high-level challenger, and Aaron Shaffer showing why he is never an easy out for anyone."

Aaron reaches down for the champion again as the pace and intensity continue to build.

Aaron Shaffer reaches down and pulls Susanita Ybanez up from the ropes, one hand at the wrist and the other behind the head, refusing to let the champion use the strands for long-term recovery.

John Phillips: "That knee lift may have been the first truly momentum-stopping strike of the match."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah, because Susanita was flying there for a minute. Aaron needed something that didn't just slow her down, but made her think twice about opening up like that again."

Susanita is still clutching at her ribs when Aaron snaps her over with a gutwrench suplex, rolling through smoothly and keeping his hands locked around the waist. He muscles her up again and drives her over with a second one, this time with more snap on the landing.

John Phillips: "Back-to-back gutwrench suplexes from the challenger."

Mark Bravo: "And look where they're landing, too. Lower back, ribs, midsection. Those are the places Aaron wants to own if he's going to keep her from exploding into space again."

Susanita rolls to a hip, wincing, and Aaron closes in with a grounded body scissors around the waist, clamping down and squeezing at the torso while also pulling back on the arms to stretch her out. It is a grinding, ugly hold, more about discomfort and damage than flair.

John Phillips: "Smart adjustment by Aaron Shaffer. He is taking that speed advantage away piece by piece."

Susanita grits her teeth and tries to pry at the legs, but Aaron only squeezes tighter. The pain is clear now, but so is the champion's refusal to fold. She shifts her hips, turns slightly, then starts using her elbows to create just enough space to crawl toward the ropes.

Mark Bravo: "That's championship stuff right there. She's hurting, but she's not panicking."

The crowd begins clapping in rhythm, trying to push Susanita forward. She stretches, fingertips

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reaching--Aaron drags her back an inch. Susanita kicks her legs, shifts again, then lunges one more time and grabs the bottom rope.

Referee: "Break! Break it up!"

Aaron holds for an extra beat before releasing at four, then rises and backs away with a small nod, as if to say he's perfectly in control.

John Phillips: "Good ring awareness from the champion there. She had to get that break."

Susanita uses the ropes to pull herself up, one arm still wrapped protectively around her midsection. Aaron gives her no real breathing room. He steps in and drives a forearm into the back, then whips her into the opposite corner with force.

Susanita hits hard and staggers forward. Aaron rushes in for a corner clothesline--

Susanita gets both boots up.

Aaron runs right into them.

Mark Bravo: "There's the opening!"

Shaffer stumbles backward, and Susanita wastes no time. She hops to the second rope and launches into a twisting crossbody off the buckles, catching him flush and taking him down in the center of the ring.

The crowd roars as she hooks the leg.

Referee: "One! Two!"

Aaron kicks out.

John Phillips: "Another near fall for Susanita Ybanez!"

Susanita pops up quickly despite the pain in her body, sensing that the match is there to be seized if she can keep the tempo moving. Aaron rises to one knee and she catches him with a sharp kick to the chest. Then another. Then a spinning kick to the shoulder and side of the head that knocks him toward the ropes.

Mark Bravo: "And there's that burst again. She doesn't need long. She just needs a window."

Susanita hits the ropes and comes flying back with a running meteora aimed at the seated challenger near the ropes--

But Aaron rolls aside at the last possible second.

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Susanita lands hard on her knees and hands.

John Phillips: "Nobody home!"

Aaron is on her instantly, grabbing around the waist from behind and snapping her backward into a release German suplex that sends the champion tumbling across the canvas.

The crowd gasps.

Mark Bravo: "What a counter!"

Susanita flips through the impact and somehow gets back to her feet, but she is clearly rocked. Aaron sees it and charges in with a running back elbow that crushes her into the corner. He follows with a snapmare out of the buckles and then hits the ropes, returning with a low basement dropkick right between the shoulders.

Susanita spills forward onto the mat.

John Phillips: "Aaron Shaffer putting together an excellent stretch of offense here."

He turns her over and hooks both legs.

Referee: "One! Two!"

Susanita gets the shoulder up.

Mark Bravo: "And there's the fight from the champ again."

Aaron sits up and exhales, then quickly pulls Susanita upright by the head. He tries to hook her for what looks like a fisherman's suplex--

Susanita twists free behind him.

Aaron turns--

Susanita catches him with a step-up enzuigiri that snaps his head sideways.

The crowd comes alive again.

John Phillips: "Enzuigiri by Susanita!"

Aaron drops to a knee, stunned, and Susanita fights through the pain in her ribs to hit the ropes. She comes back with a running facewash-style kick to the side of the head, then quickly rolls him away from the ropes and hooks the leg.

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Referee: "One! Two!"

Aaron kicks out.

Mark Bravo: "This is getting good now. Real good."

Susanita rises with a determined look on her face, breathing hard, hair partially in her eyes, but the fire is still there. Aaron is slower getting up now as well, one hand on the back of his neck, the other on the mat, both competitors clearly having to dig deeper with every exchange.

John Phillips: "This is exactly what a first title defense should be. A real test. A real fight. And Susanita Ybanez is meeting that challenge head-on."

Susanita grabs Aaron by the wrist and starts pulling him back to his feet, looking to string together the next big sequence as the match continues to build toward something decisive.

Susanita Ybanez pulls Aaron Shaffer back to his feet and immediately tries to keep the momentum in her hands, still favoring the ribs but refusing to let that slow her decision-making.

John Phillips: "What I like about Susanita right now is that she's not giving Aaron time to fully reset. Even hurt, she understands the moment."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah, because if she lets him breathe, he goes right back to that power game and starts folding her up again."

Susanita whips Aaron toward the ropes. He rebounds--she swings for a spinning kick--Aaron ducks under it and catches her around the waist from behind.

Susanita throws an elbow backward, then another. Aaron absorbs the first, avoids the second, and tries to lift.

Susanita hooks the top rope with one hand just in time to block the throw.

John Phillips: "Great ring awareness by the champion."

Aaron changes course and yanks her backward by the waist, pulling her off the ropes into a sit-out powerbomb attempt--

Susanita counters mid-lift, twisting through the hold and spiking Aaron down with a sudden hurricanrana that sends him rolling toward center ring.

The crowd jumps to its feet.

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Mark Bravo: "That was nasty!"

Aaron pops up disoriented, and Susanita is already on him with a running forearm. Then a second one. Then a jumping knee strike that catches him flush and sends him backward into the corner.

John Phillips: "Susanita is unloading now!"

The champion sprints in with a corner meteora, crushing into Aaron against the turnbuckles. He stumbles out of the corner, barely upright, and Susanita immediately leaps, catching him with a tornado DDT that plants him near the center of the ring.

The crowd erupts as she dives into the cover.

Referee: "One! Two!"

Aaron kicks out.

John Phillips: "Another near fall! Susanita Ybanez has come very close multiple times now!"

Mark Bravo: "And you can see it on her face. She knows that was a big one."

Susanita sits up, breathing hard, frustration flickering for only a moment before she shoves it down and rises again. Aaron is still hurting, but he is moving, trying to get toward the ropes on instinct alone.

John Phillips: "No panic from the champion. Just determination."

Susanita reaches down to pull Aaron up once more, but this time Shaffer fires a desperate forearm into the body. Susanita winces. Aaron follows with another shot to the ribs, then one more, forcing her to take a step back.

Mark Bravo: "There it is. He's going right back to the damage."

Aaron gets to his feet, grabs Susanita by the wrist, and yanks her in for a short-arm lariat--Susanita ducks. She hits the ropes and comes back looking for a running crossbody--

Aaron catches her.

The crowd reacts.

He holds her there for a split second, muscles straining, then shifts and slams her down with a crushing fallaway slam that sends Susanita tumbling toward the turnbuckles.

John Phillips: "What strength by Aaron Shaffer!"

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Mark Bravo: "And that's what makes him so dangerous. He can get beat on for a stretch, and then one power move changes the whole landscape."

Susanita pulls herself up in the corner, but Aaron is already charging. He drives a hard clothesline into her chest, then pulls her out with a snapmare and hits the ropes. This time he comes back with a running penalty kick to the spine that drops her flat.

Aaron turns her over and hooks the far leg.

Referee: "One! Two!"

Susanita gets the shoulder up.

John Phillips: "Susanita still in it!"

Aaron exhales, then nods to himself, like he is beginning to understand that this champion is not going to be put away casually. He gets back to his feet and starts signaling now, looking to end things.

Mark Bravo: "Uh oh. That body language says he thinks it's time."

The crowd stirs as Aaron pulls Susanita up from behind and hooks her, setting for a fisherman's buster. Susanita kicks her legs, fighting with everything she has left. Aaron tightens his grip and tries to lift--

Susanita slips free behind him.

Aaron turns--

Susanita catches him with a spinning back kick to the stomach that doubles him over, then immediately follows with a running knee to the jaw that snaps his head up.

Aaron staggers but stays on his feet.

John Phillips: "What resilience from the champion!"

Susanita hits the ropes one more time and comes flying back with a running bulldog that drives Aaron face-first into the mat. She does not cover. Instead, adrenaline taking over, she rushes to the corner and climbs to the second rope, then the top.

The crowd rises with her.

Mark Bravo: "This could be it right here!"

Susanita steadies herself, then launches with a diving frog splash toward the challenger--

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Aaron rolls out of the way.

Susanita crashes hard onto the canvas.

The crowd groans.

John Phillips: "Nobody home! Susanita took a huge risk and it did not pay off!"

Both competitors are down now, the toll of the match fully on display. The referee begins his count as the crowd rallies for both sides, sensing the stakes reaching their highest point yet.

Referee: "One!... Two!... Three!..."

Aaron rolls toward the ropes and starts pulling himself up first. Susanita pushes to all fours, still clutching at her ribs, trying to will herself back into the fight. The challenger sees her rise and begins closing the distance, looking to capitalize on the missed aerial attempt.

John Phillips: "What a match this has become. Susanita Ybanez is digging as deep as any champion can, but Aaron Shaffer may be seconds away from finding the opening he's been waiting for."

Aaron reaches for the champion again as the crowd noise swells and the match barrels toward its next turning point.

Aaron Shaffer reaches Susanita Ybanez just as she gets to one knee, still clutching at her ribs from the missed frog splash. He grabs her by the head and wrist, dragging her upright with a sense of urgency that says he knows this may be the opening he has been waiting for.

John Phillips: "This is a huge moment in the match right here. Susanita took the risk, it didn't pay off, and now Aaron Shaffer has the champion exactly where he wants her."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah, and after everything she's already absorbed to that midsection, there is absolutely no doubt where he's going next."

Aaron drives a hard knee into the body.

Susanita folds over, and Aaron immediately hooks her up for the fisherman's buster again. He lifts--

Susanita kicks free at the last possible second and lands on her feet behind him.

The crowd pops.

Aaron turns--

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Susanita catches him with a sharp thrust kick to the chest that rocks him backward into the ropes. She charges in, trying to follow with another running strike--

But Aaron explodes forward and nearly cuts her in half with a lariat.

The impact turns Susanita inside out.

John Phillips: "What a clothesline by Aaron Shaffer!"

Mark Bravo: "That was not a counter. That was a collision."

Aaron falls into the cover immediately, hooking the leg deep.

Referee: "One! Two!"

Susanita kicks out.

The crowd roars.

John Phillips: "Susanita stays alive!"

Aaron sits up and wipes sweat from his face, breathing hard now himself. This match has taken plenty out of him too. He looks at the referee for a brief second, then back at the champion, and nods as if deciding that the next attempt has to be the last one.

Mark Bravo: "You can see it on Shaffer's face. He knows he's in a fight now. This is not going to be stolen with one big move."

Aaron gets to his feet and pulls Susanita up again, slower this time, making sure she stays under control. He traps the head and arm, trying to set up a twisting slam--

Susanita suddenly drops her weight, slips out to the side, and shoves him off into the corner.

Aaron hits the buckles chest-first and turns just in time to eat a running dropkick from the champion that sends him slumping into a seated position in the corner.

The crowd comes alive again.

John Phillips: "Susanita found the opening!"

Still hurting, but sensing the moment, Susanita rushes corner to corner and drives both knees into Aaron with a running meteora in the buckles. Shaffer spills out of the corner on instinct, crawling toward center ring as Susanita rises and shakes out the pain in her ribs.

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Mark Bravo: "That's the athleticism right there. She doesn't need a lot of daylight. She just needs enough."

Susanita grabs Aaron by the wrist and yanks him upright, then whips him hard into the ropes. On the rebound she catches him with a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker--

But the impact hurts her too.

She winces immediately and cannot capitalize as quickly as she wants.

John Phillips: "She got all of that move, but you can see the damage she's carrying now."

Aaron rolls away and tries to stand. Susanita fights through the pain and charges, catching him with a basement dropkick to the side of the knee that buckles him. Aaron stumbles forward to one knee, and Susanita follows with a spinning enzuigiri that catches him flush.

He topples over to the mat.

Mark Bravo: "There it is! Stringing it together now!"

Susanita hooks the leg.

Referee: "One! Two!"

Aaron kicks out.

The champion exhales sharply, frustration flickering again, but only for a moment. The crowd claps and stomps, firmly behind her as she pushes back to her feet.

John Phillips: "What an effort by both of these competitors. This has absolutely looked like a championship fight."

Susanita looks toward the corner again, thinking about going back up high, but she hesitates this time, her ribs reminding her of the last failed attempt. Instead, she drags Aaron up and hooks him for a front facelock, then snaps him down into a guillotine-style kneeling facebuster that bounces him off the mat.

The crowd gasps at the impact.

Mark Bravo: "That was nasty."

Aaron rolls onto his back, stunned, and Susanita knows this is her chance. She backs to the ropes, waiting for him to rise just enough. Aaron gets to a knee. Susanita bursts forward--

Running knee strike to the jaw.

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Aaron collapses flat.

John Phillips: "Knee strike by the champion!"

Susanita dives into another cover, hooking both legs and pressing all her weight down.

Referee: "One! Two! Thr--"

Aaron barely gets the shoulder up.

The crowd lets out a huge reaction.

Mark Bravo: "Oh, that was close!"

Susanita sits back on her knees, breathing heavily, sweat dripping, hair hanging loose, title defense and exhaustion all over her face. Across from her, Aaron is barely moving but still refusing to stay down.

John Phillips: "This is what we were talking about at the start of the match. First defenses are different. They demand something extra. Susanita Ybanez is having to find that extra right now."

The champion gets back to her feet and drags Aaron up one more time, looking to force the deciding sequence as the match reaches an even higher level of intensity.

Susanita Ybanez pulls Aaron Shaffer back to his feet, every movement showing the strain of the fight but none of the hesitation. She knows she is close. She also knows the challenger is still dangerous enough to ruin everything with one mistake.

John Phillips: "This match has reached that championship level where every exchange feels like it could be the last one."

Mark Bravo: "And both of them are deep into the reserves now. This is where instinct, grit, and pain tolerance decide things."

Susanita hooks Aaron by the head and wrist, looking to spin him into another strike sequence, but Shaffer suddenly plants his feet and fires a desperate forearm into the ribs. Susanita doubles slightly. Aaron hits another. Then a third. He shoves free and stumbles backward toward the ropes just to create room.

Susanita tries to close in--

Aaron catches her coming forward with a snap powerslam out of nowhere.

The crowd gasps as both competitors hit the mat hard.

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John Phillips: "What a counter by Aaron Shaffer!"

Mark Bravo: "That's what makes him so dangerous. He doesn't need long. He just needs one opening."

Aaron crawls into the cover, slower than before but still urgent enough, hooking the leg.

Referee: "One! Two!"

Susanita kicks out.

The crowd roars again.

John Phillips: "The champion survives!"

Aaron rolls to a seated position and exhales sharply, frustration finally beginning to show. He wipes his face, nods once to himself, then reaches down and drags Susanita upright again.

Mark Bravo: "He's going right back to it. He knows he can't let her recover."

Aaron hooks the arm and head, setting again for the fisherman's buster. This time he gets Susanita off the mat--

But in mid-lift, Susanita twists her hips and slips free over the side.

Aaron turns around--

Susanita catches him flush with a spinning heel kick to the jaw.

Shaffer staggers, but stays standing on instinct alone.

John Phillips: "He's rocked!"

Susanita bursts to the ropes and comes flying back with a shotgun dropkick that drives Aaron backward into the corner. He hits hard and slumps just enough for the champion to see the opening.

Mark Bravo: "Now! This is it, right here!"

Susanita charges corner to corner and crushes him with another meteora against the turnbuckles. Aaron stumbles out, glassy-eyed, barely balanced. Susanita grabs him from behind, hooks the waist, and rolls through into a tight bridging pinning combination, stacking him high on his shoulders.

Referee: "One! Two! Thr--"

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Aaron kicks out again.

The crowd erupts at the near fall.

John Phillips: "Incredible! Aaron Shaffer still in this fight!"

Susanita slaps the mat once in frustration, then pops back up. She is done second-guessing herself now. She reaches down, brings Aaron up by the wrist, and pulls him into position.

Kick to the body.

Aaron doubles over.

Susanita hits the ropes one last time and comes back with a blistering running knee strike right to the face.

Aaron drops to both knees, dazed.

Susanita does not let him fall away. She grabs him, pulls him into a fast cradle off the kneeling position, hooks both legs deep, and folds him tight to the mat.

Referee: "One! Two! Three!"

The bell rings.

John Phillips: "She got him! Susanita Ybanez retains the United States Championship!"

Mark Bravo: "What a match. What a fight. And what a first defense for the champion."

Susanita releases the hold and rolls onto her back for a moment, exhausted, chest heaving, the reality of the victory needing a second to catch up with her.

The crowd in Raleigh gives her a huge ovation.

John Phillips: "Susanita Ybanez said she would be a fighting champion, and tonight she proved it. Aaron Shaffer pushed her every step of the way, but the champion found a way when it mattered most."

The referee retrieves the United States Championship and helps Susanita up. He places the title in her hands, and she clutches it to her chest for a moment before raising it high above her head.

Mark Bravo: "That's the kind of win that changes how people see you. Not just as the woman who won the title, but as the woman who can keep it."

Aaron Shaffer sits up in the corner, disappointed but still composed, looking across the ring at the champion

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with the expression of a man who knows he just lost a real one.

John Phillips: "An outstanding championship contest, and in the end, Susanita Ybanez survives her first United States Championship defense."

Susanita climbs to the second rope in the corner and raises the championship again as the crowd cheers, the champion having passed the first true test of her reign.

Hall of Fame 2026

The screen fades from the arena into a sweeping cinematic package set to triumphant music.

We open on aerial shots of Raleigh at night, the city lights glowing beneath a dark sky before cutting to the exterior of the Lenovo Center bathed in gold lighting. Fans in suits, dresses, and vintage UTA shirts make their way inside, cameras flashing and voices buzzing with anticipation.

Voiceover: "The night before Victory..."

Voiceover: "UTA paused the fight..."

Voiceover: "To honor the legends who built the company."

Quick cuts now. The Hall of Fame stage. The UTA crest. Applause rising to its feet. Emotional embraces. Gold jackets. Teary smiles. Rings being presented. Plaques held high.

Voiceover: "Hall of Fame: 2026 was a celebration of legacy..."

Voiceover: "A celebration of sacrifice..."

Voiceover: "And a celebration of the names that shaped UTA forever."

We see the crowd standing for one inductee after another. A close-up of hands clapping. A legend wiping away tears. Another laughing through the emotion. A family member in the front row overcome by the moment.

Voiceover: "For one unforgettable night, rivalries faded..."

Voiceover: "The noise slowed down..."

Voiceover: "And greatness took center stage."

We cut to slow-motion shots of induction speeches, emotional reactions from the audience, and Hall of Fame

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rings slipping onto fingers. The music swells as the video shows one legend after another soaking in the ovation of the people who still remember every moment.

Voiceover: "Champions."

Voiceover: "Icons."

Voiceover: "Trailblazers."

Voiceover: "Immortals."

Then the package shifts to the most emotional beats of the night. A standing ovation that seems to go on forever. Tears. Laughter. Hugs backstage. A final wave from the stage. The sort of images that do not need explanation.

Voiceover: "The Hall of Fame is more than a ceremony."

Voiceover: "It is a reminder."

Voiceover: "Of where UTA has been..."

Voiceover: "And of the giants whose shoulders this company still stands on."

The music rises higher as the package turns toward celebration. Hall of Famers lined up together on the stage. Rings shining under the lights. Plaques raised. Fans on their feet. The camera catches faces young and old, all united in one feeling--respect.

Voiceover: "Last night, UTA honored its past."

Voiceover: "Tonight, that legacy lives on."

The Hall of Fame: 2026 logo fills the screen in gold.

Voiceover: "Hall of Fame: 2026."

Voiceover: "Legends remembered."

Voiceover: "Legacies secured."

Voiceover: "Forever immortal."

The package ends on one final wide shot of the stage, every inductee standing together beneath the lights as the crowd gives them one last ovation.

Fade out.

Proving Grounds

The screen fades away from the arena and into a slick, cinematic teaser package.

We see quick flashes of a training ring. A bus rolling down a highway at sunrise. Nervous faces. Taped wrists. Folding chairs in a locker room. A coach barking instructions. Sweat dripping to the mat. Someone slamming a fist into a wall. Another person staring into a mirror, trying to steady their breathing.

Voiceover: "Ten weeks."

Cut to a line of hopeful wrestlers standing shoulder to shoulder.

Voiceover: "One chance."

Quick cuts now. Conditioning drills. In-ring practice. Tears. Laughter. A van door slamming shut. Someone saying "I'm not leaving without a contract." Another voice saying "You either want this, or you don't."

Voiceover: "For some, this is a dream."

Voiceover: "For others..."

Cut to a tense faceoff between two competitors in the gym.

Voiceover: "It's survival."

The title slams onto the screen.

PROVING GROUNDS

More clips. Road miles. Hard conversations. Emotional breakdowns. Rivalries forming. Trainers yelling. A wrestler crashing to the mat in practice and getting right back up. The energy builds.

Voiceover: "The new UTA reality series follows the next generation as they fight through pressure, pain, politics, and opportunity... all for the chance to prove they belong."

We see one final montage of intense training, backstage nerves, and cameras catching every second.

Voiceover: "Who will rise?"

Voiceover: "Who will break?"

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Voiceover: "Who will earn their place?"

The Proving Grounds logo fills the screen again, bigger this time.

Voiceover: "Proving Grounds."

Voiceover: "Every Tuesday."

Voiceover: "Only on WrestleUTA.com."

The screen cuts back to black.

Hakuryu Makes His Choice

The camera cuts to the center of the ring, where a long black table stands beneath a single stark spotlight. Three clipboards rest upon it--each one representing a championship contract for Victorious: the UTA World Championship, the WrestleZone Championship, and the UTA Tag Team Championships. Behind the table stands UTA General Manager Scott Stevens, hands clasped behind his back, posture straight, expression sharp. The crowd murmurs with anticipation, knowing exactly what this moment means.

John Phillips: "Ladies and gentlemen, this is a landmark moment. Hakuryu has defended the Fighting Championship five times, and tonight he cashes in that privilege to challenge any champion in the UTA."

Mark Bravo: "And whoever he picks is gonna need a miracle, John. The White Dragon doesn't do warm-ups--he does executions."

The arena lights suddenly shut off.

A single gong echoes.

Then another.

Then another.

With each strike, a white spotlight flickers to life along the stage, illuminating thick white smoke rolling across the ramp like a creeping storm. A low, droning spiritual chant begins to fill the arena--haunting, ritualistic, ancient.

A lone figure steps out first: Sinja, facepaint stark under the lights, dressed in full pilgrimage garments--white robes, takuhatsugasa hat, shakujo staff in hand. He stops at the top of the ramp, head bowed, unmoving.

A second figure emerges behind him.

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Hakuryu.

White robes. Scripture-painted skin. The UTA Fighting Championship draped over his shoulder. His head lowered beneath the brim of his hat, walking stick tapping the steel grate with each slow, deliberate step. The crowd erupts in boos, but Hakuryu does not react. He does not acknowledge them. He does not care.

John Phillips: "The White Dragon has arrived. Calm. Cold. Completely unmoved by this audience."

Mark Bravo: "He's not here for cheers, John. He's here to pick a victim."

Hakuryu and Sinja reach ringside. Sinja ascends the steps first, holding the ropes open with ceremonial precision. Hakuryu pauses, brings his hands together in a prayer formation, and murmurs an inaudible chant before entering the ring.

He steps to the center, removes his hat and outer garments, and hands them to Sinja without looking at him. The crowd continues to boo. Hakuryu remains still, expression unreadable, posture perfect.

Scott Stevens: "Hakuryu... congratulations on your fifth defense of the Fighting Championship. As per UTA regulations, you now have the right to challenge any champion in this company at Victorious. The contracts are here. All you need to do is choose."

Hakuryu slowly lifts his head. His eyes lock onto Stevens. The arena falls silent, as if the air itself is waiting.

Hakuryu: ?????????????????????????????????

Sinja: "My master says he is Hakuryu. His victories have earned him the right to stand above all others."

Hakuryu steps closer to the table, the crowd buzzing with anticipation, the tension thick enough to feel in the chest.

Hakuryu: ?????????????????????????????????

Sinja: "There is no one in this company capable of stopping him."

Hakuryu stands before the three contracts. The arena is so quiet it feels unnatural, as if the entire building is holding its breath. The White Dragon's presence radiates a cold, suffocating pressure that makes even the front-row fans lean back in their seats. Scott Stevens stands behind the table, hands clasped behind his back, posture rigid, eyes locked on Hakuryu with a mixture of curiosity and caution. He has no idea what is about to happen -- and that uncertainty only heightens the tension.

John Phillips: "Hakuryu has earned the right to challenge any champion in the UTA... and this decision could reshape the entire landscape of Victorious."

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Mark Bravo: "John, I swear, I can feel my heartbeat in my teeth. This man is about to ruin somebody's month."

Hakuryu steps forward with slow, deliberate precision. His sandals barely make a sound on the canvas. Sinja follows one step behind, head bowed, hands folded in front of him like a monk awaiting instruction.

Hakuryu stops at the first clipboard -- the Tag Team Championship contract. He doesn't even look at the names. He stares at the paper as if it is beneath him, as if the idea itself is an insult.

Hakuryu: ??????????????????????????????

Sinja: "My master says no one is worthy to stand beside him... and he has no need for help."

The crowd reacts with a mix of boos and nervous laughter. Hakuryu does not move. He does not blink. He simply turns away from the Tag Titles with the same calm finality one might use to close a door on a stranger.

John Phillips: "Hakuryu dismisses the Tag Titles outright. He wants no allies."

Mark Bravo: "He doesn't want partners, John. He wants victims."

Hakuryu now stands between the remaining two contracts. The UTA World Championship. The WrestleZone Championship. The air feels heavier. The crowd noise dips into a low, anxious rumble. Even Stevens shifts his weight slightly, trying to read the White Dragon's body language.

Hakuryu steps toward the UTA World Championship contract. He stares down at Chris Ross's name for a long, cold moment. The camera zooms in on his expression -- unreadable, emotionless, almost bored.

John Phillips: "It looks like Hakuryu is considering the UTA World Champion Chris Ross."

Mark Bravo: "If he picks Ross, that's a main event anywhere on the planet."

Hakuryu finally speaks, his voice low and sharp like a blade drawn in silence.

Hakuryu: ????????...?????????

Sinja: "Chris Ross is no warrior."

The crowd reacts instantly -- gasps, boos, shouts of disbelief. Hakuryu doesn't acknowledge any of it.

Hakuryu: ??????????????????????????????

Sinja: "He has no skill. No spirit. Nothing but barbarism."

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The arena erupts. Fans shout at Hakuryu from the front row. A "ROSS! ROSS! ROSS!" chant tries to start, but it dies quickly under the weight of Hakuryu's cold stare.

John Phillips: "Hakuryu is tearing into the UTA World Champion! He's calling Ross a barbarian!"

Mark Bravo: "John, I'm not saying he's wrong... I'm just saying I wouldn't say it to Ross's face."

Hakuryu steps away from the UTA Championship contract with a slow, dismissive turn of his back. He doesn't even look at it again. Stevens' eyebrows lift -- he did not expect that outcome, and the surprise flickers across his face before he masks it.

Scott Stevens: "Well... that's certainly unexpected."

Hakuryu now stands before the final contract. The WrestleZone Championship. Gunnar Van Patton. The crowd's reaction is immediate -- a wave of noise that rolls across the arena like a storm front. Some fans cheer. Some gasp. Some simply fall silent, knowing what this choice could mean.

John Phillips: "If Hakuryu chooses Gunnar Van Patton... Victorious becomes a battlefield."

Mark Bravo: "John... I think he's gonna do it. I think he's gonna poke the biggest, meanest bear in the woods."

Hakuryu stares down at the contract. His fingers hover above it, not touching, just feeling the weight of the moment. The camera zooms in on his hand. The crowd noise fades into a low hum.

Then Hakuryu speaks, his voice colder than before.

Hakuryu: ??????????..???????

Sinja: "My master says he will break the symbol of America."

The boos explode like a bomb. Fans scream. Some stand up. Some throw their hands in the air. Hakuryu remains perfectly still.

Hakuryu: ??????????????????????

Sinja: "America is weak. Ugly. Worthless."

The arena shakes with fury. Stevens' lips twitch upward -- he tries to hide it, but the satisfaction is too strong. This is the outcome he wanted, but he never dared assume.

Mark Bravo: "Oh boy. Ohhhh boy. He just insulted the entire country."

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John Phillips: "This is dangerous ground, even for Hakuryu."

Hakuryu lowers his hand onto the WrestleZone contract. His thumb presses down with ritualistic precision.

Hakuryu: ??????????????...???????????????

Sinja: "Defeating Gunnar Van Patton will prove Japan's superiority once and for all."

The arena erupts again -- louder, angrier, more chaotic. Stevens' eyes widen, and this time he doesn't hide his smile.

Scott Stevens: "So... that's your choice? Gunnar Van Patton? The WrestleZone Championship at Victorious?"

Sinja produces a small red ink stamp from his sleeve. Hakuryu presses his thumb into it, then onto the contract, leaving a crimson seal of intent.

The contract is officially claimed.

John Phillips: "It's official! Hakuryu has chosen Gunnar Van Patton!"

Mark Bravo: "Victorious just became a battlefield, John!"

Hakuryu lifts his head, staring into the hard camera with cold, merciless eyes. The hatred from the crowd washes over him like wind against stone.

Hakuryu: ??????????...???????????

Sinja: "Gunnar Van Patton... your end is coming."

Hakuryu turns away from the table, robes swaying with each slow, deliberate step. Sinja follows behind him, head bowed. The crowd drowns them in venom as they exit the ring. Stevens watches them leave, a slow, satisfied smile spreading across his face.

The camera cuts--

--to backstage.

The monitor in the locker room shows Hakuryu handing the signed document to Scott Stevens, the crowd's fury echoing faintly through the speakers.

Gunnar Van Patton sits directly in front of the screen, arms folded, shoulders squared, braced leg out straight before him, his one good eye fixed on the image with a cold, immovable stare. The blue glow from

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the monitor sharpens the lines of his face, casting him in a harsh, unforgiving light.

To his left stands Avril Selene Kinkade. Her posture is immaculate, her expression composed but sharpened with aristocratic disdain. She watches Hakuryu's image with a controlled, icy lift of her brow -- the kind of reaction that suggests surprise, but only in the way a queen might be "surprised" to find a commoner speaking out of turn.

Avril Selene Kinkade: "How... extraordinary. Of all the champions available to him, he selects you? How utterly irrational."

Her tone is crisp, clipped, and cold -- not emotional, not panicked, simply disdainful and superior.

Behind them, the Unholy Wolf Brigade forms a loose semicircle. Arkady Bogatyr leans forward, hands on his hips, eyes wide with restless energy.

Arkady Bogatyr: "Yoooo... that monk's gotta be out of his mind to take on the Lycan."

Torunn Sigurjonsson folds her arms, her jaw tightening as she watches Hakuryu bow on the monitor.

Torunn Sigurjonsson: "He believes himself a warrior. He believes this is destiny."

Theron Tkachuk stands silent, arms crossed, eyes narrowed. He studies Hakuryu's posture, the angle of his bow, the way he exits the ring. His expression does not change, but his focus is absolute -- clinical, predatory, calculating.

Avril glances at Gunnar, her voice dropping into a tone of aristocratic irritation.

Avril Selene Kinkade: "He postures as a holy man, yet behaves like a fanatic begging for martyrdom. His deity will be the only one to welcome him."

Arkady snorts.

Arkady Bogatyr: "Stevens thinks he found a hunter that can us wolves.."

Torunn nods once, her voice low and steady.

Torunn Sigurjonsson: "Another poacher, who will meet his end in the jaws of the Lycan."

Theron points to the monitor and signs a single word... "dead".

Torunn nods in agreement.

Avril's eyes narrow slightly -- the only sign of her true feelings slipping through her mask.

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Avril Selene Kinkade: "Regardless... this is the situation. And it demands to be addressed."

The room falls silent.

Heavy.

Tense.

All waiting for their leader's command.

Gunnar doesn't move. He doesn't blink. His eye focuses on the approaching danger, taking in all the information at hand.

Then Gunnar finally exhales -- slow, controlled, dangerous. His hand pats the brace around his damaged right leg. He lowers his head just slightly, jaw tightening.

Gunnar Van Patton: "Motherfu--"

The scene fades.

Pretty Nice, Huh?

The scene cuts backstage just moments before the main event.

Madman Szalinski is leading El Fantasma through the corridor with clear purpose, focused on getting his team to the ring for the UTA Tag Team Championship match. Both champions are all business, walking with their titles and their attention locked on the task ahead.

Then, of course, they run into Bobby Dean.

Bobby lights up immediately and steps right into Madman's path, forcing the Hall of Famer to stop.

Bobby Dean: "Madman! Madman! Hey! Look at this!"

Without waiting for a response, Bobby thrusts his Hall of Fame plaque up into Madman's line of sight, then immediately wiggles the Hall of Fame ring on his finger like it is the most dazzling object on earth.

Bobby Dean: "Pretty nice, huh?"

Madman just stares at him for a second, already looking like a man regretting this interaction.

Madman Szalinski: "Bobby... I was also inducted last night. I have the same stuff."

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He pauses, then tilts his head slightly.

Madman Szalinski: "We literally hung out after the Hall of Fame last night."

Bobby either does not hear this or chooses not to acknowledge it.

Instead, he leans in with the excited energy of someone about to share the biggest news in the world.

Bobby Dean: "Guess what?!"

Madman blinks behind the mask.

Madman Szalinski: "Uh... what?"

Bobby proudly points to the Hardcore Championship over his shoulder.

Bobby Dean: "I'm gonna defend my Hardcore belt against Eric Dane Jr. at Victorious!"

Even through the mask, Madman's puzzled expression is obvious.

Madman Szalinski: "I don't think that belt is active, chief."

Bobby nods enthusiastically like he has been waiting for this exact setup.

Bobby Dean: "Sure is! Scott Stevens made the match official!"

Madman lets that sit for a second.

Madman Szalinski: "I see."

He glances toward El Fantasma, then back to Bobby, clearly trying to be polite while also very much needing to keep moving.

Madman Szalinski: "Well... hate to cut this short, but I've got a couple champions to get to the ring myself."

Bobby nods like this is all perfectly reasonable.

Bobby Dean: "Oh, that's cool. The main event. I mean, me and Eric's match won't be the main event... but it's gonna be big!"

Madman lets out a long sigh.

Madman Szalinski: "Yeah. Cool."

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He turns toward El Fantasma and motions forward.

Madman Szalinski: "Let's go, boys."

Madman and El Fantasma continue down the corridor toward the arena, leaving Bobby Dean standing there smiling to himself, plaque in one hand, Hall of Fame ring gleaming, and the old Hardcore Championship still draped proudly over his shoulder.

With that, the focus shifts back toward the main event.

Servitude

The scene cuts to the New Empire's dressing room.

Amy Harrison stands in the center of the room like a queen addressing her court, the International Championship draped proudly over her shoulder. Trey Mack and Clovis Black stand in front of her, dressed and ready for the main event, while Valkyrie Knox lingers nearby with that same cold, unreadable stare.

Amy Harrison: "Alright, boys. Final words."

She steps closer to Trey and Clovis, looking from one to the other with total confidence.

Amy Harrison: "You go out there, you handle business, and you bring those tag belts back where they belong."

She pats the title on her shoulder.

Amy Harrison: "To the New Empire."

Trey Mack: "Man, we got this."

Clovis Black gives a short nod.

The two men turn and head for the door, focused on the match ahead. Amy watches them leave, then turns her attention to Valkyrie.

Amy Harrison: "Be on standby in case we need to make sure nothing happens."

Valkyrie nods once.

And then--

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WHAM.

The dressing room door bursts open.

Standing there is Marie Van Claudio, the UTA Women's Championship over her shoulder, absolutely furious. Flanking her are Dahlia Cross, Rosa Delgado, and Selena Vex. The tension in the room spikes instantly.

Amy barely blinks.

Amy Harrison: "The losers' locker room is down the hall."

MVC steps into the room, eyes locked on Amy.

Marie Van Claudio: "You think you can just do whatever you please around here, don't you?"

Amy smiles, utterly unconcerned even with the odds in front of her.

Amy Harrison: "Oh, honey, I don't think..."

She steps forward until she is nearly nose to nose with Marie.

Amy Harrison: "I know."

The two women stand forehead-close, glaring daggers at each other.

Marie Van Claudio: "I'm done with you, Amy. I'm done with all of it. Let's end this."

Amy stares back intensely for a moment...

Then she smiles.

She takes a step back, turns her back on Marie like she is no threat at all, and casually walks over to stand beside Valkyrie.

Amy Harrison: "Oh, Marie. Poor little Marie and her new friends."

She says the last part with dripping mockery.

Amy Harrison: "Better be careful, Marie. I hear those three don't know what loyalty is."

Rosa Delgado: "That's rich coming from you."

Amy rolls her eyes and keeps going.

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Amy Harrison: "Let me guess, Marie."

She sighs dramatically.

Amy Harrison: "You want to come in here and challenge me to a title-for-title match at Victorious. Winner takes both belts, loser--well, you of course--goes home finally defeated for good."

She tilts her head and smirks.

Amy Harrison: "Am I getting warm here?"

Marie's jaw tightens.

Marie Van Claudio: "There's only room for one of us, Amy!"

Amy immediately mocks her voice.

Amy Harrison: "'There's only room for one of us, Amy!'"

She drops the imitation and steps forward again.

Amy Harrison: "Oh, shut up, Marie. Literally nobody cares."

Her voice turns nastier.

Amy Harrison: "Just like nobody cares about that thing you call a championship anymore."

Marie glances down at the Women's Championship for just a second.

It is brief, but Amy sees it and pounces.

Amy Harrison: "Seriously, I'm the International Champion. What use do I have for your little trinket?"

She laughs.

Amy Harrison: "Oh, the women's division champion. Oooh... look at me, Miss Big Star."

Another laugh.

Amy Harrison: "Just like you, that title is worthless now. More worthless than the Unlikely era of the UTA."

Marie steps forward again, anger flashing in her eyes.

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Marie Van Claudio: "So just like that, huh? You think it's just over?"

Amy smiles.

Amy Harrison: "Oh, poor little Marie. Don't worry..."

She pauses for effect.

Amy Harrison: "You can have your match."

Marie's eyes sharpen immediately.

Marie Van Claudio: "Good."

Amy Harrison: "But it won't be title for title."

Marie Van Claudio: "That's fine. I don't need a title on the line to beat your ass."

Amy laughs again.

Amy Harrison: "Such big words from such a little girl."

She folds her arms.

Amy Harrison: "How about this... at Victorious, we'll see how much you can trust your little band of misfit losers..."

Selena Vex has to put an arm out to hold Rosa back as Rosa starts to lunge forward.

Amy Harrison: "We'll take the Old Empire... and my New Empire and..."

Marie Van Claudio: "I get it. Another elimination team match."

Amy grins and slowly shakes her head.

Amy Harrison: "Oh no, sweetheart. It'll be one on one."

She points between herself and Marie.

Amy Harrison: "But both teams will be on the outside..."

She smiles wider.

Amy Harrison: "In a Lumberjill match."

That hangs in the room for a beat.

Amy Harrison: "Nowhere to run. Nowhere to hide. We'll finish this alright."

She tilts her head.

Amy Harrison: "How's that sound, Marie?"

Marie nods once.

Marie Van Claudio: "Yeah. I'm ready."

Amy smiles again, pleased.

Amy Harrison: "Good. Oh, and Marie... one more thing..."

Marie Van Claudio: "What's that?"

Amy Harrison: "If I lose... I'll gladly vacate my International Championship."

Valkyrie Knox turns her head sharply toward Amy, clearly not loving that. Amy waves her off without even looking at her.

Marie Van Claudio: "And if I lose?"

Amy's smile changes. It gets colder.

Amy Harrison: "If you lose, Marie, you don't lose your little title. I'll let you keep your plaything."

She steps closer, her voice almost purring now.

Amy Harrison: "I want something... more."

Marie Van Claudio: "What do you want?"

Amy Harrison: "I want your servitude."

The room goes still.

Amy Harrison: "If you lose, you will be contractually obligated to be my and the New Empire's servant. Whatever I want, you'll do it. And you'll do it with a smile on your face... or there will be hell to pay."

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Selena Vex: "Don't agree to that."

Dahlia Cross: "Marie, no. Don't do it."

Marie raises a hand, motioning that she can speak for herself.

Amy Harrison: "And Marie... if you get any wild ideas about not fulfilling your obligations..."

She glances down at the Women's Championship.

Amy Harrison: "That thing you call a title... well, you'll have to give it up."

Marie looks conflicted for the briefest moment. The others watch her, worried. Amy waits, totally certain she has her cornered.

Then Marie lifts her head.

Marie Van Claudio: "I'm not going to lose, so that's not even a worry."

She steps even closer.

Marie Van Claudio: "You got your match."

Amy smiles, fully satisfied.

Amy Harrison: "Good."

She motions lazily toward the door.

Amy Harrison: "Now... get out of our dressing room or there's going to be a problem."

Valkyrie steps forward immediately, ready to make good on that threat. Marie does not flinch, but she motions for Dahlia, Rosa, and Selena to come on.

The four back out of the room, never taking their eyes off Amy Harrison and Valkyrie Knox.

The door remains open for one last second as Amy stands there smiling, the International Championship on her shoulder, looking completely pleased with herself.

Then the scene fades.

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Victorious

The screen fades to black.

A low, cinematic pulse begins to build beneath the silence.

Then--

Flash cuts.

A packed arena. Screaming fans. Pyro exploding into the sky. Championship gold glinting beneath white-hot lights.

A bold logo slams onto the screen.

VICTORIOUS: 2026

April 18, 2026

CHI Health Center

Omaha, Nebraska

The music intensifies.

We see Amy Harrison standing with the International Championship over her shoulder, a smug smile stretched across her face as the New Empire looms behind her.

Cut to Marie Van Claudio, Women's Championship in hand, glaring into the camera with cold determination.

Cut to Rosa Delgado, Selena Vex, and Dahlia Cross standing shoulder to shoulder.

Cut to Valkyrie Knoxx, expression unreadable, ready for violence. Trey Mack and Clovis Black beside her.

Voiceover: "At Victorious... the war between Amy Harrison and Marie Van Claudio finally reaches its breaking point."

We flash back to Amy and Marie nose to nose in the New Empire locker room.

Amy Harrison: "Nowhere to run. Nowhere to hide."

Marie Van Claudio: "You got your match."

Quick cuts of Amy's betrayal. Dahlia being attacked. Rosa and Selena cast aside. Marie stepping in to

confront the chaos.

Then the match graphic fills the screen.

Marie Van Claudio vs. Amy Harrison

Lumberjill Match

Title vs. Servitude

A dramatic sting hits.

Voiceover: "If Amy Harrison loses... she will vacate the International Championship."

Amy smirks into the camera.

Amy Harrison: "If you lose, Marie... you belong to me."

Cut to Marie, jaw clenched, refusing to blink.

Voiceover: "If Marie Van Claudio loses... she becomes the servant of Amy Harrison and the New Empire."

We see a rapid-fire montage of both women striking, shouting, being held back, and staring each other down while the women surrounding the ring look ready to erupt at any second.

Voiceover: "One rivalry. One ring. No escape. And everything to lose."

The music shifts.

The tone turns a little stranger.

We cut to "Beautiful" Bobby Dean proudly carrying the old Hardcore Championship over his shoulder, Hall of Fame plaque in hand, smiling like the happiest man alive.

Then a smash cut to Eric Dane Jr., sunglasses on, looking amused and dangerous at the same time.

Voiceover: "And in a match nobody saw coming..."

We flash back to Bobby squealing with excitement.

Bobby Dean: "YES! I accept!"

Then to Eric Dane Jr. wrapping an arm around Bobby's shoulder, all charm and bad intentions.

Eric Dane Jr.: "I think that's a great idea."

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The next graphic slams onto the screen.

Eric Dane Jr. vs. Bobby Dean Hardcore Match For the Hardcore Championship

We see Bobby lifting the belt high with goofy pride.

Then Eric smirking at the camera like he already owns the moment.

Voiceover: "The Hall of Famer. The self-proclaimed final Hardcore Champion. The returning legend who never stopped believing."

Cut to Bobby grinning ear to ear.

Voiceover: "And across from him..."

Cut to Eric Dane Jr. lowering his sunglasses.

Voiceover: "A man who sees opportunity everywhere."

We get quick flashes of shopping carts, steel chairs, trash cans, kendo sticks, and the battered old Hardcore Championship belt.

Voiceover: "Will Bobby Dean's dream return become a miracle comeback..."

Cut to Eric smiling.

Voiceover: "Or Eric Dane Jr.'s latest masterstroke?"

The music swells toward its climax.

We see the Victorious stage render. The packed CHI Health Center. Amy Harrison and Marie Van Claudio glaring at one another. Bobby Dean proudly holding his belt. Eric Dane Jr. standing opposite him with a grin. The Victorious logo fills the screen one final time.

Voiceover: "Two matches made tonight. Two futures hanging in the balance. One night where reputations, pride, power, and humiliation all collide."

Voiceover: "Victorious: 2026."

Voiceover: "April 18th. CHI Health Center. Omaha, Nebraska."

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Voiceover: "Be there."

The logo slams onto the screen one last time as the music cuts to black.

El Fantasma vs. Mack & Black

The camera returns to ringside for the main event as the atmosphere inside the Lenovo Center shifts once again.

John Phillips: "It is now time for our main event. The UTA Tag Team Championships are on the line as El Fantasma defend against Trey Mack and Clovis Black of the New Empire."

Mark Bravo: "And if tonight hasn't already been chaotic enough, let's remember what else was made official earlier. At Victorious, Amy Harrison and Marie Van Claudio go one on one in a Lumberjill Match, which means everybody tied to that war is going to be around ringside."

John Phillips: "Including these challengers. Trey Mack and Clovis Black will be on the outside as part of the New Empire contingent, while Dahlia Cross, Rosa Delgado, and Selena Vex back Marie Van Claudio. There will be nowhere to run and nowhere to hide in that match."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah, and if you think Trey Mack and Clovis Black are just going to politely stand there and watch, you haven't been paying attention. That's going to be a powder keg."

The arena lights dip into deep purple and gold.

A thick bassline starts pounding through the building like a heartbeat, and the crowd immediately responds with loud boos.

John Phillips: "And here come the challengers."

Trey Mack steps through the curtain first, wearing a grin that says he knows exactly how much people hate what he became and he could not care less. He rolls his shoulders once, then looks out over the crowd like he owns the reaction coming back at him.

A step behind him comes Clovis Black.

No smile. No pose. No wasted motion.

Just a heavy, silent presence moving beside Trey like an enforcer already imagining the damage ahead.

Mark Bravo: "That right there is an unsettling combination. Trey Mack has all the swagger, all the confidence, all the noise. Clovis Black is just the violence waiting behind it."

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John Phillips: "Trey Mack has always carried himself with charisma, but since aligning with Amy Harrison, that energy has turned sharper, more arrogant, more dangerous. And Clovis Black remains one of the most intimidating men in UTA."

Trey slaps his chest once, then points out toward the ring with a cocky smirk before starting down the ramp. Clovis follows at his own pace, slower, steadier, like a man collecting a debt.

Mark Bravo: "And don't overlook the pressure on these two tonight. Amy Harrison already stood in that ring and promised the world they'd walk out with the tag titles. That's a lot to live up to."

John Phillips: "It certainly is, especially against a team like El Fantasma, who have proven time and again that they are among the most unique and difficult champions in this company."

Trey keeps his bounce as he walks, a big man moving with surprising rhythm and confidence, jawing at the crowd here and there without ever fully losing focus on the ring. Clovis remains locked in straight ahead, hooded trench hanging off his frame, every bit the looming threat beside him.

Mark Bravo: "You can feel the difference between them, too. Trey likes the moment. He likes the spotlight. Clovis just looks like he wants to throw somebody through it."

Halfway down the ramp, Trey turns toward Clovis and says something off-mic with a grin. Clovis doesn't answer. He just keeps walking, eyes fixed on the ring.

John Phillips: "That silence from Clovis Black may say more than anything Trey Mack could shout."

The boos intensify as the two reach ringside.

Trey stops for a second and looks up toward the ring, smiling wider now, clearly picturing the championship gold already. Clovis steps onto the apron first, turning his head just enough to scan the ring like he is measuring the space for violence.

Mark Bravo: "This is the kind of team that can beat you in two different ways. Trey Mack can overwhelm you with pace and impact. Clovis Black can just break you down until nothing's left."

Trey slides into the ring with quickness that still does not look natural for a man his size, popping up to his feet immediately and throwing his arms out wide to a wall of boos. Clovis steps through the ropes behind him and removes his coat in one sharp motion, tossing it aside with no ceremony.

John Phillips: "Trey Mack and Clovis Black are here for the biggest tag team opportunity they have had since aligning with Amy Harrison and the New Empire."

Mark Bravo: "And now they wait for the champions. If this match is anything like the rest of tonight, we are in for a war."

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Trey backs into his corner, still bouncing lightly, still grinning. Clovis plants himself beside him, cold and motionless. Together, the challengers stare toward the stage, ready for the arrival of El Fantasma.

The challengers wait inside the ring as the arena lights shift once more.

A darker, more dramatic sound begins to build through the Lenovo Center, the kind of music that feels less like an entrance theme and more like the score to something mythical arriving. The crowd starts to stir, knowing exactly what is coming.

John Phillips: "And now here come the champions."

El Fantasma Oscuro 1 and El Fantasma Oscuro 2 step onto the stage together, the UTA Tag Team Championships with them, moving with the same eerie synchronicity and calm menace that has made them one of the most difficult teams in the company to prepare for. There is no grandstanding, no wasted motion, just presence.

Behind them, right on cue, comes their manager and newly inducted Hall of Famer, Madman Szalinski.

The crowd responds loudly as Madman steps into view, carrying himself with the relaxed confidence of a veteran who has seen it all and somehow still thrives in the chaos.

Mark Bravo: "There he is. Newly inducted Hall of Famer Madman Szalinski, and I still don't know if that man has ever had a normal day in his life."

John Phillips: "Madman has been instrumental in guiding El Fantasma to this point, and tonight they face one of their biggest tests yet against the New Empire."

Then, suddenly, one more figure comes through the curtain behind Madman.

"Beautiful" Bobby Dean.

The crowd absolutely erupts.

Bobby Dean, still in his Hall of Fame suit and still carrying himself like the happiest man alive, steps out waving enthusiastically with that goofy grin plastered across his face. The ovation somehow gets even louder.

Mark Bravo: "Oh no."

Madman hears the reaction and, for just a moment, looks pleased with himself, soaking in what he assumes is a bigger Hall of Fame hero's welcome.

Then he turns his head...

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...and sees Bobby Dean behind him, grinning and waving to the crowd like he belongs in the entrance.

John Phillips: "Well, there's Bobby Dean."

Mark Bravo: "Of course there is. Why wouldn't there be?"

Madman stops dead on the stage and turns fully toward Bobby, confusion immediately turning into annoyance. He points toward the back and starts motioning for Bobby to get out of there.

Madman Szalinski: "No. No, no. Back. Go back."

Bobby just smiles at first, not fully understanding. He points to himself like, "Me?"

Madman nods emphatically and continues waving him off.

Madman Szalinski: "Yes, you. Go. Back."

The crowd laughs as Bobby's expression slowly drops into exaggerated disappointment. His shoulders slump. He gives one last little wave to the fans, then turns and starts heading back through the curtain looking genuinely sad about it.

Mark Bravo: "That may be the saddest exit in professional wrestling history."

John Phillips: "Bobby Dean being Bobby Dean."

Madman shakes his head, mutters something under his breath, then refocuses and gestures for El Fantasma to keep moving.

Madman Szalinski: "Let's go."

The champions continue down the ramp with Madman trailing right behind them now, the brief Bobby Dean detour finally behind them.

John Phillips: "And while we have a moment here, we should also remember the ominous words spoken to Madman Szalinski last week by Silas Grimm."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah, that's been hanging over this whole thing. Silas Grimm made it very clear that whatever business he has with Madman, it isn't over. Not even close."

John Phillips: "Madman may be leading a championship team to the ring tonight, but there is no question that Grimm's warning cast a shadow. You have to wonder if that threat is somewhere in the back of his mind."

Mark Bravo: "It has to be. The problem is, when you manage a team like El Fantasma, there's already

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enough danger to keep track of before you start adding Silas Grimm to the list."

At ringside, El Fantasma split and approach from either side of the ring, both men never taking their eyes off the challengers waiting inside. Madman follows them down with a little more focus in his step now, all jokes aside.

Oscuro 1 slides under the bottom rope first. Oscuro 2 steps up onto the apron and enters just after him. The champions move to center ring, titles raised as the crowd roars.

John Phillips: "Champions in the ring. Challengers already waiting. Main event atmosphere, and the UTA Tag Team Championships are on the line."

Mark Bravo: "And after everything else tonight, this one still might steal the show."

Madman takes his place at ringside, eyes bouncing from the ring to the aisle and back again, while El Fantasma stand side by side, ready for the fight to begin.

The referee steps into the center of the ring and holds the UTA Tag Team Championships high overhead as all four men stare each other down.

John Phillips: "Main event time. The Tag Team Championships on the line."

Mark Bravo: "And I'll tell you right now, Trey Mack and Clovis Black do not look even a little intimidated."

That much is obvious.

El Fantasma Oscuro 1 and El Fantasma Oscuro 2 stand motionless, the eerie calm and silent menace that usually gets under an opponent's skin hanging over the ring like fog.

Trey Mack just starts laughing.

He points at both champions, then looks over at Clovis Black with a wide grin like he's being let in on the world's funniest joke.

Trey Mack: "Oh man, y'all serious with this?"

Clovis doesn't laugh much, but even he cracks a slight smirk as he shakes his head at the whole presentation.

Mark Bravo: "Yeah, they are absolutely not buying into the spooky act."

John Phillips: "That may be confidence. It may be arrogance. But either way, Trey Mack and Clovis Black are not giving El Fantasma the psychological edge they're used to having."

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Trey starts pacing in his corner, bouncing lightly, talking the whole time.

Trey Mack: "Ghosts? Phantoms? Man, please."

He slaps Clovis once on the chest and points across the ring.

Trey Mack: "They just dudes in masks."

Clovis takes a step forward and spreads his arms slightly, almost inviting the champions to do something about it.

Clovis Black: "Ain't nobody scared."

Across the ring, neither member of El Fantasma responds verbally. They just stare back, unreadable behind the masks.

John Phillips: "That may be the wrong approach. El Fantasma have built their reputation not just on atmosphere, but on being one of the most effective teams in UTA."

Mark Bravo: "True, but I get what Trey's doing. He doesn't want them controlling the temperature. He wants this to be a fight, not a séance."

Madman Szalinski watches from ringside, arms folded now, his expression saying he has seen people underestimate his team before.

Trey steps right up to Oscuro 1 and waves a hand in front of the mask, mocking the stoic stillness.

Trey Mack: "You gonna stand there all night, or we gonna make some money?"

Oscuro 1 doesn't move.

Trey leans in even closer, grinning.

Trey Mack: "That's what I thought."

The referee quickly steps between them and starts sending both teams back to their corners.

Referee: "Alright, back it up. Let's get one from each team."

Trey backs off still smiling, hands up like he's just having fun. Clovis steps out onto the apron without complaint, but not before giving one last dismissive look toward the champions.

On the other side, Oscuro 2 exits as well, leaving Oscuro 1 in the ring to start for the champions.

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John Phillips: "It looks like Trey Mack is going to start things off for the challengers."

Mark Bravo: "And honestly, that feels right. He's the one doing all the talking. Now let's see how much of it holds up once the bell rings."

Trey bounces in place, loose and cocky, not the slightest bit bothered by the silence in front of him. Across from him, Oscuro 1 stands perfectly still until the last second, when he lowers into a ready stance.

The contrast could not be sharper.

John Phillips: "The challengers are laughing now. We'll see if they're still laughing once this match gets going."

The referee looks to both men.

Referee: "Ready?"

Trey smirks.

Trey Mack: "Born ready."

The bell is about to ring.

The bell rings.

John Phillips: "And our main event is underway!"

Trey Mack comes out of his corner loose and grinning, shoulders bouncing, hands half-raised more out of swagger than caution. Across from him, Oscuro 1 stays low and still for just a moment longer, almost statuesque--

Then he explodes.

In one sudden blur, Oscuro 1 darts forward and catches Trey with a lightning-quick arm drag that sends the challenger rolling across the canvas before he even fully realizes contact was made.

The crowd pops immediately.

Mark Bravo: "Oh! Okay!"

John Phillips: "What speed from Oscuro 1!"

Trey scrambles back up, surprised more than hurt, and shakes his head once like he's trying to clear it. He

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charges in again, this time looking to grab hold and slow things down--

Oscuro 1 slips to the side, snatches the wrist, and twists Trey over into a second arm drag, even smoother than the first. Trey tumbles up to a knee this time, staring at the masked champion with irritation replacing the grin.

John Phillips: "Trey Mack may not have taken the champions' aura seriously, but he just got a very real reminder of how dangerous El Fantasma can be."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah, that speed caught him clean. Trey thought he was getting spooky nonsense. What he got was technique."

Oscuro 1 rises and spreads his stance again, calm and ready, while Trey pushes up to his feet now with a lot less bounce in him than before. From the apron, Clovis Black leans in slightly, eyes narrowing. At ringside, Madman Szalinski folds his arms with a faint look of satisfaction.

John Phillips: "Excellent start for the champions."

Trey circles again, more cautious this time, and reaches in looking for a tie-up. Oscuro 1 steps in to meet him--

And that is exactly when Trey changes gears.

He drives a hard boot into the midsection.

The crowd boos as Oscuro 1 folds slightly and Trey immediately clubs him across the upper back with a heavy forearm, then grabs a side headlock and wrenches it in tight with much more force than finesse.

Mark Bravo: "There it is. Trey got surprised once, maybe twice, and now he's done letting that happen."

John Phillips: "A very different kind of response from Trey Mack. He just shut down the speed advantage the direct way."

Trey grinds the headlock hard and talks while he does it, because of course he does.

Trey Mack: "That little flash stuff? Ain't gonna save you."

Oscuro 1 tries to fight up and shoot him off into the ropes, but Trey lowers his shoulder on the rebound and blasts him with a hard shoulder tackle that knocks the champion flat to the canvas.

Trey stays standing.

The grin comes back.

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Mark Bravo: "That's a grown man right there. Trey Mack may move like a lighter guy sometimes, but when he decides to put the weight on you, it's a problem."

Oscuro 1 rolls backward and gets to his feet quickly, but Trey doesn't let him reset. He storms in with a forearm to the jaw, backs him toward the ropes, and whips him across the ring. Oscuro rebounds--Trey catches him with a huge back elbow right under the cheekbone that drops him again.

John Phillips: "Trey Mack turning this around in a hurry."

Trey points to his own head and barks toward Clovis on the apron.

Trey Mack: "Told you. Ain't nothing to it."

Clovis gives one approving nod.

Trey drags Oscuro 1 up by the mask and arm, then muscles him backward into the challengers' corner. He drives a shoulder into the ribs once, then again, before backing away just enough to tag Clovis Black into the match.

John Phillips: "And now here comes Clovis Black."

Mark Bravo: "This is exactly what Trey wanted. Get rid of the surprise, slow the pace, and now hand a softened-up champion to the heavy artillery."

Clovis steps into the ring with no wasted motion. Trey holds Oscuro 1 in place long enough for Clovis to line him up, then Clovis unloads with a crushing body shot to the ribs that folds the champion over.

The crowd groans.

John Phillips: "That'll knock the wind out of you in a hurry."

Trey steps out to the apron as Clovis yanks Oscuro 1 out of the corner and drives him down with a short-arm clothesline. The champion pops back up on instinct, but Clovis is waiting with a second clothesline, this one even harder, turning Oscuro inside out and dropping him near the challengers' side of the ring.

Mark Bravo: "And now the tone changes completely. Trey shut down the speed. Clovis is trying to crush whatever's left."

On the apron, Oscuro 2 leans in, ready for a tag if his partner can get there. Madman shouts encouragement from ringside. But in the ring, the challengers have quickly found their footing.

John Phillips: "Early surprise from the champions, but Trey Mack adjusted fast, and now the challengers are in firm control."

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Clovis reaches down and drags Oscuro 1 back up, the main event beginning to take shape.

Clovis Black drags Oscuro 1 up from the mat like he weighs nothing, one hand wrapped around the mask and the other controlling the wrist. There is nothing flashy about the way he moves. Nothing wasted. He just imposes himself on the match.

John Phillips: "This is where Clovis Black becomes so dangerous. He doesn't need momentum for very long. He just needs one opening to start flattening people."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah, and once he gets rolling, he's a Mack truck. He doesn't finesse you. He just runs you over."

Clovis shoves Oscuro 1 toward the ropes and catches him on the rebound with a brutal shoulder block that sends the champion flipping backward to the canvas. Oscuro 1 tries to push back up quickly, but Clovis is already there, looming over him, daring him to stand.

Oscuro 1 gets to a knee.

Clovis blasts him with a clubbing forearm across the chest and shoulder line that knocks him right back down.

John Phillips: "That is pure force from Clovis Black."

On the apron, Trey Mack is loving every second of it, shouting encouragement and talking trash toward the champions' corner.

Trey Mack: "That's it! Walk through him!"

Clovis drags Oscuro 1 up again and backs him into the challengers' corner. Trey tags himself in, but there is no rush to change the tone. Trey steps in only long enough to hold Oscuro in place while Clovis unloads with a crushing body shot. Trey follows with a forearm to the face, then the two challengers whip Oscuro across the ring together.

Oscuro 1 rebounds--

Clovis nearly cuts him in half with a massive back elbow.

The crowd groans as the champion drops hard.

Mark Bravo: "That's what I mean. He's not just hitting you. He's erasing space."

Trey drops into a quick cover, more to keep the pressure on than out of real expectation.

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Referee: "One! Two!"

Oscuro 1 kicks out.

John Phillips: "Still enough left in the champion to stay alive, but the challengers are dictating this thing now."

Trey stays on him, pulling Oscuro 1 up and snapping him into a front facelock before walking him toward Clovis' corner. Another tag. Clovis steps through the ropes and Trey hands the champion over like a fresh target.

Clovis immediately hooks him around the waist and launches him across the ring with a release belly-to-belly suplex.

Oscuro 1 skids and tumbles toward the far ropes.

John Phillips: "What a throw!"

Mark Bravo: "That's not a suplex. That's getting relocated."

Oscuro 2 reaches out from the apron, trying to will his partner closer, but Clovis closes the distance before any tag can be made. He stomps once to the midsection, then once to the shoulder, then reaches down and yanks Oscuro 1 upright again.

Oscuro fires a shot to the ribs.

Then another.

Clovis barely acknowledges either one.

He responds with a short headbutt that stuns the champion in place, then hammers him with a lariat that sends him collapsing backward into the ropes.

John Phillips: "Oscuro 1 is trying to fight back, but Clovis Black is just steamrolling through him."

Mark Bravo: "Exactly. Some guys you outwrestle. Some guys you outpace. Clovis? Sometimes you just have to survive him first."

Trey slaps the top rope and extends a hand for another tag. Clovis gives it to him, but not before one more nasty contribution. He hoists Oscuro 1 up onto his shoulder and drives him down gut-first across the top turnbuckle, leaving him draped and vulnerable. Trey comes in and immediately blasts the hanging champion with a forearm to the back that sends him spilling awkwardly back into the ring.

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John Phillips: "Excellent tandem offense by the challengers."

Trey stays on the attack now, but the groundwork is obvious. The speed that surprised him at the opening bell has been completely neutralized. Oscuro 1 is slower getting up, slower reacting, and every second Clovis Black spent in the ring has made that worse.

Mark Bravo: "That's what those truck hits do. They don't just hurt in the moment. They make everything after them harder."

Trey drags Oscuro 1 toward center ring and whips him toward the ropes again. On the rebound, Trey ducks low and launches him upward into the air just enough--

For Clovis, who has stepped back onto the apron, to crack him across the chest with a vicious forearm from the outside as he comes down.

The crowd boos loudly.

John Phillips: "Come on now!"

Mark Bravo: "That's teamwork. Dirty teamwork, but teamwork."

The referee warns Clovis and tries to push him back to the apron edge, but the damage is done. Trey grins and points to his own head again, proud of the little shortcut. Across the ring, Madman Szalinski is shouting at the referee while Oscuro 2 paces with growing urgency.

Inside the ropes, Trey hooks the leg for another cover.

Referee: "One! Two!"

Oscuro 1 kicks out again.

John Phillips: "The champions are still in this, but this has become a punishing stretch."

Trey gets up quickly and tags Clovis right back in, keeping the pressure relentless. Clovis steps over the ropes and immediately boots Oscuro 1 in the side as he tries to rise. Then he grabs him by the arm and whips him hard into the corner. The impact sends Oscuro slumping against the buckles.

Clovis charges in full speed and crushes him with a running splash that shakes the entire corner.

The crowd gasps.

Mark Bravo: "Mack truck."

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John Phillips: "There is no better word for it."

Clovis peels Oscurro 1 out of the corner and powers him onto his shoulder again, then runs him across the ring and drives him down with a brutal powerslam in the center of the canvas.

He hooks the leg.

Referee: "One! Two!"

Oscurro 1 barely gets the shoulder up.

Clovis rises with a grim look, not frustrated, just ready to keep running through whatever is in front of him. Trey leans in from the apron, barking for one more shot, one more pass, one more collision.

John Phillips: "The challengers are in complete control right now, and Clovis Black is doing exactly what Mark said--running over El Fantasma one collision at a time."

Clovis reaches down and hauls Oscurro 1 back up again, the punishment still coming.

Clovis Black hauls Oscurro 1 off the mat again, the champion barely able to keep his footing under the accumulated damage. Every time he tries to steady himself, Clovis is already there to knock him off balance all over again.

John Phillips: "This has become a nightmare stretch for the champions."

Mark Bravo: "And look outside. Madman can barely stand there and watch it."

The camera cuts to ringside.

Madman Szalinski paces in frustration, one hand on top of his head, the other slapping the apron now and then, clearly hating every second of what he's seeing. He shouts toward his team, but there is a helplessness underneath it. He can coach. He can warn. He can beg for movement. But he cannot stop the beating happening in front of him.

John Phillips: "Madman has guided this team through so much success, but right now he is forced to watch as Trey Mack and Clovis Black systematically tear them apart."

Mark Bravo: "And that's the worst feeling in the world as a manager. You know what's happening. You see every second of it. And you still can't physically do a thing about it."

Inside the ring, Clovis clubs Oscurro 1 across the upper back and shoves him toward the ropes. Oscurro stumbles through them and bounces back--only for Clovis to flatten him again with another thundering shoulder block. The challenger stays standing. Oscurro 1 collapses hard.

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John Phillips: "Again! Clovis Black just keeps driving through him!"

Madman winces at ringside, grimacing like he felt it himself.

Madman Szalinski: "Come on! Move! Get moving!"

On the apron, Oscuro 2 is leaning so far over the top rope that the referee has to warn him back, desperate for a tag that still feels miles away. Trey Mack barks from his own corner, loving every second of the destruction.

Trey Mack: "Yeah! That's it! Break him down!"

Clovis drags Oscuro 1 up and walks him into the challengers' corner. Trey slaps his chest for the tag and steps in with fresh energy while Clovis holds the champion upright. Trey cracks him with a forearm to the face, then another, then backs up and drives a running knee into the ribs that folds Oscuro over again.

John Phillips: "Trey Mack now picking the bones after Clovis Black softened him up."

Mark Bravo: "That's what makes this team dangerous. Clovis crushes you, Trey picks the spots, and before long you're drowning."

Trey hooks Oscuro 1 around the head and neck and drags him toward the middle of the ring, then snaps him over with a quick neckbreaker. He floats into the cover.

Referee: "One! Two!"

Oscuro 1 kicks out.

The crowd roars, but Trey just shakes his head and smirks, not rattled at all. He rises and points toward Madman on the outside.

Trey Mack: "You watching this? You seeing this?"

Madman points back toward the ring and shouts for his man to get up, but his expression is tight now, strained. He knows the danger of what comes next if this pace keeps up.

John Phillips: "Madman is trying everything he can from the outside, but right now the New Empire challengers are a step ahead of El Fantasma at every turn."

Trey reaches down and pulls Oscuro 1 up by the mask again, then whips him hard into the ropes. Oscuro rebounds, and Trey catches him with a spinning side slam that drives him down near center ring. Another cover.

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Referee: "One! Two!"

Again, the champion kicks out.

Mark Bravo: "Still alive. Barely, but still alive."

Trey wastes no time. He drags Oscuro 1 toward the corner and tags Clovis back in, wanting another round of heavy punishment. Clovis steps through the ropes, reaches down, and simply lifts the champion straight off the mat by the throat and upper chest before launching him back-first into the challengers' corner.

Oscuro 1 hits the buckles and slumps.

Clovis charges in with a running back elbow that crushes him against the turnbuckles, then follows with a short-arm lariat as Oscuro stumbles back out.

The champion drops again.

John Phillips: "This is relentless."

At ringside, Madman looks away for just a second, jaw tight, then forces himself to look back. He hates what he's seeing, but he cannot afford to miss the moment his team might finally find an opening.

Mark Bravo: "That right there says everything. Madman can barely watch, but he knows he has to. Because if there's even one crack in this, he's got to be ready to scream his guys toward it."

Clovis plants a boot on Oscuro 1's chest and looks out toward the crowd with cold disdain. Then he drags the champion up one more time and hoists him onto his shoulder, marching slowly around the ring before driving him down with a heavy snake-eyes onto the top turnbuckle.

Oscuro staggers backward in a daze--

Right into Trey Mack, who has reached blindly over the top rope and slapped Clovis on the shoulder for another tag.

John Phillips: "Quick tag right back to Trey."

Clovis grabs Oscuro 1 from behind and holds him in place just long enough for Trey to spring off the second rope and drive a flying clothesline into the side of the champion's head and chest.

Oscuro 1 crumbles to the mat.

Mark Bravo: "That was nasty teamwork."

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Trey hooks both legs deep this time, leaning all his weight into the cover.

Referee: "One! Two!"

Oscuro 1 just barely kicks out.

The crowd erupts with relief.

John Phillips: "How much more can he take?"

Madman slaps the apron in frustration and shouts again, his voice cracking just a little from the urgency.

Madman Szalinski: "Come on, boys! Come on! Fight out of it!"

Trey rises and glances toward Clovis with a grin, but the longer this goes, the more even he can feel that the champions are surviving on something deeper than momentum. Across the ring, Oscuro 2 still has a hand stretched out, still calling for the tag, still waiting for his partner to find one single opening in the storm.

John Phillips: "Madman Szalinski is almost powerless out there, forced to watch his team get dismantled, but somehow the champions are still hanging on."

Trey Mack reaches down once more for Oscuro 1, trying to keep the destruction going before El Fantasma can finally turn the tide.

Trey Mack reaches down and yanks Oscuro 1 up by the arm and mask, dragging the battered champion away from his own corner with deliberate cruelty. He knows exactly where Oscuro 2 is. He knows exactly how desperate Madman Szalinski is getting on the outside. And he is enjoying every second of denying them both.

John Phillips: "Trey Mack knows the situation. He knows that one tag could change everything, and he is doing everything in his power to make sure it never happens."

Mark Bravo: "That's veteran tag team wrestling right there. It's ugly, but it's smart."

Trey twists the arm into a standing wristlock and wrenches down, then pulls Oscuro 1 into a sharp short-arm clothesline that drops him again. The challenger doesn't even bother celebrating this time. He just drops an elbow across the upper chest, then another, then hooks the leg for another cover.

Referee: "One! Two!"

Oscuro 1 gets the shoulder up again.

John Phillips: "Still alive."

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Mark Bravo: "I don't know how, but still alive."

Trey pops back to his feet and points to his head again, proud of himself, then drags Oscuro 1 backward into the challengers' corner. He tags Clovis Black back in, and the crowd groans because they know exactly what that means.

John Phillips: "And here comes Clovis Black again."

Clovis steps through the ropes and immediately stomps down on the shoulder blades as Oscuro 1 tries to rise. Then he yanks him upright and hammers him with a heavy forearm to the jaw that sends him staggering sideward instead of forward, his legs barely holding up under him now.

Madman is pacing harder on the floor, shouting himself raw.

Madman Szalinski: "One opening! One opening, boys! Come on!"

Clovis grabs Oscuro 1 around the waist and muscles him up for another throw--

But this time Oscuro 1 starts fighting in the air.

He throws elbows down at the side of Clovis' head. One. Two. Three.

Clovis stumbles and loses full control. Oscuro 1 slips down behind him.

The crowd starts to come alive.

John Phillips: "Wait a minute!"

Clovis turns--

Oscuro 1 catches him with a sudden spinning heel kick to the side of the head.

Clovis rocks backward but does not fall.

Oscuro 1 hits the ropes on instinct and comes flying back with a springboard crossbody--

Clovis catches him.

Mark Bravo: "Nope!"

The crowd gasps as Clovis adjusts him across the chest, but before he can turn it into a powerslam, Oscuro 1 slips free again, lands on his feet, and shoves Clovis chest-first into the turnbuckles.

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Clovis hits hard and stumbles backward out of the corner.

Oscuro 1 drops to a knee from exhaustion, but the opening is finally there.

John Phillips: "This is the chance! He needs the tag right now!"

On the apron, Oscuro 2 is leaning halfway into the ring with his arm stretched as far as it can go. Madman is practically jumping out of his shoes on the floor, screaming for it.

Madman Szalinski: "Go! Go! Go!"

Oscuro 1 crawls.

Clovis turns and sees it, then dives toward Trey's corner.

Both teams are reaching now.

John Phillips: "This could change the whole match!"

Trey gets the tag first.

The crowd boos.

Trey lunges into the ring and grabs at Oscuro 1's ankle just before he can fully reach his partner--

But Oscuro 1 kicks free with both legs, sending Trey sprawling forward onto the mat.

The arena erupts.

Oscuro 1 dives the final inches--

And tags Oscuro 2.

John Phillips: "He got it! He got the tag!"

Mark Bravo: "Here we go!"

Oscuro 2 explodes into the ring like he's been shot out of a cannon.

Trey gets up first and runs right into a flying forearm that knocks him flat. Clovis steps in and eats a jumping back elbow that staggers even the big man. Trey back up--arm drag. Clovis charging--drop toehold into the middle rope. Trey swings from behind--Oscuro 2 ducks and drills him with a springing enziguri that sends him crashing into the corner.

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The crowd is going absolutely wild now.

John Phillips: "What a burst from Oscuro 2!"

Mark Bravo: "That's exactly what they needed! Fresh body, fresh speed, and total chaos!"

Clovis shakes off the ropes and charges in with bad intentions, but Oscuro 2 slips around him, bounces off the second rope, and catches the big man with a tornado DDT that finally takes him off his feet. Trey comes flying out of the corner with a clothesline attempt--Oscuro 2 ducks and catches him with a snap powerslam of his own.

Madman is losing his mind on the outside now, half-laughing, half-yelling, all adrenaline.

Madman Szalinski: "That's it! That's it! Keep going!"

John Phillips: "Listen to this place! El Fantasma has fought all the way back into the main event!"

Oscuro 2 turns and sees Clovis rising again. He sprints, jumps to the second rope, and comes back with a missile dropkick that sends Clovis tumbling through the ropes to the floor. Trey scrambles up and stumbles right into a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker from the fresh champion.

Oscuro 2 hooks the leg.

Referee: "One! Two!"

Trey Mack kicks out.

Mark Bravo: "That was close!"

Oscuro 2 pops right back up and motions to his corner. Oscuro 1, still hurting badly, nods from the apron as the champions look ready to finally string together some offense of their own. Across the ring, Trey rolls away, buying seconds, while Clovis Black is already pushing himself up on the floor, shaking off the DDT and the dropkick like a man who refuses to stay down for long.

John Phillips: "The challengers dominated for a long stretch, but that one tag has changed the complexion of this match entirely."

Oscuro 2 grabs Trey Mack by the wrist and drags him back toward center ring, the main event surging into a whole new gear.

Oscuro 2 drags Trey Mack back toward center ring and does not hesitate. The fresh champion knows exactly how precious this momentum is, and he has no intention of giving the challengers a second to settle themselves.

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John Phillips: "Oscuro 2 understands the assignment here. Fast pace. Constant movement. Don't let Trey Mack or Clovis Black rebuild that wall they had around this match."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah, because the second this slows down, you're right back under the truck tires."

Oscuro 2 whips Trey into the ropes and catches him on the rebound with a jumping calf kick that snaps his head to the side. Trey stumbles but stays on his feet just long enough for Oscuro 2 to spin through and drill him with a running knee to the body, doubling him over. From there, the champion hooks the head and snaps Trey down with a quick neckbreaker, then kips up to a loud roar from the crowd.

John Phillips: "What a sequence from Oscuro 2!"

Trey rolls toward the ropes, trying to create a little breathing room, but Oscuro 2 is already on him. He yanks Trey upright by the wrist and drives him into the champions' corner, where Oscuro 1 reaches over the top rope for the tag.

John Phillips: "And now the champions look to capitalize together."

Tag made.

Oscuro 1, still showing the effects of the beating he took, steps back in with a grim determination and immediately joins his partner in a double whip. Trey hits the ropes, rebounds, and El Fantasma catch him with a tandem double dropkick that sends him skidding across the ring. The crowd erupts again.

Mark Bravo: "That's tag team wrestling. Survive the storm and then make the hot tag hurt."

Oscuro 1 stays in, but now the roles are reversed. He is the damaged champion with a second wind, feeding off the energy of the building and the support of his partner. He reaches down and pulls Trey up, then catches him with a quick series of kicks to the thigh and body. Trey tries to swing back with a wild right hand--Oscuro 1 ducks under it and answers with a spinning back kick to the ribs that drives Trey backward toward the corner.

John Phillips: "This is the first sustained stretch the champions have really had all match."

On the floor, Clovis Black is back on his feet and circling toward the apron, still dangerous, still looming. Madman Szalinski sees it and immediately points toward him, shouting a warning to the referee while also trying to keep his team locked in.

Madman Szalinski: "Watch him! Watch Clovis!"

Inside the ring, Trey manages to grab a side headlock to stop the flow, but Oscuro 1 fires him off into the ropes. Trey rebounds and tries to lower a shoulder. Oscuro 1 slips aside, reaches back, and hooks Trey into a snap powerslam that gets another loud pop from the crowd.

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He covers.

Referee: "One! Two!"

Trey kicks out.

Mark Bravo: "Close one. Real close."

Oscuro 1 rises quickly and looks toward his partner. Another tag. Oscuro 2 springs back in and the champions immediately go to work together again, pulling Trey up and sending him into the ropes. On the rebound, they catch him with a double flapjack that drops him face-first to the canvas.

John Phillips: "Excellent teamwork by the champions!"

Oscuro 2 turns just in time to see Clovis finally step through the ropes without a tag. The crowd buzzes, knowing the danger. The referee rushes toward him to force him back, but Clovis doesn't stop. He barrels forward like a runaway truck, aiming straight through the champions--

Only for Oscuro 1 to catch him with a low dropkick to the knee.

Clovis buckles just enough.

Oscuro 2 springs to the second rope and dives off with a bulldog that finally takes the big man down.

The crowd explodes.

Mark Bravo: "That's how you handle him! Take the base out and make him fall!"

Trey is back up, though, and he blasts Oscuro 2 from behind with a forearm that sends him sprawling. Oscuro 1 turns and eats a big boot from Trey that knocks him through the ropes to the apron. Suddenly the ring is chaos again.

John Phillips: "Everything breaking down now in the main event!"

Madman is shouting from the outside, trying to direct traffic, while the referee is pulled in four directions at once. Trey sees Oscuro 2 on one knee and charges for a kill shot--

Oscuro 2 ducks.

Trey hits the ropes and comes back into a superkick from the champion that snaps his head back. Trey falls into the corner. Oscuro 2 hits the opposite ropes and rushes in with a running forearm smash, then keeps going, sprinting across the ring and back again for a second corner strike--

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But this time Trey moves.

Oscuro 2 crashes chest-first into the buckles.

Mark Bravo: "That might be the opening Trey needed!"

Clovis is back on the apron now, one arm stretched in. Trey lunges and makes the tag.

The crowd groans.

Clovis steps in and immediately crushes Oscuro 2 in the corner with a running splash, sandwiching him against the turnbuckles. He drags him out of the corner like dead weight, lifts him onto his shoulders, and marches toward center ring.

John Phillips: "Here comes that power again!"

Clovis turns the carry into a massive powerslam and drives Oscuro 2 into the mat with authority. Trey steps back in illegally and drops a quick elbow to the chest before slipping back out to the apron as the referee turns around.

Mark Bravo: "Those extra little shots matter. That's how you drain the comeback."

Clovis covers.

Referee: "One! Two!"

Oscuro 2 kicks out.

The crowd roars again, now fully living and dying with every count.

John Phillips: "What resilience from the champions!"

Clovis rises with that same cold look, no frustration, no panic, just readiness to hit harder next time. On the outside, Madman can hardly contain himself now, pacing and pointing, trying to will his team to one more opening. Trey is grinning on the apron again, believing the gold is only moments away.

Mark Bravo: "This thing is on a knife edge now. One bad move, one missed tag, one half-second mistake... and that's all she wrote."

Clovis drags Oscuro 2 back up by the arm, while on the apron Oscuro 1 leans in, hurting but ready, hand extended once again for a tag that could save the match.

Clovis Black yanks Oscuro 2 up from the mat by the arm and shoulder, dragging him away from the

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champions' corner with grim purpose. On the apron, Oscuro 1 is reaching as far as he can, still hurting from the earlier beating but desperate to get back into the fight.

John Phillips: "This is where matches are won and lost. Clovis Black knows exactly where Oscuro 1 is, and he is doing everything he can to keep that tag from happening."

Mark Bravo: "And if he keeps him trapped in the wrong half of the ring for another thirty seconds, this might be over."

Clovis hooks Oscuro 2 for another power move, looking to hoist him up and drive him down again--

But Oscuro 2 starts firing elbows into the side of the head.

One.

Two.

Three.

Clovis stumbles half a step.

Oscuro 2 slips down behind him and shoves him forward into the ropes. Clovis rebounds and swings a clothesline--Oscuro 2 ducks, hits the ropes, and comes flying back with a springboard crossbody that finally takes the big man off his feet again.

The crowd erupts.

John Phillips: "He got him down!"

Mark Bravo: "And now he has got to move!"

Both men are down for a beat.

Madman Szalinski is screaming from ringside.

Madman Szalinski: "Tag! Tag! Tag!"

Oscuro 2 crawls toward his corner.

Across the ring, Trey Mack is stomping the apron and calling for Clovis to get there too.

Trey Mack: "Come on! Come on!"

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The two men inch forward at nearly the same pace. Clovis lunges--

Oscuro 2 dives--

Tag to Oscuro 1.

Tag to Trey Mack.

The crowd comes unglued.

John Phillips: "Both teams make the tag!"

Trey springs into the ring first, but Oscuro 1 meets him with a running forearm smash that knocks him backward. Trey pops up and charges again--arm drag. Back up--spinning kick to the body. Trey stumbles into the ropes, comes off them, and Oscuro 1 catches him with a jumping knee that drops him to a knee in the center of the ring.

Mark Bravo: "Oscuro 1 is running on fumes and adrenaline right now!"

Clovis steps through the ropes again to try and break it up, but Oscuro 2 cuts him off with a missile dropkick that sends the big man spilling back out to the apron and then down to the floor. Madman throws both hands up, losing his mind at ringside.

John Phillips: "The champions are fighting like hell to hold onto these titles!"

Inside the ring, Trey Mack throws a desperate right hand.

Oscuro 1 ducks it, hooks the arm, and snaps Trey over with a high-angle suplex that lands him near center ring. Oscuro 2 is already climbing to the apron as Oscuro 1 turns toward him.

Tag.

The champions move quickly now, instinct and chemistry taking over. Oscuro 1 grabs Trey by the legs and stacks him up while Oscuro 2 flies off the top rope with a diving stomp across the chest.

The crowd explodes.

John Phillips: "What a combination by El Fantasma!"

Oscuro 2 hooks both legs deep.

Referee: "One! Two!"

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Trey barely kicks out.

Mark Bravo: "Oh, that was close!"

On the floor, Clovis Black is already getting back up, one hand on the apron, eyes locked on the ring. Madman sees him and immediately starts shouting toward the referee again, but the official is focused on Trey and Oscuro 2 in the ring.

John Phillips: "And now you can feel it. We are getting very close to the finish here."

Oscuro 2 pulls Trey up, looking to keep the advantage, but Trey suddenly drives a thumb to the eye while the referee's vision is blocked by the bodies shifting around. The crowd boos loudly as Oscuro 2 stumbles backward blinded.

Mark Bravo: "And there's Trey Mack taking the shortcut when he needs it most."

Trey lunges for Clovis on the outside--

Tag made.

Clovis steps in immediately as Trey grabs the dazed Oscuro 2 from behind. The challengers look poised to put the champions away, while Oscuro 1 tries to re-enter and the referee rushes to stop the ring from breaking down completely.

John Phillips: "Bodies are flying, tempers are high, and the Tag Team Championships may be seconds away from changing hands!"

Clovis Black steps fully into the ring as Trey Mack keeps hold of the blinded Oscuro 2 from behind. The referee is trying to restore order, one hand out toward Oscuro 1 on the apron, but the damage is already in motion.

John Phillips: "This is bad for the champions. This is very bad."

Mark Bravo: "And this is exactly what the New Empire wanted. Chaos. Confusion. One opening."

Trey yanks Oscuro 2 backward and drives a forearm into the side of the head, keeping him staggered just long enough for Clovis to line him up. Then Trey shoves the champion forward--

Right into a devastating running big boot from Clovis Black that snaps Oscuro 2 backward and nearly takes his head off.

The crowd gasps.

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John Phillips: "What a shot from Clovis Black!"

Oscuro 2 doesn't even hit the mat cleanly before Trey is moving again. He hits the ropes, comes back with all his momentum, and wipes the champion out with a brutal lariat as Clovis turns and knocks Oscuro 1 off the apron with a forearm blast that sends him crashing to the floor near Madman Szalinski.

Mark Bravo: "That'll do it! That'll absolutely do it!"

Madman lunges toward the fallen Oscuro 1 on the outside, horror all over his face as he tries to help him back up, but the damage in the ring is immediate and catastrophic.

Trey grabs the downed Oscuro 2 and pulls him up just enough for Clovis to scoop him onto his shoulders. Trey sprints to the corner, climbs to the second rope in one motion, and launches himself off--

Driving a crushing clothesline across the upper body and head as Clovis simultaneously drops Oscuro 2 out of the carry and into the impact.

The ring shakes.

The crowd erupts into a mix of stunned gasps and furious boos.

John Phillips: "My God! What a combination!"

Mark Bravo: "Champions are done. They are done!"

Clovis rolls out under the bottom rope while Trey drops into the cover, hooking both legs deep and leaning every ounce of his weight into the pin.

Referee: "One! Two! Three!"

The bell rings.

John Phillips: "That's it! We have new UTA Tag Team Champions!"

Mark Bravo: "The New Empire just delivered on Amy Harrison's promise!"

Trey Mack releases the cover and immediately pounds the mat once before rising to his knees with a wild grin on his face. Clovis Black slides back into the ring, not smiling, but clearly satisfied as the reality of the moment settles in.

On the outside, Madman Szalinski is frozen for a second, staring at the ring in disbelief while Oscuro 1 is still trying to recover at his feet.

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John Phillips: "What a fight from El Fantasma, but in the end the power of Clovis Black and the ruthlessness of Trey Mack were just too much."

The referee retrieves the championships and reluctantly hands them over. Trey snatches one and raises it high above his head, yelling toward the hard camera. Clovis takes the other belt and lifts it with far less celebration, but no less meaning.

Mark Bravo: "And now you can add the Tag Team Titles to the International Championship. Amy Harrison is going to be insufferable after this."

Trey climbs to the second rope and throws one arm into the air with the championship, soaking in the hatred from the crowd like it fuels him. Clovis stands in the middle of the ring with his title over one shoulder, looking every bit like a wrecking machine that just did exactly what it was built to do.

John Phillips: "The New Empire came into tonight promising gold, and Trey Mack and Clovis Black have made good on that promise in the main event."

Inside the ring, the new champions stand tall while El Fantasma and Madman are left to deal with the aftermath of a brutal loss.

The New Empire backpedal up the ramp with the UTA Tag Team Championships held high, Trey Mack shouting all the way while Clovis Black walks with that same cold, punishing confidence that carried them through the main event. The crowd rains boos down on them as they disappear behind the curtain, gold in hand.

Inside the ring, the aftermath settles in.

Madman Szalinski climbs up onto the apron and steps through the ropes, his face a mixture of anger, disbelief, and heartbreak. El Fantasma Oscuro 1 and El Fantasma Oscuro 2 stand with him, all three men staring up the aisle where the titles just vanished.

John Phillips: "A heartbreaking loss for El Fantasma here tonight."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah, and you can feel it. They had that match in reach. One opening, one shortcut, one brutal sequence later... and the belts are gone."

Madman turns to each of his men, placing a hand on a shoulder, trying to steady them, but the emotion is obvious. The Hall of Famer can only watch as the team he led to championship glory now stands defeated in the center of the ring.

John Phillips: "This is one of the cruelest parts of this business. One minute you're on top of the world. The next, you're left standing in the wreckage."

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The moment hangs there.

Then--

The opening riffs of A Perfect Circle's "Judith" hit the arena.

The crowd reacts instantly.

The lights flicker.

Then darken.

Fog begins pouring from the stage, thick and low, creeping out into the entranceway as the atmosphere inside the Lenovo Center turns ominous all over again.

John Phillips: "What the hell...?"

Mark Bravo: "Why is he here? What does Silas Grimm want?"

Silas Grimm steps through the fog.

Slow. Deliberate. Ceremonial.

His head is slightly lowered, his expression carved in contempt, his pace never changing as he begins the walk down the aisle. In the ring, Madman and both Oscuros immediately shift their attention to the stage.

All three of them roll fully into the ring and stand together, watching. Waiting.

John Phillips: "This does not feel good at all."

Silas continues his approach, never hurrying, never acknowledging the crowd. He reaches ringside and turns toward the steel steps. He climbs them slowly, each step measured, then enters the ring with the same exact tempo.

Once inside, Silas steps forward and throws both arms out as the music continues behind him. The fog lingers. The lighting pulses. Then the song fades away and the lights return to normal.

No microphones.

No introductions.

Just men yelling in the center of the ring.

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Madman Szalinski: "What do you want?!"

Silas stares at him for a moment, then slowly raises one hand and points at El Fantasma.

Silas Grimm: "They deserve to be led by the darkness... not some..."

His lip curls.

Silas Grimm: "Clown in a mask."

Madman throws both hands out in disbelief.

Madman Szalinski: "They freaking have masks too!"

The crowd reacts with a mix of laughter and noise--

--and that is all the waiting Silas Grimm does.

He suddenly surges forward and nearly takes Madman Szalinski's head off with a vicious lariat.

The Hall of Famer flips sideways and crashes to the mat.

The crowd erupts in boos.

John Phillips: "Oh my God!"

Mark Bravo: "Silas Grimm just laid out Madman!"

Madman sprawls on the canvas, stunned, while Silas slowly turns toward El Fantasma.

Oscuro 1 and Oscuro 2 stand in place, both men tense, both clearly ready to move if they choose to.

Silas steps closer.

Silas Grimm: "Embrace your darkness."

He looks from one to the other.

Silas Grimm: "Join me."

El Fantasma look at Silas.

Then, in perfect sync, they turn and look at each other.

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Then both men lower their gaze to Madman Szalinski laid out at their feet.

Then back up to Silas Grimm.

Silas turns his back to them.

The crowd noise swells, expecting violence at any second.

John Phillips: "What are they doing?"

Mark Bravo: "Don't tell me..."

For a moment, it feels like El Fantasma might attack him.

But they don't.

Instead, leaving Madman laid out in the ring, El Fantasma step forward.

One takes position on one side of Silas Grimm.

The other takes position on the other.

The crowd rains down boos as the visual settles in--Silas Grimm in the center, El Fantasma beside him, and Madman Szalinski laid out behind them.

John Phillips: "No... no way..."

Mark Bravo: "It's a dark day in the UTA."

The camera first focuses tightly on the trio.

Then on Madman, still motionless on the canvas.

And that is where the scene fades.

Show Credits

Segment: "Earlier Today" - Written by Ben, dave.

Segment: "Introduction" - Written by Ben.

Match: "Maxwell "Max" Jett vs. Tyger II" - Written by Ben.

Segment: "Weighing Options" - Written by Ben, justin.

Segment: "What Did I Tell You?" - Written by Ben, chris.

Segment: "A True Statement" - Written by Ben, dave.

Match: "Bianca Page vs. Angela Hall" - Written by Ben.

Segment: "How You Survive" - Written by Ben, chris.

Segment: "Platinum Made Society" - Written by Carlos, Ace.

Segment: "Calm Down" - Written by Ben, chris.

Match: "Brick Bronson vs. Samuel Scythe" - Written by Ben.

Segment: "We Fight Back" - Written by Ben.

Segment: "Very Much Real... Very Much Active..." - Written by Ben, justin.

Match: "Susanita Ybanez vs. Aaron Shaffer" - Written by Ben.

Segment: "Hall of Fame 2026" - Written by Ben.

Segment: "Proving Grounds" - Written by Ben.

Segment: "Hakuryu Makes His Choice" - Written by tony.

Segment: "Pretty Nice, Huh?" - Written by Ben.

Segment: "Servitude" - Written by Ben, dave, meagan.

Segment: "Victorious" - Written by Ben.

Match: "El Fantasma vs. Mack & Black" - Written by Ben.

Results Compiled by the eFed Management Suite