

One Last Stop: 2026

Promotion: United Toughness Alliance
Date: July 25, 2026
Location: Scotiabank Arena — Toronto, Ontario

Preview

After two legs of an international tour, it's time for ONE LAST STOP before returning to the U.S.

Results

Introduction

Segment

The screen is black.

For several seconds, there is nothing but the distant rumble of a crowd.

Then the sound begins to build.

Twenty thousand voices becoming one.

A rapid montage flashes across the screen.

Mexico City.

Strasbourg.

London.

San Juan.

Buenos Aires.

Rio de Janeiro.

South Africa.

Championships won.

Friendships destroyed.

Careers changed.

And through it all, the United Toughness Alliance kept moving.

One city after another.

One country after another.

Until there was nowhere else to go.

Large white letters slowly appear against the darkness.

ONE.

A beat.

LAST.

Another beat.

STOP.

BOOM!

The picture explodes into a live shot inside Toronto's Scotiabank Arena as a massive wall of red and white pyrotechnics erupts from the entrance stage!

The capacity crowd is already on its feet, signs filling the air as the cameras sweep across the arena. UTA logos glow from the massive video screens surrounding the stage while the ring sits beneath a brilliant bank of lights at the center of it all.

The camera races down the aisle, circles the ring, and finally settles at ringside where John Phillips and Mark Bravo sit behind the commentary desk.

John Phillips: "TORONTO, CANADA! Welcome to ONE LAST STOP!"

Mark Bravo: "Listen to this place, John! The World Tour has brought the UTA around the globe, but tonight everything comes together right here in Toronto!"

John Phillips: "I'm John Phillips alongside Mark Bravo, and what a night we have ahead of us. Six matches, five championships on the line, and months of unfinished business that could finally come to an end tonight."

Mark Bravo: "Or get a whole lot worse."

John Phillips: "Knowing the people involved, Mark, that's entirely possible."

The WrestleZone Championship graphic fills the screen.

John Phillips: "Maxx Mayhem somehow managed to convince General Manager Scott Stevens to give him what he wanted. Tonight, Mayhem challenges Mikey Unlikely for the WrestleZone Championship."

Mark Bravo: "I still don't know if Stevens gave Maxx a championship match because he earned it or because it was the easiest way to get him out of his office."

John Phillips: "Either way, Mikey Unlikely now has to deal with him, and there may not be a more unpredictable challenger on the UTA roster."

The graphic changes.

John Phillips: "The International Championship will also be defended when Bobby Dean puts the title on the line against Lindsey Lothario."

Mark Bravo: "And you've got to appreciate Eli Creed here. He encourages Bobby Dean to become a fighting champion, tells him he needs to defend that championship... and wouldn't you know it? He just happens to know somebody who would love a title shot."

John Phillips: "Lindsey Lothario of The Creed Method. Lindsey has tasted championship gold before, and tonight, she has the opportunity to do it again."

The crowd grows noticeably louder as the next graphic appears.

SUSANITA YBANEZ.

MARIE VAN CLAUDIO.

John Phillips: "And then there is this."

Mark Bravo: "Forget championships. Forget rankings. These two women want to hurt each other."

John Phillips: "Susanita Ybanez trusted Marie Van Claudio. She fought for Marie. She sacrificed for Marie. And at International Affair, after Susanita won Marie's freedom, Van Claudio repaid her by turning on her and forming The Empire."

Mark Bravo: "And Marie hasn't stopped playing games since. Even in South Africa, she found another way inside Susanita's head. Tonight there are no more games. Susanita finally gets Marie Van Claudio in that ring."

John Phillips: "Perhaps the most personal rivalry in the UTA comes to a head tonight."

The United States Championship appears on the screen.

John Phillips: "For weeks, Hakuryu has watched Yoshii."

Mark Bravo: "Watched him. Studied him. Never rushed him. Never needed to say much of anything."

John Phillips: "Yoshii has continued to turn away challenger after challenger, but tonight Hakuryu is finished watching. The number one ranked competitor finally steps forward to challenge Yoshii for the United States Championship."

Mark Bravo: "Yoshii has been dominant. Hakuryu has been terrifyingly patient. Something has to give."

The graphic changes again, this time showing Emily Hightower and Sol Azteca on opposite sides of the UTA Women's Championship.

John Phillips: "Emily Hightower and Sol Azteca know each other very well. They have battled, they have bled, and tonight Sol receives another opportunity at The Hightower."

Mark Bravo: "But this time there's something hanging over Emily's shoulder, John. The UTA Women's Championship."

John Phillips: "Sol Azteca has proven she can stand toe-to-toe with Emily Hightower. Tonight she has to prove she can defeat her when the championship is at stake."

The arena darkens slightly.

The final match graphic appears.

Three faces.

CHRIS ROSS.

MIKE BEST.

MAXWELL JETT.

The UTA Championship sits between them.

The Toronto crowd erupts.

John Phillips: "And then, our main event."

Mark Bravo: "This is insane."

John Phillips: "At International Affair, Maxwell Jett accomplished something no UTA Champion had ever done. He entered All or Nothing as champion, survived the entire field, and left London still holding the UTA Championship."

Mark Bravo: "And somehow his life has gotten harder ever since."

John Phillips: "Chris Ross has stalked him across the World Tour. He attacked Maxwell in Argentina and threw him down a hotel laundry chute. In Brazil, despite Scott Stevens attempting to keep him out of the building, The Reaper found his way into the UTA Championship match."

Mark Bravo: "And Mike Best hasn't traveled all this way to make friends. He's a legend. He's a Hall of Famer. He came

to the UTA because he wanted the biggest prize here, and tonight he finally has the opportunity to take it."

John Phillips: "Maxwell Jett. Mike Best. Chris Ross. Triple Threat. No champion's advantage. The first man to score a pinfall or submission walks out of Toronto as UTA Champion."

Mark Bravo: "Maxwell wanted to be on top of the world."

Bravo looks toward the ring as the crowd continues roaring around them.

Mark Bravo: "Well, welcome to the view."

The camera pulls away from the commentary desk and rises above the ring, revealing the entirety of the packed Scotiabank Arena.

John Phillips: "The World Tour has brought us here. Every rivalry, every championship, every decision has brought us to Toronto."

Mark Bravo: "No tomorrow. No next country. No next stop."

John Phillips: "This is ONE LAST STOP!"

The crowd erupts once again as the One Last Stop logo slams onto the screen.

The Champion's Advantage

Segment

The One Last Stop logo fades from the screen.

For just a moment, the capacity crowd inside Scotiabank Arena is allowed to breathe.

Then—

"Gold Standard" hits.

The reaction is immediate.

BOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

John Phillips: "Well, we wondered how we were going to officially begin One Last Stop, and I suppose we have our answer."

Mark Bravo: "Stand up, John. The champion is here."

John Phillips: "I will do no such thing."

A single spotlight hits the entrance stage.

Maxwell Jett steps through the curtain.

Unlike the designer suits and expensive robes we've become accustomed to seeing him wear, tonight the UTA Champion is already dressed for competition.

Full ring attire.

UTA Championship strapped firmly around his waist.

And that same insufferable smirk stretched across his face.

Behind him come the other members of First Class, Jacoby Jacobs and Darian Darrington.

Darian is jawing with the Toronto crowd almost immediately.

Jacoby, however, is carrying something unusual.

A small stack of papers.

John Phillips: "Maxwell Jett is already dressed to compete."

Mark Bravo: "Maybe he just likes being prepared."

John Phillips: "Have you met Maxwell Jett?"

Mark Bravo: "Fair point."

Max stops at the top of the ramp.

He looks out over the crowd.

Slowly turns his head from one side of Scotiabank Arena to the other.

Then raises both hands and closes his eyes, soaking in the hatred like Toronto is throwing rose petals at his feet.

Finally, Jett taps the UTA Championship around his waist.

He mouths toward the hard camera.

Maxwell Jett: "That's why you're here."

First Class slowly makes its way toward ringside.

John Phillips: "Later tonight, Maxwell Jett is scheduled to face perhaps the greatest challenge of his championship reign. A Triple Threat Match against Chris Ross and Mike Best."

Mark Bravo: "And there is no champion's advantage. Maxwell doesn't have to be pinned to lose that championship. Chris Ross can pin Mike Best. Mike Best can pin Chris Ross. Either way, Maxwell Jett walks out without the UTA Championship."

John Phillips: "Chris Ross has made the champion's life a living hell throughout this World Tour, while Mike Best came into the UTA with one goal—to reach the top."

Mark Bravo: "And Maxwell has spent the entire time telling everybody neither one belongs in his spotlight."

Jett reaches ringside and takes his time climbing the steps.

He wipes his boots on the apron.

Steps through the ropes.

Then immediately climbs to the second turnbuckle and unfastens the UTA Championship.

He raises it high.

The boos get even louder.

Jett smiles.

He blows an exaggerated kiss to the crowd before dropping back to the canvas.

Jacoby and Darian enter behind him.

Max demands a microphone.

He waits.

And waits.

And waits.

The boos refuse to die.

Jett finally lifts the microphone anyway.

Maxwell Jett: "Are you people finished?"

BOOOOOOOOO!

Max nods.

Maxwell Jett: "That's what I thought."

He looks down at the UTA Championship in his hand.

Maxwell Jett: "You know, I've been thinking."

Maxwell Jett: "Dangerous concept for most of you, I know."

Another wave of boos.

Maxwell Jett: "I've been thinking about this World Tour."

Maxwell Jett: "I've been thinking about everything I've accomplished."

Maxwell Jett: "I walked into International Affair as the UTA Champion."

Maxwell Jett: "I entered All or Nothing with every single person in that match trying to take this away from me."

He raises the championship.

Maxwell Jett: "And I did something nobody in the history of this company had ever done."

Maxwell Jett: "I survived."

Maxwell Jett: "I won."

Maxwell Jett: "And I walked out exactly the same way I walked in."

Max drapes the championship over his shoulder.

Maxwell Jett: "As your UTA Champion."

BOOOOOOOOO!

Maxwell Jett: "And yet..."

His expression changes.

The smile disappears.

Maxwell Jett: "Nobody wants to talk about me."

Maxwell Jett: "No."

Maxwell Jett: "Instead, every week, I have to hear about Chris Ross."

The mention of Ross gets a reaction from the crowd.

Maxwell Jett: "Chris Ross did this."

Maxwell Jett: "Chris Ross attacked that guy."

Maxwell Jett: "Chris Ross showed up here."

Maxwell Jett: "Chris Ross disappeared there."

Maxwell Jett: "Chris Ross is coming for Maxwell Jett."

Max rolls his eyes.

Maxwell Jett: "And when you're not obsessing over some psychotic loser from Harrisburg, everybody suddenly wants to talk about Mike Best."

The crowd pops again.

Maxwell Jett: "A man who spent the best years of his career somewhere else."

Maxwell Jett: "A man whose greatest accomplishment in the UTA is reminding everybody about all the things he accomplished outside of it."

Maxwell Jett: "A UTA never-was."

The crowd reacts loudly.

John Phillips: "Oh, come on."

Mark Bravo: "I don't think Mike Best is going to appreciate that one."

Maxwell Jett: "And somehow those are the two men getting all the attention."

Maxwell Jett: "Meanwhile, the guy holding the most important championship in professional wrestling gets treated like an afterthought."

Max pauses.

Then smirks.

Maxwell Jett: "But that's how Scott Stevens runs things, isn't it?"

The crowd reacts at the mention of the General Manager.

Maxwell Jett: "Scott doesn't recognize greatness until somebody else tells him where to look."

Maxwell Jett: "So tonight, Scott..."

Max turns toward the entrance.

Maxwell Jett: "I'm going to remind you."

Maxwell Jett: "I'm going to remind Mike Best."

Maxwell Jett: "I'm going to remind Chris Ross."

Maxwell Jett: "And I'm going to remind every single one of you ungrateful Canadian mouth-breathers exactly who the hell I am."

BOOOOOOOOO!

Maxwell Jett: "I am the champion."

Maxwell Jett: "I am the standard."

Maxwell Jett: "And there is nobody in the United Toughness Alliance who comes close."

Max looks into the hard camera.

Maxwell Jett: "Not Ross."

Maxwell Jett: "Not Best."

Maxwell Jett: "Nobody."

He begins pacing.

Maxwell Jett: "Now, Chris Ross and Mike Best managed to worm their way into a championship opportunity tonight."

Maxwell Jett: "Fine."

Maxwell Jett: "But here's the thing."

Max stops.

The smirk returns.

Maxwell Jett: "They don't get two more hours to prepare."

John Phillips immediately sits forward at commentary.

Maxwell Jett: "Because Scott Stevens may have made the match..."

Jett slowly lifts the UTA Championship above his head.

Maxwell Jett: "...but I'm the goddamn champion."

The crowd roars.

Maxwell Jett: "And I set the terms."

Max turns toward the entrance ramp.

Maxwell Jett: "So Chris."

Maxwell Jett: "Mike."

Maxwell Jett: "Get your asses down here..."

Jett drops the championship onto the canvas at his feet.

Maxwell Jett: "...AND LET'S DO THIS RIGHT NOW!"

The building EXPLODES.

John Phillips: "WHAT?!"

Mark Bravo: "Did he just—"

John Phillips: "Maxwell Jett just called for the UTA Championship match! Right now!"

Mark Bravo: "Our main event is supposed to happen at the end of the night!"

Max throws the microphone down and begins stretching against the ropes.

Jacoby and Darian exchange knowing smiles.

They're loving this.

Until—

Scott Stevens' music hits.

The General Manager storms through the curtain with a microphone already in hand.

Scott Stevens: "Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa!"

Maxwell rolls his eyes.

Scott Stevens: "That's not how this works, Maxwell."

Stevens begins walking down the ramp.

Scott Stevens: "You don't get to come out here and dictate wh—"

Maxwell Jett: "In fact, Scott, I do."

Stevens stops.

Max is smiling again.

Maxwell Jett: "Because if Chris Ross and Mike Best don't come through that curtain and have this match right now..."

He bends down and picks up the UTA Championship.

Maxwell Jett: "...I'm leaving."

The crowd boos.

Maxwell Jett: "I'll walk right out of Scotiabank Arena."

Maxwell Jett: "And if the champion isn't here..."

Max shrugs.

Maxwell Jett: "...there isn't going to be a championship match."

Stevens stares at him from the aisle.

Scott Stevens: "Or I can vacate the championship right now and let Chris Ross and Mike Best fight over it."

The crowd erupts.

For the first time, Maxwell looks slightly concerned.

Then he smiles.

Maxwell Jett: "No, Scott."

Maxwell Jett: "You can't."

Stevens raises an eyebrow.

Maxwell Jett: "See, even you have a limit to your power."

Max turns.

Maxwell Jett: "Jacoby."

Jacoby perks up.

Maxwell Jett: "Read the thing."

Jacoby proudly lifts the papers he's been carrying.

John Phillips: "Read the thing?"

Mark Bravo: "Apparently First Class has legal representation now."

Jacoby clears his throat.

Max walks over and holds his microphone in front of Jacoby's mouth.

Jacoby Jacobs: "Section four, Article thirteen, paragraph two."

Jacoby squints at the paper.

Jacoby Jacobs: "The UTA Champion, at his discretion, may defend the championship at any point in which he sees fit, as long as the individual or individuals challenging are under current contract with the United Toughness Alliance."

Max slowly turns his head toward Stevens.

Smug doesn't begin to describe the expression on his face.

Maxwell Jett: "Continue."

Jacoby flips the page.

Jacoby Jacobs: "Paragraph six."

Jacoby Jacobs: "If said match has previously been scheduled at a future date, then the UTA Champion's challenge shall henceforth fulfill the champion's obligation for the scheduled title defense."

Maxwell slowly nods.

Maxwell Jett: "There you have it."

Scott Stevens looks genuinely confused.

Scott Stevens: "Where the hell are you getting this?"

Maxwell Jett: "It's right there in the contract, Scott."

Jacoby Jacobs: "Yeah, ChatGPT found—"

Maxwell's head WHIPS around.

Darian's eyes go wide.

Jacoby freezes.

There is one perfect second of silence.

Then Scotiabank Arena absolutely loses it.

John Phillips: "OH MY GOD!"

Mark Bravo: "HAHAHAHA! THEY USED CHATGPT?!"

Maxwell lowers the microphone very slowly.

He stares at Jacoby.

Jacoby offers an apologetic little shrug.

Jacoby Jacobs: "My bad."

Darian turns away, desperately trying not to laugh.

Scott Stevens just shakes his head.

Scott Stevens: "You have got to be kidding me."

Max tries desperately to regain control.

Maxwell Jett: "That is completely irrelevant."

Scott Stevens: "You had artificial intelligence write fake clauses into your contract?"

Maxwell Jett: "They're not fake if they're legally sound."

Scott Stevens: "THAT'S NOT HOW CONTRACTS WORK!"

The crowd is roaring with laughter now.

John Phillips: "Now we know what this is about."

Mark Bravo: "Of course we do. Maxwell is already dressed. First Class is already out here. He figured Chris Ross and Mike Best wouldn't be ready to compete at the start of the show."

John Phillips: "The whole thing was a setup!"

Maxwell angrily turns toward commentary.

Maxwell Jett: "SHUT UP!"

And then—

The arena goes dark.

The laughter disappears instantly.

On the massive video screen...

THE REAPER.

The logo fills the screen.

The opening of "Black Flame" by Bury Tomorrow blasts throughout Scotiabank Arena.

The reaction is deafening.

John Phillips: "WAIT A MINUTE!"

Mark Bravo: "Oh, Max."

Red, white, and blue police lights begin flickering across the stage.

Chris Ross storms through the curtain.

John Phillips: "THE REAPER IS HERE!"

Maxwell's face drops.

Jacoby slowly lowers the papers.

Darian isn't laughing anymore.

Ross doesn't pose.

Doesn't play to the crowd.

Doesn't even look toward the ring at first.

His eyes find Scott Stevens.

Ross walks directly toward the General Manager.

Stevens raises his microphone, but Ross grabs his wrist.

He pulls Stevens' hand—and the microphone with it—toward his own mouth.

Ross never takes his eyes off Maxwell Jett.

Chris Ross: "I told you."

He pauses.

Chris Ross: "Any time."

Chris Ross: "Any place."

Ross' eyes narrow.

Chris Ross: "You wanna do this now, Maxwell?"

A grin slowly forms across Ross' face.

Chris Ross: "Get ready to reap what you sow."

Ross shoves Stevens away.

Then starts toward the ring.

John Phillips: "Chris Ross has called Maxwell Jett's bluff!"

Mark Bravo: "Look at First Class!"

Jacoby and Darian immediately begin backing toward the opposite side of the ring.

Maxwell is waving his hands.

Maxwell Jett: "Whoa! Whoa! Whoa!"

Ross reaches ringside.

Maxwell Jett: "Chris!"

Ross pulls himself onto the apron.

Maxwell Jett: "Think about this!"

Ross steps through the ropes.

First Class retreats.

Ross moves forward.

Maxwell moves backward.

Maxwell Jett: "I'm not ready!"

The crowd erupts in laughter again.

Maxwell Jett: "The match is the main event!"

John Phillips: "HE JUST ASKED FOR THE MATCH!"

Mark Bravo: "That was before Chris Ross actually showed up!"

Ross keeps walking toward him.

Maxwell continues retreating.

And then—

Mike Best's music hits.

The arena erupts AGAIN.

Ross stops.

Maxwell's eyes close.

Jacoby puts both hands on top of his head.

Darian mouths something that the cameras thankfully don't quite pick up.

Scott Stevens, still standing in the aisle, lowers his head.

He looks completely defeated.

John Phillips: "YOU HAVE GOT TO BE KIDDING ME!"

Mark Bravo: "Mike Best too!"

Mike Best steps through the curtain.

And it's immediately obvious that he was not expecting to wrestle yet.

He's in his ring gear.

His knee pads aren't completely situated.

One boot isn't even fully tied.

Best takes two hurried steps onto the stage before stopping.

He holds one finger up.

Wait.

Then bends down.

Right there on the entrance stage, Mike Best finishes tying his boot.

The crowd laughs and cheers.

Mark Bravo: "He wasn't ready either!"

John Phillips: "But unlike Maxwell Jett, apparently Mike Best doesn't care!"

Best finishes tying the boot.

He stands.

Adjusts his knee pad.

Then looks toward the ring.

First at Chris Ross.

Then at Maxwell Jett.

A smirk spreads across his face.

Mike Best: "You wanna do this now?"

Best throws both arms out.

Mike Best: "LET'S DO IT NOW!"

Scotiabank Arena comes unglued.

Mike Best starts down the ramp.

Scott Stevens watches him pass.

He looks toward the ring.

Chris Ross is ready.

Mike Best is coming.

And in the middle of the ring, the UTA Champion looks like a man who just realized his brilliant plan worked far better than he ever intended.

John Phillips: "Maxwell Jett tried to ambush his challengers by moving the main event to the opening minutes of One Last Stop!"

Mark Bravo: "And they both called his bluff!"

John Phillips: "Somebody get a referee out here because we may be about to start One Last Stop with the UTA CHAMPIONSHIP!"

Mike Best continues toward the ring as Chris Ross stares through Maxwell Jett.

Jacoby Jacobs and Darian Darrington look at one another.

Then at Maxwell.

Max looks at Ross.

He looks at Best.

He looks down at the UTA Championship.

For once...

Maxwell Jett has absolutely nothing to say.

Mike Best reaches the bottom of the ramp as Scott Stevens stands off to the side, staring at all three men like he has officially given up trying to maintain control.

Chris Ross is already inside the ring.

Maxwell Jett is still backing away from him.

First Class huddles near the ropes, suddenly far less confident than they were five minutes ago.

Stevens raises the microphone.

Scott Stevens: "You know what?"

He exhales heavily.

Scott Stevens: "Whatever."

The crowd begins to buzz.

Scott Stevens: "You three idiots wanna do this now?"

Stevens throws his free hand up.

Scott Stevens: "Fine."

The crowd ERUPTS.

Scott Stevens: "REFEREE!"

Stevens points toward the entrance.

Scott Stevens: "GET OUT HERE!"

John Phillips: "OH MY GOD!"

Mark Bravo: "He's doing it!"

John Phillips: "Scott Stevens has made it official! The UTA Championship match is happening RIGHT NOW!"

A referee comes sprinting through the curtain and races down the aisle.

Mike Best reaches ringside and immediately climbs onto the apron.

Maxwell Jett rushes toward the ropes.

Maxwell Jett: "WAIT! HOLD ON!"

Stevens slowly turns toward him.

Maxwell Jett: "Scott, let's not make any emotional decisions here."

Stevens just stares.

Maxwell Jett: "There are schedules. There are sponsors. There are—"

Scott Stevens: "You asked for it."

The crowd roars.

Scott Stevens: "You got it."

Stevens points at Jacoby Jacobs and Darian Darrington.

Scott Stevens: "And you two."

Jacoby looks around innocently.

Jacoby Jacobs: "Us?"

Scott Stevens: "Out."

Jacoby's smile disappears.

Scott Stevens: "Get out of the ring."

Darian Darrington: "Man, come on—"

Scott Stevens: "NOW!"

Darian throws his hands up.

Jacoby gathers his completely legitimate, definitely-not-AI-generated paperwork and slips through the ropes.

Darian follows.

They remain at ringside as the referee enters the ring.

Mike Best steps through the ropes.

The atmosphere changes instantly.

Chris Ross stands in one corner.

Mike Best takes another.

And Maxwell Jett slowly backs into the third.

The UTA Championship is still clutched tightly against his chest.

John Phillips: "This was supposed to be tonight's main event."

Mark Bravo: "Instead, we're opening One Last Stop with it!"

John Phillips: "Maxwell Jett tried to catch both challengers unprepared."

Mark Bravo: "And now look at him. He's the only one who doesn't want the match!"

The referee walks toward Maxwell and reaches for the championship.

Jett pulls it away.

Maxwell Jett: "Careful."

The referee reaches again.

Max reluctantly hands it over.

The official raises the UTA Championship high above his head.

Scotiabank Arena explodes.

John Phillips: "The biggest championship in the United Toughness Alliance is on the line!"

The referee hands the title through the ropes.

Chris Ross rolls his shoulders.

Mike Best bounces lightly on the balls of his feet.

Maxwell Jett looks from one challenger to the other.

Then immediately points at both of them.

Maxwell Jett: "Okay."

Maxwell Jett: "Let's all be smart here."

Ross takes one step forward.

Best takes one step forward.

Max stops talking.

Mark Bravo: "I don't think they're interested in being smart."

The referee looks around at all three men.

Then signals for the bell.

DING! DING! DING!

John Phillips: "HERE WE GO!"

The UTA Championship Triple Threat Match is officially underway.

Chris Ross vs. Mike Best vs. Maxwell Jett

Match

Chris Ross looks at Mike Best.

Mike Best looks at Chris Ross.

Neither man says a word.

They both slowly turn their attention toward Maxwell.

Jett stops.

Mark Bravo: "Uh-oh."

John Phillips: "Maxwell Jett wanted this match right now. I think he's starting to understand exactly what that means."

Max points between Ross and Best.

Maxwell Jett: "Don't."

Ross starts walking toward him.

Best does the same.

Maxwell Jett: "Guys."

Max backs up.

Maxwell Jett: "Come on."

Ross continues forward.

Best continues forward.

Max's back hits the turnbuckles.

Maxwell Jett: "Think about this."

Ross cracks his neck.

Best rolls his shoulders.

Maxwell Jett: "There are three people in this match. You two should be worried about each oth—"

Ross BLASTS Jett with a right hand!

Best follows with one of his own!

The crowd erupts.

John Phillips: "Here we go!"

Ross fires another shot.

Best follows.

Ross.

Best.

Ross.

Best.

Maxwell's head snaps back and forth as the two challengers take turns hammering the UTA Champion in the corner.

Mark Bravo: "They're taking turns!"

John Phillips: "And Maxwell Jett has nobody to blame but himself!"

Ross grabs Maxwell by the wrist and pulls him out of the corner.

He sends Jett across the ring with a hard Irish whip.

Max hits the opposite turnbuckles.

Best charges first—

RUNNING FOREARM!

Jett staggers forward directly into Ross.

Ross catches him around the waist.

BELLY-TO-BELLY SUPLEX!

Maxwell crashes across the canvas.

John Phillips: "Chris Ross just launched the champion!"

Jett rolls toward the ropes, desperate to escape.

Mike Best grabs him by the ankle.

Max clings to the bottom rope with both hands.

Maxwell Jett: "NO! NO! NO!"

Best pulls.

Max refuses to let go.

Ross walks over.

He looks at Best.

Then stomps directly on Maxwell's hands.

Jett releases the rope immediately.

Best drags him back to the center of the ring.

Mark Bravo: "That's teamwork!"

John Phillips: "Temporary teamwork."

Best pulls Maxwell to his feet.

Knife-edge chop!

SMACK!

Jett recoils.

Ross steps in.

Another brutal chop!

SMACK!

Maxwell turns away clutching his chest.

Best grabs him and turns him back around.

Another chop!

SMACK!

Ross follows!

SMACK!

Maxwell stumbles between them, chest already turning bright red.

John Phillips: "Maxwell Jett is being dismantled here!"

Mark Bravo: "And look at Jacoby and Darian. There's nothing they can do!"

At ringside, Jacoby Jacobs and Darian Darrington are screaming instructions toward the champion.

Jacoby Jacobs: "GET OUTTA THERE, MAX!"

Darian Darrington: "STOP LETTIN' 'EM HIT YOU!"

Maxwell hears them.

He looks toward ringside with absolute disbelief.

Maxwell Jett: "OH, REALLY?!"

That distraction costs him.

Best grabs Maxwell from behind.

SNAP SUPLEX!

Jett hits hard.

Best rolls through and starts pulling Maxwell up again—

Ross steps in.

He grabs Jett himself.

OVERHEAD BELLY-TO-BELLY!

Maxwell flies halfway across the ring.

John Phillips: "This is becoming a competition between Ross and Best to see who can throw Maxwell Jett farther!"

Maxwell lands near the ropes and immediately rolls underneath them.

He tumbles to the floor.

Jett lands on his knees beside First Class.

Jacoby immediately reaches down to help him.

Darian steps between Maxwell and the ring.

Maxwell Jett: "TIME OUT!"

The crowd laughs.

John Phillips: "There are no timeouts!"

Maxwell points angrily toward the referee.

Maxwell Jett: "Tell them!"

The referee just shakes his head.

Inside the ring, Mike Best looks toward Chris Ross.

Ross looks back.

Then both men look down at Maxwell.

Again.

Mark Bravo: "Oh, come on."

Maxwell sees it.

Maxwell Jett: "No."

Ross exits through one side of the ring.

Best exits through the other.

Maxwell Jett: "NO!"

First Class immediately starts backing away.

Maxwell grabs Jacoby by the shoulder.

Maxwell Jett: "DO SOMETHING!"

Jacoby points to himself.

Jacoby Jacobs: "Me?!"

Ross comes around one side of the ring.

Best comes around the other.

Jacoby and Darian scatter.

Leaving Maxwell standing alone.

He slowly looks left.

Chris Ross.

He slowly looks right.

Mike Best.

Maxwell Jett: "Traitors."

Max takes off running.

He races around ringside.

Ross gives chase from behind.

Best cuts him off from the opposite direction.

Max stops dead.

He turns back toward Ross.

Too late.

Ross catches him with a huge forearm across the jaw!

Maxwell spins directly into Best—

WHO DROPS HIM WITH A FULL-WEIGHT LARIAT!

Jett flips inside out on the floor.

John Phillips: "GOOD LORD!"

Mark Bravo: "Maxwell may be reconsidering that whole 'fight right now' thing!"

Ross grabs Jett by the hair and drags him back to his feet.

He drives Maxwell face-first into the ring apron.

Jett staggers backward.

Best grabs him.

And sends him shoulder-first into the barricade!

Maxwell crashes against the steel and drops to one knee.

John Phillips: "Remember, this is Triple Threat rules. No disqualifications. No count-outs. The referee can't stop any of this!"

Ross approaches Maxwell again.

Jett sees him coming.

Desperation takes over.

Max reaches forward and rakes Ross across the eyes!

Chris Ross: "AHH!"

Ross stumbles backward.

Max spins—

And kicks Mike Best directly between the legs!

The crowd explodes with boos.

Best drops immediately.

John Phillips: "OH, COME ON!"

Mark Bravo: "There it is! Maxwell finally found an opening!"

Maxwell drops to his knees between both challengers, gasping for air.

His chest is red.

His hair is disheveled.

His face is twisted with rage.

But slowly...

The smile returns.

Jett gets to his feet and backs toward the ring.

He points at Ross.

Then at Best.

Maxwell Jett: "I'm smarter than both of you."

Max slides underneath the bottom rope.

He gets back to his feet and throws his arms wide for the crowd.

BOOOOOOOOOOOO!

Maxwell Jett: "THAT'S WHY I'M THE CHAMPION!"

John Phillips: "Maxwell Jett has survived the opening assault, but only by going straight to the shortcuts that made him champion in the first place."

Mark Bravo: "He survived, John. That's all that matters."

Outside the ring, Chris Ross wipes at his eyes.

Mike Best remains doubled over near the barricade.

Inside the ring, Maxwell Jett finally has a moment to breathe.

And for the first time since the bell rang...

The UTA Champion is smiling again.

Maxwell Jett stands in the center of the ring, breathing heavily but looking far too pleased with himself.

Outside, Chris Ross is already recovering.

Mike Best is slower to straighten up, one hand still pressed low after the cheap shot.

John Phillips: "Maxwell Jett bought himself some time, but I don't know how much."

Mark Bravo: "Enough to change the complexion of the match. That's all he needed."

Ross reaches the apron first.

Maxwell immediately charges.

Running boot!

Ross takes it across the side of the head and drops back to the floor.

Jett spins around—

Mike Best slides underneath the bottom rope.

Maxwell charges him too.

Best ducks the clothesline.

Jett turns—

SNAP DROPKICK!

Maxwell hits the canvas hard.

John Phillips: "Mike Best caught him clean!"

Best immediately grabs Jett by the wrist and pulls him back up.

Short-arm knee to the body!

Another!

Then a snap suplex!

Best floats over into the cover.

ONE!

TWO—

Chris Ross dives into the ring and breaks it up with a clubbing forearm across Best's back.

John Phillips: "And there it is."

Mark Bravo: "The alliance lasted exactly as long as Maxwell Jett was the biggest problem."

Best rolls off Maxwell and gets to one knee.

He looks up at Ross.

Ross looks back down at him.

There's a brief pause.

Mike Best: "Had to happen eventually."

Ross answers with a forearm.

Best fires one back.

The crowd comes alive again.

Ross hits another.

Best responds.

Ross.

Best.

Neither gives ground.

John Phillips: "Now we're seeing the collision we knew was inevitable!"

Best changes levels and drives a knee into Ross' midsection.

He grabs a front facelock.

Ross blocks the suplex.

Best tries again.

Blocked again.

Ross powers free and hooks Best around the waist.

GERMAN SUPLEX!

Best lands hard but rolls through to his knees.

Ross charges.

Best sidesteps.

Ross hits the ropes and turns around—

SUPERKICK!

Ross staggers but doesn't go down.

Best runs the ropes.

FULL-WEIGHT LARIAT!

Ross finally hits the mat.

Mark Bravo: "Mike Best just put the Reaper down!"

Best drops for the cover.

ONE!

Maxwell Jett comes flying in with a knee drop to the back of Best's head!

The cover is broken immediately.

Jett scrambles onto Best.

ONE!

TWO!

Best kicks out.

Max instantly shifts to Ross.

Cover!

ONE!

TWO!

Ross powers a shoulder up.

Maxwell sits up in disbelief.

Maxwell Jett: "Come on!"

John Phillips: "That is the danger Maxwell Jett presents in this environment. He doesn't have to dominate. He just has to be there when somebody else does the work."

Mark Bravo: "That's called efficiency."

Jett pulls Best up first.

Arm wringer.

He twists hard on the shoulder, then snaps Best down with a quick arm-controlled takedown.

Max drops a knee directly onto the shoulder.

Then another.

He grabs the wrist and starts grinding the joint into the mat.

John Phillips: "This is much more Maxwell's pace now. Slow it down. Pick a body part. Make the match smaller."

Maxwell pulls Best back up and sends him shoulder-first into the turnbuckles.

Best hits hard and turns out of the corner.

Jett rushes forward—

RUNNING KNEE!

Best drops to a seated position against the bottom turnbuckle.

Maxwell backs away.

Measures him.

Charges—

Ross explodes across the ring and intercepts Jett with a SPINEBUSTER!

The ring shakes.

John Phillips: "CHRIS ROSS JUST PLANTED THE CHAMPION!"

Ross mounts Maxwell immediately.

Forearm!

Forearm!

Forearm!

Ross rains heavy shots down across the champion's head and face.

The referee can only watch.

Mark Bravo: "And this is where Triple Threat rules are terrifying with Chris Ross. There's nobody to pull him off!"

Ross grabs Maxwell by the throat and drags him upright.

Jett desperately drives a thumb toward Ross' eye—

Ross catches the wrist.

Max's eyes widen.

Ross headbutts him.

Jett drops to his knees.

Ross takes a step back.

He begins measuring Maxwell.

John Phillips: "Ross may be looking for the 12 Gauge!"

Ross grabs Maxwell's wrist.

He pulls him forward—

Mike Best catches Ross from the side with a knee!

Ross releases Jett.

Best immediately hooks Ross.

BELLY-TO-BACK SUPLEX!

Ross hits hard.

Best turns—

Maxwell Jett is already there.

Hammerlock DDT!

Best is driven head-first into the canvas.

Jett hooks the leg!

ONE!

TWO!

ROSS BREAKS IT UP!

Ross simply drives a boot into Maxwell's ribs and sends him rolling away.

John Phillips: "So close!"

Jett rolls toward the ropes and pulls himself upright.

Ross charges him.

Maxwell drops down and pulls the top rope with him!

Ross tumbles over the ropes and crashes to the floor.

Jett immediately turns toward Mike Best.

Best is getting back up.

Max charges—

HEAT SEEKER KNEE!

The knee connects flush!

Best crumples.

Maxwell dives on top of him!

ONE!

TWO!

THR—

BEST GETS A SHOULDER UP!

Maxwell's eyes practically bulge out of his head.

Maxwell Jett: "NO!"

He grabs the referee by the shirt.

Maxwell Jett: "THAT WAS THREE!"

The referee holds up two fingers.

Jett argues.

Behind him, Chris Ross is back on the apron.

John Phillips: "Maxwell needs to stop worrying about the referee!"

Ross steps through the ropes.

Jett turns around.

360 DISCUS ELBOW!

THE 10-71!

Maxwell drops like he's been shot.

John Phillips: "10-71!"

Ross hooks Maxwell's leg!

ONE!

TWO!

MIKE BEST DIVES ACROSS AND BREAKS IT UP!

All three men collapse to the canvas.

The crowd rises to its feet.

Mark Bravo: "Now we're getting somewhere."

For several seconds, nobody moves.

Then Ross sits up.

Best rolls onto one elbow.

Maxwell remains flat on his back between them.

Ross looks across at Best.

Best looks back.

Both men glance down at Maxwell.

Then back at each other.

John Phillips: "The champion is down."

Mark Bravo: "Which means now they have a decision to make."

Ross gets to his feet.

Best does the same.

Neither man looks away.

And this time...

Maxwell Jett isn't between them.

Chris Ross and Mike Best stand across from one another.

Between them, Maxwell Jett remains flat on his back.

For the first time tonight, neither challenger is looking at the champion.

The crowd realizes what's coming.

The noise begins to build.

John Phillips: "These two helped tear Maxwell Jett apart at the beginning of this match, but there can only be one UTA Champion."

Mark Bravo: "And neither one came to Toronto to help the other guy win it."

Best raises his hands.

Ross does the same.

They circle.

Then collide in the center of the ring.

Best immediately tries to control the head.

Ross drives forward.

Best twists into a standing headlock.

Ross hooks him around the waist and tries to lift—

Best drops his weight.

Ross tries again.

Best releases the headlock and transitions behind.

Waistlock.

Ross fires an elbow backward.

Best ducks.

Ross spins around.

Best catches the arm.

He tries to drag Ross down into an armbar!

Ross immediately clasps his hands together.

John Phillips: "Look at Best! Mike Best will wrestle you anywhere, anytime, and he's trying to take that arm home with him!"

Ross powers himself back to his feet with Best still attached to the arm.

Best tries to extend it.

Ross reaches down.

He grabs Best around the waist.

And simply PICKS HIM UP!

Best's eyes widen.

Ross runs forward and drives him back-first into the turnbuckles!

Best releases the arm.

Ross immediately buries a shoulder into his stomach.

Again!

Again!

Then Ross grabs Best around the waist.

OVERHEAD BELLY-TO-BELLY SUPLEX!

Best crashes across the ring.

Mark Bravo: "Technical wrestling works great until Chris Ross decides to throw you across the building."

Best rolls through the impact and pushes himself up.

Ross is already coming.

Best fires a kick into the thigh.

Another.

Ross slows.

Best lands a third kick.

Then an elbow across the jaw.

Ross answers with a forearm.

Best fires back.

Ross!

Best!

Ross!

Best!

Ross finally rocks Best with a particularly vicious shot.

Best staggers backward.

Ross charges—

Best catches him!

SPINNING SPINEBUSTER!

Ross hits hard!

Best immediately hooks a leg!

ONE!

TWO!

Ross powers out.

Best doesn't waste a second.

He grabs Ross' arm and rolls directly into an armbar!

John Phillips: "Best goes right back to the arm!"

Ross grimaces.

Best pulls back.

The referee drops beside Ross.

Referee: "Do you give?!"

Ross looks at him like the question itself is offensive.

Chris Ross: "FUCK NO!"

The crowd roars.

Mark Bravo: "I think that's a no."

Ross twists his body.

Best adjusts his grip.

Ross forces himself onto his knees.

Then one foot.

Best's eyes widen.

Ross is standing with Best hanging off his arm.

Ross reaches down.

Gets his other arm around Best.

And POWERBOMBS HIM INTO THE CANVAS!

Best releases immediately.

John Phillips: "Good lord!"

Ross shakes feeling back into the arm.

Best rolls onto his stomach.

Ross grabs him.

Pulls him upright.

SNAP SUPLEX!

Ross maintains control.

He pulls Best up again.

BELLY-TO-BACK SUPLEX!

Still Ross doesn't release him.

Best is dragged upright for a third time.

John Phillips: "Ross is doing exactly what he does best!"

GERMAN SUPLEX!

Best folds up on impact.

Mark Bravo: "All the technique in the world doesn't help if the other guy keeps dropping you on your head!"

Ross gets back to his feet.

He looks down at Best.

Then suddenly remembers something.

Maxwell Jett.

Ross turns.

The champion is gone.

John Phillips: "Where's Maxwell?"

The camera quickly finds him.

Jett is crouched on the floor beside First Class.

He has been there for nearly the entire exchange.

Recovering.

Watching.

Waiting.

Mark Bravo: "There he is!"

John Phillips: "Maxwell Jett has let Ross and Best beat the hell out of each other while he recovers on the floor!"

Mark Bravo: "Now THAT is championship strategy."

Ross walks toward the ropes.

He stares down at Maxwell.

Jett points at Mike Best behind him.

Maxwell Jett: "He's right there!"

Ross doesn't care.

Maxwell Jett: "CHRIS!"

Ross steps through the ropes.

Maxwell immediately starts retreating.

Maxwell Jett: "You're winning!"

Ross drops to the floor.

Maxwell Jett: "GO PIN HIM!"

Ross starts toward him.

Maxwell backs directly into Jacoby Jacobs.

He turns.

Looks at Jacoby.

Looks at Ross.

Then grabs Jacoby by the shoulders and SHOVES HIM AT CHRIS ROSS!

Jacoby Jacobs: "YO—"

Ross catches Jacoby.

Jacoby's eyes get huge.

Jacoby Jacobs: "Hey, man, I ain't even in the ma—"

Ross launches him with a belly-to-belly suplex on the floor!

Jacoby crashes down!

John Phillips: "MAXWELL JUST SACRIFICED JACOBY JACOBS!"

Darian looks down at his partner.

Then up at Maxwell.

Darian Darrington: "Man, what the hell?!"

Maxwell Jett: "HE'S FINE!"

Max takes off around the ring.

Ross follows.

Darian kneels beside Jacoby.

Darian Darrington: "You good?"

Jacoby Jacobs: "No!"

Maxwell rounds the corner.

Ross closes the distance.

Jett suddenly slides underneath the bottom rope.

Ross follows him in.

Exactly what Maxwell wanted.

Jett springs to his feet and stomps Ross as he enters!

Again!

Again!

Again!

John Phillips: "Jett suckered him in!"

Maxwell grabs Ross by the head.

HAMMERLOCK DDT!

Ross is planted!

Maxwell rolls him over.

Hooks the leg!

ONE!

TWO!

MIKE BEST BREAKS IT UP!

Best drives a boot into Maxwell's head.

Jett rolls away.

Best grabs Maxwell.

Pulls him up.

Knife-edge chop!

Max staggers.

Best grabs him around the waist.

NORTHERN LIGHTS SUPLEX!

Bridge!

ONE!

TWO!

MAXWELL KICKS OUT!

Best rolls backward to his feet.

Maxwell scrambles up as well.

Best catches him with a kick to the stomach.

Then another.

Max doubles over.

Best pulls him into position.

Jett realizes what's happening and desperately drops to one knee.

Best tries to pull him back up.

Maxwell reaches forward—

And rakes Best across the eyes!

Best stumbles away.

Jett springs forward.

RUNNING BOOT TO THE FACE!

Best drops.

Maxwell turns toward the hard camera.

His hair is a mess.

His chest is covered in red marks.

He's breathing hard.

And he still can't help himself.

Maxwell Jett: "THIS IS YOUR LEGEND?!"

The crowd boos.

Maxwell Jett: "LOOK AT HIM!"

Maxwell turns back toward Best.

He never sees Chris Ross get up behind him.

John Phillips: "Max!"

Ross grabs Maxwell around the waist.

Jett's expression changes instantly.

GERMAN SUPLEX!

Maxwell lands on his shoulders and neck!

Ross maintains the waistlock.

He pulls Maxwell up.

SECOND GERMAN SUPLEX!

Jett hits again!

Ross still doesn't release him.

Mark Bravo: "Maxwell should've kept his mouth shut!"

Ross drags him up one more time.

Maxwell desperately reaches for the ropes.

Too far away.

THIRD GERMAN SUPLEX!

Jett crashes down!

Ross gets up and lets out a roar.

The Toronto crowd roars with him.

Maxwell slowly rolls onto his hands and knees.

Ross sees him.

He grabs the champion by the back of the neck.

John Phillips: "Ross has him!"

SIDE WALK SMASH!

Ross drives Maxwell face-first into the canvas!

Jett goes limp.

Ross stands over him.

Then looks toward the ropes.

The crowd realizes it.

John Phillips: "Ross may be thinking Welcome to Harrisburg!"

Ross reaches down for Maxwell.

But Mike Best suddenly grabs Ross from behind!

Best drags him backward!

Ross spins around—

Best drives a knee into the body!

Then another!

Ross fires back with a forearm!

Best answers with an elbow!

Ross swings!

Best ducks!

Best hooks him—

RUSSIAN LEGSWEEP!

Ross hits the mat.

Best immediately grabs the arm and leg.

He starts twisting Ross over.

John Phillips: "GILDED CAGE!"

Best locks in the chicken wing Muta lock!

Ross' body contorts as Best cranks back!

The referee drops into position.

Referee: "Chris! Do you give?!"

Chris Ross: "NO!"

Best pulls harder.

Ross growls through the pain.

John Phillips: "There are no rope breaks in a Triple Threat! Ross has nowhere to go!"

Ross reaches toward the ropes anyway.

His fingertips touch the bottom rope.

Nothing happens.

Best keeps the hold locked in.

Ross realizes it.

So does the crowd.

Ross plants his free hand against the mat.

He starts trying to push himself upward.

Best leans back harder.

Ross refuses to quit.

And several feet away...

Maxwell Jett's eyes slowly open.

He sees Mike Best.

He sees Chris Ross trapped.

He sees both men completely occupied with each other.

Maxwell begins crawling toward them.

Mark Bravo: "Look at the champion."

Jett gets to one knee.

Then both feet.

Best still doesn't see him.

Ross can't do anything about him.

Maxwell backs into the corner.

His eyes lock onto Mike Best.

He measures the distance.

John Phillips: "Best has no idea!"

Maxwell Jett explodes out of the corner—

Maxwell Jett explodes out of the corner—

HEAT SEEKER KNEE!

The knee catches Mike Best square in the side of the head!

Best collapses instantly.

The Gilded Cage is broken.

John Phillips: "JETT JUST SAVED ROSS!"

Mark Bravo: "No, John! He saved himself!"

Maxwell dives on top of Best!

ONE!

TWO!

THR—

ROSS GRABS MAXWELL BY THE ANKLE AND YANKS HIM OFF!

Jett screams as he's dragged backward across the canvas.

Maxwell Jett: "NO! NO!"

Ross pulls himself up using the ropes, one arm still hurting from the submission.

Max scrambles to his feet.

Ross charges.

Max ducks the forearm.

Ross turns.

Jett kicks him in the knee.

Another kick!

Ross drops to one leg.

Maxwell backs away.

Runs forward—

RUNNING BOOT!

Ross takes it across the face and falls backward into the ropes.

Maxwell immediately grabs the injured arm Best had been working.

He twists it.

Ross snarls.

Jett wrenches harder.

Then drops Ross shoulder-first across his knee!

John Phillips: "Smart attack by Maxwell Jett. He's going right after that arm."

Max stays on it.

Arm wringer.

He drives an elbow into the shoulder joint.

Another.

Ross swings wildly with the free hand.

Max ducks.

HAMMERLOCK DDT!

Ross spikes into the canvas!

Maxwell rolls him over.

Hooks the leg!

ONE!

TWO!

ROSS KICKS OUT!

Max sits up immediately.

He stares at the referee.

Then at Ross.

Then at Mike Best, who is beginning to move in the opposite corner.

Mark Bravo: "Maxwell's running out of bodies to steal a pin from."

Jett rises.

He looks down at Ross.

Then reaches for the arm.

John Phillips: "He's going for the Long Island Lock!"

Maxwell traps the wrist and starts trying to sit back into the armbar.

Ross immediately fights.

He clasps his hands.

Max kicks at the grip.

Ross refuses to release.

Max stomps the shoulder.

Ross finally loses the grip.

Jett drops backward—

LONG ISLAND LOCK!

Ross' arm is extended.

Maxwell pulls back with everything he has.

John Phillips: "Jett has it locked in!"

Ross grimaces.

The referee asks the question.

Referee: "Chris! Do you give?!"

Chris Ross: "NO!"

Maxwell cranks harder.

Maxwell Jett: "TAP!"

Ross shakes his head.

Maxwell Jett: "TAP, YOU PSYCHO!"

Ross begins twisting his body toward Jett.

Max tries to keep control.

Ross forces himself onto his knees.

Then—

Mike Best flies into frame with a running knee to Maxwell's face!

Jett loses the hold and falls backward.

John Phillips: "MIKE BEST!"

Best grabs Maxwell immediately.

FOREARM!

Jett staggers.

Another forearm!

Max backs into the ropes.

Best whips him across.

Jett rebounds—

Best catches him with a BELLY-TO-BELLY SUPLEX!

Maxwell bounces off the canvas.

Best stays on him.

He pulls Jett upright.

SNAP SUPLEX!

Best rolls through.

Pulls Maxwell up again.

ANOTHER SUPLEX!

Jett is getting ragdolled now.

Mark Bravo: "Mike Best has had enough!"

Best drags Maxwell up one more time.

Max reaches desperately for Best's face.

Best catches the hand.

Twists the wrist.

Elbow to the jaw!

Maxwell drops to one knee.

Best takes a step back.

The crowd rises.

John Phillips: "Wait a minute..."

Best looks down at Jett.

Maxwell is seated on his heels.

Perfect position.

John Phillips: "I KNEED A HERO!"

Best charges—

ROSS TACKLES HIM OUT OF NOWHERE!

Both men tumble through the ropes and crash to the floor!

Maxwell remains on his knees in the ring.

His eyes are wide.

He realizes exactly how close he just came.

Mark Bravo: "Ross just saved the championship for Maxwell again!"

Jett looks toward the floor.

Ross and Best are already getting up.

Ross throws a forearm.

Best fires back.

The two start brawling at ringside.

Ross drives Best backward into the barricade.

Best answers with a knee to the stomach.

Ross fires a headbutt.

Best stumbles.

Ross grabs him by the back of the head.

He charges toward the ring post—

Best blocks!

Ross tries again.

Best plants a foot.

Then reverses!

ROSS GOES SHOULDER-FIRST INTO THE POST!

Ross drops to the floor clutching the same arm that has been worked over repeatedly.

John Phillips: "That shoulder may be in serious trouble now!"

Best turns around.

Maxwell Jett comes flying through the ropes with a baseball slide!

Both feet catch Best in the chest!

Best goes backward into the barricade.

Maxwell slides out of the ring after him.

Jett immediately grabs Best by the head.

He slams Best face-first into the announce desk!

Once.

Twice.

Three times.

Maxwell Jett: "LEGEND?!"

Jett drives him into the desk again.

Maxwell Jett: "THIS IS THE GUY?!"

Max turns toward the camera.

Maxwell Jett: "I'M THE GUY!"

He turns back—

Best punches him directly in the mouth.

Maxwell stumbles backward.

Best steps forward and fires another shot.

Jett answers.

Best.

Jett.

Best.

Maxwell tries another eye rake—

Best catches the wrist.

He smiles.

Mike Best: "Not twice."

Best pulls Maxwell forward—

SHORT-ARM LARIAT!

Jett flips backward and crashes to the floor!

The crowd roars.

Best starts pulling Maxwell up.

Behind him—

Ross is back on his feet.

He charges.

25 TO LIFE!

The cyclone kick catches Mike Best flush!

Best drops beside Maxwell.

John Phillips: "25 TO LIFE!"

Ross stands over both men.

His shoulder is clearly hurting.

He doesn't care.

Ross grabs Maxwell.

Rolls him underneath the bottom rope.

Then follows him into the ring.

Jett is barely moving.

Ross pulls him up.

Maxwell tries to fight.

A weak punch.

Ross doesn't even flinch.

Another punch.

Ross stares at him.

Maxwell realizes it's not working.

Ross grabs the back of his neck.

SIDE WALK SMASH!

Jett goes face-first into the canvas again!

Ross doesn't cover.

Instead, he pulls Maxwell back up.

John Phillips: "Ross could pin him!"

Mark Bravo: "He doesn't want a pin!"

Ross positions Jett.

The crowd rises again.

John Phillips: "WELCOME TO HARRISBURG!"

Ross drives Maxwell face-first into the canvas with the curb stomp!

The champion crumples.

Ross rolls him over.

Hooks the leg!

ONE!

TWO!

THR—

MIKE BEST DIVES INTO THE RING AND BREAKS THE COVER!

The crowd explodes.

John Phillips: "BEST SAVES IT!"

Ross slowly turns toward him.

Best is kneeling beside Maxwell.

Both men are exhausted.

Ross gets to his feet.

Best gets to his.

They meet in the middle.

FOREARM FROM ROSS!

ELBOW FROM BEST!

ROSS!

BEST!

ROSS!

BEST!

The crowd chants along with every strike.

Best finally gets the better of the exchange with a knee to the stomach.

Ross doubles over.

Best hits the ropes.

Running knee!

Ross drops to one knee.

Best sees it.

He backs into the opposite corner.

John Phillips: "Ross is down!"

Mike Best explodes forward.

John Phillips: "I KNEED A HERO!"

BEST CONNECTS!

Ross collapses.

Mike Best dives onto him!

ONE!

TWO!

Maxwell Jett launches himself across the ring—

THR—

AND BREAKS IT UP AT THE ABSOLUTE LAST POSSIBLE SECOND!

The entire arena erupts.

John Phillips: "MAXWELL SAVED HIS CHAMPIONSHIP!"

Mark Bravo: "By a fraction of a second!"

Mike Best sits up.

He stares at Maxwell.

Jett is on his hands and knees.

Best's expression changes.

He looks furious.

Maxwell looks up.

Sees Best.

Immediately begins crawling backward.

Maxwell Jett: "Mike."

Best rises.

Maxwell Jett: "Mike, come on."

Best starts toward him.

Maxwell Jett: "You almost had him!"

Best keeps coming.

Maxwell Jett: "THAT'S A COMPLIMENT!"

Best grabs Maxwell by the ankle.

Jett desperately claws at the canvas.

Best drags him back toward the center of the ring.

Maxwell rolls onto his back.

Best stands over him.

Jett raises both hands.

Maxwell Jett: "Let's talk."

Best smiles.

Mike Best: "Okay."

Best grabs him by the head.

Mike Best: "Talk."

And starts pulling the UTA Champion back to his feet.

Mike Best pulls Maxwell Jett back to his feet.

Mike Best: "Talk."

Maxwell opens his mouth—

Best unloads with a knife-edge chop!

SMACK!

Jett staggers backward.

Mike Best: "Go ahead."

Another chop!

SMACK!

Maxwell's chest is nearly purple now.

Mike Best: "I'm listening."

Best swings again—

Maxwell ducks!

Jett hooks Best from behind.

ROLL-UP!

ONE!

TWO!

BEST KICKS OUT!

Both men scramble up.

Best charges.

Maxwell sidesteps and sends him shoulder-first into the ring post!

Best crashes through the turnbuckles.

Jett immediately grabs the arm.

John Phillips: "Maxwell going back to that shoulder!"

Jett yanks Best backward and twists the arm behind him.

HAMMERLOCK DDT!

Best is planted!

Maxwell hooks both legs!

ONE!

TWO!

BEST KICKS OUT!

Jett pounds the mat in frustration.

Maxwell Jett: "STAY DOWN!"

He grabs Best by the wrist.

Maxwell pulls him toward the center of the ring.

He traps the arm.

Mark Bravo: "He's looking for the Long Island Lock again!"

Best immediately recognizes it.

He rolls through before Jett can secure the hold.

Best reaches up and traps Maxwell's leg.

He twists.

Jett goes down!

Best transitions behind.

He hooks Maxwell's legs.

John Phillips: "Sharpshooter!"

Best turns him over!

SASORI-GATAME!

Maxwell screams.

Maxwell Jett: "NO! NO! NO!"

Best sits deep into the hold.

The referee checks on Jett.

Referee: "Do you give?!"

Maxwell Jett: "GET OFF ME!"

Jett begins crawling toward the ropes.

John Phillips: "Remember, the ropes won't save him!"

Maxwell reaches them anyway.

He grabs the bottom rope.

The referee does nothing.

Jett stares at him in disbelief.

Maxwell Jett: "BREAK IT!"

Referee: "NO ROPE BREAK!"

Maxwell Jett: "WHAT DO YOU MEAN?!"

Mark Bravo: "Apparently Maxwell didn't have ChatGPT explain Triple Threat rules."

The crowd roars with laughter.

Best leans back harder.

Maxwell reaches desperately toward ringside.

Jacoby Jacobs and Darian Darrington are both shouting at him.

Darian Darrington: "DON'T TAP!"

Maxwell Jett: "I KNOW!"

Jacoby Jacobs: "GET OUT OF IT!"

Maxwell Jett: "I KNOW THAT TOO!"

Best wrenches back again.

Maxwell screams.

His hand comes up.

The crowd gets louder.

John Phillips: "Jett may have to tap!"

His hand hovers above the mat.

Best pulls harder.

Maxwell raises his hand higher—

CHRIS ROSS CRASHES INTO MIKE BEST WITH A RUNNING BOOT!

The hold is broken!

Best rolls away.

Maxwell curls into a ball clutching his back.

John Phillips: "Ross saves Maxwell Jett AGAIN!"

Mark Bravo: "Nobody has saved Maxwell more tonight than the two men trying to take his championship!"

Ross doesn't even glance at Jett.

His attention is entirely on Mike Best.

Best gets to his knees.

Ross grabs him by the back of the head.

FOREARM!

Another!

Best fires one into Ross' stomach.

Ross answers with a knee.

He pulls Best upright.

Hooks him around the waist.

GERMAN SUPLEX!

Best rolls through the impact and somehow gets back to his feet.

Ross charges.

Best catches him with a step-up enzuigiri!

Ross stumbles into the ropes.

Best follows with a running knee!

Ross spills through the ropes and lands on the apron.

Best grabs him through the ropes.

Ross fires a headbutt!

Best staggers.

Ross steps back into the ring.

Best turns—

12 GAUGE!

The ripcord headbutt SMASHES Best in the face!

Best crumples to the canvas.

John Phillips: "12 GAUGE! Mike Best may be out!"

Ross drops beside him.

Cover!

ONE!

TWO!

THR—

MAXWELL JETT DIVES ON TOP OF THE PILE!

The referee stops the count.

Jett rolls Ross off.

Then immediately covers Mike Best himself!

ONE!

TWO!

BEST KICKS OUT!

Maxwell rolls onto his back and stares toward the ceiling.

Maxwell Jett: "HOW?!"

Ross grabs Maxwell by the throat from behind.

Jett's eyes widen.

Chris Ross: "You stealing my kill?"

Ross drags Maxwell upright.

Jett starts throwing frantic elbows backward.

One catches Ross in the injured shoulder.

Ross loosens his grip.

Maxwell hits the shoulder again.

Ross releases.

Jett spins.

Kick to the knee!

Ross drops down.

Maxwell runs the ropes.

HEAT SEEKER KNEE!

Ross falls backward!

Jett doesn't cover.

He looks toward Mike Best.

Best is slowly pulling himself up in the corner.

Maxwell looks between both challengers.

A desperate idea forms.

Jett pulls Ross up first.

He hooks the arm.

John Phillips: "Platinum Driver!"

Ross blocks it.

Maxwell tries again.

Ross powers upright.

BACK BODY DROP!

Jett crashes to the mat.

Ross turns—

MIKE BEST BLASTS HIM WITH A SUPERKICK!

Ross drops to one knee.

Best sees the opening.

He backs away.

John Phillips: "Not again!"

Best charges.

I KNEED A HERO—

ROSS FALLS FLAT!

Best's knee sails over him!

Best lands awkwardly and turns around—

MAXWELL JETT KICKS HIM IN THE STOMACH!

Jett traps the arm.

PLATINUM DRIVER!

MIKE BEST IS SPIKED INTO THE CANVAS!

THE CROWD ERUPTS!

John Phillips: "PLATINUM DRIVER! PLATINUM DRIVER ON MIKE BEST!"

Maxwell immediately rolls Best over.

He hooks the leg.

ONE!

TWO!

ROSS DIVES—

THR—

ROSS BREAKS IT UP!

Ross gets there with barely a fraction of a second remaining.

Maxwell pounds the canvas.

He turns toward Ross with pure hatred.

Maxwell Jett: "YOU SON OF A BITCH!"

Jett launches himself at Ross.

Forearm!

Ross fires one back!

Maxwell swings again!

Ross absorbs it.

Another from Jett!

Ross answers with a headbutt!

Maxwell staggers.

Ross grabs him.

SPINEBUSTER!

Jett crashes down.

Ross mounts him.

Forearm!

Forearm!

Forearm!

Maxwell tries covering up.

Ross keeps hammering away.

John Phillips: "Ross isn't even thinking about the championship anymore!"

Mark Bravo: "That's what makes him so dangerous! He doesn't care about three seconds!"

Ross stops.

He looks down at Maxwell.

Then slowly pulls him upright.

Ross positions him.

John Phillips: "He's looking for Welcome to Harrisburg again!"

Ross grabs the back of Maxwell's neck.

Jett desperately grabs at Ross' injured arm.

Ross winces.

Maxwell twists the wrist.

Ross loses control.

Jett spins behind him.

LOW BLOW!

Ross freezes.

The crowd erupts in boos.

John Phillips: "DAMN IT!"

Ross slowly drops to his knees.

Maxwell backs away.

He sees Ross kneeling.

Perfectly positioned.

Max takes off.

HEAT SEEKER KNEE!

ROSS IS FLATTENED!

Maxwell dives on top!

ONE!

TWO!

THR—

MIKE BEST GRABS THE REFEREE'S ARM!

The count stops.

The crowd erupts again.

Maxwell slowly turns his head.

Mike Best is barely conscious, still on the canvas, but he has the referee by the wrist.

Mark Bravo: "Mike Best just saved Chris Ross!"

Jett crawls toward Best.

There is absolute fury in his eyes.

Maxwell Jett: "WHY WON'T EITHER OF YOU JUST DIE?!"

Best looks up at him.

Smiles weakly.

Then flips Maxwell off.

The crowd explodes.

Maxwell loses it.

He jumps on Best and begins raining punches down!

Best covers up.

Jett keeps swinging.

Behind them...

Chris Ross starts to rise.

Slowly.

First to one knee.

Then to his feet.

Maxwell doesn't see him.

Ross stands directly behind the UTA Champion.

The Toronto crowd gets louder and louder.

Maxwell finally notices the noise.

He stops punching.

His expression changes.

Very slowly...

Maxwell Jett turns around.

Maxwell Jett slowly turns around.

Chris Ross is standing directly behind him.

Maxwell freezes.

Ross' chest rises and falls heavily.

His shoulder hangs slightly lower after everything Mike Best and Maxwell have done to the arm.

But the look in his eyes hasn't changed.

Maxwell immediately puts both hands up.

Maxwell Jett: "Chris."

Ross steps forward.

Maxwell Jett: "Think about what you're doing."

Another step.

Maxwell Jett: "Mike's the problem."

Maxwell points frantically past Ross.

Maxwell Jett: "HE'S THE ONE WHO KEEPS BREAKING UP YOUR PINS!"

Ross glances over his shoulder.

Just for a fraction of a second.

Maxwell takes the bait he created himself.

He lunges forward—

Ross spins back around!

HEADBUTT!

Jett's legs buckle.

Ross grabs him by the wrist.

John Phillips: "Maxwell tried to sucker Ross again!"

Ross pulls Jett toward him—

12 GAUGE!

THE RIPCORDER HEADBUTT CONNECTS!

Maxwell collapses!

John Phillips: "12 GAUGE!"

Ross drops to make the cover—

MIKE BEST GRABS ROSS FROM BEHIND!

Best yanks Ross backward before he can even hook the leg.

Ross spins around.

Best unloads with a forearm!

Ross answers!

Best fires another!

Ross returns it!

Best!

Ross!

Best!

Ross swings again—

Best ducks!

Ross turns—

SUPERKICK!

Ross staggers backward into the ropes.

Best charges.

RUNNING FOREARM!

The impact sends Ross through the ropes!

Ross crashes to the floor!

John Phillips: "Chris Ross is out!"

Mike Best immediately turns around.

Maxwell Jett is still down.

Best sees him.

The crowd sees him.

And suddenly the entire building realizes what's possible.

John Phillips: "Mike Best has Maxwell Jett all to himself!"

Best walks toward the champion.

Slowly.

His eyes never leave Maxwell.

At ringside, Jacoby Jacobs and Darian Darrington are losing their minds.

Jacoby Jacobs: "MAX! GET UP!"

Darian Darrington: "GET YOUR ASS UP, MAN!"

Maxwell rolls onto his stomach.

He pushes himself onto his hands and knees.

Best watches him rise.

Mark Bravo: "Maxwell doesn't know where Mike Best is."

Jett gets one foot underneath him.

Then the other.

He turns.

Best kicks him in the stomach!

Maxwell doubles over.

Best hooks him.

Maxwell realizes what's happening.

He starts fighting wildly.

Shots to Best's ribs!

Another!

Best loses the grip.

Maxwell stumbles away.

Best grabs his wrist.

Pulls him back—

Maxwell spins through!

Eye rake!

Best staggers backward.

Jett runs forward—

HEAT SEEKER KNEE!

BEST DUCKS!

Maxwell flies past him!

Jett lands and turns around—

BEST DRILLS HIM WITH A SUPERKICK!

Maxwell drops to his knees.

Mike Best looks at him.

The crowd rises.

John Phillips: "He's got him!"

Best backs toward the corner.

Maxwell sways on his knees.

His eyes are glassy.

Best measures him.

Mark Bravo: "Maxwell is exactly where Mike wants him!"

Best explodes forward—

John Phillips: "I KNEED A HERO!"

THE KNEE CONNECTS FLUSH!

Maxwell's head snaps backward.

He collapses to the canvas.

Mike Best falls on top of him!

He hooks both legs!

ONE!

The crowd counts with the referee.

TWO!

Chris Ross is still on the floor.

Jacoby and Darian are screaming.

THR—

MAXWELL JETT GETS A SHOULDER UP!

Scotiabank Arena gasps.

John Phillips: "NO! NO! MAXWELL SURVIVED!"

Mike Best sits upright.

He stares at the referee.

Two fingers.

Best nods.

No argument.

No wasted time.

He gets back to his feet.

John Phillips: "Mike Best knows how close he is!"

Best looks down at Maxwell.

Then toward the corner.

He begins climbing.

Mark Bravo: "What's Best doing now?"

Mike reaches the second rope.

Then the top.

Maxwell remains flat on his back.

Best steadies himself.

He looks down.

Then launches—

DIVING ELBOW DROP!

RIGHT INTO MAXWELL'S CHEST!

Jett's entire body jolts from the impact.

Best rolls through.

He's hurting too.

But he gets back up.

Maxwell doesn't.

John Phillips: "Mike Best is pouring it on!"

Best grabs Maxwell by the hair.

He drags the champion upright.

Maxwell can barely stand.

Best hooks him.

Jett's arms hang limp.

Best lifts—

BRAINBUSTER!

MAXWELL IS SPIKED!

The crowd erupts.

Best could cover.

Instead, he looks toward the corner again.

John Phillips: "Mike Best wants to make absolutely certain!"

Best drags Maxwell toward the center of the ring.

He leaves him there.

Then backs away.

All the way into the corner.

Best lowers himself.

His hands grip the ropes on either side of him.

He waits.

Maxwell doesn't move.

Best shouts at him.

Mike Best: "GET UP!"

At ringside, Jacoby slaps the mat.

Jacoby Jacobs: "DON'T GET UP!"

Darian Darrington: "STAY DOWN, MAX!"

Maxwell's fingers move.

He slowly pushes himself up.

Best waits.

Jett reaches his knees.

The Toronto crowd is deafening.

Best explodes out of the corner.

I KNEED A HERO!

AGAIN!

THE KNEE DESTROYS MAXWELL JETT!

Jett crumples.

Mike Best immediately hooks the leg.

John Phillips: "THAT'S IT!"

Mark Bravo: "WE'VE GOT A NEW CHAMPION!"

The referee drops.

ONE!

Jacoby Jacobs climbs onto the apron!

The referee sees him and points him down!

Darian grabs Jacoby and pulls him off before he can get them both thrown out.

TWO!

Mike Best squeezes the leg tighter.

Maxwell Jett isn't moving.

Chris Ross is nowhere in sight.

The referee's hand comes down—

ROSS FLIES INTO FRAME!

HE DRIVES BOTH BOOTS INTO MIKE BEST!

Best is knocked completely off Maxwell!

The crowd EXPLODES.

John Phillips: "CHRIS ROSS! CHRIS ROSS AT THE LAST POSSIBLE SECOND!"

Best rolls across the ring.

Ross falls beside Maxwell.

All three men are down.

For several seconds, nobody moves.

Mark Bravo: "Mike Best had it!"

John Phillips: "There was nothing left! Maxwell Jett was done!"

Ross begins pushing himself upright.

Mike Best does the same on the opposite side.

They see each other.

Best's expression is pure fury.

Ross gives him a tired grin.

Best charges.

Ross meets him.

FOREARM!

Best answers!

Ross!

Best!

Best gets the advantage!

Elbow!

Another!

A third!

Ross staggers backward.

Best charges—

Ross catches him!

OVERHEAD BELLY-TO-BELLY!

Best crashes hard.

Ross gets up.

Best does too.

25 TO LIFE!

BEST DUCKS THE CYCLONE KICK!

Ross spins through.

Best catches him from behind!

GERMAN SUPLEX!

Ross lands hard!

Best maintains the waistlock.

He pulls Ross up again.

SECOND GERMAN!

Ross crashes down!

Best releases.

Ross rolls onto his knees.

Best sees him.

Perfect position.

The crowd rises again.

John Phillips: "Best has another one lined up!"

Mike Best backs into the corner.

Chris Ross is on his knees.

Best charges—

I KNEED A HERO!

ROSS MOVES!

Best's knee misses!

His momentum carries him toward the ropes.

Ross springs up behind him.

Best turns—

25 TO LIFE!

THE CYCLONE KICK CONNECTS!

Mike Best is sent tumbling through the ropes!

He crashes to the floor!

John Phillips: "BEST IS OUT OF THE RING!"

Ross drops to one knee.

He clutches the shoulder.

He looks toward the floor.

Mike Best is down.

Then Ross looks behind him.

Maxwell Jett.

The champion is crawling.

Slowly.

Desperately.

Toward the ropes.

Toward First Class.

Toward safety.

Ross sees him.

His expression changes.

He begins stalking Maxwell.

John Phillips: "Maxwell doesn't know!"

Jett reaches the bottom rope.

Jacoby reaches toward him.

Jacoby Jacobs: "COME ON, MAX!"

Ross grabs Maxwell's ankle.

Jett's eyes go wide.

Maxwell Jett: "NO!"

Ross drags him away from the ropes.

Maxwell claws at the canvas.

Maxwell Jett: "NO! NO! NO!"

Ross pulls him to the center of the ring.

Jett rolls onto his back.

He kicks desperately at Ross.

Ross catches one leg.

Maxwell kicks with the other.

Ross swats it away.

Jett scrambles upright.

Ross grabs the wrist.

Maxwell knows what's coming.

He shakes his head violently.

Maxwell Jett: "NO!"

Ross pulls him forward—

12 GAUGE!

THE RIPCORDER HEADBUTT CONNECTS!

Maxwell drops.

Ross looks down at him.

Then toward the floor.

Mike Best is beginning to stir.

Ross knows he doesn't have long.

He grabs Maxwell.

Pulls the champion onto his knees.

Ross steps backward.

Best reaches the apron.

John Phillips: "Mike Best is coming back!"

Ross explodes forward—

25 TO LIFE!

THE CYCLONE KICK DESTROYS MAXWELL!

Jett collapses.

Ross dives on top!

Best pulls himself onto the apron!

ONE!

Best gets one leg through the ropes!

TWO!

Best throws himself forward!

Ross hooks Maxwell's leg tighter!

Best dives—

THREE!

DING! DING! DING!

MIKE BEST CRASHES INTO THE PILE A FRACTION OF A SECOND TOO LATE!

Scotiabank Arena ERUPTS.

John Phillips: "ROSS GOT HIM!"

Mark Bravo: "HE DID IT!"

John Phillips: "CHRIS ROSS HAS PINNED MAXWELL JETT!"

Ross rolls away from the impact.

Mike Best immediately sits up.

His eyes are locked on the referee.

The official signals three.

Best closes his eyes.

He knows.

He was too late.

Maxwell Jett hasn't moved.

At ringside, Jacoby Jacobs and Darian Darrington are frozen.

The ring announcer rises.

Ring Announcer: "Ladies and gentlemen, the winner of this match..."

The referee retrieves the UTA Championship.

Ring Announcer: "...AND NEEEEEEEW..."

Ross gets to his knees.

Ring Announcer: "UTA CHAMPION..."

The championship is placed into his hands.

Ring Announcer: "THE REAPER..."

Ring Announcer: "CHRIS..."

Ring Announcer: "ROSS!"

The building explodes again.

John Phillips: "Chris Ross has done it! The Reaper has recaptured the UTA Championship!"

Ross looks down at the title.

Months of chaos.

Months of stalking Maxwell Jett.

Argentina.

Brazil.

Every warning.

Every promise.

Any time.

Any place.

Anywhere.

And now...

It's his again.

Ross rises.

The referee raises his arm.

Chris Ross raises the UTA Championship high above his head.

John Phillips: "Mike Best was seconds away! Maybe less than seconds! He had Maxwell Jett beaten!"

Mark Bravo: "But that's the Triple Threat, John. Mike Best didn't lose this match. He didn't have to. Chris Ross found the opening, he pinned Maxwell Jett, and that's all that matters."

Mike Best sits against the bottom turnbuckle.

He watches Ross with the championship.

There is frustration written across his face.

But he doesn't argue.

He knows exactly what happened.

Across the ring, Maxwell finally begins to stir.

He looks toward the referee.

Then toward Chris Ross.

Then toward the championship raised above Ross' head.

Maxwell's face goes blank.

The realization hits him.

His championship is gone.

John Phillips: "Maxwell Jett wanted this match now."

Ross climbs onto the second turnbuckle.

The UTA Championship rises above his head.

John Phillips: "Maxwell Jett demanded this match now."

Jett sits motionless on the canvas.

John Phillips: "And Maxwell Jett has nobody to blame."

Mark Bravo: "His own plan cost him everything."

Chris Ross looks out across Scotiabank Arena.

Then down at Maxwell Jett.

Ross slowly raises the championship one more time.

The Reaper is once again on top of the United Toughness Alliance.

Empires Fall

Segment

This should hit Susanita's core character hard: heart, loyalty, and the belief that betrayal has consequences. Her history consistently frames her as someone who values respect and refuses to cheat, even when things get personal.

The camera cuts backstage.

Melissa Cartwright stands in front of the One Last Stop backdrop, microphone in hand.

Beside her is Susanita Ybanez.

Susanita is already dressed for competition.

Her hands are taped.

Her hair is pulled back.

But unlike the usual focused determination we've seen from her, tonight there is something different.

Her eyes are already wet.

Her jaw is tight.

She's trying very hard to keep herself composed.

Melissa Cartwright: "Susanita, after weeks of waiting, weeks of interference, weeks of The Empire doing everything they could to keep this from happening..."

Melissa pauses.

Melissa Cartwright: "Tonight, you finally get Marie Van Claudio one-on-one."

Susanita looks down.

Melissa Cartwright: "What is going through your head right now?"

For several seconds, Susanita doesn't answer.

She takes a breath.

Then another.

When she finally looks back toward Melissa, the emotion is written all over her face.

Susanita Ybanez: "Everything."

Her voice catches slightly.

Susanita Ybanez: "Everything is going through my head."

She swallows hard.

Susanita Ybanez: "Because this isn't just another match for me, Melissa."

Susanita Ybanez: "This isn't about rankings."

Susanita Ybanez: "It isn't about a championship."

Susanita Ybanez: "It isn't about proving that I am the better wrestler."

Susanita shakes her head.

Susanita Ybanez: "This is personal."

Her eyes begin to well up more.

Susanita Ybanez: "Marie was my friend."

Susanita Ybanez: "I believed in her."

Susanita Ybanez: "When people attacked her, I stood beside her."

Susanita Ybanez: "When she was hurt, I worried about her."

Susanita Ybanez: "When she needed someone, I was there."

Susanita wipes underneath one eye with the back of her taped hand.

Susanita Ybanez: "And then she looked me in the face..."

Her voice trembles.

Susanita Ybanez: "...and decided none of that mattered."

She looks away for a moment.

Her breathing becomes heavier.

Susanita Ybanez: "Do you know what that feels like?"

Susanita Ybanez: "To fight for somebody."

Susanita Ybanez: "To trust somebody."

Susanita Ybanez: "To think you know their heart."

Susanita Ybanez: "And then find out that maybe you never knew them at all?"

Melissa doesn't interrupt.

Susanita looks directly into the camera now.

Susanita Ybanez: "Marie, tonight I need you to understand something."

Her sadness begins turning into anger.

Susanita Ybanez: "You cannot just turn your back on your friends."

Susanita Ybanez: "You cannot use people."

Susanita Ybanez: "You cannot betray everyone who stood beside you and then pretend it makes you powerful."

Susanita's voice rises.

Susanita Ybanez: "It doesn't!"

She takes another breath, trying to steady herself.

Susanita Ybanez: "And it isn't only me."

Susanita Ybanez: "You turned your back on all of them too."

She points toward the arena.

Susanita Ybanez: "Every person who cheered for you."

Susanita Ybanez: "Every person who believed in you."

Susanita Ybanez: "Every little girl who looked at Marie Van Claudio and thought she was someone worth believing in."

Susanita shakes her head slowly.

Susanita Ybanez: "You disrespected all of them."

Susanita Ybanez: "You disrespected this entire UTA Universe."

Her fists tighten.

Susanita Ybanez: "And that is not right."

Her voice cracks again.

Susanita Ybanez: "Maybe that sounds stupid to some people."

Susanita Ybanez: "Maybe people will tell me this is wrestling and I should stop taking it so personally."

She shakes her head.

Susanita Ybanez: "No."

Susanita Ybanez: "I take it personally because people matter to me."

Susanita Ybanez: "Friendship matters to me."

Susanita Ybanez: "Respect matters to me."

Susanita Ybanez: "These fans matter to me."

Susanita puts a hand over her heart.

Susanita Ybanez: "And tonight..."

She stares directly into the camera.

Susanita Ybanez: "...I fight for all of it."

Melissa gives her a moment before speaking again.

Melissa Cartwright: "Susanita, throughout this rivalry, Marie hasn't exactly been alone."

Melissa Cartwright: "Amy Harrison."

Melissa Cartwright: "Valkyrie Knoxx."

Melissa Cartwright: "The Empire has repeatedly made its presence felt."

Melissa lowers the microphone slightly.

Melissa Cartwright: "What happens if The Empire gets involved tonight?"

Susanita looks at Melissa.

The emotion disappears from her face for just a second.

Not because she feels less.

Because something inside her has hardened.

She slowly turns back toward the camera.

Susanita Ybanez: "Then The Empire will fall tonight too."

Melissa's eyebrows rise slightly.

Susanita steps closer to the camera.

Susanita Ybanez: "Amy."

Susanita Ybanez: "Valkyrie."

Susanita Ybanez: "Listen to me."

Susanita Ybanez: "If you come to that ring, I will fight you."

Susanita Ybanez: "If you stand between me and Marie, I will go through you."

Susanita Ybanez: "I don't care how many of you there are."

Susanita Ybanez: "I don't care what you have planned."

Her eyes begin watering again, but this time she doesn't wipe them.

Susanita Ybanez: "I have waited too long for this."

Susanita Ybanez: "I have cried too much over this."

Susanita Ybanez: "And I have spent too many nights wondering why someone I cared about could do what Marie did."

Susanita takes a breath.

Susanita Ybanez: "Tonight, I stop wondering."

Susanita Ybanez: "Tonight, I stop chasing her."

Susanita Ybanez: "Tonight, Marie Van Claudio has nowhere left to run."

Susanita's voice drops.

Susanita Ybanez: "And tonight..."

She looks directly into the lens.

Susanita Ybanez: "...Susanita will prevail."

She holds the stare for several seconds.

Then Susanita turns and walks out of frame.

Melissa watches her leave.

The camera lingers on the empty space beside her for a moment before fading.

Encouragement

Segment

The camera cuts backstage.

Mikey Unlikely is already in his ring gear, the WrestleZone Championship resting over his shoulder as he makes his way down the hallway toward Gorilla position.

His match is next.

There is a little more focus in Mikey's step than usual tonight.

Maxx Mayhem is not exactly the kind of opponent anyone can prepare for in a conventional sense.

Then, from somewhere behind him—

HONK!

Mikey stops.

His eyes close.

HONK! HONK!

Mikey slowly turns around.

Rolling toward him in the now-infamous battle chair is "Beautiful" Bobby Dean.

The UTA International Championship is draped proudly across Bobby's lap.

Bobby has one hand on the controls and the other raised excitedly in the air.

Bobby Dean: "MIKEY!"

Mikey smiles immediately.

Mikey Unlikely: "There he is."

Bobby rolls up beside him and brings the battle chair to a stop.

Bobby Dean: "I heard you're next."

Mikey Unlikely: "That is generally why I'm walking toward the place where people go before they wrestle, yes."

Bobby nods thoughtfully.

Bobby Dean: "Makes sense."

He looks down at the WrestleZone Championship.

Then back up at Mikey.

Bobby Dean: "Well, I just wanted to come wish you luck."

Mikey's expression softens slightly.

Mikey Unlikely: "Thanks, buddy."

Bobby Dean: "Because Maxx Mayhem is crazy."

Mikey nods.

Mikey Unlikely: "He is."

Bobby Dean: "Like... really crazy."

Mikey Unlikely: "I'm aware."

Bobby Dean: "Like the kind of crazy where you see him walking toward you in a parking lot and you suddenly remember you left something inside."

Mikey considers that.

Mikey Unlikely: "That's actually pretty accurate."

Bobby leans closer.

Bobby Dean: "So here's what you gotta do."

Mikey waits.

Bobby Dean: "Don't let him hit you."

Mikey stares at him.

Bobby Dean: "That's important."

Mikey Unlikely: "That's your advice?"

Bobby Dean: "Well, yeah."

Bobby shrugs.

Bobby Dean: "Every time somebody hits me, it hurts."

Bobby Dean: "So I've started thinking maybe getting hit is actually bad."

Mikey slowly nods.

Mikey Unlikely: "Ten years in the business together and you're still teaching me things."

Bobby Dean: "That's what friends are for."

Bobby smiles proudly.

Bobby Dean: "Also, if things get really bad..."

He pats the armrest of the battle chair.

Bobby Dean: "I can probably get this thing up to about eleven miles an hour downhill."

Mikey Unlikely: "Bobby, you are absolutely not driving that thing into Maxx Mayhem."

Bobby Dean: "Twelve if I skip lunch."

Mikey looks at him.

Bobby thinks about what he just said.

Bobby Dean: "Never mind. Eleven."

Mikey laughs.

Mikey Unlikely: "I'll handle Maxx."

Bobby Dean: "Okay."

Bobby's expression grows slightly more sincere.

Bobby Dean: "Seriously though."

He taps the WrestleZone Championship.

Bobby Dean: "Don't let him take that from you."

Mikey looks down at the title.

Bobby Dean: "You came all the way back here."

Bobby Dean: "You got that thing."

Bobby Dean: "And you're really good at this."

Mikey looks back at Bobby.

Bobby Dean: "Which is kinda annoying sometimes."

Mikey Unlikely: "There he is."

Bobby Dean: "But still."

Bobby smiles.

Bobby Dean: "Go beat him."

Mikey reaches out and pats Bobby on the shoulder.

Mikey Unlikely: "Thanks, Bobbo."

He starts to turn toward Gorilla, then stops.

Mikey Unlikely: "And hey."

Bobby looks up.

Mikey Unlikely: "You've got Lindsey Lothario later."

Bobby's smile fades just a little.

Bobby Dean: "Yeah."

Mikey Unlikely: "Don't sell yourself short."

Bobby looks down at the International Championship across his lap.

Mikey Unlikely: "You still do that."

Bobby Dean: "Do what?"

Mikey Unlikely: "Act like the belt accidentally fell into your lap."

Bobby looks at the championship.

Which is, quite literally, sitting in his lap.

Bobby Dean: "Well..."

Mikey points at him.

Mikey Unlikely: "Not literally."

Bobby Dean: "Oh."

Mikey shakes his head, smiling.

Mikey Unlikely: "You're the International Champion, Bobby."

Mikey Unlikely: "Not because somebody forgot to pick it up."

Mikey Unlikely: "Not because Scott Stevens made a paperwork mistake."

Mikey Unlikely: "Not because the universe thought it'd be funny."

Bobby gives him a skeptical look.

Mikey Unlikely: "Okay, maybe the universe thought it'd be a little funny."

Bobby nods.

Mikey Unlikely: "But you're still the champion."

Mikey Unlikely: "So when Lindsey comes after you tonight..."

Mikey taps Bobby's championship.

Mikey Unlikely: "...make her take it."

Bobby looks down at the International Championship again.

This time, he actually seems to let the words sink in.

Bobby Dean: "Make her take it."

Mikey Unlikely: "Exactly."

Bobby slowly nods.

Bobby Dean: "Okay."

Then his eyes suddenly light up.

Bobby Dean: "And if she tries..."

He pats the battle chair.

Bobby Dean: "Eleven miles an hour."

Mikey laughs and starts walking away.

Mikey Unlikely: "Whatever works, buddy."

Bobby immediately hits the horn.

HONK! HONK!

Bobby Dean: "GO GET 'EM, MIKEY!"

Mikey raises the WrestleZone Championship over his shoulder without turning around.

Bobby watches his old friend disappear toward Gorilla position.

Then Bobby looks down at his own championship.

He considers Mikey's words for a moment.

Bobby Dean: "Make her take it."

Bobby nods.

A little more confidence now.

Then he presses the controls on the battle chair.

It moves approximately six inches.

Stops.

Bobby looks down.

Bobby Dean: "Uh oh."

He hits the horn.

HONK!

We cut away.

The Son of GOD is Back

Segment

The camera cuts backstage.

Mike Best is walking down the hallway.

Slowly.

His hands are planted firmly on his hips.

Sweat pours from his face and chest, his hair soaked from the battle we just witnessed.

There is no smile.

No smirk.

No veteran enjoying one more night under the lights.

Mike Best is furious.

His breathing is still heavy as he moves through the corridor, staring straight ahead like anyone unfortunate enough to step into his path might become collateral damage.

From behind him—

Melissa Cartwright: "Mike!"

Best keeps walking.

Melissa Cartwright: "Mike! Mike, wait!"

Melissa Cartwright jogs into frame, quickly catching up beside him with her microphone in hand.

Melissa Cartwright: "Mike, do you have anything to say after what we just saw out there?"

Best suddenly stops.

Melissa almost walks past him.

Mike slowly turns his head.

The look he gives her makes Melissa instinctively take half a step back.

Mike Best: "Do I have anything to say?"

Melissa keeps the microphone raised.

Mike Best: "Yeah."

Best takes a breath through his nose.

Mike Best: "I got plenty to fucking say."

He turns completely toward her now.

Mike Best: "You wanna talk about the match?"

Mike Best: "Let's talk about the match."

Mike points back toward the arena.

Mike Best: "I had Maxwell Jett beaten."

Melissa starts to speak.

Mike Best: "No."

He raises one finger.

Mike Best: "Don't."

Melissa stops.

Mike Best: "Don't give me the Triple Threat speech."

Mike Best: "Don't tell me Chris Ross was legally allowed to break up the pin."

Mike Best: "Don't tell me there were no disqualifications."

Mike Best: "Don't tell me that's the nature of the match."

His voice rises.

Mike Best: "I KNOW HOW A FUCKING TRIPLE THREAT WORKS."

The hallway goes quiet around them.

Several crew members in the background suddenly find other things to be doing.

Mike Best: "I have been doing this longer than half that locker room has been legally allowed to drive."

Mike Best: "I don't need anybody explaining wrestling to me."

Mike points toward himself.

Mike Best: "I hit Maxwell Jett with I KNEED A HERO."

Mike Best: "I had him dead in the middle of that ring."

Mike Best: "One."

Mike Best: "Two."

He holds up three fingers.

Mike Best: "And everybody in that fucking building knew what came next."

Mike lowers his hand.

Mike Best: "Mike Best becomes UTA Champion."

His jaw tightens.

Mike Best: "But Chris Ross couldn't let that happen."

Mike Best: "Could he?"

Melissa carefully responds.

Melissa Cartwright: "Chris Ross was trying to win the championship too."

Mike immediately laughs.

There is absolutely no humor in it.

Mike Best: "Thank you, Melissa."

Mike Best: "Thank you for that incredible insight."

Melissa's expression hardens slightly.

Mike Best: "Yes."

Mike Best: "Chris Ross wanted the championship."

Mike Best: "And how did he get it?"

Mike spreads his hands.

Mike Best: "By waiting for me to do the fucking work."

There it is.

The bitterness is becoming something else now.

Mike Best: "I beat Maxwell."

Mike Best: "I broke Maxwell down."

Mike Best: "I was seconds away from finishing this cute little championship fairy tale everybody has been telling themselves."

Mike Best: "And then Chris Ross throws me out of the equation and pins the body I left behind."

Mike shakes his head.

Mike Best: "Congratulations."

Slow clap.

Mike Best: "What a champion."

Melissa studies him.

Melissa Cartwright: "But Mike, you also broke up several of Chris Ross' pin attempts during the match."

Mike stares at her.

A long silence.

Mike Best: "Yeah."

He steps closer.

Mike Best: "Because I'm Mike fucking Best."

Melissa doesn't move.

Mike Best: "There's the difference."

Mike Best: "When I stop somebody from winning, it's because I'm going to beat them myself."

Mike Best: "When Chris Ross does it, it's because he knows he can't."

Mike turns away for a second, hands returning to his hips.

Mike Best: "You know what I've heard since I walked through the door here?"

He looks back at Melissa.

Mike Best: "Welcome back, Mike."

Mike Best: "What a surprise, Mike."

Mike Best: "It's so great to see you, Mike."

Mike Best: "Hall of Famer Mike Best is in the UTA."

He mockingly nods along with every phrase.

Mike Best: "Everybody wanted the nostalgia moment."

Mike Best: "Everybody wanted to clap because the old guy showed up."

Mike Best: "Everybody wanted their little photograph of Mike Best standing in a UTA ring."

His expression hardens.

Mike Best: "Well, take your fucking picture."

Mike spreads his arms.

Mike Best: "Here I am."

Mike Best: "And now that everybody has gotten the novelty out of their system, maybe you can start paying attention."

Mike steps toward the camera.

Mike Best: "I did not come here for nostalgia."

Mike Best: "I did not come here to wave to the crowd."

Mike Best: "I did not come here to help Chris Ross finish some sad little redemption story."

Mike Best: "And I sure as hell did not come here to make Maxwell Jett look good."

Mike gets even closer to the lens.

Mike Best: "I came here to become UTA Champion."

He pauses.

Mike Best: "And tonight..."

Mike's eyes narrow.

Mike Best: "...I was screwed out of it."

Melissa raises the microphone slightly.

Melissa Cartwright: "By Chris Ross?"

Mike turns toward her again.

Mike Best: "By everybody."

Melissa looks confused.

Mike Best: "Chris Ross."

Mike Best: "Maxwell Jett."

Mike Best: "Scott Stevens."

Mike Best: "This company."

Mike taps his own chest.

Mike Best: "You put Mike Best in a championship match and then surround him with chaos because that's what makes good television."

Mike Best: "Great."

Mike Best: "Congratulations."

Mike Best: "You got your television."

He points toward the arena again.

Mike Best: "You got your surprise title change."

Mike Best: "You got Chris Ross standing there holding the belt."

Mike Best: "Everybody gets their moment."

His voice drops.

Mike Best: "Except the best wrestler in the fucking match."

Melissa gives him a long look.

Melissa Cartwright: "So what happens now?"

Mike takes several seconds before answering.

When he does, the anger is quieter.

More dangerous.

Mike Best: "Now?"

He wipes sweat from his forehead with his wrist.

Mike Best: "Now I stop being nice."

Melissa's expression changes.

Mike Best: "Because apparently that's where I fucked up."

Mike Best: "I came into this company smiling."

Mike Best: "I shook hands."

Mike Best: "I played the returning legend."

Mike Best: "I let everybody have their fun."

Mike slowly shakes his head.

Mike Best: "That version of Mike Best didn't become UTA Champion tonight."

He looks directly into the camera.

Mike Best: "So that version of Mike Best is fucking dead."

Melissa lowers the microphone slightly.

Mike begins walking away.

Then stops after two steps.

He doesn't turn around.

Mike Best: "Chris."

Mike looks over his shoulder toward the camera.

Mike Best: "Enjoy my championship."

Mike Best: "You won't have it long."

Mike Best turns and continues down the hallway.

Melissa remains where she is.

The camera stays with Best as he disappears around the corner.

No smile.

No nostalgia.

No celebration that the Son of GOD is back.

Tonight, Mike Best lost an opportunity.

And judging by the look on his face...

he intends to make that everyone else's problem.

Maxx Mayhem vs. Mikey Unlikely

Match

Back at ringside, the energy inside Scotiabank Arena begins to rise again as the camera sweeps across the packed Toronto crowd.

We settle on the ring, where the official stands waiting for our next contest.

John Phillips: "Well, ladies and gentlemen, we have already seen championship gold change hands tonight, and now another champion is about to step into the ring."

Mark Bravo: "Not defending it, though, Johnny. Important distinction. Maxx Mayhem doesn't get the WrestleZone Championship if he somehow pulls this thing off."

John Phillips: "No, the championship is not on the line, but you have to believe a victory over the champion would put Maxx Mayhem squarely into that conversation."

Mark Bravo: "Conversation? You beat the champion, you don't start a conversation. You kick his door down and demand the match."

The arena lights suddenly begin to dim.

The video wall flickers.

Paparazzi flashes.

A red carpet.

Hollywood marquees.

Images from a career spanning championships, arenas, movie sets, red carpets, and more than a few questionable fashion decisions flash across the massive screen.

Then everything cuts to black.

One word appears.

UNLIKELY

The Toronto crowd erupts.

? "Blunt Blowin" by Lil Wayne ?

John Phillips: "Listen to Toronto!"

The beat hits and Mikey Unlikely steps through the curtain.

The WrestleZone Championship is fastened firmly around his waist.

Mikey stops at the top of the stage.

He doesn't immediately start toward the ring.

Why would he?

The World's Greatest Entertainer knows how this works.

You don't rush the shot.

You let the camera find you.

Mikey slowly spreads his arms and turns his head from one side of Scotiabank Arena to the other, soaking in the reaction.

Then he looks down.

At the championship.

He runs his hand across the faceplate before looking directly into the camera.

That familiar grin appears.

Mark Bravo: "This man has never met a camera he didn't believe was there specifically for him."

John Phillips: "Maybe because quite a few of them have been."

Mark Bravo: "Don't encourage him."

Mikey starts down the ramp.

There is a swagger to every step.

Not the swagger of somebody trying to convince everyone he belongs.

Mikey Unlikely has been doing this far too long for that.

This is the swagger of somebody who knows exactly who he is.

John Phillips: "It really has been remarkable watching Mikey Unlikely back in the UTA. More than a decade of history with this company, a member of the Hall of Fame, and now once again carrying championship gold."

Mark Bravo: "International Affair wasn't some ceremonial return either. Mikey walked into the All or Nothing Rumble and walked back out as WrestleZone Champion."

John Phillips: "And since then, Mikey has made it very clear that this isn't a nostalgia tour."

Mikey reaches toward the fans lining the barricade, slapping several outstretched hands as he continues toward ringside.

One fan holds up an old Hollywood Bruvs sign.

Mikey notices it.

Stops.

Points.

Then gives the fan an approving nod.

Mark Bravo: "See? That's Mikey's favorite kind of fan."

John Phillips: "Someone who's been watching for years?"

Mark Bravo: "Someone carrying a picture of Mikey."

Mikey reaches ringside and walks around the ring instead of immediately entering.

He stops in front of the hard camera.

Unfastens the WrestleZone Championship.

Looks at it.

Looks into the camera.

And raises the championship high overhead.

Another roar rolls through the arena.

John Phillips: "That championship has a long history of its own, and Mikey Unlikely is writing another chapter in it."

Mikey lowers the belt and heads toward the steel steps.

He climbs onto the apron, pauses once more to look out over Toronto, then steps between the ropes.

Once inside, Mikey heads straight for the nearest corner.

Second rope.

Championship raised.

Flashbulbs fire throughout the building.

Mark Bravo: "There it is. That's going on Instagram before the bell rings."

John Phillips: "Do you even use Instagram?"

Mark Bravo: "No."

John Phillips: "Then how would you know?"

Mark Bravo: "I understand branding, Johnny."

Mikey hops down from the turnbuckles and walks toward the center of the ring.

The referee approaches and Mikey hands over the WrestleZone Championship, though not before giving the faceplate one final pat.

The official raises the championship overhead.

Again, it is not being defended tonight.

But it is impossible to ignore what it represents.

Mikey Unlikely is the WrestleZone Champion.

And Maxx Mayhem is about to get an opportunity to beat him.

John Phillips: "Mikey Unlikely looks ready."

Mark Bravo: "He better be. Because all the Hollywood polish, all the experience, and all the championship gold in the world doesn't prepare you for Maxx Mayhem."

John Phillips: "And speaking of Mayhem..."

Mikey backs into his corner as his music begins to fade.

His eyes move toward the entrance.

The smile remains.

But now the World's Greatest Entertainer waits to see exactly what kind of insanity is coming through that curtain.

Mikey Unlikely waits in his corner.

The arena lights begin to flicker.

Once.

Twice.

Then the video wall suddenly fills with static.

A siren screams through Scotiabank Arena.

Not a clean production siren.

Something harsher.

More like somebody hijacked an emergency broadcast system.

John Phillips: "And here we go."

Mark Bravo: "That is never a reassuring sentence when Maxx Mayhem is involved."

The static cuts out.

? "Holiday" by Green Day ?

The opening guitar riff hits.

Nothing happens.

Mikey raises an eyebrow.

The crowd waits.

Still nothing.

Mark Bravo: "Did he miss his cue?"

John Phillips: "With Maxx Mayhem, I'm not convinced there was ever a cue."

Suddenly, a trash can lid comes flying through the curtain.

It skids across the stage.

A second later, Maxx Mayhem bursts through after it.

He is cackling.

Not smiling.

Cackling.

Maxx scoops the trash can lid up off the floor and begins smashing it against the side of his own head in rhythm with the music.

CLANG!

CLANG!

CLANG!

The crowd reacts with a mixture of cheers and complete disbelief.

John Phillips: "I don't know why I expected anything else."

Mark Bravo: "Because you're an optimist."

Maxx stops at the top of the ramp.

He holds the trash can lid up like a championship belt.

Then looks down at it.

Frowns.

Turns it around.

Looks at it again.

Then nods approvingly.

Maxx Mayhem: "THERE IT IS!"

Maxx throws the lid over his shoulder.

It nearly hits a stagehand.

The stagehand ducks just in time.

Maxx doesn't even notice.

He begins marching down the ramp.

Not walking.

Marching.

High knees.

Arms swinging.

For absolutely no reason.

Mark Bravo: "He looks like he's invading a country by himself."

John Phillips: "And losing."

Halfway down the ramp, Maxx suddenly stops.

He turns toward a fan holding a sign that reads:

MAXX MAYHEM NEEDS THERAPY

Maxx reads it.

Slowly nods.

Then points at the fan.

Maxx Mayhem: "YOU'RE NOT WRONG!"

The crowd laughs.

Maxx slaps the top of the barricade and continues down the ramp.

Then he sees a ringside camera.

He stops.

Walks directly toward it.

The camera operator backs up.

Maxx follows.

The camera backs up again.

Maxx follows again.

John Phillips: "Leave the cameraman alone."

Maxx finally leans directly into the lens.

His face fills the screen.

He stares into it.

Then sticks out his tongue and licks the camera lens.

The picture immediately blurs.

Mark Bravo: "Oh, come on!"

John Phillips: "Someone sanitize that camera."

Maxx turns toward the announce desk.

Phillips sees him coming.

John Phillips: "No."

Maxx keeps coming.

John Phillips: "Absolutely not."

Maxx stops in front of the desk.

He looks at Phillips.

Then Bravo.

Then at the WrestleZone Championship resting at ringside.

Maxx reaches toward it.

The official quickly pulls the belt away.

Maxx freezes.

He slowly looks at the referee.

Maxx Mayhem: "Rude."

He turns toward commentary.

Maxx Mayhem: "You two got anything valuable?"

Mark Bravo: "Not anymore."

Maxx nods.

Maxx Mayhem: "Good answer."

He suddenly SLAPS the announce desk with both hands.

Phillips jumps.

Maxx laughs hysterically.

John Phillips: "I hate him."

Maxx finally turns toward the ring.

Mikey Unlikely has been watching all of this from his corner.

Arms crossed.

Expression somewhere between amusement and concern.

Maxx sees him.

The grin disappears.

For just a second.

Maxx points at Mikey.

Then points at the WrestleZone Championship.

Then makes a throat-cutting motion.

Then immediately follows it by blowing Mikey a kiss.

Mark Bravo: "I genuinely don't know what message that was supposed to send."

John Phillips: "I don't think Maxx does either."

Maxx circles the ring.

He reaches underneath the apron.

The referee immediately leans through the ropes.

Referee: "NO!"

Maxx stops.

Slowly pulls his empty hand back out.

He raises both hands innocently.

Maxx Mayhem: "I wasn't doing anything."

The referee points toward the ring.

Referee: "GET IN HERE!"

Maxx looks at the ring.

Then the referee.

Then the ring again.

He shrugs.

And takes off running.

Maxx sprints around the entire ring.

One full lap.

Then a second.

By the third, the crowd is clapping along.

John Phillips: "What is he doing?!"

Mark Bravo: "Cardio."

On the fourth lap, Maxx suddenly dives under the bottom rope.

He slides almost all the way across the ring.

Stops just short of Mikey's boots.

Maxx looks up.

Mikey looks down.

Maxx smiles.

Maxx Mayhem: "Hi."

Mikey slowly looks toward the referee.

Mikey Unlikely: "This is the guy?"

The referee just shrugs.

Maxx springs back to his feet.

He runs to the opposite corner.

Climbs to the second rope.

Throws both arms wide.

Maxx Mayhem: "ORDER IS FOR COWARDS!"

The crowd reacts loudly.

Maxx Mayhem: "LET'S MAKE SOME MAYHEM!"

Maxx jumps down.

He begins pacing in a tight circle.

Fast.

Muttering to himself.

Slapping the side of his own head.

Getting himself increasingly worked up.

John Phillips: "Mikey Unlikely has experience against just about every kind of competitor imaginable."

Mark Bravo: "Not this kind."

John Phillips: "No."

Mark Bravo: "There may not be another one of this kind."

Maxx finally stops pacing.

He turns toward Mikey.

The grin comes back.

Wide.

Uncomfortable.

Completely unhinged.

Mikey removes his entrance jacket and hands it through the ropes.

His eyes never leave Maxx.

The referee steps between them.

On one side:

The polished, experienced WrestleZone Champion.

On the other:

A man who just licked a television camera and ran four laps around the ring for no discernible reason.

John Phillips: "Mikey Unlikely versus Maxx Mayhem."

Mark Bravo: "Good luck, Mikey."

The referee checks both men.

Maxx keeps bouncing from foot to foot.

Mikey shakes his head.

The official signals for the bell.

DING! DING! DING!

Mikey Unlikely steps out of his corner.

Maxx Mayhem does not.

Maxx remains crouched in his corner, gripping the middle rope with both hands.

Staring at Mikey.

Grinning.

Mikey takes another step forward.

Nothing.

Mikey looks toward the referee.

Mikey Unlikely: "Are we doing this?"

The referee looks at Maxx.

Referee: "Come on, Maxx!"

Maxx suddenly explodes out of the corner!

Mikey immediately braces himself—

Maxx runs right past him.

Hits the opposite ropes.

Comes back.

Runs past Mikey again.

Hits the ropes.

Back again.

Mikey turns each time, increasingly confused.

John Phillips: "What is he doing?"

Mark Bravo: "Building momentum?"

Maxx hits the ropes again.

This time Mikey anticipates him.

Dropkick!

Maxx runs directly into both boots!

He crashes to the canvas.

Mikey pops back to his feet.

He spreads his arms.

Mikey Unlikely: "Was that the plan?"

The Toronto crowd laughs.

Maxx sits upright.

He rubs his jaw.

Then starts laughing.

Mark Bravo: "Apparently."

Maxx springs back up.
This time the two men circle.
Mikey raises a hand.
Maxx raises his.
Collar-and-elbow tie-up—
No.
Maxx drops flat onto his stomach.
Mikey grabs nothing but air.
Maxx rolls underneath Mikey's legs.
Springs back up behind him.
And slaps Mikey on the back of the head.
Mikey freezes.
The crowd reacts.
Maxx immediately takes off running.
John Phillips: "Oh, that's a mistake."
Mikey gives chase.
Maxx circles the ring.
Mikey follows.
Maxx abruptly stops.
Mikey nearly runs into him.
Maxx drops down.
Drop toe hold!
Mikey goes face-first into the middle turnbuckle!
Maxx jumps onto his back.
Schoolboy!
ONE!
Mikey kicks out immediately.
Both men spring up.
Mikey swings.
Maxx ducks.
Maxx throws a wild right hand.
Mikey ducks.
Maxx spins all the way around.

Mikey catches him.

Waistlock!

TAKEDOWN!

Mikey rides Maxx to the canvas.

Front facelock.

Maxx tries rolling.

Mikey follows.

Maxx tries rolling the opposite direction.

Mikey follows again.

Maxx stops.

Looks toward the referee.

Maxx Mayhem: "HE'S FOLLOWING ME!"

Referee: "That's wrestling!"

Maxx Mayhem: "CREEPY!"

Mikey tightens the hold.

Mikey Unlikely: "You asked for this match!"

Maxx Mayhem: "I MAKE BAD DECISIONS!"

Mark Bravo: "Finally, something we can all agree on."

Maxx works himself back to one knee.

Mikey keeps the headlock secured.

Maxx reaches toward the ropes.

Too far.

So Maxx bites Mikey's forearm.

Mikey Unlikely: "OW! WHAT THE HELL?!"

Mikey immediately releases him.

The referee jumps between them.

Referee: "NO BITING!"

Maxx looks offended.

Maxx Mayhem: "I DIDN'T BITE HIM!"

Mikey holds up his arm.

Mikey Unlikely: "YOUR TEETH ARE STILL IN MY ARM!"

Maxx looks at Mikey's arm.

Then at the referee.

Maxx Mayhem: "Circumstantial."

John Phillips: "Circumstantial?!"

Mikey has heard enough.

He pushes past the referee.

Maxx swings.

Mikey blocks it.

RIGHT HAND!

Maxx staggers.

Another!

And another!

Mikey grabs Maxx by the wrist.

Irish whip!

Maxx hits the ropes.

Mikey catches him coming back—

POWERSLAM!

Mikey hooks the leg.

ONE!

TWO!

Maxx kicks out!

Mikey immediately transitions into a grounded headlock.

John Phillips: "And this is where the experience of Mikey Unlikely becomes important. Maxx wants chaos. Mikey needs to keep him grounded."

Mark Bravo: "You can't cause mayhem if you're lying on your face."

Maxx starts fighting up.

Mikey keeps pressure on him.

Maxx gets to his feet.

He drives an elbow into Mikey's stomach.

Another.

A third breaks the hold.

Maxx hits the ropes.

Mikey leapfrogs him.

Maxx rebounds.

Mikey drops down.

Maxx jumps over him.

Hits the opposite ropes.

Mikey rises—

Maxx stops dead.

Mikey waits.

Maxx waits.

They stare at each other.

Maxx slowly raises one finger.

Maxx Mayhem: "Hold on."

Maxx bends over.

Puts both hands on his knees.

Starts breathing heavily.

Maxx Mayhem: "Too much running."

Mikey stares at him.

Mark Bravo: "Four laps before the match may have been a tactical error."

Maxx holds up his finger again.

Maxx Mayhem: "Time out."

Mikey looks toward the crowd.

The crowd laughs.

Mikey looks back at Maxx.

Then shrugs.

SUPERKICK!

Maxx goes down!

John Phillips: "THERE ARE NO TIMEOUTS!"

Mikey drops into the cover.

ONE!

TWO!

MAXX KICKS OUT!

Mikey sits up.

He nods.

Enough games.

Mikey pulls Maxx back to his feet.

European uppercut!

Maxx backs into the corner.

Mikey follows.

Knife-edge chop!

SMACK!

Maxx grabs his chest.

Maxx Mayhem: "WHY?!"

Another chop!

SMACK!

Maxx Mayhem: "I THOUGHT WE WERE HAVING FUN!"

Mikey grabs his wrist.

Irish whip across the ring!

Maxx crashes into the opposite turnbuckles.

Mikey charges.

Maxx gets a boot up!

Mikey catches it.

Maxx hops on one leg.

He looks down at his trapped foot.

Then at Mikey.

He smiles.

ENZUIGIRI!

Mikey releases the leg and staggers sideways.

Maxx climbs onto the second rope.

He launches—

MISSILE DROPKICK!

Mikey goes down!

Maxx crawls into the cover.

ONE!

TWO!

Mikey kicks out!

Maxx sits up.

He looks at the referee.

Holds up three fingers.

The referee holds up two.

Maxx looks at his own fingers.

He puts one down.

Now he's holding up two.

He nods.

Maxx Mayhem: "Okay."

Mark Bravo: "Excellent officiating."

Maxx gets back to his feet.

Mikey is already rising.

Maxx charges.

Running knee!

Mikey ducks!

Maxx crashes knee-first into the turnbuckles!

He stumbles backward.

Mikey hooks him around the waist.

GERMAN SUPLEX!

Maxx lands hard!

Mikey maintains control.

He pulls Maxx up.

SECOND GERMAN SUPLEX!

Mikey releases this time.

Maxx rolls toward the ropes.

Mikey gets up.

He waits.

Maxx slowly pulls himself upright.

Mikey charges—

Maxx suddenly drops and pulls down the top rope!

Mikey's momentum carries him over!

He crashes to the floor!

John Phillips: "And there it is! Just when Mikey seems to have him figured out, Maxx does something completely different!"

Maxx looks down at Mikey.

Then toward the opposite ropes.

Then back at Mikey.

The grin returns.

Mark Bravo: "Oh no."

Maxx takes off.

He hits the opposite ropes.

Sprints back across the ring.

Mikey begins getting up on the floor.

Maxx launches himself between the ropes—

SUICIDE DIVE!

MAXX CRASHES INTO MIKEY!

Both men slam into the barricade!

The crowd erupts.

John Phillips: "MAYHEM TAKES FLIGHT!"

Both men are down.

Maxx slowly sits up.

He looks around.

Then begins laughing again.

Mikey remains against the barricade, clutching his ribs.

Maxx gets to his feet.

He grabs Mikey by the head.

And suddenly the silliness is gone.

Maxx drives Mikey face-first into the barricade!

Mikey staggers backward.

Maxx grabs him again.

He sends the WrestleZone Champion shoulder-first into the steel steps!

CRASH!

Mikey hits hard.

Maxx stands over him.

His head tilts slightly.

That strange smile creeps back across his face.

John Phillips: "This is what makes Maxx Mayhem dangerous. It's easy to laugh at him. It's easy to dismiss all the bizarre behavior."

Mark Bravo: "Until he starts hurting you."

Maxx reaches down.

He grabs Mikey by the hair.

Pulls him back toward the ring.

And rolls the WrestleZone Champion underneath the bottom rope.

Maxx climbs onto the apron.

Mikey slowly pushes himself onto his hands and knees.

Maxx watches him.

The grin disappears again.

He grips the top rope.

Waiting.

For the first time tonight...

Maxx Mayhem looks completely serious.

Maxx Mayhem grips the top rope from the apron.

Mikey Unlikely is on his hands and knees in the center of the ring, still trying to recover from being driven into the steps.

Maxx watches him.

Still.

Focused.

Then he springs up—

JUMPING SENTON OVER THE TOP ROPE!

MAXX CRASHES DOWN ACROSS MIKEY'S BACK!

Mikey is flattened!

John Phillips: "Good lord! Maxx Mayhem just crushed the WrestleZone Champion!"

Maxx rolls Mikey over.

Cover!

ONE!

TWO!

MIKEY KICKS OUT!

Maxx sits up.

He looks at the referee.

No argument this time.

He just smiles.

Then grabs Mikey by the head and pulls him upright.

SNAP DDT!

Mikey is planted.

Maxx covers again!

ONE!

TWO!

Mikey kicks out again!

Mark Bravo: "This is a very different Maxx Mayhem now."

John Phillips: "Exactly. The jokes are gone, and this is the version of Maxx that makes him dangerous."

Maxx gets back to his feet.

He drags Mikey toward the corner.

Whips him hard into the turnbuckles.

Mikey hits chest-first and staggers backward.

Maxx runs the ropes.

DISCUS ELBOW!

Mikey drops!

Maxx hooks both legs.

ONE!

TWO!

MIKEY GETS A SHOULDER UP!

Maxx pounds the canvas once.

Then twice.

Not angry.

Excited.

Maxx Mayhem: "Come on, movie star!"

Maxx pulls Mikey back up.

Mikey fires a forearm into his stomach.

Maxx responds with a clubbing shot across the back.

Mikey fires another.

Maxx clubs him again.

Mikey drops to one knee.

Maxx grabs the wrist.

Irish whip into the corner!

Maxx takes off after him!

John Phillips: "Crash Course!"

MAXX LEAPS—

FULL-SPEED CANNONBALL!

MIKEY MOVES!

Maxx crashes spine-first into the turnbuckles!

The ring shakes!

Mark Bravo: "He flattened himself!"

Maxx collapses out of the corner.

Mikey falls against the ropes, trying to catch his breath.

Both men are down.

The crowd begins clapping.

Mikey gets to his knees first.

Maxx follows.

They rise together.

Maxx swings wildly.

Mikey ducks.

SUPERKICK!

Maxx staggers backward.

Mikey fires another kick into the body.

Then a sharp forearm.

Another!

Maxx backs into the ropes.

Mikey whips him across.

Maxx rebounds—

SPINEBUSTER!

Mikey plants him!

Cover!

ONE!

TWO!

MAXX KICKS OUT!

Mikey gets right back up.

He looks toward the corner.

Then toward Maxx.

Mikey grabs him by the head.

Pulls him upright.

Maxx suddenly rakes Mikey across the eyes!

Referee: "HEY!"

Maxx Mayhem: "ACCIDENT!"

Mikey stumbles away.

Maxx charges.

SWINGING NECKBREAKER!

Mikey hits hard.

Maxx immediately grabs the leg.

ANKLE LOCK!

Mikey shouts as Maxx twists the ankle.

John Phillips: "Tapout Terror!"

Maxx leans back harder.

Maxx Mayhem: "SHHHHHHHHHH!"

Mikey looks back at him in disbelief.

Maxx Mayhem: "SHHHHHHHHHH!"

Maxx twists harder.

Mikey crawls toward the ropes.

John Phillips: "Mikey needs the ropes!"

Mikey reaches.

Almost.

Maxx pulls him back toward the center.

Mark Bravo: "Maxx Mayhem may actually submit Mikey Unlikely!"

Mikey rolls forward!

Maxx loses his grip and gets thrown toward the ropes.

He rebounds—

MIKEY CATCHES HIM WITH A SUPERKICK!

Maxx drops to his knees.

Mikey grabs him.

SNAP SUPLEX!

Mikey floats over.

ONE!

TWO!

MAXX KICKS OUT!

Mikey sits up.

He nods.

Now both men are breathing heavily.

Maxx rolls toward the apron.

Mikey follows.

Maxx slips through the ropes to the floor.

Mikey reaches through to grab him—

Maxx pulls Mikey throat-first across the middle rope!

Mikey recoils.

Maxx reaches beneath the ring.

John Phillips: "No, no, no."

He pulls out a steel chair.

The referee immediately slides halfway through the ropes.

Referee: "PUT IT DOWN!"

Maxx looks at the chair.

Then the referee.

Maxx Mayhem: "This?"

Referee: "YES, THAT!"

Maxx looks confused.

Maxx Mayhem: "I found it."

Referee: "PUT IT DOWN!"

Maxx sighs.

He drops the chair.

Then kicks it angrily underneath the ring.

Mark Bravo: "He's disappointed."

Maxx climbs back onto the apron.

Mikey is waiting.

RIGHT HAND!

Maxx nearly falls off.

Mikey grabs him through the ropes.

Maxx fires a shoulder into Mikey's stomach.

Another.

Mikey backs up.

Maxx slingshots himself over the ropes—

MIKEY CATCHES HIM IN MID-AIR!

POWERSLAM!

Maxx is driven into the canvas!

Mikey hooks the leg!

ONE!

TWO!

MAXX KICKS OUT!

Mikey can't believe it.

John Phillips: "Maxx Mayhem keeps finding ways to survive!"

Mikey gets back to his feet.

He grabs Maxx by the wrist.

Pulls him up.

Maxx fires a right hand.

Mikey answers.

Maxx!

Mikey!

Maxx!

Mikey!

The crowd starts reacting to each shot.

Maxx suddenly HEADBUTTS Mikey.

Mikey staggers.

Maxx laughs.

Mikey steps back in.

HEADBUTTS MAXX RIGHT BACK!

Maxx staggers now.

He looks offended.

Maxx Mayhem: "HEY!"

Mikey fires a forearm.

Maxx responds with one of his own.

Mikey hits another.

Maxx swings—

Mikey ducks.

Maxx turns around.

Mikey hooks him from behind.

GERMAN SUPLEX!

Maxx lands on his shoulders!

But somehow rolls through!

He's back on his feet!

Mikey turns—

DISCUS ELBOW!

MIKEY DROPS!

Maxx collapses onto him!

ONE!

TWO!

THR—

MIKEY KICKS OUT!

The crowd erupts.

Maxx sits upright.

The grin slowly fades.

For the first time, frustration starts to creep in.

He looks toward the corner.

Then back at Mikey.

Maxx gets to his feet.

He pulls Mikey up.

Irish whip into the corner!

Mikey crashes into the turnbuckles.

Maxx backs all the way across the ring.

John Phillips: "He's looking for Crash Course again!"

Maxx starts screaming.

Maxx Mayhem: "MAYHEMMMMMMMMM!"

He takes off.

Full speed.

Maxx leaps—

CRASH COURSE!

THE CANNONBALL CONNECTS!

MIKEY IS CRUSHED IN THE CORNER!

Maxx crashes down too!

John Phillips: "HE GOT ALL OF IT!"

Maxx crawls away from the corner.
He grabs Mikey by the ankle.
Drags the champion out toward the center.
Mikey looks completely dazed.
Maxx rolls toward the ropes.
Then suddenly slides out to the floor.
Mark Bravo: "Where is he going now?"
Maxx reaches under the ring again.
The referee immediately starts shouting.
Referee: "MAXX!"
Maxx ignores him.
He pulls something out.
A folding chair.
The crowd reacts.
John Phillips: "We just went through this!"
Maxx looks at the chair.
Then at Mikey.
Then at the referee.
His grin returns.
He slides the chair into the ring.
The referee immediately grabs it.
Maxx climbs onto the apron.
The official is yelling at him while trying to get the chair out of the ring.
Maxx looks past him.
Mikey is slowly getting back to his feet.
Maxx steps through the ropes.
The referee turns away for just a second to slide the chair out—
MAXX RUSHES MIKEY!
MIKEY DUCKS!
Maxx nearly crashes into the referee!
He stops just in time.
Maxx turns—
SUPERKICK!

Maxx drops to one knee!

Mikey takes a step back.

Measures him.

Charges—

RUNNING KNEE!

MAXX IS FLATTENED!

Mikey falls into the cover!

ONE!

TWO!

THR—

MAXX MAYHEM KICKS OUT!

The entire arena erupts.

Mikey rolls onto his back.

He stares up at the lights.

Maxx lies beside him.

Both men are spent.

John Phillips: "Mikey Unlikely just threw almost everything he had at Maxx Mayhem, and somehow Mayhem is still alive!"

Mark Bravo: "He's too crazy to know when he's beaten."

Mikey slowly turns his head.

Looks at Maxx.

Then starts pulling himself back to his feet.

Mikey Unlikely slowly gets back to his feet.

Across from him, Maxx Mayhem rolls onto his stomach.

Then onto his hands and knees.

Mikey watches him.

Waits.

Maxx pushes himself upright.

Still smiling.

Still somehow enjoying this.

John Phillips: "Both men have absorbed a lot here, but Mikey Unlikely is still the fresher of the two."

Mark Bravo: "Which means Maxx is probably about to do something incredibly stupid."

Maxx reaches his feet.

Mikey charges.

FOREARM!

Maxx answers with one of his own.

Mikey fires another.

Maxx fires back.

Mikey.

Maxx.

Mikey finally gets the better of it with a sharp knee to the stomach.

Maxx doubles over.

Mikey grabs the head.

SNAP DDT!

Maxx is planted.

Mikey rolls him over.

ONE!

TWO!

MAXX KICKS OUT!

Mikey immediately sits up.

He glances toward the referee.

Then back at Maxx.

No frustration.

Just calculation.

John Phillips: "Mikey is starting to piece this together. He knows Maxx is not going away easily."

Mikey pulls Maxx upright.

Whips him across the ring.

Maxx rebounds.

Mikey lowers his shoulder.

Maxx leapfrogs him!

Mikey turns.

Maxx spins—

DISCUS ELBOW!

Mikey ducks!

Maxx keeps spinning.

He stops facing the wrong direction.

Mikey looks at him.

Maxx looks over his shoulder.

Maxx Mayhem: "Aw, shit."

Mikey grabs him from behind.

BACKDROP DRIVER!

Maxx lands high on his shoulders!

Mikey maintains control.

Pulls him back up.

SECOND BACKDROP DRIVER!

Maxx folds up again!

Mikey finally releases.

Maxx rolls toward the corner.

Mark Bravo: "This is where Mikey's experience is taking over."

Mikey waits for Maxx to pull himself upright.

Maxx reaches the turnbuckles.

Uses them to stand.

Mikey charges—

CORNER FOREARM!

Maxx gets rocked.

Mikey hooks the waist.

He pulls Maxx out of the corner.

GERMAN SUPLEX!

Maxx lands hard!

Mikey bridges!

ONE!

TWO!

MAXX KICKS OUT!

Mikey rolls through to his feet.

Maxx stays down.

Mikey looks toward the crowd.

Then signals that he's ready to finish it.

John Phillips: "Mikey may have him now."

Mikey backs into the corner.

He lowers himself.

Waits.

Maxx slowly gets to one knee.

Mikey charges—

RUNNING KNEE!

MAXX MOVES!

Mikey crashes knee-first into the turnbuckles!

He recoils in pain.

Maxx is suddenly behind him.

SWINGING NECKBREAKER!

Mikey goes down!

Maxx hooks the leg!

ONE!

TWO!

MIKEY KICKS OUT!

Maxx rolls away.

He immediately exits the ring.

John Phillips: "Where is he going now?"

Maxx reaches under the apron.

Pulls out another chair.

The referee sees it.

Referee: "NO!"

Maxx ignores him.

He holds the chair up.

Looks at Mikey.

Then looks at the referee.

He slides it into the ring.

The referee immediately moves to retrieve it.

Mark Bravo: "He's doing the exact same thing again."

Maxx climbs onto the apron.

The referee picks the chair up.

Starts carrying it toward the ropes.

Maxx steps through.

Mikey is getting up.

Maxx reaches into the back of his tights.

Pulls out—

A second, much smaller folding chair.

John Phillips: "WHERE DID HE GET THAT?!"

Maxx raises it.

Mikey turns.

And Maxx swings—

MIKEY SUPERKICKS THE CHAIR INTO MAXX'S FACE!

The tiny chair goes flying.

Maxx drops flat.

Mark Bravo: "I have so many questions."

The referee turns around.

Sees Maxx down.

Sees the tiny chair.

Looks at Mikey.

Mikey raises both hands.

Mikey Unlikely: "Not mine."

The referee looks at Maxx.

Then at the tiny chair.

He kicks it out of the ring too.

Mikey doesn't waste the opening.

He grabs Maxx.

Pulls him up.

Hooks the head.

SPIKE DDT!

Maxx is driven into the canvas!

Mikey rolls him over.

ONE!

TWO!

MAXX KICKS OUT!

Mikey exhales sharply.

He gets up again.

Looks toward the corner.

Maxx is barely moving.

Mikey backs up.

Waits.

Maxx pushes himself upright.

One knee.

Then both feet.

Mikey charges—

RUNNING KNEE!

MAXX CATCHES HIM!

Maxx grabs Mikey around the waist.

He lifts—

BELLY-TO-BELLY SUPLEX!

Mikey crashes across the ring.

Maxx pops back up.

He screams.

Maxx Mayhem: "MAYHEMMMM!"

He hits the ropes.

Mikey gets to his knees.

Maxx charges—

DISCUS ELBOW!

MIKEY DROPS!

Maxx hooks both legs!

ONE!

TWO!

THR—

MIKEY GETS A SHOULDER UP!

The crowd erupts.

Maxx sits up.

He looks at Mikey.

For once, no joke.

No laugh.

No weird face.

Just frustration.

Maxx grabs Mikey by the wrist.
Pulls him up.
Kick to the stomach.
He hooks Mikey for the brainbuster.
John Phillips: "Maxximum Carnage!"
Maxx tries to lift.
Mikey blocks.
Maxx tries again.
Mikey blocks again.
Mikey lifts Maxx instead!
VERTICAL SUPLEX!
Maxx crashes down.
Mikey gets back up.
Maxx does too.
They meet in the center.
Mikey throws a forearm.
Maxx answers.
Mikey.
Maxx.
Mikey rocks him with a third.
Maxx responds with a headbutt.
Both men stagger.
Mikey comes back first.
SUPERKICK!
Maxx drops to one knee.
Mikey hits the ropes.
RUNNING KNEE!
THIS ONE CONNECTS!
Maxx falls flat!
John Phillips: "That may do it!"
Mikey drops into the cover.
ONE!
TWO!

THR—

MAXX GETS A FOOT ON THE ROPE!

The referee sees it at the absolute last second.

John Phillips: "NO! Maxx survives again!"

Mikey sits up.

He stares toward the ropes.

Then at Maxx.

For the first time, the champion looks genuinely annoyed.

Mikey gets back to his feet.

He pulls Maxx up by the head.

Maxx is barely standing.

Mikey whispers something in his ear.

Mikey Unlikely: "Enough."

Mikey kicks Maxx in the stomach.

He hooks both arms.

Maxx struggles.

Mikey maintains control.

He lifts—

MIKEY MONEYMAKER!

MAXX IS DRIVEN INTO THE CANVAS!

Mikey immediately hooks the leg.

ONE!

TWO!

THREE!

DING! DING! DING!

The Toronto crowd erupts.

John Phillips: "MIKEY UNLIKELY GETS IT DONE!"

Mark Bravo: "And it took damn near everything he had!"

Mikey rolls off Maxx and remains on his back for a second.

Breathing heavily.

Exhausted.

Then slowly sits up.

The referee retrieves the WrestleZone Championship.

Mikey gets to his knees as the title is handed back to him.

He looks down at it.

Then over at Maxx Mayhem.

Maxx is still flat on his back.

Mikey shakes his head.

Half amused.

Half relieved.

Ring Announcer: "Here is your winner... the WrestleZone Champion... MIKEY... UNLIKELY!"

Mikey gets to his feet.

He raises the WrestleZone Championship high.

John Phillips: "Maxx Mayhem may not have walked out with a win, but he pushed Mikey Unlikely to the absolute limit."

Mark Bravo: "Which is a sentence I never expected to say after watching the man pull a tiny chair out of his pants."

Mikey climbs the second rope and raises the championship again.

The crowd cheers.

Behind him, Maxx Mayhem slowly begins to sit up.

He looks toward Mikey.

Then starts laughing.

Mikey hears him.

He looks over his shoulder.

Maxx gives him a weak thumbs-up.

Mikey just shakes his head and smiles.

The WrestleZone Champion survives the Mayhem.

End of a Chapter

Segment

The camera cuts backstage.

No hallway chaos.

No shouting.

No celebration.

Just silence.

Chris Ross sits on a bench inside his locker room.

The newly reclaimed UTA Championship rests across his lap.

His hands sit on either side of it.

Not gripping it tightly.

Not raising it.

Just feeling the weight.

But Ross isn't looking at the championship.

His eyes are fixed on something else.

A photograph.

Or what remains of one.

The picture of Lauran.

Ripped.

Torn apart by Maxwell Jett during a rivalry that became about far more than championship gold.

Ross holds the damaged photograph carefully between his fingers.

The same hands that have bloodied men.

The same hands that have carried screwdrivers, chairs, and championships.

Right now, they treat a torn piece of paper like it could break again.

Beside him sits Valentina Blaze.

Close.

Not crowding him.

Not trying to force him to speak.

Just there.

For several seconds, neither says anything.

Valentina looks down at the UTA Championship.

Then at the photograph.

Finally, she looks at Chris.

Valentina Blaze: "You did it."

Ross doesn't look up.

His thumb slowly moves across the torn edge of the photograph.

Chris Ross: "Yeah."

That's all.

Valentina smiles softly.

Valentina Blaze: "No."

Ross finally shifts his eyes toward her.

Valentina Blaze: "Don't give me 'yeah.'"

Her smile grows just a little.

Valentina Blaze: "You did it, Chris."

She taps the faceplate of the championship sitting across his legs.

Valentina Blaze: "You're UTA Champion again."

Ross looks down at the belt.

His expression barely moves.

But his breathing does.

A little deeper.

A little heavier.

Chris Ross: "Took long enough."

Valentina lets out a small laugh.

Valentina Blaze: "There he is."

Ross glances at her.

Valentina Blaze: "Can't just have a moment, can you?"

Chris Ross: "Not really my thing."

Valentina looks back at the photograph.

Her expression softens again.

Valentina Blaze: "I know what that meant."

Ross' jaw tightens slightly.

He looks back down.

Valentina Blaze: "What Maxwell did."

No response.

Valentina Blaze: "I know why that hurt more than anything he could've done to you in that ring."

Ross swallows.

Still staring at the picture.

Chris Ross: "He didn't know her."

His voice is low.

Chris Ross: "Didn't know anything about her."

Chris Ross: "Didn't know what she meant."

His fingers tighten slightly around the edge of the photograph.

Chris Ross: "He just knew it would piss me off."

Valentina nods.

Valentina Blaze: "And it did."

Ross gives her a look.

Valentina Blaze: "I'm not saying he was right."

She shifts closer.

Valentina Blaze: "I'm saying he knew exactly where to cut."

Ross looks away.

For a moment, that monster everyone sees disappears.

What's underneath is just a man staring at something he lost a long time ago.

Chris Ross: "People keep thinkin' they can use dead people against me."

Valentina's expression tightens.

Chris Ross: "Like they're props."

Chris Ross: "Like they're stories."

Chris Ross: "Like because they're gone, they don't matter anymore."

Valentina looks at him carefully.

Valentina Blaze: "She matters."

Ross says nothing.

Valentina Blaze: "She'll always matter."

She reaches over and gently rests a hand against his forearm.

Valentina Blaze: "But Maxwell doesn't get to own that anymore."

Ross looks at her.

Valentina Blaze: "He doesn't get to live in your head because he tore a picture."

Valentina Blaze: "He doesn't get to decide what her memory means."

Valentina Blaze: "And he sure as hell doesn't get to decide what happens next."

Valentina taps the championship again.

Valentina Blaze: "You decided that."

Ross looks down at the belt.

Valentina Blaze: "Tonight."

The room falls quiet again.

Ross stares at the championship.

Then the picture.

Then back at the championship.

Chris Ross: "Justice."

Valentina hears it.

Valentina Blaze: "Yeah."

Ross gives the smallest nod.

Chris Ross: "Finally."

Valentina smiles.

Valentina Blaze: "Finally."

She leans into him now.

Her shoulder against his.

Chris doesn't move away.

He doesn't immediately move closer either.

But after a second...

His shoulder relaxes against hers.

Valentina Blaze: "I'm proud of you."

Ross' eyes immediately shift away.

Like somehow that sentence is harder for him to handle than anything Maxwell Jett ever threw at him.

Chris Ross: "Don't start."

Valentina smiles wider.

Valentina Blaze: "I'm serious."

Chris Ross: "I know."

Valentina Blaze: "You should be proud of yourself too."

Ross exhales through his nose.

Chris Ross: "Let's not get carried away."

Valentina laughs softly.

Valentina Blaze: "Okay, tough guy."

She looks down at the picture again.

Valentina Blaze: "What are you gonna do with it?"

Ross looks at the torn photograph.

Long pause.

Chris Ross: "Keep it."

Valentina nods.

Chris Ross: "I'm not letting him be the last person who touched it."

That lands.

Valentina doesn't try to answer immediately.

Instead, she gently squeezes his arm.

Valentina Blaze: "Then keep it."

Ross carefully places the torn photograph inside his bag.

Not thrown in.

Not shoved away.

Placed.

Protected.

He closes the zipper.

Then his hands return to the UTA Championship.

This time, Ross actually lifts it.

Just slightly.

He stares at the faceplate.

Valentina Blaze: "That chapter's over."

Ross doesn't answer immediately.

Valentina Blaze: "Maxwell."

Valentina Blaze: "The picture."

Valentina Blaze: "All of it."

Ross' thumb moves slowly across the UTA logo.

Valentina Blaze: "You got back what you came for."

Ross gives another small nod.

Chris Ross: "Yeah."

Valentina raises an eyebrow.

Valentina Blaze: "There it is again."

Ross finally looks at her.

And there...

For the briefest second...

Is almost a smile.

Almost.

Chris Ross: "I'm champion."

Valentina beams.

Valentina Blaze: "You're damn right you are."

She leans over and kisses him on the cheek.

Ross immediately looks toward the camera.

The expression says everything.

Chris Ross: "You better not put that shit in the highlight package."

Valentina laughs.

Valentina Blaze: "Oh, that's absolutely going in."

Ross shakes his head.

But that almost-smile comes back.

He looks down at the UTA Championship again.

Then rests it firmly across his shoulder.

The Reaper is champion again.

The photograph is safe.

Maxwell Jett no longer owns the ending.

And beside Chris Ross, Valentina Blaze looks at him with nothing but pride.

For once...

Chris Ross looks almost at peace.

Almost.

Congratulations

Segment

We cut to the office of UTA General Manager Scott Stevens.

Stevens is seated behind his desk.

For perhaps the first time tonight, things appear relatively calm.

That lasts approximately three seconds.

BANG!

The office door flies open!

Maxwell Jett: "THIS IS BULLSHIT!"

Maxwell Jett storms into the office.

Still in his ring gear.

Still sweaty from the Triple Threat Match earlier tonight.

And, most importantly...

No longer carrying the UTA Championship.

Jacoby Jacobs and Darrian Darington follow behind him.

First Class has arrived.

Scott Stevens slowly looks up from his desk.

He sees Maxwell.

He sees Jacoby.

He sees Darrian.

Then he looks back down at whatever he was working on.

Scott Stevens: "No."

Maxwell stops.

Maxwell Jett: "Excuse me?"

Scott Stevens: "Whatever you're about to say."

Scott looks back up.

Scott Stevens: "No."

Maxwell Jett: "Oh, you're gonna listen to what I have to say, Scott, because what happened out there was completely fucking unacceptable!"

Maxwell marches toward the desk.

Maxwell Jett: "You forced me to defend the UTA Championship hours before I was scheduled to compete!"

Scott blinks.

Maxwell Jett: "I had no time to properly prepare!"

Scott's eyebrows rise.

Maxwell Jett: "No time to warm up!"

Scott leans back.

Maxwell Jett: "No time to mentally prepare myself for a Triple Threat Match against two psychopaths!"

Scott stares at him.

Maxwell throws his arms out.

Maxwell Jett: "And now because of your gross incompetence, Chris Ross is walking around with MY championship!"

Silence.

Scott looks toward Jacoby.

Then Darrian.

Then back at Maxwell.

Scott Stevens: "Are you serious?"

Maxwell Jett: "Do I look like I'm joking?"

Scott Stevens: "You want to know what I think happened?"

Maxwell Jett: "I just told you what happened!"

Scott Stevens: "No. You told me what happened in the alternate universe currently existing inside your head."

Maxwell's eyes narrow.

Scott Stevens: "Here's what actually happened."

Scott stands.

Scott Stevens: "You walked into that ring."

He points at Maxwell.

Scott Stevens: "You called out Chris Ross."

Another finger.

Scott Stevens: "You called out Mike Best."

Another.

Scott Stevens: "You demanded that I move the UTA Championship Match to the beginning of the show."

Maxwell Jett: "Because—"

Scott Stevens: "You threatened to leave the building if I didn't!"

Maxwell stops.

Scott Stevens: "You had Jacoby read me some bullshit clause from a contract."

Scott looks at Jacoby.

Scott Stevens: "That ChatGPT apparently wrote."

Jacoby looks down.

Jacoby Jacobs: "In fairness, it sounded pretty official."

Maxwell whips around.

Maxwell Jett: "STOP HELPING!"

Jacoby Jacobs: "Right."

Jacoby takes a step backward.

Scott turns back toward Maxwell.

Scott Stevens: "And when your little plan didn't work because Chris Ross actually showed up..."

Scott smiles.

Scott Stevens: "...you panicked."

Maxwell Jett: "I did not panic."

Scott Stevens: "You told him you weren't ready."

Maxwell Jett: "Strategic recalibration."

Scott Stevens: "Then Mike Best showed up."

Maxwell Jett: "Also unexpected."

Scott Stevens: "And suddenly the man who demanded to defend his championship right then and there didn't want to defend his championship right then and there."

Maxwell Jett: "Circumstances changed."

Scott Stevens: "No, Maxwell."

Scott steps around his desk.

Scott Stevens: "Your plan blew up in your face."

Maxwell's jaw tightens.

Scott Stevens: "You thought you'd catch Mike and Chris unprepared."

Scott Stevens: "You thought neither one of them would be ready to wrestle."

Scott Stevens: "You thought you'd stand in that ring, make a big show out of being the champion, and when they couldn't answer your challenge, you'd spend the rest of the night telling everybody how they were afraid of Maxwell Jett."

Maxwell says nothing.

Which says plenty.

Scott Stevens: "Except Chris Ross called your bluff."

Beat.

Scott Stevens: "Then Mike Best called it too."

Scott moves closer.

Scott Stevens: "And you lost."

Maxwell's face twists.

Maxwell Jett: "I wasn't even pinned!"

Scott pauses.

He stares at Maxwell.

Scott Stevens: "Yes, you were."

Jacoby closes his eyes.

Darrian slowly turns his head away.

Maxwell realizes what he just said.

Maxwell Jett: "That's not what I meant."

Scott Stevens: "Chris Ross pinned you."

Maxwell Jett: "I KNOW THAT!"

Scott Stevens: "One."

Scott raises a finger.

Scott Stevens: "Two."

A second.

Scott Stevens: "Three."

Third finger.

Scott Stevens: "Right in the middle of the ring."

Maxwell Jett: "I WAS THERE, SCOTT!"

Scott Stevens: "Then why the hell are you in my office asking me what happened?"

Maxwell slams both hands onto Stevens' desk.

Maxwell Jett: "Because I want my championship back!"

Scott looks down at Maxwell's hands.

Then slowly looks back up.

Scott Stevens: "That's not my championship."

Beat.

Scott Stevens: "That's not your championship."

Another beat.

Scott Stevens: "It's Chris Ross' championship."

Maxwell's nostrils flare.

Scott Stevens: "Because he beat you for it."

Maxwell Jett: "I want my rematch."

Scott Stevens: "Of course you do."

Maxwell Jett: "Tonight."

Scott actually laughs.

Scott Stevens: "No."

Maxwell Jett: "I have a contractual—"

Scott Stevens: "Don't."

Scott points at Jacoby.

Scott Stevens: "And don't you dare pull those papers out again."

Jacoby, who had actually begun reaching behind his back, immediately stops.

Jacoby Jacobs: "Wasn't gonna."

Scott Stevens: "Maxwell, listen carefully."

Scott steps directly in front of the former champion.

Scott Stevens: "For weeks, you have complained about Chris Ross."

Scott Stevens: "You've complained about Mike Best."

Scott Stevens: "You've complained about me."

Scott Stevens: "You've complained that everybody was paying attention to everyone except Maxwell Jett."

Scott gestures toward the empty space where the UTA Championship normally sits around Maxwell's waist.

Scott Stevens: "Well, tonight everybody was paying attention to you."

Maxwell stares daggers through him.

Scott Stevens: "You got exactly what you asked for."

Beat.

Scott Stevens: "You wanted the match."

Scott Stevens: "You wanted it early."

Scott Stevens: "You wanted Chris Ross."

Scott Stevens: "You wanted Mike Best."

Scott Stevens: "You wanted the spotlight."

Scott leans forward.

Scott Stevens: "Congratulations."

He gives Maxwell a cold smile.

Scott Stevens: "You got all of it."

Maxwell's face reddens.

Scott Stevens: "And then Chris Ross took your championship."

Silence.

Maxwell looks ready to explode.

Maxwell Jett: "You're enjoying this."

Scott Stevens: "A little."

Jacoby coughs into his fist to hide a laugh.

Maxwell spins toward him.

Maxwell Jett: "Is something funny?!"

Jacoby Jacobs: "Allergies."

Maxwell turns back to Scott.

Maxwell Jett: "This isn't over."

Scott Stevens: "Probably not."

Maxwell Jett: "I am Maxwell Jett."

Scott Stevens: "I'm aware."

Maxwell Jett: "I made history at All or Nothing."

Scott Stevens: "You did."

Maxwell Jett: "I am the biggest star in this company."

Scott Stevens: "Debatable."

Maxwell Jett: "And I will be UTA Champion again."

Scott shrugs.

Scott Stevens: "Then earn it."

That one hits Maxwell harder than anything else.

His eyes narrow.

His jaw clenches.

He takes one long look at Stevens.

Then turns sharply.

Maxwell Jett: "We're leaving."

First Class follows him toward the door.

Jacoby reaches it last.

Scott Stevens: "Jacoby."

Jacoby stops.

Slowly turns around.

Scott Stevens: "Next time you need legal advice..."

Scott points toward the papers Jacoby is still carrying.

Scott Stevens: "...hire a lawyer."

Jacoby looks down at the papers.

Jacoby Jacobs: "Yeah."

He sighs.

Jacoby Jacobs: "Probably fair."

Maxwell Jett: "JACOBY!"

Jacoby Jacobs: "COMING!"

Jacoby rushes out.

The door slams behind First Class.

Scott stands alone in his office.

He looks at the closed door.

Shakes his head.

Scott Stevens: "ChatGPT..."

Scott sits back down.

Scott Stevens: "Fucking idiot."

We fade out.

Emily Hightower vs Sol Azteca

Match

The screen fills with the One Last Stop match graphic.

UTA WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP

EMILY HIGHTOWER vs. SOL AZTECA

The crowd is already loud before the graphic fades.

John Phillips: "This is the match Sol Azteca has been chasing. Week after week, Emily Hightower moved the line. One win was not enough. Two wins were not enough. But finally, Emily walked into Sol's locker room and told her she could have the match at One Last Stop."

Mark Bravo: "But John, I have not liked the way Emily talked about this from the moment she agreed to it. She kept saying Sol gets the match. Sol gets the bell. Sol gets the moment. She never sounded like a champion eager to defend anything."

John Phillips: "Either way, the UTA Women's Championship is on the line tonight. Sol Azteca has her chance."

The arena lights drop.

A harsh white light cuts across the stage.

Then rusted red.

Emily Hightower's music hits.

The boos come immediately.

Emily Hightower steps through the curtain with the UTA Women's Championship over her shoulder and the UTA Hardcore Championship around her waist.

She does not rush.

She does not pose.

She simply stands at the top of the ramp and looks down toward the ring like she owns the entire building.

David Hightower steps out beside her.

Buck follows on one side.

Dakota follows on the other.

The Hightower family stands together on the stage while the boos pour over them.

Ring Announcer: "The following contest is scheduled for one fall, and it is for the UTA Women's Championship! Introducing first, accompanied by the Hightower family... she is the UTA Hardcore Champion and the reigning, defending UTA Women's Champion... EMILY HIGHTOWER!"

Emily lifts the Women's Championship with one hand.

The boos grow louder.

John Phillips: "Emily Hightower has called Sol charity. She has called her punishment. She has called her a problem. Tonight, she is supposed to finally stand across from her with the Women's Championship at stake."

Mark Bravo: "Supposed to. That is the phrase that worries me."

Emily starts down the ramp.

David walks beside her, calm as ever.

Buck keeps his eyes on the ring.

Dakota watches the crowd more than Sol's entrance point, measuring the room in silence.

Emily reaches ringside and climbs the steel steps.

She pauses on the apron, looking out at the crowd with open contempt, then steps through the ropes.

The referee moves toward her and asks for the Women's Championship.

Emily looks at him.

Then at the title.

Then finally hands it over.

The referee raises it high.

The crowd reacts.

John Phillips: "That is what this is all about. The UTA Women's Championship."

Mark Bravo: "For Sol, yes. For Emily? I think this is about control."

Emily backs into her corner.

David, Buck, and Dakota remain at ringside near the floor, watching.

The lights shift.

Gold burns across the stage.

The Aztec sun appears on the video wall.

The crowd comes alive.

Sol Azteca's instrumental music hits, and the reaction surges through the building.

Sol steps through the curtain, mask bright beneath the lights, shoulders loose, eyes locked on the ring.

She does not look overwhelmed.

She does not look grateful.

She looks ready.

Ring Announcer: "And her challenger... from Puebla, Mexico... she is The Aztec Sun... SOL AZTECA!"

The crowd erupts.

Sol starts down the ramp.

She does not run.

She does not take her eyes off Emily.

John Phillips: "Look at Sol Azteca. This is not someone hoping she belongs. This is someone who believes she forced this moment into existence."

Mark Bravo: "And she did. Emily laughed at her. Emily dismissed her. Emily tried to bury her under every excuse she could find. Sol kept winning. Sol kept standing. Sol got here."

Sol reaches ringside.

Buck shifts slightly.

Sol stops in front of him.

The crowd buzzes.

Buck smirks.

Sol looks past him, directly at Emily.

Then she steps around him and climbs onto the apron.

Emily watches from the corner, expression unreadable.

Sol steps through the ropes.

The two women stand across from each other.

The referee brings them to the center of the ring.

Emily carries herself like this is beneath her.

Sol stands still, fists loose at her sides.

The referee holds the Women's Championship between them.

Referee: "This is for the UTA Women's Championship. I want a clean match. Listen to my commands."

Emily barely looks at him.

Sol does.

The referee turns to Emily.

Referee: "Champion, are you ready?"

Emily smiles faintly.

Emily Hightower: "Of course."

The referee turns to Sol.

Referee: "Challenger, are you ready?"

Sol nods.

Sol Azteca: "Yes."

The referee hands the championship to the timekeeper, then backs away.

The crowd rises.

Emily and Sol remain in the center of the ring.

For one moment, after weeks of insults, excuses, chains, punishment, and denial, they are finally standing where Sol wanted them.

No hallway.

No stage.

No family between them.

Bell to bell.

John Phillips: "Here we go. Emily Hightower. Sol Azteca. UTA Women's Championship on the line."

Mark Bravo: "This has been building for weeks. Now we find out what happens when there is nowhere left for Emily to move the line."

The referee calls for the bell.

DING! DING! DING!

Sol steps forward.

Emily steps back.

Then Emily turns.

And climbs through the ropes.

The crowd reacts in confusion first.

Then the boos begin.

Sol stops in the center of the ring.

Emily drops to the floor outside.

David is already there.

Buck moves toward her.

Dakota steps in beside them.

Emily does not look panicked.

She does not look injured.

She does not look conflicted.

She simply walks straight to the timekeeper's table.

John Phillips: "Wait a minute. What is Emily doing?"

Mark Bravo: "She is leaving."

The referee leans through the ropes.

Referee: "Emily, get back in the ring!"

Emily ignores him.

She reaches the timekeeper's table and snatches the UTA Women's Championship before anyone can stop her.

The crowd erupts in boos.

Sol moves to the ropes.

Sol Azteca: "Emily!"

Emily turns back toward the ring with the championship in her hand.

The referee has no choice.

Referee: "One!"

Emily lifts the Women's Championship onto her shoulder, right where she believes it belongs.

Then she looks directly at Sol.

She raises her free hand.

And flips her off.

The crowd explodes.

Sol's jaw tightens.

Emily turns slightly toward the fans, hearing every boo raining down on her.

Then she flips them off too.

The boos become deafening.

John Phillips: "Emily Hightower just walked out of the ring, grabbed her championship, and gave that gesture to Sol Azteca and this entire crowd!"

Mark Bravo: "She planned this. She planned every second of it."

Referee: "Two!"

Sol steps through the ropes like she might follow.

David moves slightly, placing himself between Sol and Emily's path.

Buck steps beside him.

Dakota watches from just behind them.

Sol stops on the apron.

Not because she is afraid.

Because she understands the trap.

If she leaves the ring and chases Emily, the match becomes chaos.

The title stays with Emily anyway.

The Hightowers get exactly what they want.

Referee: "Three!"

Emily walks backward up the ramp now, the Women's Championship still over her shoulder.

Sol grips the top rope.

Sol Azteca: "Come back."

Emily smiles.

Referee: "Four!"

Emily lifts a microphone that David has handed her.

She looks into the ring.

Emily Hightower: "I told you I would give you the match."

Sol's eyes burn through her from the ring.

Emily Hightower: "I never said I would wrestle in it."

The boos become even louder.

John Phillips: "Oh, come on!"

Mark Bravo: "That is exactly what she meant. That is what she has been saying this whole time."

Referee: "Five!"

Emily lowers the microphone, then raises the Women's Championship slightly, making sure Sol sees it.

Referee: "Six!"

Sol moves toward the ropes again, but the referee steps between her and the exit.

Referee: "Sol, stay back."

Sol looks like she might go through him.

Then she stops.

Her eyes are locked on Emily.

Referee: "Seven!"

Emily keeps backing up the ramp.

David walks beside her.

Buck grins.

Dakota watches Sol from behind them, quiet as ever.

Referee: "Eight!"

The crowd chants louder.

Crowd: "COWARD! COWARD! COWARD!"

Emily hears it.

She stops near the top of the ramp, turns back toward the ring, and raises her middle finger again.

This time, it is for everyone.

Sol.

The crowd.

The entire building.

Referee: "Nine!"

Emily takes one final step backward.

Referee: "Ten!"

DING! DING! DING!

The crowd erupts in anger.

Emily turns and walks through the curtain with the UTA Women's Championship still over her shoulder.

Ring Announcer: "Here is your winner as a result of a count-out... SOL AZTECA!"

The crowd cheers Sol's name for half a second, but the anger remains underneath it.

The ring announcer continues.

Ring Announcer: "However, due to the championship not changing hands by count-out... still UTA Women's Champion... EMILY HIGHTOWER!"

The boos swallow the building.

Sol stands in the ring, breathing hard through her nose.

She won.

But not the way she came for.

Not the way the crowd came to see.

Not the way Emily made everyone believe she had agreed to.

John Phillips: "Sol Azteca wins the match, but Emily Hightower keeps the championship by walking out."

Mark Bravo: "And Emily gets to say she kept her word. That is the disgusting part. She gave Sol the match. She gave her the bell. Then she grabbed the title and left."

Sol turns toward the ramp.

Emily is gone.

The championship is gone.

The fight is gone.

But the insult is still hanging in the air.

The crowd starts chanting again.

Crowd: "COWARD! COWARD! COWARD!"

Sol does not join them.

She walks to the ropes and leans over the top rope, staring at the empty stage.

Her hand slowly rises.

One finger.

Not two.

One.

John Phillips: "Sol still has one finger raised."

Mark Bravo: "Because to Sol, this did not erase the last excuse. This became the last excuse."

Sol keeps staring toward the stage.

Then she takes the microphone from the ring announcer.

The crowd quiets enough to hear her.

Sol Azteca: "Emily."

The name lands sharp.

Sol Azteca: "You gave me a match."

A pause.

Sol Azteca: "Now give me a fight."

The crowd erupts.

Sol lowers the microphone.

She keeps one finger raised toward the stage.

John Phillips: "Sol Azteca won by count-out, but Emily Hightower is still the UTA Women's Champion."

Mark Bravo: "And now Emily has done something worse than deny Sol. She proved Sol right in front of everyone."

The final shot holds on Sol Azteca in the ring, one finger raised toward the empty entrance.

Emily kept the title.

But she walked away from the fight.

By Any Means

Segment

We cut backstage to The Empire locker room.

Marie Van Claudio is seated on the bench, already partially dressed for competition later tonight.

Amy Harrison sits across from her, one leg crossed over the other.

Valkyrie Knoxx stands nearby.

Marie has been quiet.

Unusually quiet.

Amy finally breaks the silence.

Amy Harrison: "You're thinking too much."

Marie looks up.

Marie Van Claudio: "I'm thinking exactly as much as I need to."

Amy raises an eyebrow.

Marie Van Claudio: "Susanita thinks she has me figured out."

Marie gets to her feet.

Marie Van Claudio: "She thinks because Scott Stevens barred both of you from ringside, suddenly she has what she wants."

Marie Van Claudio: "Me."

Marie points toward herself.

Marie Van Claudio: "Alone."

Amy smirks.

Amy Harrison: "Well, she did spend half the tour crying about it."

Valkyrie gives a small laugh.

Marie doesn't.

Marie Van Claudio: "She thinks I'm afraid of her."

That wipes a little of the amusement from Amy's face.

Marie Van Claudio: "That's what she said in Brazil."

Marie Van Claudio: "That I brought The Empire because I'm afraid."

Marie shakes her head.

Marie Van Claudio: "No."

Marie Van Claudio: "I brought The Empire because I could."

Amy's smile returns.

Marie Van Claudio: "Because she needed to understand that when I walked away from her, I wasn't losing something."

Marie looks toward Amy.

Then Valkyrie.

Marie Van Claudio: "I was choosing something better."

Amy Harrison: "Long live The Empire."

Valkyrie Knoxx: "Long live The Empire."

Marie lets those words sit for a moment.

Marie Van Claudio: "But tonight is different."

She steps closer to them.

Marie Van Claudio: "Tonight, I need to beat her."

Amy studies Marie.

Marie Van Claudio: "Not embarrass her."

Marie Van Claudio: "Not leave her laying before the bell."

Marie Van Claudio: "Not take another match away from her."

Marie shakes her head.

Marie Van Claudio: "I need the bell to ring."

Marie Van Claudio: "And when it rings again, Susanita Ybanez needs to have lost."

Amy uncrosses her legs and leans forward.

Amy Harrison: "Then beat her."

Marie looks directly at her.

Marie Van Claudio: "I will."

A beat.

Marie Van Claudio: "By any means necessary."

Amy's lips curl upward.

That language she understands.

Amy Harrison: "There she is."

Marie turns toward Valkyrie.

Marie Van Claudio: "Scott said neither of you can come to ringside."

Valkyrie Knoxx: "Scott says a lot of things."

Marie Van Claudio: "And this time, we're going to listen."

Valkyrie looks almost disappointed.

Marie Van Claudio: "I don't want Susanita having that excuse."

Marie Van Claudio: "I don't want her saying Amy saved me."

Marie Van Claudio: "I don't want her saying Valkyrie saved me."

Marie Van Claudio: "I don't want her saying The Empire saved me."

Marie steps forward.

Marie Van Claudio: "I want her to know that I beat her."

Amy watches Marie carefully.

Amy Harrison: "And if something goes wrong?"

Marie pauses.

For the first time, a slight smile appears.

Marie Van Claudio: "Then something goes wrong."

Amy's smile widens.

Amy Harrison: "Now you're talking."

Marie walks over to her gear bag and begins wrapping her wrist.

Marie Van Claudio: "Susanita spent weeks trying to save me."

She pulls the tape tighter.

Marie Van Claudio: "She came into this room."

Another wrap.

Marie Van Claudio: "She went to Scott Stevens."

Tighter.

Marie Van Claudio: "She entered All or Nothing because she thought she could free me."

Marie tears the tape.

Marie Van Claudio: "And after everything I've done to her, she still thinks there's some explanation coming."

Marie looks up.

Marie Van Claudio: "There isn't."

Silence.

Marie Van Claudio: "She wanted to know who I really am."

Marie flexes her taped hand.

Marie Van Claudio: "Tonight, I'll show her."

Amy stands.

Valkyrie pushes away from the wall.

Marie looks between the two women.

Marie Van Claudio: "Susanita said The Empire would fall tonight."

Amy scoffs.

Amy Harrison: "Cute."

Marie gives the slightest smile.

Marie Van Claudio: "No."

She looks directly into the camera.

Marie Van Claudio: "Susanita falls tonight."

Amy's grin spreads.

Valkyrie nods.

Marie goes back to preparing for the match.

The camera holds on The Empire for another moment before cutting away.

Truth

Segment

We cut backstage.

Emily Hightower moves quickly through the halls of Scotiabank Arena.

The UTA Women's Championship is in one hand.

The UTA Hardcore Championship is in the other.

David, Buck, and Dakota are nowhere in sight.

And Emily isn't heading toward the locker rooms.

She's heading toward the exit.

Emily reaches the end of the hallway when a voice stops her.

Scott Stevens: "What the hell was that?"

Emily stops.

She closes her eyes for just a moment before slowly turning around.

Scott Stevens is marching toward her.

And the General Manager is pissed.

Emily Hightower: "What was what?"

Scott Stevens: "Don't do that."

Emily raises an eyebrow.

Scott Stevens: "You know exactly what I'm talking about."

Emily Hightower: "I agreed to the match."

Scott Stevens: "Emily—"

Emily Hightower: "Did I not?"

Stevens stares at her.

Emily Hightower: "Sol wanted a championship match. You wanted a championship match. I agreed to a championship match."

Emily motions back toward the arena.

Emily Hightower: "I went out there."

Emily Hightower: "I got in the ring."

Emily Hightower: "The referee raised the championship."

Emily Hightower: "The bell rang."

She shrugs.

Emily Hightower: "Sounds like a match to me."

Scott Stevens: "You walked out!"

Emily Hightower: "Yes."

No hesitation.

Scott Stevens: "You walked out, grabbed your championship, and let the referee count you out on purpose!"

Emily Hightower: "Also true."

Stevens throws his hands up.

Scott Stevens: "This is not how a champion operates!"

Emily looks down.

First at the UTA Hardcore Championship.

Then at the UTA Women's Championship.

She looks back at Stevens.

Emily Hightower: "Really?"

She raises the Women's Championship slightly.

Emily Hightower: "Because I'm still the champion."

Then the Hardcore Championship.

Emily Hightower: "Actually, I'm still champion twice."

Stevens' jaw tightens.

Emily Hightower: "So I'd say that's exactly how this champion operates."

Scott Stevens: "You made a mockery of the Women's Championship."

That gets Emily's attention.

Emily Hightower: "No."

She steps closer.

Emily Hightower: "Sol did."

Stevens looks almost offended by the suggestion.

Scott Stevens: "Sol?"

Emily Hightower: "You gave her exactly what she wanted."

Emily Hightower: "She had me."

Emily Hightower: "Right there."

Emily points back toward the arena.

Emily Hightower: "No excuses."

Emily Hightower: "No more waiting."

Emily Hightower: "No more begging."

Emily Hightower: "Her big opportunity."

Emily pauses.

Emily Hightower: "And she let it walk away."

Scott Stevens: "You can't seriously blame her because you refused to wrestle."

Emily Hightower: "Why not?"

Stevens actually stops for a second.

Emily Hightower: "She could've come out of the ring."

Emily Hightower: "She could've grabbed me."

Emily Hightower: "She could've thrown me into the barricade."

Emily Hightower: "She could've dragged my ass back into that ring and made me fight her."

Emily steps even closer to Stevens.

Emily Hightower: "Isn't that what she's been telling everyone she wanted?"

Stevens doesn't answer.

Emily Hightower: "But she didn't."

Beat.

Emily Hightower: "She stood there."

Emily Hightower: "She watched me leave."

Emily Hightower: "She listened to the referee count."

Emily Hightower: "And then she took her little victory."

Emily shakes her head.

Emily Hightower: "That's on her."

Scott Stevens: "She beat you."

Emily Hightower: "And what did she win?"

Emily raises the Women's Championship between them.

Stevens looks at it.

Emily smiles.

Emily Hightower: "Exactly."

Stevens opens his mouth.

Nothing immediately comes out.

Emily Hightower: "All she did tonight was prove I was right."

Emily Hightower: "She didn't deserve the opportunity you gave her."

Scott Stevens: "That's bullshit and you know it."

Emily shrugs.

Emily Hightower: "Then give her a participation trophy."

Stevens' face reddens.

Emily Hightower: "But this?"

She taps the faceplate of the Women's Championship.

Emily Hightower: "She had her chance at this."

Emily Hightower: "She let it walk away."

Emily turns to leave.

Scott Stevens: "Emily!"

She stops and looks over her shoulder.

Emily Hightower: "What?"

Stevens glares at her.

Emily waits.

Finally, she sighs.

Emily Hightower: "Scott, instead of standing here holding me up..."

She lifts both championships.

Emily Hightower: "...why don't you go find me an opponent who actually deserves a match?"

Emily turns.

She pushes through the exit doors and disappears.

Scott Stevens remains in the hallway.

Absolutely furious.

He looks toward the doors.

Then back toward the arena.

He wants to argue.

He wants to chase after her.

But the most aggravating part of all?

Somewhere buried beneath Emily Hightower's arrogance, manipulation, and complete disrespect for the spirit of the match...

There is just enough truth in what she said to leave Scott Stevens standing there without an answer.

Make Room

Segment

We head backstage where Melissa Cartwright is standing by.

Melissa Cartwright: "Ladies and gentlemen, joining me at this time... Selina Santorino."

Selina Santorino steps into frame.

Hovering just over her shoulder is the Santorino Sentinel, its gold frame glimmering beneath the backstage lights.

Selina doesn't look happy.

Actually, she looks personally offended.

Melissa Cartwright: "Selina, we're here at One Last Stop, one of the biggest events of the summer, and I understand you're not exactly happy with your role tonight."

Selina slowly turns her head toward Melissa.

Selina Santorino: "My role?"

She looks toward the drone.

Selina Santorino: "Influencies, did you hear that?"

Selina points toward Melissa.

Selina Santorino: "She said my role."

Selina gives a disbelieving laugh.

Selina Santorino: "Melissa, I don't have a role."

She motions toward herself.

Selina Santorino: "I am the production."

Melissa tries to continue.

Melissa Cartwright: "Well, what I meant was—"

Selina Santorino: "I don't have a match."

Selina stares at her.

Selina Santorino: "How do I not have a match tonight?"

Melissa doesn't immediately answer.

Selina Santorino: "Seriously."

Selina turns toward the camera.

Selina Santorino: "Look at this."

She gestures around herself.

Selina Santorino: "One Last Stop."

Selina Santorino: "Toronto."

Selina Santorino: "Scotiabank Arena."

Selina Santorino: "Thousands of people."

She points at herself.

Selina Santorino: "And your most influential star is standing backstage talking to Melissa Cartwright."

Melissa raises an eyebrow.

Melissa Cartwright: "I'm standing right here."

Selina Santorino: "I know. That's why it's so upsetting."

Melissa lowers the microphone slightly.

Selina continues before she can respond.

Selina Santorino: "Do you know what happened last week?"

Melissa Cartwright: "You competed against Susanita Ybanez in the main event."

Selina Santorino: "Exactly!"

Selina spreads her arms.

Selina Santorino: "They needed a main event."

Selina Santorino: "Who walked in?"

She points at herself.

Selina Santorino: "Me."

Selina Santorino: "The show needed an upgrade, and the Dominican Diamond saved the entire production."

Melissa starts to speak.

Selina Santorino: "And now we get to one of the biggest shows of the year..."

She pauses.

Selina Santorino: "...and nothing?"

Selina looks toward the Sentinel as though seeking confirmation from her livestream.

Selina Santorino: "Do they understand how algorithms work?"

Melissa Cartwright: "There are only so many spots on a card, Selina."

Selina looks horrified.

Selina Santorino: "Then remove somebody."

Melissa blinks.

Selina Santorino: "This isn't complicated."

Melissa Cartwright: "Remove who?"

Selina shrugs.

Selina Santorino: "I don't know."

She waves dismissively toward the arena.

Selina Santorino: "One of the low-resolution people."

Melissa Cartwright: "That's practically the entire roster you're talking about."

Selina smiles.

Selina Santorino: "Now you're getting it."

The Sentinel drifts slightly closer.

Selina immediately turns toward it.

Selina Santorino: "Do you know how many Influencies would have watched me compete tonight?"

Selina Santorino: "Do you know how much engagement UTA just left sitting on the table?"

Selina Santorino: "This isn't just disrespectful."

She shakes her head.

Selina Santorino: "It's bad business."

Melissa raises the microphone.

Melissa Cartwright: "So what are you going to do about it?"

Selina turns back toward her.

A smile slowly begins to form.

Selina Santorino: "Melissa..."

She reaches up and gently pushes the microphone down.

Selina Santorino: "If UTA didn't make room for Selina Santorino on tonight's show..."

Selina looks directly into the Sentinel's camera.

Selina Santorino: "...then maybe Selina Santorino makes room for herself."

Melissa studies her.

Melissa Cartwright: "What exactly does that mean?"

Selina smiles sweetly.

Selina Santorino: "Subscribe and find out."

She flashes a peace sign toward the drone.

Selina Santorino: "Hate me. Love me. It's all the same."

Selina begins walking away.

She takes several steps before stopping and looking back toward Melissa.

Selina Santorino: "Because I'm simply better."

Selina disappears down the hallway.

The Santorino Sentinel follows behind her.

Melissa watches them go.

Melissa Cartwright: "Somehow, I don't think Selina Santorino intends to spend the rest of One Last Stop quietly watching from backstage."

We cut away.

Bobby Dean vs. Lindsey Lothario

Match

The camera returns to ringside as the International Championship graphic fills the screen.

UTA INTERNATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

"BEAUTIFUL" BOBBY DEAN (c) vs. LINDSEY LOTHARIO

The Toronto crowd reacts immediately.

John Phillips: "Championship action is next here at One Last Stop, and this may be one of the more unusual International Championship defenses we've ever seen."

Mark Bravo: "Unusual? John, show some respect. That man is a UTA Hall of Famer."

John Phillips: "He absolutely is."

Mark Bravo: "A former Hardcore Champion."

John Phillips: "Technically—"

Mark Bravo: "Don't."

John Phillips: "I wasn't going to."

Mark Bravo: "And more importantly, Beautiful Bobby Dean is the reigning UTA International Champion."

The graphic fades.

For a moment, nothing happens.

Then...

SFX: "HONK! HONK!"

The crowd erupts.

John Phillips: "Oh boy."

SFX: "HONK! HONK! HONK!"

Bobby Dean emerges onto the stage aboard the battle-tested mobility scooter.

The UTA International Championship is proudly secured across his lap.

Calling the scooter battle-tested may actually be generous.

The thing has survived months of Bobby Dean, which makes it one of the most durable pieces of equipment UTA owns.

Bobby raises both arms into the air as the crowd greets him.

Crowd: "BOB-BY! BOB-BY! BOB-BY!"

Bobby's face lights up.

He points toward one side of Scotiabank Arena.

SFX: "HONK!"

Then the other.

SFX: "HONK! HONK!"

Mark Bravo: "Listen to Toronto!"

John Phillips: "There was a time when people laughed when Bobby Dean walked into a UTA arena."

Mark Bravo: "They still laugh."

John Phillips: "Sure. But they're laughing with him now."

Bobby begins the journey down the ramp.

Slowly.

Very slowly.

The International Championship gleams beneath the arena lights as it rests across his lap.

The scooter lets out a concerning mechanical whine.

SFX: "WHRRRRRRRR... clunk."

Bobby looks down at it.

He taps the controls twice.

The scooter suddenly accelerates.

Bobby Dean: "WHOA!"

Bobby jerks the handlebars and narrowly avoids driving directly into the barricade.

The crowd laughs and cheers.

Mark Bravo: "Championship focus."

John Phillips: "He almost took out the front row."

Mark Bravo: "Mind games."

Bobby regains control and gives everyone a reassuring thumbs-up.

Bobby Dean: "I'm okay!"

Another huge cheer.

Bobby continues toward ringside.

Ring Announcer: "The following contest is scheduled for one fall and is for the UTA INTERNATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP!"

The crowd pops again.

Ring Announcer: "Introducing first... the reigning UTA International Champion... UTA Hall of Famer... 'BEAUTIFUL'... BOBBY... DEEEEEEEAN!"

Bobby stops the scooter.

He looks around.

Then points at himself.

Bobby Dean: "That's me!"

John Phillips: "Yes, Bobby. That's you."

Bobby carefully picks up the International Championship from his lap and drapes it over his shoulder.

Then he starts to climb off the scooter.

One foot hits the floor.

Then the other.

He stands.

Pauses.

Takes a breath.

Then another.

Mark Bravo: "Already pacing himself. Veteran instincts."

Bobby grabs the middle rope and begins pulling himself onto the apron.

The championship remains over his shoulder.

The crowd begins clapping rhythmically.

Crowd: "BOB-BY! BOB-BY! BOB-BY!"

Bobby gets one knee onto the apron.

He stops.

Looks out at the crowd.

They get louder.

Bobby smiles.

For just a second, the comedy disappears.

Because Bobby remembers this feeling.

Victorious.

The ladder.

The fall.

The crowd chanting his name when everyone expected him to be nothing more than the punchline.

John Phillips: "You know, Mark, underneath all of this, there's something we shouldn't overlook."

Mark Bravo: "What's that?"

John Phillips: "Bobby Dean earned that championship."

Bobby pulls himself the rest of the way onto the apron.

John Phillips: "Maybe not in the traditional way. Maybe not the way anybody would have predicted six months ago. But every time we've expected Bobby Dean to embarrass himself, somehow he's found another gear."

Mark Bravo: "Sometimes literally."

John Phillips: "At Victorious, he took Eric Dane Jr. to the limit in a ladder match. Since then, Bobby has kept showing up. He's kept fighting. And somehow, some way, he's no longer chasing championship gold."

Bobby steps through the ropes.

He raises the International Championship high above his head.

John Phillips: "He's carrying it."

Crowd: "BOB-BY! BOB-BY! BOB-BY!"

Bobby turns slowly, taking in the entire arena.

His smile grows.

Then he notices something at ringside.

His scooter.

Bobby suddenly looks concerned.

Bobby Dean: "Hey!"

He leans through the ropes and points toward a ringside attendant.

Bobby Dean: "Watch that for me!"

The attendant nods.

Bobby Dean: "Seriously! That's my good one!"

Mark Bravo: "That's the good one?"

John Phillips: "Apparently."

Bobby finally turns back toward the entrance stage.

He adjusts the International Championship over his shoulder.

The smile remains.

But there's something underneath it now.

Nerves.

Excitement.

And responsibility.

Bobby Dean is standing inside the ring at One Last Stop.

Not hoping for an opportunity.

Not trying to stumble his way into another miracle.

Tonight, somebody is coming after him.

Somewhere behind that curtain is Lindsey Lothario.

And Lindsey wants what Bobby Dean already has.

John Phillips: "Beautiful Bobby Dean has made a career out of doing things nobody thought he could do."

Mark Bravo: "Tonight is different."

John Phillips: "Absolutely. Tonight isn't about whether Bobby Dean can become champion."

Bobby looks down at the International Championship.

John Phillips: "It's about whether Bobby Dean can prove he deserves to stay champion."

Bobby grips the top rope and stares toward the stage.

Mark Bravo: "And Lindsey Lothario intends to find out."

Bobby Dean remains inside the ring, his attention fixed on the entrance stage.

The lights begin to fade.

Not to darkness.

To gold.

A soft golden glow spreads across Scotiabank Arena.

The crowd immediately knows what it means.

Crowd: "BOOOOOOOOOOO!"

John Phillips: "And here comes The Creed Method."

Mark Bravo: "All three of them."

The opening of "Glory and Gore" by Lorde begins to play.

Through the light steps Eli Creed.

White shirt.

Sleeves rolled.

Hands folded calmly in front of him.

That serene smile resting comfortably on his face despite thousands of people booing him.

But tonight, he isn't alone.

Lindsey Lothario steps through behind him.

The transformation is impossible to ignore.

The Lindsey who once needed every entrance to become a spectacle is gone.

No exaggerated poses.

No desperate demand for the camera.

Just Lindsey.

Focused.

Cold.

Ready.

Then comes Kairo Bey.

The Neon Ace moves with more natural swagger than Lindsey, but even Kairo seems subdued by comparison to his usual entrance. His eyes remain on the ring.

On Bobby Dean.

On the International Championship.

John Phillips: "There is something unsettling about seeing these three together."

Mark Bravo: "Unsettling? Look what Eli Creed has done for them. Lindsey Lothario is a completely different competitor. Kairo Bey has found direction. Maybe the guy actually knows what he's doing."

John Phillips: "That's exactly what concerns me."

Eli begins walking down the ramp.

Lindsey and Kairo follow.

Not quite followers marching behind their leader.

More like three people arriving with the same purpose.

Bobby watches them from inside the ring.

His eyes move from Eli...

...to Lindsey...

...to Kairo.

Then Bobby looks down at the International Championship.

John Phillips: "Remember how this match came together. Bobby Dean didn't have to defend against Lindsey Lothario

tonight."

Mark Bravo: "Bobby chose Lindsey."

John Phillips: "After a conversation with Eli Creed."

Mark Bravo: "There it is."

John Phillips: "There what is?"

Mark Bravo: "The tone."

John Phillips: "I'm simply stating what happened."

Mark Bravo: "You're saying it like Eli hypnotized Bobby."

John Phillips: "Eric Dane Jr. certainly believes Bobby was manipulated."

Mark Bravo: "Eric Dane Jr. believes Eric Dane Jr. deserves everything."

Eli reaches ringside.

Kairo moves toward the corner.

But Eli gestures for him to follow.

All three members of The Creed Method climb the steps.

Lindsey enters first.

Kairo follows.

Then Eli.

The referee immediately moves between the groups, but there's no aggression.

Eli asks for a microphone.

The crowd boos louder.

Eli waits.

He doesn't demand silence.

He simply waits until enough of it arrives.

Eli Creed: "My name is Eli Creed..."

The boos swell.

Eli Creed: "...and I'm here to help you."

Eli isn't looking at the audience.

He's looking directly at Bobby.

Eli Creed: "Bobby."

Bobby adjusts the championship on his shoulder.

Eli Creed: "Look around."

Bobby glances toward the crowd.

Eli Creed: "Listen to them."

The chant starts almost immediately.

Crowd: "BOB-BY! BOB-BY! BOB-BY!"

Bobby smiles.

Eli Creed: "Do you remember our conversation?"

Bobby nods.

Eli Creed: "I told you what everyone else sees when they look at Bobby Dean."

Eli begins walking slowly toward him.

Eli Creed: "A joke."

Eli Creed: "Comic relief."

Eli Creed: "The man they expect to fall down so they can laugh."

Bobby's smile fades slightly.

Eli Creed: "But I told you that isn't what I see."

Eli stops several feet away.

Eli Creed: "I see a champion."

The crowd gives a surprised reaction.

Lindsey doesn't laugh.

Kairo doesn't either.

Eli Creed: "And Bobby..."

Eli Creed: "...neither do they."

Eli gestures toward Lindsey.

Lindsey looks directly at Bobby.

No smirk.

No mockery.

Just acknowledgment.

Then Eli gestures toward Kairo.

Kairo gives Bobby a small nod.

Eli Creed: "Lindsey doesn't see a joke."

Eli Creed: "Kairo doesn't see a joke."

Eli Creed: "I don't see a joke."

Eli's expression becomes almost warm.

Eli Creed: "We see a brother in arms."

Bobby looks surprised by the words.

Eli Creed: "A man who has fallen."

Eli Creed: "A man who has been embarrassed."

Eli Creed: "A man who has heard people tell him that he doesn't belong."

Eli Creed: "And a man who kept getting back up."

The crowd begins applauding.

Eli Creed: "You earned that."

Eli points toward the International Championship.

Eli Creed: "You earned the right to carry that championship."

Eli Creed: "Not because someone felt sorry for you."

Eli Creed: "Not because someone handed you a participation trophy."

Eli Creed: "You survived when people expected you to fail."

Eli Creed: "You became champion when people expected the punchline."

Bobby looks down at the belt.

Eli Creed: "And when I asked you what a champion does..."

Eli pauses.

Eli Creed: "...you answered."

He turns toward Lindsey.

Eli Creed: "You chose Lindsey."

John Phillips: "With considerable prompting."

Mark Bravo: "There it is again."

John Phillips: "Oh, come on! Lindsey didn't win a number one contender's match. There wasn't a ranking determining this. Eli Creed walked up to Bobby Dean, told him Lindsey had earned a championship match, and Bobby agreed!"

Mark Bravo: "Sounds like Lindsey earned it to me."

John Phillips: "HOW?!"

Mark Bravo: "Methodically."

Back inside the ring, Eli continues.

Eli Creed: "Lindsey earned the right to stand here tonight."

A louder collection of boos answers that claim.

Eli Creed: "You may disagree."

Eli looks briefly toward the audience.

Eli Creed: "That's all right."

Eli Creed: "Understanding often arrives after resistance."

Eli turns back toward Bobby.

Eli Creed: "But this isn't about Lindsey."

Lindsey looks toward Eli.

Eli Creed: "Not yet."

His attention returns completely to Bobby.

Eli Creed: "Right now..."

Eli Creed: "...this is about you."

Bobby's expression changes.

Eli Creed: "Because I know what happens next."

Eli Creed: "That bell rings."

Eli Creed: "Lindsey comes across this ring."

Eli Creed: "And somewhere inside your head..."

Eli taps his temple.

Eli Creed: "...you hear them."

Eli Creed: "Every laugh."

Eli Creed: "Every joke."

Eli Creed: "Every person who ever told you that Bobby Dean could never be taken seriously."

Bobby swallows.

Eli Creed: "Don't silence them."

Bobby looks confused.

Eli Creed: "Use them."

The crowd quiets.

Eli Creed: "Tonight, I don't want the Bobby Dean who makes them laugh."

Eli Creed: "I don't want the Bobby Dean who accidentally survives."

Eli Creed: "I don't even want the Bobby Dean who somehow finds a way."

Eli takes another step toward him.

Eli Creed: "I want the champion."

Bobby's eyes remain locked on Creed.

Eli Creed: "The real one."

Eli Creed: "The one I saw before you were willing to see him yourself."

Bobby slowly straightens his posture.

Eli Creed: "Because Lindsey doesn't need your sympathy."

Eli Creed: "Lindsey doesn't need you to underestimate them."

Eli Creed: "And Lindsey certainly doesn't need Bobby Dean trying to prove that everybody likes him."

Lindsey steps forward until they stand beside Eli.

Bobby looks at Lindsey.

Lindsey stares right back.

Eli Creed: "Lindsey needs your best."

Eli looks between them.

Eli Creed: "And you need theirs."

The crowd begins buzzing.

Eli Creed: "Because that's what brothers and sisters in arms do."

Eli Creed: "We test one another."

Eli Creed: "We expose weakness."

Eli Creed: "We force each other to become something greater than we were when we arrived."

Eli turns fully toward Bobby.

Eli Creed: "So don't fight tonight to prove you're not a joke."

A beat.

Eli Creed: "Fight because you're the International Champion."

The crowd erupts.

Eli Creed: "Fight like Lindsey is trying to take something from you that matters."

Eli Creed: "Fight until your lungs burn."

Eli Creed: "Fight until your legs beg you to stop."

Eli Creed: "And when that voice inside your head tells you you've done enough..."

Eli moves closer.

Almost face-to-face with Bobby now.

Eli Creed: "...get up one more time."

Bobby's grip tightens around the championship.

Crowd: "BOB-BY! BOB-BY! BOB-BY!"

Eli smiles.

Eli Creed: "There he is."

Bobby looks around at the crowd.

Then at Lindsey.

Whatever nervousness was there before has changed.

His jaw tightens.

Bobby steps forward.

He raises the International Championship between himself and Lindsey.

Lindsey looks at the gold.

Then immediately back into Bobby's eyes.

John Phillips: "I don't like Eli Creed. I don't trust Eli Creed. But I'll give him this..."

Mark Bravo: "He got Bobby's attention."

John Phillips: "No. I think he got Bobby Dean to believe in Bobby Dean."

Eli lowers the microphone.

He places one hand briefly on Lindsey's shoulder.

Then turns toward Kairo.

No secret instructions.

No whispered plan.

Eli simply nods.

Kairo steps through the ropes and drops to the floor.

Eli follows.

The two take their place at ringside.

Lindsey remains inside.

Alone.

Just as Eli promised when he first proposed this match.

Bobby Dean hands the International Championship to the referee.

The referee raises it high above his head.

Lindsey watches the championship.

Bobby doesn't.

Bobby watches Lindsey.

Mark Bravo: "Look at Bobby."

John Phillips: "That's not the same man who rode down here honking that ridiculous scooter."

Mark Bravo: "That's the International Champion."

Outside the ring, Eli Creed folds his hands calmly in front of him.

Kairo stands beside him.

Eli looks toward Bobby.

Then Lindsey.

That faint smile returns.

Eli Creed: "Show each other."

The referee hands the championship through the ropes to the timekeeper.

He checks Bobby.

He checks Lindsey.

Then calls for the bell.

DING DING DING!

The bell sounds.

Bobby Dean and Lindsey Lothario remain exactly where they are.

Neither moves forward.

Outside the ring, Eli Creed stands with his hands folded in front of him.

Kairo Bey leans against the apron beside him.

Lindsey rolls their shoulders once.

Bobby takes a deep breath.

Then another.

Mark Bravo: "Cardio."

John Phillips: "The match started three seconds ago."

Mark Bravo: "Preventative cardio."

Bobby raises his hands.

Lindsey does the same.

And that's when something becomes immediately apparent.

Lindsey isn't smiling.

They're not laughing.

They're not inviting Bobby into some embarrassing test of strength.

They're studying him.

John Phillips: "Look at Lindsey."

Mark Bravo: "That's respect."

John Phillips: "I think you're right. Lindsey Lothario is approaching Bobby Dean exactly the way they would approach any other championship-level competitor."

The two circle.

Bobby reaches.

Lindsey pulls back.

Bobby reaches again.

Another retreat.

Bobby suddenly stops.

Bobby Dean: "Are we gonna do this or what?"

Lindsey gives the slightest nod.

They lock up.

Collar and elbow.

Lindsey immediately tries to gain position—

—and Bobby SHOVES them backward!

Lindsey stumbles several steps before catching their balance.

The crowd reacts.

Mark Bravo: "Mass, baby!"

John Phillips: "That's one area where Bobby Dean has an undeniable advantage."

Lindsey straightens.

Bobby grins.

He flexes both arms.

There it is.

Bobby Dean.

Bobby Dean: "Still got it."

Lindsey nods again.

No frustration.

Information gathered.

They circle again.

Bobby offers another lockup.

Lindsey steps toward him—

THWACK!

A low kick cracks into Bobby's thigh.

Bobby Dean: "OW!"

Bobby immediately grabs his leg.

Bobby Dean: "Why would you do that?!"

Lindsey resets their stance.

Mark Bravo: "Because you're wrestling."

John Phillips: "Bobby seemed genuinely offended by that."

Bobby points at Lindsey.

Bobby Dean: "That hurt!"

Lindsey nods.

Lindsey Lothario: "I know."

Bobby looks toward the referee.

Bobby Dean: "Did you hear that?"

The referee waves him on.

Bobby Dean: "Unbelievable."

Bobby turns back—

THWACK!

Another kick to the thigh!

Bobby Dean: "STOP THAT!"

The crowd laughs.

But Lindsey doesn't.

They close the distance.

Left hand behind Bobby's head.

KNEE TO THE BODY!

Bobby doubles over.

Another knee!

Lindsey pushes Bobby backward into the ropes.

Forearm!

Another!

Bobby covers up as Lindsey works him with compact strikes.

John Phillips: "This is that change we've seen in Lindsey since joining Eli Creed. Everything is tighter now. Everything has a purpose."

Mark Bravo: "And look at Eli. He's not telling Lindsey anything."

Creed remains perfectly still.

Watching.

John Phillips: "Lindsey knows what they're doing."

Lindsey grabs Bobby's wrist.

Irish whip—

No!

Bobby doesn't move.

Lindsey pulls again.

Nothing.

Bobby looks down at Lindsey's hand.

Then up at Lindsey.

A smile spreads across his face.

Bobby Dean: "My turn."

Bobby reverses!

Lindsey is sent across the ring!

They rebound—

SHOULDER BLOCK!

Lindsey crashes to the canvas!

The crowd erupts.

Mark Bravo: "BEEF!"

John Phillips: "Bobby Dean just ran straight through Lindsey Lothario!"

Bobby looks around.

The crowd cheers.

Bobby gets an idea.

Possibly a terrible one.

He takes off toward the ropes.

Not particularly quickly.

But he takes off.

Bobby hits the ropes.

Rebounds.

Lindsey rolls onto their stomach.

Bobby steps over them.

Hits the opposite ropes.

Lindsey gets up.

Bobby comes back—

Lindsey drops down!

Bobby steps over again!

Another rebound!

John Phillips: "Bobby's moving!"

Mark Bravo: "LOOK AT HIM GO!"

Lindsey gets back to their feet.

Bobby charges—

LEAPFROG BY LINDSEY!

Bobby continues underneath!

Hits the ropes again!

Rebounds—

Then suddenly stops.

Hands on knees.

Breathing heavily.

Bobby Dean: "Timeout."

The crowd bursts into laughter.

Mark Bravo: "He made it three and a half trips!"

John Phillips: "There are no timeouts!"

Lindsey stands across from Bobby.

Bobby raises one finger.

Bobby Dean: "Just... give me... a second."

Lindsey walks toward him.

Bobby Dean: "Sportsmanship."

Lindsey gets closer.

Bobby Dean: "Remember what Eli said about brotherhood?"

Lindsey stops directly in front of Bobby.

Bobby looks hopeful.

Lindsey pats him on the shoulder.

Bobby smiles.

Bobby Dean: "Thank y—"

SMACK!

ELBOW TO THE JAW!

Bobby staggers backward!

Mark Bravo: "That's how The Creed Method shows love!"

Lindsey moves in—

ANOTHER ELBOW!

Bobby rocks backward into the ropes.

Lindsey shoots him across!

Bobby rebounds—

BIG BOOT!

NO!

Bobby catches the leg!

Lindsey's eyes widen.

Bobby has it.

Bobby looks around.

He clearly did not expect to have it.

John Phillips: "Bobby caught it!"

Mark Bravo: "Now what?"

Bobby appears to be wondering the exact same thing.

Lindsey hops on one leg.

Bobby thinks.

Thinks some more.

Then smiles.

Bobby Dean: "I know!"

DRAGON SCREW!

Lindsey is whipped violently to the canvas!

The crowd EXPLODES!

John Phillips: "WHAT?!"

Mark Bravo: "BOBBY DEAN WITH A DRAGON SCREW!"

Lindsey rolls across the canvas clutching their knee.

Bobby sits up.

His eyes are huge.

Even Bobby seems impressed.

Bobby Dean: "I did that!"

The crowd begins chanting again.

Crowd: "BOB-BY! BOB-BY! BOB-BY!"

Bobby gets to his feet.

Lindsey pushes up.

Bobby grabs the arm.

Wristlock.

Lindsey immediately rolls forward to relieve the pressure.

They kip up—

Bobby twists again!

Lindsey drops to a knee!

John Phillips: "Wait a minute."

Bobby transitions.

Hammerlock.

Lindsey reaches backward.

Bobby ducks the elbow.

Side headlock!

John Phillips: "Bobby Dean is wrestling!"

Mark Bravo: "He's always wrestling!"

John Phillips: "You know exactly what I mean!"

Lindsey tries to push Bobby toward the ropes.

Bobby drops his weight.

Lindsey can't move him.

Bobby wrenches the headlock tighter.

Outside the ring, Kairo looks toward Eli.

Eli hasn't moved.

But he's smiling.

John Phillips: "Look at Creed."

Mark Bravo: "He told us."

John Phillips: "Maybe he did."

Lindsey plants their feet.

They fire an elbow into Bobby's ribs.

Another.

A third breaks the hold.

Lindsey turns—

Bobby catches them around the waist!

BELLY-TO-BELLY SUPLEX!

Lindsey crashes hard!

Bobby crawls into the cover!

ONE!

TWO!

Lindsey kicks out!

Bobby immediately grabs the arm.

He doesn't complain.

Doesn't celebrate the two-count.

He pulls Lindsey back toward the center.

John Phillips: "That's different."

Mark Bravo: "Very different."

Lindsey gets to one knee.

Bobby maintains control of the wrist.

Lindsey looks up at him.

Bobby looks back.

And for the first time since the bell...

Lindsey smiles.

Not mockingly.

Approvingly.

Bobby notices.

His own expression changes.

Lindsey Lothario: "There you are."

Bobby tightens the wristlock.

Bobby Dean: "I'm right here."

Lindsey surges upward.

Forearm!

Bobby answers!

Lindsey fires another!

Bobby fires back!

Crowd: "YEAH!"

Lindsey!

Crowd: "BOO!"

Bobby!

Crowd: "YEAH!"

Lindsey!

Crowd: "BOO!"

Bobby!

Crowd: "YEAH!"

Lindsey suddenly changes levels.

THWACK!

LOW KICK!

Bobby's leg buckles.

Lindsey grabs the back of his head.

WHAM!

KNEE TO THE FACE!

Bobby drops to one knee.

Lindsey hits the ropes.

CURTAIN CALL!

SUPERKICK!

Bobby collapses!

Lindsey covers!

ONE!

TWO!

BOBBY KICKS OUT!

The crowd roars.

Lindsey sits beside Bobby.

No disbelief.

No argument with the referee.

They simply nod.

John Phillips: "That's what I'm talking about. Lindsey isn't surprised."

Mark Bravo: "Because Lindsey expected Bobby to kick out."

John Phillips: "Exactly."

Lindsey gets back to their feet.

They reach down and pull Bobby up with them.

Bobby is glassy-eyed.

Lindsey brings the guard up.

Low kick.

Body kick.

Elbow.

Bobby stumbles.

Lindsey steps forward.

Bobby suddenly throws a right hand!

Lindsey ducks!

Another low kick!

Bobby's knee buckles.

Lindsey grabs him in the clinch.

KNEE!

KNEE!

KNEE!

Bobby sinks toward the canvas.

Lindsey keeps hold of him.

John Phillips: "Lindsey is systematically breaking the champion down now."

Mark Bravo: "Not humiliating him. Not playing with him. Trying to beat him."

Another knee!

Bobby drops to both knees.

Lindsey releases him.

Bobby nearly falls forward.

But catches himself.

Outside the ring, Eli crouches slightly.

His eyes are on Bobby.

Eli Creed: "One more time, Bobby."

Bobby hears him.

Eli Creed: "Get up."

Bobby looks toward Creed.

Lindsey waits behind him.

Not attacking.

Not because they pity Bobby.

Because they want him standing.

Eli Creed: "Get up."

Bobby reaches for the ropes.

The crowd begins clapping.

Crowd: "BOB-BY! BOB-BY! BOB-BY!"

Bobby pulls himself to one knee.

Then his feet.

He turns around.

Lindsey is waiting.

Bobby raises his fists.

His chest heaves.

His leg hurts.

His mouth is open, desperately pulling oxygen into his lungs.

But he's standing.

Lindsey raises their guard.

And gives Bobby one small nod.

John Phillips: "This is exactly what Eli Creed said he wanted."

Mark Bravo: "No jokes now."

John Phillips: "Bobby Dean is in a fight."

Bobby wipes his mouth with the back of his hand.

Looks at Lindsey.

And waves them forward.

Bobby Dean: "Come on."

Lindsey does.

Lindsey steps forward.

Bobby meets them in the center of the ring.

Forearm from Lindsey!

Bobby answers!

Lindsey fires again!

Bobby fires back harder!

The crowd roars.

Lindsey changes levels and chops the damaged leg with another low kick.

Bobby winces.

Lindsey immediately goes upstairs—

ELBOW!

Bobby stumbles into the ropes.

Lindsey follows with another sharp elbow.

Then grabs Bobby by the wrist.

Irish whip—

Bobby reverses!

Lindsey rebounds—

Bobby scoops them up!

POWERSLAM!

The ring shakes under the impact!

John Phillips: "There is that strength again!"

Bobby hooks the leg.

ONE!

TWO!

Lindsey kicks out!

Bobby rolls away and gets to one knee.

He is breathing hard again.

But he looks focused.

Lindsey begins to rise.

Bobby grabs them.

Front facelock.

SNAP SUPLEX!

Bobby keeps hold!

He rolls through.

Pulls Lindsey back up.

SECOND SNAP SUPLEX!

The crowd comes alive.

Mark Bravo: "Look at Bobby go!"

Bobby rolls through again.

He tries to bring Lindsey up a third time.

Lindsey plants their feet.

Blocks.

Bobby tries again.

Lindsey drives a knee into Bobby's ribs!

Another!

The grip breaks.

Lindsey spins—

STANDING OVATION!

The spinning wheel kick catches Bobby flush!

Bobby drops to the canvas.

Lindsey covers.

ONE!

TWO!

BOBBY KICKS OUT!

Lindsey sits up.

Again, no frustration.

Just another nod.

Outside the ring, Eli Creed quietly applauds once.

John Phillips: "Lindsey knew what they were signing up for."

Mark Bravo: "They expected a fight."

Lindsey pulls Bobby back to his feet.

They grab the back of his head and bring him into the clinch.

KNEE TO THE BODY!

Another!

Bobby tries to shove free.

Lindsey keeps control.

KNEE!

Bobby absorbs it.

Another!

Bobby's legs start to buckle.

Lindsey tries to pull him down—

Bobby suddenly wraps both arms around Lindsey's waist.

BEARHUG!

Lindsey's eyes widen.

Mark Bravo: "Oh no."

Bobby squeezes.

Hard.

Lindsey's feet leave the canvas.

Bobby Dean: "Gotcha!"

The crowd erupts.

Lindsey immediately starts firing elbows down onto Bobby's head.

One!

Two!

Three!

Bobby refuses to let go.

He swings Lindsey from side to side.

John Phillips: "Bobby Dean may actually squeeze the life out of Lindsey Lothario!"

Lindsey reaches toward Bobby's face.

Not an eye rake.

They palm the forehead and shove backward to create space.

Then fire another elbow.

Bobby finally drops them.

Lindsey lands on their feet.

Immediately—

THWACK!

LOW KICK!

Bobby's bad leg buckles.

Lindsey sees it.

Another low kick!

Bobby drops to one knee.

Lindsey takes a step back.

CURTAIN CALL!

SUPERKICK CONNECTS!

Bobby goes down!

Lindsey covers!

ONE!

TWO!

THR—

BOBBY GETS A SHOULDER UP!

The crowd explodes.

Lindsey rolls onto their knees.

They look at Bobby.

Then toward Eli.

Eli gives no instruction.

Just watches.

John Phillips: "Again. Lindsey isn't shocked."

Mark Bravo: "Because Lindsey doesn't think Bobby is lucky."

Lindsey gets up.

Bobby rolls onto his side.

Lindsey grabs the bad leg.

They pull Bobby toward the center.

Bobby immediately realizes what's coming.

Bobby Dean: "Nope."

Lindsey tries to turn him over.

Bobby grabs the bottom rope.

The referee orders a break.

Lindsey releases immediately.

Bobby pulls himself underneath the ropes to the apron.

He sits there for a second.

Breathing.

Holding the leg.

Outside, Kairo steps closer.

Bobby looks at him.

Kairo raises both hands.

No interference.

Bobby looks toward Eli.

Eli gives him a small nod.

Eli Creed: "Breathe."

Bobby does.

Slowly.

Eli Creed: "Then get back in."

Bobby looks at him.

Then at Lindsey.

Lindsey is standing in the middle of the ring.

Waiting.

Not rushing him.

Not taunting him.

Waiting for the champion.

Bobby gets back to his feet on the apron.

He steps through the ropes.

The crowd applauds.

John Phillips: "This is becoming something very different from what I expected."

Mark Bravo: "What did you expect?"

John Phillips: "Honestly? Bobby making jokes, Lindsey taking advantage, maybe Creed finding a shortcut."

Mark Bravo: "Instead we've got a championship fight."

Bobby steps forward.

Lindsey meets him.

They lock up again.

This time Bobby doesn't overpower them immediately.

Lindsey pivots.

Waistlock.

Bobby tries to break the grip.

Lindsey drops behind.

Chop block to the bad leg!

Bobby collapses.

Lindsey immediately transitions.

They grab Bobby's leg.

Half crab!

Bobby yells.

John Phillips: "Lindsey has been setting this up from the beginning!"

Lindsey sits deep.

Bobby reaches toward the ropes.

Too far.

He tries to crawl.

Lindsey pulls him back.

Bobby cries out.

The referee asks the question.

Referee: "Do you give?"

Bobby Dean: "NO!"

Bobby claws forward.

One hand.

Then another.

Lindsey keeps the pressure.

Bobby's fingers stretch toward the bottom rope.

Still short.

Outside, Eli crouches slightly.

Eli Creed: "One more."

Bobby reaches.

Eli Creed: "One more."

Bobby drags himself forward.
Eli Creed: "One more."
Bobby's fingertips touch the rope!
The referee orders the break.
Lindsey releases immediately.
Bobby collapses onto the canvas.
The crowd applauds.
John Phillips: "Bobby got there."
Lindsey stands over him.
Bobby looks up.
Lindsey offers a hand.
The crowd buzzes.
Mark Bravo: "Whoa."
Bobby looks at the hand.
Then at Lindsey.
He takes it.
Lindsey pulls Bobby back to his feet.
And immediately throws an elbow!
Bobby blocks!
The crowd erupts.
Bobby fires a right hand!
Lindsey staggers.
Bobby fires another!
And another!
Lindsey backs into the ropes.
Bobby whips them across!
Lindsey rebounds—
Bobby ducks down.
BACK BODY DROP!
Lindsey goes high!
Crashes hard!
Bobby hears the crowd.
He looks around.

The energy hits him.

Bobby begins bouncing on his feet.

Mark Bravo: "Oh no."

John Phillips: "What?"

Mark Bravo: "He's feeling athletic."

Lindsey pushes themselves upright.

Bobby charges—

RUNNING CLOTHESLINE!

Lindsey goes down!

Bobby keeps moving!

Another clothesline!

Lindsey down again!

Bobby hits the ropes.

Comes back—

BIG SPLASH!

LINDSEY IS FLATTENED!

The crowd erupts!

John Phillips: "GOOD GOD!"

Bobby hooks the leg!

ONE!

TWO!

THR—

LINDSEY GETS A SHOULDER UP!

Bobby rolls onto his back.

Stares toward the ceiling.

Bobby Dean: "That usually works."

Mark Bravo: "Usually on furniture."

Bobby gets up again.

Slowly.

His leg is clearly bothering him.

Lindsey rolls toward the corner.

Bobby follows.

He grabs Lindsey by the wrist.

Pulls them out.

SHORT-ARM CLOTHESLINE!

Lindsey flips inside out!

Bobby covers again!

ONE!

TWO!

LINDSEY KICKS OUT!

Bobby sits up.

This time he doesn't joke.

He looks toward Eli.

Eli looks back.

Bobby nods to himself.

He stands.

Grabs Lindsey.

Hooks them for a suplex.

Lindsey blocks.

Bobby tries again.

Lindsey fires a knee into the bad leg!

Bobby releases.

Lindsey spins—

DISCUSS LARIAT!

CENTER STAGE!

Bobby crashes to the canvas!

John Phillips: "CENTER STAGE!"

Lindsey drops into the cover!

ONE!

TWO!

THR—

BOBBY KICKS OUT!

The crowd explodes.

Lindsey sits there.

Breathing hard now.

For the first time, something resembling surprise crosses their face.

Not disbelief.

Respect.

Lindsey looks down at Bobby.

Lindsey Lothario: "Okay."

They get back to their feet.

Bobby rolls toward the ropes.

Lindsey doesn't let him.

They grab Bobby around the waist.

Try to pull him upright.

Bobby suddenly drops his weight.

Lindsey can't lift him.

They try again.

Nothing.

Bobby looks over his shoulder.

Bobby Dean: "You sure you wanna do this?"

Lindsey answers by driving a knee into his back.

Bobby straightens.

Lindsey hooks him.

They try to lift—

Bobby reverses!

BACKDROP!

Lindsey crashes hard.

Bobby falls backward too.

Both competitors are down.

The crowd rises.

John Phillips: "Now this is a championship match."

The referee begins checking both.

Outside the ring, Kairo watches intensely.

Eli Creed remains calm.

But the smile is gone.

He is fully invested now.

Bobby rolls onto one knee.

Lindsey does the same.

They look at each other.

Both exhausted.

Both hurting.

Neither smiling.

They rise together.

Bobby Dean and Lindsey Lothario rise together.

Bobby is favoring the leg.

Lindsey is breathing harder now than they were earlier.

They step toward one another.

Lindsey throws the first forearm.

Bobby answers.

Lindsey again.

Bobby again.

Lindsey fires a sharp kick into Bobby's thigh.

Bobby Dean: "Would you STOP doing that?!"

The crowd laughs.

Lindsey gives him a tiny shrug.

Lindsey Lothario: "It works."

Bobby Dean: "Yeah, well, I don't like it."

Lindsey kicks the leg again.

Bobby Dean: "SEE?!"

Bobby swings wildly.

Lindsey ducks.

They hook Bobby around the waist—

Bobby drops his weight.

Lindsey tries to lift.

Nothing.

They try again.

Bobby looks down at them over his shoulder.

Bobby Dean: "You're gonna hurt yourself."

Lindsey plants their feet and tries one more time.

Bobby suddenly shifts his hips.

Standing switch!

Now Bobby has Lindsey around the waist.

The crowd reacts.

John Phillips: "Look at Bobby!"

Bobby lifts—

GERMAN SUPLEX!

Lindsey crashes hard!

Bobby bridges!

ONE!

TWO!

Lindsey kicks out!

Bobby remains bridged for a second.

Then realizes he has to get back up.

Bobby Dean: "Oh, that was a mistake."

Bobby rolls onto his side clutching his lower back.

Mark Bravo: "Beautiful technique. Terrible long-term planning."

Lindsey pushes themselves upright.

Bobby does the same.

Slowly.

Very slowly.

Lindsey charges—

Bobby sidesteps!

Lindsey hits the ropes.

Bobby lowers his head.

BACK BODY DROP!

Lindsey goes flying!

Bobby turns around.

Sees Lindsey down.

Then sees the corner.

A terrible idea begins forming.

John Phillips: "No."

Mark Bravo: "Oh yes."

Bobby points toward the top turnbuckle.

The crowd explodes.

Bobby Dean: "You want it?!"

Crowd: "YEAHHHHHH!"

Bobby nods enthusiastically.

Bobby Dean: "Okay!"

He starts toward the corner.

Stops.

Looks up.

The top rope suddenly appears much higher than it did from the middle of the ring.

Bobby Dean: "Actually..."

The crowd starts laughing.

Bobby Dean: "That's pretty high."

Mark Bravo: "Excellent scouting report."

Bobby puts one foot on the bottom rope anyway.

Then another on the second.

The crowd rises.

Bobby looks back over his shoulder.

Lindsey is still down.

Bobby climbs one more step.

He reaches the second rope.

Stops.

Bobby Dean: "Good enough."

Bobby turns around.

He launches—

SECOND-ROPE SPLASH!

LINDSEY MOVES!

Bobby crashes belly-first into the canvas!

The ring shakes.

John Phillips: "Bobby took a chance!"

Mark Bravo: "And gravity took offense."

Bobby rolls onto his back.

Bobby Dean: "Bad idea."

Lindsey is already getting up.

They see Bobby seated.

Hit the ropes.

RUNNING KNEE!

Bobby folds backward!

Lindsey covers!

ONE!

TWO!

BOBBY KICKS OUT!

Lindsey rolls onto one knee.

They look toward Eli.

Eli remains calm.

Kairo claps once, encouraging Lindsey to stay on him.

Lindsey grabs Bobby by the head.

Pulls him upright.

Elbow.

Low kick.

Another elbow.

Bobby backs toward the corner.

Lindsey follows.

Knee to the body!

Bobby doubles over.

Another knee!

Lindsey steps back.

Charges—

Bobby suddenly throws both arms out!

He catches Lindsey!

Lindsey's momentum carries them directly into Bobby's chest.

Bobby wraps them up.

And falls forward.

SAMOAN DROP!

Lindsey is crushed beneath him!

The crowd erupts.

Bobby remains laying across Lindsey.

The referee drops.

ONE!

TWO!

Lindsey kicks out!

Bobby doesn't move.

The referee waves at him.

Referee: "Bobby, you have to get off."

Bobby lifts his head.

Bobby Dean: "I'm trying."

The crowd laughs.

Bobby finally rolls away.

John Phillips: "Somehow Bobby Dean is simultaneously having one of the best matches of his career and still very much being Bobby Dean."

Mark Bravo: "That's the magic."

Bobby gets back to his knees.

Lindsey does the same.

Bobby points at them.

Bobby Dean: "You're really good."

Lindsey breathes heavily.

Lindsey Lothario: "So are you."

Bobby blinks.

That genuinely catches him off guard.

Bobby Dean: "Really?"

Lindsey nods.

Lindsey Lothario: "Really."

Bobby smiles.

For just a second, the match disappears.

Then Lindsey kicks him in the chest.

Bobby Dean: "HEY!"

Lindsey gets to their feet.

Lindsey Lothario: "Still wrestling."

Bobby Dean: "Right."

Bobby gets up too.

Lindsey fires a forearm.

Bobby answers.

Lindsey again.

Bobby again.

Lindsey kicks the bad leg.

Bobby stumbles.

Lindsey grabs the wrist.

Pulls Bobby forward—

CENTER STAGE!

NO!

Bobby ducks the discus lariat!

Lindsey spins through.

Bobby catches them!

SIDEWALK SLAM!

Lindsey is driven into the canvas!

Bobby hooks the leg!

ONE!

TWO!

LINDSEY KICKS OUT!

Bobby sits up.

This time, he looks frustrated.

He looks toward the championship at ringside.

Then toward Eli.

Eli meets his eyes.

Eli Creed: "You're doing exactly what a champion does."

Bobby looks back at Lindsey.

His expression changes.

The smile fades again.

He gets to his feet.

Pulls Lindsey up.

Hooks them around the waist.

Bobby lifts—

BELLY-TO-BELLY SUPLEX!

Lindsey crashes hard!

Bobby doesn't cover.

He gets back up.

He waits.

Lindsey slowly rises.

Bobby charges—

RUNNING CROSSBODY!

THE FULL WEIGHT OF BOBBY DEAN CRASHES INTO LINDSEY!

Both go down!

John Phillips: "GOOD LORD!"

Bobby crawls over.

Hooks both legs!

ONE!

TWO!

THR—

LINDSEY GETS A SHOULDER UP!

The crowd gasps.

Bobby sits there.

Staring.

Then he looks toward the referee.

Bobby Dean: "Are you sure?"

The referee holds up two.

Bobby squints at the fingers.

Bobby Dean: "Those look like three."

The referee shakes his head.

Bobby sighs.

Bobby Dean: "Worth a shot."

The crowd laughs again.

But Bobby gets right back up.

Because beneath every joke...

He's still trying to win.

And Lindsey knows it.

Bobby Dean gets back to his feet.

Across the ring, Lindsey Lothario uses the ropes to pull himself upright.

Both competitors are exhausted.

Bobby shakes out his damaged leg.

Lindsey rolls their neck.

The International Championship sits at ringside.

Neither competitor has forgotten why they're here.

Then...

A reaction begins building through Scotiabank Arena.

Not because of anything happening inside the ring.

People are standing and looking toward the entrance.

John Phillips: "Wait a minute."

Bobby notices the noise.

He looks toward the stage.

Lindsey does the same.

And there he is.

Eric Dane Jr. steps through the curtain.

No elaborate entrance.

No music.

No ridiculous robe.

No attempt to make this about presentation.

Eric simply walks onto the stage and stares toward the ring.

John Phillips: "Eric Dane Jr.!"

Mark Bravo: "Oh, this could be a problem."

Outside the ring, Eli Creed's expression changes immediately.

The calm remains.

But his eyes narrow.

Kairo Bey turns toward the ramp.

Inside the ring...

Bobby Dean lights up.

Bobby Dean: "ERIC!"

Bobby waves excitedly.

Eric keeps walking.

Bobby Dean: "HEY!"

Bobby points at himself.

Bobby Dean: "LOOK!"

Eric continues toward ringside.

Bobby spreads his arms proudly.

Bobby Dean: "I'M WRESTLING!"

The crowd breaks into laughter.

Mark Bravo: "He sounds like a kid showing his dad he can ride a bicycle."

John Phillips: "Eric Dane Jr. does not look nearly as excited to see Bobby."

Bobby points down toward Lindsey.

Bobby Dean: "AND I'M DOING REALLY GOOD!"

Lindsey slowly turns toward Bobby.

Even Lindsey can't quite hide the expression.

Bobby catches it.

Bobby Dean: "I am!"

Lindsey nods.

Lindsey Lothario: "You are."

Bobby Dean: "See?!"

Eric reaches the bottom of the ramp.

He isn't looking at Bobby.

He's looking at Eli Creed.

The amusement leaves Bobby's face as he realizes it.

John Phillips: "There has been tension between Eric Dane Jr. and Eli Creed surrounding Bobby Dean for weeks."

Mark Bravo: "Dane thinks Creed is manipulating Bobby."

John Phillips: "And Eric has been very vocal about the fact he doesn't believe Bobby needs Eli Creed anywhere near him."

Eric stops several feet away from Creed.

Eli remains beside the ring.

The two stare at one another.

Kairo Bey steps between them.

Eli glances toward Kairo.

Nothing is said.

It doesn't need to be.

Kairo understands.

The Neon Ace walks toward Eric.

John Phillips: "Kairo Bey stepping in here."

Kairo raises both hands.

Kairo Bey: "Not tonight."

Eric looks at him.

Kairo Bey: "Whatever you've got with Eli, take it somewhere else."

Eric looks past Kairo.

Directly at Creed.

Kairo steps sideways, blocking his view again.

Kairo Bey: "I'm talking to you."

Eric finally looks at Kairo.

There's a small pause.

Then—

CRACK!

ERIC DANE JR. COLD COCKS KAIRO BEY!

Kairo drops instantly!

The crowd erupts.

John Phillips: "OH!"

Mark Bravo: "DANE JUST DROPPED KAIRO!"

Kairo falls hard onto the floor.

Eric barely even watches him fall.

He uses his foot to shove Kairo aside.

His eyes never leave Eli Creed.

Inside the ring, Bobby looks horrified.

Bobby Dean: "Eric!"

Eric takes another step toward Creed.

And something happens that we have never seen before.

Eli Creed looks down.

Slowly...

He begins unbuttoning his jacket.

John Phillips: "Wait."

Eli removes it.

Carefully.

Methodically.

He folds the jacket once.

Places it across the ring apron.

Mark Bravo: "Whoa."

Eric stops.

Creed looks directly at him.

Still calm.

Still wearing that almost compassionate expression.

But for the very first time...

Eli Creed begins rolling up his sleeves.

John Phillips: "I don't believe we've ever seen this."

Mark Bravo: "Eli Creed is getting ready to fight."

One sleeve.

Slowly rolled above the elbow.

Then the other.

Eric smirks.

He motions for Creed to come forward.

Eric Dane Jr.: "There you go."

Eli takes one step.

Eli Creed: "Eric—"

Suddenly—

LINDSEY LOTHARIO FLIES THROUGH THE ROPES!

LINDSEY CHARGES ERIC DANE JR. HEAD ON!

The two collide at ringside!

John Phillips: "LINDSEY!"

Lindsey tackles Dane backward!

Both crash into the barricade!

The crowd erupts!

Lindsey immediately unloads!

RIGHT HAND!

ELBOW!

ANOTHER ELBOW!

Dane fires back!

Forearm!

Lindsey staggers!

Dane grabs them by the head—

Lindsey drives a knee into his stomach!

Another!

The referee rushes to the ropes.

Referee: "LINDSEY! GET BACK IN THE RING!"

Lindsey doesn't even hear him.

Or doesn't care.

Eric fires a headbutt!

Lindsey answers with one of their own!

Both stumble backward!

John Phillips: "This match is completely breaking down!"

Bobby Dean stands inside the ring looking from Lindsey...

...to Eric...

...to the fallen Kairo...

...to Eli Creed.

Bobby looks completely overwhelmed.

Bobby Dean: "GUYS!"

Nobody listens.

Bobby Dean: "WE'RE WRESTLING!"

Mark Bravo: "Bobby is trying to restore order."

John Phillips: "That's terrifying."

The referee begins counting Lindsey out.

Referee: "ONE!"

Lindsey rushes Eric again.

Eric catches them with a knee!

Lindsey fires a forearm!

Referee: "TWO!"

Eric grabs Lindsey.

Tries to send them into the barricade—

Lindsey reverses!

DANE CRASHES INTO THE BARRICADE!

Referee: "THREE!"

Lindsey charges—

Eric gets both feet up!

Lindsey staggers backward.

Dane explodes forward!

ROLLING ELBOW!

Lindsey drops!

Referee: "FOUR!"

Eric stands over Lindsey.

He looks toward Eli Creed again.

Creed still has his sleeves rolled up.

Still hasn't taken his eyes off Dane.

But he doesn't advance.

Because Lindsey is already getting back up.

John Phillips: "Look at Lindsey! They're not staying down!"

Referee: "FIVE!"

Lindsey grabs the barricade.

Pulls themselves upright.

Eric waves them forward.

Lindsey obliges.

They collide again!

Forearm from Lindsey!

Elbow from Dane!

Kick from Lindsey!

Headbutt from Dane!

Referee: "SIX!"

Bobby leans over the top rope.

Bobby Dean: "LINDSEY!"

Lindsey glances toward the ring.

Bobby Dean: "YOU'RE GONNA GET COUNTED OUT!"

That registers.

Lindsey looks toward the referee.

Referee: "SEVEN!"

Lindsey looks back at Eric.

Eric smiles.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Go ahead."

He gestures toward the ring.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Wouldn't wanna lose your big opportunity."

Lindsey's jaw tightens.

They take one step toward Dane.

Referee: "EIGHT!"

Eli finally speaks.

Eli Creed: "Lindsey."

That's all.

Lindsey freezes.

They look toward Creed.

Eli points calmly toward the ring.

Lindsey breathes heavily.

Looks back at Eric.

Then rolls underneath the bottom rope!

Referee: "NINE!"

Lindsey beats the count!

The crowd erupts.

John Phillips: "Lindsey got back in just in time!"

Bobby immediately moves toward them.

Bobby Dean: "Are you okay?"

Lindsey looks up at Bobby.

Still furious.

Still breathing hard.

Still staring past him toward Eric Dane Jr.

Bobby turns around.

Eric remains at ringside.

Kairo is beginning to recover nearby.

Eli Creed stands between them now.

Jacket removed.

Sleeves rolled up.

A side of Eli Creed that nobody in UTA has seen before.

Eric points at him.

Eric Dane Jr.: "This ain't over."

Eli slowly tilts his head.

That familiar calm smile returns.

Eli Creed: "No."

Beat.

Eli Creed: "It isn't."

Inside the ring, Lindsey gets back to their feet.

Bobby looks toward Eric again.

Bobby Dean: "Eric..."

Dane looks at him.

Bobby gestures toward the ring with both hands.

Bobby Dean: "You're kinda messing up my match."

The crowd laughs.

Eric stares at Bobby for a moment.

Some of the aggression drains from his expression.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Sorry, Bobbo."

Bobby gives him a thumbs-up.

Bobby Dean: "It's okay."

Bobby turns around—

LOW KICK FROM LINDSEY!

Bobby's bad leg buckles!

Bobby Dean: "OH COME ON!"

Lindsey grabs Bobby around the head.

Lindsey Lothario: "Still wrestling."

Bobby sighs.

Bobby Dean: "Right."

Lindsey drives a knee into Bobby's stomach!

And just like that...

The International Championship match is back underway.

But outside the ring...

Eric Dane Jr. and Eli Creed continue staring at one another.

And something new has just begun.

Bobby Dean pushes himself back to his feet.

Across the ring, Lindsey Lothario does the same.

Both competitors are feeling this one now.

Bobby grabs the top rope and shakes out his leg.

Lindsey wipes the sweat from their face and begins moving toward the center of the ring.

Then...

The crowd begins to stir.

John Phillips: "Wait a minute."

The reaction grows.

Lindsey notices it first.

They turn toward the entrance.

Eli Creed does the same.

And the expression on Creed's face immediately changes.

Mark Bravo: "Oh no."

Eric Dane Jr. walks out onto the stage.

And he does not look happy.

John Phillips: "Eric Dane Jr."

Mark Bravo: "There's a guy who's probably been watching this match somewhere backstage wanting to put his fist through a television."

Eric doesn't pose.

Doesn't play to the crowd.

He just starts walking toward the ring.

Eyes locked on the International Championship sitting at ringside.

Then Lindsey.

Then Bobby.

Bobby sees him.

And immediately lights up.

Bobby Dean: "ERIC!"

Bobby waves.

Eric keeps walking.

Bobby Dean: "HEY, ERIC!"

Bobby points excitedly at himself.

Bobby Dean: "LOOK!"

Eric's expression doesn't change.

Bobby Dean: "I'M WRESTLING!"

The crowd laughs.

Mark Bravo: "Yes, Bobby. He can see that."

Bobby gives Eric an enthusiastic thumbs-up.

Bobby Dean: "FOR MY TITLE!"

That one lands differently.

Eric stops halfway down the aisle.

He looks at Bobby.

Then slowly looks toward Lindsey.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Yeah."

He nods.

Eric Dane Jr.: "I see that, Bobbo."

Eric starts walking again.

Eric Dane Jr.: "That's kinda the problem."

Bobby's smile fades slightly.

John Phillips: "Remember what happened in South Africa. Eric Dane Jr. wanted this opportunity."

Mark Bravo: "More than wanted it. He thought he had Bobby convinced."

John Phillips: "Until Eli Creed entered the conversation."

Eric reaches ringside.

He points toward Lindsey.

Eric Dane Jr.: "That should be me."

Bobby looks confused.

Eric Dane Jr.: "We talked about this."

Eric points at Bobby now.

Eric Dane Jr.: "You were gonna give me the shot."

Bobby thinks about it.

Bobby Dean: "Well..."

Eric immediately throws his hands up.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Oh, don't start thinking now."

Bobby closes his mouth.

Eric points toward Eli Creed.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Then he got in your ear."

Creed remains perfectly still.

Eric Dane Jr.: "He confused you."

Eric points toward Lindsey.

Eric Dane Jr.: "And somehow they walked away with my match."

Lindsey steps toward the ropes.

The referee immediately moves between Lindsey and the ropes, reminding them that there is still a match happening.

John Phillips: "Eric Dane Jr. has maintained ever since South Africa that Bobby Dean was manipulated into giving Lindsey Lothario this opportunity."

Mark Bravo: "Because in Eric's mind, there is absolutely no universe where Bobby Dean willingly chooses Lindsey over an Eric Dane."

Eric reaches the bottom of the ramp.

Eli Creed looks toward Kairo Bey.

No words.

Just a look.

Kairo understands.

He steps away from the Creed Method's corner and moves directly into Eric's path.

Eric stops.

Looks at Kairo.

Then tries to step around him.

Kairo moves with him.

Kairo Bey: "No."

Eric looks almost offended.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Move."

Kairo Bey: "There's a match happening."

Eric Dane Jr.: "I know."

Eric looks past him toward the ring.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Mine."

Kairo shakes his head.

Kairo Bey: "Not tonight."

Eric takes another step.

Kairo plants himself firmly in front of him.

Kairo Bey: "Go backstage."

Eric stares at him.

Eric Dane Jr.: "You really wanna be the guy who tries to stop me from watching my championship match?"

Kairo Bey: "It's not your championship."

Eric's jaw tightens.

Kairo Bey: "It's not your match."

Beat.

Kairo Bey: "And you're not screwing this up."

Eric looks toward Eli.

Creed hasn't moved.

He simply watches.

Eric looks back at Kairo.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Okay."

A tiny nod.

Eric Dane Jr.: "You had your chance."

CRACK!

ERIC DANE JR. COLD COCKS KAIRO BEY!

Kairo drops!

John Phillips: "OH! DANE JUST DROPPED KAIRO!"

Mark Bravo: "Kairo tried to keep him away from the ring and Eric Dane Jr. just punched him right in the mouth!"

Kairo hits the floor hard.

Eric looks down at him.

Then uses his boot to shove Kairo out of his path.

Not even worth another look.

Eric turns back toward the ring.

And starts forward.

That's when Eli Creed moves.

For the first time since Eric arrived...

Creed steps directly into his path.

Eric stops again.

Now they're looking directly at one another.

John Phillips: "And now it's Eli Creed."

Creed looks down at Kairo.

Then back at Eric.

Eric motions toward the ring.

Eric Dane Jr.: "You did this."

Creed says nothing.

Eric Dane Jr.: "You got in his head."

Eric points toward Bobby.

Eric Dane Jr.: "You took a guy who barely knows what day it is and talked him out of making the obvious decision."

Creed remains calm.

Eric Dane Jr.: "That is supposed to be me in there."

Creed finally answers.

Eli Creed: "And yet..."

He looks toward Lindsey.

Eli Creed: "...it isn't."

Eric's face tightens.

Creed gestures back toward the entrance.

Eli Creed: "Leave."

Eric laughs.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Or what?"

Silence.

Eli looks down.

Then...

for the first time...

Eli Creed removes his jacket.

Mark Bravo: "Whoa."

Creed carefully folds it.

Places it across the ring apron.

Then begins rolling up his right sleeve.

John Phillips: "We've never seen this before."

Eric watches.

The arrogance slowly returns to his face.

Eli rolls up the other sleeve.

Mark Bravo: "I don't think Eli Creed wants to fight Eric Dane Jr."

John Phillips: "But I think he's making it very clear that if Eric takes another step toward that ring, he will."

Eric looks past Creed.

At Lindsey.

At Bobby.

At the International Championship.

Then back at Eli.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Finally."

He smiles.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Maybe somebody around here wants to earn something."

Eric takes a step forward.

Creed does the same.

And before either man can do anything—

LINDSEY LOTHARIO SHOOTS THROUGH THE ROPES!

John Phillips: "LINDSEY!"

LINDSEY CHARGES ERIC DANE JR. HEAD ON!

Eric barely has time to turn before Lindsey crashes into him!

Both go flying backward!

They slam into the barricade!

The crowd erupts!

Mark Bravo: "LINDSEY LOTHARIO ISN'T WAITING FOR ELI CREED TO HANDLE THIS!"

Lindsey is immediately on Eric!

Forearm!

Another!

Eric covers up!

Lindsey grabs him by the jacket and drives him back into the barricade!

John Phillips: "Eric Dane Jr. came down here claiming Lindsey stole his opportunity, and Lindsey has heard enough!"

Eric finally fires back!

RIGHT HAND!

Lindsey staggers!

Eric grabs them—

Lindsey drives him backward again!

Meanwhile, Eli Creed stands several feet away.

Sleeves rolled up.

Watching.

He doesn't interfere.

He doesn't need to.

Because Lindsey Lothario has made their own decision.

And inside the ring...

Bobby Dean looks absolutely horrified.

Bobby Dean: "ERIC!"

He looks toward Lindsey.

Bobby Dean: "LINDSEY!"

Then toward the referee.

Bobby Dean: "ARE WE STILL WRESTLING?!"

Inside the ring, Bobby Dean looks from Lindsey Lothario...

...to Eric Dane Jr...

...to the referee.

Bobby Dean: "ARE WE STILL WRESTLING?!"

The referee doesn't answer Bobby.

He's already halfway through the ropes, shouting toward ringside.

Referee: "LINDSEY! BACK IN THE RING!"

Lindsey has Eric backed near the barricade.

Eric fires a forearm.

Lindsey answers with one of their own.

Neither appears interested in stopping.

Referee: "THAT'S ENOUGH!"

The referee points toward Lindsey.

Referee: "YOU'VE GOT A MATCH!"

Lindsey barely glances toward him.

Eric uses the opening to shove Lindsey backward.

Lindsey immediately lunges again—

Eli Creed: "Lindsey."

The voice isn't loud.

It doesn't need to be.

Lindsey stops.

Breathing heavily.

Fists clenched.

Eli Creed moves between Lindsey and Eric.

His jacket remains draped over the apron.

His sleeves remain rolled above his elbows.

For the first time tonight, the calm preacher-like presentation has been stripped down to something considerably more direct.

Eli Creed: "Back away."

Lindsey looks at Eric.

Then at Eli.

Eli Creed: "You've made your point."

Lindsey's jaw tightens.

Eli Creed: "Your opportunity is in that ring."

Eli gestures toward Bobby.

Bobby raises a hand.

Bobby Dean: "Hi."

Nobody acknowledges him.

Bobby Dean: "Okay."

Lindsey finally takes one step backward.

Then another.

Eli turns toward Eric.

Eric's attention immediately shifts to him.

Eli Creed: "Eric."

Creed's voice is still measured.

Eli Creed: "This is not the time."

Eric laughs under his breath.

Eli Creed: "And it is not the place."

Eric looks past him toward Bobby and Lindsey.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Actually, Eli..."

He points toward the International Championship.

Eric Dane Jr.: "...this is exactly the place."

Eli subtly shifts with him, blocking the path toward the ring.

Eric Dane Jr.: "That's the belt I should be wrestling for."

He points toward Lindsey.

Eric Dane Jr.: "That's the spot that should've been mine."

Then toward Bobby.

Eric Dane Jr.: "And Bobbo damn near gave it to me until you walked in and started doing your Jedi mind trick bullshit."

Inside the ring, Bobby looks toward them.

Bobby Dean: "It was actually a pretty good conversation."

Eric looks toward Bobby.

Eric Dane Jr.: "NOT HELPING, BOBBY!"

Bobby Dean: "Sorry."

John Phillips: "Eric Dane Jr. still believes this match was stolen from him."

Mark Bravo: "And technically Bobby was considering giving Eric the championship opportunity before Eli Creed got involved."

John Phillips: "That doesn't give Dane the right to come out here and derail the match!"

Eli takes another step closer to Eric.

Eli Creed: "You are angry."

Eric rolls his eyes.

Eli Creed: "I understand."

Eric Dane Jr.: "Oh, fuck off."

The crowd reacts.

Eli's expression doesn't change.

Eli Creed: "But your anger does not make this your moment."

Eric Dane Jr.: "My name makes every moment my moment."

Eli gives the slightest shake of his head.

Eli Creed: "And that is precisely why you still have so much growing to do."

Eric's eyes narrow.

Mark Bravo: "Probably not the line I'd use right now."

Eli gestures toward the entrance.

Eli Creed: "Walk away."

Eric doesn't move.

Eli Creed: "Tonight belongs to Lindsey."

Eric looks over Creed's shoulder toward the ring.

Eli Creed: "Your presence here serves no purpose except distraction."

Eric Dane Jr.: "My presence is the only reason anybody's looking at this match now."

The crowd boos.

Eric smiles at the reaction.

Eric Dane Jr.: "There we go."

He spreads his arms.

Eric Dane Jr.: "That's star power."

Eli doesn't indulge him.

Eli Creed: "Leave."

Eric looks at Creed.

Then slowly looks down at Eli's rolled sleeves.

A smirk spreads across Dane's face.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Or what?"

Eli says nothing.

For several long seconds, neither man moves.

The referee continues shouting from the ring.

Referee: "GET AWAY FROM RINGSIDE! BOTH OF YOU!"

Eli raises one hand toward Lindsey without looking away from Eric.

Eli Creed: "Lindsey, return to the ring."

Lindsey hesitates.

Eli Creed: "Now."

Lindsey reluctantly turns.

They take two steps toward the apron.

Eric watches them.

Then looks back at Eli.

Eric Dane Jr.: "You really think you're gonna tell me what to do?"

Eli Creed: "No."

Eli's tone stays maddeningly calm.

Eli Creed: "I'm giving you an opportunity to make the correct choice."

Eric nods slowly.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Okay."

Beat.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Here's my choice."

CRACK!

ERIC DANE JR. DRIVES A FIST INTO THE SIDE OF ELI CREED'S HEAD!

Creed drops to the floor!

The arena erupts.

John Phillips: "DANE JUST HIT ELI CREED!"

Mark Bravo: "HE DROPPED HIM!"

Eli lands beside the apron.

The calm is gone because the man himself is down.

Lindsey hears the impact.

Stops dead.

Slowly turns.

Sees Eli on the floor.

Sees Eric standing above him.

Something changes instantly.

John Phillips: "Oh no."

Lindsey charges!

Referee: "LINDSEY! NO!"

Too late.

LINDSEY LOTHARIO LAUNCHES AT ERIC DANE JR.!

Eric turns—

AND DRIVES AN ELBOW STRAIGHT INTO LINDSEY'S FACE!

Lindsey drops!

The crowd erupts again.

John Phillips: "GOOD GOD! DANE CAUGHT LINDSEY FLUSH!"

Lindsey hits the floor hard beside Creed.

Eric stands over both members of The Creed Method.

Kairo Bey is still recovering several feet away from the earlier punch.

Eric looks around.

Three bodies around him.

And the arrogant grin starts to return.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Anybody else?"

Inside the ring, Bobby Dean looks horrified.

Bobby Dean: "ERIC!"

Eric looks toward him.

Bobby Dean: "YOU HIT EVERYBODY!"

Eric shrugs.

Eric Dane Jr.: "They started it."

Bobby Dean: "I DON'T THINK THEY DID!"

The referee has finally had enough.

He turns toward the timekeeper.

Waves both arms.

Referee: "RING THE BELL!"

DING! DING! DING!

The arena fills with boos.

John Phillips: "That's it! The referee has thrown this match out!"

Mark Bravo: "And listen to this crowd!"

Crowd: "BOOOOOOOOOOO!"

Bobby Dean stands in the middle of the ring.

Completely confused.

Bobby Dean: "Wait."

The ring announcer receives the official decision.

Bobby Dean: "Did I win?"

The referee starts trying to explain.

Bobby Dean: "Did Lindsey win?"

The referee points toward Lindsey.

Bobby Dean: "But I'm still champion?"

The referee nods.

Bobby thinks about this.

Bobby Dean: "That's confusing."

The ring announcer raises the microphone.

Ring Announcer: "Ladies and gentlemen, due to outside interference..."

The boos grow louder.

Ring Announcer: "...the referee has ruled this match a disqualification."

Eric Dane Jr. rolls his eyes.

Ring Announcer: "Therefore, your winner of the match..."

Lindsey is beginning to sit up at ringside, holding their jaw.

Ring Announcer: "...LINDSEY LOTHARIO!"

A mixed reaction, mostly drowned beneath frustration from the crowd.

Ring Announcer: "However, as the championship cannot change hands via disqualification..."

The referee retrieves the International Championship.

Ring Announcer: "...still UTA International Champion..."

The championship is handed back to Bobby.

Ring Announcer: "'BEAUTIFUL' BOBBY DEAN!"

Bobby takes the belt.

He doesn't celebrate.

He looks down at it.

Then toward Lindsey.

Then Eric.

John Phillips: "Lindsey Lothario wins this match by disqualification, but Bobby Dean remains International Champion."

Mark Bravo: "And nobody's happy about it."

The fans continue booing.

They had been watching Bobby Dean and Lindsey Lothario push each other further and further.

A real championship fight.

And Eric Dane Jr. just took the ending away from them.

Eric looks toward Bobby's championship.

Not apologetic.

Not remotely bothered by what he's done.

If anything...

he looks satisfied.

Because Lindsey didn't leave Toronto with Bobby Dean's championship.

And neither did Bobby prove he could beat Lindsey.

Everything remains unresolved.

Bobby Dean stands in the center of the ring with the International Championship in his hands.

There is no celebration.

No smile.

No goofy little dance.

He just looks down at the championship.

Then toward Lindsey Lothario on the floor.

Then toward Eric Dane Jr.

Disappointment settles across Bobby's face.

Not anger.

Not yet.

Disappointment.

Eric climbs onto the apron.

The referee tries to stop him.

Referee: "Eric, that's enough."

Dane brushes past him and steps through the ropes.

John Phillips: "Eric Dane Jr. has already done enough damage here."

Bobby watches Eric approach.

For once, Bobby doesn't look happy to see him.

Bobby Dean: "Why'd you do that?"

Eric stops.

Bobby Dean: "Why'd you have to come out here and mess up my match?"

Eric looks almost confused that Bobby would even ask.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Because this wasn't supposed to be their match, Bobbo."

Eric points toward Lindsey.

Eric Dane Jr.: "It was supposed to be mine."

Bobby's eyebrows pull together.

Eric Dane Jr.: "We talked about this."

Eric Dane Jr.: "You were gonna give me the shot."

Eric Dane Jr.: "Then this asshole—"

Eric points toward Eli Creed outside the ring.

Eric Dane Jr.: "—walked up, whispered a few magic words in your ear, and you stupidly handed it to Lindsey instead."

Bobby looks down.

That word hurts.

Stupidly.

Bobby Dean: "Come on, Eric."

He looks back up.

Bobby Dean: "I'm not stupid."

Eric stares at him.

Then actually laughs.

Not kindly.

Not like a friend.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Bobby."

Eric shakes his head.

Eric Dane Jr.: "You're kidding, right?"

Bobby says nothing.

Eric Dane Jr.: "You're Bobby fucking Dean."

The crowd begins booing.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Your entire career is one long joke that somehow forgot to end."

Bobby's face falls.

Eric Dane Jr.: "People don't look at you and see a champion."

Eric Dane Jr.: "They see the fat guy on the scooter."

Eric Dane Jr.: "The guy who falls down."

Eric Dane Jr.: "The guy who says something dumb so everybody can laugh."

The boos get louder.

John Phillips: "Come on, Eric."

Eric Dane Jr.: "You honestly think these people respect you?"

Bobby looks around at the crowd.

Eric Dane Jr.: "They laugh at you, Bobby."

Eric Dane Jr.: "That's not the same thing."

Bobby's eyes begin to glass slightly.

Eric Dane Jr.: "You think Mikey Unlikely really sees you as an equal?"

Eric Dane Jr.: "You think Maxx Mayhem gives a shit about you?"

Eric Dane Jr.: "You think The Creed Method suddenly became your best friends because they believe in Beautiful Bobby Dean?"

Eric laughs again.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Wake up."

Bobby's grip tightens around the International Championship.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Nobody likes you."

The crowd erupts in boos.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Nobody."

Eric Dane Jr.: "They tolerate you because you're funny."

Eric Dane Jr.: "Because you're harmless."

Eric Dane Jr.: "Because you're too stupid to realize when you're being used."

Bobby looks down again.

Eric keeps going.

Eric Dane Jr.: "That's why Creed picked you."

Eric Dane Jr.: "That's why Lindsey got this match."

Eric Dane Jr.: "Because everybody knows Bobby Dean is the easiest mark in the locker room."

Bobby's jaw tightens.

Something changes.

Small.

Almost invisible.

But it's there.

Eric Dane Jr.: "And the saddest part?"

Eric steps closer.

Eric Dane Jr.: "You actually believe these people like you."

Eric points toward the crowd.

Eric Dane Jr.: "You actually think you're one of them."

Bobby lifts his head.

Eric Dane Jr.: "You're not—"

BOOM!

BOBBY DEAN FLATTENS ERIC DANE JR. WITH A MASSIVE RIGHT HAND!

The building EXPLODES.

John Phillips: "OH MY GOD!"

Mark Bravo: "BOBBY JUST DROPPED HIM!"

Eric crashes to the canvas.

He rolls onto one hip.

One hand immediately goes to his jaw.

His eyes are wide.

Shocked.

Absolutely stunned that Bobby Dean just punched him in the face.

Bobby stands over him.

International Championship hanging from one hand.

The other balled tightly into a fist.

Bobby's chest rises and falls.

His eyes are wet.

But he isn't looking away.

Bobby Dean: "I'M NOT STUPID, ERIC!"

The crowd erupts.

Bobby Dean: "AND PEOPLE DO LIKE ME!"

Eric stares up at him.

Bobby Dean: "MIKEY LIKES ME!"

Crowd: "YEAHHHHHH!"

Bobby points toward the entrance.

Bobby Dean: "MAXX LIKES ME!"

Another surprisingly loud cheer.

Mark Bravo: "Oddly enough, that's true."

Bobby Dean: "I THINK EVEN ELI, LINDSEY, AND KAIRO LIKE ME!"

The camera cuts to ringside.

The Creed Method has regrouped.

Kairo is back on his feet, rubbing his jaw.

Lindsey stands beside him.

Eli Creed is upright again, one hand against the side of his head.

Creed looks toward Bobby.

He slowly raises one hand.

Then gives Bobby a respectful nod.

The crowd reacts warmly.

Bobby sees it.

His expression softens for just a second.

Then he looks back down at Eric.

Bobby Dean: "And until today..."

Bobby's voice cracks slightly.

Bobby Dean: "...I thought you liked me too."

The arena gets quieter.

Eric's expression changes.

Not remorse.

But perhaps the realization that Bobby actually means it.

Eric begins pulling himself up using the ropes.

Bobby watches him.

Eric reaches the apron.

His hand grips the middle rope.

Bobby kicks the arm away.

Eric loses his grip!

He drops backward onto the apron!

The crowd laughs and cheers.

Bobby Dean: "Eric..."

Dane looks up.

Bobby Dean: "I don't think I like YOU anymore!"

HUGE POP.

Eric's face twists with anger.

Bobby isn't finished.

Bobby Dean: "What you did tonight wasn't right."

Bobby points toward Lindsey.

Bobby Dean: "Lindsey earned a chance to wrestle me."

Bobby Dean: "And you cheated them out of it."

Lindsey watches silently from ringside.

Bobby Dean: "And what you said to me..."

Bobby pauses.

This part is harder.

Bobby Dean: "...was just plain mean."

The crowd reacts sympathetically.

Eric looks almost incredulous.

Bobby shakes his head.

Bobby Dean: "Friends aren't supposed to make you feel bad about yourself."

Bobby looks down at Eric.

The anger is fading.

What's left hurts more.

Bobby Dean: "We're not friends anymore, Eric."

The arena reacts with a mixture of cheers and a genuine sympathetic groan.

It shouldn't sound devastating.

Coming from Bobby Dean, somehow it does.

Eric stares at him from the apron.

For perhaps the first time tonight, Eric Dane Jr. doesn't immediately have something to say.

Bobby turns away from him.

He looks toward Lindsey.

Then down at the International Championship.

Bobby walks to the ropes.

He looks directly at Lindsey.

Bobby Dean: "I'm sorry."

Lindsey studies him.

Bobby raises the championship slightly.

Bobby Dean: "You didn't get your whole chance."

That draws Eli Creed's attention.

Bobby looks from Lindsey...

...to Kairo...

...to Eli.

Bobby Dean: "I didn't want it to end like that."

Lindsey steps closer to the apron.

For a moment, it looks like they may say something.

Instead, Lindsey extends a hand upward.

Bobby looks at it.

Then reaches down.

They shake hands.

The crowd applauds.

John Phillips: "Respect between champion and challenger."

Eli Creed looks toward Bobby.

Another small nod.

Not recruitment.

Not manipulation.

Just acknowledgment.

Eric sees all of it.

The handshake.

The crowd applauding Bobby.

The Creed Method showing him respect.

Everything Eric just told Bobby didn't exist.

Happening right in front of him.

Dane's embarrassment slowly turns into rage.

He starts to climb through the ropes again.

The referee immediately steps between them.

Kairo moves forward at ringside.

Lindsey does too.

Even Eli takes a step.

Eric stops.

He looks around.

Suddenly, everyone is looking back at him.

Eric points at Bobby.

Eric Dane Jr.: "You're gonna regret that."

Bobby looks at him.

Still hurt.

Still angry.

But not afraid.

Bobby Dean: "Maybe."

Bobby looks down at the International Championship.

Then back at Eric.

Bobby Dean: "But I'm still not stupid."

The crowd erupts again.

Bobby raises the International Championship.

Not triumphantly.

Not really.

Tonight doesn't feel like a victory.

But it does feel like something changed.

John Phillips: "Bobby Dean came into this match trying to prove he belonged as International Champion."

Mark Bravo: "I think he proved something bigger."

The final shot catches Bobby Dean inside the ring.

Lindsey Lothario, Eli Creed, and Kairo Bey together at ringside.

Eric Dane Jr. backing away up the aisle, eyes burning with humiliation and anger.

And Bobby...

watching someone he thought was his friend walk away.

International Championship still in hand.

But with a little less innocence than he had when the match began.

Embarrassing

Segment

We cut backstage.

Ace Andrews stands in one of the corridors of Scotiabank Arena, dressed—as always—in a suit that probably costs more than most people's cars.

Beside him stands "Classy" Bianca Page.

Arms folded.

Clearly irritated.

And behind them...

Samuel Scythe.

The UTA Fighting Championship rests over his shoulder.

Samuel says nothing.

He simply stares into the camera with that same murderous intensity that makes silence feel considerably more threatening than words.

Ace adjusts the cuffs of his jacket.

Ace Andrews: "I have been trying all evening to find the proper word for what is happening here tonight."

He pauses.

Ace Andrews: "Disrespectful?"

Ace shakes his head.

Ace Andrews: "No."

Ace Andrews: "Incompetent?"

Another small shake.

Ace Andrews: "Closer."

Bianca rolls her eyes.

Bianca Page: "Embarrassing."

Ace looks toward her.

A smile appears.

Ace Andrews: "There it is."

He turns back toward the camera.

Ace Andrews: "Embarrassing."

Ace gestures toward Samuel.

Ace Andrews: "Samuel Scythe is the Fighting Champion of the United Toughness Alliance."

Samuel slowly adjusts the championship on his shoulder.

Ace Andrews: "A man who walked into this company, destroyed what was placed before him, and took championship gold because there was nobody capable of stopping him."

Ace Andrews: "And yet here we are."

Ace spreads his hands.

Ace Andrews: "One Last Stop."

Ace Andrews: "Toronto."

Ace Andrews: "One of UTA's biggest events of the year."

He looks toward Scythe.

Ace Andrews: "And the Fighting Champion isn't defending his championship."

Ace lets out a disbelieving laugh.

Ace Andrews: "That isn't poor booking."

Ace Andrews: "That's a travesty."

Bianca immediately steps forward.

Bianca Page: "And apparently we're supposed to ignore the other problem."

She gestures toward herself.

Bianca Page: "Me."

Ace nods solemnly, as though discussing a national crisis.

Bianca Page: "Thousands of people bought tickets tonight."

Bianca Page: "People paid for parking."

Bianca Page: "They bought overpriced food."

Bianca Page: "They bought merchandise."

She shakes her head.

Bianca Page: "And after all of that, UTA doesn't even give them the opportunity to watch Bianca Page wrestle?"

Bianca looks genuinely offended on behalf of the audience.

Bianca Page: "That's practically theft."

Ace Andrews: "Consumer fraud, perhaps."

Bianca Page: "Exactly."

Ace looks into the camera.

Ace Andrews: "The Fighting Champion is standing backstage."

He points toward Samuel.

Ace Andrews: "One of the most accomplished women on this roster is standing backstage."

He gestures toward Bianca.

Ace Andrews: "And somehow neither one of them was deemed necessary for tonight's card."

Ace smiles.

Ace Andrews: "Do you understand how absurd that is?"

Bianca Page: "Meanwhile, I've been watching people get championship opportunities all night."

She scoffs.

Bianca Page: "People I've beaten."

Bianca Page: "People beneath me."

Bianca Page: "People who should be buying tickets to watch me."

Bianca turns toward Ace.

Bianca Page: "Honestly, I'm beginning to think UTA hates money."

Ace Andrews: "I've considered the possibility."

Samuel Scythe remains silent.

His hand slowly closes around the faceplate of the Fighting Championship.

Ace notices.

Ace Andrews: "And Samuel..."

Ace glances back toward him.

Ace Andrews: "...is considerably less philosophical about it than Bianca and I."

Samuel looks toward Ace.

Then back into the camera.

Samuel Scythe: "Give me someone."

Ace smiles.

Ace Andrews: "See?"

He turns toward the camera again.

Ace Andrews: "Simple."

Ace Andrews: "Samuel doesn't care who."

Ace Andrews: "He doesn't require weeks of build."

Ace Andrews: "He doesn't require elaborate negotiations."

Ace Andrews: "Find somebody brave enough to challenge him..."

Ace taps the Fighting Championship.

Ace Andrews: "...and allow the champion to do what champions are supposedly here to do."

Bianca Page: "And while they're fixing mistakes..."

Bianca steps closer to the camera.

Bianca Page: "...they can find something worthwhile for me too."

Her smile sharpens.

Bianca Page: "Preferably involving gold."

Ace places a hand lightly on Bianca's shoulder.

Ace Andrews: "This company can continue pretending Platinum Society is optional."

He looks toward Bianca.

Then Samuel.

Ace Andrews: "That's their prerogative."

His smile disappears.

Ace Andrews: "But eventually they're going to discover something."

Ace Andrews: "You can leave us off the card."

Ace Andrews: "You cannot leave us out of the conversation."

Bianca smiles approvingly.

Bianca Page: "Because without Platinum Society..."

She looks around with exaggerated disappointment.

Bianca Page: "...this show has been considerably less classy."

Ace chuckles.

Samuel doesn't.

Samuel simply looks down at the Fighting Championship.

Then into the camera.

Samuel Scythe: "You reap what you sow."

Ace's grin widens.

Ace Andrews: "And Scott Stevens..."

He straightens his jacket.

Ace Andrews: "...might want to keep that in mind when he puts together the next card."

Ace turns away.

Bianca follows, still visibly insulted by the entire concept of not wrestling tonight.

Samuel remains behind for another moment.

The Fighting Championship over his shoulder.

His eyes fixed on the camera.

Then The Reaper turns and follows Platinum Society down the hallway.

Relax

Segment

We cut backstage to the corridor leading toward Gorilla Position.

The atmosphere here is different.

Production assistants hurry between stations. Crew members wear headsets and call out timing cues. Through the walls, the roar of the Toronto crowd can be heard growing louder.

And walking directly through the middle of it all...

Susanita Ybanez.

Already dressed for competition.

Already focused.

Tonight is huge for her.

You can see it written across her face.

There is no smile. No acknowledgement of the camera following her. Susanita keeps her eyes straight ahead toward Gorilla Position, rolling her shoulders once before taking a deep breath.

She's only moments away from walking through that curtain.

Only moments away from her match.

Then—

CRACK!

Susanita suddenly disappears from frame!

The camera jerks sideways as Susanita crashes violently into the concrete wall!

Standing behind her—

SELINA SANTORINO!

Selina doesn't have her phone out.

She's not looking for the perfect angle.

She's not talking to her Influencies.

She's furious.

Earlier tonight, Selina Santorino said if UTA couldn't find room for her on One Last Stop...

She'd make room herself.

Apparently she meant it.

Selina Santorino: "You got your spot!"

Selina grabs Susanita by the hair before she can recover and DRIVES her face-first into a nearby equipment case!

CLANG!

Susanita collapses against it.

Selina Santorino: "You got your match!"

Selina grabs her again.

Selina Santorino: "And I got NOTHING!"

She sends Susanita crashing across the corridor!

Susanita hits the floor hard, but immediately tries pushing herself back up.

That's Susanita.

She's hurt.

She's disoriented.

But she's fighting.

She gets to one knee—

Selina charges!

Susanita catches her!

The two women collide against the wall as Susanita begins firing back!

A forearm!

Another!

Susanita grabs Selina and drives her backward into a stack of production crates!

Selina's eyes go wide.

For a moment, Susanita has turned the tables!

Susanita throws another shot—

But Selina ducks!

She grabs Susanita from behind!

And LAUNCHES HER SHOULDER-FIRST INTO THE STEEL FRAME OF THE GORILLA POSITION ENTRANCE!

THUD!

Susanita hits at an awful angle.

Her right shoulder takes almost all of it.

She immediately drops to the floor.

This time she doesn't get back up.

Susanita rolls onto her side, clutching her shoulder tightly against her body.

Susanita Ybanez: "¡AHHH! ¡Mi hombro!"

Selina looks down at her.

Breathing heavily.

Still angry.

And then she notices something.

Susanita is still trying to crawl toward Gorilla.

Still trying to get to her match.

Using one arm, Susanita drags herself forward across the floor.

Selina watches her for several seconds in disbelief.

Selina Santorino: "Are you serious?"

Susanita reaches toward the curtain.

Selina grabs her by the ankle and drags her backward!

Susanita screams as the sudden movement jars her injured shoulder.

Selina Santorino: "You STILL don't get it!"

Selina pulls Susanita up by the back of her gear.

Susanita's right arm hangs almost uselessly at her side.

Selina looks toward the Gorilla Position entrance.

Then toward Susanita.

And there's the realization.

If Susanita can't make it through that curtain...

There is suddenly room on the show.

Selina Santorino: "I said I'd make room."

She grabs Susanita—

Scott Stevens: "HEY! HEY! THAT'S ENOUGH!"

Scott Stevens comes charging into frame!

Three officials are immediately behind him, followed by security and members of the medical staff.

Selina releases Susanita.

Susanita drops to the floor.

Officials swarm between them!

Scott Stevens: "GET HER OUT OF HERE!"

Stevens pushes through the group, absolutely furious.

Scott Stevens: "What the hell is wrong with you?!"

Selina backs away.

Then something strange happens.

She puts both hands into the air.

No resistance.

No attempt to get around the officials.

She's finished.

Selina Santorino: "Relax."

Stevens looks ready to explode.

Scott Stevens: "RELAX?!"

Selina Santorino: "I'm done."

Selina takes another step backward, hands still raised.

Selina Santorino: "I proved my point."

She looks beyond Stevens.

At Susanita.

Medical personnel are already surrounding her.

Selina Santorino: "You didn't have room for me."

A small smile finally returns to Selina's face.

Selina Santorino: "Now you do."

Scott Stevens: "GET HER OUT!"

Security begins escorting Selina away.

She doesn't fight them.

She doesn't need to.

As she disappears down the hallway, Selina looks back one final time.

Selina Santorino: "I'm simply better."

Then she's gone.

The attitude disappears from the scene immediately.

Because Susanita Ybanez is still on the floor.

And this doesn't look good.

A member of the medical staff kneels beside her, carefully supporting Susanita's right arm while another checks her shoulder.

Medic: "Susanita, don't move it."

Susanita Ybanez: "My match..."

Medic: "Forget the match right now."

Susanita shakes her head immediately.

Susanita Ybanez: "No."

She tries to sit up.

The second she puts any pressure through the arm—

Susanita Ybanez: "AHHH!"

She drops back down.

Stevens kneels beside her now.

Scott Stevens: "Don't move, Susanita."

Susanita Ybanez: "Scott... I can go."

Stevens looks at the medical staff.

The medic immediately shakes his head.

Medic: "Nobody touches that shoulder until we stabilize it."

Susanita closes her eyes.

The frustration hits almost as hard as the pain.

She was seconds away.

Seconds away from walking through the curtain for one of the biggest matches of her career.

Now she is lying only feet away from Gorilla Position while medical personnel begin immobilizing her right arm.

Stevens rises slowly.

He looks down the hallway where Selina Santorino disappeared.

Then back toward Susanita.

The anger on the General Manager's face says everything.

But right now...

The bigger concern is Susanita Ybanez.

And whether she's going to be able to compete at all.

Canada Donuts

Segment

Bobby Dean has finally made it through the curtain.

The UTA International Championship rests over his shoulder.

Normally, that alone would be enough to have Bobby smiling from ear to ear.

Not tonight.

He walks slowly through the hallway.

No scooter.

No horn.

No excitedly showing the championship to every production assistant he passes.

Bobby just looks... sad.

The adrenaline from everything that happened in the ring is beginning to disappear.

And what's left is the realization that someone Bobby genuinely considered a friend just told him exactly what he thinks of him.

Bobby looks down at the International Championship.

He adjusts it slightly.

Voice: "Bobby."

Bobby stops.

He looks up.

Mikey Unlikely is standing farther down the hallway.

The WrestleZone Championship rests over his shoulder.

Bobby's expression immediately changes.

Not completely.

But enough.

Bobby Dean: "Hey, Mikey."

Mikey walks toward him.

Mikey Unlikely: "Hey yourself."

Mikey stops in front of Bobby.

For a second, neither man says anything.

Then Mikey looks down at Bobby's hand.

The hand that knocked Eric Dane Jr. flat.

Mikey Unlikely: "Nice right hand."

Bobby looks down at it too.

Bobby Dean: "It kinda hurts."

Mikey Unlikely: "Yeah, that's usually how punching people works."

Bobby nods thoughtfully.

Bobby Dean: "I don't usually do it that hard."

Mikey Unlikely: "I noticed."

A tiny smile escapes Bobby.

Mikey sees it.

Mikey Unlikely: "You know, I was about thirty seconds away from coming out there."

Bobby looks surprised.

Bobby Dean: "You were?"

Mikey Unlikely: "Absolutely."

Mikey points back toward Gorilla.

Mikey Unlikely: "I was watching everything on the monitor."

Mikey Unlikely: "Eric starts running his mouth."

Mikey Unlikely: "Starts telling you you're stupid."

Mikey Unlikely: "Starts telling you nobody likes you."

Mikey shakes his head.

Mikey Unlikely: "I put the title down."

Mikey Unlikely: "I was coming."

Bobby looks genuinely touched.

Bobby Dean: "Really?"

Mikey Unlikely: "Really."

Beat.

Mikey Unlikely: "Then you punched him in the face."

Bobby looks almost embarrassed.

Bobby Dean: "Yeah."

Mikey Unlikely: "And suddenly I realized..."

Mikey smiles.

Mikey Unlikely: "...Bobby's got this."

Bobby looks down.

That one lands.

Mikey Unlikely: "I'm proud of you, man."

Bobby looks back up.

Bobby Dean: "For punching Eric?"

Mikey Unlikely: "Little bit."

Bobby almost smiles again.

Mikey Unlikely: "But mostly because you stood up for yourself."

The smile disappears.

Bobby looks back down at the floor.

Bobby Dean: "I didn't wanna hit him."

Mikey Unlikely: "I know."

Bobby Dean: "Eric was my friend."

Mikey's expression softens.

Bobby Dean: "At least..."

Bobby hesitates.

Bobby Dean: "...I thought he was."

Mikey nods.

Bobby Dean: "I know people make jokes about me."

Bobby pats his stomach.

Bobby Dean: "I mean, I get it."

Bobby Dean: "Sometimes I make it pretty easy."

Mikey smirks slightly.

Bobby Dean: "But Eric..."

Bobby shakes his head.

Bobby Dean: "He didn't sound like he was joking."

Mikey Unlikely: "He wasn't."

Bobby absorbs that.

Mikey Unlikely: "And that's why I'm proud of you."

Mikey steps closer.

Mikey Unlikely: "Because the old Bobby would've laughed."

Mikey Unlikely: "You would've made a joke."

Mikey Unlikely: "Pretended it didn't bother you."

Mikey Unlikely: "Then you would've gone looking for a donut and acted like everything was fine."

Bobby looks at him.

Bobby Dean: "Donuts do help."

Mikey Unlikely: "They do."

Beat.

Mikey Unlikely: "But they don't fix everything."

Bobby nods slowly.

Mikey Unlikely: "Tonight you didn't pretend."

Mikey Unlikely: "You told him he hurt you."

Mikey Unlikely: "You told him what he did was wrong."

Mikey Unlikely: "And when he kept pushing..."

Mikey makes a fist.

Mikey Unlikely: "...you introduced Eric Dane Jr. to the Beautiful Right Hand."

Bobby's eyebrows rise.

Bobby Dean: "The Beautiful Right Hand."

Mikey Unlikely: "Trademark it."

Bobby Dean: "Think it'll sell shirts?"

Mikey Unlikely: "Absolutely not."

Bobby laughs.

Not a huge laugh.

But it's there.

Mikey smiles.

Mikey Unlikely: "There he is."

Bobby looks down at the International Championship again.

Bobby Dean: "I really was wrestling good, wasn't I?"

Mikey raises an eyebrow.

Mikey Unlikely: "Bobby..."

Mikey taps the International Championship.

Mikey Unlikely: "You're the International Champion."

Bobby Dean: "Yeah."

Mikey Unlikely: "You went out there against Lindsey Lothario."

Mikey Unlikely: "Someone who took you seriously from the opening bell."

Mikey Unlikely: "And you gave them everything they could handle."

Bobby listens.

Mikey Unlikely: "Nobody handed you anything tonight."

Mikey Unlikely: "Nobody carried you."

Mikey Unlikely: "You wrestled."

Mikey smiles.

Mikey Unlikely: "Really damn well."

Bobby looks almost bashful.

Bobby Dean: "Eric said I'm only champion because people laugh at me."

Mikey Unlikely: "Eric says a lot of stupid shit."

Bobby looks up quickly.

Bobby Dean: "So Eric's stupid?"

Mikey Unlikely: "Tonight?"

Mikey nods.

Mikey Unlikely: "Very."

Bobby smiles wider.

Bobby Dean: "Good."

He thinks about that for a second.

Bobby Dean: "Because I'm not."

Mikey points at him immediately.

Mikey Unlikely: "Exactly."

Bobby takes a deep breath.

Then lets it out.

Bobby Dean: "Hey, Mikey?"

Mikey Unlikely: "Yeah?"

Bobby Dean: "You really like me, right?"

Mikey looks at Bobby.

No joke this time.

Mikey Unlikely: "Yeah, Bobby."

Beat.

Mikey Unlikely: "I really like you."

Bobby nods.

His eyes glass over just slightly.

Bobby Dean: "Okay."

Mikey immediately notices.

Mikey Unlikely: "Don't cry."

Bobby Dean: "I'm not."

Mikey Unlikely: "You're absolutely about to cry."

Bobby Dean: "It's sweat."

Mikey Unlikely: "From your eyes?"

Bobby Dean: "I wrestled really hard."

Mikey laughs.

Then reaches forward and pulls Bobby into a quick hug.

Bobby immediately hugs him back.

Very tightly.

Mikey Unlikely: "Okay."

Bobby squeezes harder.

Mikey Unlikely: "Bobby."

Still squeezing.

Mikey Unlikely: "Bobby, championship ribs."

Bobby finally releases him.

Bobby Dean: "Sorry."

Mikey Unlikely: "You're good."

The two champions stand together.

Bobby looks considerably better than he did when he came through the curtain.

Mikey Unlikely: "Come on."

Bobby Dean: "Where are we going?"

Mikey Unlikely: "You just defended the International Championship, punched Eric Dane Jr. in the face, and ended a toxic friendship."

Mikey considers it.

Mikey Unlikely: "I feel like that earns food."

Bobby's face immediately lights up.

Bobby Dean: "I knew you were my friend."

Mikey puts an arm around Bobby's shoulders as they begin walking down the hallway.

Mikey Unlikely: "Yeah, yeah."

Bobby Dean: "Think Toronto has good donuts?"

Mikey Unlikely: "It's a city, Bobby. I'm sure they have donuts."

Bobby Dean: "Canadian donuts though."

Mikey looks toward him.

Mikey Unlikely: "What does that even mean?"

Bobby Dean: "I don't know."

Bobby shrugs.

Bobby Dean: "But I think we should investigate."

Mikey laughs as the two champions disappear down the hallway together.

Susanita Ybanez vs. Marie Van Claudio

Match

The camera returns to ringside.

The atmosphere inside Scotiabank Arena has changed.

There should be anticipation.

There should be excitement.

After everything that has happened between Susanita Ybanez and Marie Van Claudio, this is supposed to be one of the most personal matches of the entire night.

Instead...

There is uncertainty.

John Phillips: "Folks, we are scheduled for Susanita Ybanez versus Marie Van Claudio next."

The match graphic fills the screen.

SUSANITA YBANEZ

vs.

MARIE VAN CLAUDIO

The crowd reacts loudly at the sight of the names.

John Phillips: "But after what we witnessed backstage just a short time ago, I honestly do not know if this match is going to happen."

Mark Bravo: "Selina Santorino attacked Susanita Ybanez completely unprovoked on her way to Gorilla Position. She drove Susanita shoulder-first into that steel framework, and the last image we saw was medical personnel trying to immobilize that arm."

John Phillips: "Susanita was telling Scott Stevens she could still compete."

Mark Bravo: "Of course she was. That's Susanita."

John Phillips: "But wanting to compete and being medically capable of competing are two very different things."

The graphic fades.

For several seconds, the arena remains dim.

Then...

A small light begins to flash across the entrance stage.

The opening notes of "Forever and Ever" by Lacey Sturm and Lindsey Stirling begin to play.

The reaction is immediate.

Boos pour through Scotiabank Arena.

John Phillips: "And here comes Marie Van Claudio."

The song builds.

Then the violin kicks in.

Marie Van Claudio steps through the curtain.

Alone.

No Amy Harrison.

No Valkyrie Knoxx.

No Empire surrounding her.

Just Marie.

Mark Bravo: "And notice this, John. Marie Van Claudio is here by herself."

John Phillips: "Earlier tonight, Marie made it very clear that she wanted this victory to belong to her. She did not want Susanita blaming Amy Harrison. She did not want Susanita blaming Valkyrie Knoxx. She wanted to prove she could beat Susanita herself."

Marie stops at the top of the stage.

Her eyes immediately move toward the ring.

Then toward the opposite entrance.

There is no smile.

No attempt to play to the Canadian crowd.

That alone feels strange.

Marie Van Claudio is back in Canada.

Born in Montreal.

A woman whose history with UTA stretches back more than a decade.

There was once a time when this kind of entrance in Canada would have been greeted like a homecoming.

Not anymore.

Ring Announcer: "The following contest is scheduled for one fall!"

The crowd reacts.

Ring Announcer: "Introducing first... from Montreal, Quebec, Canada..."

A small pocket of cheers rises from the Canadian crowd.

It is immediately swallowed by boos.

Ring Announcer: "...weighing in at one hundred thirty-five pounds..."

Marie slowly starts walking down the ramp.

Ring Announcer: "...she is the First Lady of the UTA..."

Ring Announcer: "MARIE... VAN... CLAUDIO!"

The boos intensify.

Marie doesn't acknowledge them.

She moves slowly toward the ring.

Purposefully.

Every few steps, her eyes return to the entrance behind her.

John Phillips: "Marie has to be wondering the same thing we are."

Mark Bravo: "Is Susanita coming?"

Marie reaches the middle of the ramp.

She stops.

Normally, this is where Marie surveys the crowd.

Where she takes in the reaction.

Tonight...

She turns her head slightly and looks back toward the entrance.

Waiting.

Almost expecting Susanita to come charging out early.

Nothing.

Marie turns back toward the ring.

And for just a moment...

something flashes across her face.

Disappointment?

Annoyance?

Perhaps both.

John Phillips: "Make no mistake about it, Marie wanted this match."

Mark Bravo: "She needed this match."

John Phillips: "Exactly. After everything between these two women, Marie doesn't simply want Susanita gone. She wants to beat her."

Marie resumes walking.

She reaches ringside.

The referee moves toward the ropes.

Marie climbs onto the apron.

For a second, she stands there looking into the ring.

Then the referee holds the ropes open.

Marie steps through.

The violin continues soaring through the arena.

Marie walks toward the center of the ring.

She stops.

Looks around at the Toronto crowd.

The boos rain down.

Marie slowly raises her chin.

The First Lady doesn't look hurt by the reaction.

If anything...

she looks defiant.

Mark Bravo: "Think about how much has changed for Marie Van Claudio."

John Phillips: "Susanita once looked at Marie as someone who inspired her. Susanita defended Marie. Fought for Marie. Risked everything trying to free Marie from Amy Harrison."

Mark Bravo: "And tonight she was supposed to finally get Marie one-on-one."

John Phillips: "Supposed to."

Marie walks toward the ropes facing the entrance.

She grips the top rope with both hands.

Her music begins to fade.

The lights return to normal.

And Marie waits.

The crowd begins buzzing.

Everyone is looking toward the stage.

The referee looks toward the timekeeper.

Then toward the entrance.

Marie takes several steps backward into her corner.

Her arms fold across her chest.

Still waiting.

John Phillips: "Normally, this is where we would hear Susanita Ybanez's music."

Nothing happens.

The crowd begins murmuring.

Mark Bravo: "John..."

Marie looks toward the referee.

Then points toward the entrance.

Marie Van Claudio: "Well?"

The referee can only shake his head.

He doesn't know either.

Marie slowly walks back toward the center of the ring.

Her eyes remain fixed on the stage.

The hatred between these two women has spent weeks building toward this exact moment.

Marie Van Claudio is here.

Alone.

Ready.

Waiting.

But after Selina Santorino's vicious attack...

the question hanging over Scotiabank Arena is no longer whether Susanita Ybanez can defeat Marie Van Claudio.

It's whether Susanita Ybanez can make it to the ring at all.

For several more seconds, nothing happens.

Marie Van Claudio remains in the center of the ring, staring toward the entrance.

The crowd begins to grow restless.

And then—

The heavy drums hit.

Red lights explode across the stage.

SUSANITA YBANEZ'S MUSIC!

SCOTIABANK ARENA ABSOLUTELY ERUPTS!

John Phillips: "WAIT A MINUTE!"

Mark Bravo: "NO WAY!"

The fans leap to their feet.

The reaction is deafening.

Thousands turn toward the entrance as the violin begins cutting through the heavy drums.

Inside the ring, Marie's eyes widen.

She immediately steps forward.

John Phillips: "Is Susanita Ybanez actually going to do this?!"

Mark Bravo: "After what Selina Santorino did to her?! You've gotta be kidding me!"

The fans wait.

Marie waits.

The music continues.

But Susanita doesn't come out.

Five seconds.

Ten.

Fifteen.

The cheers slowly begin turning into confused murmurs.

Marie looks toward the referee.

He has no idea.

Then...

The music abruptly cuts.

The red lighting disappears.

And the arena falls into an uneasy buzz.

John Phillips: "Something isn't right."

A moment later, Scott Stevens steps through the curtain.

No music.

No theatrics.

The UTA General Manager has a microphone in his hand and an expression that immediately tells the story.

The crowd begins booing before Stevens even says a word.

Mark Bravo: "Oh, no."

Stevens walks several steps onto the stage before stopping.

He looks toward the ring.

Marie watches him closely.

Stevens raises the microphone.

Scott Stevens: "Ladies and gentlemen..."

The boos continue.

Scott Stevens: "Unfortunately, Susanita Ybanez will NOT be able to compete here tonight."

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

The disappointment crashes through Scotiabank Arena immediately.

John Phillips: "Damn it."

Stevens waits for the crowd to settle enough to continue.

Scott Stevens: "Susanita is currently being transported to a local hospital, where her shoulder will undergo further evaluation."

More boos.

Inside the ring...

Marie Van Claudio smirks.

Then she starts laughing.

Stevens sees it.

His head slowly turns toward her.

The laughter immediately gets under his skin.

Scott Stevens: "Yeah, Marie."

Marie looks toward him.

Scott Stevens: "Laugh."

Marie raises an eyebrow.

Scott Stevens: "It's real funny."

The smile begins disappearing from Marie's face.

Scott Stevens: "But I'm going to tell you something right now."

Stevens points directly toward the ring.

Scott Stevens: "If I find out that you had ANYTHING to do with what happened to Susanita tonight..."

The crowd reacts loudly.

Marie immediately puts both hands up.

Her expression changes completely.

She looks genuinely confused.

She points toward herself.

Marie Van Claudio: "Me?!"

Marie shakes her head emphatically.

She mouths something toward Stevens that the cameras can't quite pick up, but the message is obvious.

She had nothing to do with it.

Stevens stares at her for another second before turning his attention elsewhere.

Scott Stevens: "Now..."

His jaw tightens.

Scott Stevens: "As for Selina Santorino."

The crowd immediately boos at the mention of her name.

Scott Stevens: "Selina, if you think attacking another wrestler from behind and putting her in the hospital is how you earn yourself a match in the United Toughness Alliance..."

Stevens shakes his head.

Scott Stevens: "...you are greatly mistaken."

The fans cheer.

Scott Stevens: "There WILL be repercussions for what you did tonight."

He pauses.

Scott Stevens: "I assure you of that."

Suddenly—

"Obsessed" by Mariah Carey blasts through the arena.

The cheers immediately become THUNDEROUS boos.

John Phillips: "Oh, you've got to be kidding me."

Selina Santorino steps through the curtain.

She isn't strutting.

She isn't posing.

There is no runway walk.

The Dominican Diamond is furious.

Selina marches directly toward Scott Stevens.

Her music fades.

She already has a microphone.

Selina Santorino: "Like what, Scott?"

Stevens turns toward her.

Selina spreads her arms.

Selina Santorino: "Come on."

She steps closer.

Selina Santorino: "Why don't you tell me?"

Inside the ring, Marie walks over to the ropes.

She leans against them casually, arms draped over the top rope.

Suddenly, she's just another spectator.

Mark Bravo: "Look at Marie."

John Phillips: "She's enjoying the show now."

Stevens looks Selina up and down.

Then raises the microphone.

Scott Stevens: "For starters?"

Selina waits.

Scott Stevens: "Go home."

The crowd POPS.

Selina blinks.

For perhaps the first time all night, she looks genuinely stunned.

Scott Stevens: "Effective immediately, you're suspended from the United Toughness Alliance until I figure out exactly what I'm going to do with you."

Scotiabank Arena erupts again.

Selina's jaw drops.

Selina Santorino: "SUSPENDED?!"

She points at herself.

Selina Santorino: "You cannot suspend ME!"

Scott Stevens: "I just did."

The crowd loves it.

Selina Santorino: "Are you insane?! Do you have any idea how many people watch this show because of me? Do you

know what happens to your engagement when I'm not here?!"

Stevens has heard enough.

Scott Stevens: "Cut it out."

Selina keeps going anyway.

Selina Santorino: "No! You don't get to—"

Scott Stevens: "I SAID CUT IT OUT!"

Selina stops.

Stevens points toward the back.

Scott Stevens: "You're done tonight."

He raises his free hand and motions toward the curtain.

Scott Stevens: "SECURITY!"

The crowd gets even louder.

Several members of UTA security immediately emerge from behind the curtain.

Selina's eyes widen.

Selina Santorino: "Don't you TOUCH me!"

Security surrounds her.

Selina Santorino: "I can walk myself!"

One of the guards reaches toward her arm.

Selina jerks away.

Selina Santorino: "I SAID DON'T TOUCH ME!"

She tries to push through them.

That's enough.

Security grabs hold of Selina and begins physically hauling her toward the curtain.

Selina Santorino: "GET OFF OF ME!"

Selina kicks her legs wildly as the guards struggle to control the six-foot Dominican Diamond.

Selina Santorino: "SCOTT!"

Stevens doesn't move.

Selina Santorino: "YOU'RE GOING TO REGRET THIS!"

The crowd begins waving goodbye.

John Phillips: "Selina Santorino wanted to make room for herself on One Last Stop."

Mark Bravo: "Well, she made room, all right. Unfortunately for her, it's apparently at home."

Selina continues kicking and screaming as security finally manages to drag her through the curtain.

Selina Santorino: "I'M SIMPLY BETTER THAN ALL OF YOU!"

She's gone.

The Toronto crowd roars its approval.

Scott Stevens stands on the stage, watching to make sure security gets Selina completely out of the area.

And inside the ring...

Marie Van Claudio remains draped against the ropes.

Watching.

The last echoes of Selina Santorino's screaming disappear behind the curtain.

Scott Stevens watches security haul her away.

He waits.

Makes sure she's actually gone.

Then slowly lowers his microphone.

Inside the ring, Marie Van Claudio is still leaning against the ropes.

She looks amused.

Almost relieved.

Susanita Ybanez is on the way to the hospital.

Selina Santorino has just been suspended.

And as far as Marie is concerned...

her night appears to be over.

Scott Stevens turns toward the ring.

Scott Stevens: "Now."

Marie looks toward him.

Scott Stevens: "Marie."

Marie spreads her arms.

Marie Van Claudio: "What?"

Stevens begins walking slowly down the ramp.

Scott Stevens: "You may have gotten out of your match with Susanita tonight..."

Marie's eyebrows rise.

Scott Stevens: "...but don't think for one second that means you're done."

Marie's smile disappears.

Marie Van Claudio: "What?!"

The crowd reacts.

Stevens stops halfway down the ramp.

Scott Stevens: "You see, Marie..."

A small smile begins forming on the General Manager's face.

Scott Stevens: "...it's funny how things work out sometimes."

Marie steps away from the ropes.

Scott Stevens: "Sometimes former talent comes around when they have a free night."

The crowd begins buzzing.

Scott Stevens: "Maybe they want to visit old friends."

Scott Stevens: "Maybe they want to see the show."

Scott Stevens: "Maybe they just want to remind themselves what it feels like to walk through a UTA locker room again."

Marie looks toward the entrance.

Then back at Stevens.

Marie Van Claudio: "What are you talking about?"

Scott Stevens: "Well, there's an old saying in this business."

Stevens raises one finger.

Scott Stevens: "Always bring your gear."

The crowd gets louder.

Mark Bravo: "Oh boy."

John Phillips: "Scott Stevens has something up his sleeve."

Marie begins shaking her head.

Marie Van Claudio: "No."

Scott Stevens: "Because it doesn't matter whether you're twenty-five years old and trying to make your name..."

Stevens takes another step.

Scott Stevens: "...or whether you've already made it."

Scott Stevens: "Doesn't matter whether you're chasing your first championship..."

Scott Stevens: "...or you're already in the Hall of Fame."

That gets a reaction.

Marie freezes.

John Phillips: "Wait a minute."

Stevens smiles wider.

Scott Stevens: "Because when an opportunity comes along..."

Scott Stevens: "...and you've got your gear..."

He shrugs.

Scott Stevens: "...you never know what might happen."

Marie stares at him.

Marie Van Claudio: "Scott."

Stevens ignores her.

Scott Stevens: "And oddly enough..."

He turns toward the entrance.

Scott Stevens: "...we happen to have somebody visiting tonight."

Marie slowly turns toward the stage.

Scott Stevens: "Somebody who brought her gear."

The crowd rises.

Scott Stevens: "And somebody..."

Stevens looks directly at Marie.

Scott Stevens: "...who has a little bit of a bone to pick with you."

Marie's face changes.

Confusion first.

Then concern.

Marie Van Claudio: "Huh?"

She looks toward Stevens.

Marie Van Claudio: "Who?"

Stevens doesn't answer.

He just lowers the microphone.

For one long second...

Nothing.

Then—

A fierce distorted guitar riff EXPLODES through Scotiabank Arena!

The reaction is instantaneous.

John Phillips: "NO WAY!"

Mark Bravo: "YOU HAVE GOT TO BE KIDDING ME!"

Marie Van Claudio's eyes go wide.

She knows that music.

Everyone who remembers the history of the United Toughness Alliance knows that music.

The video wall flashes.

HARDCORE SANDY

The Toronto crowd comes UNGLUED.

Crowd: "SAN-DY! SAN-DY! SAN-DY! SAN-DY!"

Marie takes several steps backward from the ropes.

She looks completely stunned.

John Phillips: "HARDCORE SANDY IS HERE!"

Mark Bravo: "Hall of Famer! Former Hardcore Champion! One of the toughest human beings ever to walk through a UTA curtain!"

And then...

Hardcore Sandy steps through the curtain.

The building erupts all over again.

Sandy stands at the top of the stage.

Six-foot-one.

Two hundred twenty pounds.

Already dressed to fight.

Boots.

Gear.

Knuckles taped.

No Hall of Fame gown.

No formal suit.

No nostalgia appearance.

This is Hardcore Sandy.

Ready to wrestle.

Sandy looks toward Scott Stevens.

Stevens steps aside.

Then Sandy's eyes move toward the ring.

Toward Marie.

The reaction between them is immediate.

Marie's shock begins giving way to something much more complicated.

History.

Respect.

Anger.

Guilt.

And unfinished business.

John Phillips: "Think about the history between these two women."

Mark Bravo: "Marie Van Claudio inducted Hardcore Sandy into the UTA Hall of Fame."

John Phillips: "Sandy later became part of Amy Harrison's Empire. She hurt Marie. She cost Marie opportunities. But at

Survivor, Sandy finally walked away from Amy Harrison."

Mark Bravo: "And Sandy made one thing clear afterward. She never wanted her final chapter with Marie Van Claudio to belong to Amy Harrison."

Sandy begins walking down the ramp.

Slowly.

No grand posing.

No playing to the audience.

Her eyes never leave Marie.

John Phillips: "These two women went through hell at Black Horizon."

Mark Bravo: "Hell might be putting it lightly."

Marie watches Sandy approach.

Her jaw tightens.

She looks toward Scott Stevens.

Marie Van Claudio: "You're serious?"

Stevens raises the microphone.

Scott Stevens: "Dead serious."

The crowd explodes again.

Sandy reaches the bottom of the ramp.

She stops.

Looks up at Marie.

Marie looks down at her.

Neither smiles.

Neither speaks.

They don't need to.

Sandy moves toward the steel steps.

Crowd: "SAN-DY! SAN-DY! SAN-DY!"

Marie backs toward the center of the ring.

The referee looks toward Scott Stevens for confirmation.

Stevens nods.

This is happening.

Hardcore Sandy climbs the steps.

One heavy boot at a time.

She reaches the apron.

Marie stands in the center of the ring waiting for her.

Sandy steps through the ropes.

The two Hall of Fame-caliber veterans stand across from one another.

Marie Van Claudio expected Susanita Ybanez tonight.

Instead...

she's staring across the ring at a ghost from her past.

And Hardcore Sandy came dressed for a fight.

Hardcore Sandy steps through the ropes.

Marie Van Claudio watches her closely from the center of the ring.

The crowd is still roaring.

Crowd: "SAN-DY! SAN-DY! SAN-DY!"

Sandy rolls her shoulders once.

Then cracks her neck.

Marie looks toward the referee.

Marie Van Claudio: "Seriously?"

The referee looks toward Scott Stevens at ringside.

Stevens nods.

It's official.

John Phillips: "Marie Van Claudio prepared all night for Susanita Ybanez."

Mark Bravo: "And instead she gets six-foot-one, two hundred twenty pounds of Hardcore Sandy."

John Phillips: "That may be the worst possible substitution imaginable."

The referee brings both women toward the center.

Marie looks up at Sandy.

Sandy looks down at Marie.

There is nearly a full foot of difference between them.

And considerably more mass.

Marie isn't intimidated.

But she is very aware of it.

Referee: "Both of you understand this is a standard singles match. Listen to my commands. Keep it in the ring."

Sandy says nothing.

Marie gives the referee a look.

Marie Van Claudio: "You might wanna tell her."

Sandy's eyes narrow.

Marie notices.

The referee quickly backs away.
He calls for the bell.
DING! DING! DING!
Marie brings her hands up.
Sandy doesn't.
She simply walks forward.
Marie circles to her left.
Sandy tracks her.
Marie reaches for a collar-and-elbow tie-up—
WHAM!
SANDY BLASTS MARIE WITH A FOREARM!
Marie hits the canvas immediately!
The crowd erupts.
John Phillips: "GOOD GOD!"
Mark Bravo: "WELCOME BACK TO hardcore SANDY!"
Marie rolls onto her side.
Her hand immediately goes to her jaw.
Sandy doesn't give her a second.
She grabs Marie by the hair and pulls her upright.
Marie fires a shot into Sandy's ribs!
Another!
Sandy barely moves.
Marie throws a third—
Sandy grabs her around the throat!
Marie freezes.
Sandy DRIVES her backward into the corner!
THUD!
Marie's back slams against the turnbuckles.
Sandy follows with a massive body shot.
Then another.
And another.
Marie folds around every punch.
Referee: "Sandy! Out of the corner!"

Sandy grabs Marie by the wrist.

Irish whip!

Marie rockets across the ring and SLAMS into the opposite turnbuckles!

The impact sends her stumbling forward.

Sandy charges—

BIG BOOT!

Marie flips backward and crashes onto the canvas!

John Phillips: "Marie Van Claudio has barely gotten out of the starting blocks!"

Mark Bravo: "Sandy isn't giving her time to think!"

Sandy drops down for the cover.

ONE!

Marie kicks out quickly!

Sandy doesn't react.

She knew it wasn't enough.

She grabs Marie by the back of the head and hauls her up again.

Marie throws a slap across Sandy's face!

The crowd reacts.

Sandy's head turns slightly.

Then slowly turns back.

Marie realizes immediately that might have been a mistake.

Marie Van Claudio: "Oh—"

CRACK!

Sandy returns the favor with an open-hand slap of her own!

Marie spins completely around!

Sandy grabs her from behind—

GERMAN SUPLEX!

MARIE LANDS HARD ON HER SHOULDERS!

Sandy doesn't release.

She rolls through.

Pulls Marie back up.

SECOND GERMAN SUPLEX!

Marie folds on impact!

John Phillips: "This is brutal!"

Mark Bravo: "You say that like her name isn't Hardcore Sandy."

Sandy rolls through again.

Marie desperately grabs the ropes.

The referee immediately calls for a break.

Referee: "Break! She's got the ropes!"

Sandy releases.

Marie drops to the mat.

She pulls herself underneath the bottom rope to the apron.

Sandy stands over her from inside the ring.

Marie looks up.

Breathing hard.

Already realizing what kind of night this has become.

John Phillips: "Marie came out here expecting a deeply personal grudge match against Susanita."

Mark Bravo: "Instead she's getting mugged by a Hall of Famer."

Marie slips to the floor.

The referee warns Sandy to stay back.

Sandy ignores him.

She steps through the ropes.

Marie sees her coming and starts backing away.

Marie Van Claudio: "Stay back!"

Sandy continues forward.

Marie suddenly charges and drives a kick into Sandy's knee!

Sandy staggers.

Marie immediately follows with a forearm!

Another!

Another!

She begins backing Sandy toward the barricade!

Marie winds up—

Sandy catches her arm.

Turns.

AND LAUNCHES MARIE INTO THE BARRICADE!

CRASH!

Marie hits hard and collapses to the floor!

The fans in the front row recoil.

John Phillips: "Marie went into that barricade with tremendous force!"

Sandy walks toward her.

The referee leans through the ropes.

Referee: "GET BACK IN THE RING!"

Sandy looks toward him.

Then back at Marie.

Sandy grabs Marie around the waist.

She lifts her.

Marie begins kicking!

Sandy carries her toward the ring—

AND RAMS HER SPINE-FIRST INTO THE APRON!

Marie screams and drops to the floor.

Mark Bravo: "Sandy is dismantling her."

Sandy rolls Marie back underneath the bottom rope.

Then climbs in after her.

Marie tries crawling toward the opposite side.

Sandy grabs her ankle.

Marie kicks wildly with the free leg.

One catches Sandy in the face!

Sandy releases.

Marie scrambles up.

Sandy charges—

MARIE PULLS DOWN THE TOP ROPE!

Sandy's momentum sends her over!

She crashes to the floor!

The crowd reacts.

John Phillips: "There's the opening Marie needed!"

Marie drops to her knees.

She grabs her lower back.

For several seconds, she simply tries to breathe.

Sandy is already beginning to stand outside.

Marie sees her.

Her eyes widen.

Marie Van Claudio: "You've gotta be kidding me."

Sandy gets back to her feet.

Marie makes a decision.

She hits the ropes.

Charges across the ring—

SUICIDE DIVE!

NO!

SANDY CATCHES HER!

The crowd GASPS.

Marie is suspended in Sandy's arms!

John Phillips: "SANDY CAUGHT HER!"

Marie starts firing elbows into Sandy's head.

One!

Two!

Three!

Sandy's grip loosens.

Marie slips down behind her!

Marie shoves Sandy forward!

Sandy hits the ring post shoulder-first!

CLANG!

For the first time...

Hardcore Sandy is down.

Marie leans against the barricade.

Breathing heavily.

Holding her ribs.

Staring at Sandy.

John Phillips: "Marie finally found something!"

Mark Bravo: "She better find a whole lot more."

Marie looks toward Sandy.

Then toward the ring.

Then back at Sandy.

And slowly...

the shock begins leaving her face.

Marie Van Claudio realizes she is not going to survive this by trying to weather Hardcore Sandy.

She's going to have to fight her.

Marie Van Claudio remains against the barricade.

Hardcore Sandy is down near the ring post.

For the first time since the bell rang...

Marie has room to breathe.

She doesn't waste it.

Marie pushes off the barricade and charges.

RUNNING KNEE TO THE SIDE OF SANDY'S HEAD!

Sandy slumps against the post.

Marie grabs her by the hair.

Marie Van Claudio: "You wanted this?!"

She slams Sandy face-first into the apron!

Once!

Twice!

Three times!

John Phillips: "And now Marie Van Claudio has finally found that aggression!"

Mark Bravo: "She had to. Sandy spent the opening minutes trying to fold her in half."

Marie rolls Sandy underneath the bottom rope.

Then slides in after her.

Sandy starts to rise.

Marie doesn't let her.

SNAP DDT!

Sandy's head spikes into the canvas!

Marie rolls her over.

Cover!

ONE!

SANDY POWERS OUT!

Marie is thrown several feet away.

She lands on her side and stares at Sandy.

Marie Van Claudio: "Oh, come on!"

Sandy rolls onto one knee.

Marie gets up first.

She runs forward—

SPINNING HEEL KICK!

Sandy takes it flush!

She stumbles backward into the ropes.

Marie charges again.

CLOTHESLINE!

Sandy doesn't go down.

Marie looks surprised.

She hits the ropes.

Another clothesline!

Sandy rocks backward.

Still standing.

John Phillips: "Marie is throwing everything she has at Sandy!"

Marie hits the ropes a third time.

She leaps—

SANDY CATCHES HER!

Marie immediately starts kicking!

Sandy adjusts her grip.

FALLAWAY SLAM!

MARIE GOES FLYING!

She crashes hard near the corner.

Sandy sits up.

There is a small trickle of blood beginning near her eyebrow from the ring post.

She touches it.

Looks at the blood on her fingertips.

And smiles.

Mark Bravo: "Uh-oh."

John Phillips: "That's probably the last reaction Marie wanted."

Sandy gets to her feet.

Marie pulls herself up in the corner.

Sandy charges.

AVALANCHE!

Marie is crushed between Sandy and the turnbuckles!

Sandy backs away.

Marie nearly collapses.

Sandy grabs her by the wrist.

WHIPS HER HARD INTO THE OPPOSITE CORNER!

Marie hits chest-first!

She staggers backward.

Sandy grabs her around the waist.

GERMAN SUPLEX!

Marie lands hard!

Sandy holds on.

She drags Marie upright.

A SECOND GERMAN!

Marie folds up on impact.

Sandy still doesn't release.

John Phillips: "Sandy is manhandling Marie Van Claudio!"

Sandy pulls her up again.

Marie suddenly stomps down on Sandy's foot!

Sandy's grip loosens.

Marie fires an elbow backward!

Another!

She breaks free!

Marie turns—

SLAP!

Sandy takes it.

Marie slaps her again!

Then a third time!

Marie Van Claudio: "I'M NOT AFRAID OF YOU!"

Sandy responds with a HEADBUTT!

Marie crumples!

Mark Bravo: "Maybe don't yell that from three inches away."

Sandy grabs Marie by the throat.

The crowd rises.

John Phillips: "Oh no."

Sandy lifts—

CHOKESLAM!

MARIE IS DRIVEN INTO THE CANVAS!

Sandy drops into the cover.

ONE!

TWO!

MARIE GETS A SHOULDER UP!

The crowd reacts loudly.

Sandy sits beside Marie.

Looks at the referee.

No argument.

She knows.

Marie is still alive.

Sandy reaches down.

Pulls Marie up.

Marie is barely standing.

Sandy grabs her again—

Marie suddenly drops down!

JAWBREAKER!

Sandy staggers!

Marie gets up.

SUPERKICK!

Sandy rocks backward!

Marie hits the ropes.

RUNNING FACEBUSTER!

Sandy goes down!

Marie scrambles into the cover!

ONE!

TWO!

SANDY KICKS OUT!

Marie pounds the mat once.

Not because she thinks it was three.

Because she knows she needs something bigger.

Marie gets up.

She looks toward the corner.

Then at Sandy.

The crowd begins to rise.

John Phillips: "Marie may be thinking Montreal Spinout!"

Marie climbs.

One rope.

Second rope.

Top.

Sandy slowly gets to her feet.

Marie waits.

Sandy turns.

MARIE LAUNCHES!

MONTREAL SPINOUT!

NO!

SANDY CATCHES HER OUT OF THE AIR!

THE CROWD GASPS!

Sandy has Marie across her chest!

Marie starts thrashing!

Sandy adjusts her grip—

POWERSLAM!

MARIE IS PLANTED!

John Phillips: "SANDY COUNTERED THE MONTREAL SPINOUT!"

Sandy hooks both legs.

ONE!

TWO!

THR—

MARIE KICKS OUT!

The crowd erupts.

Sandy rolls backward onto her knees.

For the first time, there is something like frustration on her face.

Marie lays flat on the canvas.

Chest rising and falling.

Eyes barely open.

Sandy stands over her.

She looks down.

And for just a moment...

the history comes back.

The Hall of Fame.

Marie standing on that stage telling the world what Hardcore Sandy meant to this company.

Sandy later putting Marie down while trapped inside Amy Harrison's war.

Black Horizon.

The ambulance.

Everything unresolved between them.

Sandy reaches down and grabs Marie by the wrist.

She pulls her upright.

Hardcore Sandy: "Come on."

Marie can barely hold herself up.

Hardcore Sandy: "You wanted to know if I had anything left?"

Sandy shoves Marie backward.

Marie stumbles but stays upright.

Hardcore Sandy: "Fight me."

Marie looks at her.

Something in those words hits differently.

Marie straightens.

As much as her body will allow.

She raises her fists.

Sandy does the same.

The crowd begins applauding.

John Phillips: "There it is."

Mark Bravo: "This isn't about Scott Stevens anymore."

Marie fires a forearm.

Sandy answers.

Marie again.

Sandy again.

Marie!

Sandy!

Marie!

Sandy rocks backward!

Marie sees it!

She unloads!

FOREARM!

SLAP!

ELBOW!

Sandy backs toward the ropes!

Marie hits the opposite side.

Charges—

SANDY EXPLODES FORWARD!

HUGE LARIAT!

MARIE FLIPS INSIDE OUT!

The crowd erupts.

Marie lands face-down.

Sandy stands over her.

Breathing heavily.

Blood now running farther down the side of her face.

Sandy grabs Marie again.

Pulls her to her feet.

Marie can barely stand.

Sandy hooks her.

Marie suddenly slips behind!

WAISTLOCK!

GERMAN SUPLEX BY MARIE!

SANDY GOES OVER!

The crowd explodes!

Marie rolls through!

She keeps the waistlock!

Pulls Sandy back up!

SECOND GERMAN!

Sandy crashes again!

Marie somehow holds on!

John Phillips: "MARIE IS TURNING IT AROUND!"

Marie drags Sandy up a third time.

Sandy drives an elbow backward!

Marie ducks!

Sandy turns—

POISONRANA!

SANDY IS SPIKED!

The crowd erupts!

Sandy rolls through awkwardly onto her back.

Marie crawls toward the corner.

She's exhausted.

But she sees Sandy down.

She starts climbing again.

John Phillips: "Marie is going back up!"

Marie reaches the top rope.

Sandy slowly begins rising.

Marie waits.

Sandy turns around.

MARIE LEAPS—

MONTREAL SPINOUT!

THIS TIME IT CONNECTS!

SANDY CRASHES TO THE MAT!

Marie immediately hooks the leg!

ONE!

TWO!

THR—

SANDY GETS THE SHOULDER UP!

Scotiabank Arena ERUPTS.

Marie rolls onto her back.

She stares toward the ceiling.

Disbelief on her face.

Marie Van Claudio: "No..."

The referee holds up two.

Marie looks toward Sandy.

Sandy is barely moving.

But she's moving.

Marie pushes herself onto one knee.

Then to her feet.

She looks toward Sandy.

Looks toward the crowd.

Then back at Sandy.

Whatever surprise substitution this started as...

it's gone now.

Marie Van Claudio and Hardcore Sandy are in a war.

Marie Van Claudio remains on one knee.

Across the ring, Hardcore Sandy is beginning to stir after somehow surviving the Montreal Spinout.

Marie wipes the sweat from her face.

She looks exhausted.

She looks battered.

But she also looks determined.

Then suddenly—

The crowd begins to boo.

John Phillips: "Wait a minute."

Marie hears it.

Her attention shifts toward the entrance.

Valkyrie Knoxx comes through the curtain!

Amy Harrison is right behind her!

Mark Bravo: "Here comes The Empire!"

John Phillips: "And so much for Marie Van Claudio doing this alone!"

Amy and Valkyrie immediately start down the ramp.

They aren't running.

They don't need to.

The message is obvious.

Marie is in trouble.

The Empire is coming to help.

The referee sees them.

Referee: "HEY! STAY BACK!"

Valkyrie ignores him.

Amy continues forward.

Inside the ring, Marie gets back to her feet.

She looks toward Sandy.

Then toward Amy and Valkyrie.

And Marie's expression changes.

Immediately.

Marie Van Claudio: "No."

Amy keeps walking.

Marie steps toward the ropes.

She raises one hand.

Marie Van Claudio: "NO!"

Amy stops.

Valkyrie takes another step before realizing Amy isn't beside her anymore.

She turns.

Marie holds her hand out toward both women.

Stay there.

The crowd begins to buzz.

John Phillips: "Marie is stopping them."

Mark Bravo: "She doesn't want their help."

Amy looks confused.

She points toward Sandy.

Then toward Marie.

Marie shakes her head.

Marie Van Claudio: "This is mine."

Valkyrie doesn't look convinced.

She starts forward again.

Marie Van Claudio: "VALKYRIE!"

Valkyrie stops.

Marie points toward the stage.

Marie Van Claudio: "Stay there."

There is no hesitation in Marie's voice.

No wink.

No signal that this is some kind of setup.

She means it.

John Phillips: "That's interesting."

Mark Bravo: "Very interesting."

John Phillips: "Marie has had absolutely no problem allowing The Empire to involve themselves in her business before."

Mark Bravo: "But not this time."

Marie looks back toward Sandy.

Hardcore Sandy has made it to her knees.

She saw the whole thing.

Sandy looks past Marie toward Amy and Valkyrie.

Then back toward Marie.

Marie slowly turns away from The Empire.

She faces Sandy.

Then points down at the canvas between them.

Marie Van Claudio: "You and me."

Sandy stares at her.

Marie points at herself.

Then Sandy.

Marie Van Claudio: "Nobody else."

For a moment, Sandy doesn't respond.

Then she gives Marie the slightest nod.

That's all.

But between these two women...

it's enough.

John Phillips: "There is history here that goes far beyond The Empire."

Mark Bravo: "Marie doesn't want Amy Harrison deciding this. She doesn't want Valkyrie Knoxx deciding it. Win or lose, Marie wants whatever happens between her and Hardcore Sandy tonight to belong to them."

Amy remains halfway down the ramp.

She looks toward Valkyrie.

Valkyrie clearly doesn't like it.

But finally, Amy gives her a small gesture.

Back off.

Valkyrie reluctantly does.

The two members of The Empire begin backing toward the entrance.

Marie watches just long enough to make sure they're listening.

Then she turns around—

AND HARDCORE SANDY IS ALREADY STANDING!

The crowd erupts!

Marie freezes.

Sandy is battered.

Blood streaks down the side of her face.

Her chest rises and falls heavily.

But she's standing.

Waiting.

Marie slowly raises her fists.

Sandy does the same.

John Phillips: "Marie Van Claudio just sent away the only insurance policy she had."

Mark Bravo: "Good."

John glances toward his broadcast partner.

Mark Bravo: "If these two are going to settle this, then settle it."

Marie takes one step forward.

Sandy takes one of her own.

Amy Harrison and Valkyrie Knoxx remain at the top of the ramp, watching.

But neither moves toward the ring.

Marie made her decision.

Whatever happens next...

she wants it all on her.

Marie Van Claudio and Hardcore Sandy step toward one another.

No hesitation now.

No surprise substitution.

No Empire.

No excuses.

Just two veterans standing in the middle of the ring.

Sandy throws first.

FOREARM!

Marie answers!

Sandy again!

Marie again!

The crowd begins roaring with every strike.

Crowd: "YEAH!"

Sandy!

Crowd: "YEAH!"

Marie!

Sandy throws another massive forearm.

Marie stumbles backward.

Sandy grabs her—

Marie slips underneath!

DROP KICK TO THE KNEE!

Sandy drops to one knee.

Marie sees the opening.

She hits the ropes.

RUNNING KNEE!

Sandy rocks backward but stays upright!

Marie hits the ropes again.

ANOTHER RUNNING KNEE!

Sandy finally goes down!

Marie covers!

ONE!

TWO!

SANDY KICKS OUT!

Marie rolls away and immediately gets back to her feet.

John Phillips: "Marie is staying on her now. She cannot allow Sandy to get that base underneath her again."

Marie grabs Sandy's leg.

She twists!

FIGURE FOUR!

Marie gets it locked in!

Sandy immediately sits up.

Pain flashes across her face.

Marie leans backward and increases the pressure.

Referee: "Sandy! Do you give?"

Hardcore Sandy: "Hell no."

Sandy begins dragging herself toward the ropes.

Marie tries to stop her.

Sandy keeps moving.

Inch by inch.

Marie grips the canvas and pulls in the opposite direction.

But Sandy is too strong.

She reaches the bottom rope!

The referee calls for the break.

Marie releases at four.

Sandy rolls onto the apron.

Marie follows her.

Sandy gets to one knee—

Marie kicks the damaged leg!

Sandy nearly falls off the apron.

Marie grabs her head.

SNAP DDT ON THE APRON!

Sandy's head and shoulders slam against the hardest part of the ring!

John Phillips: "GOOD GOD!"

Sandy spills to the floor.

Marie collapses on the apron beside her.

Both women are down.

At the top of the ramp, Amy Harrison and Valkyrie Knox continue watching.

Neither moves.

Marie made that very clear.

The referee begins counting.

Referee: "ONE!"

Marie pushes herself upright first.

Referee: "TWO!"

She drops to the floor.

Sandy is still down.

Marie looks toward the ring.

She could roll back inside.

Take the count-out.

Win.

Marie starts toward the ring.

Referee: "THREE!"

Then she stops.

Marie looks back at Sandy.

The crowd realizes what she's thinking.

John Phillips: "Marie could take the count-out here."

Mark Bravo: "But that isn't what she wanted."

Marie turns around.

She grabs Sandy by the head and shoulder.

Pulls her upright.

Marie Van Claudio: "Not like that."

Marie rolls Sandy back into the ring.

The crowd reacts loudly.

John Phillips: "Marie just gave up the easy victory!"

Mark Bravo: "Because she wants to beat Sandy."

Marie slides in.

Sandy is already trying to rise.

Marie can't believe it.

She grabs Sandy's wrist.

Pulls her forward.

FACEBUSTER!

Sandy goes down again.

Marie hooks the leg.

ONE!

TWO!

SANDY KICKS OUT!

Marie pounds the canvas.

She looks toward the corner.

Then at Sandy.

Marie climbs again.

The crowd rises with her.

John Phillips: "She's going back for the Montreal Spinout!"

Marie reaches the top.

Sandy slowly gets to her feet.

Marie waits.

Sandy turns—

MARIE LEAPS!

MONTREAL SPINOUT!

SANDY SHOVES HER OFF IN MID-AIR!

Marie crashes hard onto the canvas!

Sandy staggers toward the ropes.

Marie tries to get up.

Sandy explodes forward!

BIG BOOT!

Marie drops!

Sandy falls into the cover!

ONE!

TWO!

THR—

MARIE KICKS OUT!

The arena erupts.

Sandy rolls onto her back.

Both women are exhausted.

For several seconds, neither moves.

John Phillips: "This match was never supposed to happen tonight."

Mark Bravo: "Tell that to them."

Sandy gets to her knees first.

Marie follows.

They look at each other.

Sandy gives Marie a small nod.

Marie returns it.
Then Sandy punches her in the face.
Marie almost falls over.
She steadies herself.
And punches Sandy back.
Sandy!
Marie!
Sandy!
Marie!
Both women rise while trading shots!
Sandy gains the advantage.
FOREARM!
FOREARM!
HEADBUTT!
Marie staggers backward.
Sandy grabs her around the throat.
John Phillips: "CHOKESLAM!"
Sandy lifts—
Marie counters in mid-air!
She twists around Sandy's head!
TORNADO DDT!
SANDY IS SPIKED!
Marie collapses beside her.
The crowd is on its feet.
Marie slowly crawls toward Sandy.
She drapes an arm across her chest.
ONE!
TWO!
THR—
SANDY KICKS OUT AGAIN!
Marie sits up.
She stares at Sandy.
Almost laughing now.

Not because anything is funny.

Because she has absolutely no idea what else she has to do.

Marie Van Claudio: "What the hell are you made of?"

Sandy rolls toward her.

Hardcore Sandy: "Same shit you are."

Marie looks at her.

Sandy starts getting up again.

So does Marie.

The crowd begins applauding.

Marie reaches her feet.

Sandy reaches hers.

They meet again in the middle.

Marie throws a slap.

Sandy catches the wrist!

Marie immediately kicks Sandy's knee!

Sandy releases.

Marie hits the ropes—

Sandy catches her around the waist!

SPINEBUSTER!

Marie is PLANTED!

Sandy doesn't cover.

Instead...

she grabs Marie by the hair.

Pulls her upright.

Hooks her around the throat.

Marie looks almost limp.

John Phillips: "Sandy may be looking to finish this!"

Sandy lifts—

CHOKESLAM!

MARIE CRASHES INTO THE CANVAS!

Sandy drops onto her for the cover!

ONE!

TWO!

THR—

MARIE GETS THE SHOULDER UP!

Sandy sits up immediately.

She looks at the referee.

Then at Marie.

And she starts laughing.

A tired, exhausted laugh.

Sandy grabs Marie's wrist.

Pulls her toward the center of the ring.

Marie rolls onto her stomach.

Sandy stands over her.

Marie tries to push herself up.

Sandy reaches down—

MARIE GRABS THE LEGS!

She trips Sandy!

Sandy hits the canvas!

Marie turns over!

SHARPSHOOTER!

MARIE LOCKS IT IN!

The crowd explodes!

John Phillips: "SHARPSHOOTER! MARIE HAS THE SHARPSHOOTER!"

Sandy screams through clenched teeth.

Marie sits deep.

The damaged leg from earlier is trapped.

Sandy reaches toward the ropes.

Too far.

She tries dragging herself forward.

Marie pulls backward!

Sandy's hand rises.

The crowd rises with it.

Referee: "Do you give?!"

Sandy's hand hovers above the mat.

Marie screams.

Marie Van Claudio: "TAP!"

Sandy's hand drops—

NOT A TAP!

She plants her palm and pushes herself forward!

Marie tries to drag her back!

Sandy reaches again!

Fingertips!

Closer!

Marie sits even deeper!

SANDY GRABS THE BOTTOM ROPE!

The referee calls for the break!

Marie immediately releases.

She falls backward onto the canvas.

Sandy clutches her leg.

Both women lie there.

And at the top of the ramp...

Amy Harrison and Valkyrie Knoxx remain watching.

Neither has moved an inch.

Marie wanted this on her own.

And right now...

she's getting exactly what she asked for.

Marie Van Claudio releases the Sharpshooter and falls backward onto the canvas.

Hardcore Sandy clutches her leg near the ropes.

Neither woman moves for several seconds.

The crowd begins to applaud.

Not wildly.

Not yet.

Just a steady wave of respect rolling through Scotiabank Arena.

John Phillips: "Listen to this crowd."

Mark Bravo: "They know what they're watching now."

Marie rolls onto one elbow.

Sandy pulls herself toward the ropes.

Marie looks across the ring.

Sandy looks back.

For a moment, neither tries to attack.

They're just looking at each other.

Remembering.

Marie gets to one knee.

Sandy does the same.

Hardcore Sandy: "Still got it."

Marie exhales through a tired smile.

Marie Van Claudio: "You talk too much."

Sandy laughs.

A rough, exhausted laugh.

Hardcore Sandy: "You inducted me."

Marie pauses.

Hardcore Sandy: "You should know better."

Marie gives a small nod.

Then both women stand.

Slowly.

Carefully.

The crowd gets louder.

John Phillips: "There is something very different happening here now."

Marie steps toward Sandy.

Sandy steps toward Marie.

They meet in the center.

No guard.

No circling.

Just two exhausted veterans standing face-to-face.

Hardcore Sandy: "You remember what I told you?"

Marie looks at her.

Hardcore Sandy: "One more match."

A beat.

Hardcore Sandy: "One that mattered."

Marie's expression softens.

Marie Van Claudio: "Yeah."

Sandy nods.

Hardcore Sandy: "This one matters."

The crowd applauds louder.

Marie looks away for half a second.

Then back.

Marie Van Claudio: "Then stop talking."

Marie throws a forearm!

Sandy answers!

Marie again!

Sandy again!

Every strike is slower now.

Heavier.

More deliberate.

Like neither woman is trying to win quickly anymore.

They're trying to prove something.

Marie throws another forearm.

Sandy staggers.

Sandy answers with one of her own.

Marie nearly falls.

She steadies herself.

They lock eyes again.

Crowd: "THIS IS AWESOME! THIS IS AWESOME!"

Marie laughs through the pain.

Sandy does too.

Mark Bravo: "I don't think either one expected this when the night started."

Sandy raises a hand.

Marie instinctively tenses.

But Sandy doesn't strike.

She holds the hand out.

The crowd reacts.

Marie stares at it.

Then at Sandy.

Hardcore Sandy: "No Amy."

Marie glances toward the stage.

Amy Harrison and Valkyrie Knoxx are still watching.

Hardcore Sandy: "No Empire."

Sandy looks directly at Marie.

Hardcore Sandy: "Just us."

Marie looks back down at Sandy's hand.

Slowly...

she takes it.

The crowd applauds.

They squeeze each other's hands.

For just a second...

this isn't a fight.

It's acknowledgment.

Then Sandy pulls Marie forward—

SHORT-ARM LARIAT!

MARIE FLIPS INSIDE OUT!

The crowd erupts!

Mark Bravo: "THAT'S HARDCORE SANDY'S VERSION OF RESPECT!"

Sandy falls into the cover!

ONE!

TWO!

THR—

MARIE KICKS OUT!

Sandy sits up.

She looks down at Marie.

Almost proud.

Hardcore Sandy: "Good."

Marie rolls onto her side.

She hears it.

And somehow...

she smiles.

Sandy pulls Marie up.

Marie fires a slap!

Sandy answers with one!

Marie!

Sandy!

Marie!

Sandy!

Neither woman backs down.

Marie throws another—

Sandy catches the wrist!

Marie spins through!

FACEBUSTER!

Sandy hits hard!

Marie falls over her for the cover!

ONE!

TWO!

SANDY KICKS OUT!

Marie doesn't even complain.

She just pulls Sandy back up.

Marie Van Claudio: "Come on."

Sandy looks at her.

Marie Van Claudio: "You wanted me."

Marie shoves her backward.

Marie Van Claudio: "You got me."

Sandy charges!

Marie ducks the lariat!

SPINNING HEEL KICK!

Sandy staggers!

Marie hits the ropes!

SANDY CATCHES HER!

SPINEBUSTER!

Marie is driven into the canvas!

Sandy remains on her knees afterward.

She could cover.

She doesn't.

Instead, Sandy grabs Marie by the wrist.

Pulls her up.

John Phillips: "Sandy could've gone for the pin."

Mark Bravo: "I don't think she wants it yet."

Marie barely stands.

Sandy holds her upright.

Hardcore Sandy: "At the Hall of Fame..."

Marie tries to focus.

Hardcore Sandy: "...you told them I forced the world to catch up."

Marie nods faintly.

Hardcore Sandy: "Don't you dare make me regret believing you could do the same."

Marie looks up.

That hits.

Hard.

Sandy releases her.

Marie nearly falls.

But she catches herself.

One knee.

Then back up.

Marie looks toward Sandy.

Marie Van Claudio: "You don't get to say that to me."

Sandy raises an eyebrow.

Marie Van Claudio: "Not after what you did."

The crowd quiets slightly.

Sandy's expression changes.

Marie Van Claudio: "You stood with Amy."

Marie Van Claudio: "You hurt me."

Sandy doesn't look away.

Marie Van Claudio: "You helped her."

A beat.

Marie Van Claudio: "And I still stood there when they put you in that ambulance."

Sandy's jaw tightens.

Marie steps closer.

Marie Van Claudio: "I still cared."

Sandy lowers her head for a second.

Then looks back up.

Hardcore Sandy: "I know."

Marie slaps Sandy across the face.

Sandy takes it.

Doesn't return it.

Marie slaps her again.

Sandy takes that too.

Marie Van Claudio: "Then fight me."

Sandy looks at her.

Marie Van Claudio: "Not Amy's fight."

Marie shoves Sandy.

Marie Van Claudio: "Yours."

Sandy's eyes harden.

She steps forward.

Hardcore Sandy: "That's why I'm here."

HEADBUTT!

Marie staggers!

Marie answers with a forearm!

Sandy fires back!

Marie!

Sandy!

Again!

Again!

The crowd rises.

Neither woman is protecting herself anymore.

They're just unloading years of history one strike at a time.

John Phillips: "This has become incredibly personal."

Mark Bravo: "Maybe it always was."

Sandy rocks Marie with a forearm!

Marie falls into the ropes.

Sandy grabs her wrist.

Pulls her forward—

Marie counters!

POISONRANA!

SANDY SPIKES INTO THE CANVAS!

Marie collapses beside her.

Both women are down again.

The crowd stands and applauds.

At the top of the ramp, even Valkyrie Knoxx looks impressed.

Amy Harrison's expression is much harder to read.

Marie rolls onto her back.

Sandy does the same.

They turn their heads toward one another.

Both exhausted.

Both smiling faintly.

Neither finished.

Marie Van Claudio and Hardcore Sandy remain flat on the canvas.

Neither moves.

For several seconds, the only thing filling Scotiabank Arena is applause.

Then Sandy rolls onto her stomach.

She plants both palms against the canvas.

Pushes.

Her arms shake.

But Sandy rises.

Marie sees her.

She rolls toward the ropes and begins pulling herself upright as well.

John Phillips: "Neither one of these women is willing to stay down."

Mark Bravo: "And I don't think this is about The Empire anymore."

Sandy reaches her feet.

Marie reaches hers.

They turn toward one another.

Across the ring.

Exhausted.

Bruised.

Sandy's face streaked with blood.

Marie's body showing every minute of the beating she's absorbed.

Sandy motions toward her.

Hardcore Sandy: "Come on."

Marie breathes heavily.

Hardcore Sandy: "Show me."

Marie pushes herself away from the ropes.

She walks toward Sandy.

Sandy suddenly charges!

MARIE MEETS HER!

FOREARM!

Sandy answers!

Marie fires again!

Sandy rocks backward!

Marie presses forward.

FOREARM!

SLAP!

ELBOW!

Sandy stumbles into the ropes.

John Phillips: "Marie is bringing everything she's got!"

Marie grabs Sandy's wrist.

Irish whip—

Sandy reverses!

Marie hits the ropes.

Comes back—

SANDY WITH A HUGE SHOULDER BLOCK!

Marie is thrown backward!

But she rolls through!

Back to her feet!

Sandy charges again—

DROP TOE HOLD!

Sandy crashes face-first!

Marie immediately hits the ropes.

CURB STOMP!

SANDY'S FACE IS DRIVEN INTO THE CANVAS!

Marie rolls her over!

ONE!

TWO!

SANDY KICKS OUT!

Marie immediately grabs Sandy around the head.

She tries to pull her upright.

Sandy suddenly powers up!

Marie is lifted off her feet!

Sandy charges forward—

SPINEBUSTER!

MARIE BOUNCES OFF THE CANVAS!

Sandy falls over her!

ONE!

TWO!

MARIE KICKS OUT!

Sandy rolls away.

She pounds the mat once.

Then gets back up.

Marie barely moves.

Sandy grabs her.

Pulls her upright.

Hardcore Sandy: "Stay with me."

Marie can barely focus.

Sandy fires a forearm.

Marie almost drops.

Sandy catches her before she can.

Holds her upright.

Hardcore Sandy: "No."

Sandy pushes Marie backward.

Hardcore Sandy: "Not yet."

Marie stumbles.

She looks up at Sandy.

And fires back.

FOREARM!

Sandy smiles through the pain.

Marie hits her again.

And again.

Marie Van Claudio: "Don't..."

Another forearm.

Marie Van Claudio: "...you..."

Another!

Marie Van Claudio: "...dare..."

Marie winds up.

HUGE FOREARM!

Marie Van Claudio: "...feel sorry for me!"

Sandy staggers backward.

Then laughs.

Hardcore Sandy: "There she is."

Sandy charges!

LARIAT!

Marie ducks!

Sandy turns around—

RIPCORDER KNEE!

Sandy's head snaps backward!

Marie doesn't let go!

She pulls Sandy in again!

SECOND RIPCORDER KNEE!

Sandy drops to one knee!

The crowd erupts!

Marie hits the ropes.

RUNNING KNEE!

SANDY GOES DOWN!

Marie falls across her!

ONE!

TWO!

THR—

SANDY KICKS OUT!

Marie rolls onto her back.

Her hands cover her face.

She is exhausted.

Sandy isn't moving much either.

Crowd: "THIS IS AWESOME! THIS IS AWESOME! THIS IS AWESOME!"

Marie hears them.

She lowers her hands.

Looks toward the crowd.

Then toward Sandy.

At the top of the ramp, Amy Harrison and Valkyrie Knox remain watching.

But they barely matter now.

The camera doesn't stay on them.

Because this isn't their moment.

This belongs to Marie Van Claudio.

And Hardcore Sandy.

John Phillips: "Look at what this has become."

Mark Bravo: "Two women who have been through damn near every version of this business together."

John Phillips: "Different eras. Different battles. Sometimes standing together. Sometimes standing across from one another."

Mark Bravo: "And tonight none of that matters."

Sandy begins moving.

Marie sees her.

She starts moving too.

Both crawl toward the center of the ring.

Sandy gets to one knee.

Marie gets to one knee.

They come face-to-face.

Sandy reaches forward.

She puts one hand behind Marie's head.

Marie does the same.

Forehead to forehead.

Both breathing heavily.

Hardcore Sandy: "This what you wanted?"

Marie closes her eyes for a second.

Marie Van Claudio: "Yeah."

Sandy nods.

Hardcore Sandy: "Me too."

Marie opens her eyes.

Then suddenly SLAPS Sandy.

Sandy's head snaps sideways.

Sandy turns back.

She SLAPS Marie.

Marie almost falls.

She steadies herself with one hand.

Then throws another slap.

Sandy responds.

Marie!

Sandy!

Marie!

Sandy!

They begin rising while trading shots.

Every slap harder than the last.

Every strike dragging them closer to their feet.

Until finally...

both women are standing again.

Face-to-face.

Barely.

But standing.

Sandy throws a forearm.

Marie answers.

Sandy!

Marie!

Sandy!

Marie!

Sandy suddenly unloads with THREE consecutive forearms!

Marie drops to a knee!

Sandy hits the ropes.

BIG BOOT!

NO!

MARIE MOVES!

Sandy turns—

SUPERKICK!

Sandy staggers!

Marie hits another!

Sandy drops to one knee!

Marie takes several steps backward.

She looks at Sandy.

Something emotional flashes across her face.

She shakes it away.

Then charges.

SANDY EXPLODES UP!

CHOKESLAM!

NO!

Marie slips free in mid-air!

She lands behind Sandy!

Sandy turns—

MARIE KICKS HER IN THE STOMACH!

Hooks the head!

SNAP DDT!

SANDY IS SPIKED!

Marie rolls Sandy onto her back.

She could cover.

Instead...

Marie pauses.

Looks down at Sandy.

John Phillips: "Cover her!"

Marie doesn't.

She reaches down.
Takes Sandy by the wrist.
And begins pulling her back up.
Mark Bravo: "Marie doesn't want that."
John Phillips: "What do you mean she doesn't want that?!"
Mark Bravo: "She doesn't want Sandy finished because Sandy couldn't stand."
Sandy reaches her knees.
Marie continues pulling.
Sandy looks at her.
Understanding.
Marie gets Sandy upright.
Marie Van Claudio: "Come on."
Sandy breathes heavily.
Marie Van Claudio: "One more."
Sandy smiles.
Hardcore Sandy: "One more."
Marie releases Sandy's wrist.
They take several steps apart.
Both barely able to stand.
Both refusing to let the other see it.
The crowd rises as one.
Sandy clenches her fists.
Marie raises hers.
They stare across the ring.
Not hero and villain.
Not Empire and resistance.
Not past and present.
Just Hardcore Sandy.
Just Marie Van Claudio.
And one more fight.
Sandy charges.
Marie charges.
They collide in the center of the ring.

Sandy charges.

Marie charges.

They collide in the center of the ring.

Sandy gets the better of it.

A huge forearm rocks Marie backward.

Another!

Marie stumbles into the ropes.

Sandy grabs her by the wrist.

Pulls her forward.

LARIAT!

Marie turns inside out!

The crowd gasps.

Sandy drops to one knee afterward.

She is exhausted.

Her leg is barely holding her.

Blood streaks down the side of her face.

But she looks at Marie.

And smiles.

John Phillips: "Hardcore Sandy is still pushing forward."

Mark Bravo: "She has been doing that her entire career."

Sandy reaches down.

She grabs Marie by the wrist.

Pulls her up.

Marie can barely stand.

Sandy holds her there.

Hardcore Sandy: "Come on."

Marie looks at her.

Hardcore Sandy: "Everything."

Marie breathes heavily.

Hardcore Sandy: "Give me everything."

Marie shakes her head faintly.

Marie Van Claudio: "I am."

Sandy's smile widens.

Hardcore Sandy: "No."

Sandy shoves Marie backward.

Hardcore Sandy: "You're still holding back."

Marie looks almost offended.

Sandy points toward herself.

Hardcore Sandy: "Don't."

Marie stares at her.

Hardcore Sandy: "Not for me."

The crowd begins to quiet.

Something about the way Sandy says it changes the atmosphere.

Marie understands.

Maybe not completely.

But enough.

Sandy raises both fists again.

Hardcore Sandy: "Show me who you are."

Marie takes a long breath.

Then raises her hands.

Sandy comes forward.

Marie meets her.

FOREARM!

Sandy answers!

Marie!

Sandy!

Marie!

Sandy rocks her backward!

Marie stumbles.

Sandy charges—

SUPERKICK!

Sandy stops dead!

Marie fires another!

Sandy drops to one knee!

Marie grabs her by the head.

KNEE STRIKE!

Sandy falls backward!

Marie collapses onto her for the cover!

ONE!

TWO!

SANDY KICKS OUT!

The arena erupts.

Marie sits beside her.

She doesn't look frustrated anymore.

She looks emotional.

Sandy rolls onto her side.

She looks toward Marie.

And laughs weakly.

Hardcore Sandy: "Better."

Marie almost laughs too.

Almost.

Sandy begins pushing herself upright.

Marie immediately reaches down and helps her.

The crowd applauds.

Sandy makes it to her feet.

She leans against Marie for half a second.

Marie holds her there.

Then Sandy pushes her away.

Not angrily.

Firmly.

Hardcore Sandy: "Finish it."

Marie freezes.

Sandy stands several feet away.

Leg trembling.

Chest heaving.

But standing.

Waiting.

John Phillips: "Did Sandy just tell Marie to finish this?"

Mark Bravo: "I think she did."

Marie slowly shakes her head.

Sandy nods.

Hardcore Sandy: "Come on."

Marie looks toward the crowd.

Then toward the stage.

Amy Harrison and Valkyrie Knoxx are still there.

Watching.

But again...

they do not matter.

Marie turns back toward Sandy.

Sandy taps her own chest.

Hardcore Sandy: "Right here."

Marie closes her eyes.

Just for a second.

Then she opens them.

The hesitation is gone.

Marie charges.

RUNNING KNEE!

Sandy's head snaps backward!

She somehow stays upright!

Marie hits the ropes.

ANOTHER RUNNING KNEE!

Sandy drops to both knees!

Marie grabs her.

SNAP DDT!

Sandy spikes into the canvas!

Marie rolls her over.

She almost covers.

But stops.

Sandy's eyes are still open.

Still looking at her.

Sandy shakes her head.

Not enough.

Marie stares down at her.

Sandy reaches up.

One hand grabs Marie by the wrist.

She pulls herself toward her.

Hardcore Sandy: "Everything."

Marie swallows hard.

Sandy releases her.

Marie slowly gets back to her feet.

She moves toward the corner.

The crowd rises.

Marie climbs.

First rope.

Second.

Then the top.

Sandy begins moving again.

She rolls onto her stomach.

Pushes herself onto one knee.

The entire arena is standing.

Sandy pulls herself upright.

She turns toward Marie.

Marie is perched on the top turnbuckle.

The two women lock eyes.

And neither moves.

For one long moment...

the noise of Scotiabank Arena seems to disappear.

Sandy smiles.

A real smile.

Not a fighting smile.

Not defiance.

Something warmer.

Marie looks down at her.

Her face begins to break.

The camera moves closer.

Marie mouths something.

There is no microphone close enough to hear it.

But the camera catches every word.

Marie Van Claudio: "Thank you for everything."

Sandy's smile grows.

Marie takes a breath.

Her eyes are wet.

Marie Van Claudio: "I love you."

Sandy nods.

Once.

Slowly.

Then she spreads her arms.

Not surrendering.

Ready.

Giving Marie everything she has left.

John Phillips: "What is happening here..."

Marie wipes her eyes with the back of her wrist.

Then sets her feet.

Sandy looks up at her.

Marie leaps.

MONTREAL SPINOUT!

NO—

MARIE ROTATES THROUGH EVEN HARDER!

SHE DRIVES SANDY INTO THE CANVAS WITH EVERYTHING SHE HAS!

THE IMPACT SHAKES THE RING!

Scotiabank Arena EXPLODES.

Marie doesn't immediately move.

She lies beside Sandy.

Eyes closed.

Breathing hard.

Then she rolls over.

She drapes herself across Sandy's chest.

Hooks the leg.

The referee drops.

ONE!

Sandy does not move.

TWO!

Marie closes her eyes.

THREE!

DING! DING! DING!

The crowd erupts.

Marie doesn't celebrate.

She remains laying across Sandy for several seconds.

The referee reaches toward her.

Marie slowly pushes herself upright.

Ring Announcer: "Here is your winner..."

Marie sits beside Sandy.

She reaches down.

Takes Sandy's hand.

Ring Announcer: "...MARIE VAN CLAUDIO!"

The crowd cheers.

Not for The Empire.

Not because Marie Van Claudio is suddenly forgiven.

Not because anyone has forgotten who she has become.

They cheer the match.

They cheer the moment.

They cheer the two women in the ring.

John Phillips: "Marie Van Claudio wins."

John pauses.

John Phillips: "But somehow that doesn't feel like the story."

Marie continues holding Sandy's hand.

Sandy's eyes slowly open.

She looks toward Marie.

Marie looks back.

Sandy gives her the faintest smile.

Then squeezes Marie's hand.

Once.

Marie lowers her head.

The emotion finally gets through.

The crowd begins chanting.

Crowd: "SAN-DY! SAN-DY! SAN-DY! SAN-DY!"

Marie hears it.

She looks around.

Then toward Sandy.

Sandy is still laying on the canvas.

Spent.

Finished.

But smiling.

Mark Bravo: "John..."

Mark pauses.

Mark Bravo: "If that's the last time Hardcore Sandy ever competes in a UTA ring..."

The chant gets louder.

Mark Bravo: "...that's one hell of a way to go out."

Marie gets to her feet.

The referee raises her hand.

Marie immediately pulls it down.

She doesn't want it.

Not right now.

Instead...

Marie turns back toward Hardcore Sandy.

And drops to one knee beside her.

The crowd continues chanting Sandy's name.

Marie reaches down.

And helps her sit up.

The two women look at each other.

No words.

None are needed.

Marie Van Claudio remains kneeling beside Hardcore Sandy.

The crowd continues chanting.

Crowd: "SAN-DY! SAN-DY! SAN-DY! SAN-DY!"

Marie looks around the arena.

Then back at Sandy.

For a moment, it looks like she might stay.

Instead...

Marie slowly rises.

She looks down at Sandy one last time.

Sandy gives her a small nod.

Marie returns it.

Then she turns.

No celebration.

No pose.

No acknowledgement of the victory.

Marie simply walks toward the ropes.

John Phillips: "Marie is leaving the ring."

Mark Bravo: "And I think she knows exactly what she's doing."

Marie steps through the ropes and drops to the floor.

She begins the walk up the ramp.

Slowly.

Quietly.

Behind her, Hardcore Sandy remains in the ring.

The chant continues.

Crowd: "SAN-DY! SAN-DY! SAN-DY!"

At the top of the ramp, Amy Harrison and Valkyrie Knoxx are still standing there.

Neither one seems quite sure what to make of what they just watched.

Amy's expression is unreadable.

Valkyrie looks almost stunned.

Marie reaches them.

Amy starts to say something.

Marie doesn't let her.

She simply motions with one hand.

Come on.

That's it.

No explanation.

No discussion.

Valkyrie looks toward the ring.

Then back at Marie.

Amy does the same.

Marie motions again.

This time, both women listen.

The three members of The Empire turn.

And disappear through the curtain.

Leaving Hardcore Sandy alone in the ring.

John Phillips: "That's not something I expected to see tonight."

Mark Bravo: "Marie Van Claudio just gave Hardcore Sandy the ring."

The camera returns to Sandy.

She is still sitting on the canvas.

Her face is battered.

Blood streaks one side of her face.

Her chest rises and falls heavily.

But the smile is still there.

Sandy slowly looks around Scotiabank Arena.

The crowd begins to rise.

Section by section.

Until nearly everyone is standing.

The chant grows louder.

Crowd: "SAN-DY! SAN-DY! SAN-DY! SAN-DY!"

Sandy lowers her head.

For several seconds, she just sits there and listens.

Then she wipes beneath one eye.

Whether it's sweat, blood, or something else...

it doesn't matter.

John Phillips: "Hardcore Sandy has spent a career giving everything she had to this company."

Mark Bravo: "Blood. Injuries. Championships. Years of her life."

Sandy reaches for the ropes.

She pulls herself up.

Slowly.

Her body clearly doesn't want to cooperate.

But eventually...

Hardcore Sandy stands.

The crowd gets even louder.

Sandy leans against the ropes and looks out over them.

She turns toward one side of the arena.

Then the other.

Taking it all in.

Every face.

Every cheer.

Every chant.

Like she's trying to remember all of it.

Crowd: "THANK YOU, SANDY!"

Crowd: "THANK YOU, SANDY!"

Crowd: "THANK YOU, SANDY!"

Sandy closes her eyes.

Her head lowers again.

The chant hits her.

This time, there is no hiding the emotion.

Sandy nods to herself.

Then raises one hand.

The crowd gets louder.

She points toward them.

Then presses that same hand against her chest.

John Phillips: "I don't know if Hardcore Sandy has officially said anything about retirement."

Mark Bravo: "She doesn't have to."

Sandy walks toward the nearest corner.

She climbs onto the second rope.

Slowly.

Painfully.

But she gets there.

Sandy raises both arms.

Scotiabank Arena erupts.

Crowd: "SAN-DY! SAN-DY! SAN-DY!"

Sandy looks out over the crowd.

She isn't playing a character.

She isn't trying to intimidate anyone.

She isn't Hardcore Sandy, the weapon-wielding monster.

She's just Sandy.

A woman taking in what very well may be the final ovation of her career.

John Phillips: "If this is goodbye..."

John pauses.

John Phillips: "...what a career."

Sandy steps down from the corner.

She walks toward the center of the ring.

Stops.

Looks down at the canvas beneath her feet.

Then slowly kneels.

Sandy places one hand flat against the mat.

She holds it there.

Almost like she's saying goodbye to the ring itself.

The crowd continues applauding.

Sandy looks toward the entrance.

Marie is gone.

But Sandy smiles anyway.

She nods once.

Then mouths something toward the empty stage.

We can't hear it.

But it looks very much like...

Hardcore Sandy: "Thank you."

Sandy rises one more time.

Raises a fist.

And lets the crowd give her everything they have.

Crowd: "THANK YOU, SANDY!"

Crowd: "THANK YOU, SANDY!"

Crowd: "THANK YOU, SANDY!"

The camera slowly pulls back.

Hardcore Sandy stands alone in the middle of the UTA ring.

Surrounded by thousands of people on their feet.

No opponent.

No Empire.

No championship.

Just respect.

And maybe...

goodbye.

Cashing In

Segment

We cut backstage.

Eric Dane Jr. storms through the hallway.

He is still furious.

Not frustrated.

Not disappointed.

Furious.

His jaw is tight as he walks, one hand occasionally touching the spot where Bobby Dean flattened him earlier tonight.

Eric turns a corner—

And nearly walks directly into Scott Stevens.

Stevens stops.

Looks at Eric.

Then immediately recognizes the expression on his face.

Scott Stevens: "What now?"

Eric steps directly in front of him.

Eric Dane Jr.: "That's it."

Stevens waits.

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

Scott Stevens: "Waiting for what?"

Eric stares at him.

Eric Dane Jr.: "I'm cashing it in."

Stevens' expression changes.

Scott Stevens: "Your guaranteed title shot?"

Eric Dane Jr.: "That's what guaranteed means, Scott."

Stevens sighs.

Scott Stevens: "Okay."

Eric steps closer.

Eric Dane Jr.: "I want Bobby Dean."

Stevens studies him.

Eric Dane Jr.: "International Championship."

A beat.

Scott Stevens: "You're sure?"

Eric almost laughs at the question.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Oh, I'm sure as shit."

Stevens nods slowly.

Scott Stevens: "All right."

He thinks for a moment.

Scott Stevens: "Here's the problem."

Eric rolls his eyes.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Of course there's a problem."

Scott Stevens: "The next few weeks are Ring King."

Eric doesn't care.

Scott Stevens: "We've got a tournament to get through. That's going to be the focus, and I'm not taking away from that because you finally decided tonight was the night you couldn't control your temper."

Eric's eyes narrow.

Scott Stevens: "But..."

Stevens points toward him.

Scott Stevens: "September twenty-sixth."

Eric listens.

Scott Stevens: "Ring King."

Scott Stevens: "Eric Dane Jr..."

A beat.

Scott Stevens: "...against Bobby Dean."

Eric's jaw tightens.

Scott Stevens: "International Championship."

Stevens spreads his hands.

Scott Stevens: "How does that sound?"

Eric doesn't hesitate.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Too far off."

Stevens blinks.

Eric Dane Jr.: "I want him now."

Scott Stevens: "Well, you can't have him now."

Eric Dane Jr.: "Why the hell not?"

Scott Stevens: "Because Bobby already defended the championship tonight."

Eric Dane Jr.: "Because I had to go out there and stop him from giving my shot away!"

Scott Stevens: "No. You went out there and got involved in a match that wasn't yours."

Eric steps toward Stevens.

Eric Dane Jr.: "It should've been."

Scott Stevens: "But it wasn't."

That lands.

Eric's nostrils flare.

Scott Stevens: "And after what you pulled tonight, you're lucky I'm standing here offering you September twenty-sixth instead of telling you to get the hell out of my building."

Eric glares at him.

Scott Stevens: "So here's the deal."

Stevens holds up one finger.

Scott Stevens: "Ring King."

Scott Stevens: "You."

Scott Stevens: "Bobby."

Scott Stevens: "International Championship."

Stevens lowers his hand.

Scott Stevens: "Take it or leave it, Eric."

A pause.

Scott Stevens: "You cashing in?"

Eric looks away.

His tongue pushes against the inside of his cheek.

September is clearly much farther away than he wants.

But the opportunity is exactly what he wants.

Eric turns back toward Stevens.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Yeah."

Stevens raises an eyebrow.

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

Stevens nods.

Scott Stevens: "Then it's official."

Eric starts to walk away.

He gets several steps before stopping.

He doesn't turn around.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Tell Bobby."

Stevens looks toward him.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Tell him he's got two months to enjoy pretending he belongs."

Eric turns his head just enough for Stevens to see the side of his face.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Because at Ring King..."

His hand touches his jaw again.

The place Bobby hit him.

Eric Dane Jr.: "...the joke's over."

Eric walks away.

Scott Stevens watches him disappear down the hallway.

Then shakes his head.

Scott Stevens: "September can't get here fast enough."

The camera holds on Stevens for another moment before we fade away.

Ring King 2026

Segment

The arena goes dark.

For several seconds, the screen is completely black.

Then...

THUMP.

A single spotlight illuminates a golden crown.

It sits alone atop a pedestal.

A deep voice begins to speak.

Narrator: "In the United Toughness Alliance..."

Quick flashes of UTA competition fill the screen.

Bodies crashing into the canvas.

Championships being raised.

Hands reaching desperately for ropes.

Competitors standing exhausted beneath the lights.

Narrator: "...championships prove who stands at the top."

The UTA Championship flashes across the screen.

Then the United States Championship.

The International Championship.

The Fighting Championship.

The WrestleZone Championship.

The Women's Championship.

Narrator: "And every UTA singles champion is guaranteed their place."

The music begins building.

Narrator: "But champions alone will not fill the field."

The screen suddenly fractures into sixteen individual boxes.

Some contain silhouettes.

Others remain completely black.

Narrator: "Sixteen competitors."

One box illuminates.

Then another.

Then another.

Narrator: "Some enter because they have already proven themselves worthy."

The remaining silhouettes flash.

Narrator: "The rest..."

A bell rings.

Rapid shots of competitors fighting across a UTA ring.

Narrator: "...will have to earn it."

Text slams onto the screen.

QUALIFY.

Another impact.

ADVANCE.

Another.

SURVIVE.

A sixteen-person tournament bracket begins forming across the screen.

Sixteen becomes eight.

Eight becomes four.

Four becomes two.

Then...

One.

Narrator: "Over the coming weeks, the tournament will unfold."

The bracket flashes between matches, victories, defeats, and empty spaces waiting to be filled.

Narrator: "Every victory brings you closer."

Narrator: "Every defeat sends you home."

The music stops.

The golden crown appears again.

Narrator: "Because championships can be defended."

A beat.

Narrator: "Championships can be lost."

The camera slowly pushes toward the crown.

Narrator: "But only one competitor can rule the tournament."

The music explodes.

RING KING: 2026

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2026

7:00 PM

CRYPTO.COM ARENA

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

The sixteen-person bracket appears behind the event logo.

Narrator: "Sixteen competitors."

Sixteen spaces.

Narrator: "One tournament."

The bracket begins collapsing inward.

Narrator: "One survivor."

Everything disappears except the crown.

Narrator: "One..."

A hand reaches from the darkness and lifts the crown from the pedestal.

Narrator: "...Ring King."

The Ring King logo slams onto the screen one final time.

RING KING: 2026

SEPTEMBER 26 • LOS ANGELES

WHO WILL WEAR THE CROWN?

The screen cuts to black.

Hakuryu vs. Yoshii

Match

The camera returns to ringside.

Scotiabank Arena is still buzzing after everything that has happened tonight.

Then the graphic fills the screen.

UTA UNITED STATES CHAMPIONSHIP

YOSHII (c) vs. HAKURYU

The reaction from Toronto immediately rises.

John Phillips: "Ladies and gentlemen, we have arrived at our main event."

Mark Bravo: "And those are words we didn't expect to be saying about this match when One Last Stop began."

John Phillips: "The United States Championship was always scheduled to be defended tonight. But after Maxwell Jett demanded the UTA Championship match take place at the beginning of the show, everything changed."

Mark Bravo: "And now Yoshii and Hakuryu have inherited the biggest position on the card."

John Phillips: "Inherited it, perhaps. But don't mistake that for these two men not deserving it."

The graphic changes.

Images from the World Tour flash across the screen.

Hakuryu sitting in the front row.

Watching.

Studying.

His eyes continually returning to the United States Championship.

Yoshii proudly displaying the title.

Jed Dye running his mouth.

Hakuryu remaining completely unmoved.

John Phillips: "For weeks, Hakuryu has followed Yoshii across this international tour. Sometimes from the aisle. Sometimes from the front row. He hasn't needed to attack Yoshii. He hasn't needed to create chaos."

Mark Bravo: "He's been studying him."

John Phillips: "And tonight, the studying is over."

The graphic disappears.

The lights go out.

Completely.

The roar of the crowd slowly dissolves into an uneasy murmur.

Darkness consumes Scotiabank Arena.

Then...

GOOOOOOONG.

A single white spotlight illuminates the entrance ramp.

Nothing stands beneath it.

GOOOOOOONG.

A second spotlight appears several feet farther down the aisle.

White smoke begins crawling across the stage.

GOOOOOOONG.

Another light.

Another.

Until a pathway of white illumination cuts through the darkness toward the ring.

Spiritual chanting begins to echo throughout the arena.

Low.

Haunting.

Repetitive.

The Toronto crowd begins to boo.

Through the smoke...

Sinja emerges.

His face painted stark white beneath the lights.

Full pilgrimage garments cover his body. White robes. Takuhatsugasa hat. The shakujo staff held firmly in his hand.

Sinja walks several steps onto the stage.

Then stops.

He lowers his head.

Waiting.

John Phillips: "There is Sinja."

Mark Bravo: "And you know what comes next."

The chanting grows louder.

The smoke continues rolling.

Another figure appears.

White robes.

A walking stick in one hand.

His face hidden beneath the wide brim of his takuhatsugasa.

The scripture painted across the exposed portions of his body catches beneath the stark white light.

The White Dragon has arrived.

Ring Announcer: "The following contest is scheduled for one fall and is your MAIN EVENT of One Last Stop!"

The crowd erupts.

Ring Announcer: "And it is for the UTA UNITED STATES CHAMPIONSHIP!"

Another enormous reaction.

Hakuryu does not acknowledge it.

He doesn't even raise his head.

Ring Announcer: "Introducing first, the challenger... accompanied to the ring by his disciple, Sinja..."

Hakuryu begins walking.

Ring Announcer: "From Japan..."

Tap.

The walking stick strikes the floor.

Step.

Tap.

Step.

Ring Announcer: "He is THE WHITE DRAGON..."

Hakuryu passes beneath another spotlight.

Ring Announcer: "HAKURYUUUUUUUU!"

The boos pour down.

Hakuryu gives them nothing.

Sinja walks several paces ahead of his master, guiding the procession toward the ring.

John Phillips: "Hakuryu has been one of the most dominant competitors in UTA throughout 2026."

Mark Bravo: "Former Fighting Champion. Former number one ranked competitor. A man who spent months talking about collecting heads and climbing toward the top of this company."

John Phillips: "And lately, his attention has narrowed to one man."

Mark Bravo: "Not the man, John."

The camera gets a tight shot of Hakuryu beneath his hat.

His eyes are barely visible.

Mark Bravo: "The championship."

The United States Championship graphic briefly appears in the corner of the screen.

John Phillips: "That's true. Every time Hakuryu has appeared around Yoshii lately, his eyes have gone straight to that title."

Hakuryu and Sinja reach ringside.

Sinja turns toward his master.

Hakuryu stops.

The chanting continues.

The boos continue.

Hakuryu slowly raises his head.

His eyes immediately find the ring.

Then he brings his hands together.

Prayer position.

His lips begin moving.

Whatever Hakuryu says cannot be heard.

It isn't intended for anyone else.

Sinja climbs the steel steps.

He enters first and reaches for the ropes.

The middle rope is pushed down.

The top rope is lifted.

A pathway prepared for his master.

Hakuryu ascends the steps.

He pauses on the apron.

One final prayer.

Then The White Dragon steps through the ropes.

Hakuryu walks directly to the center of the ring.

Sinja approaches.

Hakuryu removes the takuhatsugasa.

Hands it to him.

The walking stick follows.

Then the outer garments.

Piece by piece, the ceremonial figure disappears.

Until only the fighter remains.

Hakuryu stands beneath the lights in his ring gear, scripture covering his body, expression completely devoid of emotion.

Sinja carefully gathers everything and exits the ring.

Hakuryu turns toward his corner.

He kneels.

Hands together.

Eyes closed.

The entire building seems to wait with him.

John Phillips: "This man has spent weeks waiting for tonight."

Mark Bravo: "And look at him. Main event of One Last Stop. United States Championship waiting on the other side of that curtain. Nothing has changed."

Hakuryu's eyes slowly open.

Mark Bravo: "This is exactly where Hakuryu expected to be."

Hakuryu rises.

He turns toward the entrance.

His hands fall calmly to his sides.

Sinja stands beneath him on the floor.

Neither moves.

Neither speaks.

They simply stare toward the entrance.

Waiting for the United States Champion.

Hakuryu waits.

Motionless.

Sinja stands below him at ringside.

Then...

"WOLF TOTEM" BY THE HU FEATURING JACOBY SHADDIX HITS!

Scotiabank Arena explodes.

John Phillips: "And here comes the champion!"

Yoshii bursts through the curtain.

The UTA United States Championship is wrapped proudly around his waist.

The massive former sumo champion stops at the top of the ramp and looks out across the Toronto crowd.

A huge smile spreads across his face.

Yoshii throws both arms into the air.

Yoshii: "YOSHIIIIIIIIII!"

The crowd answers him.

Crowd: "YOSHIIIIIIIIII!"

Yoshii laughs.

Then does it again.

Yoshii: "YOSHIIIIIIIIII!"

Crowd: "YOSHIIIIIIIIII!"

Several steps behind him...

Jed Dye emerges.

Perfectly pressed tan suit.

Rigid posture.

Chest out.

An expression suggesting he personally orchestrated every cheer Yoshii just received.

Mark Bravo: "And there's the architect of all this success."

John Phillips: "According to Jed Dye."

Mark Bravo: "The most reliable source on Jed Dye."

Jed steps beside Yoshii and immediately points toward the ring.

Focus.

Business.

Championship defense.

Yoshii nods seriously.

Then immediately turns and high-fives a kid leaning over the barricade.

Jed closes his eyes.

Deep breath.

John Phillips: "Yoshii has never met a stranger."

Mark Bravo: "Jed wishes he would."

The United States Champion begins making his way down the ramp.

Hands reach toward him from everywhere.

Yoshii tries to get as many as possible.

High-five.

High-five.

Another.

He stops for a young fan wearing a UTA shirt.

Yoshii points at the championship around his waist.

Then points at the kid.

Thumbs up.

The kid beams.

Yoshii pats him gently on the head and continues.

Jed catches up and gestures urgently toward the ring again.

Mark Bravo: "I believe Jed Dye has calculated that stopping for every person in Canada could delay this match considerably."

John Phillips: "It's our main event. We've got time."

Yoshii finally reaches the bottom of the ramp.

And that's when things change.

His smile fades.

Because standing inside the ring...

is Hakuryu.

The White Dragon has not moved.

Yoshii looks directly at him.

Hakuryu looks directly back.

For weeks, Yoshii greeted those stares with smiles.

With waves.

With friendliness.

Not tonight.

John Phillips: "There's the change."

Mark Bravo: "Yoshii likes to have fun, but don't confuse that with Yoshii not understanding exactly what's waiting for him."

Jed steps beside his client.

For once, Jed doesn't say anything.

He simply looks toward Hakuryu.

Then up at Yoshii.

Yoshii reaches down.

He unfastens the United States Championship.

He holds it in both hands.

Looks down at it.

Then starts toward the ring.

Ring Announcer: "And his opponent... accompanied to the ring by Jed Dye..."

Yoshii climbs the steel steps.

Ring Announcer: "From Tokyo, Japan..."

Yoshii steps onto the apron.

Ring Announcer: "Weighing in at FIVE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-THREE POUNDS..."

The crowd reacts to the number alone.

Ring Announcer: "He is the reigning and defending UTA UNITED STATES CHAMPION..."

Yoshii steps through the ropes.

Ring Announcer: "YOSHIIIIIIIIII!"

Yoshii raises the championship high.

Crowd: "YOSHIIIIIIIIII!"

Another enormous ovation.

Yoshii heads toward the nearest corner.

He steps onto the bottom rope.

Then the second.

The ropes visibly strain beneath him as Yoshii raises the United States Championship over his head.

The fans roar.

Yoshii flashes his trademark grin.

A peace sign follows.

Then he looks across the ring.

Hakuryu.

The smile disappears again.

Yoshii steps down.

Jed enters the ring behind him.

He immediately reaches up and straightens the championship on Yoshii's shoulder.

Yoshii barely notices.

He's staring at Hakuryu.

Hakuryu is staring at the championship.

John Phillips: "This is what Hakuryu has been waiting for."

Mark Bravo: "Watching Yoshii. Studying Yoshii. Showing up week after week and looking at that championship."

John Phillips: "But now he has to take it."

Jed notices Hakuryu's eyes.

He immediately steps partially in front of Yoshii.

Jed points toward the championship.

Jed Dye: "Observe it carefully."

Hakuryu slowly moves his eyes from the championship...

...to Jed.

Jed hesitates.

Jed Dye: "From an appropriate distance."

The crowd laughs.

Yoshii gently places one enormous hand on Jed's shoulder.

He moves his manager aside.

Not roughly.

Just enough.

Because Yoshii doesn't need anyone standing between them.

Champion and challenger stare at one another.

Yoshii takes the United States Championship from his shoulder.

He steps forward.

Hakuryu does the same.

The crowd begins to rise.

Yoshii holds the championship between them.

Hakuryu looks down at it.

Then slowly raises his eyes.

Yoshii's expression is no longer playful.

This is the champion Hakuryu has spent weeks waiting to meet.

Yoshii says something quietly.

Yoshii: "You want?"

Yoshii raises the championship slightly.

Hakuryu doesn't answer.

He doesn't need Sinja to answer for him either.

Yoshii nods.

Yoshii: "Then fight."

The crowd erupts.

John Phillips: "That's all Yoshii needs to say."

The referee steps between them and takes possession of the United States Championship.

Yoshii backs toward his corner.

Hakuryu retreats toward his.

Jed exits to the floor.

Across the ring, Sinja stands waiting.

The referee walks to the center.

He raises the United States Championship high above his head.

Scotiabank Arena erupts one more time.

John Phillips: "Five hundred and eighty-three pounds of power against one of the most calculating competitors in the United Toughness Alliance."

Mark Bravo: "Hakuryu has watched. Hakuryu has waited. Now we're about to find out whether all that patience pays off."

John Phillips: "The United States Championship."

The referee hands the title through the ropes.

John Phillips: "Yoshii."

The champion lowers into his stance.

John Phillips: "Hakuryu."

The White Dragon brings his hands together in prayer.

John Phillips: "Our main event."

The referee looks toward Yoshii.

Then Hakuryu.

He raises his hand.

The referee calls for the bell.

DING! DING! DING!

The main event is underway.

Yoshii steps out of his corner.

Hakuryu does the same.

Neither man rushes.

They begin circling.

Yoshii is enormous.

There is no getting around it.

Nearly six hundred pounds of former sumo wrestler standing between Hakuryu and the United States Championship.

But Hakuryu doesn't look intimidated.

If anything...

he looks intrigued.

John Phillips: "We've talked about Hakuryu watching Yoshii for weeks. Now he gets to experience the problem firsthand."

Mark Bravo: "You can watch all the tape you want, John. Tape doesn't weigh five hundred and eighty-three pounds."

Yoshii raises his hands.

Hakuryu raises his.

They move toward the center.

COLLAR AND ELBOW!

Immediately Yoshii drives forward!

Hakuryu's boots slide across the canvas!

Yoshii continues pushing!

Hakuryu braces.

His legs widen.

His entire body tightens.

And suddenly...

Hakuryu stops moving.

The crowd reacts.

John Phillips: "Wait a minute!"

Yoshii pushes harder.

Hakuryu grits his teeth.

His boots remain planted.

Mark Bravo: "Hakuryu stopped him!"

Yoshii's eyes widen slightly.

That doesn't happen often.

Hakuryu suddenly twists!

He turns Yoshii just enough to break the lockup!

Both men separate.

The crowd applauds.

Yoshii looks at Hakuryu.

Then smiles.

Not his usual goofy grin.

A competitor's smile.

Hakuryu gives him nothing in return.

At ringside, Sinja slowly nods.

Across from him, Jed Dye looks considerably less pleased.

John Phillips: "Hakuryu couldn't overpower Yoshii, but he stopped him."

Mark Bravo: "That's important. Yoshii is used to the first collision telling his opponent exactly how the night's going to go. Hakuryu just told Yoshii something too."

They circle again.

Second lockup!

This time Hakuryu immediately changes levels.

He grabs Yoshii around the waist.

Hakuryu tries to lift!

Nothing.

He resets his feet.

Tries again!

Yoshii's heels leave the canvas!

Maybe an inch.

But they leave it!

The crowd reacts loudly.

John Phillips: "Did you see that?!"

Mark Bravo: "Hakuryu just got Yoshii off the ground!"

Yoshii immediately clubs both forearms across Hakuryu's back.

Hakuryu releases him.

Yoshii turns.

OPEN-HAND SUMO STRIKE!

Hakuryu is blasted backward!

He hits the ropes!

Comes back—

YOSHII WITH THE SHOULDER BLOCK!

Hakuryu goes down!

The crowd erupts.

Yoshii looks down at him.

Hakuryu immediately rolls onto his stomach.

Pushes himself up.

Back to his feet.

Yoshii hits the ropes.

ANOTHER SHOULDER BLOCK!

Hakuryu goes down again!

Yoshii doesn't stop.

He hits the opposite ropes.

Hakuryu gets up—

YOSHII CHARGES!

HAKURYU SIDESTEPS!

Yoshii stops himself before crashing into the turnbuckles.

He turns—

ROUNDHOUSE KICK TO THE THIGH!

THWACK!

Yoshii grimaces.

Another kick!

THWACK!

Hakuryu targets the same leg.

Again!

Yoshii reaches for him—

Hakuryu ducks underneath!

Another kick to the thigh!

Yoshii turns.

Hakuryu fires a kick into the ribs!

Yoshii absorbs it.

Hakuryu fires another!

Then a forearm!

Another forearm!

Yoshii is being backed toward the ropes!

John Phillips: "Hakuryu isn't trying to fight Yoshii's fight."

Mark Bravo: "Exactly. Don't stand directly in front of five hundred and eighty-three pounds if you don't have to."

Hakuryu fires another forearm—

Yoshii catches him!

One enormous hand grabs Hakuryu around the throat!

The crowd rises.

Hakuryu's eyes widen.

Yoshii pulls him forward.

BELLY-TO-BELLY SUPLEX!

HAKURYU IS THROWN ACROSS THE RING!

The crowd erupts!

John Phillips: "GOOD LORD!"

Hakuryu crashes hard.

He rolls beneath the bottom rope and onto the apron.

Sinja immediately moves toward him.

Hakuryu raises one hand.

Stop.

Sinja freezes.

Hakuryu doesn't want assistance.

He pulls himself upright.

Yoshii approaches.

Hakuryu suddenly drives a shoulder through the ropes into Yoshii's stomach!

Another!

Yoshii backs away.

Hakuryu steps through the ropes.

Yoshii charges—

Hakuryu catches him!

Or tries to!

Both arms wrap around Yoshii!

Hakuryu plants his feet!

Yoshii keeps coming!

Hakuryu is driven backward!

But he doesn't release him!

Hakuryu ROARS!

He changes his grip!

Gets underneath Yoshii!

And—

LIFTS!

YOSHII COMES OFF THE MAT!

The entire arena erupts!

John Phillips: "NO WAY!"

Hakuryu has Yoshii several inches off the canvas!

His legs tremble!

His face contorts!

Yoshii comes back down—

But Hakuryu keeps the grip!

He tries again!

Yoshii leaves the canvas!

HAKURYU TURNS!

AND DUMPS YOSHII TO THE MAT!

Not cleanly.

Not beautifully.

But Yoshii is down.

And Hakuryu put him there.

Scotiabank Arena is on its feet.

Mark Bravo: "There it is!"

John Phillips: "Hakuryu just muscled Yoshii off his feet!"

Hakuryu drops to one knee.

Even that took something out of him.

Yoshii rolls onto his side.

For the first time tonight...

the United States Champion looks genuinely surprised.

Hakuryu looks at him.

Then slowly rises.

He brings his hands together.

A brief prayer.

Yoshii gets to one knee.

Hakuryu strikes.

SHINING WIZARD!

Yoshii's head snaps sideways!

The champion falls!

Hakuryu covers!

ONE!

Yoshii launches Hakuryu off of him!

Hakuryu lands several feet away.

The crowd erupts again.

John Phillips: "ONE!"

Mark Bravo: "And there's the other side of this problem!"

Hakuryu sits up.

He stares at Yoshii.

Yoshii sits up too.

The two men look across the ring at each other.

Yoshii rubs his jaw.

Then smiles.

Hakuryu tilts his head.

Yoshii gets back to his feet.

Hakuryu does the same.

Yoshii gestures toward him.

Yoshii: "Again."

The crowd pops.

Hakuryu stares at him.

Then something happens that we almost never see.

The corner of Hakuryu's mouth rises.

Just slightly.

Mark Bravo: "Was that a smile?"

John Phillips: "I think Hakuryu might actually be enjoying this."

Yoshii pounds his chest.

Hakuryu rolls his shoulders.

They charge.

Yoshii throws a massive palm strike!

Hakuryu answers with a forearm!

Yoshii!

Hakuryu!

Yoshii!

Hakuryu!

The shots become harder.

Yoshii rocks Hakuryu backward!

Hakuryu fires back!

Yoshii barely moves!

Hakuryu hits him again!

And again!

Yoshii answers with one enormous open-hand strike!

Hakuryu drops to a knee!

Yoshii hits the ropes!

Hakuryu explodes upward!

HIGH KNEE!

Yoshii staggers!

Hakuryu hits the ropes!

Yoshii charges too!

THEY COLLIDE!

Neither man falls!

The crowd erupts.

Yoshii looks at Hakuryu.

Hakuryu looks back.

Yoshii charges again!

Hakuryu meets him!

ANOTHER COLLISION!

Hakuryu staggers backward.

Yoshii takes two steps back himself.

That gets an enormous reaction.

John Phillips: "Nobody has been able to meet Yoshii like this!"

Mark Bravo: "Hakuryu isn't as big. He isn't as heavy. But he may be the strongest opponent Yoshii has defended that championship against!"

Yoshii lowers his center of gravity.

Hakuryu does the same.

Across the ring, Jed Dye is screaming instructions.

On the opposite side, Sinja remains perfectly still.

Champion.

Challenger.

Both breathing harder now.

Both understanding exactly what is standing across from them.

And both beginning to realize...

this may be considerably harder than either expected.

Yoshii and Hakuryu remain across from one another.

Both men breathing harder.

Both recalibrating.

Hakuryu brings his hands together.

A brief prayer.

Yoshii watches him.

Then pounds both hands against his chest.

Yoshii: "YOSHII!"

The crowd answers.

Crowd: "YOSHII!"

Hakuryu comes forward.

Yoshii meets him.

Hakuryu immediately fires a kick into the thigh!

Yoshii absorbs it.

Another kick!

Yoshii reaches for him—

Hakuryu pivots away!

BACKFLIP KICK!

Hakuryu's heel catches Yoshii across the jaw!

The champion staggers!

John Phillips: "Hakuryu is using every bit of mobility he has!"

Hakuryu comes off the ropes.

HANDSPRING BACK ELBOW!

The elbow smashes into Yoshii's chest!

Yoshii takes two steps backward.

But stays upright.

Hakuryu turns.

SUPERKICK!

Yoshii's head snaps back!

The champion falls into the corner!

Hakuryu sees it.

He takes several steps backward.

Hands together.

Prayer.

Then charges!

RUNNING CORNER STRIKE!

NO!

Yoshii moves!

Hakuryu hits the turnbuckles!

He staggers backward—

YOSHII HUG!

Yoshii wraps both enormous arms around Hakuryu!

Hakuryu is trapped!

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

Yoshii squeezes.

Hakuryu's feet leave the canvas!

The White Dragon grimaces.

Yoshii swings him slightly from side to side.

John Phillips: "The Yoshii Hug doesn't sound particularly dangerous until you're trapped inside it!"

Mark Bravo: "That's five hundred and eighty-three pounds squeezing the oxygen out of you!"

Hakuryu's arms are pinned initially.

He works one free.

ELBOW!

Yoshii holds on.

Another elbow!

Still holding.

Hakuryu brings both palms together against Yoshii's ear!

Yoshii releases!

Hakuryu drops to his feet.

He immediately kicks the knee!

Yoshii buckles!

TORNADO KICK!

Yoshii goes down to one knee!

The crowd rises.

John Phillips: "Hakuryu has the champion down!"

Hakuryu hits the ropes.

PRAYING STANDING MOONSAULT!

Hakuryu crashes across Yoshii!

Cover!

ONE!

TWO!

Yoshii powers out!

Hakuryu rolls away.

Yoshii sits up.

That one got his attention.

At ringside, Sinja brings his hands together and speaks quietly toward his master.

Sinja: "Patience."

Hakuryu looks toward him.

A small nod.

Across the ring...

Jed Dye notices.

Jed Dye: "HEY!"

Sinja doesn't even look at him.

Jed Dye: "No outside consultation!"

Sinja slowly turns his head.

Sinja: "I am his manager."

Jed Dye: "So am I!"

Sinja looks toward Yoshii.

Then back at Jed.

Sinja: "My condolences."

The crowd laughs.

Jed's mouth falls open.

Mark Bravo: "Oh, Sinja got him."

Jed Dye: "Excuse me?!"

Sinja turns back toward the ring.

Completely dismissing him.

Jed Dye: "Do not turn your back on me!"

Jed marches around the corner of the ring.

Sinja remains still.

Jed stops beside him.

Jed Dye: "For your information, Yoshii's championship success is the direct result of an expertly implemented strategic development program created and administered by—"

Sinja: "You."

Jed pauses.

Jed Dye: "Precisely."

Sinja: "You were going to say you."

Jed Dye: "Because it's accurate."

Sinja looks toward Yoshii.

The massive champion is getting back to his feet on his own.

Sinja looks back at Jed.

Sinja: "He seems capable without you."

Jed looks personally attacked.

Jed Dye: "Capable?!"

Inside the ring, Yoshii charges Hakuryu.

Hakuryu tries to slip away—

Yoshii catches him!

SAMOAN DROP!

The ring SHAKES!

Hakuryu bounces from the impact.

Yoshii covers!

ONE!

TWO!

HAKURYU KICKS OUT!

Jed immediately points toward the ring.

Jed Dye: "THAT is capable!"

Sinja barely reacts.

Sinja: "Two."

Jed looks toward him.

Sinja: "Only two."

Jed clenches his jaw.

John Phillips: "We've got quite the secondary competition developing out here."

Mark Bravo: "I'd pay money for Sinja and Jed Dye to argue for an hour."

John Phillips: "I wouldn't."

Inside the ring, Yoshii grabs Hakuryu and pulls him upright.

SUMO CHOP!

The impact echoes throughout the building!

Hakuryu stumbles backward.

Yoshii follows.

ANOTHER SUMO CHOP!

Hakuryu's chest reddens instantly.

Yoshii backs him into the corner.

Another chop!

Another!

The referee warns Yoshii to let Hakuryu out.

Yoshii takes a step backward.

He smiles.

Then charges!

YOSHII SPLASH!

HAKURYU MOVES!

Yoshii crashes backward into the turnbuckles!

The entire ring moves!

Hakuryu immediately attacks the leg!

LOW KICK!

Another!

Yoshii turns.

SUPERKICK!

Yoshii is rocked!

Hakuryu grabs him.

He tries to hook Yoshii for a suplex.

The crowd begins buzzing.

John Phillips: "Surely not."

Hakuryu plants his feet.

He pulls.

Yoshii doesn't move.

Hakuryu resets.

Deep breath.

Hands briefly come together.

Then he tries again!

Yoshii rises!

The crowd ERUPTS!

Mark Bravo: "HE'S GOT HIM!"

Hakuryu gets Yoshii almost vertical—

But the weight shifts!

Yoshii comes back down!

Hakuryu's knees buckle beneath him!

Yoshii immediately scoops Hakuryu!

FRONT POWERSLAM!

Hakuryu is PLANTED!

Yoshii hooks the leg!

ONE!

TWO!

HAKURYU KICKS OUT!

Yoshii sits up.

He looks toward Hakuryu.

The challenger rolls onto one knee.

Yoshii smiles again.

Yoshii: "Strong."

Hakuryu hears him.

He looks up.

Yoshii nods.

Yoshii: "Very strong."

Hakuryu slowly rises.

Then brings his hands together.

He bows his head slightly.

Not gratitude.

Acknowledgment.

John Phillips: "Yoshii recognizes what he's in there with."

Yoshii rises too.

Hakuryu suddenly explodes forward!

SUPERKICK!

Yoshii staggers!

SECOND SUPERKICK!

Yoshii hits the ropes!

Hakuryu charges.

Yoshii catches him!

SIDE BELLY-TO-BELLY!

HAKURYU GOES FLYING!

But Hakuryu rolls through the landing!

He comes back to his feet!

Yoshii turns—

TORNADO KICK!

The kick catches Yoshii behind the ear!

The champion DROPS TO A KNEE!

Hakuryu hits the ropes!

RUNNING BACKFLIP KICK!

YOSHII GOES DOWN!

The crowd erupts.

Hakuryu falls into the cover!

ONE!

TWO!

YOSHII KICKS OUT!

Hakuryu immediately sits upright.

Sinja slaps the apron once.

Sinja: "?!"

Hakuryu looks toward him.

Jed hears Sinja.

Jed Dye: "What did you tell him?!"

Sinja looks over.

Sinja: "I told him now."

Jed Dye: "Now WHAT?"

Sinja: "Now."

Jed Dye: "That is intentionally vague!"

Sinja smiles faintly.

Sinja: "Yes."

Jed takes another step toward him.

Jed Dye: "You think you're clever."

Sinja: "I don't think about you at all."

The crowd reacts.

Mark Bravo: "Sinja is destroying this man."

Jed gets directly into Sinja's face.

Jed Dye: "Listen here, face paint—"

Sinja immediately turns toward him.

The smile disappears.

For the first time...

there is real tension between them.

Jed stops talking.

Sinja steps closer.

Sinja: "Choose your next words carefully."

Jed swallows.

Then straightens his jacket.

Jed Dye: "I said..."

Jed glances toward the referee.

Then back.

Jed Dye: "...distinguished gentleman."

The crowd laughs.

Sinja slowly turns away.

Mark Bravo: "Excellent recovery."

But Jed isn't finished.

He mutters something beneath his breath.

Sinja turns back.

Sinja: "What was that?"

Jed Dye: "Nothing."

Inside the ring...

Hakuryu has pulled Yoshii upright.

He hooks the arms.

Hakuryu brings his hands together for the briefest prayer.

John Phillips: "Wait a minute!"

Hakuryu drops his base.

He lifts!

Yoshii rises!

Not all the way.

But enough!

HAKURYU POWERS HIM UP!

The crowd rises!

Hakuryu's entire body shakes under the weight!

He takes one step.

Then another.

AND DRIVES YOSHII DOWN WITH A MODIFIED POWERBOMB!

The ring buckles beneath the impact!

The building erupts!

John Phillips: "HAKURYU GOT HIM UP!"

Mark Bravo: "I HAVE NEVER SEEN ANYBODY MANHANDLE YOSHII LIKE THAT!"

Hakuryu collapses beside the champion.

That took almost everything he had.

But Yoshii is flat on his back.

Sinja stares into the ring.

Completely focused now.

Jed forgets their argument too.

Both managers rush toward the apron.

Sinja: "Hakuryu!"

Jed Dye: "YOSHII! VERTICAL RECOVERY! IMMEDIATELY!"

Neither competitor moves.

The referee begins checking both men.

And for the first time...

the possibility becomes very real.

Yoshii's United States Championship reign may be in serious danger.

Hakuryu and Yoshii remain down.

The crowd is on its feet.

Sinja grips the edge of the apron.

Jed Dye is almost climbing through the ropes himself.

Jed Dye: "YOSHII! THIS IS NOT AN AUTHORIZED REST PERIOD!"

Yoshii's fingers move.

Hakuryu rolls onto one shoulder.

John Phillips: "Hakuryu got Yoshii up, but look at what it cost him."

Mark Bravo: "That's the tradeoff. You want to prove you can lift nearly six hundred pounds? Congratulations. Now your spine wants a meeting with Human Resources."

The referee begins a count.

Referee: "ONE!"

Hakuryu rolls onto his stomach.

Referee: "TWO!"

Yoshii turns onto his side.

Referee: "THREE!"

Hakuryu pushes himself onto one knee.

He brings his hands together.

Even now.

Even exhausted.

Prayer.

Referee: "FOUR!"

Yoshii plants one enormous hand against the canvas.

He pushes.

Referee: "FIVE!"

Both men are upright.

Barely.

Hakuryu strikes first.

SUPERKICK!

Yoshii absorbs it!

Hakuryu fires another!

Yoshii staggers backward!

A third!

The champion falls into the ropes!

John Phillips: "Hakuryu is unloading!"

Hakuryu hits the opposite side.

Charges—

YOSHII EXPLODES FORWARD!

SUMO HEADBUTT!

Hakuryu drops!

The crowd erupts!

Yoshii falls to one knee from the momentum.

He shakes his head.

Then looks toward Hakuryu.

The challenger is already trying to rise.

Yoshii: "No."

Yoshii gets up.

Hakuryu reaches his knees.

Yoshii grabs him.

SAVATE KICK!

Hakuryu is thrown backward!

Yoshii covers!

ONE!

TWO!

HAKURYU KICKS OUT!

Yoshii looks toward the referee.

Two.

The champion nods.

No argument.

He gets up again.

Hakuryu rolls toward the ropes.

Yoshii follows.

He grabs Hakuryu by the wrist.

Irish whip into the corner!

Hakuryu crashes against the turnbuckles!

Yoshii backs across the ring.

The crowd begins to rise.

John Phillips: "Yoshii may be setting up the Yoshii Splash!"

Yoshii charges!

Hakuryu watches him coming.

At the last possible second—

HAKURYU MOVES!

Yoshii turns his back for the splash—

AND CRASHES INTO THE TURNBUCKLES!

The entire ring shakes!

Yoshii stumbles forward.

Hakuryu leaps onto the second rope!

He runs along it!

Hands together!

PRAYING ROPE WALK CHOP!

The strike crashes across Yoshii's upper chest!

Yoshii falls to one knee!

Hakuryu lands.

Turns.

TORNADO KICK!

Yoshii falls onto both knees!

Mark Bravo: "He's chopping the giant down!"

Hakuryu looks toward the corner.

Then back at Yoshii.

He takes a breath.

Hands together.

Prayer.

Hakuryu hooks Yoshii.

John Phillips: "No. Don't tell me he's going to try this again."

Hakuryu strains.

Yoshii rises!

The crowd comes alive!

Hakuryu gets him up—

YOSHII COUNTERS!

His weight crashes down!

Hakuryu is trapped beneath him!

The referee drops!

ONE!

TWO!

HAKURYU ESCAPES!

Both men scramble up.

Hakuryu is quicker.

SUPERKICK!

Yoshii staggers!

Hakuryu hits another!

Yoshii falls backward against the ropes!

Hakuryu charges—

Yoshii ducks down!

BACK BODY DROP!

Hakuryu goes over the top rope!

But he catches the apron!

Hakuryu hangs on!

Yoshii turns.

Hakuryu launches himself back through the ropes—

YOSHII CATCHES HIM!

YOSHII HUG!

Hakuryu is squeezed in the middle of the ring!

His feet leave the canvas again!

Yoshii squeezes harder.

Referee: "Do you give?!"

Hakuryu shakes his head.

Sinja watches closely.

Hakuryu's arms begin dropping.

John Phillips: "Hakuryu may be fading!"

Yoshii squeezes.

The referee lifts Hakuryu's arm.

It falls once.

He lifts it again.

It falls twice.

Sinja suddenly slaps the apron.

Sinja: "??!"

Jed immediately steps toward him.

Jed Dye: "Do not shout during an official consciousness examination!"

Sinja ignores him.

Sinja: "??!"

The referee raises Hakuryu's hand a third time.

It starts to fall—

HAKURYU STOPS IT!

The crowd erupts!

John Phillips: "HE'S STILL IN IT!"

Hakuryu suddenly brings his palms together around Yoshii's head!

EAR CLAP!

Yoshii grimaces.

Another!

A third!

Yoshii releases!

Hakuryu drops behind him.

He immediately clips the knee!

Yoshii drops!

Hakuryu grabs him from behind.

He climbs onto Yoshii's back!

Arms around the head!

KASU OBU DORAGON!

CURSE OF THE DRAGON!

The camel clutch is applied!

John Phillips: "HAKURYU HAS THE SUBMISSION!"

Yoshii's massive frame arches backward.

Hakuryu pulls!

The referee gets directly in Yoshii's face.

Referee: "Do you submit?!"

Yoshii: "NO!"

Hakuryu leans farther backward.

Yoshii reaches toward the ropes.

Too far.

He tries to crawl.

Hakuryu keeps his weight centered.

Mark Bravo: "This is where Yoshii's size can work against him. Moving that body across the ring while Hakuryu is hanging off his back is a nightmare!"

Yoshii reaches again.

Still short.

Jed Dye begins pounding the apron.

Jed Dye: "FORWARD PROPULSION, YOSHII!"

Sinja looks sideways at him.

Sinja: "He knows how to crawl."

Jed Dye: "I am reinforcing the procedure!"

Yoshii plants both hands.
Pushes.
Hakuryu keeps pulling.
Yoshii pushes again.
And suddenly—
HE STARTS RISING!
The crowd erupts!
John Phillips: "WHAT?!"
Yoshii gets one foot underneath him.
Then the other!
Hakuryu is STILL ON HIS BACK!
Yoshii stands!
Hakuryu's eyes widen!
Yoshii charges backward—
AND CRUSHES HAKURYU INTO THE TURNBUCKLES!
Hakuryu releases!
Yoshii staggers forward.
Hakuryu remains in the corner.
The champion turns.
He sees him.
Yoshii backs into the opposite corner.
Jed Dye's eyes go wide.
Jed Dye: "YES!"
Yoshii charges.
He turns at the final second—
YOSHII SPLASH!
CONNECTS!
Hakuryu disappears between Yoshii and the turnbuckles!
The crowd explodes!
Yoshii steps forward.
Hakuryu collapses out of the corner.
John Phillips: "HAKURYU GOT CRUSHED!"
Yoshii looks down at him.

Then toward the corner.

The crowd realizes what's coming.

Mark Bravo: "Oh boy."

Yoshii drags Hakuryu into position.

Face-up.

Near the corner.

Yoshii points upward.

The crowd roars.

John Phillips: "YOSHII BOMB!"

Yoshii grabs the ropes.

One foot onto the bottom rope.

Then the second.

The ropes strain beneath him.

Yoshii begins climbing to the second rope.

Hakuryu remains motionless below.

Sinja looks toward him.

For the first time all match...

there is urgency in Sinja's face.

Sinja: "Hakuryu!"

Jed steps sideways, putting himself between Sinja and the corner.

Jed Dye: "Absolutely not."

Sinja looks at him.

Jed Dye: "You will remain in your assigned managerial zone."

Sinja takes one step toward him.

Sinja: "Move."

Jed Dye: "Negative."

Sinja tries to step around.

Jed moves with him.

Sinja: "I said move."

Jed Dye: "And I said—"

Sinja shoves Jed!

The crowd reacts!

Jed stumbles backward.

His eyes widen.

Jed Dye: "YOU PHYSICALLY CONTACTED ME!"

Jed shoves Sinja back!

Now the crowd really comes alive.

John Phillips: "Oh, come on! Not now!"

The referee notices the commotion.

He turns toward ringside.

Referee: "HEY! BOTH OF YOU!"

Jed points accusingly at Sinja.

Jed Dye: "HE STARTED IT!"

Sinja takes another step forward.

The referee moves toward the ropes.

Referee: "ENOUGH!"

On the second rope...

Yoshii turns toward the distraction.

Just briefly.

Just long enough.

Hakuryu's eyes open.

He sees Yoshii above him.

Hakuryu rolls!

Yoshii turns back—

AND LEAPS!

YOSHII BOMB!

NO ONE HOME!

YOSHII CRASHES INTO THE CANVAS!

The impact shakes the entire ring!

John Phillips: "YOSHII MISSED!"

The referee immediately turns back.

Hakuryu crawls toward the ropes.

Yoshii is flat on his back.

Sinja sees it.

So does Jed.

Their argument stops instantly.

Jed Dye: "No."

Hakuryu pulls himself upright.

He looks toward Yoshii.

Then toward the top rope.

The crowd begins buzzing.

John Phillips: "Hakuryu sees the opening!"

The White Dragon slowly climbs.

First rope.

Second.

Top.

Hakuryu settles onto the turnbuckle.

He brings both hands together.

Prayer.

Below him...

Yoshii begins to stir.

Hakuryu looks down.

Sinja bows his head.

Jed Dye looks absolutely terrified.

Mark Bravo: "Breath of the Dragon."

Hakuryu rises to his feet on the top rope.

Hands still pressed together.

And leaps.

RYU NO KOKYU!

DIVING HEADBUTT!

HAKURYU CRASHES DOWN ONTO YOSHII!

The crowd erupts!

Hakuryu immediately grabs the leg!

ONE!

TWO!

THR—

YOSHII THROWS A SHOULDER UP!

SCOTIABANK ARENA EXPLODES!

Hakuryu rolls away.

For the first time tonight...
the composure cracks.
Hakuryu stares at the referee.
The referee holds up two fingers.
Hakuryu looks toward Sinja.
Sinja looks just as stunned.
John Phillips: "YOSHII KICKED OUT OF THE BREATH OF THE DRAGON!"
Mark Bravo: "Hakuryu thought he had him! I thought he had him!"
Hakuryu turns back toward Yoshii.
The champion is barely moving.
Hakuryu slowly gets to his feet.
His breathing is heavy now.
His chest rises.
Falls.
Hakuryu looks down at Yoshii.
Then brings his hands together again.
But this prayer lasts longer.
Because for all the studying...
for all the preparation...
for everything Hakuryu believed he knew about Yoshii...
the United States Champion is still here.
Hakuryu remains on his knees beside Yoshii.
Hands pressed together.
Head bowed.
The prayer finally ends.
Hakuryu opens his eyes.
And something is different.
The frustration is gone.
The calm has returned.
John Phillips: "Hakuryu had the championship won."
Mark Bravo: "He thought he did."
Hakuryu slowly rises.
Yoshii rolls onto his stomach.

The champion begins pushing himself upright.

Hakuryu watches.

Doesn't rush.

Doesn't attack.

He studies.

John Phillips: "This is what makes Hakuryu so dangerous. He's not panicking because the Breath of the Dragon didn't finish it."

Mark Bravo: "He's adjusting."

Yoshii reaches one knee.

Hakuryu strikes.

LOW KICK TO THE THIGH!

Yoshii drops back down.

Hakuryu immediately backs away.

Yoshii rises again.

Another kick!

Same leg.

Yoshii grimaces.

Hakuryu circles.

Yoshii reaches for him.

Hakuryu moves away.

Another kick!

John Phillips: "He's going back to the leg."

Mark Bravo: "Which is smart. Yoshii can absorb punishment better than almost anyone, but five hundred and eighty-three pounds still has to stand on two legs."

Hakuryu fires again—

YOSHII CATCHES THE LEG!

The crowd erupts.

Hakuryu hops on one foot.

Yoshii shakes his head.

Hakuryu tries an enzuigiri—

Yoshii ducks!

Hakuryu lands on his stomach!

Yoshii still has the ankle!

He drags Hakuryu backward!

Hakuryu claws at the canvas!

Yoshii pulls him up—

AND LAUNCHES HIM WITH A SIDE BELLY-TO-BELLY SUPLEX!

Hakuryu crashes hard!

The crowd explodes.

Yoshii drops to one knee afterward.

The damaged leg is clearly bothering him.

Jed Dye immediately pounds the apron.

Jed Dye: "UTILIZE THE SUPERIOR MASS!"

Yoshii looks toward Jed.

Then toward Hakuryu.

Yoshii nods.

Yoshii: "Yoshii smash."

The crowd erupts.

Mark Bravo: "Finally, instructions everyone can understand."

Hakuryu pulls himself up in the corner.

Yoshii charges.

AVALANCHE!

HAKURYU IS CRUSHED!

Yoshii backs away.

Hakuryu falls forward—

Yoshii catches him!

SAMOAN DROP!

The ring shakes!

Yoshii covers!

ONE!

TWO!

THR—

HAKURYU GETS THE SHOULDER UP!

The crowd reacts.

Yoshii sits up.

He looks toward Hakuryu.

No frustration.

Just respect.

Yoshii gets to his feet.

Slowly.

He limps toward Hakuryu.

Pulls him upright.

SUMO CHOP!

Hakuryu stumbles backward.

Another!

Hakuryu hits the ropes.

Yoshii swings again—

Hakuryu ducks!

He rebounds off the opposite side!

SUPERKICK!

Yoshii staggers!

Hakuryu hits the ropes again!

SECOND SUPERKICK!

Yoshii falls against the turnbuckles!

Hakuryu charges—

YOSHII CATCHES HIM!

FRONT POWERSLAM!

HAKURYU IS DRIVEN INTO THE CANVAS!

Yoshii falls across him!

ONE!

TWO!

THR—

HAKURYU KICKS OUT!

Scotiabank Arena erupts again.

John Phillips: "Hakuryu survives again!"

Yoshii pushes himself upright.

He points toward the corner.

The fans know.

Crowd: "YOSHII! YOSHII! YOSHII!"

Yoshii drags Hakuryu toward the corner.

He positions him face-up.

Jed Dye's eyes go wide.

Jed Dye: "FINISHING PROTOCOL!"

Sinja watches from the opposite side.

Completely still.

Yoshii grips the ropes.

He starts climbing.

The injured leg slows him.

One step.

Then another.

Yoshii reaches the second rope.

Hakuryu's eyes open.

He sees Yoshii above him.

Yoshii raises both arms.

Yoshii: "YOSHIIIIIIII!"

The crowd roars.

Yoshii leaps—

HAKURYU ROLLS AWAY!

YOSHII BOMB MISSES AGAIN!

The champion crashes into the canvas!

Hakuryu rolls toward the ropes.

Both men are down.

John Phillips: "Yoshii missed it again!"

Mark Bravo: "And that's not luck anymore."

Hakuryu uses the ropes to pull himself up.

Yoshii remains on his back.

Hakuryu looks toward him.

Then toward Sinja.

Sinja slowly raises one hand.

Five fingers.

Then closes them into a fist.

Hakuryu nods.

John Phillips: "What was that?"

Mark Bravo: "I don't know, but Hakuryu did."

Hakuryu stalks toward Yoshii.

Yoshii begins sitting up.

Hakuryu fires a superkick!

Yoshii falls backward.

Hakuryu grabs both legs.

He tries to turn Yoshii over.

The champion resists.

Hakuryu strains.

Yoshii kicks him away!

Hakuryu rolls backward.

Both men rise.

Yoshii charges!

Hakuryu sidesteps!

Yoshii hits the ropes!

Hakuryu catches him on the rebound!

He hooks both arms!

Prayer!

John Phillips: "Koya Otoshi?!"

Hakuryu tries to lift!

Yoshii doesn't move!

Hakuryu tries again!

Yoshii starts rising!

The crowd erupts!

Hakuryu's legs shake!

He gets Yoshii higher!

Higher!

Yoshii fights!

Hakuryu loses the grip!

Yoshii lands!

SUMO HEADBUTT!

Hakuryu staggers!

Yoshii grabs him!

YOSHII HUG!

Hakuryu is trapped again!

Yoshii squeezes.

Hakuryu gasps.

His feet leave the canvas.

The referee asks if he submits.

Hakuryu shakes his head.

Yoshii squeezes harder.

Hakuryu begins fading.

Sinja watches.

Jed Dye looks ecstatic.

Jed Dye: "COMPRESS!"

Sinja slowly looks toward Jed.

Sinja: "He is not a trash compactor."

Jed Dye: "You manage your athlete, I'll manage mine!"

Hakuryu's arms drop.

The referee raises one.

It falls.

Again.

It falls.

Third time—

HAKURYU'S HAND STAYS UP!

The crowd erupts.

Hakuryu suddenly hooks both legs around Yoshii's waist!

He shifts his weight!

Yoshii loses balance!

Both tumble backward!

Hakuryu lands on top!

He immediately hooks the head!

KASU OBU DORAGON!

CURSE OF THE DRAGON AGAIN!

Yoshii is trapped!

Hakuryu sits deep!

The crowd roars.

John Phillips: "Hakuryu has it again!"

Yoshii reaches toward the ropes.

Too far.

Hakuryu pulls.

Yoshii tries to rise like before.

One knee underneath him.

Then—

THE DAMAGED LEG GIVES OUT!

Yoshii crashes back to the canvas!

Hakuryu tightens the hold!

Mark Bravo: "There! That's why Hakuryu spent the entire match attacking the leg!"

Yoshii reaches.

His fingers stretch toward the ropes.

Short.

Jed Dye runs around the corner.

Jed Dye: "COME ON! MOVE!"

Sinja steps directly into his path.

Jed stops.

Jed Dye: "Get out of my way."

Sinja: "Stay out of the ring."

Jed Dye: "I'm encouraging my client!"

Sinja: "Encourage him from there."

Jed tries to step around.

Sinja moves with him.

Jed looks toward Yoshii.

Then Sinja.

Then Yoshii again.

Inside the ring, Yoshii digs his fingers into the canvas.

He drags himself forward.

Hakuryu pulls backward.

Yoshii moves another inch.

Another.

The crowd begins clapping.

Crowd: "YOSHII! YOSHII! YOSHII!"

Yoshii reaches.

His fingertips touch the bottom rope!

He grabs it!

The referee immediately orders the break.

Hakuryu releases at four.

He gets to his feet.

Yoshii rolls toward the apron.

His leg clearly compromised.

Hakuryu looks down at him.

No frustration.

No surprise.

Just another piece of information.

Hakuryu looks toward the center of the ring.

Then toward Yoshii.

Hands together.

Prayer.

John Phillips: "Look at Hakuryu."

Mark Bravo: "He's figured something out."

Yoshii pulls himself upright using the ropes.

Hakuryu waits.

Yoshii turns.

Hakuryu explodes forward!

SUPERKICK!

Yoshii staggers!

SECOND SUPERKICK!

Yoshii drops to one knee!

Hakuryu hits the ropes.

TORNADO KICK!

Yoshii falls onto both knees!

The White Dragon backs away.

Yoshii looks up at him.

Hakuryu brings his hands together.
Slowly.
Deliberately.
Yoshii begins forcing himself back up.
Hakuryu watches.
Waiting.
The champion reaches his feet.
Barely.
Hakuryu charges—
YOSHII SWINGS!
HakuryU DUCKS!
He gets behind Yoshii!
Hooks him!
Hakuryu drops his base.
And begins to lift.
The crowd rises again.
John Phillips: "He's going for it again!"
Yoshii's feet leave the canvas.
Hakuryu strains.
Higher.
Higher.
This time...
Yoshii cannot immediately fight his way back down.
Hakuryu has him.
The crowd is on its feet.
Sinja watches without blinking.
Jed Dye looks horrified.
Hakuryu takes one step forward beneath the impossible weight.
Then another.
And Yoshii is still in the air.
Hakuryu takes one step forward beneath the impossible weight.
Then another.
And Yoshii is still in the air.

The crowd rises higher with every second.

Hakuryu's legs tremble.

His back bends.

But he refuses to let go.

John Phillips: "Hakuryu is carrying five hundred and eighty-three pounds!"

Mark Bravo: "Not for long!"

Hakuryu exhales sharply.

He shifts his grip.

Then drops!

POWERBOMB!

YOSHII CRASHES INTO THE CANVAS!

The ring shakes violently.

Hakuryu collapses forward onto both hands.

For a moment, he cannot even cover.

Sinja pounds the apron.

Sinja: "?!"

Hakuryu hears him.

He crawls.

Drapes himself across Yoshii's chest.

The referee drops.

ONE!

TWO!

THR—

YOSHII KICKS OUT!

The building erupts.

Hakuryu rolls onto his back.

His eyes close.

The crowd is roaring.

Yoshii remains flat on the canvas.

John Phillips: "How much more can either man possibly have?"

Mark Bravo: "More than they should."

Hakuryu rolls over.

He pushes himself onto his knees.

Yoshii begins to stir.
Hakuryu watches him.
Patient.
Measured.
Yoshii gets to one knee.
Hakuryu attacks the leg again.
LOW KICK!
Yoshii winces.
Another!
Another!
Yoshii finally catches Hakuryu by the throat!
Hakuryu's eyes widen.
Yoshii rises.
Angry now.
Very angry.
Yoshii: "ENOUGH!"
Yoshii pulls Hakuryu toward him.
HEADBUTT!
Hakuryu staggers.
Another headbutt!
Hakuryu nearly falls.
Yoshii grabs him.
SIDE BELLY-TO-BELLY SUPLEX!
Hakuryu flies across the ring.
Yoshii doesn't cover.
He limps after him.
Hakuryu pulls himself up in the corner.
Yoshii backs away.
The crowd rises.
John Phillips: "Here comes Yoshii!"
Yoshii charges.
Turns at the last second.
YOSHII SPLASH!

CONNECTS!

Hakuryu is crushed in the corner.

He collapses face-up near the turnbuckles.

Yoshii looks down at him.

The crowd knows.

Jed Dye knows.

Sinja knows.

Jed Dye: "NOW!"

Yoshii grips the ropes.

He begins climbing.

The damaged leg slows him.

Hakuryu barely moves beneath him.

Yoshii reaches the second rope.

Raises both arms.

Yoshii: "YOSHIIIIIIII!"

The crowd explodes.

Yoshii leaps.

YOSHII BOMB!

HAKURYU MOVES!

AT THE LAST POSSIBLE SECOND!

Yoshii crashes into the canvas!

He immediately grabs his lower back.

Hakuryu rolls to the opposite side.

Both men are down.

John Phillips: "THREE TIMES!"

Mark Bravo: "Three times Yoshii has gone for that move, and Hakuryu has studied him well enough to avoid it every single time!"

Hakuryu uses the ropes to pull himself up.

Yoshii rolls onto his knees.

Hakuryu sees him.

He steps forward.

SUPERKICK!

Yoshii drops to one knee.

Hakuryu takes another step.

SECOND SUPERKICK!

Yoshii sways.

Hakuryu backs into the ropes.

Charges.

TORNADO KICK!

Yoshii falls onto both hands.

Hakuryu looks toward the corner.

Then back at Yoshii.

Hands together.

Prayer.

Hakuryu climbs.

One rope.

Second rope.

Top.

John Phillips: "He's going back to the Breath of the Dragon!"

Hakuryu settles into the praying position.

Yoshii begins to rise.

Hakuryu adjusts.

He waits.

Yoshii gets to his feet.

Turns.

HAKURYU LEAPS!

DIVING HEADBUTT!

YOSHII CATCHES HIM!

The crowd erupts!

Yoshii catches Hakuryu in mid-air against his chest!

Hakuryu's eyes go wide!

Yoshii adjusts.

SAMOAN DROP!

HAKURYU IS PLANTED!

Yoshii rolls on top!

ONE!

TWO!

THR—

HAKURYU KICKS OUT!

Scotiabank Arena erupts again.

Yoshii sits up.

He looks toward the referee.

Two.

Yoshii nods.

Then turns toward Hakuryu.

The challenger is still breathing.

Still fighting.

Yoshii reaches down.

He pulls Hakuryu upright.

Hakuryu can barely stand.

Yoshii gives him a hard shove backward.

Hakuryu falls into the ropes.

Yoshii pounds his chest.

Yoshii: "Come!"

Hakuryu looks up.

Yoshii gestures toward himself.

Yoshii: "Fight!"

Hakuryu slowly straightens.

He brings his hands together.

One more prayer.

Then charges.

FOREARM!

Yoshii answers with a sumo chop!

Hakuryu stumbles.

He comes back with another forearm!

Yoshii fires another chop!

Hakuryu nearly falls.

He steadies himself.

SUPERKICK!

Yoshii staggers.

Yoshii answers with a SAVATE KICK!

Hakuryu goes down!

Yoshii falls backward into the ropes.

Both men are exhausted.

The crowd begins chanting.

Crowd: "THIS IS AWESOME! THIS IS AWESOME!"

Hakuryu rises first.

Yoshii follows.

They meet in the middle.

Hakuryu throws a forearm.

Yoshii answers.

Hakuryu.

Yoshii.

Hakuryu.

Yoshii.

Neither gives ground.

Hakuryu suddenly attacks the knee again!

Yoshii buckles!

Hakuryu gets behind him.

Waistlock.

Yoshii tries to break it.

Hakuryu plants his feet.

He lifts!

Yoshii comes off the ground!

GERMAN SUPLEX!

YOSHII CRASHES ONTO HIS SHOULDERS!

The crowd erupts.

Hakuryu doesn't release.

He rolls through!

Pulls Yoshii back up!

John Phillips: "No way!"

Hakuryu's entire body strains.

SECOND GERMAN SUPLEX!

YOSHII GOES OVER AGAIN!

Hakuryu collapses beside him.

The crowd is losing its mind.

Mark Bravo: "This is unbelievable!"

Hakuryu gets to his knees.

Yoshii rolls onto his side.

Hakuryu grabs his head.

Pulls him upward.

Yoshii suddenly fires a headbutt!

Hakuryu staggers!

Yoshii grabs him.

FRONT POWERSLAM!

Hakuryu crashes hard!

Yoshii falls onto him!

ONE!

TWO!

THR—

HAKURYU KICKS OUT!

Yoshii rolls away.

For the first time...

the champion looks tired enough to wonder what else he has left.

Hakuryu looks exactly the same.

Both men slowly rise again.

Jed Dye is screaming.

Sinja is shouting instructions in Japanese.

Neither wrestler seems to hear them anymore.

Hakuryu and Yoshii lock eyes.

This has become entirely about the two of them.

Yoshii raises one fist.

Hakuryu brings his hands together.

They step toward each other again.

Yoshii raises one fist.

Hakuryu brings his hands together.

They step toward each other again.

Yoshii strikes first.

SUMO CHOP!

Hakuryu's chest snaps backward.

But he stays upright.

Hakuryu answers.

FOREARM!

Yoshii rocks backward.

SUMO CHOP!

FOREARM!

CHOP!

FOREARM!

Neither man is protecting himself anymore.

They're just throwing.

Yoshii winds up—

HUGE SUMO CHOP!

Hakuryu spins from the impact!

He falls against the ropes.

Yoshii roars!

Yoshii: "YOSHII!"

The champion charges!

Hakuryu suddenly ducks!

Yoshii hits the ropes!

Hakuryu turns—

SUPERKICK!

Yoshii stumbles backward!

Hakuryu fires another!

Yoshii stays up!

Hakuryu looks at him.

Yoshii gestures.

Yoshii: "MORE!"

The crowd erupts.

Hakuryu obliges.

THIRD SUPERKICK!

Yoshii drops to one knee!

Hakuryu hits the ropes.

RUNNING KNEE!

Yoshii falls backward!

Hakuryu covers!

ONE!

TWO!

THR—

YOSHII KICKS OUT!

Hakuryu immediately rolls away.

No disbelief this time.

No wasted motion.

He gets right back to his feet.

John Phillips: "That's different from earlier. Hakuryu isn't stopping to wonder what it's going to take anymore."

Mark Bravo: "Because now he knows."

Hakuryu grabs Yoshii's damaged leg.

Yoshii kicks him away with the other!

Hakuryu rolls backward.

Yoshii forces himself upright.

Hakuryu charges.

YOSHII CATCHES HIM!

YOSHII HUG!

The crowd reacts!

Hakuryu is trapped again!

Yoshii squeezes!

Hakuryu's feet leave the canvas!

The referee moves into position.

John Phillips: "We've already seen Hakuryu nearly fade in this hold twice!"

Yoshii squeezes harder.

Hakuryu's face contorts.

But this time...

Hakuryu doesn't fight Yoshii's arms.

He looks down.

At Yoshii's leg.

The leg he has spent the entire match attacking.

Hakuryu shifts his weight.

Yoshii adjusts.

Hakuryu shifts again.

Yoshii's damaged leg buckles!

Yoshii drops to one knee!

His grip loosens!

Hakuryu slips free!

He lands behind Yoshii!

IMMEDIATE KICK TO THE BACK OF THE KNEE!

Yoshii falls onto both knees!

Hakuryu hits the ropes!

RUNNING BACKFLIP KICK!

Yoshii collapses!

John Phillips: "Everything Hakuryu did twenty minutes ago is paying off right now!"

Hakuryu doesn't cover.

He looks toward the corner.

Then Yoshii.

Then the corner again.

Sinja sees it.

He slowly nods.

Hakuryu begins climbing.

Jed Dye immediately realizes what is happening.

Jed Dye: "GET UP!"

Yoshii rolls onto his side.

Jed Dye: "YOSHII! GET UP!"

Hakuryu reaches the top rope.

He settles into position.

Hands together.

Prayer.

Yoshii begins pushing himself upright.

Hakuryu waits.

Yoshii gets one knee underneath him.

Then the other.

Hakuryu remains perched above.

Waiting.

Yoshii reaches his feet.

Turns.

Hakuryu launches!

DIVING HEADBUTT!

YOSHII MOVES!

HAKURYU CRASHES FACE-FIRST INTO THE CANVAS!

The entire arena gasps.

John Phillips: "Nobody home!"

Hakuryu rolls onto his back, clutching his head.

Yoshii sees him.

The champion's eyes widen.

This is his opening.

Yoshii drags himself toward the corner.

Jed Dye is practically beside himself.

Jed Dye: "THIS IS IT! THIS IS IT!"

Yoshii grabs the ropes.

He looks back at Hakuryu.

Still down.

Yoshii starts climbing.

The damaged leg nearly gives out.

Yoshii stops.

Grimaces.

Then continues.

One foot onto the second rope.

Then the other.

The crowd rises.

Mark Bravo: "Hakuryu has avoided this all night, but he's not moving now!"

Yoshii looks down.

Hakuryu is flat on his back.

Yoshii raises his arms.

Yoshii: "YOSHIIIIIIII!"

Yoshii jumps!

YOSHII BOMB!

CONNECTS!

FIVE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-THREE POUNDS CRASHES DOWN ACROSS HAKURYU!

The ring shakes!

The crowd erupts!

John Phillips: "YOSHII BOMB! YOSHII GOT ALL OF IT!"

Yoshii rolls off from the impact.

His own damaged leg screaming at him.

But he crawls back.

Hooks Hakuryu's leg!

The referee drops!

ONE!

TWO!

THREE—

HAKURYU'S SHOULDER COMES UP!

SCOTIABANK ARENA EXPLODES!

Yoshii's eyes go wide.

Jed Dye freezes.

Sinja's eyes widen as well.

John Phillips: "HAKURYU KICKED OUT!"

Mark Bravo: "HE KICKED OUT OF THE YOSHII BOMB!"

Yoshii looks at the referee.

The referee holds up two fingers.

Yoshii looks back at Hakuryu.

For several seconds...

he simply stares.

Hakuryu isn't moving.

But the match continues.

Yoshii sits beside him.

Breathing heavily.

Then slowly...

Yoshii begins to laugh.

Not mockingly.

Almost in disbelief.

He looks toward Hakuryu.

Yoshii: "Dragon strong."

Hakuryu's eyes slowly open.

He hears him.

Yoshii nods.

Yoshii: "Very strong."

Hakuryu rolls onto one side.

He begins pushing himself up.

Yoshii does the same.

Neither man should have anything left.

Somehow...

both rise.

The crowd begins applauding.

Not chanting.

Not booing.

Just applauding.

John Phillips: "Listen to Toronto."

Hakuryu reaches his feet.

Yoshii reaches his.

They stand across from one another.

Exhausted.

Bruised.

Yoshii's leg barely supporting him.

Hakuryu's body battered from everything the champion has thrown at him.

Yoshii raises his fists.

Hakuryu brings his hands together.

But this time...

Hakuryu doesn't immediately separate them.

He bows.

Directly to Yoshii.

The crowd reacts.

Yoshii watches him.

Then bows his own head.

Mark Bravo: "That's respect."

Hakuryu straightens.

Yoshii does the same.

And then...

they charge each other.

Yoshii swings!

Hakuryu ducks!

Hakuryu kicks the damaged knee!

Yoshii drops!

Hakuryu hits the ropes!

RUNNING KNEE!

Yoshii falls backward!

Hakuryu grabs him immediately.

Hooks both arms.

The crowd rises.

John Phillips: "Hakuryu's looking for the Koya Otoshi again!"

Hakuryu plants his feet.

He tries to lift.

Yoshii blocks.

Hakuryu tries again.

Yoshii's damaged leg buckles.

Hakuryu gets him up!

Not completely.

Yoshii fights!

Hakuryu strains!

Yoshii's feet leave the canvas!

Hakuryu turns!

But Yoshii shifts his weight!

Both men tumble!

Yoshii lands on top!

THE REFEREE COUNTS!

ONE!

TWO!

HAKURYU ROLLS THROUGH!

HE REVERSES THE PIN!

ONE!

TWO!

YOSHII KICKS OUT!

Both men scramble to their feet!

Hakuryu is faster!

SUPERKICK!

Yoshii staggers!

ANOTHER SUPERKICK!

Yoshii remains upright!

Hakuryu looks at him.

Yoshii looks back.

Yoshii pounds his chest.

Yoshii: "MORE!"

Hakuryu takes several steps backward.

His hands come together.

Prayer.

Then he explodes forward.

SUPERKICK!

Yoshii drops to his knees.

Hakuryu catches him before he can fall.

Hooks him again.

Yoshii realizes what is happening.

So does Jed Dye.

So does Sinja.

The entire building rises.

Hakuryu lowers his base.

Yoshii fights.
Hakuryu pulls.
The damaged leg gives beneath Yoshii.
And this time...
Hakuryu gets him up.
All the way.
The crowd ERUPTS.
John Phillips: "HE'S GOT YOSHII!"
Hakuryu holds him.
For one impossible second.
Two.
Then Yoshii begins fighting again!
Hakuryu's legs start to buckle!
The White Dragon lets out a roar!
He steadies himself!
But Yoshii is still fighting!
Hakuryu has him up...
and this match is hanging on what happens next.
Hakuryu has Yoshii up.
All five hundred and eighty-three pounds of him.
The White Dragon's legs shake.
His arms tremble.
Yoshii is fighting with everything he has.
But the damaged leg betrays him again.
Hakuryu takes one step.
Then another.
And with a final burst—
KOYA OTOSHI!
CRUCIFIX POWERBOMB!
YOSHII IS DRIVEN INTO THE CANVAS!
The ring SHUDDERS.
The crowd erupts.
John Phillips: "HE DID IT! HAKURYU GOT ALL OF IT!"

Hakuryu collapses beside Yoshii.

For a second, he can't even move.

Sinja pounds the apron.

Sinja: "HAKURYU!"

Hakuryu crawls.

He throws an arm across Yoshii's chest.

ONE!

TWO!

THR—

YOSHII KICKS OUT!

The building explodes.

Hakuryu rolls onto his back.

His eyes close.

Jed Dye nearly collapses in relief.

Jed Dye: "Correct! Statistically correct! Continue surviving!"

Sinja looks across the ring at him.

Sinja: "He won't forever."

Jed turns.

Jed Dye: "Neither will your optimism."

Sinja almost smiles.

Inside the ring, Hakuryu is already sitting up.

He looks at Yoshii.

Then slowly brings his hands together.

Prayer.

Yoshii begins to rise.

Hakuryu waits.

Yoshii gets to one knee.

Hakuryu fires a kick into the damaged leg.

Yoshii drops.

Another kick.

Another.

Yoshii reaches up and grabs Hakuryu by the wrist.

Hakuryu tries to pull away.

Yoshii yanks him forward.

SUMO HEADBUTT!

Hakuryu staggers.

Yoshii rises.

He grabs Hakuryu.

YOSHII HUG!

Hakuryu is trapped again!

Yoshii squeezes.

Hard.

Hakuryu's feet leave the canvas.

But this time Hakuryu immediately attacks the injured leg.

He drives his heel down!

Again!

Again!

Yoshii's leg buckles.

Hakuryu slips out.

SUPERKICK!

Yoshii drops to one knee.

Hakuryu hits the ropes.

RUNNING KNEE!

Yoshii falls backward.

Hakuryu doesn't cover.

He looks toward the top rope.

Sinja sees it.

Jed sees it too.

Jed Dye: "NO!"

Hakuryu climbs.

Slowly.

Deliberately.

Hands together.

Prayer.

Yoshii is flat on his back.

Hakuryu looks down.

And leaps.

RYU NO KOKYU!

BREATH OF THE DRAGON!

DIVING HEADBUTT CONNECTS!

Hakuryu immediately hooks both legs.

ONE!

TWO!

THR—

YOSHII KICKS OUT AGAIN!

Scotiabank Arena comes unglued.

Hakuryu sits upright.

His eyes are wide now.

Not panic.

But disbelief.

John Phillips: "Yoshii survived the Koya Otoshi and the Breath of the Dragon back-to-back!"

Mark Bravo: "What the hell do you do now?"

Hakuryu looks toward Sinja.

Sinja says nothing.

He simply points toward Yoshii.

Finish him.

Hakuryu turns back.

Yoshii is moving.

Slowly.

Still moving.

Hakuryu gets to his feet.

Yoshii reaches his knees.

Hakuryu fires a superkick.

Yoshii wobbles.

Another.

Yoshii stays upright on his knees.

Hakuryu looks at him.

Yoshii looks back.

Yoshii: "More."

The crowd roars.

Hakuryu fires a third superkick.

Yoshii's body sways.

But he still doesn't fall.

Hakuryu backs away.

Charges.

TORNADO KICK!

Yoshii finally goes down.

Hakuryu stands over him.

Breathing heavily.

Then brings his hands together again.

But before he can move—

YOSHII GRABS HIS ANKLE!

Hakuryu looks down.

Yoshii pulls.

Hakuryu crashes to the canvas.

Yoshii rolls on top.

He gets to his feet.

Hakuryu rises.

Yoshii catches him!

FRONT POWERSLAM!

Hakuryu is planted!

Yoshii drops into the cover.

ONE!

TWO!

HAKURYU KICKS OUT!

Yoshii immediately rolls away.

He looks toward the corner.

The crowd realizes it.

John Phillips: "Yoshii Bomb!"

Yoshii drags Hakuryu into position.

He starts climbing.

The damaged leg makes every step difficult.

But he reaches the second rope.

Yoshii raises both arms.

Yoshii: "YOSHIIIIIIII!"

The crowd answers.

Yoshii leaps.

YOSHII BOMB!

HAKURYU GETS THE KNEES UP!

Yoshii crashes down across both knees!

He rolls away clutching his ribs.

Hakuryu screams from the impact too.

Both men are down.

Sinja pounds the apron.

Jed does the same on the opposite side.

Jed Dye: "GET UP, YOSHII!"

Sinja: "HAKURYU!"

The referee begins counting.

ONE!

Neither moves.

TWO!

Hakuryu rolls onto his stomach.

THREE!

Yoshii pushes himself onto one elbow.

FOUR!

Hakuryu reaches one knee.

FIVE!

Yoshii begins rising.

SIX!

Hakuryu stands.

SEVEN!

Yoshii stands too.

The crowd erupts.

Both men stagger toward the center.

Yoshii throws a chop.

Hakuryu answers with a forearm.
Yoshii.
Hakuryu.
Yoshii.
Hakuryu.
The shots get slower.
Heavier.
Yoshii throws one more enormous chop.
Hakuryu nearly falls.
He catches himself.
Hakuryu fires a forearm.
Yoshii staggers.
Hakuryu kicks the damaged knee.
Yoshii drops to one knee.
Hakuryu steps back.
Hands together.
Prayer.
He charges.
YOSHII EXPLODES UP!
SAVATE KICK!
Hakuryu crashes backward!
Yoshii falls onto him!
ONE!
TWO!
HAKURYU KICKS OUT!
Yoshii immediately grabs him.
He pulls Hakuryu upright.
Hakuryu suddenly ducks underneath.
LOW KICK!
Yoshii's leg gives out again.
Hakuryu grabs him from behind.
He hooks the arms.
Yoshii realizes what's coming.

He fights.

Hakuryu strains.

Gets him up.

NENBUTSU BOMB!

SITOUT POWERBOMB!

YOSHII IS DRIVEN INTO THE MAT!

Hakuryu stays seated.

Both legs hooked.

ONE!

TWO!

THR—

YOSHII KICKS OUT!

The crowd cannot believe it.

Hakuryu falls backward.

Yoshii rolls onto his side.

Both men are completely spent.

John Phillips: "This is beyond endurance now."

Mark Bravo: "This is pride."

Hakuryu rolls onto one knee.

Yoshii does the same.

They look at one another.

Neither smiles.

Neither gestures.

No more acknowledgment.

No more invitations for more.

They both know.

The next mistake might end this.

Hakuryu rises.

Yoshii follows.

The United States Championship sits on the timekeeper's table.

Both men glance toward it.

Then back at each other.

Hakuryu brings his hands together.

Yoshii lowers into his sumo stance.

Sinja watches.

Jed Dye watches.

Scotiabank Arena stands.

Hakuryu takes one step forward.

Yoshii does the same.

And neither man intends to take a step backward.

Hakuryu takes one step forward.

Yoshii does the same.

And neither man intends to take a step backward.

They collide.

Yoshii throws a massive sumo chop!

Hakuryu answers with a forearm!

Yoshii again!

Hakuryu again!

Each shot is slower now.

But somehow heavier.

The kind of strikes thrown by men who have nothing left except instinct.

Yoshii winds up.

SUMO CHOP!

Hakuryu staggers into the ropes.

Yoshii charges!

Hakuryu moves!

Yoshii hits the ropes chest-first!

Hakuryu attacks the damaged leg!

LOW KICK!

Yoshii drops to one knee!

Hakuryu steps back.

SUPERKICK!

Yoshii sways.

But stays on one knee.

Hakuryu fires another!

Yoshii catches the foot!

Hakuryu's eyes widen.

Yoshii rises.

Still holding the leg.

Hakuryu tries an enzuigiri—

Yoshii blocks it!

Hakuryu crashes down!

Yoshii pulls him upright.

SAMOAN DROP!

Hakuryu is planted!

Yoshii falls into the cover!

ONE!

TWO!

HAKURYU KICKS OUT!

Yoshii rolls onto his back.

He looks toward the ceiling.

Then toward Hakuryu.

The White Dragon is already trying to move.

Yoshii almost looks offended by it.

John Phillips: "Neither one can put the other away."

Mark Bravo: "Not yet."

Yoshii forces himself up.

Hakuryu does the same.

Yoshii grabs him.

YOSHII HUG!

Hakuryu is trapped again.

Yoshii squeezes with everything he has left.

Hakuryu's arms drop.

The referee moves in.

But Hakuryu suddenly shifts his body.

He hooks his boot around Yoshii's bad leg.

Pulls.

Yoshii stumbles.

Hakuryu slips free!

He immediately grabs the leg!

DRAGON SCREW!

Yoshii hits the canvas!

Hakuryu doesn't let go.

He twists again!

Yoshii roars in pain.

Jed Dye: "PROTECT THE LIMB!"

Sinja looks across the ring.

Sinja: "A little late."

Jed glares at him.

Hakuryu drags Yoshii toward the center.

He steps over.

Tries to transition into a leg submission.

Yoshii kicks him away!

Hakuryu goes backward.

Yoshii rolls onto his knees.

Hakuryu charges.

YOSHII CATCHES HIM!

FRONT POWERSLAM!

Hakuryu bounces off the canvas!

Yoshii covers!

ONE!

TWO!

THR—

HAKURYU KICKS OUT!

The crowd erupts again.

Yoshii pounds the mat.

Not angry.

Exhausted.

He looks toward the corner.

Then Hakuryu.

Jed Dye sees the look.

Jed Dye: "NO MORE EXPERIMENTATION! TERMINATE THE CONTEST!"

Yoshii nods.

He drags Hakuryu toward the corner.

Positions him flat.

Yoshii grips the ropes.

The crowd rises.

John Phillips: "He may be going back to the Yoshii Bomb one more time."

Yoshii starts climbing.

But the leg.

The leg won't cooperate.

Yoshii's foot slips.

He catches himself on the ropes.

Hakuryu sees it.

The challenger rolls away from the corner.

Yoshii turns.

Hakuryu is already standing!

He charges!

SUPERKICK TO THE KNEE!

Yoshii falls awkwardly off the ropes and lands on his feet—

But the damaged leg buckles!

Yoshii drops to his knees.

Hakuryu hits the ropes.

TORNADO KICK!

Yoshii falls onto his back!

Hakuryu climbs.

Immediately.

No hesitation.

He reaches the top rope.

Hands together.

Prayer.

Yoshii starts to rise.

Hakuryu waits.

Yoshii reaches his feet.

Turns.

HAKURYU LEAPS!

DIVING HEADBUTT!

CONNECTS!

Yoshii crashes backward!

Hakuryu hooks both legs!

ONE!

TWO!

THR—

YOSHII KICKS OUT!

Hakuryu immediately rolls onto his knees.

This time there is no shock.

He expected it.

Hakuryu grabs Yoshii by the head.

Pulls him upright.

SUPERKICK!

Yoshii drops to one knee.

Hakuryu grabs him again.

Another superkick!

Yoshii stays kneeling.

Hakuryu backs away.

He looks toward Sinja.

Sinja brings both hands together.

Then slowly lowers them.

Finish it.

Hakuryu turns back.

Yoshii is forcing himself upright again.

Hakuryu almost looks impressed.

Almost.

Yoshii reaches his feet.

Hakuryu charges.

Yoshii swings!

Hakuryu ducks!

KICK TO THE DAMAGED KNEE!

Yoshii drops again!

Hakuryu grabs him from behind.

Hooks both arms.

The crowd rises.

John Phillips: "He's going for the Nenbutsu Bomb again!"

Hakuryu strains.

Yoshii fights.

Hakuryu lifts.

Yoshii gets off the canvas.

Higher.

Higher.

NENBUTSU BOMB!

YOSHII IS DRIVEN INTO THE MAT!

Hakuryu stays seated.

Hooks both legs.

ONE!

TWO!

THR—

YOSHII KICKS OUT AGAIN!

Scotiabank Arena erupts.

Hakuryu falls backward.

For several seconds, neither man moves.

Then Hakuryu sits up.

Slowly.

Yoshii rolls onto his stomach.

Hakuryu watches him.

And then...

Hakuryu smiles.

Not smugly.

Not mockingly.

Something closer to respect.

Yoshii gets to one knee.

Hakuryu stands.

He extends one hand.

Not to help Yoshii.

To beckon him up.

Yoshii looks at him.

Then nods.

He rises.

Slowly.

The crowd applauds.

John Phillips: "Look at this."

Mark Bravo: "Hakuryu knows he's got Yoshii hurt, but he still wants the champion standing."

Yoshii reaches his feet.

He raises his hands.

Hakuryu brings his together.

Yoshii lets out one exhausted roar.

Yoshii: "YOSHII!"

Hakuryu answers with a sudden forearm.

Yoshii answers with a chop.

Hakuryu.

Yoshii.

Hakuryu.

Yoshii.

The crowd rises with every shot.

Hakuryu fires a superkick!

Yoshii staggers!

Yoshii fires a savate kick!

Hakuryu nearly falls!

Yoshii grabs him!

HAKURYU ESCAPES!

LOW KICK!

Yoshii drops to one knee.

Hakuryu steps backward.

Hands together.

Prayer.

Yoshii looks up.
Hakuryu charges.
Yoshii catches him!
YOSHII HUG!
The crowd erupts.
Hakuryu is trapped again!
Yoshii squeezes with everything remaining.
Hakuryu's face twists.
His arms begin falling.
Yoshii squeezes harder.
Hakuryu's eyes close.
The referee moves into position.
John Phillips: "This could be it!"
Hakuryu's arm drops once.
Twice.
The referee raises it a third time.
It begins to fall—
HAKURYU STOPS IT!
The crowd erupts.
Hakuryu opens his eyes.
Looks down at the damaged leg.
And starts kicking.
Once.
Twice.
Three times.
Yoshii's leg gives out.
Hakuryu slips free.
Yoshii falls to both knees.
Hakuryu hits the ropes.
SUPERKICK!
Yoshii stays upright.
Hakuryu hits the ropes again!
TORNADO KICK!

Yoshii collapses onto his back.
Hakuryu stands over him.
Breathing heavily.
Then slowly looks toward the top rope.
Sinja does too.
Jed Dye realizes it.
Jed Dye: "NO! NO, NO, NO!"
Hakuryu begins climbing.
The crowd rises.
He reaches the top.
Sits in the praying position.
Yoshii doesn't move.
Hakuryu looks down at him.
And waits.
Yoshii's hand moves.
Then his arm.
The champion begins trying to sit up.
Hakuryu remains perched above.
Watching.
Waiting for Yoshii to give him exactly the opening he wants.
Hakuryu remains perched on the top rope.
Hands together.
Eyes fixed on Yoshii.
The United States Champion slowly pushes himself upright.
One hand on the mat.
Then one knee.
Hakuryu waits.
Yoshii reaches his feet.
Unsteady.
His damaged leg almost gives beneath him.
He catches himself.
Turns.
Hakuryu launches!

RYU NO KOKYU!

BREATH OF THE DRAGON!

DIVING HEADBUTT CONNECTS!

Yoshii crashes backward!

Hakuryu lands hard beside him.

The crowd erupts.

Hakuryu immediately crawls over.

Hooks both legs.

ONE!

TWO!

THR—

YOSHII KICKS OUT!

The building explodes again.

Hakuryu remains across Yoshii for a moment.

Then slowly lifts his head.

The referee holds up two fingers.

Hakuryu looks at him.

Then down at Yoshii.

And this time...

there is no disbelief.

No frustration.

Hakuryu simply nods.

John Phillips: "That's the third time Yoshii has survived the Breath of the Dragon."

Mark Bravo: "But look at Hakuryu."

John Phillips: "He isn't surprised anymore."

Mark Bravo: "Because I think he's stopped looking for one move to beat Yoshii."

Hakuryu rises.

Slowly.

Yoshii rolls onto his side.

The champion tries to push himself up.

Hakuryu kicks the damaged leg.

Yoshii collapses.

Hakuryu kicks it again.

Yoshii tries to crawl away.

Another kick.

The champion grabs the bottom rope.

Referee: "Back up, Hakuryu!"

Hakuryu immediately backs away.

No argument.

No wasted energy.

He waits.

John Phillips: "This has become surgical."

Yoshii uses the ropes.

Pulls himself up.

Hakuryu watches the leg.

Yoshii sees him watching it.

The champion's expression hardens.

Yoshii: "No."

Hakuryu looks at him.

Yoshii: "Fight Yoshii."

The crowd pops.

Hakuryu tilts his head slightly.

Yoshii points toward himself.

Yoshii: "Not leg."

Hakuryu's expression doesn't change.

Then he responds quietly.

Hakuryu: "??????"

Sinja translates from ringside.

Sinja: "He says this is fighting."

Yoshii stares at Hakuryu.

Then smiles.

A tired smile.

Yoshii: "Good."

Yoshii steps away from the ropes.

Hakuryu does not attack immediately.

The champion forces himself upright.

Raises his hands.

Hakuryu brings his together.

Prayer.

Then they meet again.

Yoshii throws a chop!

Hakuryu answers with a forearm!

Yoshii!

Hakuryu!

Yoshii!

Hakuryu!

Yoshii catches Hakuryu with a massive palm strike!

Hakuryu drops!

The crowd erupts!

Yoshii grabs him immediately.

Pulls him up.

YOSHII HUG!

Hakuryu is trapped!

Yoshii squeezes.

The White Dragon's feet leave the mat.

Hakuryu reaches toward Yoshii's leg.

Yoshii realizes it.

He shifts.

Hakuryu can't reach it.

Yoshii squeezes harder!

Hakuryu begins fading.

John Phillips: "Yoshii learned too!"

Mark Bravo: "Exactly! Hakuryu's been attacking that leg every time he gets caught. Yoshii just took that away!"

Hakuryu's arms fall.

The referee checks him.

Hakuryu suddenly brings both palms together.

EAR CLAP!

Yoshii grimaces.

Another!

Another!

Yoshii releases!

Hakuryu drops behind him.

Yoshii turns—

SUPERKICK!

Yoshii staggers.

Hakuryu fires another!

Yoshii stays standing.

THIRD SUPERKICK!

Yoshii drops to one knee!

Hakuryu backs away.

Hands together.

Prayer.

Hakuryu charges.

RUNNING KNEE!

Yoshii falls backward!

Hakuryu covers!

ONE!

TWO!

YOSHII KICKS OUT!

Hakuryu immediately transitions.

He grabs Yoshii's legs.

Rolls him onto his stomach!

Hakuryu climbs onto the back!

KASU OBU DORAGON!

CURSE OF THE DRAGON!

The crowd erupts.

Hakuryu pulls back with everything he has.

Yoshii reaches toward the ropes.

They're far away.

Referee: "Do you submit?!"

Yoshii: "NO!"

Hakuryu leans backward.

Yoshii's face tightens.
His hand reaches.
Nothing.
He plants both palms.
Yoshii tries to rise.
The crowd comes alive.
One knee underneath him.
Hakuryu keeps pulling.
Yoshii gets the other leg underneath himself.
John Phillips: "He's going to do it again!"
Yoshii begins standing!
Hakuryu remains on his back!
Yoshii rises higher!
Higher!
Then the damaged leg buckles.
Yoshii collapses!
Hakuryu immediately sinks the hold deeper!
Yoshii screams.
Jed Dye pounds the apron.
Jed Dye: "ROPE! ROPE! MOVE TOWARD THE ROPE!"
Sinja looks toward him.
Sinja: "He's trying."
Jed Dye: "I AM AWARE!"
Yoshii drags himself forward.
Hakuryu rides him.
Another inch.
Another.
The ropes get closer.
Yoshii reaches.
Fingertips.
Hakuryu pulls backward!
Yoshii's hand drops.
He reaches again.

And GRABS THE BOTTOM ROPE!

The crowd erupts.

Hakuryu releases immediately.

He rolls away.

Yoshii lies beneath the ropes.

Completely exhausted.

John Phillips: "Yoshii survives again!"

Hakuryu sits in the center of the ring.

Hands resting on his thighs.

Breathing slowly.

Watching.

Waiting.

Yoshii pulls himself onto the apron.

Jed moves toward him.

Jed Dye: "Yoshii! Listen to me!"

Yoshii looks down.

Jed points toward Hakuryu.

Jed Dye: "He has exhausted his available offensive sequence! He has nothing left!"

Across the ring, Hakuryu slowly gets to his feet.

Sinja looks at Jed.

Sinja: "That was foolish."

Jed Dye: "It was mathematically sound!"

Hakuryu looks directly at Jed.

Then toward Yoshii.

The champion steps back through the ropes.

His leg nearly gives immediately.

Hakuryu attacks.

SUPERKICK!

Yoshii staggers into the ropes!

Hakuryu hits another!

Yoshii remains upright!

Hakuryu hits the ropes.

Yoshii charges too!

THEY COLLIDE!

Hakuryu goes down!

Yoshii falls to one knee!

The crowd erupts.

Yoshii grabs Hakuryu.

Pulls him up.

SAVATE KICK!

Hakuryu crashes backward!

Yoshii covers!

ONE!

TWO!

THR—

HAKURYU KICKS OUT!

Yoshii rolls onto his knees.

He looks toward the corner.

One more Yoshii Bomb.

That's what he needs.

The champion drags Hakuryu toward the turnbuckles.

Hakuryu doesn't resist.

He may not be able to.

Yoshii positions him.

Then starts climbing.

One rope.

The bad leg shakes.

Yoshii climbs anyway.

Second rope.

Jed Dye screams from ringside.

Jed Dye: "THIS IS IT!"

Yoshii steadies himself.

Hakuryu remains flat below.

The champion raises his arms.

Yoshii: "YOSHIIIIIIII!"

Scotiabank Arena erupts.

Yoshii jumps.

YOSHII BOMB!

HAKURYU ROLLS!

Yoshii changes direction in mid-air!

He manages to land partially on his feet instead!

But the damaged leg cannot take it.

Yoshii's knee folds beneath him!

The champion crashes to the canvas screaming in pain!

Hakuryu rises immediately.

He sees Yoshii clutching the leg.

Hakuryu approaches.

Yoshii pushes him away.

Hakuryu comes back.

Yoshii throws a desperate palm strike!

Hakuryu takes it.

Another!

Hakuryu rocks backward.

Yoshii forces himself up on one leg.

He throws another!

Hakuryu ducks!

KICK TO THE KNEE!

Yoshii drops!

Hakuryu immediately grabs him.

Hooks both arms.

Yoshii starts fighting.

Hakuryu pulls.

Yoshii tries to plant his feet.

One leg won't cooperate.

Hakuryu lifts.

Yoshii rises.

The crowd comes to its feet.

John Phillips: "Here we go!"

Hakuryu brings Yoshii all the way up.

Hands together for the briefest possible prayer.

Then—

KOYA OTOSHI!

YOSHII IS DRIVEN INTO THE CANVAS!

The crowd explodes.

Hakuryu does not cover.

Sinja watches closely.

Jed Dye is screaming for Yoshii to move.

Hakuryu looks down at the champion.

Then toward the corner.

And suddenly everyone understands.

Mark Bravo: "He's not done."

Hakuryu walks toward the turnbuckles.

He climbs.

One rope.

Two.

Top.

Hakuryu settles into prayer.

The crowd rises.

Yoshii remains down.

Hakuryu looks toward him.

Then closes his eyes.

For just a moment.

When they open...

The White Dragon looks completely certain.

Hakuryu rises to his feet.

And leaps.

RYU NO KOKYU!

BREATH OF THE DRAGON!

IT CONNECTS!

Hakuryu crashes headfirst into Yoshii's chest!

Yoshii's entire body jolts from the impact.

Hakuryu rolls away clutching his own head.

For several seconds...

neither man moves.

Then Hakuryu looks toward Yoshii.

The champion is still down.

Hakuryu crawls.

Slowly.

Every inch taking effort.

He reaches Yoshii.

Hooks one enormous leg.

Then the other.

The referee drops into position.

Jed Dye's face goes white.

Sinja stands perfectly still.

ONE!

Yoshii doesn't move.

TWO!

The crowd holds its breath.

Yoshii's hand twitches.

THREE!

DING! DING! DING!

Scotiabank Arena erupts.

Hakuryu remains draped across Yoshii.

For a second...

he doesn't move.

Like even he needs to hear the bell again to believe it.

DING! DING! DING!

Sinja slowly closes his eyes.

Then bows his head.

Jed Dye stands frozen at ringside.

Absolutely stunned.

John Phillips: "HE DID IT!"

Mark Bravo: "HAKURYU HAS DONE IT!"

The referee gets to his feet and signals toward the timekeeper.

Ring Announcer: "Ladies and gentlemen... here is your winner..."

The United States Championship is handed into the ring.

Ring Announcer: "...AND NEEEEEEW UTA UNITED STATES CHAMPION..."

Hakuryu slowly pushes himself off Yoshii.

He rolls onto his knees.

Ring Announcer: "HAKURYUUUUUUUUU!"

The crowd reacts loudly.

Some boos.

Some applause.

And more than a little respect.

Hakuryu looks toward the championship in the referee's hands.

For weeks...

that is all he has looked at.

From the front row.

From the aisle.

From across the ring.

Watching Yoshii carry it.

Waiting for this opportunity.

Now the referee places the United States Championship into Hakuryu's hands.

Hakuryu stares down at it.

Silent.

Almost reverent.

John Phillips: "For weeks, Hakuryu watched Yoshii. He studied every defense. Every movement. Every weakness."

Mark Bravo: "And tonight the patience paid off."

Hakuryu runs one hand across the faceplate.

Then brings both hands together around the championship.

He bows his head.

Prayer.

Sinja enters the ring.

He approaches his master.

Hakuryu rises.

Sinja takes the championship from him for a moment.

Hakuryu stands in the center of the ring.

Sinja carefully places the United States Championship around his waist.

Fastens it.

Then steps back.

Hakuryu looks down.

The United States Championship now rests around the waist of The White Dragon.

He slowly raises both arms.

The crowd reacts again.

John Phillips: "What a main event."

Mark Bravo: "And what a championship performance from both men."

Nearby...

Yoshii begins to move.

Jed Dye immediately slides into the ring.

Jed Dye: "Yoshii!"

Jed drops beside him.

Yoshii rolls onto his side.

He looks toward the center of the ring.

At Hakuryu.

At the championship around his waist.

Yoshii's face falls.

He knows.

Jed immediately begins talking.

Jed Dye: "There were contributing variables. The leg damage was statistically abnormal. There was managerial interference adjacent to the competitive environment. We will immediately file—"

Yoshii puts one hand up.

Jed stops.

Yoshii slowly shakes his head.

Yoshii: "No."

Jed blinks.

Jed Dye: "No?"

Yoshii uses the ropes to pull himself up.

His damaged leg nearly gives beneath him.

Jed tries to help.

Yoshii accepts just enough to reach his feet.

Hakuryu notices.

The celebration stops.

Champion and former champion look at one another.

Sinja remains beside Hakuryu.

Jed remains beside Yoshii.

For several seconds...

nobody moves.

John Phillips: "Yoshii gave Hakuryu everything tonight."

Mark Bravo: "And Hakuryu gave it right back."

Yoshii limps forward.

Jed looks concerned.

Sinja subtly shifts.

Hakuryu raises one hand.

Sinja stops.

Yoshii approaches Hakuryu.

They stand face-to-face.

Yoshii looks down at the United States Championship.

Then up at Hakuryu.

Hakuryu waits.

Yoshii slowly extends one hand.

The crowd reacts.

Hakuryu looks down at it.

Then toward Yoshii.

For a moment...

it is impossible to know what The White Dragon will do.

Hakuryu takes Yoshii's hand.

The crowd erupts in applause.

They shake.

Not warmly.

Not as friends.

As two men who now know exactly what the other is capable of.

Yoshii nods.

Yoshii: "Strong."

Hakuryu says something quietly in Japanese.

Sinja translates.

Sinja: "He says you were worthy."

Yoshii smiles.

A tired, disappointed smile.

Yoshii: "You too."

The handshake ends.

Yoshii turns away.

Jed immediately follows.

But before stepping through the ropes, Jed stops.

He turns toward Sinja.

Points two fingers toward his own eyes.

Then toward Sinja.

Jed Dye: "I'm watching you."

Sinja looks at him.

Sinja: "You should watch your client."

Jed's mouth opens.

Yoshii grabs him by the back of the jacket and gently pulls him through the ropes.

The crowd laughs.

Mark Bravo: "Probably for the best."

Yoshii and Jed make their way toward the ramp.

Yoshii stops halfway through the ropes.

He turns back.

Hakuryu remains in the center of the ring.

Yoshii raises one fist.

Hakuryu brings his hands together.

One final acknowledgment.

Then Yoshii leaves the ring.

Hakuryu watches him go.

Only after Yoshii reaches the aisle does Hakuryu turn his attention back to the championship.

Sinja steps beside him.

Hakuryu unfastens the United States Championship.

He takes it into both hands.

Looks down at it.

Then slowly raises it high above his head.

John Phillips: "Hakuryu waited."

The crowd grows louder.

John Phillips: "He watched."

Hakuryu closes his eyes beneath the championship.

John Phillips: "He studied."

Sinja bows beside him.

John Phillips: "And tonight, The White Dragon conquered Yoshii."

Mark Bravo: "We started One Last Stop with a new UTA Champion."

A shot of Chris Ross holding the UTA Championship from earlier flashes briefly across the screen.

Mark Bravo: "And we're ending it with another championship changing hands."

Hakuryu lowers the title onto his shoulder.

He turns toward Sinja.

Sinja retrieves the takuhatsugasa and white robes.

He begins placing the ceremonial garments back onto his master.

Piece by piece.

The fighter disappears.

The White Dragon returns.

Hakuryu places the hat over his head.

The United States Championship remains visible beneath one arm.

GOOOOOONG.

The lights begin fading.

One white spotlight remains.

Hakuryu stands beneath it.

United States Champion.

Sinja beside him.

And after weeks of watching Yoshii carry the prize he believed should belong to him...

The White Dragon finally has it.

Hakuryu stands beneath the lone white spotlight.

The United States Championship rests against his shoulder.

Sinja stands silently beside him.

Across Scotiabank Arena, the fans remain on their feet.

John Phillips: "What a night in Toronto."

Hakuryu slowly lowers his head beneath the takuhatsugasa.

John Phillips: "Chris Ross reclaimed the UTA Championship. Beautiful Bobby Dean stood up for himself. We witnessed what may have been the final match in the legendary career of Hardcore Sandy..."

Highlights from throughout the night begin flashing across the screen.

Chris Ross pinning Maxwell Jett.

Bobby Dean standing over Eric Dane Jr.

Emily Hightower walking away with the Women's Championship.

Selina Santorino's vicious attack on Susanita Ybanez.

Hardcore Sandy standing in the ring as Toronto gave her one final ovation.

And finally...

Hakuryu driving Yoshii into the canvas.

Mark Bravo: "One Last Stop was supposed to be the end of the road before UTA headed back home."

The highlights disappear.

We're back live.

Hakuryu remains exactly where we left him.

Mark Bravo: "Instead, it feels like we just changed everything."

Hakuryu raises the United States Championship one final time.

The crowd roars.

John Phillips: "And now the road to Ring King begins."

The camera slowly pulls backward.

First revealing the ring.

Then the ringside area.

Then thousands of fans filling Scotiabank Arena.

Hakuryu becomes smaller in the center of it all.

But the championship held above his head remains unmistakable.

John Phillips: "For Mark Bravo, I'm John Phillips. Thank you for joining us for One Last Stop."

Mark Bravo: "Goodnight from Toronto."

The lights continue to fade.

The crowd becomes distant.

The final image is Hakuryu standing beneath the spotlight...

The White Dragon.

The new UTA United States Champion.

GOOOOOONG.

FADE TO BLACK.

UTA

ONE LAST STOP: 2026

END SHOW.

Conclusion

CARD SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Show Credits

Results Compiled by the eFed Management Suite