

World Tour: Argentia '26

Promotion: United Toughness Alliance
Date: June 26, 2026
Location: Luna Park — Buenos Aires

Preview

The United Toughness Alliance embarks on an epic World Tour for 2026.

Results

Introduction

Segment

The screen fades in from black.

A low rumble builds beneath the opening shot. Buenos Aires at night. City lights stretch across the skyline as traffic cuts through the streets below. The camera glides over the city before finding Luna Park, glowing beneath the Argentine night.

The shot cuts inside.

The crowd is already loud. Thousands are packed into the historic arena, waving signs, flags, and UTA merchandise as the energy rolls from one side of the building to the other.

The UTA logo flashes across the screen.

WORLD TOUR: ARGENTINA '26

Friday, June 26, 2026

Luna Park

Buenos Aires, Argentina

The opening video begins.

Bianca Page steps into frame, eyes locked forward. Kirsty McKinney cracks her neck and rolls her shoulders. Selina Santorino smirks, full of confidence. Rosa Delgado stands in the light, her expression focused and serious.

The words hit the screen.

FATAL FOUR WAY

Bianca Page vs. Kirsty McKinney vs. Selina Santorino vs. Rosa Delgado

The video cuts quickly.

The PAS move through the backstage area together, ready for a fight. Next Level answer with confidence, talking between themselves as the camera catches them heading toward the arena.

TAG TEAM ACTION

The PAS vs. Next Level

The music drops heavier.

Samuel Scythe stands in shadow, still and silent. Graham Keel tightens his wrist tape, the UTA Fighting Championship nearby. The camera lingers on the championship before cutting back to Keel's cold stare.

UTA FIGHTING CHAMPIONSHIP

Fighting Championship Rules

Samuel Scythe vs. Graham Keel

The video moves on.

Sol Azteca raises his arms beneath flashing lights. Selena Vex smiles from the other side of the screen, calm, dangerous, and ready.

SINGLES COMPETITION

Sol Azteca vs. Selena Vex

The final images hit fast.

Kairo Bey walks with purpose, the opportunity of a lifetime waiting in front of him. Yoshii turns toward the camera with the United States Championship over his shoulder.

The two men appear side by side on the screen.

UNITED STATES CHAMPIONSHIP

Kairo Bey vs. Yoshii

The video cuts to black.

One final line appears.

THE WORLD TOUR CONTINUES.

The scene explodes back inside Luna Park as pyro fires from the stage. The crowd in Buenos Aires erupts, the cameras sweeping over the arena as the ring sits under the bright lights in the center of the building.

John Phillips: "Welcome to Buenos Aires, Argentina! Welcome to Luna Park! And welcome to another stop on the UTA World Tour!"

Mark Bravo: "Listen to this place, John! They are not just ready, they are starving for UTA tonight!"

John Phillips: "Five matches are scheduled, two championships will be defended, and our main event will see Yoshii put the United States Championship on the line against Kairo Bey."

Mark Bravo: "And that is not just a title match. That is Kairo Bey walking into the biggest chance of his career against a champion who does not move for anybody."

John Phillips: "We will also see Graham Keel defend the UTA Fighting Championship against Samuel Scythe under Fighting Championship Rules."

Mark Bravo: "That one is going to be ugly. Keel has been dangerous enough lately, but Samuel Scythe? That is not a man you want to meet when the rules already encourage violence."

John Phillips: "Plus, Bianca Page, Kirsty McKinney, Selina Santorino, and Rosa Delgado meet in fatal four way action. The PAS take on Next Level. And Sol Azteca goes one on one with Selena Vex."

Mark Bravo: "Argentina gets a loaded show, John. The World Tour keeps rolling, but every stop feels like someone is either getting closer to glory or getting knocked off the road completely."

The camera pans across the crowd again as chants rise from the stands. Signs shake in the air. The lights begin to shift around the entranceway.

John Phillips: "The road out of International Affair has been chaotic. Puerto Rico left us with more questions, more tension, and more targets. Tonight, in Buenos Aires, we find out who can turn that chaos into momentum."

Mark Bravo: "And who gets swallowed by it."

The first entrance of the night is moments away as the crowd noise builds again inside Luna Park.

John Phillips: "World Tour starts right now."

Enough is Enough

Segment

The camera cuts backstage to a private warm-up area inside Luna Park.

"Classy" Bianca Page is already in her ring gear, moving with purpose as she fires sharp punches into the open hands of Sione Maivia. Each strike lands clean. Fast. Precise. Bianca's face is locked in, but there is no doubt she knows the camera is there.

Nearby, Ace Andrews watches with a pleased smile, hands folded in front of him, taking in every shot like he is admiring a valuable investment.

Ace Andrews: "You're always on your game, Classy One. Now it's time to get back on the winning track."

Bianca stops warming up.

A big smile spreads across her face as she turns toward Ace.

"Classy" Bianca Page: "You damn right, Ace! We all saw how all those jealous bitches treated me during the All or Nothing battle royal! That won't be tolerated anymore, gentlemen."

She rolls her shoulders, stepping away from Sione's hands as her confidence grows.

"Classy" Bianca Page: "Tonight I step into the ring with a trashy heifer, a stupid hoe, and a miserable shrew..."

Ace chuckles.

"Classy" Bianca Page: "The three of you can decide amongst yourselves because I'll officially be acknowledged as the winner of this match."

Ace nods, clearly pleased.

Ace Andrews: "Exactly. Bianca, Samuel, and I didn't come to UTA to just lounge around and collect dust. We came here to win matches, win championships, and win boatloads of money."

He looks directly into the camera now, his smile sharpening.

Ace Andrews: "That is exactly what you'll see tonight when Bianca wins her match and Samuel walks out of his match as the brand new UTA Fighting Champion."

Bianca steps closer to Ace, her smile turning smug.

"Classy" Bianca Page: "And what a glorious night it'll be when everything we say comes to fruition. So everyone on the roster better be on alert for what Samuel and I are bringing."

She tilts her head, eyes narrowing with ambition.

"Classy" Bianca Page: "Especially all of you with UTA gold."

Bianca looks straight into the camera.

"Classy" Bianca Page: "Tonight, you'll all realize that my downfall has been greatly exaggerated."

Bianca winks at the camera.

Ace smirks beside her as Sione Maivia steps in behind them, the three walking away together with the confidence of

people who believe the night is already theirs.

The camera holds on the empty warm-up area for a moment before cutting away.

Bianca Page vs. Kirsty McKinney vs. Selina Santorino vs. Rosa Delgado

Match

The camera returns to ringside inside Luna Park as the crowd continues to buzz from the opening of the show. The lights lower across the arena, leaving the ring glowing beneath a clean white spotlight.

John Phillips: "We are kicking things off tonight with fatal four way action in the women's division. Four competitors, one fall to a finish, and a major opportunity to create momentum on the World Tour."

Mark Bravo: "And that is the important word, John. Opportunity. You win this match, you do not just get your hand raised in Buenos Aires. You put everybody on notice."

A sudden digital glitch cuts across the video screen.

The arena lights flicker from white to gold, then into a bright, camera-flash rhythm. The screen above the entranceway fills with scrolling comments, flashing hearts, diamond emojis, follower counts, and the words:

THE DOMINICAN DIAMOND

A phone camera feed appears on the screen, vertical and slightly shaky, showing Selina Santorino from her own perspective. She is already filming herself before she even steps through the curtain.

Mark Bravo: "Oh, here we go. The broadcast just became content."

John Phillips: "Making her way out first, one of the newest additions to the UTA roster, Selina Santorino. The self-proclaimed Queen of Clicks."

Selina Santorino steps through the curtain with her phone held high, angled perfectly above her face as she smiles into the lens instead of acknowledging the live crowd in front of her. She pauses at the top of the entranceway, turns slightly to catch the best lighting, and blows a kiss directly into her screen.

The Buenos Aires crowd reacts with a loud mix of boos, whistles, and scattered cheers, the kind of noise that only makes Selina smile wider.

Selina Santorino: "Buenos Aires, say hi to the feed."

She turns the phone outward for half a second, giving her livestream a look at Luna Park before immediately turning it back toward herself.

Selina Santorino: "Cute little building. Great lighting. Budget energy, but we can work with it."

The crowd boos louder.

Mark Bravo: "Did she just call Luna Park budget?"

John Phillips: "She did, and this crowd did not appreciate it."

Mark Bravo: "That is called engagement, John. Boos, cheers, hate comments, it all counts the same when the numbers go up."

Selina begins walking down the ramp, slow and deliberate, more concerned with camera angles than urgency. Every few steps, she stops to adjust her posture, tilt her chin, or check herself in the phone screen. A fan leans over the barricade shouting at her, and Selina gives them a quick glance before looking back to the phone.

Selina Santorino: "See? This is what I mean. Low-res people always want premium access."

She gives a smug little laugh and continues forward.

John Phillips: "For all the attitude and all the theatrics, Selina Santorino is not someone to dismiss. Six feet tall, athletic, confident, and dangerous when she stops looking at the camera long enough to focus on the fight."

Mark Bravo: "That is what makes her special. She does not just beat you. She makes sure it gets clipped, tagged, posted, reposted, and monetized before you even wake up."

At ringside, Selina stops again, turning slowly so the camera catches the ring behind her. She frames herself with the ropes in the background, then smirks.

Selina Santorino: "First UTA four way. First Argentina appearance. First step toward making this whole division watchable."

She lowers the phone just enough to look at the ring for the first time, her expression sharpening beneath the arrogance.

Selina walks up the steel steps, pauses on the apron, and holds the phone out high again. She turns her back to the ring and captures the arena behind her as the fans shower her with more boos.

Mark Bravo: "Look at that. She has them all working for free."

John Phillips: "Selina may enjoy the reaction, but she is about to step into a match where there are no tags, no waiting, and no room for distraction."

Selina slips between the ropes and enters the ring. She walks straight to the center, still recording, then slowly pans the phone around the arena before stopping on herself again.

With a bright, artificial smile, she raises one hand and forms a diamond shape with her fingers.

Selina Santorino: "Remember this angle. This is the one they replay after I go viral."

She finally ends the recording, or at least appears to, before handing the phone off at ringside with visible reluctance.

Selina turns toward the entranceway and leans back into the corner, one boot pressed casually against the bottom turnbuckle. The smile fades into something colder as she waits for the next opponent.

John Phillips: "Selina Santorino is in the ring. Three more women to come. Fatal four way action opens World Tour: Argentina '26."

Selina Santorino remains in the corner, arms draped across the top ropes, her expression halfway between boredom and superiority. She glances toward ringside, then toward the entrance, as if already annoyed that someone else is about to take attention away from her.

The lights inside Luna Park dim again.

This time, there is no digital flash. No scrolling comments. No diamonds. No vanity feed.

A warm steel-blue glow settles over the entranceway as a staccato snare cuts through the arena.

John Phillips: "And here comes Rosa Delgado. Very different energy from what we just saw with Selina Santorino."

Mark Bravo: "That is because Rosa looks like she came here to fight, not check her follower count."

Rosa Delgado steps through the curtain to a strong reaction from the Buenos Aires crowd. She does not waste time posing at the top of the entranceway. She simply stops, looks out at Luna Park, and taps her left elbow pad twice.

The gesture is small, almost ritualistic. Then she starts down the ramp.

John Phillips: "Rosa Delgado is a technician, a brawler, and someone who gets sharper the deeper a match goes. She

likes to isolate the left arm, she likes to break opponents down, and she does not get rattled easily."

Mark Bravo: "Which means this is exactly the kind of match she could thrive in. Everybody else gets chaotic, Rosa finds a limb, and suddenly somebody cannot lift their shoulder off the mat."

Rosa keeps her eyes on the ring as she walks, jaw set, posture calm. The crowd claps along with the rhythm of the music, trying to pull some emotion from her, but Rosa stays locked in.

Inside the ring, Selina raises her eyebrows and leans forward slightly, looking Rosa up and down. She says something off-mic, then makes a dismissive motion with one hand.

Mark Bravo: "Selina does not look impressed."

John Phillips: "That could be a mistake. Rosa Delgado may not be as loud as Selina Santorino, but once that bell rings, she is going to make every inch of that ring uncomfortable."

Rosa reaches ringside and turns the corner, never taking her eyes off Selina. She grabs the middle rope, steps onto the apron, and pauses there for just a moment.

Selina gives her a bright, fake smile from across the ring.

Rosa does not smile back.

She steps through the ropes and enters the ring, then immediately moves toward the nearest corner. Before climbing onto the turnbuckle or acknowledging the crowd, Rosa drops to one knee and adjusts the tape around her wrist.

John Phillips: "Rosa is all business tonight. This fatal four way is not just about a win. It is about positioning in a women's division where every opportunity matters."

Mark Bravo: "And with Bianca Page coming in frustrated after last week, with Kirsty McKinney looking to make an impression, and Selina trying to make herself the center of the universe, Rosa might be the most dangerous kind of person in this match. Quiet."

Rosa stands and turns toward Selina. The two women stare at one another from opposite corners, an instant contrast between Selina's smirking confidence and Rosa's hard, grounded focus.

Rosa taps her left elbow pad twice more.

Then she waits.

Rosa Delgado stays in her corner, calm and composed, while Selina Santorino lounges against the opposite turnbuckles like the ring has already become part of her personal set.

The crowd inside Luna Park settles into a restless buzz, waiting for the third woman in the match.

Then "In Walks Barbarella" by Clutch growls through the speakers.

The entrance lights do not explode. There is no theatrical reveal. No dramatic pause. No attempt to make the moment bigger than it needs to be.

Kirsty McKinney steps through the curtain.

She stands at the top of the entranceway with an almost neutral expression, looking out at the Buenos Aires crowd like she is not entirely convinced any of this is necessary. A few fans cheer. A few others shout toward her from the barricade. Kirsty gives one side of the arena a long side-eye, then looks away with a small, irritated shift of her jaw.

John Phillips: "And here is another of the newest additions to the UTA roster, Kirsty McKinney. A decorated amateur wrestler, a natural grappler, and someone who brings a very different kind of threat to this match."

Mark Bravo: "She looks like she would rather be literally anywhere else."

John Phillips: "That may be true, but once the bell rings, Kirsty McKinney is all business. She is not interested in flash. She is not interested in wasting motion. She wants to control bodies, control position, and end fights efficiently."

Kirsty starts down the ramp at a walk. No playing to the crowd. No posing for the cameras. She takes in the building with passing glances, occasionally locking eyes with someone yelling at her before dismissing them entirely.

In the ring, Selina Santorino leans forward and makes an exaggerated show of checking Kirsty out, unimpressed. She says something under her breath, then points at herself as if reminding everyone where the attention belongs.

Kirsty notices.

She does not respond with words.

She just rolls her eyes.

Mark Bravo: "I think Selina just got subtweeted without a phone."

John Phillips: "Kirsty McKinney may be new to UTA, but she is not new to pressure. Her background gives her the ability to change a match quickly, especially if she can drag this fatal four way down to the mat."

Mark Bravo: "That is the problem, though. Fatal four ways do not always stay clean. You can be the best wrestler in the world, but when three other people are coming from three different directions, technique only gets you so far."

As Kirsty nears the ring, her walk turns into a light jog. She reaches the apron, drops low, and slides under the bottom rope with one smooth motion.

She rolls to her knees, then rises in the center of the ring.

Still, there is no pose.

No raised arms.

No attempt to soak in the moment.

Kirsty simply does a couple of deep squats, rolls one shoulder, then flicks her hair out of her face with enough contempt to make the gesture feel louder than a shouted insult.

Rosa Delgado watches her carefully from the corner, recognizing immediately that Kirsty is not here to posture. Selina, meanwhile, smirks and mouths something across the ring.

Kirsty turns her head slowly toward Selina.

Another eye roll.

John Phillips: "This is going to be fascinating. Rosa Delgado wants to grind opponents down. Kirsty McKinney wants to dominate position and force mistakes. Selina Santorino wants the spotlight. And Bianca Page has not even arrived yet."

Mark Bravo: "And Bianca is the one I keep thinking about, John. After what happened last week, she is not coming into this match in a generous mood."

Kirsty backs into an open corner, arms loose at her sides. She looks from Rosa to Selina, then toward the entranceway, waiting for the final competitor.

Three women are now in the ring.

One remains.

Kirsty McKinney settles into the final open corner, her expression as unimpressed as ever. Rosa Delgado stands across from her, focused and ready, tapping her left elbow pad once more. Selina Santorino leans against the ropes,

already looking irritated that the spotlight is about to shift again.

The lights in Luna Park soften.

A hush moves through the building for half a second before "Wildest Dreams" by Taylor Swift begins to play.

The reaction is immediate.

Boos rise from the Argentine crowd as the entranceway glows with polished light, clean and expensive, like the arena has briefly been turned into a runway.

John Phillips: "And here comes the final entrant. "Classy" Bianca Page, accompanied by Ace Andrews."

Mark Bravo: "Now this is the woman I have been waiting to see, John. Bianca Page is not walking into this match happy. She lost last week, and when Bianca Page feels embarrassed, somebody usually pays for it."

Ace Andrews steps through the curtain first.

The Corporate Cutthroat is dressed sharply, every line of his suit intentional, every movement calm and controlled. He pauses at the top of the entranceway and looks out over Luna Park with a faint, unimpressed smile, as if the arena itself is being evaluated and found barely acceptable.

Then he turns slightly and extends one arm back toward the curtain.

"Classy" Bianca Page emerges from the backstage area.

She stops at the top of the entranceway beside Ace, chin lifted, eyes sharp, and a smile spread across her face that does not quite reach anything warm. She looks immaculate. Composed. Poised.

But beneath it, there is something else.

Frustration.

The kind that has been polished over, not forgotten.

John Phillips: "Bianca Page has made it very clear since arriving in UTA that championship gold is not a goal for her, it is an expectation. But after last week, you have to wonder how much pressure she has put on herself coming into this fatal four way."

Mark Bravo: "Pressure? Please. Bianca Page was robbed of momentum last week. Tonight is not about pressure. Tonight is about correction."

Bianca looks from one side of the arena to the other as the boos continue. She gives the crowd a big smile, then slowly raises one hand and blows a kiss toward them.

The boos get louder.

Bianca's smile tightens.

Ace notices immediately. He leans in and says something quietly to her, one hand hovering near her shoulder without touching it. Bianca keeps her eyes forward, listening, then gives a small nod.

Whatever Ace says works.

The smile returns.

Colder this time.

John Phillips: "Ace Andrews has been a constant presence beside Bianca Page, and you can already see him trying to keep her focused."

Mark Bravo: "That is why he is valuable. Ace Andrews is not just some guy in a suit. Fourteen-time world champion. Billionaire. Casino owner. Corporate Cutthroat. He knows what it takes to win, and Bianca Page is smart enough to listen."

Bianca begins walking down the aisle with Ace beside her. Her steps are measured, deliberate, and full of arrogance. She does not rush toward the ring. She allows the cameras to follow her, allows the crowd to react, allows the other three women to wait.

Inside the ring, Selina Santorino watches Bianca with narrowed eyes, clearly displeased by the reaction and presentation. Rosa Delgado remains still, studying Bianca's body language. Kirsty McKinney gives one short glance, then looks away as if all of this is already wasting her time.

John Phillips: "Look at the three women already in the ring. Selina Santorino and Kirsty McKinney are still trying to make their first major impressions here in UTA. Rosa Delgado would love to build momentum of her own. But Bianca Page may be the most desperate woman in this match, whether she would ever admit that or not."

Mark Bravo: "Desperate is an ugly word, John. I prefer motivated. Bianca Page knows she belongs in championship matches. She knows she belongs in the conversation. And tonight, she has three women in her way."

Bianca reaches ringside and pauses.

She looks up at Selina first.

Selina mouths something down at her, making a little motion toward herself as if reminding Bianca who the camera should be watching.

Bianca gives her a slow, unimpressed smile.

Then she looks to Rosa.

Rosa does not move.

Finally, Bianca's eyes land on Kirsty.

Kirsty stares back for half a second, then rolls her eyes.

Bianca's expression flickers.

Ace steps closer again, his voice low but firm.

Ace Andrews: "Do not give them anything they have not earned."

Bianca exhales through her nose, then turns toward the steel steps.

She climbs slowly, stepping onto the apron with a slight twirl before motioning sharply toward the referee.

The referee moves over and opens the ropes for her.

Bianca does not thank him.

She enters the ring like the gesture was the bare minimum she deserved.

John Phillips: "Bianca Page now entering the ring, and this match is almost ready to begin."

Mark Bravo: "Look at her, John. That is not someone hoping to win. That is someone who already believes the win belongs to her and is angry she has to prove it."

Bianca walks into the middle of the ring and raises both arms out to the side, soaking in the negative reaction. She turns slowly, making sure every side of Luna Park gets a good look at her.

Ace remains at ringside, adjusting one cuff as he looks at each of the other competitors with open disdain.

Selina steps out of her corner slightly, eyes locked on Bianca.

Rosa rolls her shoulders.

Kirsty lowers into a slight stance, already more interested in body position than theatrics.

Bianca finally backs into her corner. Ace steps below her on the outside, offering one final quiet word of strategy.

Bianca nods once.

Then she looks across the ring at the three women standing between her and the kind of victory she believes should launch her back toward championship contention.

John Phillips: "Four women. One fall to a finish. Bianca Page, Kirsty McKinney, Selina Santorino, and Rosa Delgado. Fatal four way action is next."

Mark Bravo: "And if Bianca has to bend the match around her to win, she will. That is not a weakness. That is instinct."

The referee steps into the center of the ring and looks around at all four competitors.

Bianca Page stands in one corner with Ace Andrews positioned on the floor behind her, speaking quietly from ringside. Bianca does not take her eyes off the other three women. She nods once, barely, as Ace finishes.

Across the ring, Rosa Delgado rolls one shoulder and taps her left elbow pad twice, calm and ready.

Kirsty McKinney is already low in her stance, hands loose, expression flat, looking less like she is waiting for a wrestling match to begin and more like she is waiting for someone to make a mistake.

Selina Santorino leans back against the turnbuckles, one hand lifted near her face as if the entire situation is interrupting a photo shoot.

John Phillips: "A very interesting mix in this opening match. Bianca Page, coming in frustrated and dangerous. Rosa Delgado, the steady technician. Kirsty McKinney, one of the newest additions to the roster with a tremendous amateur wrestling background. And Selina Santorino, another new face who certainly does not lack confidence."

Mark Bravo: "Confidence? Selina Santorino walks around like the world was invented to give her better lighting. I respect that."

The referee checks with each corner, then calls for the bell.

DING DING DING!

None of the four women move immediately.

Bianca steps out first, slow and careful, raising her hands slightly as she looks from Rosa to Kirsty to Selina. Rosa moves out next, circling to her left, keeping her back away from the ropes. Kirsty takes two short steps forward, then stops, knees bent, weight balanced. Selina pushes herself out of the corner last, almost offended that she has to participate in the opening caution.

John Phillips: "No one eager to make the first mistake here. Fatal four way rules change everything. There are no tags, no partners, and you do not have to be involved in the decision to lose the match."

Mark Bravo: "Which means the smartest person in this ring may be the one who lets the other three tear each other apart first."

Bianca points toward Rosa, then toward Kirsty, saying something off-mic with a smug little smile. Rosa does not react. Kirsty gives Bianca a look that lands somewhere between boredom and annoyance.

Selina raises a hand.

Selina Santorino: "Okay, hold on."

The other three turn slightly toward her.

Selina gestures between herself and the cameras around ringside.

Selina Santorino: "Before anybody does something ugly, just understand something. If you hit me from the wrong side, I will make production delete the footage."

The crowd boos as Selina flips her hair back.

Mark Bravo: "That is fair. Angles matter."

John Phillips: "I do not think the other three are concerned about Selina Santorino's preferred camera side."

Kirsty blinks once.

Then she turns away from Selina entirely and looks toward Rosa.

Rosa steps in carefully. Kirsty does the same. The two circle, each lowering slightly, both recognizing the other's comfort in close quarters. Rosa reaches first, testing for the wrist. Kirsty pulls back just enough to avoid the grip, then steps in for a collar tie, only for Rosa to turn her shoulder and deny the angle.

They reset.

Bianca watches closely from a few steps away, not entering yet. At ringside, Ace Andrews points toward Kirsty and says something sharp, reminding Bianca where the danger is.

John Phillips: "Rosa and Kirsty both understand leverage. Both understand positioning. That could be a match within the match if they get enough time to work."

Mark Bravo: "Except Bianca Page is too smart to let anybody else get comfortable."

Selina slowly moves behind Rosa and Kirsty, clearly more interested in being noticed than engaging. She spreads her arms slightly as if the crowd should appreciate her restraint.

Rosa and Kirsty tie up.

Kirsty immediately drops her hips and tries to turn Rosa down by the arm, but Rosa rotates through and catches Kirsty's wrist. Rosa twists, looking to isolate the left arm early, but Kirsty steps across, posts her foot, and reverses into a quick waistlock.

Rosa reaches back, grabs Kirsty's hands, and starts to peel the grip apart.

Bianca takes one step forward.

Then stops.

She looks to Selina instead.

Selina notices and points at Bianca with a warning glare.

Selina Santorino: "Do not even think about it."

Bianca smiles.

She does think about it.

But before Bianca can make a move, Kirsty shifts behind Rosa and tries to pull her down to the mat. Rosa widens her base and blocks it, forcing Kirsty to work harder than she expected. Kirsty's expression tightens with irritation.

John Phillips: "Rosa Delgado doing a good job keeping her feet underneath her. Kirsty McKinney wanted this match on

the mat early, and Rosa denied it."

Mark Bravo: "That probably annoyed Kirsty more than getting hit would."

Kirsty transitions again, trying to drag Rosa backward, but Rosa slips an elbow inside and turns toward her. The two separate cleanly for half a second.

Bianca steps in now, hands raised, as if offering a temporary pause.

Bianca Page: "Ladies, ladies. We do not have to be uncivilized."

Rosa looks at her cautiously.

Kirsty stares at Bianca like that sentence physically hurt to hear.

Selina scoffs from the side.

Selina Santorino: "You? Civilized? Please. Your whole vibe is clearance rack inheritance."

The crowd reacts with a sharp "ooooh" as Bianca slowly turns her head toward Selina.

Ace Andrews immediately steps closer to the apron, warning Bianca not to bite on the insult.

John Phillips: "That got Bianca's attention."

Mark Bravo: "Selina may be new here, but she is already brave enough or dumb enough to poke Bianca Page in the ego."

Bianca takes a slow step toward Selina.

Selina stands taller, chin lifted, smirking like she has already won the exchange.

Rosa and Kirsty both watch, neither willing to turn their backs on the other.

For one brief moment, all four women are frozen in a tense square.

Then Selina suddenly lunges.

Not at Bianca.

At Kirsty.

Selina rushes across and catches Kirsty from the side with a sharp forearm, knocking her off balance before immediately following with another. Kirsty stumbles toward the ropes, more surprised than hurt, and Selina stays on her, hammering down with quick shots while shouting over her shoulder.

Selina Santorino: "That is how you start trending!"

John Phillips: "Selina Santorino with the first real attack of the match, and she chose Kirsty McKinney!"

Mark Bravo: "Smart! Do not let the wrestler wrestle. Hit her before she drags you into whatever farm-strength nightmare she had planned."

Kirsty covers up against the ropes as Selina keeps swinging. Rosa starts forward, but Bianca grabs Rosa by the arm and yanks her backward, spinning her around.

Rosa immediately tries to pull free, but Bianca fires a quick knee into the midsection, then drives a forearm across Rosa's upper back.

The slow opening is gone.

The match has broken open.

John Phillips: "And now Bianca Page takes advantage! Selina jumped Kirsty, Bianca jumped Rosa, and this fatal four way is officially underway!"

Mark Bravo: "That is the thing about a feeling-out process, John. It only lasts until somebody decides feelings are overrated."

Selina Santorino keeps Kirsty McKinney backed into the ropes, throwing quick forearms with one hand while using the other to hold Kirsty in place by the shoulder.

Kirsty absorbs the shots with her arms up, her expression changing from detached annoyance to something sharper. Not panic. Not pain.

Irritation.

Across the ring, Bianca Page drives Rosa Delgado back toward the corner with another knee to the midsection, then grabs her by the wrist and tries to send her across.

Rosa plants her feet.

Bianca pulls again.

Rosa does not go.

Instead, Rosa twists under Bianca's arm, catches the wrist, and snaps Bianca down just enough to force her shoulder forward. Bianca gasps, immediately reaching toward the pressure point as Rosa steps in and cranks the arm.

John Phillips: "Rosa Delgado reversing Bianca Page, and right away she goes to that arm."

Mark Bravo: "That is Rosa's game. Give her one limb and she starts treating it like a project."

Bianca grimaces, trying to straighten up, but Rosa keeps the wrist trapped and turns the arm again. Bianca reaches for Rosa's hair with her free hand, but Rosa ducks under it and twists once more.

Ace Andrews slaps the apron from the floor.

Ace Andrews: "Move your feet, Bianca! Do not stand there!"

Bianca hears him and steps through, rolling forward to relieve the pressure. She pops back up quickly, but Rosa stays attached to the wrist.

Bianca's eyes widen in anger.

Before Rosa can pull her back in, Bianca reaches out and rakes her fingers across Rosa's face.

The referee immediately steps toward them with a warning.

John Phillips: "Come on! Bianca Page going to the eyes early!"

Mark Bravo: "Fatal four way, John. The referee can warn all he wants, but there is no disqualification here."

Rosa stumbles away, blinking and covering one eye. Bianca shakes out her arm and glares at her, embarrassed that she had to fight free so quickly.

On the other side of the ring, Selina pulls Kirsty away from the ropes and turns toward the hard camera with a bright grin.

Selina Santorino: "Watch this angle."

She hooks Kirsty by the head and looks for a quick snapmare, but Kirsty drops her weight instantly. Selina pulls again. Nothing.

Kirsty's hands shoot to Selina's waist.

Selina has just enough time to look confused before Kirsty pops her hips and throws her over with a sudden belly-to-belly suplex.

Selina hits the mat hard and rolls to her side, stunned.

John Phillips: "Kirsty McKinney! Just like that, taking Selina over!"

Mark Bravo: "That was not a wrestling move. That was Kirsty deciding Selina had become inconvenient furniture."

Kirsty sits up on one knee and gives Selina a flat look, then flicks her hair out of her face with visible disdain.

She does not go for a cover.

Instead, Kirsty reaches down, grabs Selina by the wrist, and begins pulling her toward the center of the ring, trying to flatten her out and control position.

Selina kicks her legs, immediately trying to crawl away.

Selina Santorino: "No, no, no, get off—"

Kirsty steps over, drops her weight, and rides across Selina's back, trapping one arm underneath her. Selina's face twists with frustration as Kirsty starts grinding her down against the canvas.

John Phillips: "This is exactly where Kirsty wants this match. Heavy pressure, body control, keeping Selina underneath her."

Mark Bravo: "And Selina absolutely hates this. There is no good lighting when your face is being mashed into the mat."

Bianca sees Kirsty controlling Selina.

She sees Rosa still recovering near the ropes.

For a moment, Bianca considers her options.

Then she moves.

Bianca rushes toward Kirsty and drives a sharp kick into Kirsty's ribs, knocking her off Selina. Kirsty rolls to one side, clutching her midsection, while Bianca follows with another stomp.

John Phillips: "Bianca Page breaking that up before Kirsty could settle in."

Mark Bravo: "That is ring awareness. Bianca knew if Kirsty started turning this into a grappling clinic, everyone else was in trouble."

Bianca grabs Kirsty by the hair and pulls her up, ignoring the referee's warning. She throws Kirsty toward the corner, then follows in with a hard forearm under the jaw.

Kirsty's head snaps back against the turnbuckle.

Bianca smiles now, more satisfied, and drives her shoulder into Kirsty's midsection once. Twice. Three times.

Ace claps from the outside.

Ace Andrews: "That is it. Make her wrestle your match."

Bianca steps back, grabs Kirsty by the wrist, and whips her out of the corner.

Kirsty reverses.

Bianca hits the opposite corner instead, back-first.

She stumbles forward, and Rosa Delgado meets her with a rolling elbow.

The shot lands clean.

Bianca drops to the mat.

John Phillips: "Rosa Delgado caught Bianca!"

Mark Bravo: "Oh, that was not good for the Classy One."

Rosa immediately drops into the cover.

Referee: "ONE!"

Selina dives in from the side and breaks it up with a double axe handle across Rosa's back.

Rosa rolls off Bianca, and Selina scrambles to her feet, clutching her own lower back from Kirsty's suplex while still trying to look composed.

Selina Santorino: "Nobody pins anybody before I get my moment!"

Rosa pushes herself up, still blinking from Bianca's earlier eye rake. Selina charges, but Rosa sidesteps and catches her by the arm, twisting into an arm wringer.

Selina cries out and immediately reaches toward the ropes, but Rosa yanks her back toward the middle.

John Phillips: "Rosa has Selina now, and again she goes after the arm."

Mark Bravo: "Rosa does not care whose arm it is. If you leave it out there, she is taking it home."

Rosa steps over Selina's arm and drives a knee down near the shoulder. Selina drops to one knee, furious, more offended than anything else.

Before Rosa can follow up, Kirsty McKinney comes from behind and catches Rosa in a rear waistlock.

Rosa tries to block, but Kirsty pops her hips and takes Rosa over with a back-to-belly suplex.

Rosa lands hard and rolls through to her stomach.

Kirsty stays on her, floating immediately into a ride, one knee pressing into Rosa's hip while she reaches for the far wrist.

John Phillips: "Kirsty transitions right from the suplex into control. That is the kind of efficiency she brings."

Mark Bravo: "She looks bored while doing it, too. That is what bothers me. She is folding people up like laundry and seems annoyed the laundry exists."

Bianca Page is still down near the corner, one hand on her jaw from Rosa's elbow. Ace Andrews crouches near the apron, speaking quickly to her.

Ace Andrews: "Stay outside the storm. Let them spend themselves. Then take it."

Bianca looks at the action in the ring.

Kirsty has Rosa controlled.

Selina is shaking out her arm near the ropes.

The referee is checking the position.

Bianca's eyes narrow.

She slides quietly under the bottom rope and drops to the floor beside Ace.

John Phillips: "And Bianca Page leaving the ring here."

Mark Bravo: "Smart. Very smart."

John Phillips: "Or opportunistic."

Mark Bravo: "Those are synonyms when you win."

Bianca takes a moment outside, leaning against the apron as Ace talks directly into her ear. She nods slowly, breathing through the frustration, as the match continues without her inside the ropes.

In the ring, Kirsty tries to pull Rosa's arm behind her back, but Rosa rolls through and traps Kirsty's wrist in return. The two scramble across the mat, trading control in short, tight bursts.

Selina watches them from the ropes, then looks toward the nearest ringside camera.

Even with the match moving, even after being thrown and stretched, she cannot help herself.

She reaches out and points toward the lens.

Selina Santorino: "Do not post that suplex."

Then Rosa and Kirsty scramble too close.

Selina reacts, stepping in and driving a boot into Rosa's shoulder, then another into Kirsty's side. She grabs Kirsty by the head and pulls her up, trying to take command again.

Outside the ring, Bianca watches.

Waiting.

Calculating.

John Phillips: "Bianca Page is letting the other three fight right now, and that may be the most dangerous thing about her."

Mark Bravo: "Exactly. Bianca does not need to win every exchange. She just needs to win the last one."

Inside the ring, Selina Santorino pulls Kirsty McKinney up by the head, trying to drag her away from Rosa Delgado before either woman can get comfortable on the mat again.

Kirsty immediately reaches for Selina's wrist.

Selina realizes it half a second too late.

Kirsty drops her weight and twists, trying to yank Selina down into another scramble, but Selina throws a quick knee into Kirsty's shoulder to stop the transition.

Kirsty grunts and backs off a step.

Selina smiles through the discomfort, shaking out the arm Rosa had worked earlier.

Selina Santorino: "See? That is called adapting, sweetie."

Kirsty looks at her.

Then at the crowd.

Then back at Selina.

Her face says she cannot believe this is her job.

Mark Bravo: "Kirsty McKinney has the best facial expressions in UTA, John, and none of them are happy."

John Phillips: "Selina may be irritating her, but she did stop Kirsty from taking her back down. That is important."

Rosa Delgado pushes herself up near the ropes, one hand on her shoulder from Selina's boot. She sees Selina focused on Kirsty and moves in quickly, grabbing Selina from behind and spinning her around.

Rosa fires a short forearm to the jaw.

Selina stumbles back.

Rosa follows with another, then grabs the wrist and pulls Selina forward into a sharp short-arm rolling elbow.

Selina drops to one knee.

John Phillips: "Rosa Delgado finding her rhythm now!"

Mark Bravo: "That elbow will ruin your whole content calendar."

Rosa grabs Selina by the arm and tries to pull her up for another strike, but Kirsty steps in from the side and catches Rosa around the waist.

Rosa immediately hooks one leg behind Kirsty's to block the lift.

Kirsty adjusts, trying to muscle through it.

Rosa drops her hips, refusing to go.

For a few seconds, the two women are locked in a stubborn test of leverage, both fighting for position while Selina crawls toward the ropes.

John Phillips: "Rosa and Kirsty again, strength against leverage, leverage against strength."

Mark Bravo: "And Bianca Page is still outside letting all of this happen. She is watching them spend gas."

The camera cuts to ringside.

Bianca Page stands near the apron with Ace Andrews beside her. Her jaw is still tight from Rosa's rolling elbow. She looks angry, but not reckless. Ace speaks calmly, one hand raised, slowing her down.

Ace Andrews: "You do not owe them effort. You owe yourself the result."

Bianca nods once.

Ace points into the ring.

Ace Andrews: "Wait for the mistake."

Back in the ring, Kirsty finally shifts her grip and tries to pull Rosa backward, but Rosa turns with it, lands on her feet, and catches Kirsty's arm on the way through.

Rosa twists into an arm wringer.

Kirsty winces, then immediately rolls forward to relieve the pressure. She pops up and shoots low for Rosa's leg.

Rosa sprawls just enough to stop the clean takedown.

The crowd starts to clap at the exchange.

John Phillips: "Excellent counter wrestling from both Rosa Delgado and Kirsty McKinney!"

Mark Bravo: "Yeah, and Selina is about to ruin all of it because she cannot stand not being the center of the screen."

Selina Santorino charges back into the frame and drives a boot into Rosa's ribs, breaking the exchange. Rosa rolls away clutching her side. Kirsty turns toward Selina, but Selina grabs her by the head and drives a knee up into her

face.

Kirsty staggers back into the ropes.

Selina immediately takes two steps back, spreads her arms, and turns toward the hard camera.

Selina Santorino: "Clip that."

She runs forward, looking for a clothesline to send Kirsty over the top rope.

Kirsty ducks.

Selina hits the ropes chest-first and bounces backward.

Kirsty catches her from behind with a rear waistlock.

Selina's eyes go wide.

Kirsty launches her backward with a German suplex.

Selina lands high on her shoulders and rolls through, clutching the back of her head as the crowd reacts loudly.

John Phillips: "German suplex by Kirsty McKinney!"

Mark Bravo: "Selina wanted a clip. She got one."

Kirsty sits up and exhales, still looking annoyed that Selina made her do that much work. She crawls over and hooks the leg.

Referee: "ONE!"

Referee: "TWO!"

Rosa Delgado breaks it up with a hard kick to Kirsty's shoulder.

Kirsty rolls off Selina and immediately grabs at Rosa's ankle, but Rosa pulls free and backs up toward the ropes.

Kirsty gets to one knee, glaring at Rosa now.

Rosa raises her hands slightly, knowing she had to break the cover.

John Phillips: "Rosa Delgado had no choice there. Selina Santorino was in real danger of being pinned."

Mark Bravo: "And Kirsty did not appreciate the interruption. I am starting to think Kirsty does not appreciate much."

Kirsty rises and steps toward Rosa.

Rosa meets her in the center.

The two women lock up again, but this time there is less caution. Rosa snaps into a side headlock. Kirsty pushes at her hip and tries to send her off, but Rosa drops to one knee and holds the headlock tight.

Kirsty shifts her hands, looking for a back body grip.

Rosa wrenches tighter.

Kirsty finally powers upward, lifting Rosa just enough to create space, but Rosa lands behind her and goes right back to the left arm.

Rosa twists.

Kirsty grimaces, then answers with a sharp back elbow that catches Rosa near the cheek.

Rosa stumbles.

Kirsty follows with a sudden kitchen-sink knee to the midsection.

Rosa folds forward.

John Phillips: "Kirsty McKinney with that knee, and Rosa felt every bit of it."

Kirsty grabs Rosa around the waist, looking for another suplex, but Rosa blocks again. Kirsty switches grip, trying to drag her down instead.

That is when Bianca Page slides back into the ring behind both of them.

Ace Andrews immediately steps toward the apron, eyes locked on the opening.

Mark Bravo: "Here we go."

Bianca rushes forward and catches Kirsty from behind with a sharp high knee to the back of the head.

Kirsty collapses forward, crashing into Rosa and knocking both women down in a heap.

John Phillips: "Bianca Page back in, and she picks her spot perfectly!"

Mark Bravo: "That is what Ace was talking about. Wait for the mistake, then collect."

Bianca quickly grabs Rosa by the arm and shoves her out of the way, then rolls Kirsty onto her back and covers.

Referee: "ONE!"

Referee: "TWO!"

Selina Santorino dives in and breaks the count with a forearm across Bianca's back.

Bianca immediately rolls away, furious. She gets to her knees and stares up at Selina, who is still holding the back of her head from the German suplex but smiling anyway.

Selina Santorino: "Nobody steals my engagement."

Bianca rises slowly.

The crowd senses the shift as Bianca and Selina step toward one another.

Rosa and Kirsty are both down.

Ace Andrews watches from ringside, expression tightening.

John Phillips: "Bianca Page and Selina Santorino now face to face. Two egos, two attitudes, and neither woman willing to take a backward step."

Mark Bravo: "There may not be enough room in Luna Park for both of these personalities, John."

Bianca says something off-mic.

Selina laughs in her face.

Bianca's smile disappears.

Then she slaps Selina across the mouth.

The crowd erupts.

Selina slowly turns her head back toward Bianca, eyes wide, one hand touching her cheek.

Selina Santorino: "You just hit the brand."

Selina lunges.

The two women explode into each other, trading wild shots in the center of the ring as the crowd comes alive.

John Phillips: "And now Bianca Page and Selina Santorino are unloading on one another!"

Mark Bravo: "This is not wrestling anymore. This is a hostile takeover of the spotlight!"

Bianca Page and Selina Santorino tear into each other in the center of the ring, each shot landing harder than the last.

Bianca fires a forearm.

Selina answers with one of her own.

Bianca steps in again, but Selina catches her first with a sharp knee to the midsection, doubling her over.

Selina grabs Bianca by the back of the head and turns toward the hard camera, forcing Bianca's face up just enough to make sure the shot is framed.

Selina Santorino: "This is what happens when you touch premium content!"

Selina hooks Bianca's head and looks for a DDT, but Bianca spins out before Selina can drop. Bianca shoves her away, then catches her coming back with a stiff superkick to the jaw.

Selina drops flat to the mat.

John Phillips: "Swanky! Bianca Page caught Selina clean with that superkick!"

Mark Bravo: "That may have knocked the filter right off her face!"

Bianca immediately drops into the cover, hooking Selina's leg with both arms.

Referee: "ONE!"

Referee: "TWO!"

Kirsty McKinney reaches in from the side and grabs Bianca by the ankle, yanking her off the cover before the referee can come down for three.

Bianca hits the mat chest-first and turns over, furious.

Kirsty is still on one knee, breathing through the effects of Bianca's earlier high knee, but she has enough awareness to stop the match from ending.

John Phillips: "Kirsty McKinney saves the match!"

Mark Bravo: "Saves the match for herself. Let us be clear. Kirsty is not out here doing charity."

Bianca scrambles to her feet and charges at Kirsty, but Kirsty drops low and catches Bianca around the waist. Bianca tries to club down across Kirsty's back, but Kirsty drives forward, lifting and turning Bianca before dumping her to the mat with a quick amateur-style takedown.

Bianca lands hard and immediately tries to crawl away, but Kirsty stays attached, moving behind her and dragging her back toward the center.

Ace Andrews slams one hand on the apron.

Ace Andrews: "Get to the ropes! Bianca, move!"

Kirsty rides Bianca from behind, trapping one arm, then shifting her weight across Bianca's shoulders to flatten her down.

Bianca kicks her legs, furious, reaching toward the ropes even though the rules do not promise her the same kind of relief.

John Phillips: "Kirsty has Bianca grounded, and this is exactly where Bianca does not want to be."

Mark Bravo: "No one wants to be there. Kirsty McKinney turns wrestling into manual labor."

Kirsty reaches for Bianca's far wrist, trying to pull her into a cradle position, but Bianca claws forward and manages to get one hand on the bottom rope.

The referee tells Kirsty to open up.

Kirsty does, but not happily.

She releases Bianca with an exaggerated sigh, then flicks her hair back with that same bored disgust.

Mark Bravo: "Look at that. She is offended by rope breaks as a concept."

John Phillips: "In a fatal four way, the referee still wants clean breaks when competitors are in the ropes, but Kirsty gave Bianca every last second there."

Bianca rolls to the apron, clutching at her shoulder and glaring back into the ring.

Kirsty turns away from Bianca and immediately gets caught by Rosa Delgado.

Rosa steps in with a spinning backfist that clips Kirsty across the side of the head.

Kirsty staggers.

Rosa grabs her by the wrist, pulls her in, and plants her with a tornado DDT out of the corner.

Kirsty spikes into the mat and rolls onto her back.

John Phillips: "Rosa Delgado plants Kirsty!"

Mark Bravo: "And Rosa may have found her opening!"

Rosa hooks the leg.

Referee: "ONE!"

Referee: "TWO!"

Selina Santorino breaks it up just in time, throwing herself across Rosa's back.

Selina rolls off, still dazed from Bianca's superkick, but she pushes up to one knee and shakes her head like she is trying to clear static.

Selina Santorino: "No reposts. Original content only."

Rosa grabs Selina by the hair and pulls her up, but Selina suddenly catches Rosa by the front of the gear and drops backward, sending Rosa throat-first across the middle rope.

Rosa snaps back and drops to one knee, coughing.

Selina gets to her feet and looks down at Rosa with a sharp grin.

Selina Santorino: "There we go. Much better angle."

Selina hits the ropes, comes back, and drives both knees into Rosa's upper back, pressing her against the rope before Rosa spills down to the mat.

Selina turns, ready to cover, but Kirsty McKinney grabs her from behind.

Kirsty hooks around the waist and tries to pull Selina back into another suplex. Selina fights the grip, throwing elbows backward, one catching Kirsty on the side of the head.

Kirsty loosens just enough for Selina to twist free.

Selina swings wildly.

Kirsty ducks and catches her in a front facelock.

Selina immediately drops to a knee, trying to keep from being dragged down, but Kirsty sprawls over her and starts to crank the head and arm, forcing Selina toward the mat.

John Phillips: "Kirsty McKinney going right back to control, trying to smother Selina Santorino's offense before it can build."

Mark Bravo: "Selina has been hit, suplexed, stretched, and still somehow believes this is a branding opportunity. That takes heart, John. Terrible judgment, but heart."

Kirsty tightens the front facelock, dragging Selina farther down. Selina reaches blindly toward the ropes, kicking her legs as Kirsty shifts position and starts to turn the hold into something nastier.

Rosa Delgado is near the ropes, still recovering.

Bianca Page is on the apron.

Ace Andrews moves toward her, speaking fast.

Ace Andrews: "Now. Before Rosa gets back up."

Bianca looks at Kirsty controlling Selina.

Then at Rosa on one knee.

Then back to Ace.

Ace points toward the turnbuckle.

Bianca understands.

She starts to climb.

John Phillips: "Bianca Page heading up top here."

Mark Bravo: "This is risk, John, but it may be the kind of risk that puts Bianca right back where she believes she belongs."

Bianca reaches the top turnbuckle, balancing carefully as the crowd rises. Kirsty still has Selina trapped and does not see Bianca behind her.

Rosa sees it.

Rosa pushes to her feet and charges toward the corner.

Bianca notices just in time and kicks Rosa away from the top, catching her in the chest. Rosa stumbles backward.

Bianca stands fully now.

She looks down at the pile forming beneath her.

Kirsty starts to turn.

Too late.

Bianca launches herself from the top rope with a corkscrew moonsault, crashing down across both Kirsty and Selina.

The crowd erupts as all three women hit hard.

John Phillips: "Pure Elegance! Bianca Page from the top!"

Mark Bravo: "That was gorgeous! That was championship-level instinct!"

Bianca rolls through the impact clutching her ribs, unable to immediately capitalize. Selina turns onto her side, both arms wrapped around her midsection. Kirsty is down, blinking up at the lights.

Rosa Delgado, staggered but still standing, sees all three women down.

The crowd starts to build as Rosa steadies herself.

John Phillips: "Bianca Page may have done the damage, but Rosa Delgado is the only woman standing right now."

Mark Bravo: "That is the problem with taking the big risk. Sometimes you hit it, and someone else gets to benefit."

Rosa looks from Bianca to Kirsty to Selina.

She chooses Selina.

Rosa pulls Selina up, grabs her by the wrist, and whips her hard into the corner. Selina hits back-first and stumbles forward.

Rosa explodes forward with a corner shotgun dropkick, blasting Selina back into the buckles.

Selina drops into a seated position in the corner, eyes wide, breathing hard.

Rosa rises quickly, clapping her hands once to rally herself as the crowd responds.

John Phillips: "Rosa Delgado building momentum here in Buenos Aires!"

Rosa turns back toward Kirsty, who is getting to one knee.

Rosa grabs Kirsty by the arm and pulls her in, looking to set her up near the corner.

But Kirsty drops her weight.

Rosa pulls again.

Kirsty suddenly explodes upward, lifting Rosa from the front.

Kirsty powers Rosa up and over with a stalling gutwrench suplex, holding just long enough to make the crowd react before driving Rosa into the mat.

John Phillips: "K-Lift by Kirsty McKinney!"

Mark Bravo: "Farm strength, amateur wrestling, goat trauma, whatever it is, it works!"

Kirsty rolls into the cover on Rosa.

Referee: "ONE!"

Referee: "TWO!"

Bianca Page dives across and breaks it up with a forearm to the back of Kirsty's head.

Kirsty rolls away, clutching the back of her skull, and Bianca stays on her, grabbing Kirsty by the hair and pulling her toward the ropes.

John Phillips: "Bianca Page had to stop that cover. Rosa Delgado may not have kicked out."

Mark Bravo: "And listen to Ace on the outside. He knows Bianca is getting close. He can smell the win."

Ace Andrews is animated now, pointing into the ring, directing Bianca as she drags Kirsty toward the near side.

Ace Andrews: "Clear the ring! One at a time!"

Bianca nods, then pulls Kirsty up and throws her shoulder-first through the ropes.

Kirsty tumbles to the apron and then drops down to the floor, landing hard near the barricade.

Bianca turns back toward the ring.

Selina is still seated in the corner.

Rosa is down from the K-Lift.

For the first time in several minutes, Bianca has a clear opening.

Her eyes lock onto Rosa.

John Phillips: "Bianca Page has Rosa Delgado down, Selina hurt in the corner, Kirsty on the outside. This may be the moment."

Mark Bravo: "This is what she does, John. She waits for the field to thin, and then she takes what belongs to her."

Bianca moves toward Rosa, but before she can cover, Selina Santorino suddenly grabs Bianca by the ankle from the corner.

Bianca turns back, furious.

Selina looks up at her, still seated, still breathing hard, but still smirking.

Selina Santorino: "You are not the main character."

Bianca's face hardens.

She reaches down and grabs Selina by the hair with both hands.

Bianca Page: "Neither are you."

Bianca yanks Selina up from the corner as the crowd buzzes, both women again on a collision course with the match hanging in the balance.

Bianca Page drags Selina Santorino out of the corner by the hair, pulling her upright as the referee steps in with another warning.

Bianca does not even look at him.

Her eyes are locked on Selina.

Bianca Page: "You want attention?"

Bianca shifts her grip, hooks Selina by the head, and snaps her down with a DDT in the center of the ring.

Selina bounces off the mat and rolls onto her back, dazed.

John Phillips: "Snap DDT by Bianca Page! Selina Santorino may be out!"

Mark Bravo: "And Bianca did not just hit the move. She made a point. There is a difference."

Bianca looks down at Selina for a moment, then turns toward Rosa Delgado, who is still recovering from Kirsty's K-Lift.

Bianca drops beside Rosa and hooks the leg.

Referee: "ONE!"

Referee: "TWO!"

Rosa kicks out.

Bianca sits up quickly, frustration flashing across her face.

Ace Andrews slaps the apron from ringside.

Ace Andrews: "Stay on her! Do not argue! Stay on her!"

Bianca exhales sharply, then reaches down and grabs Rosa by the wrist. She pulls Rosa up, but Rosa immediately fires a short shot into Bianca's ribs.

Bianca doubles slightly.

Rosa fires another.

Then another.

Rosa grabs Bianca's arm and twists, trying once again to attack the shoulder and pull Bianca off balance.

John Phillips: "Rosa Delgado still fighting, still going back to that arm!"

Mark Bravo: "Bianca gave her too much time. Ace told her not to argue with the moment, and he was right."

Rosa steps through and wrenches the arm again. Bianca grimaces, trying to pull free, but Rosa traps the wrist and drives a sharp kick into Bianca's thigh, forcing her down to one knee.

The crowd builds as Rosa keeps the arm extended.

Rosa looks around, then pulls Bianca in close, trying to transition toward the Magnolia Lock.

John Phillips: "Rosa may be looking for the Magnolia Lock!"

Mark Bravo: "If she locks that in, Bianca's championship dreams are going to need ice and a sling."

Bianca immediately panics, reaching backward, clawing for anything she can grab. Rosa tries to step behind her, but Bianca drops her weight and falls toward the ropes.

Rosa stays attached.

Bianca reaches again.

Her hand finds the bottom rope.

The referee moves in, telling Rosa to break.

Rosa holds for a second longer, then releases cleanly.

Bianca rolls under the bottom rope onto the apron, clutching her arm and breathing hard.

John Phillips: "Bianca Page escapes to the ropes, but Rosa Delgado almost had her trapped."

Mark Bravo: "Almost does not move you toward a championship, John. Winning does."

Rosa starts to follow Bianca, but Selina Santorino suddenly comes from behind, grabbing Rosa by the shoulder and spinning her around.

Selina catches Rosa with a quick knee to the midsection, then hooks both arms.

The crowd reacts as Selina tries to set her up.

John Phillips: "Selina Santorino looking for something big here!"

Selina plants Rosa with an underhook DDT, driving her face-first into the canvas.

Rosa rolls over slowly, stunned.

Mark Bravo: "Santorino Impact System! That one landed flush!"

Selina turns Rosa over and hooks the leg.

Referee: "ONE!"

Referee: "TWO!"

Bianca Page dives in from the apron, breaking up the count with a desperate forearm across Selina's back.

Selina rolls away, clutching her spine, and Bianca pushes up to her knees, still favoring the arm Rosa had been attacking.

John Phillips: "Bianca had to throw herself back in to stop that cover!"

Mark Bravo: "That is instinct. That is survival. That is why Bianca Page belongs in this conversation."

Selina and Bianca both rise slowly.

Rosa is down between them.

Kirsty McKinney is still on the outside, using the barricade to pull herself up after being dumped from the ring.

Bianca and Selina step toward one another again, both breathing hard, both too proud to back away.

Selina Santorino: "You keep interrupting my moments."

Bianca Page: "Your moments are cheap."

Selina swings.

Bianca ducks and catches her from behind, grabbing at the waist, but Selina throws a back elbow that cracks Bianca near the temple.

Bianca staggers.

Selina hits the ropes, looking to come back with speed.

But Kirsty McKinney reaches in from the floor and grabs Selina by the ankle.

Selina trips forward and hits the mat face-first.

The crowd reacts as Kirsty pulls Selina under the bottom rope to the outside.

John Phillips: "Kirsty McKinney from the outside! She just dragged Selina out of the ring!"

Mark Bravo: "Selina forgot Kirsty existed. That is a bad analytics report."

On the floor, Selina scrambles up and tries to throw a forearm, but Kirsty ducks under it and drives her backward into the barricade.

Selina hits hard, arching in pain.

Kirsty does not pose. She does not shout. She simply grabs Selina again, turns her, and drives her back-first into the apron.

Selina drops to a knee on the floor, gasping.

John Phillips: "Kirsty is taking Selina apart on the outside."

Mark Bravo: "This is what happens when Kirsty decides she is tired of your personality."

Inside the ring, Bianca sees Kirsty and Selina on the floor.

She sees Rosa down.

Her expression shifts.

This is the opening again.

Bianca moves toward Rosa, but Rosa suddenly catches her by the wrist from the mat and pulls her down into a small package.

Referee: "ONE!"

Referee: "TWO!"

Bianca kicks out, scrambling free just before three.

Both women roll apart and rise quickly, Bianca shocked, Rosa still exhausted but fighting.

John Phillips: "Rosa almost stole it! Bianca Page nearly got caught!"

Mark Bravo: "That was too close. Way too close."

Bianca charges in angrily, but Rosa sidesteps and sends her shoulder-first toward the corner.

Bianca catches herself on the ropes before impact, then turns around—

Rosa explodes forward with another rolling elbow.

Bianca ducks.

Rosa's momentum carries her forward, and Bianca catches her from behind with a handful of tights, pulling her backward toward the mat.

Rosa rolls through before Bianca can steal the pin and pops back to her feet.

Bianca rises too.

Rosa steps in with a spinning backfist.

Bianca ducks again.

Rosa turns back around—

Bianca blasts her with a high knee.

John Phillips: "Binx! Bianca Page caught Rosa!"

Rosa drops to one knee, stunned.

Bianca immediately grabs her by the head and pulls her into position, looking toward Ace for half a second.

Ace nods hard.

Ace Andrews: "Finish her!"

Bianca hooks Rosa and drives her down with an Ace Cutter.

John Phillips: "Graceful! Bianca Page plants Rosa Delgado!"

Bianca rolls Rosa over and hooks both legs.

Referee: "ONE!"

Referee: "TWO!"

Kirsty McKinney slides back into the ring and breaks up the cover with a heavy clubbing blow across Bianca's back.

Bianca rolls away, screaming in frustration.

Ace Andrews throws both hands up on the outside.

Ace Andrews: "No! No, no, no!"

John Phillips: "Kirsty McKinney saves the match again!"

Mark Bravo: "Bianca Page had Rosa beaten! Kirsty just robbed her!"

Kirsty grabs Bianca by the arm and pulls her up.

Bianca tries to fire back, but Kirsty ducks under and catches her around the waist. Bianca fights the grip, throwing elbows down at Kirsty's hands, but Kirsty stays locked on.

For a moment, Bianca looks trapped.

Then Selina Santorino reappears on the apron.

She grabs Kirsty by the hair from behind and snaps her throat-first across the top rope.

Kirsty recoils backward, coughing, and Bianca slips free.

John Phillips: "Selina from the apron! Kirsty gets caught across the top rope!"

Mark Bravo: "This match will not let anyone build momentum for more than five seconds."

Kirsty stumbles right into Bianca's path.

Bianca does not hesitate.

She charges and connects with a spear, driving Kirsty hard into the mat.

The impact shakes both women.

John Phillips: "Spear by Bianca Page!"

Bianca covers Kirsty immediately.

Referee: "ONE!"

Referee: "TWO!"

Selina Santorino breaks it up, diving in from the apron with a sharp shot across Bianca's shoulders.

Bianca rolls away again, this time pounding the mat with both hands.

Her frustration is no longer hidden.

She sits up, hair falling across her face, eyes wide with anger as Ace Andrews shouts from ringside.

Ace Andrews: "Control yourself!"

Bianca turns toward him, breathing hard.

Ace points around the ring.

Ace Andrews: "They are breaking. You are not."

Bianca looks around.

Rosa is down near the ropes.

Kirsty is clutching her ribs after the spear.

Selina is crawling back toward the corner.

Bianca slowly rises.

The anger remains, but now it begins turning into focus.

John Phillips: "Ace Andrews trying to keep Bianca Page from losing herself in the frustration here."

Mark Bravo: "Because he knows how close she is. She is one clean opening away from taking this match."

Bianca wipes hair from her face and turns toward Selina Santorino, who is using the ropes to stand.

Selina looks back, dazed but defiant.

Bianca starts toward her.

Behind Bianca, Rosa Delgado begins to stir.

And across the ring, Kirsty McKinney rolls slowly to one knee.

The match continues to tighten around all four women as the crowd in Buenos Aires rises with it.

Bianca Page stalks toward Selina Santorino, her face set in a cold glare now. The frustration is still there, still burning, but Ace Andrews' words have sharpened it into something more useful.

Selina pulls herself up with the ropes, one arm hooked over the top strand, the other pressed against her ribs. She sees Bianca coming and tries to straighten, trying to look less hurt than she is.

Selina Santorino: "You are trying way too hard for second billing."

Bianca lunges.

Selina ducks through the ropes and drops to the apron, forcing Bianca to pull up short as the referee steps in between them.

Bianca reaches past him, trying to grab Selina by the hair, but Selina snaps a shoulder between the ropes and drives it into Bianca's midsection.

Bianca doubles over.

Selina grabs her by the head over the top rope and drops down, snapping Bianca throat-first across the strand.

Bianca whips backward and hits the mat, one hand going to her throat.

John Phillips: "Selina Santorino creates separation, and Bianca Page gets caught across that top rope!"

Mark Bravo: "That was survival. Ugly, smart survival."

Selina rolls back into the ring and immediately crawls toward Bianca for the cover.

Referee: "ONE!"

Referee: "TWO!"

Bianca kicks out.

Selina sits up, eyes wide, clearly annoyed the match did not end there. She looks toward the referee and holds up three fingers.

Selina Santorino: "That was three. Replay it. Use the good angle."

John Phillips: "Only two. Bianca Page still alive in this match."

Mark Bravo: "Selina is asking for a replay review in a fatal four way. Bold strategy."

Selina grabs Bianca by the hair and starts to pull her up, but Rosa Delgado comes in from the side, catching Selina by the arm. Rosa twists sharply, forcing Selina to cry out and drop to a knee.

Rosa steps over the arm and drives her knee down near Selina's shoulder, then keeps the wrist trapped as Selina kicks at the mat.

John Phillips: "Rosa Delgado again with the arm! Selina has taken damage to that arm throughout this match."

Mark Bravo: "Rosa is like a mechanic, John. She finds one faulty part and just keeps tightening until something breaks."

Selina reaches out toward the ropes, but Rosa pulls her away, dragging her closer to the center. Selina's free hand scrambles at Rosa's grip, trying to pry herself loose.

Rosa transitions behind her, beginning to thread the arm while stepping over, looking again for a deeper submission.

Kirsty McKinney suddenly steps in and grabs Rosa from behind.

Rosa tries to hook Kirsty's leg to block the lift, but Kirsty has better positioning this time.

Kirsty pops her hips and throws Rosa backward with a tight belly-to-belly suplex.

Rosa lands hard and rolls toward the corner.

John Phillips: "Kirsty McKinney shuts Rosa down!"

Mark Bravo: "Rosa was building toward something dangerous, and Kirsty just deleted the whole file."

Kirsty rises, one arm wrapped around her ribs after Bianca's spear. She winces, but keeps moving. She turns toward Selina, who is still on one knee, shaking out her arm.

Selina looks up.

Kirsty looks down.

Selina tries a nervous smile.

Selina Santorino: "Partnership content?"

Kirsty grabs her.

Selina's smile vanishes.

Kirsty pulls Selina into a front facelock, then rolls her down, keeping the head and arm controlled as she shifts her legs into position. Selina kicks, twists, and tries to turn her body toward the ropes, but Kirsty rolls with her, staying glued to her.

John Phillips: "Kirsty McKinney smothering Selina here, and Selina has nowhere to go!"

Mark Bravo: "This is Selina's nightmare. No camera control, no space, just Kirsty McKinney breathing angrily on top of her."

Kirsty starts to pull Selina deeper into a choke position, her face flat and bored as she tightens the grip.

Selina's free hand slaps at Kirsty's shoulder.

The referee drops down to check.

Bianca Page, still near the ropes, sees it happening.

Ace Andrews sees it too.

Ace Andrews: "Bianca! Now!"

Bianca pushes herself up, holding her throat for a second before stumbling toward Kirsty and Selina. She drives a boot into Kirsty's back once.

Kirsty holds on.

Bianca kicks again, harder.

Kirsty finally releases, rolling off Selina with an irritated grunt.

Bianca grabs Kirsty by the hair and yanks her up.

John Phillips: "Bianca Page had to break that up. Selina Santorino was fading fast."

Mark Bravo: "And Bianca is done playing defense now."

Bianca throws Kirsty toward the ropes, but Kirsty reverses the whip and sends Bianca across instead.

Bianca rebounds.

Kirsty lowers for a takedown.

Bianca leaps over her and keeps running.

On the return, Rosa Delgado suddenly steps into Bianca's path and catches her with a corner shotgun dropkick, blasting Bianca backward into the turnbuckles.

Bianca hits hard and staggers out.

Rosa claps once, the crowd coming with her, and grabs Bianca by the wrist.

John Phillips: "Rosa Delgado with a burst of offense!"

Rosa whips Bianca back into the same corner, charges in, and catches her with a rolling elbow under the jaw.

Bianca slumps against the buckles.

Rosa hooks her, turning her out of the corner, looking to create the lane for the Steel Magnolia.

John Phillips: "Rosa may be setting Bianca up for the Steel Magnolia!"

Mark Bravo: "No, no, no—Ace, do something!"

Ace Andrews moves closer to the apron, shouting at Bianca, but Rosa has her in position.

Rosa begins to lift.

Bianca kicks her legs, fighting it.

Kirsty McKinney suddenly charges in and blasts Rosa from the side with a corkscrew forearm smash.

Rosa drops Bianca and falls backward to the mat.

John Phillips: "Kirsty McKinney wipes out Rosa Delgado!"

Mark Bravo: "That saved Bianca, but not on purpose. In a fatal four way, enemies keep accidentally doing favors for each other."

Kirsty turns toward Bianca, who is still against the corner, stunned. Kirsty steps in, grabs Bianca, and starts pulling her away from the ropes.

Bianca tries to fight her off, but Kirsty ducks under a forearm and catches Bianca with a tight waistlock.

Ace Andrews shouts from ringside.

Ace Andrews: "Hands! Break the hands!"

Bianca reaches down, trying to pry Kirsty's grip apart.

Kirsty lifts.

Bianca throws an elbow backward.

Kirsty absorbs it and lifts again, taking Bianca off her feet for a back-to-belly suplex.

Bianca lands hard, rolling to her side, clutching the back of her head.

John Phillips: "Kirsty McKinney suplexes Bianca Page, and Bianca is in trouble!"

Kirsty crawls into the cover.

Referee: "ONE!"

Referee: "TWO!"

Selina Santorino breaks it up at the last second, throwing herself onto Kirsty with a desperate clubbing shot.

Selina rolls to her back afterward, still holding her arm, still blinking from the choke.

John Phillips: "Selina keeps the match alive!"

Mark Bravo: "Everybody is running on fumes now, John. This is where mistakes get expensive."

All four women are down or near down.

Bianca lies near the corner, one hand on the back of her head.

Rosa is on her side, breathing hard, still recovering from Kirsty's forearm.

Kirsty is seated near the center, annoyed and exhausted in equal measure.

Selina crawls toward the ropes, dragging herself up with one arm.

The Buenos Aires crowd grows louder, sensing the match reaching its final stretch.

John Phillips: "What an opening match here at World Tour: Argentina '26. Every time someone seems close, another competitor shuts the door."

Mark Bravo: "That door is going to stop opening eventually, John. Someone is about to get trapped on the wrong side of it."

Selina reaches her feet first, swaying slightly against the ropes. Kirsty rises next, turning toward Selina with that same irritated stare.

Selina sees Kirsty coming and throws a quick kick toward the knee.

Kirsty catches the leg.

Selina's eyes widen.

Kirsty yanks her forward, then scoops her up across her shoulders in position for the front electric chair drop.

John Phillips: "Kirsty has Selina up!"

Mark Bravo: "This could be the setup!"

Selina kicks and twists wildly, realizing the danger. She reaches toward Bianca, toward Rosa, toward anything, but Kirsty steps forward, steadying her base.

Before Kirsty can drop her, Bianca Page suddenly rushes in and clips Kirsty's knee from behind.

Kirsty's leg buckles.

Selina slips off her shoulders and crashes awkwardly to the mat.

Kirsty drops to one knee, clutching at it, anger flashing across her face.

John Phillips: "Bianca Page goes after the knee and stops Kirsty from putting Selina away!"

Mark Bravo: "That is the right target. Take the base away from the wrestler."

Bianca immediately grabs Kirsty and drives a forearm into the side of her head. Kirsty tries to rise, but Bianca kicks at the same knee again, forcing her back down.

Rosa Delgado pulls herself up behind Bianca.

Ace sees it.

Ace Andrews: "Behind you!"

Bianca turns just as Rosa steps in.

Rosa swings with a spinning backfist.

Bianca ducks.

The backfist catches Kirsty instead.

Kirsty drops fully to the mat.

John Phillips: "Rosa missed Bianca and caught Kirsty McKinney!"

Mark Bravo: "Wrong place, wrong time, and Bianca Page knew exactly where she was standing!"

Rosa freezes for half a second, realizing what happened.

That half second is enough.

Bianca grabs Rosa from behind and shoves her forward through the ropes. Rosa spills to the apron, then drops down to the floor, landing near Ace Andrews.

Ace steps back with both hands up, smiling like he had nothing to do with anything.

Inside the ring, Selina is crawling toward Bianca, reaching for her boot.

Bianca looks down.

Selina grabs her ankle weakly.

Selina Santorino: "Still... my... moment..."

Bianca sneers.

She pulls her foot free, grabs Selina by the head, and drags her up just enough to throw her shoulder-first into the ring post through the corner.

Selina hits hard and collapses through the ropes to the apron, then tumbles to the floor beside the steps.

John Phillips: "Selina Santorino sent hard into the post! She is out to the floor!"

Mark Bravo: "Bianca just cleared Selina. Rosa is outside. Kirsty is down."

Bianca turns slowly.

Kirsty McKinney is still on the mat, stunned from Rosa's accidental backfist and favoring the knee Bianca clipped.

Ace Andrews points from ringside.

Ace Andrews: "Now. Take it now."

Bianca moves toward Kirsty, every step deliberate.

The crowd rises, sensing the end may be close.

Bianca Page stands over Kirsty McKinney, breathing hard, hair loose around her face, eyes fixed on the one woman left inside the ring.

Kirsty is trying to push herself up, one hand on the mat, the other reaching toward her knee after Bianca clipped it from behind. She is hurt, but not finished. Not yet.

Outside the ring, Rosa Delgado is down near the apron, still recovering from being shoved through the ropes. Selina Santorino is on the floor by the steps, one arm wrapped around her shoulder after being driven into the post.

Ace Andrews points toward Kirsty from ringside, his voice cutting through the noise of Luna Park.

Ace Andrews: "Do not admire it. End it."

Bianca nods once.

She reaches down, grabs Kirsty by the hair, and pulls her up from the mat. Kirsty immediately tries to fight back, catching Bianca around the waist and driving forward, looking for anything she can turn into control.

John Phillips: "Kirsty McKinney still trying to wrestle through this, still trying to find a way back in."

Mark Bravo: "She is stubborn, John. I will give her that. But stubborn gets you hurt when Bianca Page smells blood."

Kirsty forces Bianca back a step, then another. Bianca's eyes widen as Kirsty begins to turn her hips, trying to drag Bianca down into a cradle.

For a second, Bianca is trapped.

Then she reaches down and grabs the ropes with both hands.

The referee moves around to check the shoulders and does not see it.

John Phillips: "Wait a minute—Bianca has the ropes!"

Mark Bravo: "The referee cannot call what he cannot see!"

Using the ropes, Bianca blocks Kirsty's attempt to pull her over. Kirsty strains, confused for half a second by the sudden resistance.

That is all Bianca needs.

She releases the ropes, drives a quick knee into Kirsty's injured leg, and yanks her down by the head.

Kirsty drops to one knee.

Bianca steps back.

Kirsty looks up.

Bianca explodes forward.

Swanky.

The superkick catches Kirsty flush across the jaw.

Kirsty collapses backward onto the mat.

John Phillips: "Swanky! Bianca Page catches Kirsty McKinney!"

Mark Bravo: "That might be it!"

Bianca drops for the cover, but before the referee can count, Rosa Delgado pulls herself onto the apron.

Ace Andrews sees her immediately.

Rosa reaches for the ropes, trying to get back inside.

Ace steps closer, just enough to put himself in her path without touching her.

Ace Andrews: "You are too late."

Rosa glares down at him and tries to step past, but Ace holds both hands up innocently, forcing her to hesitate rather than risk kicking through him.

Inside the ring, Bianca sees the delay.

Instead of covering Kirsty, she crawls toward the corner.

John Phillips: "Bianca is not covering! What is she doing?"

Mark Bravo: "She is making sure. That is what champions do."

Bianca pulls herself up the turnbuckles, climbing with urgency now. Kirsty is still down in the center of the ring, stunned by the superkick. Selina is only beginning to stir on the floor.

Rosa finally pushes past Ace and starts to enter, but Ace grabs the bottom rope and pulls it down just enough to throw off her balance.

Rosa stumbles on the apron.

The referee turns his head toward the movement.

Ace immediately lets go and steps away, hands raised, innocent as ever.

John Phillips: "Ace Andrews got involved there! He pulled that rope!"

Mark Bravo: "Allegedly."

John Phillips: "We all saw it!"

Mark Bravo: "I saw a successful businessman maintaining safe distance from an angry competitor."

Bianca reaches the top rope.

Rosa gets through the ropes, but she is too far away.

Bianca looks down at Kirsty.

Then she launches.

Pure Elegance.

The corkscrew moonsault lands across Kirsty McKinney with full impact.

The crowd erupts as Bianca hooks both legs tight.

Referee: "ONE!"

Rosa dives across the ring.

Referee: "TWO!"

Selina Santorino grabs the apron outside, trying desperately to pull herself back in.

Ace Andrews slaps the mat once from the floor, shouting with the count.

Referee: "THREE!"

DING DING DING!

Rosa lands a split second too late, crashing into Bianca just after the referee's hand hits the mat for the third time.

Bianca rolls away immediately, clutching her ribs from the landing but laughing through the pain.

John Phillips: "Bianca Page wins it! Bianca Page wins the fatal four way!"

Mark Bravo: "That is exactly what she needed, John! After last week, after the frustration, after everything, Bianca Page just put herself right back in the championship conversation!"

Ace Andrews is already moving around the ring, clapping with a wide, satisfied smile as Bianca rolls under the bottom rope and drops to the floor.

The referee raises one hand toward the timekeeper's area.

Ring Announcer: "Here is your winner... "Classy" Bianca Page!"

The crowd boos loudly as Bianca stands at ringside, one hand pressed against her ribs, the other raised high by Ace Andrews.

Ace says something to her, smiling with approval. Bianca nods, her face flushed from the fight, but her arrogance fully restored by victory.

John Phillips: "Bianca Page took advantage of the chaos, and you cannot ignore the role Ace Andrews played at ringside."

Mark Bravo: "You also cannot ignore the record book. It does not say almost. It does not say maybe. It does not say the referee missed something. It says Bianca Page won."

Inside the ring, Rosa Delgado sits up, frustrated, looking toward Bianca and Ace on the floor. She knows how close she came to breaking the pin.

Kirsty McKinney remains on her back, one arm across her face, visibly annoyed even through the exhaustion and pain.

Selina Santorino has finally pulled herself onto the apron, staring daggers toward Bianca as she realizes the match ended without her being close enough to stop it.

Bianca backs up the ramp with Ace beside her, smiling through the boos. She gestures around her waist, making the message clear.

Gold.

That is still the destination.

John Phillips: "Bianca Page came into tonight angry after last week. She leaves Buenos Aires with a win, and that may make her even more dangerous."

Mark Bravo: "Dangerous, confident, and with Ace Andrews in her corner. If I am holding championship gold in UTA, I am not sleeping well after this."

At the top of the ramp, Bianca turns back one final time and blows a kiss toward the ring.

Rosa glares back.

Selina shouts something from the apron that the cameras barely catch.

Kirsty has rolled to her side now, scowling at the mat like the canvas itself has offended her.

Bianca only smiles wider.

The shot holds on Bianca Page and Ace Andrews standing tall on the ramp as Luna Park rains boos down over them.

Worth Taking

Segment

The camera cuts backstage to Melissa Cartwright standing in front of the World Tour backdrop, microphone in hand.

The noise from Luna Park hums faintly behind the walls, but Melissa keeps her focus on the camera.

Melissa Cartwright: "Melissa Cartwright here backstage, and joining me at this time is a man whose arrival last week shook the UTA Championship picture instantly."

She turns slightly as Mike Best steps into frame.

Mike stands with that unmistakable confidence of someone who has spent his entire career walking into places that did not ask for him and making them react anyway. He does not look nervous. He does not look impressed.

He looks like a man who already knows the answer to every question before it is asked.

Melissa Cartwright: "Mike Best, thank you for joining me."

Mike Best: "Yeah. I know. Big moment for you."

Melissa pauses for half a second, professional smile still intact.

Melissa Cartwright: "Last week in Puerto Rico, you made your presence known in a major way. You stepped into the ring with the UTA Champion, Maxwell Jett, and Chris Ross. Since then, everyone has been asking the same question. Why are you here in the UTA?"

Mike looks at her.

Then he looks into the camera.

He smiles faintly.

Mike Best: "Why am I here?"

He lets the question hang, almost amused by it.

Mike Best: "Melissa, I can give you the long version if you want."

Mike lifts one hand and starts counting off invisible bullet points.

Mike Best: "I can stand here and list accomplishments. I can talk about championships, main events, wars, companies I helped build, companies I helped break, and people who still wake up in a cold sweat because they remember what happened when they stood across from me."

He shrugs.

Mike Best: "I can name-drop my father."

Mike's smile sharpens.

Mike Best: "Lee Best. The GOD of HOW."

He taps his own chest.

Mike Best: "And I can remind everybody that I am the Son of GOD. Which, frankly, seems like something people should have written down already."

Melissa keeps the microphone steady as Mike continues.

Mike Best: "I can talk about the fact that my career has been good enough, loud enough, violent enough, important

enough, that before now, I had never stepped foot in a UTA ring..."

He leans slightly toward the camera.

Mike Best: "...and I am still in the UTA Hall of Fame."

A mixed reaction can be heard from the arena as the interview plays on the screen.

Mike Best: "Think about that for a second."

Mike turns back toward Melissa.

Mike Best: "So why, Melissa?"

He gives a small laugh through his nose.

Mike Best: "Do I really need a reason?"

Melissa studies him for a moment before continuing.

Melissa Cartwright: "Maybe not, but your focus has been very specific. You have not come here quietly. You have not started at the bottom. Your attention is on the UTA Champion, Maxwell Jett. Why him?"

Mike's expression changes just enough to show that this question interests him more.

Mike Best: "Because he is the top guy."

No hesitation.

Mike Best: "That's it."

He spreads his hands slightly.

Mike Best: "I don't know what part of that is supposed to be complicated. Maxwell Jett has the championship. Maxwell Jett has the spotlight. Maxwell Jett has the thing that tells everybody in this company, in every city, on every broadcast, that he is the man standing on top of the mountain."

Mike's eyes narrow slightly.

Mike Best: "So why wouldn't I go after him?"

Melissa raises the microphone closer as Mike continues.

Mike Best: "What am I supposed to do? Walk in here, shake hands, introduce myself to the middle of the card, and politely ask for permission to matter?"

He shakes his head.

Mike Best: "No."

Mike Best: "That is not how Mike Best works."

He points toward the camera.

Mike Best: "If I walk into your company, I look for the biggest room. I look for the loudest conversation. I look for the most valuable piece of real estate in the building."

He pauses.

Mike Best: "And right now, that is Maxwell Jett."

Mike's tone lowers, becoming more direct.

Mike Best: "He can be smug. He can be arrogant. He can sit in expensive chairs, surround himself with expensive

idiots, and call it First Class all he wants."

Mike smirks.

Mike Best: "Cute branding, by the way."

The smirk fades.

Mike Best: "But that title makes him the measuring stick. That title makes him the target. And if I am going to step into a UTA ring after all this time, I am not here to build a résumé."

Mike leans closer to Melissa's microphone.

Mike Best: "I already have one."

He straightens up.

Mike Best: "I'm here to add to it."

Melissa Cartwright: "You mentioned Maxwell Jett as the target, but Chris Ross clearly sees things differently. Last week, before you could finish what you were saying, Ross struck you from behind. Tonight, he has already made a violent statement against Maxwell. What is your response to Chris Ross?"

The name changes the air around Mike.

Not fear.

Not anger exactly.

Irritation.

Mike Best: "Chris Ross is unfortunate."

Melissa tilts her head slightly.

Melissa Cartwright: "Unfortunate?"

Mike Best: "Yeah."

Mike nods once.

Mike Best: "Unfortunately for Chris Ross, he is standing between me and the thing I came here to take."

He looks directly into the camera.

Mike Best: "That makes him collateral damage."

The arena reaction swells faintly from behind the interview area.

Mike Best: "And I know how that sounds. I know Chris Ross has this whole thing where he wants everybody to think he is the storm, the nightmare, the thing you don't survive. I know he wants to walk around talking about Reapers and lists and how a three-count doesn't mean anything unless somebody leaves in an ambulance."

Mike shrugs.

Mike Best: "Cool."

Mike Best: "Very scary."

He gives the camera a flat look.

Mike Best: "I have met scary."

Mike Best: "I have beaten scary."

Mike Best: "I have been scary to people who were better at it than Chris Ross."

Melissa watches carefully as Mike continues.

Mike Best: "Chris had his run."

Mike holds up one finger.

Mike Best: "He was champion."

A second finger.

Mike Best: "He had his moment."

A third.

Mike Best: "He had his chances to get it back."

Mike lowers his hand.

Mike Best: "Multiple times."

He lets that sit.

Mike Best: "And what happened?"

He turns slightly, as if addressing Ross directly through the lens.

Mike Best: "You fumbled it."

A buzz rolls through the building.

Mike Best: "It's over, Chris."

Mike's tone is calm now. Almost dismissive.

Mike Best: "You had your chance. You had your belt. You had your story. And whether you like it or not, that story moved on without you."

He taps his own chest again.

Mike Best: "Now the Son of GOD is here."

Mike steps a little closer to the camera, making sure there is no mistaking where the message is aimed.

Mike Best: "And Mike Best is going to add one more accomplishment to his history."

Melissa lifts the microphone again.

Melissa Cartwright: "So to be clear, your goal in UTA is the UTA Championship?"

Mike turns back to her and smiles.

Mike Best: "Melissa."

He lets out a small laugh.

Mike Best: "Try to keep up."

Mike looks back to the camera one final time.

Mike Best: "Maxwell Jett, Chris Ross, whoever else wants to make themselves important enough to be in my way..."

His expression hardens.

Mike Best: "Understand something."

Mike Best: "I am not here because UTA needed me."

A pause.

Mike Best: "I am here because I decided UTA was worth taking."

Mike gives Melissa a brief nod, then walks out of frame.

Melissa watches him go before turning back toward the camera.

Melissa Cartwright: "Mike Best has made his intentions clear. The UTA Champion is officially in his sights, and Chris Ross may not be done with Mike Best, but Mike Best certainly sounds ready to move past him."

The camera holds for a moment before cutting away.

Live Via Remote

Segment

The broadcast cuts away from ringside.

The screen flickers once.

LIVE VIA REMOTE

The feed opens inside an upscale hotel suite that looks more like a private estate than a room. Marble floors. High ceilings. Dark wood trim. A wall of windows hidden behind heavy curtains. A fireplace burns low, throwing warm light across the room.

In front of the fireplace sits the UTA Champion, Maxwell Jett.

Not on a couch.

Not in a regular chair.

Maxwell sits in a large, throne-like leather chair, one ankle crossed over the opposite knee, the UTA Championship resting across his lap like it was designed specifically to match the room.

Standing behind him, one on each side, are Jacoby Jacobs and Darian Darrington.

Both are dressed in expensive streetwear. Both are trying very hard to look relaxed. Both look far more comfortable in the hotel suite than they have looked anywhere near Chris Ross or Mike Best.

John Phillips: "Well, there is the UTA Champion, Maxwell Jett, joining us live via remote."

Mark Bravo: "Of course he found a room with a fireplace and a chair that looks like it came with a kingdom."

Maxwell smiles into the camera.

Maxwell Jett: "Buenos Aires."

He pauses, almost tasting the words.

Maxwell Jett: "I'm sure you're all very upset that I'm not there tonight."

The crowd inside Luna Park boos as the feed plays on the arena screen.

Maxwell's smile widens.

Maxwell Jett: "Good."

He leans back into the chair, one hand resting across the UTA Championship.

Maxwell Jett: "That means you understand value. That means, despite your circumstances, your taste has not

completely collapsed."

Darian nods behind him.

Darian Darrington: "That's facts."

Jacoby Jacobs: "They know what they missing."

Maxwell holds up one finger, not looking back at either of them.

Maxwell Jett: "Careful. I was doing beautifully."

Jacoby and Darian immediately quiet down.

Maxwell turns back to the camera.

Maxwell Jett: "Now, some of you may be asking yourselves, Maxwell, why are you not in the building tonight? Why is the UTA Champion not standing in front of these people, blessing this show with class, poise, intelligence, and a jawline that could stabilize the global economy?"

He looks genuinely offended by the idea.

Maxwell Jett: "Simple."

Maxwell sits forward slightly.

Maxwell Jett: "Because there are two maniacs walking around this company looking for me."

The crowd reacts at the mention of Mike Best and Chris Ross.

Maxwell Jett: "Chris Ross."

He rolls his eyes.

Maxwell Jett: "Mike Best."

He sighs, disappointed just saying the name.

Maxwell Jett: "Two emotionally unstable men with too much free time, too little impulse control, and an almost inspiring inability to move on with their lives."

Maxwell looks down at the championship, brushing a speck of lint from the faceplate.

Maxwell Jett: "So no. I am not there tonight."

He looks back up.

Maxwell Jett: "Why would I be?"

Another pause.

Maxwell Jett: "I'm not stupid."

He taps the UTA Championship with two fingers.

Maxwell Jett: "And that, ladies and gentlemen, is what separates me from former UTA Champions."

John Phillips: "Maxwell Jett saying he is not in Argentina because of Chris Ross and Mike Best."

Mark Bravo: "He's calling it intelligence. Other people might call it hiding."

Maxwell shifts slightly in the chair, glancing over his shoulder first toward Jacoby, then toward Darian.

The smugness fades into disappointment.

Maxwell Jett: "And speaking of messages..."

Jacoby's smile tightens.

Darian suddenly finds the fireplace very interesting.

Maxwell Jett: "I received the message last week."

He looks directly at Jacoby.

Maxwell Jett: "From Chris Ross."

Then he looks directly at Darian.

Maxwell Jett: "From Mike Best."

Neither man says anything.

Maxwell stares at both of them like a disappointed principal watching two students explain why the school caught fire.

Maxwell Jett: "I have to be honest with you two."

Jacoby nods once, nervous but trying to style it out.

Jacoby Jacobs: "Yeah, yeah, no doubt. Growth moment."

Darian Darrington: "Learning experience."

Maxwell slowly turns back toward the camera.

Maxwell Jett: "I am surrounded by visionaries."

His tone makes it very clear he means the opposite.

He exhales and relaxes back into the throne-like chair again.

Maxwell Jett: "But here is the beautiful part. While Mike Best and Chris Ross are tripping over each other, foaming at the mouth, fighting over which one gets to be embarrassed by the 2016 All or Nothing winner and current UTA Champion..."

Maxwell pats the title.

Maxwell Jett: "I am going to be right here."

The camera widens slightly, showing more of the fireplace, the rich furniture, the expensive table with a glass of water and a folded room-service napkin placed perfectly beside him.

Maxwell Jett: "Relaxing."

He smiles.

Maxwell Jett: "In first class."

Jacoby grins, nodding quickly.

Jacoby Jacobs: "That's what I'm talking about."

Darian Darrington: "Man, this place is crazy comfortable too."

Jacoby Jacobs: "Like, the pillows got pillows."

Maxwell slowly closes his eyes.

He takes one calming breath.

Then opens them.

Maxwell Jett: "No."

Jacoby and Darian both stop smiling.

Maxwell Jett: "I am going to relax."

He points lazily between them without turning around.

Maxwell Jett: "You two have a job to do."

Jacoby blinks.

Jacoby Jacobs: "Ah... come on, Max."

Darian gestures around the suite.

Darian Darrington: "It is nice in this room."

Jacoby Jacobs: "Real nice."

Darian Darrington: "And safe."

That word hangs in the air.

Maxwell slowly turns his head.

He does not stand.

He does not raise his voice.

He simply looks at them.

Maxwell Jett: "Safe."

Darian immediately regrets saying it.

Darian Darrington: "I mean... secure. Like, structurally."

Jacoby Jacobs: "Yeah. Architecture."

Maxwell stares another beat longer.

Maxwell Jett: "Do what you are supposed to do..."

He leans back again, lifting the UTA Championship slightly and setting it more comfortably across his lap.

Maxwell Jett: "...and get back."

Jacoby and Darian exchange a look behind him.

Neither man wants to leave.

Both men know they have to.

Jacoby Jacobs: "Right."

Darian Darrington: "Business."

Jacoby Jacobs: "First Class business."

They begin moving toward the door, slow and reluctant, as if every step away from the fireplace is physically painful.

Darian looks back once at the chair.

Jacoby looks back at the room-service table.

Maxwell does not look back at either of them.

Maxwell Jett: "Gentlemen."

They stop at the door.

Maxwell Jett: "Try not to embarrass me twice."

Jacoby opens the door.

Jacoby Jacobs: "No pressure."

Darian Darrington: "Definitely pressure."

They leave the suite, the door closing behind them with a soft, expensive click.

Maxwell remains seated in front of the fireplace.

Alone now.

Champion still across his lap.

The fire crackles behind him.

He looks directly into the camera and smiles.

Maxwell Jett: "This is what leadership looks like."

He lifts his glass from the side table.

The feed glitches slightly.

LIVE VIA REMOTE

Then the screen cuts back to the arena.

John Phillips: "Maxwell Jett may not be in the building tonight, but he has clearly sent Jacoby Jacobs and Darian Darrington to handle something on his behalf."

Mark Bravo: "And based on their faces, whatever it is, they would rather be handling room service."

The PAS vs. Next Level

Match

The shot returns from the break to Luna Park, where the energy inside the building is still riding high after Bianca Page's victory in the fatal four way. The ring has been cleared. The referee stands near the ropes, speaking with the timekeeper as the crowd waits for the next match of the night.

John Phillips: "Tag team action is up next here in Buenos Aires, and this one has the potential to tell us a lot about the direction of the UTA tag team division."

Mark Bravo: "That division is getting crowded, John. Every team wants to be the next team in line, but tonight we have two teams trying to prove something very different."

John Phillips: "Next Level have already shown UTA what they can do. Fast-paced, coordinated, always looking for that next opening. But tonight they face The PAS, Keanu Fatu and Kimo Fatu, who are looking to make their way into the UTA tag team scene on their own terms."

Mark Bravo: "And that is the danger. A team trying to break in does not just want to win. They want to leave an impression."

The arena lights shift.

A sharp digital sound hits the speakers.

The screen above the entranceway flickers into life, filling with bright neon graphics, pixelated meters, animated status bars, and a bold flashing prompt:

PRESS START

"Press Start" by MDK kicks through the sound system, and the Buenos Aires crowd gives a strong reaction as Theo Sparks bursts through the curtain.

He is all motion immediately.

Player One throws both arms up, bouncing on the balls of his feet, feeding off the noise as a graphic pops on the screen behind him:

PLAYER ONE LOADED

A beat later, Dex Raines steps out beside him.

Where Theo is brightness and motion, Dex is calm and measured. Player Two walks into the light with his eyes already on the ring, expression focused, arms loose at his sides. The screen flashes again.

PLAYER TWO SYNCED

John Phillips: "Here come Theo Sparks and Dex Raines, collectively known as Next Level."

Mark Bravo: "You can always tell which one is which. Theo looks like he just unlocked bonus content. Dex looks like he already read the strategy guide and found three ways to ruin your night."

Theo points out toward the crowd and starts clapping over his head, trying to pull Luna Park into rhythm.

Theo Sparks: "Come on! Let's hear it!"

A chant begins in sections, then spreads.

Crowd: "NEXT! LE-VEL! NEXT! LE-VEL!"

Theo grins wide and taps his chest with one hand before pointing to Dex. Dex gives the crowd a smaller nod, then bumps forearms with Theo at the top of the ramp.

John Phillips: "Next Level have built their reputation on chemistry. Theo Sparks is the hype machine, Dex Raines is the quiet assassin, and together they are one of the more coordinated teams in UTA."

Mark Bravo: "They talk like gamers, but once that bell rings, there is nothing casual about them. Seamless tags, double-team combinations, and they do not waste a lot of motion."

Theo and Dex start down the ramp together. Theo keeps interacting with the fans, reaching out to slap hands along the aisle, while Dex stays half a step behind, scanning the ring, the ropes, and the official like he is already processing the match before it begins.

The screen follows them with a moving HUD-style graphic:

OBJECTIVE: CLEAR THE STAGE

John Phillips: "We saw Next Level come into UTA with confidence, but tonight may be a very different kind of test. The PAS bring size, power, and a completely different energy than Theo and Dex are used to dealing with."

Mark Bravo: "This is where the fun little chants stop mattering. If Keanu and Kimo Fatu get rolling, Theo and Dex may find out this stage has no checkpoints."

At ringside, Theo hops onto the apron first and grips the top rope. Dex steps up beside him, and the two exchange a quick look.

Theo points to himself.

Theo Sparks: "Player One?"

Dex gives the smallest smirk.

Dex Raines: "Synced."

They slingshot into the ring together, Theo rolling through to his feet with energy while Dex lands smoothly and turns immediately toward the entranceway.

Theo moves to the center of the ring and raises both arms, encouraging the chant again.

Crowd: "NEXT! LE-VEL! NEXT! LE-VEL!"

Dex steps to the ropes, stretches one shoulder, and keeps his eyes on the stage. He is not playing to the crowd now. He is waiting.

John Phillips: "Theo Sparks and Dex Raines look ready, but there is a seriousness from Dex already. He understands what is coming next."

Mark Bravo: "Theo can call it a boss fight. Dex can call it a pattern to solve. But The PAS are not coming out here to be part of anybody's game."

Theo finally turns back toward the entranceway as well, the smile still there but toned down now. Dex steps beside him.

The bright graphics fade from the screen.

The lights begin to change again.

Next Level stands in the ring, waiting for Keanu Fatu and Kimo Fatu.

Next Level waits in the ring as the last of their entrance graphics fades away from the screen.

The bright neon is gone.

The playful HUD elements disappear.

The lighting over Luna Park drops lower.

The crowd noise shifts with it, anticipation rolling through the building as Theo Sparks bounces lightly near his corner, still trying to keep loose. Dex Raines remains still beside him, eyes fixed on the entranceway.

John Phillips: "Next Level is in the ring, and now we await Keanu Fatu and Kimo Fatu. The PAS have an opportunity tonight to make a statement in the UTA tag team division."

Mark Bravo: "And they are not coming in here looking for a cute little achievement popup, John. They are coming in here to hit people, hurt people, and make sure everybody remembers them."

A heavy drumbeat hits.

Then another.

Then another.

The entrance screen fills with a stark black-and-white image of crashing waves, cracked stone, and two names stamped across the visual in bold lettering:

KEANU FATU

KIMO FATU

The sound grows heavier, deeper, more physical. Not fast. Not flashy. A march.

The PAS step through the curtain.

Keanu Fatu comes out first, shoulders squared, jaw set, staring directly at the ring with no wasted expression. Kimo Fatu steps out beside him a second later, matching the pace, matching the intensity, both men looking like they did not come to perform for the crowd so much as walk through whatever UTA placed in front of them.

The crowd gives them a loud, uncertain reaction. Some cheers. Some boos. Mostly the sound of a building reacting to two men who immediately change the atmosphere.

John Phillips: "There they are. Keanu Fatu and Kimo Fatu. The PAS."

Mark Bravo: "Look at the difference already. Next Level came out here with lights, energy, chants, all that fun stuff. These two? They look like they heard there was a fight and got offended it started without them."

The PAS do not stop at the top of the ramp.

They do not pose.

They do not acknowledge the camera.

They start walking.

Each step down the ramp is measured, heavy, and direct. Keanu keeps his eyes on Theo Sparks. Kimo's gaze locks onto Dex Raines. There is no confusion about why they are here.

John Phillips: "For a team like The PAS, this is exactly the kind of match that can open doors. You come into UTA, you face a known team like Next Level, and if you win, people are forced to pay attention."

Mark Bravo: "Forget paying attention. If they win the right way, people start moving out of their way."

Inside the ring, Theo's bouncing slows just slightly. He keeps the confidence on his face, but the size and presence of The PAS are impossible to ignore.

Dex steps closer to Theo and says something quietly without taking his eyes off the ramp.

Theo nods.

John Phillips: "That is the challenge for Next Level tonight. They like speed. They like rhythm. They like timing. Against Keanu and Kimo Fatu, they may need to solve a much more physical problem."

Mark Bravo: "And sometimes there is no exploit, John. Sometimes the boss just has too much health."

The PAS reach ringside.

Keanu stops at the floor and looks up at Theo.

Kimo steps around slightly, looking toward Dex.

For a moment, neither member of The PAS enters the ring. They simply stand there, letting the tension gather.

Theo says something from inside the ring, trying to keep the mood loose.

Theo Sparks: "Okay. Big stage. Big health bars. We get it."

Keanu does not react.

Kimo does not react either.

Dex glances at Theo, then subtly shakes his head, as if telling him now may not be the time.

Mark Bravo: "Theo might want to save the voice-chat banter for somebody who cares."

John Phillips: "The PAS are not giving them anything emotionally. No reaction, no wasted movement, no intimidation theatrics beyond the obvious."

Keanu climbs onto the apron first, stepping over the middle rope and into the ring with deliberate ease. Kimo follows through the ropes on the opposite side, and suddenly the ring feels smaller.

The referee immediately moves between the teams, warning both sides to keep it clean before the bell.

Keanu and Kimo ignore the official and keep walking forward.

Theo and Dex stand their ground.

The crowd noise rises.

The four men meet in the center of the ring, face to face.

John Phillips: "And just like that, the temperature has changed."

Mark Bravo: "This is the part where Next Level finds out whether this is a match or a warning."

Theo looks from Keanu to Kimo, then gives a small grin, trying one more time to break the tension.

Theo Sparks: "Welcome to the stage."

Keanu steps closer.

The grin fades just a little.

Dex calmly puts a hand against Theo's chest, easing him back before the first shot can be thrown too early.

The referee points both teams toward their corners.

For a moment, no one moves.

Then Kimo slowly backs away first, never taking his eyes off Dex.

Keanu follows, still staring down Theo as The PAS retreat to their corner.

Next Level backs into the opposite corner, Theo rolling his shoulders now, Dex speaking quietly into his ear.

John Phillips: "Keanu Fatu and Kimo Fatu have arrived, and this crowd can feel what may be coming."

Mark Bravo: "Next Level wanted a boss fight. They may have just loaded into one they cannot skip."

The referee checks with both teams.

Keanu stays in for The PAS.

Theo Sparks steps through the ropes to the apron, leaving Dex Raines to start for Next Level.

The bell is moments away.

DING DING DING!

The bell rings and Dex Raines steps forward from the Next Level corner, his eyes fixed on Keanu Fatu.

Keanu does not rush him.

He stands in the center of the ring, shoulders squared, hands low, almost daring Dex to be the first one to move.

John Phillips: "Dex Raines starting for Next Level. Keanu Fatu starting for The PAS."

Mark Bravo: "And look at Keanu. No wasted motion. No big talk. He is just standing there like a wall with fists."

Dex circles slowly, staying light on his feet. He reaches out once, testing the distance, then pulls back before Keanu can grab him.

Keanu turns with him, patient.

Theo Sparks leans over the ropes from the apron, already clapping his hands to build rhythm.

Theo Sparks: "Stay mobile, Dex! No lag!"

Dex gives a short nod, then steps in for a quick low kick to Keanu's thigh.

The kick lands.

Keanu looks down at his leg.

Then back at Dex.

Nothing changes.

Mark Bravo: "That kick had about as much effect as a software update nobody asked for."

John Phillips: "Dex Raines is trying to test the base early. Against a man like Keanu Fatu, movement may be everything."

Dex hits another low kick, then quickly shifts away before Keanu can reach him. Keanu takes one step forward. Dex circles faster now, looking for an angle.

He darts in again, this time catching Keanu with a sharp forearm to the side of the head.

Keanu absorbs it.

Dex fires a second.

Keanu absorbs that too.

Dex backs off before the third.

Keanu suddenly surges forward.

Dex ducks under a swinging arm and hits the ropes. He rebounds fast, looking for speed, but Keanu turns and catches him with a heavy shoulder block.

Dex hits the mat hard.

John Phillips: "And there is the power of Keanu Fatu!"

Mark Bravo: "Dex found the wall. The wall won."

Dex rolls quickly toward his corner, not hurt badly, but clearly understanding the difference in impact. Theo reaches down, offering a hand, but Dex waves him off and gets back to his feet.

Keanu remains in the center of the ring.

No taunt.

No celebration.

Just waiting.

John Phillips: "Dex is usually the calm one for Next Level, but even he has to know the first exchange went The PAS' way."

Mark Bravo: "This is where Next Level has to adjust. You cannot trade impact with these men. You have to make them

miss."

Dex steps forward again, this time feinting high before kicking low. Keanu reaches for him, but Dex slips away and tags Theo Sparks.

Theo springs over the top rope into the ring, landing with energy as the crowd cheers.

John Phillips: "Here comes Theo Sparks, Player One entering the match."

Theo Sparks: "Okay, big guy. New strategy."

Theo circles Keanu faster than Dex did, clapping once, then twice, trying to get the crowd back into the Next Level rhythm.

Crowd: "NEXT! LE-VEL! NEXT! LE-VEL!"

Theo rushes in with a quick kick to Keanu's leg, then another, then a fast forearm before darting back.

Keanu turns toward him.

Theo points to his own head.

Theo Sparks: "Pattern recognition, bro."

Keanu steps forward.

Theo dodges right.

Keanu steps again.

Theo dodges left.

Then Theo hits the ropes, comes back, and throws himself into a running dropkick that catches Keanu square in the chest.

Keanu stumbles back one step.

The crowd reacts.

Theo pops back up, eyes bright.

Theo Sparks: "Double Tap!"

Theo hits the ropes again and fires off a second running dropkick.

This one knocks Keanu back another step, closer to the PAS corner.

John Phillips: "Theo Sparks with the Double Tap dropkick combo, and he actually moved Keanu Fatu!"

Mark Bravo: "Moved him, yes. Dropped him, no. That is an important difference."

Theo gets up quickly and charges again, looking for a third burst of offense.

Keanu catches him.

Both hands wrap around Theo's torso in mid-run.

Theo's eyes go wide.

Theo Sparks: "Uh oh."

Keanu turns and drives Theo backward into the PAS corner with a thunderous impact.

The air leaves Theo's body.

Kimo Fatu reaches over the ropes and tags himself in.

John Phillips: "Tag made to Kimo Fatu!"

Keanu steps aside just enough for Kimo to enter, and the two men immediately hammer Theo with alternating body shots in the corner.

The referee starts the count.

Referee: "ONE! TWO! THREE!"

Keanu exits at four, leaving Kimo in control as Theo slumps against the buckles.

Mark Bravo: "That is what The PAS needed. Cut the ring in half, take the speed away, make Theo carry the weight of this match on his ribs."

John Phillips: "And just like that, Next Level's quick start is halted."

Kimo grabs Theo by the wrist and pulls him out of the corner. Theo tries to throw a forearm, but Kimo absorbs it and answers with one heavy shot to the chest.

Theo drops to one knee, clutching his sternum.

Kimo pulls him back up and sends him hard into the ropes.

Theo rebounds.

Kimo lowers his shoulder and launches him with a back body drop.

Theo hits the canvas and arches in pain.

John Phillips: "Huge back body drop by Kimo Fatu!"

Mark Bravo: "That was not a counter. That was air traffic control."

Dex Raines reaches from the Next Level corner, calling to Theo.

Dex Raines: "Theo! Crawl!"

Theo rolls to his stomach and starts moving, but Kimo steps between him and Dex. He looks down at Theo, then toward Dex with a cold stare.

Dex does not react emotionally. He just studies the position, one hand extended.

John Phillips: "Kimo Fatu cutting off the tag. This is basic tag team wrestling, but The PAS are executing it with force."

Mark Bravo: "That is how you make your way into a tag division. You do not ask for room. You take the ring and make the other team live in the corner you choose."

Kimo pulls Theo up again and drags him back toward the PAS corner. Keanu reaches out.

Tag.

Keanu steps in.

Kimo holds Theo in place as Keanu drives a hard shot into the midsection, folding Theo forward again before Kimo exits.

John Phillips: "Quick tag from The PAS, keeping Theo isolated."

Keanu grabs Theo by the back of the head and pulls him upright. Theo tries to fire back with a quick chop to the chest.

Keanu looks at him.

Theo fires another.

Keanu's expression barely shifts.

Theo winds up for a third.

Keanu cuts him off with a headbutt.

Theo drops backward to the mat.

Mark Bravo: "Hard reset."

John Phillips: "Theo Sparks is in serious trouble here, and Dex Raines can only watch from the corner."

Keanu covers Theo, pressing one forearm across his face.

Referee: "ONE!"

Referee: "TWO!"

Theo kicks out.

Keanu rises without frustration. He grabs Theo by the ankle and drags him back toward the PAS corner again.

Dex leans farther over the ropes, calling out.

Dex Raines: "Theo, you need distance!"

Theo hears him. He twists suddenly, rolling through and kicking Keanu away with both feet.

Keanu stumbles back one step.

Theo scrambles toward his corner.

The crowd rises with him.

Keanu lunges and grabs Theo by the ankle.

Theo stretches out, fingertips inches from Dex.

Dex reaches as far as he can.

John Phillips: "Theo is close! He is almost there!"

Keanu pulls Theo backward.

Theo flips over onto his back and kicks upward, catching Keanu in the jaw with an enzuigiri from the mat.

Keanu releases the ankle and staggers.

Theo dives.

Tag.

Dex Raines enters fast.

John Phillips: "Tag made! Here comes Dex Raines!"

Dex springboards in with a forearm that catches Keanu across the jaw, knocking him back. Kimo steps through the ropes, but Dex sees him coming and ducks a clothesline, hitting the opposite ropes.

Dex rebounds and connects with a sharp dropkick to Kimo's knee, forcing him down to one leg.

Mark Bravo: "Dex has to move fast here. This is the window."

Keanu charges back in, but Dex sidesteps and sends him shoulder-first into the corner.

Theo, still recovering on the apron, sees the opening and slaps Dex on the shoulder.

Tag.

John Phillips: "Quick tag back to Theo!"

Dex drops low behind Keanu in the corner as Theo climbs through and rushes forward.

Theo jumps off Dex's back and crashes into Keanu with a boosted corner splash.

Keanu staggers out of the corner.

Dex follows immediately, catching Keanu with a cutter as Theo rolls out of the impact path.

John Phillips: "Next Level with the tandem offense!"

Mark Bravo: "There it is. Speed. Timing. Two-man execution."

Theo covers Keanu.

Referee: "ONE!"

Referee: "TWO!"

Kimo Fatu breaks it up with a heavy stomp to Theo's back.

Dex immediately rushes Kimo, but Kimo shoves him away with both hands, sending Dex backward into the ropes.

Dex rebounds, ducks another big swing, and clips Kimo with a quick kick to the thigh.

Kimo turns toward him.

Dex backs up quickly, hands raised, trying to keep distance.

John Phillips: "Next Level got close there, but Kimo Fatu shuts down the cover."

Mark Bravo: "The PAS are not smooth yet, John. But they are hard to move, hard to keep down, and harder to survive when they get their hands on you."

The referee starts forcing Dex and Kimo apart, trying to restore order.

Theo rolls toward his corner, breathing hard. Keanu is down near the center, but already beginning to push up.

Kimo backs through the ropes to the apron, eyes still locked on Dex.

Dex steps back outside as well, one hand extended for Theo.

The match resets, but the pace has changed.

John Phillips: "This has become exactly the kind of contrast we expected. Next Level trying to accelerate. The PAS trying to drag the match into impact and control."

Mark Bravo: "And right now, neither team has fully solved the other."

Theo Sparks pulls himself up in the Next Level corner, one hand on the top rope, the other pressed against his ribs. Dex Raines stands on the apron beside him, calm but alert, eyes moving between Theo, Keanu Fatu, and Kimo Fatu.

Across the ring, Keanu rises to one knee, jaw tight from the cutter, but still dangerous. Kimo stands on the PAS apron, one hand gripping the tag rope, his expression unchanged.

John Phillips: "Next Level had their best burst of offense so far, but they could not keep Keanu Fatu down."

Mark Bravo: "That is the problem with The PAS. You hit them with something clean, they feel it, they go down, and then they just start getting back up like you offended them."

Theo shakes out his arms, trying to rally. Keanu gets fully vertical and turns toward him.

Theo looks over his shoulder at Dex.

Theo Sparks: "Okay. New patch."

Dex nods once.

Theo steps forward and Keanu does the same. Theo moves first, firing a quick kick to the thigh, then another to the opposite leg. Keanu reaches for him, but Theo slips under the grab and tags Dex on the way through.

Dex steps in quickly as Theo hits the ropes.

Keanu turns just as Theo comes back with a dropkick to the knee.

Keanu drops down to one leg.

Dex follows with a running knee strike to the side of the head.

Keanu staggers, falling back toward the ropes but not going down.

John Phillips: "Next Level attacking the base, then going high! That may be the strategy!"

Mark Bravo: "It better be, because trying to knock these guys over from the top down has not worked."

Dex grabs Keanu by the wrist and tries to whip him across the ring.

Keanu plants his feet.

Dex pulls again.

Keanu does not move.

Instead, Keanu yanks Dex forward with one violent pull and catches him coming in with a short lariat that turns Dex inside out.

The crowd groans at the impact.

John Phillips: "Oh! Dex Raines just got folded by Keanu Fatu!"

Mark Bravo: "That is not a lariat, John. That is an eviction notice."

Keanu drops to one knee for a second, still feeling the damage to his legs, then crawls toward his corner. Kimo reaches out.

Tag.

Kimo Fatu steps through the ropes while Dex rolls onto his side, stunned.

Theo reaches out from the Next Level corner, shouting for Dex to move.

Theo Sparks: "Dex! Reset! Reset!"

Kimo closes the distance first.

He grabs Dex by the back of the head and pulls him up, then drives him backward into the PAS corner. Keanu steps out to the apron, but keeps one arm over the top rope as Kimo tags him right back in.

John Phillips: "Another tag from The PAS. They are starting to settle into their rhythm now."

Kimo holds Dex in place as Keanu enters and both members of The PAS grab Dex by an arm.

They send him hard into the ropes.

Dex rebounds.

Double shoulder block.

Dex crashes to the canvas, bouncing once before rolling to his stomach.

Mark Bravo: "That is a human roadblock times two."

John Phillips: "And Dex Raines may be the one isolated now."

Keanu covers Dex with a forearm pressed across the jaw.

Referee: "ONE!"

Referee: "TWO!"

Dex kicks out.

Keanu immediately clamps down on a heavy side headlock, not letting Dex create distance. Dex tries to turn his hips, looking for space, but Keanu uses his weight to flatten him back down.

John Phillips: "Keanu grounding Dex Raines now. This is not flashy, but it is effective."

Mark Bravo: "And it is smart. Next Level wants timing. They want tags. They want pace. Keanu is saying no to all of that."

Theo leans over the top rope, one hand extended as the crowd begins clapping for Dex.

Crowd: "NEXT! LE-VEL! NEXT! LE-VEL!"

Dex starts working up to one knee, one hand pressed against Keanu's side, the other trying to wedge under the forearm at his chin.

Keanu tightens the hold.

Dex gets to his feet anyway.

He drives a short elbow into Keanu's ribs.

Then another.

Keanu loosens just enough.

Dex hits the ropes.

Keanu swings for another lariat.

Dex ducks.

Dex rebounds again and leaps, catching Keanu with a springboard-style crossbody off the middle rope.

Keanu stumbles backward and finally goes down with Dex landing across him.

Referee: "ONE!"

Referee: "TWO!"

Keanu powers out, throwing Dex off with authority.

Dex rolls through the landing and immediately lunges toward his corner.

Theo reaches.

Kimo enters illegally, charging across the ring.

The referee steps toward him, shouting for him to get back out.

Dex tags Theo, but the referee's attention is on Kimo.

John Phillips: "Tag made! Dex got Theo!"

Theo vaults into the ring and starts toward Keanu, but the referee turns back and waves it off, pointing to his own eyes and then to Kimo.

John Phillips: "Oh, come on! The referee did not see it!"

Mark Bravo: "Kimo stepped in at the perfect time. Intentional or not, that just saved The PAS from a momentum swing."

Theo argues from inside the ring, pointing to Dex and then to himself.

Theo Sparks: "I tagged! That was a clean input!"

The referee orders Theo back out.

Theo hesitates, frustrated, then steps back through the ropes.

As the referee is getting Theo out, Keanu drags Dex back toward the PAS corner by the ankle.

Kimo reaches down and tags himself in.

John Phillips: "Dex Raines had the tag, but it will not count, and now The PAS are right back in control."

Mark Bravo: "Welcome to tag team wrestling. Sometimes the system lags."

Kimo enters and immediately drops a heavy elbow across Dex's back. Dex arches and grabs at the mat, trying to crawl again, but Kimo pulls him upright and locks both arms around his waist.

Dex tries to widen his base.

Kimo lifts.

Big belly-to-belly suplex.

Dex hits hard near the center of the ring.

John Phillips: "Kimo Fatu with the belly-to-belly, and Dex is down!"

Kimo covers.

Referee: "ONE!"

Referee: "TWO!"

Theo breaks it up, diving in with a double axe handle to Kimo's back.

Kimo rolls off Dex and rises to one knee, turning slowly toward Theo.

Theo freezes for half a breath.

Theo Sparks: "Worth it?"

Keanu steps through the ropes, but the referee intercepts him. Theo backs away, hands up, retreating toward his corner before the official can physically force him out.

Mark Bravo: "Theo saved the match, but he may have just put a target on himself."

John Phillips: "He did what he had to do. Dex was not kicking out of too many more of those."

Kimo pulls Dex up again and sends him into the PAS corner. Dex hits the buckles hard and drops to a seated position.

Kimo tags Keanu.

Keanu comes in, and The PAS each take an arm, pulling Dex out of the corner before launching him with a double hip toss.

Dex lands hard.

Keanu follows with a running senton across Dex's chest.

Dex's legs kick off the mat from the impact.

John Phillips: "Keanu Fatu crushing Dex Raines with that senton!"

Mark Bravo: "Next Level is getting flattened right now."

Keanu covers.

Referee: "ONE!"

Referee: "TWO!"

Dex barely gets a shoulder up.

Theo slaps the top turnbuckle from the corner, trying to pull the crowd back in.

Theo Sparks: "Come on, Dex! You're not deleted! You're not deleted!"

Dex rolls to his side, gasping. Keanu sits up and looks across the ring at Theo, then reaches down and grabs Dex by the head.

Keanu pulls Dex up slowly, giving Theo a clear look at his partner being dismantled.

Dex suddenly fires a forearm into Keanu's ribs.

Keanu answers with one clubbing shot across the back.

Dex drops to a knee.

Keanu grabs him by the wrist and sends him toward the ropes.

Dex reverses at the last second, sending Keanu in instead.

Keanu rebounds.

Dex drops flat to the mat.

Keanu steps over him and hits the opposite ropes.

Dex pops up on the return and catches Keanu with the Code Breaker.

John Phillips: "Debug Error! Dex Raines caught Keanu!"

Keanu snaps backward and drops to the mat.

Dex lands hard too, unable to immediately follow up.

Mark Bravo: "That was the counter he needed. Now he has to make the tag."

Both men are down.

Theo is nearly climbing through the ropes, arm stretched as far as it can go.

Kimo leans over from the PAS corner, hand out for Keanu.

The crowd rises with the crawl.

John Phillips: "Dex Raines desperately needs Theo Sparks!"

Dex crawls.

Keanu crawls.

Both corners are reaching.

Keanu tags Kimo.

Dex tags Theo.

John Phillips: "Tags on both sides!"

Theo comes in fast, ducking under Kimo's first swing and hitting the ropes.

He comes back with a running dropkick to Kimo's chest.

Kimo staggers.

Theo pops up and hits the ropes again.

Second dropkick.

Kimo staggers back farther.

The crowd comes alive.

Theo Sparks: "Double Tap!"

Theo runs again, but Kimo catches him on the third attempt.

Theo twists in midair, slipping behind Kimo before he can be planted. Theo shoves Kimo forward into a rising Dex, who catches Kimo with a forearm from the apron.

Kimo turns around into Theo's springboard crossbody.

This time Theo hooks both legs.

Referee: "ONE!"

Referee: "TWO!"

Kimo kicks out hard, throwing Theo backward.

John Phillips: "Theo Sparks almost had Kimo Fatu!"

Mark Bravo: "Almost. And almost is dangerous when you land near those hands."

Theo rolls through and tags Dex again.

Dex comes in as Theo stays active. Together, they pull Kimo up, both men firing alternating forearms to keep him staggered.

Dex points toward the corner.

Theo nods.

John Phillips: "Next Level may be thinking Power-Up Sequence!"

The crowd rises as Theo moves into position, trying to set Kimo up while Dex waits to finish.

Keanu Fatu suddenly re-enters and runs through Theo with a brutal shoulder tackle.

Theo spills through the ropes and crashes to the outside.

John Phillips: "Keanu Fatu wipes out Theo!"

Dex turns toward Keanu, but Kimo grabs him from behind.

Dex throws a back elbow, then another, breaking free before Kimo can lock him down.

Keanu charges.

Dex ducks, pulling the top rope down.

Keanu tumbles over the top rope to the floor, landing near Theo.

Mark Bravo: "Dex Raines just dumped Keanu!"

Dex turns back around.

Kimo is waiting.

Kimo rushes forward and crushes Dex with a running body block.

Dex drops hard.

John Phillips: "Kimo Fatu cuts Dex in half!"

Kimo pulls Dex up by the wrist and drags him toward the PAS corner, but Keanu is still on the floor. There is no tag available.

Kimo looks down at Keanu, then back at Dex.

He does not wait.

Kimo pulls Dex in, hoists him up, and drives him down with a heavy side slam near the center of the ring.

Kimo covers.

Referee: "ONE!"

Referee: "TWO!"

Theo Sparks dives back in and breaks the count just in time.

Theo immediately rolls away, clutching his ribs after the save.

John Phillips: "Theo Sparks saves the match again!"

Mark Bravo: "And look at Kimo's face. I do not think he liked that."

Kimo rises slowly.

Theo realizes it.

Dex is still down.

Keanu is pulling himself back onto the apron.

Kimo turns toward Theo, and the bright confidence of Player One fades into a more serious look.

Theo pushes himself up.

Theo Sparks: "Okay."

Kimo steps forward.

Theo Sparks: "Boss phase two."

Theo throws a forearm.

Kimo absorbs it.

Theo throws another.

Kimo absorbs that too.

Theo hits the ropes, but Keanu reaches from the apron and catches him with a blind shot to the back.

Theo stumbles forward.

Kimo catches him.

The mood changes instantly.

John Phillips: "Theo Sparks may be in the wrong place at the wrong time!"

Keanu tags himself in as Kimo holds Theo in place.

Dex reaches from the mat, trying to get up, but he is still too hurt.

Mark Bravo: "The PAS have Theo trapped."

Kimo drives a knee into Theo's midsection, then shoves him forward into Keanu.

Keanu catches Theo and plants him with a thunderous Samoan drop.

Theo rolls to his side, clutching his ribs and back.

Keanu does not cover.

He looks to Kimo.

Kimo nods.

John Phillips: "The PAS are not done."

Mark Bravo: "No, John. They are making the statement now."

Keanu drags Theo toward the center of the ring while Kimo steps through the ropes again. Dex pushes himself up, sees what is happening, and lunges forward.

Kimo intercepts him, grabbing Dex and throwing him shoulder-first into the ring post through the corner.

Dex drops through the ropes to the floor.

John Phillips: "Dex Raines driven into the post! Theo is alone!"

Kimo turns back.

Keanu pulls Theo up.

The PAS stand on either side of Player One.

The crowd noise swells, mixed with concern and anticipation.

The PAS hoist Theo together and drive him down with a devastating double-team slam in the center of the ring.

The impact echoes through Luna Park.

John Phillips: "Oh my God! Theo Sparks planted by The PAS!"

Mark Bravo: "That is the kind of impact people remember!"

Kimo exits as Keanu drops into the cover, pressing both hands across Theo's chest.

Referee: "ONE!"

Dex is still down outside.

Referee: "TWO!"

Theo barely moves, one hand twitching against the mat.

Referee: "THREE!"

DING DING DING!

The bell rings as Keanu rises slowly from the cover.

Ring Announcer: "Here are your winners... The PAS!"

Kimo steps back into the ring and joins Keanu in the center. The two men stand over Theo Sparks, breathing hard, but composed. There is no wild celebration. No shock. No disbelief.

Just a win.

Just a message.

John Phillips: "Keanu Fatu and Kimo Fatu have defeated Next Level, and they did it by overwhelming one of UTA's quicker, more coordinated teams."

Mark Bravo: "That was not a perfect match, John. The PAS had to fight through Next Level's speed, their timing, their combinations. But when it mattered, they crushed them."

Dex Raines pulls himself up on the floor, one hand on the apron, eyes locked on Theo in the ring. He looks frustrated, hurt, and aware that he could not get there in time.

Theo rolls to his side, breathing hard, clutching his ribs as the referee checks on him.

Keanu and Kimo step toward the ropes and look out over Luna Park.

The crowd gives them a reaction that is louder now than when they entered. Not entirely cheers. Not entirely boos.

Recognition.

John Phillips: "The PAS came into this match looking to make their way into the UTA tag team scene, and this was a powerful first step."

Mark Bravo: "Every team in the division just got put on notice. If Keanu and Kimo Fatu get their hands on you, your game plan becomes survival."

The PAS exit the ring together, walking past Dex without a second look. Dex stares after them, jaw tight, then rolls into the ring to check on Theo.

On the ramp, Keanu and Kimo finally stop and turn back toward the ring.

Next Level is regrouping inside.

The PAS look at them for one final moment.

Then they continue up the ramp, leaving behind the clear message that they have arrived in the UTA tag team division on their own terms.

The Method Does Not Fail

Segment

The broadcast cuts away from ringside.

Black screen.

A slow inhale.

Then the faint hum of fluorescent lights rises underneath the noise of the arena.

White text fades in across the screen.

THE CREED METHOD

Underneath it, three words appear one at a time.

BREAK.

BEND.

BUILD.

The screen fades into a quiet room somewhere inside Luna Park.

It is not quite a locker room. Not quite a classroom. Not quite a chapel.

A whiteboard stands against one wall. Folding chairs form a small half-circle. The lighting is too clean. Too bright. Too deliberate. On the board, written in neat black marker, are the words:

THE METHOD DOES NOT FAIL.

Underneath:

THE UNREADY RESIST IT.

Kairo Bey sits in one of the chairs, forward on his knees, elbows resting against his thighs, hands clasped together. He is not bouncing with his usual neon rhythm tonight. There is still electricity in him, but it is contained. Focused. Waiting for the switch to flip.

Lindsey Lothario stands near the wall, arms folded, posture composed. There is still a trace of the old spotlight in the eyes, but the body language is different now. Colder. Straighter. Less performance. More purpose.

Then Eli Creed steps into frame.

White shirt. Sleeves rolled up. Hands folded calmly in front of him.

He smiles like a man arriving to help.

Eli Creed: "My name is Eli Creed, and I'm here to help you."

He lets the words settle.

Kairo looks up.

Lindsey does not move.

Eli Creed: "That sentence makes people uncomfortable."

Eli slowly walks toward the whiteboard.

Eli Creed: "Not because it is threatening."

He turns to face them.

Eli Creed: "Because somewhere inside themselves, they understand that help requires admission."

A beat.

Eli Creed: "Admission requires humility."

Another beat.

Eli Creed: "And humility feels too much like defeat to people who have spent their whole lives mistaking noise for

strength."

Lindsey's eyes shift slightly toward Kairo, then back to Eli.

Eli Creed: "All or Nothing was not a failure."

Kairo's jaw tightens.

Eli notices it immediately.

Eli Creed: "There it is."

He points gently toward Kairo.

Eli Creed: "That little flicker in the face. The small rebellion before the lesson can enter."

Kairo exhales through his nose.

Kairo Bey: "I came out of All or Nothing without gold."

Eli nods as if Kairo has just answered correctly.

Eli Creed: "Yes."

Eli steps closer.

Eli Creed: "And you are still here."

Kairo looks up at him.

Eli Creed: "That is the part most people miss."

Eli turns toward Lindsey.

Eli Creed: "Lindsey understands this now."

Lindsey lifts their chin slightly, not preening, not posing, simply acknowledging the statement.

Eli Creed: "There was a time when Lindsey believed the spotlight was proof."

Lindsey's expression barely changes, but the sentence lands.

Eli Creed: "The entrance. The sound. The color. The reaction. The need to be seen so loudly that nobody could ask what was left when the music stopped."

Eli smiles softly.

Eli Creed: "Then came the break."

Lindsey looks down for half a second.

When they look back up, their eyes are harder.

Eli Creed: "And after the break came the bend."

Eli gestures toward Lindsey now, presenting them not as a person, but as evidence.

Eli Creed: "And after the bend..."

He pauses.

Eli Creed: "...the build."

Lindsey finally speaks, their voice calm and sharpened.

Lindsey Lothario: "The part they never understand is that losing the old version does not mean losing yourself."

Kairo turns toward Lindsey.

Lindsey Lothario: "It means you stop dragging dead weight into the fight."

Eli's smile grows, proud but controlled.

Eli Creed: "Very good."

He turns back to Kairo.

Eli Creed: "All or Nothing did not crown you."

Kairo's eyes narrow slightly.

Eli Creed: "Good."

Kairo sits back a little, studying Eli now.

Eli Creed: "Because crowns can be misleading. A crown can convince a man he has arrived when all he has done is survive the noise long enough for someone to place metal on his head."

Eli steps toward the monitor in the room.

It shows a still image from All or Nothing. Bodies everywhere. Chaos. Opportunity. The kind of match that changes careers and destroys plans at the same time.

Eli Creed: "All or Nothing was not the destination."

He looks at Kairo through the reflection on the screen.

Eli Creed: "It was the diagnostic."

Kairo gives a short, humorless laugh.

Kairo Bey: "That is one way to put it."

Eli turns back toward him.

Eli Creed: "It revealed something."

Kairo says nothing.

Eli Creed: "You move beautifully, Kairo."

Kairo's expression shifts, not expecting that.

Eli Creed: "Angles. Timing. Rhythm. You count the match in beats while everyone else hears only impact. That is a gift."

Eli takes one slow step closer.

Eli Creed: "But gifts without discipline become habits."

A beat.

Eli Creed: "Habits become assumptions."

Another beat.

Eli Creed: "And assumptions become the reason your hand closes around air instead of championship gold."

Kairo leans back, the line hitting him clean.

Kairo Bey: "So what is the lesson?"

Eli smiles.

Eli Creed: "There he is."

Eli walks to the whiteboard and writes one word under the others.

PURPOSE.

Eli Creed: "The Method works because it does not worship talent."

He underlines the word once.

Eli Creed: "Talent is easy to praise. Easy to market. Easy to sell to people who want to believe the gifted are special because it excuses the rest of them from changing."

Eli turns.

Eli Creed: "The Method does not ask whether you are gifted."

He looks first at Lindsey.

Eli Creed: "Lindsey was gifted."

Then at Kairo.

Eli Creed: "You are gifted."

Eli taps the board.

Eli Creed: "The Method asks whether the gift can survive pressure."

Lindsey steps away from the wall now, moving closer to Kairo.

Lindsey Lothario: "All or Nothing was pressure."

Kairo's eyes remain forward.

Lindsey Lothario: "Tonight is pressure with a name."

Eli nods.

Eli Creed: "Yoshii."

The name hangs in the room.

The monitor changes.

Now it shows Yoshii with the United States Championship.

Kairo's attention locks onto the screen immediately.

Eli Creed: "Tonight, you have a chance to win the United States Championship."

Kairo slowly stands.

Eli Creed: "And this is where lesser people lie to you."

Eli's voice remains gentle.

Eli Creed: "They tell you this is your moment."

He takes one step closer.

Eli Creed: "They tell you this is destiny."

Another step.

Eli Creed: "They tell you to switch on the spotlight and become what the crowd already believes you are."

Kairo's mouth tightens at his own philosophy being turned back on him.

Eli Creed: "But I am not here to flatter you."

Eli's smile is small. Almost kind.

Eli Creed: "I am here to help you."

Lindsey watches Kairo closely, not interrupting now.

Eli Creed: "Yoshii is not a moment."

He points at the monitor.

Eli Creed: "Yoshii is a wall."

A beat.

Eli Creed: "And when men like you see walls, Kairo, your first instinct is to fly over them."

Kairo's eyes remain on the screen.

Eli Creed: "That is beautiful."

Eli's tone sharpens by the smallest amount.

Eli Creed: "It is also incomplete."

Kairo finally looks at him.

Kairo Bey: "Incomplete."

Eli Creed: "Yes."

Eli steps between Kairo and the monitor, forcing Kairo to look at him instead of the title.

Eli Creed: "You do not beat Yoshii by making the crowd gasp."

A beat.

Eli Creed: "You beat him by making him miss."

Kairo listens.

Eli Creed: "You beat him by making every movement mean something."

Eli taps two fingers against his own temple.

Eli Creed: "No wasted steps."

He taps his chest.

Eli Creed: "No emotional debts."

He lowers his hand.

Eli Creed: "No chasing applause when championship gold is waiting for quiet execution."

Kairo slowly nods, not fully surrendering to the words, but absorbing them.

Kairo Bey: "So All or Nothing was the break."

Eli smiles.

Eli Creed: "Yes."

Kairo Bey: "And tonight?"

Eli lets the silence stretch.

Eli Creed: "Tonight is where you prove whether you can bend without snapping back into old instinct."

Lindsey steps in beside Eli now.

Lindsey Lothario: "Do not give Yoshii the match he expects."

Kairo looks at Lindsey.

Lindsey Lothario: "Do not perform at him."

A flicker of the old Lindsey appears in the smallest smirk, then vanishes.

Lindsey Lothario: "Hurt him with timing."

Kairo exhales, and for the first time in the segment, his rhythm starts to return.

Not the bouncing, bright rhythm of the Neon Ace playing to the building.

Something quieter.

Something counted under the breath.

Kairo Bey: "Eight beats."

Eli tilts his head slightly.

Kairo Bey: "That is how I count my sequences."

He looks at the monitor again.

Kairo Bey: "Rope-walk. Springboard. Landing. Turn. Strike. Reset."

His eyes narrow.

Kairo Bey: "Eight beats."

Eli looks pleased.

Eli Creed: "Then tonight, do not count for the crowd."

He steps closer.

Eli Creed: "Count for the championship."

Kairo's face hardens into focus.

Eli Creed: "All or Nothing taught you that movement alone is not enough."

Eli gestures toward Lindsey.

Eli Creed: "Lindsey learned that identity without discipline can be turned against you."

Then back to Kairo.

Eli Creed: "You must learn that electricity without direction burns out before it becomes light."

Kairo looks down briefly.

Then he smiles.

Small.

Confident.

Not flashy.

Kairo Bey: "I do not chase the spotlight."

Eli watches him.

Kairo Bey: "I switch it on."

Eli's smile stays still.

Eli Creed: "No."

Kairo's smile fades slightly.

Lindsey looks toward Eli.

Eli Creed: "Tonight, you do not switch it on."

He steps back, allowing Kairo to see Yoshii on the monitor again.

Eli Creed: "Tonight, you make Yoshii stand in the dark."

The room falls silent.

Kairo stares at the image of the United States Champion.

Lindsey remains still beside him.

Eli folds his hands in front of him.

Eli Creed: "Not coming out of All or Nothing with a championship was not the end of the lesson."

He looks directly into the camera now, that eerie, comforting smile returning.

Eli Creed: "It was the lesson beginning."

A beat.

Eli Creed: "Break."

Lindsey lowers their head slightly.

Eli Creed: "Bend."

Kairo keeps his eyes on Yoshii.

Eli Creed: "Build."

Eli turns back to Kairo.

Eli Creed: "And if the Method has truly taken root..."

The camera pushes in on Kairo's face as the light from the monitor reflects across his eyes.

Eli Creed: "...then tonight, the United States Championship is not an opportunity."

Kairo finally turns away from the screen.

He looks at Eli.

Then at Lindsey.

Then back toward the unseen arena.

Eli Creed: "It is evidence."

Kairo nods once.

Lindsey steps beside him.

Eli stands behind them both, smiling softly, hands folded, the whiteboard visible over his shoulder.

THE METHOD DOES NOT FAIL.

The camera holds on those words.

Then fades to black.

Eli Creed: "Stay awakened."

Room Service

Segment

The broadcast cuts away from ringside again.

The screen flickers.

LIVE VIA REMOTE

The feed returns to the upscale hotel suite.

The fireplace still burns low, casting warm orange light across the marble floor and dark wood walls. The room is quieter now without Jacoby Jacobs and Darian Darrington hovering behind the UTA Champion.

Maxwell Jett sits beside the fireplace, no longer centered in the throne-like chair, but settled into a smaller leather seat with the UTA Championship placed carefully on the table beside him.

He is on his phone.

Annoyed.

Deeply annoyed.

Maxwell Jett: "No. No, no, no. I don't care how many blocks you have to walk."

He pauses, listening.

His eyes narrow.

Maxwell Jett: "I told you... I will only accept cheesecake from there."

Another pause.

Maxwell slowly sits up straighter, offended by whatever answer he has just received.

Maxwell Jett: "That's final."

He ends the call and lowers the phone into his lap.

For a moment, all that can be heard is the faint crackle of the fireplace.

Then—

A sound.

Not loud.

Not dramatic.

Just enough.

Something shifting somewhere deeper inside the suite.

Maxwell freezes.

The smugness disappears so quickly it almost feels like the camera caught something it was not supposed to see.

He slowly sets the phone down on the table beside the UTA Championship.

His eyes move toward the hallway that leads farther into the hotel room.

Maxwell Jett: "Hello?"

No answer.

Maxwell waits.

The fire pops softly behind him.

He stands.

Not fast.

Carefully.

Like a man trying very hard to convince himself he is only being cautious, not scared.

John Phillips: "Maxwell Jett heard something in that suite."

Mark Bravo: "That is the sound of a man remembering Chris Ross and Mike Best exist."

Maxwell takes one step away from the fireplace.

Then another.

The camera follows him from behind as he moves through the suite, leaving the championship on the table by the fire.

He glances toward the main door first.

Still locked.

He checks the handle anyway.

It does not move.

Maxwell exhales through his nose, then turns toward the sitting area.

He checks behind a heavy curtain.

Nothing.

He looks toward the bar.

Nothing.

The camera catches his reflection in a polished mirror as he pauses, listening again.

His face is tense.

His jaw tight.

For once, Maxwell Jett is not performing for the camera.

He is calculating exits.

He steps toward the short hallway near the bedroom door.

Maxwell Jett: "Jacoby?"

No answer.

Maxwell Jett: "Darian?"

Still nothing.

He reaches the bedroom doorway and stops.

His hand hovers near the frame.

He looks back toward the fireplace.

Toward the title.

Then back into the room.

He steps inside.

The camera follows just enough to see him check the empty space.

Nothing.

No one behind the door.

No one near the window.

No one waiting.

Maxwell stands there for a moment longer, listening.

Silence.

Finally, he lets out a long breath.

A quiet, private sigh of relief.

Then he straightens immediately, as if remembering the camera is still there.

Maxwell Jett: "Honestly."

He adjusts his jacket, forcing the arrogance back onto his face.

Maxwell Jett: "Five-star hotels used to have standards."

He walks back toward the fireplace, trying to recapture the casual pace he had before.

But the camera saw it.

So did everyone watching.

The UTA Champion was worried.

Maxwell returns to the table, picks up his phone, and sits down again beside the fire.

He reaches for the UTA Championship and pulls it closer to him.

Closer than before.

The feed lingers on that detail.

LIVE VIA REMOTE

Then the screen cuts back to the arena.

John Phillips: "Maxwell Jett may be telling everyone he is perfectly safe, but I think we just saw something very different."

Mark Bravo: "You can put the champion in the fanciest hotel suite in the city, but if Mike Best and Chris Ross are in your head, the locks only help so much."

Samuel Scythe vs. Graham Keel

Match

The cameras return to ringside inside Luna Park, where the ring crew finishes clearing the last traces of the previous match from ringside. The energy inside the building has changed. The noise is still there, but now it carries a different kind of edge.

The ring announcer steps into the center of the ring with a microphone in hand.

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

The crowd reacts strongly as the championship graphic appears across the screen.

UTA FIGHTING CHAMPIONSHIP

Graham Keel vs. Samuel Scythe

Ring Announcer: "This match will be contested under Fighting Championship Rules. There are no pinfalls. Victory can only occur by submission, knockout, or referee stoppage. Each competitor is allowed one rope break for the duration of the match."

The rules graphic remains on screen for a moment longer.

FIGHTING CHAMPIONSHIP RULES

No pinfalls

Submission, knockout, or referee stoppage only

One rope break per competitor

John Phillips: "This is the UTA Fighting Championship, and these rules change everything. There is no quick roll-up. No flash pin. You have to make your opponent give up, render them unable to continue, or force the official to stop the match."

Mark Bravo: "And that one rope break matters, John. You get one. That is it. Use it too early, and the rest of the match becomes a very small, very painful world."

John Phillips: "There is also the larger prize tied to this championship. After five successful defenses, the Fighting Champion may cash in the title for an opportunity at any other championship in UTA. We saw Hakuryu do exactly that when he cashed in and defeated Gunnar Van Patterson for the WrestleZone Championship."

Mark Bravo: "That is why this title is dangerous. It is not just a championship. It is a countdown. Every defense gets you closer to walking into any title picture you want."

The camera cuts toward the entranceway.

The arena lights go out.

For five seconds, there is no music.

No video package.

No movement.

Just the low buzz of Luna Park, waiting.

Then a single white spotlight cuts through the darkness and lands at the top of the stage.

A slow orchestral theme begins to build.

Graham Keel steps into the light.

The UTA Fighting Championship rests around his waist, the gold catching the white spotlight as he pauses at the top of the entranceway. Keel does not raise his arms. He does not look around for approval. He simply stands there, eyes locked forward, jaw set, expression controlled.

John Phillips: "There is the champion. Graham Keel, The Hold Architect, defending the UTA Fighting Championship tonight against Samuel Scythe."

Mark Bravo: "And if you are Graham Keel, you have to be thinking about two things at once. Survive Samuel Scythe tonight, and keep that defense count moving."

Keel begins walking down the ramp.

There is no wasted motion in him. Each step is measured. Controlled. Direct. The championship does not bounce at his waist. His shoulders do not sway. His eyes do not wander.

He walks like a man who has already mapped the first thirty seconds of the fight in his head.

John Phillips: "Graham Keel is not flashy. He is not theatrical. He is a student of the craft and a master of pain. European catch wrestling background, limb targeting, chain wrestling, ground-and-pound from dominant position. He breaks opponents down by design."

Mark Bravo: "That is why these rules fit him. No pinfalls? Fine. Keel does not need them. Give him an arm, give him a neck, give him a leg, and he will make you regret being attached to it."

Keel reaches ringside and stops at the bottom of the ramp.

For the first time, he looks around the arena.

Not to soak in the reaction.

To measure the space.

The ropes. The corners. The distance from apron to barricade. The official. The ring steps. Everything is seen, processed, and filed away.

John Phillips: "Against Samuel Scythe, that strategy may be more important than ever. Scythe is bigger, violent, destructive, and backed by Ace Andrews. Graham Keel cannot afford to get dragged into a pure power fight."

Mark Bravo: "No, he has to take something away early. An arm. A knee. The neck. Something. You let Scythe stay whole for too long, and eventually that man starts leaving pieces of you behind."

Keel walks to the steel steps and climbs without hurry. He steps onto the apron, looks once into the ring, then enters between the ropes.

The spotlight follows him as he walks to the center.

Keel unfastens the UTA Fighting Championship from his waist and holds it in both hands. He looks down at the title for a moment, then lifts it slightly toward the referee.

The official takes the championship and raises it high.

The crowd responds as the belt gleams beneath the white light.

John Phillips: "That is what this is about. The Fighting Championship. A title that rewards survival, punishment, and discipline."

Mark Bravo: "And a title that can become a golden ticket if you can hold onto it long enough."

The referee carries the title toward the timekeeper's area, then turns back to give Keel a brief reminder of the rules. Keel nods once, not impatient, not anxious, simply listening to information he already understands.

Keel backs into his corner.

He rolls one shoulder.

Then he slowly begins working his wrists, flexing his fingers, preparing the hands that will try to dismantle Samuel Scythe one joint at a time.

John Phillips: "Graham Keel has already started that countdown as Fighting Champion. Every successful defense moves him closer to the same kind of opportunity Hakuryu cashed in on. But standing across from him tonight will be a man built to end momentum by force."

Mark Bravo: "This might be the worst kind of defense for Keel. Samuel Scythe does not care about technique. He does not care about points. He does not care about rope breaks. He wants to wreck what is in front of him."

The lights remain low around the arena, the white spotlight still fixed on the champion.

Keel lowers his head for half a second.

Then he looks back toward the entranceway.

Waiting.

The champion is here.

The challenger is next.

Graham Keel remains in his corner, the white spotlight still resting over him as he flexes his fingers and rolls his wrists. The UTA Fighting Championship has been handed off to the timekeeper. The rules have been announced. The champion is ready.

Then the light dies.

Luna Park falls into complete darkness.

For a moment, there is nothing.

No music.

No movement.

No sound but the crowd murmuring into the black.

John Phillips: "And now comes the challenger."

Mark Bravo: "This is the part where things stop feeling like a championship match and start feeling like a warning."

The titantron flickers.

A field appears on the screen, gray and dead beneath a dark sky. A scythe blade passes slowly through it, cutting down what stands in its path.

The image glitches.

REAP WHAT YOU SOW

The words flash once.

Then again.

Then the heavy opening riff of "Useless Sacrifice" by Death Decline tears through the arena.

A single spotlight appears at the top of the stage.

Samuel Scythe stands inside it.

Hood up.

Head lowered.

Motionless.

The crowd reacts with a mix of boos and uneasy noise, the kind of reaction that comes less from dislike and more from recognition. They know what kind of man is standing there.

A second spotlight opens beside him.

Ace Andrews steps into view.

The Corporate Cutthroat is dressed in a dark, expensive suit, every inch of him controlled and deliberate. He does not look worried. He does not look excited. He looks satisfied, like the situation unfolding in front of him is exactly the one he paid to create.

John Phillips: "Samuel Scythe, accompanied by Ace Andrews, challenging tonight for the UTA Fighting Championship."

Mark Bravo: "And Ace Andrews has to love these rules, John. No pinfalls. No cheap escapes. Knockout, submission, or stoppage only. That is tailor-made for a man Ace calls his Reaper."

Ace leans slightly toward Scythe and says something that the camera cannot catch.

Scythe does not lift his head.

He simply begins walking.

Ace follows half a step behind and to the side, hands relaxed, posture smooth, eyes flicking from the ring to Graham Keel and back again.

John Phillips: "Samuel Scythe is six-foot-three, two hundred fifty pounds, and he does not wrestle with much regard for damage control. Exploder suplexes, spinebusters, running powerslams, jackhammer, camel clutch. He is a power fighter in every sense of the word."

Mark Bravo: "Power fighter is putting it politely. Samuel Scythe fights like someone handed violence a body and told it where to walk."

In the ring, Keel does not move from his corner.

His eyes stay locked on Scythe.

No fear.

No reaction for the theatrics.

Just calculation.

John Phillips: "Look at Graham Keel. He is not watching Ace Andrews. He is not watching the lights. He is watching Scythe's feet, his shoulders, his posture. Keel is already looking for the first weakness."

Mark Bravo: "The problem is, John, sometimes you look for a weakness and all you find is a man who wants to hit you in the face until the referee feels guilty."

Scythe reaches ringside.

He stops at the bottom of the steps and finally lifts his head.

His eyes find Keel.

Ace steps to the side and looks up into the ring, giving the champion a polished, poisonous smile.

Ace Andrews: "That title brings options, Graham."

Keel does not answer.

Ace's smile grows.

Ace Andrews: "Samuel brings endings."

Scythe climbs the steel steps.

Each step lands heavy.

He steps onto the apron, pauses, then enters between the ropes.

Ace remains outside, circling slowly toward Scythe's corner, never taking his eyes off Keel for long.

Inside the ring, Scythe walks to the center.

He reaches up with both hands and pulls the hood back.

The crowd noise rises.

Scythe stares across the ring at Keel, then slowly drags one thumb across his throat in a cut-throat gesture.

John Phillips: "That is Samuel Scythe's message. Nothing subtle about it."

Mark Bravo: "He is not here for a wrestling lesson. He is here to stop the countdown before it gets any closer to five."

Keel finally steps out of his corner.

Not far.

Just enough.

The two men stare at one another from across the ring, and the contrast is immediate. Graham Keel, the champion, still and focused, every breath measured. Samuel Scythe, the challenger, broad-shouldered and violent, looking like he would happily win by making the referee afraid to let the match continue.

The referee steps between them, holding both hands out.

Referee: "You both know the rules. No pinfalls. Submission, knockout, or referee stoppage only. One rope break each. One. After that, the ropes will not save you."

Keel gives one short nod.

Scythe does not respond.

Ace Andrews speaks from the floor, calm and amused.

Ace Andrews: "He heard you."

The referee turns slightly toward Ace.

Referee: "And you stay out of it."

Ace places a hand against his own chest, feigning offense.

Ace Andrews: "I am merely here for guidance."

Mark Bravo: "That is a beautiful lie."

John Phillips: "Ace Andrews has influenced plenty from ringside before, and the referee knows it."

The official calls for the championship.

The timekeeper hands the UTA Fighting Championship back through the ropes. The referee takes it, walks to the center, and raises it high between Graham Keel and Samuel Scythe.

The crowd reacts as the title hangs above the danger.

John Phillips: "The UTA Fighting Championship on the line. Graham Keel looking to continue his road toward five successful defenses. Samuel Scythe looking to bring that road to a violent end."

Mark Bravo: "Keel wants pressure. Scythe wants destruction. Under these rules, both men are going to get exactly what they are good at."

The referee hands the championship back out of the ring and signals for both men to return to their corners.

Scythe backs away slowly, never turning his back on Keel.

Keel does the same.

Ace Andrews settles outside Scythe's corner, adjusting one cufflink as if this is all just business.

The referee looks left.

Then right.

Luna Park rises with the moment.

Graham Keel lowers his stance.

Samuel Scythe rolls his neck once.

The bell is moments away.

DING DING DING!

The bell rings, and neither man moves immediately.

Graham Keel stays low in his corner, hands open, fingers loose, eyes fixed on Samuel Scythe's lead leg. Samuel Scythe stands taller, heavier, shoulders squared, staring through the champion as if the title is only the object that brought Keel into his path.

Ace Andrews stands outside Scythe's corner, one hand resting on the apron, calm and watchful.

John Phillips: "Here we go. UTA Fighting Championship on the line. No pinfalls. Submission, knockout, or referee stoppage only."

Mark Bravo: "And remember, John, Graham Keel is not trying to outmuscle Samuel Scythe. That would be a terrible life choice. He has to take him apart before Scythe can turn this into a demolition."

Keel steps out first.

Scythe follows.

The two circle slowly. Keel never overcommits, never gets close enough for Scythe to grab clean. Scythe tracks him, patient at first, but the patience feels violent rather than disciplined.

Keel reaches once toward Scythe's lead wrist.

Scythe swats the hand away.

Keel circles again.

Another reach.

This time Scythe lunges.

Keel ducks under, catches the arm, and immediately twists behind him into a standing wristlock.

John Phillips: "Keel gets the arm first, and that may be the entire opening strategy."

Mark Bravo: "That is the arm Scythe wants to use to throw him through the mat. Good place to start."

Scythe grunts and turns his body, trying to square up, but Keel steps with him, keeping the wrist trapped. Keel drives his forearm down across Scythe's elbow and forces the challenger to bend slightly at the shoulder.

Ace's expression tightens just a fraction.

Ace Andrews: "Do not let him hang on you, Samuel."

Scythe reaches back with his free hand, trying to grab Keel's head, but Keel slips out of range and twists the arm again, dropping to one knee and yanking Scythe's shoulder downward.

Scythe drops to one knee for half a second.

The crowd reacts.

John Phillips: "Keel has already taken Scythe down to a knee!"

Mark Bravo: "And he did it without throwing a single punch. That is Graham Keel."

Keel immediately steps over the trapped arm and drops his weight across it, looking to isolate the shoulder. Scythe snarls and powers toward the ropes, but Keel rolls with him, trying to keep the arm extended.

The referee drops beside them, watching the positioning.

Scythe reaches out with one boot, dragging himself closer to the bottom rope.

Keel pulls back harder.

Scythe's hand stretches.

Ace steps closer.

Ace Andrews: "No. Do not waste it. Not yet."

Scythe hears him.

Instead of grabbing the rope, Scythe plants his hand on the mat and begins forcing himself up through the pressure.

John Phillips: "Ace Andrews telling Scythe not to use that rope break early, and that is smart. One rope break for the entire match."

Mark Bravo: "It is smart until your shoulder stops working."

Scythe rises to one knee, then to both feet, Keel still hanging onto the arm. Keel tries to transition behind again, but Scythe suddenly reaches across with his free hand and grabs Keel by the throat.

The crowd shifts instantly.

Keel's eyes narrow.

Scythe's grip tightens.

Keel releases the wrist and drives a sharp knee into Scythe's thigh, breaking the grip before it can become something worse.

Scythe takes one step back.

Keel follows with a low dragon screw, twisting the same leg out from under him.

Scythe hits the mat hard.

John Phillips: "Dragon screw by Keel! The champion goes from arm to leg!"

Mark Bravo: "That is the blueprint. Do not let the monster stand comfortably. Make him carry his weight wrong."

Keel immediately grabs the leg and turns Scythe over, trying to step into a submission, but Scythe kicks him off with raw force. Keel rolls backward and comes up smoothly.

Scythe sits up.

He looks at his leg.

Then at Keel.

His face has changed.

Mark Bravo: "Uh oh."

John Phillips: "Samuel Scythe just got a taste of Graham Keel's game, and I do not think he enjoyed it."

Scythe gets to his feet more aggressively this time. Keel keeps distance, circling away from the power side, trying to draw Scythe into another reach.

Scythe advances.

Keel dips low again for the leg.

This time Scythe is waiting.

He clubs both forearms down across Keel's back.

Keel drops to the mat on one knee.

Scythe grabs him by the waist and deadlifts him off the canvas.

Keel tries to hook a leg to block, but Scythe turns through it and launches him with an exploder suplex.

Keel lands hard near the ropes and rolls onto his side.

John Phillips: "Exploder suplex! Scythe just threw the champion!"

Mark Bravo: "That is the danger. Keel can win ten exchanges technically, but Scythe only needs one grip to change the weather."

Ace Andrews smiles now, small and satisfied.

Ace Andrews: "There. Make him feel it."

Scythe stalks toward Keel, who is already trying to rise. Keel reaches for the ropes but does not grab them, aware of the rule. He uses the mat instead, pushing himself up and turning his shoulder in as Scythe arrives.

Scythe grabs Keel by the back of the head and pulls him upright.

Keel immediately catches Scythe's wrist again and tries to twist out.

Scythe answers with a European uppercut that snaps Keel's head back.

Keel staggers.

Scythe fires another uppercut.

Keel drops against the ropes, blinking hard.

John Phillips: "Scythe is using Keel's own kind of strike against him there, those heavy uppercuts landing clean."

Mark Bravo: "Keel wants precision. Scythe is bringing blunt force dressed as precision."

The referee steps closer, watching Keel against the ropes. Scythe reaches in, but Keel grabs the top rope with one hand.

The official immediately calls it.

Referee: "Rope break! Graham Keel has used his rope break!"

The crowd reacts as the graphic flashes on screen.

GRAHAM KEEL: ROPE BREAK USED

SAMUEL SCYTHER: ROPE BREAK AVAILABLE

John Phillips: "And there it is. Graham Keel has used his one rope break early."

Mark Bravo: "That is a bad sign. He needed that separation, but now the ropes do not save him again."

Keel releases the rope and steps forward out of the break, trying not to show the frustration. Scythe backs away at the referee's command, but only barely. Ace Andrews claps once from ringside.

Ace Andrews: "Good. Now the ring gets smaller."

Keel hears it.

His expression does not change, but his eyes sharpen.

He knows Ace is right.

The referee motions them back together.

Keel comes out of the ropes quickly, not wanting to be trapped there again. He feints low, then steps across and catches Scythe with a European uppercut of his own.

Scythe's head turns slightly.

Keel follows with another uppercut.

Then he grabs the arm and snaps Scythe down with an arm drag, immediately transitioning into a kneeling armbreaker.

John Phillips: "Keel goes right back to the arm! He cannot afford to be discouraged by losing the rope break."

Mark Bravo: "This is where Keel is dangerous. He is not emotional. He is problem-solving under pressure."

Scythe grimaces for the first time, the damage to the shoulder starting to matter. Keel traps the wrist and drives his knee down across the elbow, then twists again, trying to stretch the limb away from Scythe's body.

Scythe reaches toward the ropes.

His fingers are close.

Ace leans toward him.

Ace Andrews: "You still have it if you need it."

Scythe's hand hovers near the rope.

Keel sees it and cranks harder.

The referee drops in close.

Referee: "Do you want the break?"

Scythe says nothing.

His hand shakes near the rope.

Then, with a growl, he pulls it back.

Instead of using the break, Scythe rolls toward Keel and drives a headbutt into the champion's chest.

Keel loosens.

Another headbutt.

Keel releases.

Scythe surges up and barrels forward with a running shoulder block, driving Keel down hard to the mat.

John Phillips: "Scythe refuses to use the rope break, and he runs through Keel instead!"

Mark Bravo: "That is pride. That is power. That is also exactly what Ace wants. Samuel still has his rope break, and Graham does not."

Keel rolls to his stomach, trying to push up. Scythe grabs him before he can, hauling him to his feet with one arm still clearly bothering him.

Keel immediately notices.

Even hurt, even stunned, the champion sees the damage.

He reaches for that arm again.

Scythe stops him with a brutal knee to the midsection.

Keel folds.

Scythe hooks him.

He lifts.

For a long second, Keel hangs upside down in the air.

John Phillips: "Scythe has him up!"

Mark Bravo: "This is bad. This is very bad."

Scythe holds him there, stalling, letting the blood rush, letting the crowd understand the strength on display.

Then he releases forward.

Sowing The Fields.

Keel crashes chest-first and face-first into the canvas from the stalling front release vertical suplex.

The champion bounces once and lies still for a second too long.

John Phillips: "Sowing The Fields! Scythe plants the Fighting Champion!"

Mark Bravo: "And remember, he cannot pin him. He has to hurt him enough that Keel cannot continue."

The referee immediately drops beside Keel, checking him.

Referee: "Graham, talk to me. Can you continue?"

Keel pushes one hand against the mat.

Slowly.

He gets to his forearms.

Then one knee.

Scythe watches, breathing heavily now, his damaged arm hanging slightly lower than the other.

Ace Andrews steps closer to the ring, his smile gone, replaced by sharp instruction.

Ace Andrews: "Do not wait for him to be brave. Make bravery irrelevant."

Scythe steps toward Keel again.

Keel looks up, eyes focused through the pain.

The champion is hurt.

His rope break is gone.

But Samuel Scythe's arm is damaged.

And Graham Keel has seen it.

Graham Keel pushes up from one knee, his face tight from the impact of Sowing The Fields, but his eyes never leave Samuel Scythe's damaged arm.

That is the difference between pain and panic.

Keel is hurt.

He is not lost.

John Phillips: "Graham Keel took a terrible landing, but look at him. He is still studying Samuel Scythe. He knows that arm is compromised."

Mark Bravo: "That is what makes Keel dangerous. Most men get thrown like that and start checking if all their teeth are still in their mouth. Keel is already planning the next hold."

Scythe steps in and reaches down with his good arm, grabbing Keel by the back of the head. Keel lets himself be pulled halfway up, then suddenly snatches Scythe's injured wrist.

Scythe tries to jerk free.

Keel turns under the arm and twists.

Scythe grunts, forced to bend at the shoulder as Keel steps behind him.

Ace Andrews immediately moves along ringside, pointing sharply.

Ace Andrews: "Get out of that! Do not let him settle!"

Keel does not give Scythe time to answer. He drives a short European uppercut into the back of Scythe's shoulder, then another, each strike placed more like a tool than a weapon.

Scythe swings backward with his free arm, but Keel ducks under it and pulls the damaged arm across his own chest.

Keel drops backward, snapping Scythe down shoulder-first into the canvas.

John Phillips: "Keel takes Scythe down by the arm!"

Mark Bravo: "That was nasty. He did not just take him down, he made Scythe land on the exact body part he is trying to ruin."

Keel immediately floats over, knee planted beside Scythe's neck, both hands on the wrist. He starts to wrench the arm backward, trying to fold it behind Scythe's head.

Scythe snarls and tries to push up with his free hand.

Keel drives his weight down.

The referee drops in close.

Referee: "Samuel, do you submit?"

Scythe does not answer.

Keel pulls harder.

Scythe's fingers flex against the mat.

Ace's voice sharpens from the floor.

Ace Andrews: "Do not answer him. Move."

Scythe plants his feet and starts dragging both men toward the ropes. Keel adjusts, trying to roll the arm deeper and keep Scythe flat, but the challenger's strength begins to move the hold inch by inch.

John Phillips: "Scythe still has his rope break available. Keel does not."

Mark Bravo: "And if Scythe has to burn it here, that is still a win for Keel. Evening that count matters."

Scythe reaches out.

His hand is a foot from the bottom rope.

Keel sees it and shifts position, moving his knee higher toward the neck, trying to turn the arm attack into a crossface variation.

Scythe's face tightens.

The referee drops even lower.

Referee: "Samuel, I need an answer!"

Scythe reaches again.

Keel cranks back.

Scythe's fingertips brush the bottom rope.

Ace Andrews pounds the apron once.

Ace Andrews: "Use it!"

Scythe grabs the rope.

Referee: "Rope break! Samuel Scythe has used his rope break!"

The crowd reacts loudly as the graphic flashes on screen.

GRAHAM KEEL: ROPE BREAK USED

SAMUEL SCYTHER: ROPE BREAK USED

John Phillips: "Now both men have used their one rope break. From this point forward, the ropes cannot save either competitor."

Mark Bravo: "And that is huge. No escape hatches left. If Keel catches that arm again, Scythe has to fight out or submit. If Scythe traps Keel, Graham has nowhere to run."

Keel releases at the official's count of three, not wasting the full five. He backs away, breathing hard, but he knows what he has accomplished.

Scythe rolls toward the ropes, clutching his arm close to his body.

Ace leans in close, his voice low but intense.

Ace Andrews: "Enough of his match. Break him."

Scythe slowly turns his head toward Ace.

Something in his expression changes.

The pain is still there.

But now it has been joined by anger.

Keel steps forward, trying to close the distance before Scythe can fully reset. He reaches for the arm again.

Scythe suddenly explodes forward with a running shoulder block from close range, using his good side to blast Keel backward.

Keel hits the mat and rolls through, scrambling toward open space.

Scythe does not let him.

He charges again.

Keel sidesteps and catches Scythe's arm on the way past, but Scythe uses the momentum to drive Keel backward into the corner.

The champion hits the buckles hard.

His rope break is gone.

The referee moves in to warn Scythe, but there is no break to enforce unless the challenger refuses to listen to the count on the corner attack.

John Phillips: "Keel is in the ropes, but remember, he has already used his break. He has to get himself out of there."

Mark Bravo: "And Scythe knows it. Ace knows it too."

Scythe drives a knee into Keel's midsection.

Then another.

Then a third that folds the champion over.

Keel tries to clinch, wrapping one arm around Scythe's head to slow him down, but Scythe shoves him back into the corner and crushes him with a short shoulder thrust.

Keel's body jerks against the buckles.

The referee begins the count.

Referee: "ONE! TWO! THREE!"

Scythe backs off at four, only to grab Keel by the wrist and whip him hard across the ring.

Keel hits the opposite corner back-first.

Scythe charges.

Keel moves.

Scythe crashes chest-first into the buckles, and Keel immediately catches the injured arm, pulling it over the top rope and yanking down across the shoulder.

Scythe roars in pain.

John Phillips: "Keel goes back to the arm again! He has found the target and he will not let it go!"

Mark Bravo: "This is why Graham Keel is champion. He does not need a lot. Give him one injury and he turns it into a map."

Keel pulls Scythe out of the corner and snaps him down with another arm drag, but this time Scythe rolls through the landing and comes up faster than Keel expects.

Keel steps in for a kneeling armbreaker.

Scythe catches him with a headbutt.

Keel staggers backward.

Another headbutt.

Keel drops to one knee.

The referee steps closer, checking the champion's eyes.

Referee: "Graham, stay with me."

Keel waves him off and tries to rise.

Scythe grabs him by the throat with the good hand.

Keel immediately reaches for the arm to counter.

Scythe saw it coming.

He lifts his knee straight into Keel's ribs, stopping the counter dead.

Then he turns and drives Keel down with a spinebuster that shakes the ring.

John Phillips: "Spinebuster! Graham Keel driven into the canvas!"

Mark Bravo: "That is the kind of impact that makes the referee start thinking about stoppages."

Scythe stays on top of Keel, not for a pin, but to mount him.

He drives one forearm down across Keel's jaw.

Then another.

The referee drops in immediately.

Referee: "Graham, defend yourself!"

Keel covers up, turning his head and trying to trap Scythe's wrist. He catches the damaged arm for a second, twisting from underneath, but Scythe rips it free with a grimace and hammers down with the other forearm.

Keel's guard loosens.

Scythe hits him again.

John Phillips: "This is becoming very dangerous for the champion."

Mark Bravo: "This is exactly where Ace wanted the match to go. Keel cannot out-technique a forearm coming through his face."

Ace watches from ringside, expression cold now.

Ace Andrews: "Make him stop it."

Scythe hears him.

He drives another forearm down.

The referee leans in closer, hand hovering, ready to decide whether Keel can continue.

Referee: "Graham! Show me something!"

Keel suddenly hooks Scythe's damaged arm from underneath and twists his body sharply, using the challenger's own weight against him. Scythe rolls off, and Keel scrambles with him, trapping the arm again as the crowd erupts.

John Phillips: "Keel counters! Keel counters from underneath!"

Keel pulls the arm across his chest, threads his legs, and begins to turn Scythe into a figure-four crossface hybrid.

Scythe tries to roll away.

Keel follows.

The referee drops to the mat.

John Phillips: "Lancashire Lock! Keel is trying to secure the Lancashire Lock!"

Mark Bravo: "No rope breaks left! If he locks this in, Scythe is in serious trouble!"

Keel gets the arm trapped.

He starts to hook the legs.

Scythe claws at the mat with his free hand, but there is nowhere to go.

Ace Andrews steps closer, suddenly concerned.

Ace Andrews: "Samuel! Power through it!"

Keel wrenches diagonally, pulling the damaged arm and shoulder while twisting Scythe's body out of alignment.

Scythe's face contorts.

The referee leans in.

Referee: "Samuel! Do you submit?"

For the first time, Samuel Scythe looks trapped.

Keel pulls harder.

The crowd rises, sensing the champion may have found the answer.

John Phillips: "Graham Keel has him! The champion has Scythe trapped in the center of the ring!"

Mark Bravo: "This is the whole match right here!"

Scythe lifts his free hand.

The referee watches closely.

Ace Andrews' eyes go wide.

But Scythe does not tap.

He slams his own hand into the mat once, not as a submission, but as a base. Then again. Then again.

With a sound somewhere between a growl and a roar, Scythe begins forcing his body upward from inside the hold.

Keel's eyes widen slightly.

John Phillips: "How is Scythe moving?"

Mark Bravo: "I do not know if that is strength or insanity, John, but it is working!"

Scythe gets one knee under him.

Keel keeps the arm trapped and pulls harder, trying to break the base.

Scythe rises anyway.

The hold begins to unravel, not because Keel releases it, but because Scythe is lifting him with it still applied.

Ace Andrews points toward the center of the ring, shouting now.

Ace Andrews: "Up! Up! Break him!"

Scythe stands, muscles straining, arm screaming against the pressure, Keel clinging to the hold as long as he can.

Then Scythe drops backward, crushing Keel beneath him.

The hold breaks on impact.

Both men lie on the mat.

The crowd erupts into a loud, stunned reaction.

John Phillips: "Scythe powers out of the Lancashire Lock by throwing his own body backward onto the champion!"

Mark Bravo: "That may have saved the match for Scythe, but look at that arm. He paid for it."

Keel rolls away, clutching his ribs and lower back from being crushed beneath the challenger.

Scythe sits up slowly, holding his damaged arm close to his chest, breathing through clenched teeth.

Ace Andrews exhales at ringside, then immediately regains control of his expression.

Ace Andrews: "He is hurt too. Do not give him time."

Scythe turns toward Keel.

The champion is trying to rise.

The challenger is hurt.

Both rope breaks are gone.

And the match has become exactly what the Fighting Championship demands.

Survival without escape.

Samuel Scythe sits on the mat, damaged arm tucked close, breathing through his nose with visible anger in every rise of his chest.

Across from him, Graham Keel pulls himself toward one knee, one hand pressed against his ribs after being crushed

beneath Scythe's full weight.

There are no rope breaks left.

No pins to steal.

No easy way out.

John Phillips: "This is where Fighting Championship Rules become cruel. Both men have used their rope break. From here, if a hold is locked in near the ropes, the ropes mean nothing."

Mark Bravo: "And both men know it. Keel wants one clean submission. Scythe wants one clean opening to turn this into a stoppage."

Keel rises first, barely.

He shakes out his hands and takes one short step toward Scythe, still looking at the arm. He has not forgotten the target. He does not forget targets.

Scythe pushes up after him, using mostly his good arm, his face twisting with pain as the injured shoulder hangs slightly lower.

Ace Andrews leans over the apron from ringside.

Ace Andrews: "Samuel, listen to me. Stop chasing him. Make him come to you."

Scythe's eyes remain on Keel.

Keel hears Ace as well.

The champion steps in anyway.

John Phillips: "Keel knows he cannot let Scythe recover. That arm may be his best path to retaining the Fighting Championship."

Keel shoots for the wrist.

Scythe pulls it away.

Keel feints low, then steps across and drives a European uppercut up under Scythe's jaw.

Scythe staggers one step.

Keel follows with another uppercut, then another, not throwing wildly, each strike trying to turn Scythe's head and open the damaged side.

Scythe absorbs the third and suddenly answers with a headbutt.

Keel drops to one knee.

Scythe grabs him by the back of the head with his good hand and pulls him up.

Keel immediately catches the bad arm again.

Scythe growls as Keel twists.

Keel steps behind, trying to drag him down into another arm control, but Scythe swings backward with a mule kick to the midsection.

Keel doubles over.

Scythe turns and clubs him across the upper back.

Keel drops to both hands.

Mark Bravo: "That is ugly, but it is effective. Scythe does not need the arm if he can just keep folding Keel in half."

John Phillips: "And every one of those shots brings the referee closer to making a judgment call."

The referee steps near Keel again, checking his posture, watching his eyes.

Referee: "Graham, defend yourself."

Keel nods once, almost irritated by the instruction. He reaches for Scythe's ankle from the mat, trying to force a scramble.

Scythe stomps down beside his hand, forcing Keel to pull back.

Keel rolls away and gets to one knee.

Scythe charges.

Keel moves low and clips the leg with a dragon screw, turning Scythe down again.

Scythe hits the mat, immediately clutching his knee now as well as the arm.

John Phillips: "Keel goes back to the leg! Arm, leg, shoulder, anything he can isolate!"

Mark Bravo: "That is the champion's path. Make the monster fight on broken parts."

Keel does not pause. He grabs the leg and steps through, trying to turn Scythe over into a figure-four neck lock transition, but Scythe kicks with the free leg and catches Keel in the chest.

Keel stumbles backward into the ropes.

He instinctively reaches back, but the referee immediately reminds him.

Referee: "No break, Graham! You used it!"

Keel does not look surprised.

He pushes off the ropes himself and comes forward again.

Scythe is already rising.

Keel attacks the arm before he can fully stand, grabbing the wrist and dropping into another kneeling armbreaker.

Scythe drops with him, pain flashing across his face.

Keel turns the wrist, forces the elbow across his own shoulder, and pulls down hard.

John Phillips: "Keel is relentless on that arm! He knows Scythe's power is compromised!"

The referee checks Scythe.

Referee: "Samuel, do you submit?"

Scythe breathes heavily, jaw clenched.

Ace Andrews moves along the outside, his confidence thinning around the edges.

Ace Andrews: "No. No, Samuel. Not to him."

Keel hears the urgency and tightens the hold.

Scythe's hand opens.

The crowd rises.

John Phillips: "Scythe may have nowhere to go!"

Keel shifts his hips, trying to turn the armbreaker into something deeper, but Scythe suddenly reaches up with his free hand and grabs Keel by the face.

Not the chin.

Not the head.

The face.

He claws backward, forcing Keel to break his posture just enough.

The referee warns him immediately.

Referee: "Open the hand! Samuel, open the hand!"

Scythe releases, but only after buying the space he needs. He rolls toward Keel and drives a short headbutt into the champion's ribs.

Keel loosens.

Another headbutt.

Keel releases.

Scythe grabs him and pulls him forward into a brutal short-arm shoulder block, driving Keel down chest-first.

Mark Bravo: "That was not pretty. That was survival with bad intentions."

John Phillips: "Scythe had to resort to anything he could find there, and now Keel is down again."

Scythe pushes up slowly, shaking out the damaged arm with a grimace. Keel is on his stomach, trying to get his knees underneath him.

Ace slaps the apron once.

Ace Andrews: "Now the neck. Take the neck away."

Scythe steps over Keel and grabs him by the head, dragging him up from behind. Keel tries to turn into him, but Scythe hooks him and snaps him backward with a Hangman's neckbreaker.

Keel's body jolts against the mat.

John Phillips: "Hangman's neckbreaker by Samuel Scythe!"

Mark Bravo: "Ace called for the neck, and Scythe delivered."

The referee moves in again, watching Keel roll to his side, one hand going to the back of his neck.

Referee: "Graham, talk to me."

Keel nods, but it is slower now.

Scythe does not let him breathe.

He pulls Keel up again and drives a heavy European uppercut under the jaw.

Keel stumbles backward.

Another uppercut.

Keel drops into the corner.

He is in the ropes.

They cannot save him.

John Phillips: "Keel is trapped in that corner, and there is no rope break left!"

Scythe charges in with a running shoulder block, crushing Keel into the buckles.

Keel drops to a seated position, arms crossing over his body.

The referee immediately gets between them.

Referee: "Back up! Let him out of the corner!"

Scythe backs up just enough to avoid a disqualification warning, but Ace is already pointing toward Keel again.

Ace Andrews: "He cannot defend from there."

Scythe reaches around the referee's shoulder and grabs Keel by the ankle, dragging him out of the corner toward the center of the ring.

Keel suddenly turns with it.

He traps Scythe's wrist on the way down.

Scythe realizes too late.

Keel twists, rolls, and pulls Scythe forward into a crossface position again.

John Phillips: "Keel caught him! Graham Keel caught Scythe coming in!"

The crowd surges as Keel threads the arm and begins pulling Scythe down into the Crowning Hold, knee pressing near the neck, the injured arm trapped and extended.

Mark Bravo: "Crowning Hold! Keel is trying to lock in the Crowning Hold!"

Scythe drops to one knee, fighting the pressure.

Keel plants his weight and wrenches backward, using every bit of positioning he has left.

Scythe's face tightens in pain.

Ace Andrews paces outside, suddenly shouting.

Ace Andrews: "Samuel! Do not let him turn you! Stay square!"

Keel pulls harder.

Scythe's free hand reaches out instinctively toward the ropes.

The referee shakes his head.

Referee: "No break! You used it!"

Scythe's hand grips the bottom rope anyway.

Nothing happens.

No break comes.

The crowd reacts loudly to the realization.

John Phillips: "The ropes do not save him! Scythe has the rope, but it does not matter!"

Mark Bravo: "This is what Keel wanted. No escape. Just pain."

Keel leans back, face strained, every ounce of his remaining strength poured into the hold.

Scythe refuses to tap.

He pulls on the rope, not for a break, but for leverage.

He uses it to drag his body forward by inches.

Keel adjusts, trying to keep the pressure, but Scythe's free hand slides under the bottom rope and grips the apron skirt from below.

The referee cannot see it from his angle.

Ace does.

Ace smiles again.

Ace Andrews: "Pull."

Scythe pulls hard.

The sudden shift drags both men closer to the ropes and changes the angle just enough for Keel's knee to slip from the neck position.

Keel tries to reset.

Scythe surges up with a roar, using the apron grip and raw power together to explode out of the hold.

Keel keeps hold of the arm too long.

Scythe turns and hurls him shoulder-first through the middle rope to the floor.

Keel lands hard outside, crashing near the barricade.

John Phillips: "Scythe escapes, but he used that apron skirt for leverage! The referee did not see it!"

Mark Bravo: "Ropes cannot break the hold, John, but apparently they can still help you survive one."

Ace Andrews backs away from the area before the referee turns, hands raised like he is innocent of everything in the world.

Scythe remains inside the ring on one knee, breathing heavily, damaged arm trembling at his side.

Outside, Keel pushes himself up using the barricade.

The referee begins checking on him from inside the ring, then starts a count only to remember the nature of the match and stops, instead leaning through the ropes.

Referee: "Graham, can you continue?"

Keel nods.

He pulls himself to his feet.

Ace Andrews is suddenly near him.

Not close enough to touch.

Close enough to talk.

Ace Andrews: "Brilliant work, champion."

Keel turns his head toward Ace, eyes narrowing.

Ace Andrews: "You almost had him."

That word hangs there.

Almost.

Keel starts to move past him, but Ace steps lightly to the side, forcing Keel to lose half a step without making contact.

Inside the ring, Scythe sees the delay.

He charges.

John Phillips: "Scythe is moving!"

Scythe hits the ropes, comes back, and launches himself through the middle rope with a brutal shoulder-first dive, crashing into Keel and driving him backward into the barricade.

The impact rattles the ringside area.

Ace Andrews steps away at the last possible second, watching Keel collapse to the floor.

John Phillips: "Samuel Scythe just wiped out Graham Keel on the floor!"

Mark Bravo: "Two hundred fifty pounds of bad news through the ropes! And Ace gave him the opening!"

Scythe rolls to one side, clutching the injured arm after landing hard, but Keel is worse. The champion is down near the barricade, one hand at the back of his head and neck.

The referee exits the ring to check on both men.

Ace Andrews stands a few steps away, straightening his suit jacket.

Ace Andrews: "That is it, Samuel. Now he is yours."

Scythe slowly pushes himself up on the floor.

Keel crawls toward the apron, trying to pull himself back into the match.

The champion's plan is still alive.

But the damage is beginning to stack.

And Samuel Scythe is starting to look less like a man escaping holds.

And more like one closing in on the end.

Graham Keel drags himself toward the apron, one hand pressed against the back of his neck, the other reaching for the bottom rope to pull himself upright.

Samuel Scythe rises several feet away, slower than before, the damaged arm hanging heavy at his side. The dive through the ropes hurt him too, but the difference is simple.

Scythe can live with hurt.

Keel is beginning to lose pieces.

John Phillips: "Graham Keel has taken the worst of that collision into the barricade, and now the official has a decision to monitor every second."

Mark Bravo: "This is Fighting Championship territory, John. It is not about who can get a shoulder up. It is about whether your body still answers when the referee asks the question."

The referee kneels beside Keel on the floor.

Referee: "Graham, can you continue?"

Keel nods sharply, irritated by the question. He grips the apron tighter and forces himself up.

Ace Andrews watches from a few steps away, hands folded in front of him, the faintest smile returning to his face.

Ace Andrews: "Of course he can continue. Champions are proud like that."

Keel looks toward Ace for half a second.

That half second costs him.

Scythe grabs Keel from behind and drives him spine-first into the edge of the apron.

Keel's body bends around the impact and he drops to a knee, jaw clenched, eyes squeezed shut.

John Phillips: "Keel driven into the apron! That is the hardest part of the ring!"

Mark Bravo: "Ace keeps talking just enough to steal attention, and Scythe keeps arriving with violence right after it."

The referee warns Ace to back away, but Ace steps back before the warning can become anything more.

Scythe pulls Keel up again and rolls him under the bottom rope into the ring.

Keel comes to rest near the center, turning to his side, still fighting for air.

Scythe climbs onto the apron, then steps between the ropes.

He pauses for a second as the injured arm flares with pain.

Keel sees it.

Even now, he sees it.

John Phillips: "Look at Keel. Even after all of that, his eyes go right back to the arm."

Mark Bravo: "That is instinct. That is training. That is why he became champion."

Scythe reaches down with his good hand, but Keel suddenly snatches the damaged wrist from the mat and pulls himself into a rolling armbar attempt.

The crowd erupts as Keel throws both legs up, trying to trap the arm before Scythe can posture out.

John Phillips: "Keel caught him! Keel caught the arm!"

Mark Bravo: "No rope breaks left! If he extends it, Scythe may have to tap or let the arm go!"

Scythe drops to one knee, roaring as Keel tries to extend the elbow. The referee dives into position, eyes locked on Scythe's free hand.

Referee: "Samuel! Do you submit?"

Keel pulls down with everything he has left.

Scythe's arm begins to straighten.

Ace Andrews rushes to Scythe's side of the ring, suddenly no longer smiling.

Ace Andrews: "Stack him! Stack him now!"

Scythe plants his boots and drives forward, folding Keel's shoulders and hips beneath him. There is no pinfall to count, but the pressure changes the angle of the arm.

Keel tries to adjust.

Scythe uses that moment to lift.

Not clean.

Not pretty.

Just raw power and refusal.

Scythe hoists Keel off the mat with the armbar still partially attached, then drops him down with a brutal powerbomb-style counter.

Keel's grip breaks on impact.

The back of his head and shoulders hit hard.

John Phillips: "Scythe powers out! Graham Keel's head snapped off the canvas!"

Mark Bravo: "That might be the moment, John. That might be the one that changes everything."

Keel rolls onto his stomach, one arm reaching toward nothing in particular. The referee moves in immediately, checking his eyes.

Referee: "Graham. Graham, look at me."

Keel blinks, then pushes the referee's hand away.

He tries to get up.

His body does not cooperate the first time.

Scythe sits back on one knee, holding the damaged arm close. His breathing is ragged now. He is hurt badly, but he is still vertical enough to continue.

Ace sees Keel struggling.

Ace Andrews: "Do not give him the dignity of recovery."

Scythe rises.

Keel gets to both knees.

Scythe steps in and clubs him across the back of the neck with the good arm.

Keel drops to all fours.

Another clubbing shot.

Keel's arms buckle.

Referee: "Graham, defend yourself!"

Keel rolls to one side, trying to create space, but Scythe follows and drags him up by the head.

Keel throws a desperate European uppercut.

It lands.

Scythe's head snaps back.

Keel throws another.

It lands too.

For a moment, the champion is still there.

Still precise.

Still dangerous.

John Phillips: "Keel is still fighting! Somehow, Graham Keel is still firing back!"

Mark Bravo: "That is why he has held this championship. But he is running on instinct now."

Keel reaches for the damaged arm again.

Scythe steps through the reach and drives his knee into Keel's ribs.

Keel folds forward.

Scythe hooks him around the waist and lifts.

Spinebuster.

The impact drives Keel into the mat near the center of the ring.

The referee instantly crouches down beside him.

Referee: "Graham! Stay with me!"

Keel rolls halfway to his side, one hand at his ribs, the other reaching again for Scythe's wrist out of pure muscle memory.

Scythe looks down at the hand.

Then stomps beside it.

Not on it.

Beside it.

A warning that could have been worse.

Then he pulls Keel up again.

John Phillips: "The referee is watching closely. Scythe is stacking damage now."

Mark Bravo: "And Ace knows it. He is not calling for a submission. He is not calling for a knockout. He is calling for the kind of punishment that leaves the referee no choice."

Ace Andrews steps closer to the apron, eyes sharp, voice calm again now that the match has tilted.

Ace Andrews: "The neck, Samuel. Finish the neck."

Scythe grabs Keel from behind.

Keel tries to hook the bad arm again, but there is not enough strength in his grip. Scythe wrenches him backward and drops him with another Hangman's neckbreaker.

Keel hits and goes still.

The crowd noise drops into concern.

John Phillips: "Another neckbreaker! Graham Keel may be out!"

The referee drops beside Keel and checks him immediately.

Referee: "Graham! Graham, answer me!"

Keel's eyes are open, but unfocused for a second.

The referee starts to rise, hand half raised as if considering the stoppage.

Keel grabs at the referee's wrist.

Weakly.

But enough.

John Phillips: "Keel is refusing to let the referee stop this!"

Mark Bravo: "That might be courage. It might also be a terrible mistake."

The referee hesitates.

Keel pulls himself toward his knees again, slower than before, his body shaking from the effort.

Scythe watches him rise.

Ace Andrews' mouth tightens.

Ace Andrews: "He chose this."

Scythe steps back into the corner.

He lowers his shoulder.

Keel reaches one knee.

Then one foot.

The referee stays close, ready to intervene.

John Phillips: "Scythe is lining him up. This is dangerous."

Mark Bravo: "Reaper's Blade, John. If he hits this after the damage to the neck, the official may not have a choice."

Keel turns.

Scythe charges.

Reaper's Blade.

The spear drives Keel backward and down with sickening force.

The ring shakes on impact.

Keel folds around Scythe's shoulder and then spills flat onto the mat, unmoving for a moment.

John Phillips: "Reaper's Blade! Samuel Scythe just cut Graham Keel in half!"

Mark Bravo: "Stop it. The referee has to think about stopping it now."

The referee drops beside Keel, checking him again, louder this time.

Referee: "Graham! Can you continue? Graham!"

Scythe pushes up to one knee beside him, damaged arm still hurting, chest heaving.

Keel's fingers move.

Then his hand presses into the mat.

The crowd stirs.

Somehow, the champion tries to rise again.

John Phillips: "I cannot believe Graham Keel is still moving."

Mark Bravo: "And I cannot believe nobody has saved him from himself."

Ace Andrews watches Keel crawl, and for the first time, there is no mockery in his face.

Only calculation.

Ace Andrews: "Then take the decision away from him."

Scythe slowly stands.

Keel is on his knees again, barely upright, one arm hanging at his side, head low.

The referee stands between them for a moment, checking Keel's eyes.

Referee: "Graham, show me you can defend."

Keel raises one hand.

It is enough for the referee to step aside.

It may not be enough to save him.

Scythe reaches down and grabs Keel by the head.

Keel's hand suddenly shoots up, catching the damaged wrist one more time.

The crowd reacts, thinking for one instant the champion has found another miracle.

Keel tries to twist.

But there is nothing left behind it.

Scythe rips the arm free and pulls Keel into position.

Ace Andrews leans toward the ring.

Ace Andrews: "End the reign."

Scythe hooks Keel.

He lifts.

For a second, Graham Keel is vertical in the challenger's grip, the last image of the champion still trying to fight even as his body fails him.

Then Scythe drives him down with Elysian Gift.

Keel hits hard and goes limp.

Luna Park reacts loudly as the referee immediately dives in.

John Phillips: "Elysian Gift! Samuel Scythe planted the champion!"

Mark Bravo: "That is it. That has to be it."

Scythe does not cover.

There are no covers.

He simply rises to one knee and stares down at Graham Keel as the referee checks the champion.

Referee: "Graham! Graham, answer me!"

Keel does not answer.

The referee checks again, then looks at Keel's unfocused eyes and motionless body.

Ace Andrews stands outside the ring, both hands resting on the apron, watching with a cold smile.

The referee raises his arms.

Referee: "That's it! Stop the match!"

DING DING DING!

The bell rings.

Samuel Scythe remains on one knee, breathing heavily, damaged arm tucked against his body, while Graham Keel lies on the mat in front of him.

John Phillips: "The referee has stopped the match. Samuel Scythe has defeated Graham Keel by referee stoppage."

Mark Bravo: "And that means Samuel Scythe is the new Fighting Champion."

Ace Andrews steps up the steel steps slowly, not rushing, not celebrating like a man surprised by what happened. He enters the ring and walks past the referee toward Scythe.

The timekeeper hands the UTA Fighting Championship to the referee, who hesitates near the center of the ring as medical personnel start toward Graham Keel.

Ring Announcer: "Here is your winner by referee stoppage... and NEW UTA Fighting Champion... Samuel Scythe!"

The crowd reacts with a heavy mix of boos, shock, and reluctant recognition.

Ace Andrews takes the Fighting Championship from the referee before the official can hand it directly to Scythe. He looks at the title, admiring it for a moment, then turns and presents it to Samuel Scythe with both hands.

Scythe rises slowly.

Ace places the championship against his chest.

Scythe grips it with his good arm.

John Phillips: "Graham Keel fought with everything he had. He targeted the arm, he took away the rope break, he nearly trapped Scythe more than once. But in the end, Samuel Scythe's power and punishment were too much."

Mark Bravo: "And now Ace Andrews has another piece on the board. Bianca Page won earlier tonight. Samuel Scythe is leaving with gold. That is a very, very good night for Ace Andrews."

Medical personnel check on Keel as the referee keeps Scythe back. Scythe does not move toward them. He does not need to. The damage has already been done.

Ace raises Scythe's arm, careful to lift the good one, while Scythe holds the UTA Fighting Championship against his body.

The camera catches Ace leaning close enough for the microphone to pick him up.

Ace Andrews: "You reap what you sow."

Scythe looks down at Graham Keel one final time.

No smile.

No celebration.

Just the new champion standing over the old one.

John Phillips: "Samuel Scythe has ended Graham Keel's reign, and the countdown starts again under very different hands."

Mark Bravo: "Five defenses still make this championship a pathway to any title in UTA. But now the question changes,

John. Who survives long enough to even challenge him for it?"

Ace Andrews and Samuel Scythe stand in the center of the ring, the UTA Fighting Championship now in the possession of The Reaper, while Graham Keel is slowly helped by medical staff nearby.

The image holds on Scythe and Ace.

Then on the title.

Then the shot fades toward the next part of the night.

Any Time, Any Where

Segment

The broadcast cuts away from ringside once again.

The screen flickers.

LIVE VIA REMOTE

The feed returns to the upscale hotel suite.

The fireplace still burns.

The room is still elegant.

The UTA Championship still rests close to Maxwell Jett.

But the champion is not quite as comfortable now as he was earlier.

Maxwell sits near the fire with his phone in one hand and the title within reach, trying very hard to reclaim the sense of control he lost the last time we saw him.

Then—

A knock at the door.

Maxwell's head lifts immediately.

He rolls his eyes.

Maxwell Jett: "Finally."

He stands, straightening his jacket.

Maxwell Jett: "Those two idiots are back with my cheesecake."

Mark Bravo: "This should go well."

Maxwell walks toward the hotel room door, annoyed more than cautious now. He reaches for the handle and pulls it open.

Maxwell Jett: "Took you two long en—"

He stops.

No one is there.

The hallway outside the suite is empty.

Maxwell leans out, looking one direction.

Then the other.

Maxwell Jett: "Huh."

A beat.

Maxwell Jett: "Weird."

He starts to turn back into the room.

Then a voice reaches him from inside the suite.

Low.

Unsettling.

Unmistakable.

Voice: "Any time..."

Maxwell freezes.

Voice: "Any where..."

Maxwell slowly turns around.

Voice: "The Reaper comes...."

Standing inside the suite, a few feet from the fireplace, is Chris Ross.

The room that looked so safe a moment ago suddenly looks a lot smaller.

Ross stands calm. Cold. Focused. The kind of calm that makes the threat worse.

Maxwell's face drains instantly.

Maxwell Jett: "HOW DID YOU GET IN HERE?!"

Chris Ross takes one slow step forward.

Chris Ross: "I told you..."

Another step.

Chris Ross: "You weren't safe...."

John Phillips: "Chris Ross is in the hotel suite!"

Mark Bravo: "Oh, this is bad. This is very, very bad for Maxwell Jett!"

Maxwell reacts on instinct and lunges for the UTA Championship, maybe to grab it, maybe to use it, maybe just because he thinks having it near him means something.

He never gets there.

Ross explodes forward and tackles him from the side.

Both men crash into a table, sending a lamp and Maxwell's phone flying across the room.

John Phillips: "Ross just wiped Maxwell out!"

Maxwell scrambles wildly, throwing desperate forearms, but Ross keeps on him, dragging him up by the jacket and hammering him into the wall.

Once.

Twice.

Then Ross yanks him forward and slams him face-first across the edge of the bar.

Glasses rattle.

Maxwell stumbles backward, clutching his face.

Maxwell Jett: "Security! SECURITY!"

Ross grabs him by the collar and drives a right hand into his ribs.

Then another.

Then a hard shot across the jaw that sends Maxwell sprawling over the arm of the couch.

Mark Bravo: "There is no security in that room, John. It is just Maxwell Jett and the consequences he has been dodging!"

Maxwell tries crawling toward the door, but Ross catches him by the ankle and drags him back across the polished floor.

Maxwell claws at the rug, at the furniture, at anything.

Ross hauls him up again and whips him into the wall near the hallway.

Maxwell's expensive suit jacket tears at the shoulder on impact.

He barely has time to breathe before Ross is on him again.

Chris Ross: "Where's all that first class now?"

Ross drives Maxwell backward down the hall and into the bathroom.

The door flies open against the wall.

Maxwell reaches for the sink to steady himself.

Ross grabs the back of his head.

Maxwell Jett: "No! No—!"

Ross shoves Maxwell face-first into the mirror.

The glass cracks.

Maxwell recoils in shock.

Ross turns him and drives him down over the sink, then grabs him again and forces his head toward the toilet.

John Phillips: "Oh, come on!"

Maxwell thrashes, but Ross is too strong and too angry.

He dunks Maxwell head-first into the toilet bowl.

Once.

Then yanks him back up.

Maxwell coughs and sputters wildly, hair soaked, face twisted in panic and humiliation.

Mark Bravo: "Maxwell Jett has gone from luxury suite to absolute disaster!"

Ross throws him down onto the bathroom floor.

Maxwell kicks weakly, trying to create distance, but Ross drags him back out into the hallway and toward the service area near the suite entrance.

The nice suit Maxwell wore at the start of the night is in ruins now.

Jacket torn.

Shirt half pulled loose.

Hair a mess.

Every ounce of the polished champion image stripped away.

Chris Ross: "You hide in hotel rooms..."

Ross shoves Maxwell into a service cart, spilling folded towels everywhere.

Chris Ross: "You send other people..."

Ross punches him across the mouth.

Chris Ross: "You talk..."

Another punch.

Chris Ross: "And talk..."

Ross grabs Maxwell by the throat and forces him down the corridor toward a nearby service door.

Maxwell stumbles with every step, barely able to stay upright.

Maxwell Jett: "Chris— wait— hold on—"

Ross kicks the service door open.

Inside is a narrow back-area utility space.

Rolling bins. Cleaning supplies. Industrial shelving.

And at the far end, an open laundry chute door.

John Phillips: "Where are they now?"

Mark Bravo: "No. No no no. I think I know exactly where this is going."

Maxwell sees it too.

And immediately starts fighting harder.

Maxwell Jett: "Chris! Chris! Don't do this!"

Ross says nothing.

He just marches him forward.

Maxwell tries to brace himself against the wall.

Ross drives a knee into his midsection.

Maxwell folds.

Ross grabs him around the waist and shoves him chest-first against the open chute frame.

Maxwell Jett: "No! NO!"

Chris Ross: "I said..."

Ross forces Maxwell halfway in.

Chris Ross: "You weren't safe...."

Maxwell kicks wildly, one dress shoe slamming against the outside of the metal frame.

Ross gives one final hard shove.

Maxwell disappears down the laundry chute with a scream.

A loud crashing clang echoes from below.

Silence.

John Phillips: "OH MY GOD!"

Mark Bravo: "Chris Ross just threw the UTA Champion down the laundry chute!"

Ross stands there breathing hard, looking down into the chute for a second.

Then he steps back out into the suite.

The camera follows him as he returns to the fireplace area.

The UTA Championship is still sitting there.

Ross looks down at it.

He does not take it.

He just stares.

Then he looks directly into the camera.

Chris Ross: "Tell Maxwell..."

A beat.

Chris Ross: "The Reaper always finds his dead."

Ross knocks the throne-like chair over with one violent kick.

The remote feed shakes.

The picture glitches.

LIVE VIA REMOTE

Then the screen cuts abruptly back to the arena.

John Phillips: "Chris Ross just assaulted the UTA Champion in a hotel room, beat him from one end of that suite to the other, and threw him down a laundry chute!"

Mark Bravo: "Maxwell Jett wanted cheesecake and got a haunting instead."

Face to Face

Segment

The camera cuts backstage to one of the production hallways inside Luna Park.

Scott Stevens stands alone in front of a monitor, arms at his sides, jaw clenched so tightly it looks painful.

On the screen, the footage from Maxwell Jett's hotel suite plays back.

Chris Ross forces Maxwell toward the open laundry chute.

Maxwell kicks wildly.

Ross shoves.

The UTA Champion disappears down the chute with a scream.

The crash echoes through the monitor speakers.

The footage freezes there.

Scott does not move.

He does not speak.

He just stares at the screen.

His face has gone red with anger, but the rage is so complete that no words come out.

John Phillips: "There is General Manager Scott Stevens, and I don't think I have ever seen him quite like this."

Mark Bravo: "He is past yelling, John. That is the dangerous part. When Scott Stevens has nothing to say, everybody should start checking exits."

Scott slowly lifts one hand, pointing at the monitor like he wants to start a sentence.

Nothing.

He lowers the hand again.

Still speechless.

Then a hand smacks him firmly across the upper back.

Scott's whole body tenses before he turns his head.

Mike Best steps into frame with a grin, looking far too pleased with himself for someone walking up on an angry General Manager.

Mike Best: "If it isn't Mr. Scott Stevens."

Scott looks at him for a long beat.

Then exhales through his nose.

Scott Stevens: "Michael."

Mike Best: "Scott."

The two men look at each other with the kind of familiarity that only comes from years of history, too many shared locker rooms, and just enough old hostility to keep things interesting.

Mike Best: "You look good."

Scott glances down at himself, then back at Mike.

Scott Stevens: "I look like I'm two minutes away from firing half my security staff and maybe committing a felony."

Mike Best: "Yeah. That's what I said. Good."

Scott does not laugh, but the corner of his mouth twitches for half a second before the monitor draws his attention back.

The frozen image of the open laundry chute remains on the screen.

Mike follows Scott's gaze and lets out a low whistle.

Mike Best: "Can you believe that?"

Scott slowly turns his head toward Mike.

Mike Best: "Chris Ross going out of his way to attack the champion like that."

Mike shakes his head with exaggerated disappointment.

Mike Best: "In a hotel, no less. A nice one. Probably had those tiny soaps people pretend they don't steal."

Scott stares at him.

Scott Stevens: "Are you serious right now?"

Mike Best: "Almost never."

Scott Stevens: "You were going to attack the champion last week."

Mike places a hand to his chest, offended.

Mike Best: "Scott."

Scott does not blink.

Scott Stevens: "In my ring."

Mike Best: "That is an important distinction."

Scott Stevens: "While I was trying to keep Chris Ross from attacking him."

Mike Best: "Also true."

Scott Stevens: "On my show."

Mike Best: "Your show is better with me on it."

Scott's jaw tightens again.

Scott Stevens: "Michael."

Mike raises both hands, calming the air between them.

Mike Best: "Fine. Fine. Yes. I was going to put my hands on Maxwell Jett."

He points toward the monitor.

Mike Best: "But I do it face to face."

Scott looks at the monitor again, then back at Mike.

Mike Best: "I do it in the ring. I do it where everybody can see it. I do it with the lights on, Scott."

Mike's tone shifts slightly, not losing the arrogance, but gaining a little edge.

Mike Best: "I don't sneak into a man's hotel room and throw him down a laundry chute like I'm trying to win a Home Alone sequel."

Mark Bravo: "He's not wrong."

John Phillips: "That may be the problem. Mike Best has a point, but it is coming from Mike Best."

Scott rubs a hand over his face, trying to keep his temper contained.

Scott Stevens: "This whole thing is getting out of control."

Mike Best: "Welcome to wrestling."

Scott Stevens: "No. This is not wrestling. This is my UTA Champion getting assaulted off-site during a live broadcast."

Mike tilts his head.

Mike Best: "Technically, he chose not to be here because he thought that made him safer."

Scott gives him a look.

Mike Best: "I'm just saying, as strategies go, it had flaws."

Scott points a finger at Mike now.

Scott Stevens: "Do not make this worse."

Mike Best: "I have never made anything worse in my life."

Scott's expression says he knows that is a lie from years of evidence.

Mike Best: "Okay. Rarely on accident."

There is a brief pause between them.

The old rivalry is there.

The old respect too.

Neither man is pretending otherwise.

Scott Stevens: "You know I can't have you and Ross tearing through my show every week."

Mike Best: "Then give me what I came here for."

Scott narrows his eyes.

Scott Stevens: "The UTA Championship?"

Mike Best: "The top guy."

Mike looks back at the frozen image on the monitor.

Mike Best: "Whoever is still standing by the time this clown show stops rolling downhill."

Scott studies him carefully.

Scott Stevens: "You really think you can just walk into UTA and jump the line?"

Mike smiles.

Mike Best: "Scott, I'm in your Hall of Fame. I think the line started behind me."

The crowd reaction can be heard from the arena as the segment plays on the screen.

Scott looks annoyed, but not surprised.

Scott Stevens: "You always were a pain in the ass."

Mike Best: "And yet, here you are, talking to me instead of doing paperwork."

Scott glances back to the monitor again.

His expression hardens.

Scott Stevens: "I have to deal with Ross first."

Mike Best: "Sure."

Mike nods, then starts to step away.

Mike Best: "But when you're done cleaning up the laundry chute situation..."

He stops and looks back over his shoulder.

Mike Best: "You know where to find the guy who would have just hit Maxwell in the mouth like a professional."

Scott watches him go, still furious, still thinking, still staring at a problem that keeps multiplying every time someone new walks into frame.

John Phillips: "Mike Best and Scott Stevens sharing a moment backstage, and there is a lot of history between those two men."

Mark Bravo: "History, respect, rivalry, and Scott Stevens trying very hard not to add Mike Best to the list of tonight's disasters."

The camera closes on Scott as he turns back to the monitor one more time.

The image remains frozen on the open laundry chute.

Scott's hands slowly curl into fists.

The scene cuts away.

CHARITY, NOT OPPORTUNITY

Segment

The broadcast cuts backstage inside Luna Park.

At first, the camera does not open on Melissa Cartwright.

It opens on gold.

The UTA Women's Championship sits across a black equipment case, polished beneath the harsh backstage lights. Beside it, the UTA Hardcore Championship rests at an angle, the metal catching the light in a way that makes it look heavier than it should.

The camera lingers on both titles for a second.

Then the shot slowly pulls wider.

Emily Hightower stands behind them.

She is not wearing either championship yet. She does not need to. They are displayed in front of her like evidence. Like the argument has already been won before anyone says a word.

David Hightower stands just behind her right shoulder, calm and still, dressed like a man who has never needed to raise his voice to control a room. Buck Hightower leans against the wall to Emily's left, arms crossed, jaw tight, eyes already irritated by the fact that a camera crew is breathing near him. Dakota Hightower stands a little behind the others, quieter, watchful, her expression harder to read.

Melissa Cartwright stands at the edge of the frame, microphone in hand. She waits until the camera fully settles before stepping closer.

Melissa Cartwright: "Emily, last week Sol Azteca called you out in front of the entire UTA audience. She said that what happened between the two of you is not finished, and tonight she has a chance to pick up her first UTA win when she faces Selena Vexx. Can I get your reaction?"

Emily does not answer right away.

She looks down at the championships first.

Then she looks at Melissa.

Then, slowly, she laughs.

Not loudly.

Not because anything is funny.

It is the kind of laugh someone gives when they are being asked to pretend a ridiculous question deserves a serious answer.

Emily Hightower: "Reaction?"

She repeats the word like it tastes cheap.

Emily Hightower: "You want my reaction?"

Melissa keeps the microphone steady.

Emily reaches down and picks up the UTA Women's Championship. She places it over one shoulder with slow, deliberate care. Then she picks up the UTA Hardcore Championship and drapes it over the other.

Now the image is complete.

Emily Hightower, double champion, standing with her family behind her.

Emily Hightower: "My reaction is that Sol Azteca embarrassed herself last week."

The crowd can be heard booing from inside the arena.

Emily hears it and smiles faintly.

Emily Hightower: "She walked out there in her brand-new mask, stood in the middle of the ring, and gave everybody the same sad little speech people always give when they lose and want the world to pretend it means something else."

Emily tilts her head.

Emily Hightower: "I did not pin her."

She nods once, mocking Sol's words.

Emily Hightower: "She did not tap."

Another nod.

Emily Hightower: "She did not quit."

Emily's expression hardens.

Emily Hightower: "And then, somehow, she still forgot to mention the part where she lost."

David's eyes stay forward. Buck smirks. Dakota looks down for half a second, then back up.

Melissa Cartwright: "Sol has said the referee stopped the Tow Chain Match because her body could no longer respond, not because she surrendered."

Emily looks at Melissa like that explanation only makes the point worse.

Emily Hightower: "Exactly."

She taps the Hardcore Championship with two fingers.

Emily Hightower: "Her body could not respond."

Emily steps slightly closer.

Emily Hightower: "That is losing."

The boos from the arena swell again.

Emily Hightower: "Everybody keeps dressing it up because they like her. They like the mask. They like the colors. They like the pride. They like chanting her name because it makes them feel like they are part of something brave."

She glances toward the direction of the arena.

Emily Hightower: "But bravery did not get her hand raised."

Emily looks back into the camera.

Emily Hightower: "I did."

Melissa Cartwright: "Tonight, Sol has a chance to start changing the conversation."

Emily lets that sit.

Then her smile returns.

Emily Hightower: "No."

Melissa pauses.

Emily Hightower: "No, she does not."

Emily adjusts the Women's Championship higher on her shoulder.

Emily Hightower: "That is the problem with this place. Everybody is so desperate to turn one match into a redemption story. Everybody wants to take one little opportunity and pretend it is the first step toward destiny."

She gives a small shrug.

Emily Hightower: "It is not."

Emily points toward the unseen arena.

Emily Hightower: "Tonight is not opportunity."

She lets the words sit.

Emily Hightower: "It is charity."

The crowd boos loudly enough to bleed through the walls.

Buck pushes off the wall slightly, amused.

Buck Hightower: "Sounds about right."

Emily does not look at him, but the corner of her mouth lifts.

Emily Hightower: "Management saw Sol standing there last week, begging for something she did not earn, and they felt bad. So they gave her Selena Vexx."

Emily turns back to Melissa.

Emily Hightower: "That is not a path to me."

She points downward with one finger.

Emily Hightower: "That is where she belongs."

Then she touches the Women's Championship.

Emily Hightower: "This is where I am."

Melissa Cartwright: "You do not believe a win over Selena Vexx would prove anything?"

Emily's eyes sharpen.

Emily Hightower: "A win over Selena Vexx would prove that Sol Azteca can beat Selena Vexx."

She leans in slightly.

Emily Hightower: "That is all."

David Hightower finally speaks, his voice quiet but clear.

David Hightower: "A ladder does not begin at the roof."

Emily's smile deepens.

She does not turn toward him. She does not have to.

Emily Hightower: "Exactly."

She looks at Melissa again.

Emily Hightower: "Sol wants to stand on top of this division because she survived me. That is her whole argument. She survived. She endured. She kept breathing until the referee decided she could not be trusted to keep breathing on her own."

Emily pauses.

Emily Hightower: "Congratulations."

She claps once.

Slow.

Mocking.

Emily Hightower: "That does not make her a contender."

Another clap.

Emily Hightower: "That does not make her dangerous."

Another clap.

Emily Hightower: "That makes her stubborn."

Buck chuckles under his breath.

Buck Hightower: "Stubborn gets people hurt."

Emily finally glances toward him.

Emily Hightower: "It already did."

That lands cold.

Dakota's eyes shift toward Emily for a moment, then toward Melissa.

Melissa Cartwright: "You said last week that Sol had no wins in UTA. If she wins tonight, that part of your argument changes."

Emily stops smiling.

For the first time in the segment, there is a little bite under the calm.

Emily Hightower: "No."

Melissa holds the microphone still.

Emily Hightower: "That part of my argument becomes one less embarrassing for her."

A beat.

Emily Hightower: "That is all."

The camera tightens slightly on Emily.

Emily Hightower: "One win does not make her my equal. One win does not make her next in line. One win does not undo the fact that the last time she stood across from me, she ended the night unconscious."

She looks down at the Hardcore Championship.

Emily Hightower: "And one win definitely does not erase one loss."

Melissa Cartwright: "Then why come out here at all? Why talk about Sol if you believe she is beneath you?"

That gets a reaction.

Buck's head turns toward Melissa sharply. Dakota's eyes widen just slightly. David remains still.

Emily looks at Melissa.

The air gets colder.

Emily Hightower: "Because people beneath me keep making noise."

The arena boos again.

Emily does not blink.

Emily Hightower: "And when noise goes unchecked, people mistake it for value."

She looks straight into the lens.

Emily Hightower: "So let me be clear. Sol Azteca is not being watched tonight because she is close to me. She is being watched because she finally got told to start at the bottom like everyone else."

Emily turns slightly toward the camera, making the message bigger than Sol.

Emily Hightower: "That goes for the rest of them too."

Melissa's microphone stays near her.

Emily Hightower: "Every woman in that locker room who heard Sol last week and thought, 'Maybe that can be me too,' needs to listen closely. You do not get near these championships because you have a story. You do not get near these championships because you have pain. You do not get near these championships because somebody wronged you and now you think the world owes you a dramatic little comeback."

She lifts the Women's Championship slightly.

Emily Hightower: "This belongs to me."

Then the Hardcore Championship.

Emily Hightower: "This belongs to me."

She lowers both.

Emily Hightower: "And if anybody wants access, they can earn it the hard way."

Melissa Cartwright: "Is that what Selena Vexx is tonight? The hard way?"

Emily smiles again, but this one is meaner.

Emily Hightower: "Selena Vexx is exactly the kind of woman Sol should be dealing with right now."

Emily shifts her stance, settling into the statement.

Emily Hightower: "Vexx is hungry. Vexx is opportunistic. Vexx is mean enough to stop caring about Sol's little journey the second the bell rings. She is not going to look across that ring and see sacred tradition. She is going to see a throat that already got damaged once."

The crowd reacts angrily from inside the arena.

Emily's eyes brighten at the sound.

Emily Hightower: "Good."

She looks back into the camera.

Emily Hightower: "Let them hate it."

Emily Hightower: "That is what Selena Vexx should do. She should go after the neck. She should go after the throat. She should remind Sol exactly what it felt like when that chain took the air out of her."

Melissa's expression tightens slightly.

Melissa Cartwright: "That sounds like you are hoping Vexx injures her."

Emily's answer is immediate.

Emily Hightower: "I am hoping Sol learns."

A beat.

Emily Hightower: "There is a difference."

David's mouth barely moves into something that might be approval.

Emily Hightower: "Sol stood in that ring last week and talked like survival made her special. Tonight, she gets to find out if survival is enough when the person across from her does not care about the crowd, does not care about the mask, and does not care about helping her write some heroic little chapter."

Buck steps forward now, standing closer behind Emily.

Buck Hightower: "Vexx might do everyone a favor."

Melissa looks toward Buck.

Melissa Cartwright: "A favor?"

Buck's eyes stay cold.

Buck Hightower: "Shut her up before she gets hurt worse."

Emily turns her head slightly toward Buck.

Emily Hightower: "No."

Buck looks at her.

Emily Hightower: "Let her talk."

Emily's eyes return to the camera.

Emily Hightower: "Every word makes it funnier when she runs out of excuses."

Melissa Cartwright: "What happens if Sol does win?"

Emily's face settles into that same cold confidence.

Emily Hightower: "Then she wins."

Melissa waits.

Emily adds nothing.

Melissa Cartwright: "That is it?"

Emily Hightower: "That is it."

She steps closer.

Emily Hightower: "She gets to leave tonight with one win. She gets to point at me, look intense, and let all these people convince her that she proved something."

Emily points at herself with the edge of the Hardcore Championship.

Emily Hightower: "And I leave tonight as the UTA Women's Champion."

She shifts her shoulder.

Emily Hightower: "The UTA Hardcore Champion."

Then she smiles.

Emily Hightower: "And the woman who already beat her."

The crowd boos harder.

Emily lets the sound sit.

Emily Hightower: "So no, Melissa. Nothing changes tonight."

She starts to turn away.

Melissa Cartwright: "Emily, one last thing."

Emily stops.

David's eyes go to Melissa now. Buck looks annoyed. Dakota watches Emily.

Melissa Cartwright: "Sol said last week that you were standing on the stage because if you came down to the ring, it would become real again. Are you planning to be ringside for her match tonight?"

Emily turns back slowly.

She smiles.

But this time it is not amused.

It is personal.

Emily Hightower: "Why would I stand ringside?"

She looks down at both titles, then back up.

Emily Hightower: "Ringside is for people who need a closer look."

A beat.

Emily Hightower: "I can see the bottom from here."

Buck laughs.

David's expression stays calm.

Dakota looks at Emily for a second longer this time.

Emily Hightower: "If Sol wants me, she can look up."

The arena boos again.

Emily steps close enough to fill most of the frame.

Emily Hightower: "She wants me?"

A beat.

Emily Hightower: "Let her win a match first."

Then her voice drops.

Emily Hightower: "And even if she does..."

She taps the Women's Championship once.

Emily Hightower: "One win."

Then the Hardcore Championship.

Emily Hightower: "Two championships."

Finally, she points into the camera.

Emily Hightower: "One loss to me."

Emily holds the stare.

Emily Hightower: "Do the math."

She turns and walks out of frame.

David follows first, passing Melissa without a glance. Buck lingers long enough to look into the camera and smirk.

Buck Hightower: "Bottom of the line."

He walks off.

Dakota remains for half a second.

The camera catches her looking toward a nearby monitor where the match graphic has appeared.

SOL AZTECA vs. SELENA VEXX

Dakota's expression is unreadable. Her eyes stay on Sol's name a moment longer than expected.

Then she turns and follows the rest of the Hightowers.

Melissa watches them leave, then looks back toward the camera.

Melissa Cartwright: "Emily Hightower says tonight is not opportunity for Sol Azteca. She calls it charity. But if Sol wants to remove the first excuse, she has to do it in the ring against Selena Vexx."

The broadcast cuts back to ringside.

John Phillips: "Emily Hightower making her feelings very clear. She believes Sol Azteca is beneath her, and tonight, Sol has to start proving otherwise."

Mark Bravo: "Emily is not wrong about the record, John. Sol has heart. Sol has pride. Sol has unfinished business. But in UTA, she does not have a win yet."

John Phillips: "And we heard Emily say she does not need ringside. She can see the bottom from where she is."

Mark Bravo: "That is ugly champion talk. That is what happens when somebody gets gold and starts building walls around herself with it."

John Phillips: "But Sol Azteca has a chance tonight. Selena Vexx is dangerous, opportunistic, and more than willing to attack the same neck and throat Emily damaged in the Tow Chain Match."

Mark Bravo: "That is the test. Can Sol fight the woman in front of her without letting Emily Hightower control the match from a distance?"

John Phillips: "We are about to find out."

The match graphic fills the screen.

SOL AZTECA vs. SELENA VEXX

The camera holds on the graphic for a moment longer as the crowd noise rises.

Then the broadcast prepares to return to the arena.

Sol Azteca vs. Selena Vex.

Match

The broadcast cuts back live inside Luna Park as the crowd settles from the backstage words of Emily Hightower.

John Phillips: "Welcome back, everyone. Moments ago, Emily Hightower made it clear that she sees tonight as charity, not opportunity, for Sol Azteca."

Mark Bravo: "Emily said Sol belongs at the bottom of the line. She said if Sol wants her, Sol needs to win a match first. Well, John, this is that match."

John Phillips: "Sol Azteca goes one-on-one with Selena Vexx, and if Sol wants to remove Emily's first excuse, she has to do it here."

Mark Bravo: "And she has to do it against someone who heard every word Emily said. Vexx knows exactly where to attack."

The match graphic fills the screen.

SOL AZTECA vs. SELENA VEXX

The graphic fades.

The arena lights drop into a venomous mix of green and violet. A low, crawling guitar line slithers through the speakers as jagged images flash across the video wall: broken glass, flickering shadows, and the name VEXX cutting across the screen in sharp white letters.

Selena Vexx steps through the curtain.

She does not rush.

She walks out slowly, head tilted, eyes half-lidded, wearing a crooked smile that says she already knows how to hurt someone before the bell ever rings.

Ring Announcer: "The following contest is scheduled for one fall! Introducing first... SELENA VEXX!"

The crowd boos as Vexx pauses at the top of the ramp.

She looks out at them with no concern at all.

Then she turns toward the hard camera.

Selena Vexx: "Everybody wants closure until the door closes on their fingers."

She smiles, then starts down the ramp.

John Phillips: "Selena Vexx has a major chance tonight. A win over Sol Azteca would put Vexx directly into the conversation and completely derail Sol's attempt to get back to Emily Hightower."

Mark Bravo: "That is what makes this dangerous. Vexx does not care about Sol's unfinished business. She does not care about the Tow Chain Match. She sees an opening. That is what opportunists do."

Vexx reaches ringside, then stops near the apron.

She looks toward the entrance ramp, where Sol will soon appear.

Then she lifts two fingers to her own throat and slowly drags them across, mocking the chain choke from Sol's last match with Emily.

The crowd boos hard.

Vexx laughs, then slides beneath the bottom rope and into the ring.

She rises slowly in the center, rolls her shoulders, and backs into the corner with her eyes still locked on the stage.

The lights shift.

The green and violet are cut apart by gold.

The Aztec sun burns across the video wall.

The crowd rises.

Sol Azteca's instrumental music hits, all rhythm and percussion, filling the building with heat.

Sol steps through the curtain.

The reaction is loud.

But Sol does not come out smiling.

She wears a brand-new mask, clean and whole beneath the lights. Bright colors. Sharp lines. No tear. No stitching. No wound left visible for Emily Hightower to claim.

But the woman wearing it carries the damage anyway.

Her shoulders are tight. Her walk is colder. The warmth that once came easy is buried under something harder.

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

Sol stands at the top of the ramp, eyes on the ring.

Vexx leans forward over the ropes and taps her own throat again.

Selena Vexx: "Can you breathe tonight?"

The crowd boos.

Sol does not answer.

John Phillips: "Selena Vexx wasting no time going after the memory of what Emily Hightower did."

Mark Bravo: "That is the game plan. Vexx wants Sol angry. She wants Sol thinking about Emily instead of the woman in front of her."

Sol starts down the ramp.

A few fans reach for her. She touches a couple of hands, but she does not stop. She does not play to the front row. She keeps moving, eyes forward.

She reaches ringside, climbs the steel steps, and enters through the ropes.

Vexx steps out of her corner immediately.

The referee gets between them.

Selena Vexx: "You sure you're ready for this?"

Sol stares through her.

No answer.

Vexx grins.

Selena Vexx: "Blink twice if you need help."

Sol takes one step forward.

The referee puts a hand up.

Referee: "Back up. Both of you."

Sol backs into her corner.

Vexx backs into hers, still smiling.

John Phillips: "Vexx has been needling Sol since she stepped through the curtain."

Mark Bravo: "And Sol cannot afford to bite. Emily is not in that ring. Vexx is. If Sol loses focus, Emily gets to sit backstage with two belts and laugh."

The referee checks with Vexx.

Vexx nods.

The referee checks with Sol.

Sol keeps her eyes on Vexx and gives one short nod.

DING DING DING!

Sol comes out of the corner quickly.

Vexx immediately ducks halfway through the ropes.

The crowd boos.

Sol stops short.

The referee steps in.

Referee: "Come on, Selena. Back in."

Vexx keeps one arm over the top rope and smiles at Sol.

Selena Vexx: "Patience. You should try it."

Sol's jaw tightens beneath the mask.

John Phillips: "Vexx already slowing this down."

Mark Bravo: "That is intentional. Every second Sol has to wait is another second she gets frustrated."

Vexx finally steps back inside.

They circle.

Sol reaches for a lock-up, but Vexx slips low and snaps a quick kick to Sol's lead leg. Sol turns with the impact and tries to catch the ankle, but Vexx pulls away and slaps Sol lightly across the side of the mask.

The crowd reacts sharply.

Vexx laughs and backs away.

Sol lunges.

Vexx ducks under and rolls to the floor.

More boos.

Sol grabs the top rope and looks down at her.

Vexx walks a slow circle outside the ring, one hand over her heart like Sol has offended her.

Referee: "Selena! Get back inside!"

John Phillips: "Selena Vexx is doing everything she can to make Sol chase."

Mark Bravo: "Because if Sol chases, Vexx gets openings. That is how you beat someone with more emotion than patience."

Sol takes one step back from the ropes.

She closes her hands once.

Then opens them.

She breathes.

Vexx notices the adjustment and narrows her eyes slightly before sliding back in.

They circle again.

This time Vexx offers the lock-up.

Sol steps in.

Vexx immediately goes low again, trying to slip behind, but Sol catches the wrist. The crowd cheers as Sol twists into a standing wristlock and pulls Vexx into a short-arm shoulder tackle.

Vexx hits the mat and rolls quickly to her stomach.

Sol follows, floating into a front facelock.

John Phillips: "Sol caught her that time!"

Vexx scrambles to one knee, trying to pull free. Sol keeps the facelock tight and shifts her hips to block the escape.

Vexx reaches up and drives her thumb toward Sol's throat.

The referee catches part of it, but the contact lands.

Sol releases and backs away, one hand going to her neck.

The crowd boos.

Referee: "Watch the throat!"

Vexx raises both hands.

Selena Vexx: "She walked into it."

Then she looks at Sol.

Selena Vexx: "Tender?"

Sol's eyes sharpen.

Vexx charges in before Sol can reset and drives a knee into the midsection. Sol folds. Vexx follows with a forearm across the back, then grabs Sol by the edge of the mask and tries to pull her down across the middle rope.

The referee steps in fast.

Referee: "No mask! Let go!"

Vexx releases the mask.

Then immediately grabs Sol by the back of the head instead and snaps her throat-first across the middle rope.

The crowd boos as Sol bounces backward, coughing.

John Phillips: "Sol sent throat-first into the rope!"

Mark Bravo: "And that was deliberate. Vexx heard Emily say the throat was a target, and she went right to it."

Vexx does not cover right away.

She stands over Sol and looks toward the hard camera.

Selena Vexx: "Emily was right."

The boos get louder.

Vexx drops down into the cover.

Referee: "One!"

Sol kicks out before two.

Vexx sits up, not surprised, just amused.

She grabs Sol by the chin and forces her head back.

Selena Vexx: "You survived one match and made it your whole personality."

Sol shoves her away.

Vexx snaps forward with a boot to the ribs, cutting Sol off before she can rise.

Vexx drags Sol up by the wrist and whips her toward the corner. Sol reverses, sending Vexx into the turnbuckles instead. Vexx hits chest-first and stumbles backward.

Sol catches her around the waist.

German suplex.

No.

Vexx flips through and lands on her feet behind Sol.

The crowd reacts as Vexx immediately grabs Sol by the upper part of the mask from behind.

Referee: "Hey!"

Sol reaches back, furious.

Vexx yanks her down backward by the mask and neck, driving Sol into the canvas.

The referee gets in Vexx's face.

Referee: "Do not grab the mask again!"

Vexx backs away with a fake innocent look.

Selena Vexx: "Then tell her to wear a helmet."

The crowd boos.

Sol rolls to her side, one hand at the back of her head, the other near her throat.

John Phillips: "Selena Vexx is walking a very fine line here."

Mark Bravo: "No, she keeps crossing it and jumping back before the referee can make it stick."

Vexx pulls Sol up and hooks her in a side headlock, grinding the forearm across the jaw and neck. Sol tries to push her toward the ropes, but Vexx drops to one knee and tightens the hold.

Vexx leans close enough for Sol to hear.

Selena Vexx: "Emily choked you out. I'm just checking the damage."

Sol drives an elbow into Vexx's ribs.

Vexx holds on.

Sol hits another.

Vexx squeezes tighter.

Sol plants her feet, wraps both arms around Vexx's waist, and lifts.

Back suplex.

Vexx lands on her feet again, nimble and slippery, then immediately clips Sol behind the knee.

Sol drops to one knee.

Vexx hits the ropes.

Running knee to the side of the head.

Sol goes down.

Vexx covers.

Referee: "One!"

Referee: "Two!"

Sol kicks out.

The crowd cheers, but Sol is slower to move now.

Vexx smiles down at her.

John Phillips: "Near fall for Selena Vexx, and she is beginning to control the pace."

Mark Bravo: "This has been all throat, neck, and frustration. Vexx is not trying to beat Sol in a wrestling match. She is trying to make Sol relive the one she lost."

Vexx rises and grabs Sol by the wrist. She pulls Sol toward the ropes and drapes her throat-first across the bottom strand, pressing a knee into the back of Sol's neck.

The referee counts immediately.

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

Vexx releases just before five and steps away with both hands raised.

Selena Vexx: "Clean break."

The crowd boos.

Sol rolls away from the ropes, coughing harder now.

Vexx turns toward the stage and points upward, as if speaking to Emily wherever she might be watching.

Selena Vexx: "This is the bottom of the line!"

Then the arena changes.

The lights on the stage shift to harsh white and rusted red.

The crowd turns before Sol does.

Emily Hightower steps through the curtain.

The UTA Women's Championship rests over one shoulder. The UTA Hardcore Championship rests over the other.

David Hightower follows behind her, composed and unreadable.

Buck Hightower walks out next, arms loose at his sides, already staring toward the ring like he would rather be the one inside it.

Dakota comes last, quiet and watchful.

They do not walk down the ramp.

They stop on the stage.

Emily stands in the center of her family, both titles visible, watching the match like she is evaluating whether Sol is worth another breath.

John Phillips: "And here comes Emily Hightower."

Mark Bravo: "Of course she comes out now. Vexx has the upper hand, Sol is hurt, and Emily wants Sol to see her watching."

Vexx notices Emily first.

Her smile widens.

Selena Vexx: "Look who came to watch you lose."

Sol is on one knee, one hand at her throat.

Slowly, Sol looks past Vexx.

She sees Emily.
The crowd noise rises.
Emily does not smile big.
She does not need to.
Her face says enough.
You are beneath me.
Vexx grabs Sol by the head and pulls her up.
Selena Vexx: "Eyes on me."
Vexx slaps Sol across the mask.
Sol's head turns with the shot.
For one second, nothing happens.
Then Sol turns her face back toward the stage.
Not toward Vexx.
Toward Emily.
Something shifts.
Her breathing steadies.
Her shoulders loosen.
The anger does not disappear.
It focuses.
Mark Bravo: "Uh-oh."
John Phillips: "You can see it. Something just changed in Sol Azteca."
Vexx grabs Sol again.
Sol catches her wrist.
The crowd rises.
Vexx tries to pull free.
Sol does not let go.
Sol's eyes stay locked on Emily at the top of the stage.
Then Sol drives a sharp knee into Vexx's midsection.
Vexx folds.
Sol looks at Emily.
Another knee.
Vexx drops to one knee.
Sol looks at Emily again.

A hard open-hand strike cracks across Vexx's chest.

The sound echoes through the arena.

The crowd erupts.

John Phillips: "Sol is looking right at Emily Hightower with every shot!"

Mark Bravo: "Vexx is the one taking the damage, but Sol is fighting Emily right now."

Vexx stumbles backward.

Sol steps after her and fires another palm strike.

Then another.

Each one lands harder than the last.

After each hit, Sol's eyes cut back to the stage.

Emily's face hardens.

Buck takes one step forward, but David does not move. One low hand from David keeps Buck where he is.

Vexx swings wildly.

Sol ducks under.

She hits the ropes and comes back with a flying forearm.

Vexx goes down.

Sol rolls through and rises to one knee.

She looks at Emily.

Then points at her.

The crowd explodes.

John Phillips: "Sol Azteca is not just trying to win this match anymore. She is sending a message."

Vexx pushes up, dazed, and charges.

Sol catches her with an arm drag.

Vexx pops up and charges again.

Another arm drag.

This time Sol holds the wrist, twists through, and pulls Vexx into a short lariat.

Vexx flips inside out and hits the mat hard.

Sol rises.

She looks back to the stage.

Emily shifts the Women's Championship higher on her shoulder, trying to look unimpressed.

Sol sees it.

The look under the mask gets colder.

Vexx crawls toward the ropes, trying to get away. Sol grabs her by the ankle and pulls her back to the center.

Vexx kicks at her with the free leg.

Sol catches that too.

For half a second, Vexx is trapped.

Sol looks at Emily.

Then she drops backward, slingshotting Vexx throat-first into the middle rope.

The crowd roars.

Vexx bounces off, choking and stumbling backward.

Sol does not smile.

She simply turns her head toward Emily.

Mark Bravo: "That one was not for Vexx."

John Phillips: "No. That was a receipt."

Vexx staggers around, one hand at her throat now.

Sol charges.

Running double knees in the corner.

Vexx collapses to a seated position.

Sol backs out of the corner, then looks back up the ramp.

Emily is still watching.

Sol points to her own throat.

Then points to Emily.

The arena erupts.

Sol drags Vexx out of the corner and covers.

Referee: "One!"

Referee: "Two!"

Vexx kicks out.

Sol sits up.

No frustration.

No panic.

She looks at Emily again.

Vexx rolls to the apron, trying to create space. Sol reaches for her, but Vexx snaps her throat-first across the top rope.

Sol staggers backward, coughing.

Vexx slides back in quickly and rolls Sol up from behind, grabbing a handful of tights.

Referee: "One!"

Referee: "Two!"

Sol kicks out.

Both women scramble up.

Vexx swings for the face.

Sol ducks.

Vexx reaches for the mask again.

Sol catches the wrist.

Everything stops.

The crowd gets loud.

Sol looks down at Vexx's hand on the edge of the mask.

Then she looks past Vexx.

Straight at Emily.

Sol Azteca: "No."

One word.

Hard enough to cut through the noise.

Sol snaps Vexx down with a short kick to the thigh, spins behind her, and drops her with a sharp reverse DDT.

Vexx hits hard.

Sol rolls through to her feet.

She does not immediately follow.

She turns toward Emily.

Emily stares back from the stage.

Sol hits the ropes.

Vexx tries to rise.

Sol comes back with a brutal sliding forearm that knocks Vexx flat.

Sol pops up and looks at Emily again.

John Phillips: "Every major hit, every big move, Sol is making sure Emily sees it."

Mark Bravo: "She is beating Selena Vexx, but emotionally, this is aimed directly at the double champion."

Vexx tries to crawl away again.

Sol pulls her up.

Vexx, desperate, jabs toward Sol's throat.

Sol catches the hand before it lands.

The crowd rises.

Sol twists the wrist, pulls Vexx in close, and drives a knee up into the ribs.

Then she steps back.

She looks at Emily.

The crowd senses it.

Sol charges.

Corona Strike.

The kick lands flush.

Vexx collapses.

The arena explodes.

John Phillips: "Corona Strike! Sol got all of it!"

Mark Bravo: "And look at Sol! She is not looking at the cover. She is looking at Emily!"

Sol stands over Vexx for one second, eyes still on Emily.

Then she drops into the cover and hooks the leg deep.

Referee: "One!"

Referee: "Two!"

Referee: "Three!"

DING DING DING!

The crowd erupts as Sol's music hits.

Ring Announcer: "Here is your winner... SOL AZTECA!"

One Finger Raised

Segment

Sol rolls off Vexx and lands on her side, breathing hard.

For a second, she stays there.

Not because she cannot move.

Because the win just happened, and the anger has not left with the bell.

The referee checks on Vexx first, then turns back toward Sol. He reaches for her wrist to raise her hand, but Sol pulls away before he can.

She is not done.

Sol pushes to one knee.

One hand goes to her throat.

Not for long.

Just long enough to remember where Vexx spent most of the match attacking her. Just long enough to remember the chain. The rope. The choke. The night Emily Hightower stood over her while the referee stopped the match because Sol's body could not answer anymore.

Then Sol drops the hand.

She gets up.

The crowd rises with her.

Emily Hightower has not moved.

She is still on the stage with the UTA Women's Championship over one shoulder and the UTA Hardcore Championship over the other. David stands behind her, calm and unreadable. Buck is beside him, jaw tight, staring into the ring like he would love for Emily to give him permission to walk down. Dakota stands a step back, quiet, watching everything.

Sol storms toward the ropes facing the stage.

Her music fades out.

The crowd noise fills the space instead.

Sol grabs the top rope with one hand and points up the ramp with the other.

Sol Azteca: "That is one!"

The crowd roars.

Emily's face does not change.

Not yet.

Sol points to herself.

Sol Azteca: "You said I had nothing!"

Then she points down at Vexx, who is still recovering on the mat near the ropes.

Sol Azteca: "That is one!"

She raises one finger high into the air.

The arena gets louder.

Sol Azteca: "Mírame, Emily!"

The crowd pops hard.

Sol leans over the top rope, eyes locked on the stage.

Sol Azteca: "Look at me!"

Emily slowly lifts her microphone.

Her music does not hit.

She does not need it.

She stands on the stage, staring straight down at Sol from a distance. The belts sit on her shoulders like walls.

Emily Hightower: "Congratulations."

The boos rise immediately.

Emily's voice is flat.

Cold.

Worse than yelling.

Emily Hightower: "You beat Selena Vexx."

She looks down at Vexx recovering in the ring, then back to Sol.

Emily Hightower: "And you want me to be impressed?"

Sol keeps one finger raised.

Emily takes one slow step forward on the stage.

Buck starts with her, but David reaches one hand out without even looking at him.

Buck stops.

Emily notices it, but she does not turn around. Her eyes stay on Sol.

Emily Hightower: "One win."

She touches the Women's Championship.

Emily Hightower: "I have two championships."

Then she points down the ramp at Sol.

Emily Hightower: "And one win over you."

The crowd boos louder.

Sol grips the top rope, breathing hard, eyes locked on Emily.

Emily's face tightens. She is trying to sound amused, but the irritation is there now. Sol got the moment. Sol made the crowd rise. Sol made Emily stand there and watch while the first excuse disappeared.

Emily Hightower: "Do not confuse progress with proof. Do not confuse one good night with belonging. And do not confuse beating her..."

Emily points toward Vexx.

Emily Hightower: "...with earning me."

Sol lowers the microphone for a second.

She looks down at Vexx.

Then back up at Emily.

Sol Azteca: "No."

The crowd quiets just enough for the word to land.

Sol Azteca: "I did not beat her for you to be impressed."

Emily's eyes narrow.

Sol raises the finger again.

Sol Azteca: "I beat her because you said I could not."

The crowd pops.

Sol steps onto the bottom rope, pulling herself higher so she can look farther up the ramp.

Sol Azteca: "You said I had no wins."

The crowd grows louder.

Sol Azteca: "Now I have one."

Emily stares at her.

Sol Azteca: "Move the excuse again."

That line hits.

Emily's jaw tightens.

David's eyes shift toward Emily, studying the reaction. Buck looks from Sol to Emily, almost waiting for the order. Dakota looks from Emily to Sol, quiet as ever, but her attention is sharp now.

Emily lifts the microphone again.

Emily Hightower: "You really think you did something, don't you?"

Sol does not lower her finger.

Emily Hightower: "You are standing there like that number means something to me."

She laughs once.

No humor in it.

Emily Hightower: "One."

Emily points toward the ring.

Emily Hightower: "One match. One opponent. One little moment that these people are going to scream about because they are desperate to pretend you are closer to me than you are."

The boos rain down.

Emily takes another slow step forward, still staying on the stage, still refusing the ramp.

Emily Hightower: "You want the truth?"

She taps the Women's Championship.

Emily Hightower: "This is still mine."

She taps the Hardcore Championship.

Emily Hightower: "This is still mine."

Then she points directly at Sol.

Emily Hightower: "And the last time you and I were in a real fight, you were unconscious."

Sol's grip tightens on the rope.

The crowd boos hard.

Sol raises the microphone.

Sol Azteca: "And you still could not make me quit."

That brings the crowd back.

Emily's expression shifts.

Not much.

Just enough.

Sol stays on the bottom rope, one hand on the top strand, one finger still raised.

Sol Azteca: "You watched tonight."

She points at Emily.

Sol Azteca: "You came out here because you wanted to watch me fail."

The crowd reacts.

Sol Azteca: "But I did not fail."

Sol points at Vexx again.

Sol Azteca: "She touched my throat."

Then she points at Emily.

Sol Azteca: "For you."

Sol taps the side of her mask.

Sol Azteca: "She touched my mask."

Then points at Emily again.

Sol Azteca: "For you."

Her voice sharpens.

Sol Azteca: "And every time I hit her, I was looking at you."

The crowd erupts.

Emily's face hardens completely now.

Sol Azteca: "So tell yourself it was only Vexx. Tell yourself it was only one win. Tell yourself I am still at the bottom."

Sol lowers her hand from the rope and points directly up the ramp.

Sol Azteca: "But you felt that."

David looks at Emily again.

This time Emily notices.

She gives him one quick side glance, annoyed that he saw anything at all.

Then she turns back to Sol.

Emily Hightower: "What I felt was boredom."

The crowd boos.

Emily Hightower: "What I saw was a woman who finally did the bare minimum and now wants a parade."

Emily steps to the very edge of the stage.

Not down the ramp.

Not close enough to give Sol what she wants.

Just close enough to speak straight to her face from a distance.

Emily Hightower: "So let me make this very simple for you."

The building buzzes.

Emily Hightower: "One win does not erase one loss."

Sol does not lower her finger.

Sol Azteca: "Then I will take away every excuse."

The crowd explodes.

Emily says nothing for a moment.

The shot catches her face.

The annoyance is real now.

Not fear.

Not panic.

But irritation that Sol keeps standing there, refusing to disappear, refusing to let the result of the Tow Chain Match be the final word.

Emily finally lifts the microphone.

Emily Hightower: "Try."

One word.

Sharp.

Cold.

Sol leans forward over the rope.

Sol Azteca: "I will."

The crowd roars again.

For a second, it looks like Buck might finally ignore David and head down the ramp. He takes half a step.

David turns his head.

That is all.

Buck stops.

Dakota's eyes lower briefly, then return to Sol.

Emily does not look back this time. She keeps her stare on Sol.

Emily Hightower: "Enjoy your one."

Then she raises both championships.

Emily Hightower: "I will enjoy my two."

The boos rise again.

Emily lowers the microphone and turns away.

David follows beside her. Buck backs away last, glaring at Sol like this is not finished with him either. Dakota follows quietly, glancing once more toward the ring before disappearing behind the curtain.

Sol remains at the ropes.

One finger still raised.

Her breathing is heavy.

Her throat is red from the match.

Vexx is being helped out of the ring behind her.

But Sol does not turn around.

Her eyes stay fixed on the empty stage.

John Phillips: "Sol Azteca has her first UTA win, and she got it with Emily Hightower watching from the stage."

Mark Bravo: "That is what matters. Emily wanted to come out here and watch Sol struggle. Instead, she watched Sol wake up."

John Phillips: "Emily said one win does not erase one loss."

Mark Bravo: "And Sol said she will take away every excuse. That is not a threat. That is a plan."

John Phillips: "And Mark, Sol said every time she hit Selena Vexx, she was looking at Emily."

Mark Bravo: "That is the line Emily should remember. Because Vexx was the opponent tonight, but that fight turned into a message."

The camera cuts to a closer shot of Sol.

One finger raised.

Mask facing the stage.

The crowd chants her name.

Crowd: "SOL! SOL! SOL!"

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

Selena Vexx was the opponent.

But every bit of that final fight was aimed at Emily Hightower.

Platinum Society: It has only just begun

Segment

The camera cuts backstage to gorilla position.

A very happy "Classy" Bianca Page walks through the area with Ace Andrews beside her, both wearing the satisfaction of people who believe the night has gone exactly according to plan.

Behind them, Samuel Scythe walks with the UTA Fighting Championship over his right shoulder.

The Reaper does not celebrate the way Bianca and Ace do.

He simply carries the gold, scowling into the camera as if daring anyone to question whether it belongs there.

"Classy" Bianca Page: "How about it, world? Didn't we tell you? Didn't we tell you? I not only picked up the win tonight, but now Samuel is the Fighting Champion!"

Ace Andrews: "You told 'em, oh Classy One. We told the world what was going to happen and now... now... look where we stand!"

Ace grins and turns, reaching up to squeeze Samuel's vacant shoulder.

Scythe scowls harder as he stares into the lens, though his fingers tighten around the gold on his shoulder.

Ace grins even wider, then turns back toward the camera, clapping his hands together as he steps forward.

Ace Andrews: "Take a look, UTA. Take a good long look. This vision right here? This was destined."

He motions between himself, Bianca, and Scythe.

Ace Andrews: "From the moment The Platinum Society walked inside your hallowed halls, we were always going to end up on top. Nothing... no one... could stop this."

Ace's smile sharpens.

Ace Andrews: "Not Chris Ross. Not Maxwell Jett. Not Emily Hightower. Not even poor little Graham Keel."

Ace laughs and rubs his hands together in glee before turning to look at the Fighting Championship on Scythe's shoulder.

He leans in, admiring the belt. Then he breathes on the faceplate for a moment and uses the sleeve of his jacket to wipe the gold clean.

Ace looks back into the camera with a grin.

Ace Andrews: "Apologies. That English prick left some tea marks on the gold."

Bianca smirks beside him.

Ace Andrews: "But it didn't matter how eager you were to get your defenses and fight Mr. Jett. You choked on your own ego, Graham."

Ace points toward the title on Scythe's shoulder.

Ace Andrews: "And now that title is on the shoulder of a man that deserves it. My Reaper. The new UTA Fighting Champion. Once more bringing some gold to the Platinum Society."

Ace turns to look at the still-scowling Scythe.

Ace Andrews: "You can expect a good bonus in your paycheck this month, Mr. Scythe. Good job."

Scythe grins at that.

It is not warm.

It is not comforting.

It is the kind of smile that makes the hallway feel colder.

He adjusts the gold on his shoulder, the title catching the overhead lights as Ace turns the other way with a laugh.

Ace Andrews: "And of course, let's not forget the fastest-rising woman in the UTA today. My client, and the classiest client a manager could ever hope to have!"

Bianca lifts her chin, proudly soaking in the praise.

Ace Andrews: "She went out against three other women and gave them all a lesson in what it takes to be truly good in this business. Miss Page, as ever, leading by example and putting down those that don't even deserve to share the ring mat with her!"

"Classy" Bianca Page: "Not to minimize your major accomplishment, Samuel, but it's my turn."

Bianca steps closer to the camera, confidence dripping from every word.

"Classy" Bianca Page: "The only real question is which title will I take for myself? Because I won't be the only one of Ace's clients not producing."

Ace turns toward Bianca, smiling with approval.

Ace Andrews: "Bianca, you are my classiest client, and soon... very soon... we will get gold around your waist."

Ace turns back toward the camera, his voice growing louder and more theatrical.

Ace Andrews: "UTA, this is your official warning. We now hold the Fighting Championship."

He points toward the lens.

Ace Andrews: "And Mr. Jett, that means that with five defenses, my Reaper will be coming for you!"

Ace shifts his attention, his grin widening.

Ace Andrews: "Hightower, watch your back, because the Classy One is coming."

He spreads his arms wide, standing proudly between Bianca and Scythe.

Ace Andrews: "And UTA? Well..."

Ace leans closer to the camera.

Ace Andrews: "You have just. Been. Aced!"

Ace leans back and laughs.

Bianca smiles brightly beside him while Samuel Scythe stands behind them with the UTA Fighting Championship still over his shoulder, silent and dangerous.

The three continue down the corridor together.

The camera follows for a few steps before they disappear around the corner.

The scene cuts to black.

This Can't Be Good

Segment

The broadcast cuts back to the upscale hotel suite.

The feed is no longer clean.

The camera moves handheld now, following behind Jacoby Jacobs and Darian Darrington as they step off the elevator and move down the hallway toward Maxwell Jett's room.

Jacoby carries a white bakery box in both hands like it contains priceless art.

Darian walks beside him, annoyed, tired, and deeply offended by the amount of effort involved in dessert retrieval.

Darian Darrington: "I'm just saying, there had to be cheesecake closer than that."

Jacoby Jacobs: "Man, I told you, the first place had cheesecake."

Darian Darrington: "It had a cheesecake-adjacent item."

Jacoby Jacobs: "That is still cheesecake."

Darian Darrington: "Not to Max."

Jacoby looks down at the box and shakes his head.

Jacoby Jacobs: "We walked like six blocks for this."

Darian Darrington: "Seven."

Jacoby Jacobs: "That's basically cardio."

They reach the door to Maxwell's suite.

It is not fully closed.

The door sits cracked open by just a few inches.

Both men stop.

The joking ends immediately.

Darian Darrington: "Uh..."

Jacoby Jacobs: "Did we leave it like that?"

Darian Darrington: "We weren't the last ones in the room."

Jacoby Jacobs: "Right. Max was."

They look at each other.

Neither likes where that thought lands.

Darian Darrington: "This can't be good."

Jacoby Jacobs: "Nope."

Jacoby nudges the door open with his foot.

The suite comes into view.

It is destroyed.

The throne-like chair Maxwell had been sitting in is overturned near the fireplace. A side table is knocked over. A lamp lies broken across the floor. Towels from a service cart are scattered everywhere. The rug is bunched and twisted from the struggle.

The UTA Championship is gone.

So is Maxwell Jett.

Jacoby and Darian step inside slowly.

Jacoby is still holding the cheesecake box.

It suddenly feels very stupid in his hands.

John Phillips: "Jacoby Jacobs and Darian Darrington have returned to Maxwell Jett's hotel suite, and they are seeing the aftermath of what Chris Ross did earlier tonight."

Mark Bravo: "They left for cheesecake, John. They came back to a crime scene."

Darian takes another step in, looking around the room.

Darian Darrington: "Max?"

No answer.

Jacoby Jacobs: "Yo, Max?"

Still nothing.

Darian leans to look toward the hallway leading to the bathroom.

His face twists as he sees the cracked mirror and the mess beyond.

Darian Darrington: "Oh, man."

Jacoby Jacobs: "What?"

Darian Darrington: "Bathroom got got."

Jacoby moves farther into the suite, carefully stepping over broken glass.

Jacoby Jacobs: "Maxwell?"

He looks toward the fireplace.

Then toward the overturned chair.

Then down at the cheesecake.

Jacoby Jacobs: "This better not be our fault."

Darian Darrington: "How would this be our fault?"

Jacoby Jacobs: "We left."

Darian Darrington: "He told us to leave!"

Jacoby Jacobs: "That don't mean he won't blame us."

Darian opens his mouth to argue, then closes it.

Darian Darrington: "Yeah. Fair."

The two men continue searching the room, but there is no Maxwell.

No champion.

No smug voice complaining about presentation.

Just wreckage.

Jacoby finally sets the cheesecake box down on the only table still standing.

The lid has shifted slightly from the long walk back.

A tiny bit of filling has smeared against the inside of the box.

Jacoby notices and winces.

Jacoby Jacobs: "And the cheesecake got messed up too."

Darian Darrington: "Read the room, Jacoby."

Jacoby Jacobs: "I am reading the room. The room says we are in trouble."

Darian Darrington: "The room says Max is missing."

Jacoby Jacobs: "Same book, different chapter."

Darian moves toward the suite door, glancing back into the hallway.

Darian Darrington: "We gotta find him."

Jacoby Jacobs: "Yeah."

Jacoby starts to follow, then stops and looks back at the cheesecake.

Darian Darrington: "Leave it."

Jacoby Jacobs: "We walked seven blocks."

Darian Darrington: "Jacoby."

Jacoby looks at the cheesecake.

Then at the destroyed room.

Then back at Darian.

Jacoby Jacobs: "Fine."

They turn to leave.

And stop dead.

Standing in the doorway is Chris Ross.

He has not knocked.

He has not announced himself.

He is just there.

Breathing steady.

Eyes locked on them.

The hallway light behind him throws his shadow long across the floor of the ruined suite.

Jacoby's face drops.

Jacoby Jacobs: "Oh, man."

Darian takes one slow step backward.

Darian Darrington: "Not again."

Chris Ross says nothing.

He only steps into the room.

The camera cuts hard to black.

The Hunt Begins

Segment

The Hunt Begins

The camera slowly fades into Hakuryu's locker room.

The room is silent except for the faint hum of a television monitor. The walls are lined with replica championship belts, framed photographs, and traditional Japanese calligraphy.

Sitting cross-legged on a bench is Hakuryu, dressed in a white tracksuit with the Japanese crest embroidered across the chest.

His disciple and manager, Sinja, stands nearby with his arms folded.

On the monitor, highlights from recent UTA matches play. The camera briefly focuses on one match in particular.

Yoshii battling in the ring.

Hakuryu watches without emotion.

The interviewer cautiously approaches.

Katy Winters: "Hakuryu... for months you've remained silent following your loss of the UTA WrestleZone Championship after retiring Gunnar Van Patterson. Many have wondered what comes next."

Hakuryu never looks away from the monitor.

He begins speaking calmly in Japanese.

Hakuryu: ??????????????????

Sinja: "My master says... he has been silent for a very long time."

Hakuryu continues.

Hakuryu: ??????????????????

Sinja: "It was never because of anger... nor because he was searching for excuses."

Hakuryu: ??????????

Sinja: "He was reflecting."

The monitor changes to footage of Hakuryu's WrestleZone Championship reign before cutting back to Yoshii's match.

Hakuryu nods slightly.

Hakuryu: ??????????????????

Sinja: "My master says something became very clear."

Sinja: "It did not take one wrestler to take that championship away from him."

Sinja: "It took an entire locker room."

Sinja: "It took everyone."

Sinja: "Every rival."

Sinja: "Every distraction."

Sinja: "Every obstacle."

Sinja: "Every person hoping to see Hakuryu fall."

Sinja: "And only then... were they finally able to pry championship gold from his hands."

Hakuryu's eyes remain fixed on Yoshii.

Hakuryu: ??????????????????

Sinja: "But a king does not stop being a king simply because someone else wears his crown."

Hakuryu slowly stands.

The room grows tense.

Hakuryu: ??????????????

Sinja: "Do not mistake silence for surrender."

Sinja: "My master has not disappeared."

Sinja: "He has simply been watching."

Sinja: "Learning."

Sinja: "Waiting."

The monitor cycles through highlights of several championships before returning once more to Yoshii.

Hakuryu finally points toward the screen.

Hakuryu: ????????????????

Sinja: "The time has come to choose his next mission."

Sinja: "And that mission..."

Sinja: "...is championship gold."

Hakuryu steps closer to the monitor.

The reflection of the screen fills his eyes.

Hakuryu: ??????????????

Sinja: "My master does not chase championships."

Sinja: "He selects them."

Sinja: "He studies every champion."

Sinja: "Every contender."

Sinja: "Every weakness."

Sinja: "He is choosing his next target..."

Sinja: "...very carefully."

Sinja glances toward the monitor as Yoshii delivers a decisive strike in his match.

A grin slowly forms across his face.

Sinja: "Some people should consider themselves honored."

Sinja: "When Hakuryu watches you..."

Sinja: "...it means you have caught the eye of a dragon."

Sinja: "But understand this."

Sinja: "The dragon is not watching because he is impressed."

Sinja: "He is watching because he is deciding whether you are worthy of being his next victim."

Hakuryu never breaks his stare from Yoshii on the monitor.

He speaks one final sentence.

Hakuryu: ????????????

Sinja smiles.

Sinja: "The hunt..."

Sinja: "...begins now."

The camera lingers on the television screen showing Yoshii before fading to black.

Kairo Bey vs. Yoshii

Match

The camera returns to ringside inside Luna Park, where the crowd is still buzzing from the night that has already

unfolded. The ring has been reset. The lights hover low. The atmosphere feels heavier now.

Main event time.

The match graphic fills the screen.

UTA UNITED STATES CHAMPIONSHIP

Yoshii vs. Kairo Bey

John Phillips: "It is time for our main event. The UTA United States Championship is on the line, and Kairo Bey has the biggest opportunity of his UTA career tonight."

Mark Bravo: "And it is not just Kairo Bey walking into this. It is Kairo Bey under the eye of Eli Creed. That changes the temperature of everything."

John Phillips: "Earlier tonight, we heard Eli Creed call All or Nothing a learning experience. Kairo did not leave that night with championship gold, but according to Creed, that was not failure. That was the break before the bend."

Mark Bravo: "That is how Creed gets in your head, John. He does not tell you that you lost. He tells you the loss was part of your growth. And somehow, by the end of it, you are thanking him for the pain."

The arena lights dim.

Not into darkness.

Into gold.

A soft, warm glow spreads across the stage as the crowd begins to boo, knowing exactly what that light means. A single spotlight forms at center stage.

Eli Creed stands inside it.

White shirt. Sleeves rolled up. Hands folded calmly in front of him. He holds a microphone, but does not immediately raise it.

The boos grow louder.

Eli closes his eyes and smiles faintly, receiving them as if they are applause.

John Phillips: "There is Eli Creed. The Morningstar. The man behind The Creed Method."

Mark Bravo: "I hate how calm he is. Nobody that calm before a championship match is ever bringing anything good with them."

Eli lifts the microphone slowly.

Eli Creed: "Rise up..."

The crowd boos harder.

Eli Creed: "...you have all been sleeping too long."

The gold light intensifies until it nearly washes the stage white.

Then the beat changes.

The soft gold glow begins to fracture with blue, pink, and white strobes.

A crisp, glossy hip-hop beat with sharp synth stabs rolls through Luna Park.

"Neon Pulse"

The crowd reaction shifts immediately, mixing boos for Creed with a rising cheer for the challenger.

Kairo Bey steps through the light.

The Neon Ace does not burst onto the stage tonight.

He emerges with control.

His head is slightly lowered, shoulders loose, hands at his sides. Neon accents cut across his gear, catching the blue and pink strobes with every small movement. His eyes lift toward the ring, and the usual calm grin is there, but it is quieter now.

Behind his confidence, there is calculation.

Eight beats in his head.

No wasted steps.

No chasing applause.

Not tonight.

Ring Announcer: "The following contest is scheduled for one fall and is for the UTA United States Championship! Introducing first, the challenger... from Las Vegas, Nevada... weighing in at two hundred and three pounds... The Neon Ace... KAIRO BEY!"

The crowd cheers louder at Kairo's name.

Kairo points once toward the hard camera, but the gesture is smaller than usual. Sharper. Less show. More signal.

Then Lindsey Lothario steps out beside him.

Lindsey does not pose.

Not like before.

There is still presence. Still confidence. Still that unmistakable sense that every camera in the building notices them. But the flamboyant noise has been stripped into something colder. Lindsey stands tall at Kairo's flank, arms relaxed, chin lifted, eyes focused toward the ring with the discipline of someone rebuilt by pressure.

John Phillips: "And there is Lindsey Lothario, another example of what Eli Creed calls the Method taking root."

Mark Bravo: "That is what makes this scary, John. Lindsey used to be chaos with glitter on it. Now? Now Lindsey looks like chaos went to therapy and came back meaner."

Eli turns slightly, looking first to Lindsey, then to Kairo.

He does not shout.

He barely raises his voice.

Eli Creed: "Remember what the lesson revealed."

Kairo's eyes stay on the ring.

Eli Creed: "Movement with no purpose is escape."

Eli steps ahead of them, beginning the walk down the ramp.

Eli Creed: "Purpose makes it progress."

Kairo follows.

Lindsey moves beside him, half a step back, flanking the challenger as Eli leads the way.

The contrast is striking. Eli Creed, serene and invasive, walking like a preacher guiding a procession. Lindsey Lothario, sharpened and still, watching the ring like any threat inside it can be solved with violence. Kairo Bey, electric but restrained, the bright neon rhythm of his body turned inward and counted silently.

John Phillips: "Kairo Bey has always had the talent. The speed, the springboards, the sudden cutters, the Mirage Kick, the Neon Skyline. But tonight, Creed has been pushing something else. Not just electricity. Direction."

Mark Bravo: "And that matters against Yoshii. You cannot just throw yourself at a five-hundred-plus-pound champion and hope the highlight reel saves you. Yoshii absorbs people. He lets you burn out, then he crushes whatever is left."

Kairo walks with a dancer's rhythm, but it is controlled. He looks up at the ring ropes, then down to the apron, then across the canvas.

Measuring distance.

Counting steps.

Counting beats.

Eli slows near the bottom of the ramp and turns back toward him.

Eli Creed: "You do not beat Yoshii by making them gasp."

Kairo stops beside him.

Eli Creed: "You beat him by making him miss."

Lindsey's eyes stay locked on the ring.

Lindsey Lothario: "Hurt him with timing."

Kairo finally smiles.

Small.

Calm.

Dangerously certain.

Kairo Bey: "Eight beats."

Eli's smile widens just enough.

Eli Creed: "Then count for the championship."

The three continue toward ringside.

Kairo reaches the apron first. He places both hands on the edge and pauses, looking into the ring before entering. The crowd begins to clap in rhythm, trying to pull the old Neon Ace out of him.

Kairo hears it.

He lets the rhythm hit his body once.

Then he controls it.

He slides under the bottom rope, pops up instantly, and moves to the second rope. The crowd rises with him as blue, pink, and white lights flicker around the arena.

Kairo gives a clean, confident salute from the turnbuckle.

But instead of lingering in the spotlight, he drops down quickly, landing soft and already turning back toward his corner.

John Phillips: "There is that familiar flash from Kairo, but he did not stay in it."

Mark Bravo: "That is the Method talking. The old Kairo might have let the crowd lift him for a few more seconds. Tonight, he is saving every beat for Yoshii."

Lindsey circles around the outside, stopping near Kairo's corner. They rest both hands on the apron and look into the ring, offering no smile to the crowd, no flourish, no old performance.

Eli Creed walks up the steel steps slowly.

He does not enter the ring fully.

Instead, he stands on the apron, one hand on the top rope, watching Kairo bounce lightly in place.

Eli leans in close enough for only Kairo to hear.

Eli Creed: "Do not switch on the spotlight."

Kairo looks at him.

Eli's voice drops even softer.

Eli Creed: "Make him stand in the dark."

Kairo nods once.

Eli steps down from the apron and joins Lindsey at ringside.

Kairo turns toward the entranceway.

The challenger rolls his shoulders, loosens his wrists, and settles into the corner.

The neon lights dim around him, leaving only a faint pulse across the ring.

John Phillips: "Kairo Bey came to UTA as a burst of electricity. Tonight, he enters the main event with Eli Creed and Lindsey Lothario beside him, looking for the United States Championship."

Mark Bravo: "All or Nothing was the lesson. Tonight is the test. And if Kairo passes, The Creed Method leaves Argentina with championship gold."

Kairo's eyes stay fixed on the stage.

The challenger is in the ring.

The champion is next.

The ring waits.

Kairo Bey stands in the challenger's corner, neon light still pulsing faintly across his gear. Lindsey Lothario remains outside near him, arms folded, eyes sharp. Eli Creed stands beside Lindsey, hands clasped in front of him, his expression calm enough to feel unnatural.

The crowd begins to build before the music even hits.

Then the arena lights change.

The neon fades.

A deep red sun blooms across the video wall.

Traditional Japanese drums thunder through Luna Park, slow at first, then heavier. The stage fills with warm gold and crimson light as the screen flashes images of crashing waves, sumo banners, and the UTA United States Championship.

The crowd roars.

Jed Dye steps through the curtain first.

He has a mischievous grin stretched across his face and a strut that suggests he believes the entire arena has been waiting specifically for him. He throws both arms wide, soaking in the reaction as if he personally arranged it.

Jed Dye: "Argentina! You are welcome!"

The crowd cheers and laughs in pockets, some booing just because Jed makes it easy.

Jed turns back toward the curtain, points dramatically with both hands, and nearly bounces in place.

Jed Dye: "Ladies and gentlemen, hide your snacks, hide your title hopes, and prepare yourselves, because tonight I unleash the biggest United States Champion in UTA history!"

The drums hit harder.

The curtain parts.

Yoshii steps out.

The United States Championship is wrapped around his massive waist, the plate shining beneath the stage lights. At six feet four and over five hundred pounds, Yoshii fills the entranceway like a wall that learned how to walk.

But the moment he appears, his face breaks into a wide, genuine smile.

He raises both arms.

Yoshii: "?????!!!"

The crowd answers with a roar.

Ring Announcer: "And his opponent, accompanied by Jed Dye... from Tokyo, Japan... weighing in at five hundred eighty-three pounds... he is the reigning UTA United States Champion... YOSHII!"

Yoshii begins down the ramp, slow and powerful, every step carrying weight. Jed walks beside him, talking constantly, pointing toward the ring, then toward Yoshii, then toward the title, as if making sure nobody forgets the obvious.

John Phillips: "There is the United States Champion, Yoshii. A former world champion professional sumo wrestler, a former UTA World Champion, and one of the most physically imposing athletes this company has ever seen."

Mark Bravo: "You can talk all the angles and timing you want, John. That man is five hundred eighty-three pounds. If Yoshii catches Kairo once, the Method might need a stretcher."

Yoshii stops halfway down the ramp as a young fan reaches over the barricade with both hands out.

Jed keeps walking for two steps before realizing Yoshii is no longer beside him.

Jed Dye: "Yoshii! Big guy! Main event! Championship! Very important business!"

Yoshii ignores him for a moment, smiling as he gently places one enormous hand against the fan's hand. The kid beams.

Yoshii nods respectfully, then continues down the ramp.

John Phillips: "That is the thing about Yoshii. As dangerous as he is inside that ring, he has always had that connection with the fans. He loves this. He loves the people."

Mark Bravo: "And then the bell rings, and he loves turning people into pancakes. Both things can be true."

Inside the ring, Kairo watches every step.

He does not bounce now.

He studies.

Eli Creed notices and gives the smallest nod from ringside.

Eli Creed: "Good."

Lindsey looks across the ring toward Jed Dye and then toward Yoshii. Their expression remains cold, but the calculation is clear. This is not just a champion. This is a problem with mass.

Yoshii reaches ringside and pauses in front of the steps.

Jed hurries around him, pointing up at Kairo.

Jed Dye: "Hey, Neon guy! I hope you brought more than lights! Lights do not move mountains!"

Kairo does not answer.

He simply looks from Jed to Yoshii, then back to the United States Championship.

Mark Bravo: "That is new for Kairo. Usually he has a smile, a comeback, something smooth. Tonight? Nothing."

John Phillips: "Creed told him earlier to count for the championship. Kairo looks like he is doing exactly that."

Yoshii steps onto the apron with a heavy thud that shakes the ropes.

The ring visibly shifts beneath his weight.

Kairo's eyes flick down for half a second, feeling the movement through the canvas.

Yoshii steps over the middle rope and into the ring.

Jed remains on the floor, adjusting his jacket and grinning like he is personally responsible for gravity.

The champion stands in the center of the ring.

Kairo steps out of his corner just enough to meet him with his eyes.

For the first time, the difference between them becomes impossible to ignore.

Kairo Bey, all speed, angles, timing, and electricity.

Yoshii, all mass, honor, patience, and impact.

The Neon Ace against the immovable champion.

John Phillips: "Look at the size difference. Kairo Bey has to wrestle a nearly perfect match tonight."

Mark Bravo: "Nearly? No. Perfect. There is no nearly here. Yoshii can absorb a mistake. Kairo cannot absorb Yoshii."

The referee steps between them and motions for the United States Championship.

Yoshii looks down at the title around his waist. He places both hands on the belt for a moment, then unfastens it slowly.

Before handing it over, he lifts the championship high with both arms.

Yoshii: "YOSHII!"

The crowd roars again.

Jed applauds on the outside, nodding proudly.

Jed Dye: "That is right! Look at it! Big gold! Big man! Big problem!"

The referee takes the United States Championship and raises it between champion and challenger.

The lights catch the plate as Kairo's eyes lock onto it.

Across the ring, Yoshii looks from the belt to Kairo and gives a respectful nod.

Kairo nods back.

Then Eli Creed's voice cuts softly from ringside.

Eli Creed: "Respect the man."

Kairo does not turn his head.

Eli Creed: "Defeat the champion."

Kairo's expression sharpens.

Lindsey remains still beside Eli, watching closely.

Jed Dye looks across ringside at them, his grin thinning for the first time.

Jed Dye: "I do not like the creepy motivational committee over there."

Mark Bravo: "For once, Jed Dye and I are completely aligned."

The referee hands the championship to the timekeeper.

Yoshii backs into his corner, rolling his shoulders, smile fading into competition.

Kairo backs into his, light on his feet but contained, counting something under his breath.

On the floor, Eli Creed closes his eyes.

Lindsey Lothario plants their hands on the apron.

Jed Dye points toward Kairo and shouts one more warning.

Jed Dye: "Careful, kid! You fly too close to Yoshii, you do not fall. You splat!"

Kairo finally looks at Jed.

For the first time since entering, the smallest grin appears.

Kairo Bey: "Then blink fast."

The crowd pops.

Jed's eyebrows rise.

Yoshii smiles despite himself.

John Phillips: "There is still some Neon Ace in there."

Mark Bravo: "There better be. The Method can sharpen him, but Kairo Bey still has to be Kairo Bey if he wants that title."

The referee checks with Yoshii.

The champion nods.

The referee checks with Kairo.

The challenger nods once.

Luna Park rises around them.

Main event.

United States Championship.

The bell is next.

DING DING DING!

The bell rings, and the crowd does not immediately settle into the usual rhythm.

There are cheers for Yoshii.

There are cheers for Kairo Bey.

And then, threaded between them, there are boos aimed not at either man in the ring, but at the two figures standing in Kairo's corner on the floor.

Eli Creed remains still, hands folded, watching like a teacher observing a lesson begin.

Lindsey Lothario stands beside him, cold and composed, eyes locked on the champion.

John Phillips: "This is an unusual atmosphere for a championship main event. Yoshii is beloved by the UTA fans. Kairo Bey has been one of the most exciting rising stars in this company. But the presence of Eli Creed changes everything."

Mark Bravo: "The fans do not hate Kairo. I think that is the important thing here. They are cheering because they want him to remember who he was before Eli Creed started whispering in his ear."

Kairo comes out of his corner slowly, light on his feet, but restrained.

Yoshii steps forward from his corner with both hands raised, smiling faintly, acknowledging the challenger with a respectful nod.

Kairo returns the nod.

The crowd cheers the sportsmanship.

Eli Creed's face does not change.

Eli Creed: "Respect the man."

Kairo's eyes flick slightly toward the voice, but he does not turn.

Eli Creed: "Defeat the champion."

Yoshii and Kairo circle.

The size difference is impossible to ignore. Kairo moves in quick, small steps, trying to find an angle before contact. Yoshii simply pivots, massive frame turning with surprising patience, refusing to chase.

John Phillips: "Kairo cannot afford to get caught early. Yoshii's entire strategy is built around endurance, mass, and making opponents spend themselves."

Mark Bravo: "And Kairo is a rhythm wrestler. If he gets moving, he can make even big men look slow. But Yoshii does not need to be fast. He just needs to be where Kairo lands."

Kairo feints low.

Yoshii reaches, but Kairo slips around the side.

Kairo throws a quick kick to the back of Yoshii's leg.

It lands with a sharp crack.

Yoshii turns toward him.

Kairo is already gone.

Another kick lands to the opposite thigh.

The crowd cheers the speed.

John Phillips: "Kairo starting with the legs. Smart strategy. If he can slow Yoshii down, he can open up the ring."

Mark Bravo: "That is not just speed. That is discipline. Hit and move. Do not admire your work."

Kairo circles again, and a chant starts in the building.

Crowd: "KAI-RO! KAI-RO!"

Kairo hears it.

For a second, the old smile almost breaks through.

Then Eli's voice cuts from ringside.

Eli Creed: "Do not perform for them."

The smile fades.

The crowd catches it and boos Eli loudly.

John Phillips: "Listen to this reaction. The fans want to get behind Kairo, but Creed keeps pulling him back into this Method mindset."

Mark Bravo: "And that is the conflict. Kairo is not the villain in their eyes. Eli is. They want Kairo to win, but they do not want Eli to be right."

Kairo resets, then darts in again.

Another low kick.

Yoshii absorbs it.

Kairo tries a second kick, but Yoshii suddenly reaches down and catches the leg.

The crowd reacts.

Kairo's eyes widen for half a second.

Yoshii holds the ankle and looks at him.

Not angry.

Not mocking.

Just warning him.

Mark Bravo: "Uh-oh."

Kairo hops once on his free foot.

Then he jumps, spinning through the air and catching Yoshii on the side of the head with an enzuigiri.

The kick lands clean.

Yoshii staggers one step and releases the leg.

The crowd explodes.

John Phillips: "Kairo turns the catch into offense! That is the creativity that makes him so dangerous!"

Kairo lands on his hands and knees, then pops to his feet, the crowd rising with him.

He takes two quick steps toward the ropes, instinctively ready to build momentum.

Then he stops.

Eli's voice is not loud.

It does not need to be.

Eli Creed: "Count."

Kairo closes one hand.

He breathes.

He turns back toward Yoshii instead of springing immediately.

Mark Bravo: "That is interesting. Kairo had the crowd. He had the opening. The old Kairo might have hit the ropes and gone for something spectacular right away."

John Phillips: "But Creed told him to count for the championship. Kairo is trying to be patient, and against Yoshii, patience can matter."

Yoshii shakes off the shot and smiles, almost approving of the counter.

Then he claps once, nodding toward Kairo.

The crowd cheers Yoshii's sportsmanship.

Kairo nods back again.

Jed Dye points toward Eli from the outside.

Jed Dye: "See? Respect! Honor! You should try some, creepy golden boy!"

Eli does not even look at him.

Mark Bravo: "Jed Dye might be the only man alive who can call Eli Creed creepy and somehow make me feel like he is underselling it."

Kairo and Yoshii circle again.

This time Yoshii steps in with a sumo stance, lower and wider, arms open. Kairo feints left, then right, trying to pull the champion off balance.

Yoshii does not bite.

Kairo darts in anyway with a rapid kick combo: low kick, body kick, spinning back kick aimed toward the midsection.

The first two land.

The third is caught.

Yoshii clamps both arms around Kairo's body.

The crowd gasps.

John Phillips: "Yoshii has him!"

Kairo tries to wriggle free, but Yoshii's grip tightens.

Then Yoshii launches him with a side belly-to-belly suplex.

Kairo hits the mat and rolls hard toward the corner.

Mark Bravo: "That is what we talked about! One catch. One mistake. Suddenly Kairo is flying, and not in the way he wants!"

The crowd reacts with a strange mix of cheers and concern. Yoshii gets a huge reaction for the throw, but the fans immediately begin clapping for Kairo to get up.

Crowd: "KAI-RO! KAI-RO!"

Kairo pulls himself up in the corner, one hand against his ribs.

Yoshii does not rush in. He gives Kairo space to stand, still honorable, still confident.

At ringside, Eli's jaw tightens just slightly.

Eli Creed: "He is offering you comfort."

Kairo looks toward Eli from the corner.

Eli Creed: "Do not accept it."

The fans boo Creed again.

John Phillips: "Yoshii gave Kairo room, and Creed immediately reframes it as weakness."

Mark Bravo: "That is the Method. Every human moment gets turned into a lesson. Every kindness becomes something to exploit."

Kairo steps out of the corner.

Yoshii raises his hands again, ready to engage.

Kairo's eyes shift down to Yoshii's legs.

Then to the ropes.

Then back to the champion.

He moves in quickly.

Yoshii reaches.

Kairo drops low, baseball-sliding between Yoshii's legs and popping up behind him.

Yoshii turns.

Kairo hits the ropes.

For a heartbeat, the old Neon Ace is there.

The crowd rises.

Kairo leaps to the middle rope, runs two fast steps along it, and springs off with a rope-walk arm drag attempt.

Yoshii is too big to go all the way over.

But Kairo uses the momentum to twist around him, pulling Yoshii off balance enough to stumble the champion into the ropes.

The crowd erupts.

John Phillips: "There is the neon moment! Kairo uses the rope-walk, but not just to show off. He used it to shift Yoshii's weight!"

Mark Bravo: "That is the balance. The crowd gets Kairo, but Creed gets purpose. I do not know how I feel about that."

Yoshii turns from the ropes and Kairo immediately hits a basement dropkick to the knee.

Yoshii drops to one knee.

The arena erupts again.

Kairo's eyes flash.

Now the champion is lower.

Now the impossible target looks reachable.

Kairo charges.

Mirage Kick!

No.

Yoshii catches him out of the running strike, powering up from one knee and shoving Kairo backward with both hands.

Kairo flips back, lands on his feet near the ropes, and the crowd explodes at the recovery.

Even Yoshii's eyes widen.

John Phillips: "Kairo lands on his feet!"

Mark Bravo: "That is absurd body control! That is exactly why people want to cheer him!"

Kairo looks out at the crowd as they roar.

The chant starts again.

Crowd: "KAI-RO! KAI-RO!"

Kairo's chest rises.

He feels it.

For a moment, the noise gets through.

Eli Creed steps closer to the apron.

Eli Creed: "They cannot win this for you."

Kairo's head turns slightly.

The crowd boos Eli.

Eli Creed: "They can only watch you lose."

Lindsey Lothario does not speak, but their eyes stay on Kairo, watching whether he listens.

Kairo looks from Eli to the crowd.

Then back to Yoshii.

The champion is rising fully now, shaking out the leg but still steady.

Kairo's expression settles again.

Focused.

Controlled.

But something conflicted lives underneath it.

John Phillips: "Kairo is being pulled in two directions. The fans are begging him to trust himself. Creed is demanding he trust the Method."

Mark Bravo: "And Yoshii is standing there with five hundred eighty-three pounds of consequences if Kairo chooses wrong."

Kairo steps forward again.

Yoshii nods once, ready.

The crowd stays loud, but uncertain now.

They do not want Yoshii hurt.

They do not want Kairo lost.

They want a champion.

They want a challenger.

They want Kairo Bey to remember that he can be both brilliant and free.

But Eli Creed is still at ringside.

And the Method is still whispering.

Kairo Bey and Yoshii reset in the center of the ring.

The champion rolls his shoulders, one hand briefly dropping toward the knee Kairo has been targeting. The challenger notices immediately.

Yoshii notices Kairo noticing.

He smiles.

Not mockery.

Challenge.

John Phillips: "Yoshii knows Kairo has found something with that leg, but he is not hiding from it."

Mark Bravo: "That is Yoshii. Honorable, yes. Friendly, yes. But he is still a champion. He is not going to hand Kairo the answer."

Kairo starts circling again, but this time Yoshii advances with him, cutting off the outer lane and slowly forcing Kairo toward the ropes.

Kairo changes direction.

Yoshii turns with him.

Kairo feints a low kick.

Yoshii does not bite.

Instead, he steps in with a massive sumo chop across Kairo's chest.

The sound cracks through Luna Park.

Kairo's body snaps backward, and he drops to one knee, one arm crossing his chest.

John Phillips: "Good grief! One chop from Yoshii!"

Mark Bravo: "That sounded like somebody dropped a bag of bricks off a balcony."

The crowd reacts loudly, many cheering the champion's power, but the cheers quickly turn into a rally for Kairo as he tries to get back up.

Crowd: "KAI-RO! KAI-RO!"

Kairo pushes to his feet.

Yoshii waits.

Again, that hesitation.

Again, that respect.

Eli Creed steps closer to the corner.

Eli Creed: "He is giving you time because he thinks you need it."

Kairo's eyes flick toward Eli.

Eli Creed: "Prove him wrong."

The boos for Eli rise again.

Kairo inhales sharply, then rushes forward.

Yoshii swings another sumo chop.

Kairo ducks beneath it, hits the ropes, and rebounds with a springboard crossbody.

He crashes into Yoshii.

Yoshii staggers.

But he does not fall.

Kairo slides down the champion's frame, lands on his feet, and immediately fires a spinning back kick into the midsection.

Yoshii bends slightly.

Kairo hits the ropes again.

Basement dropkick to the knee.

Yoshii drops to one knee again.

The crowd surges.

John Phillips: "Kairo is putting combinations together now! Strike, move, hit the leg!"

Mark Bravo: "And he is not staying in front of Yoshii. That is the key. Every time Yoshii reaches, Kairo is already gone."

Kairo backs into the ropes, measuring the kneeling champion.

He looks toward the crowd.

The building rises with him.

Then he looks toward Eli.

Eli shakes his head once.

Eli Creed: "No applause. Evidence."

Kairo's jaw tightens.

He charges.

Mirage Kick!

This time it lands, a running knee-superkick hybrid cracking against the side of Yoshii's head while the champion is still down on one knee.

Yoshii rocks sideways and drops to both hands.

The arena erupts.

John Phillips: "Mirage Kick! Kairo caught him!"

Mark Bravo: "Yoshii is down! Not flat, but down! That is a mountain moving!"

Kairo sees the opening and scrambles into a cover, hooking as much of Yoshii's far arm as he can.

Referee: "One!"

Yoshii powers out before two, throwing Kairo off with enough force that the challenger rolls halfway across the ring.

Kairo pops back to his knees, eyes wide from the strength.

Mark Bravo: "He hit him flush, John. Flush. And Yoshii threw him away at one."

John Phillips: "That is the challenge of beating Yoshii. You can create the moment. You still have to keep him down."

Kairo gets back up and shakes out his arms, recalculating.

Yoshii slowly rises, one hand on the mat, then one foot planted underneath him.

The crowd starts a new chant, split but respectful.

Crowd: "YOSH-III! KAI-RO! YOSH-III! KAI-RO!"

Yoshii hears it and nods, smiling through the sting in his leg and the shock of the Mirage Kick.

Kairo hears it too.

Something softens in his face.

For just a second, this feels less like Creed's lesson and more like Kairo's match.

Lindsey Lothario notices.

So does Eli Creed.

Eli Creed: "Do not confuse affection with truth."

Kairo does not turn this time.

He keeps his eyes on Yoshii.

Eli Creed: "They will love you whether you win or lose."

Eli steps closer, his voice still calm.

Eli Creed: "That is why they are dangerous."

The crowd boos hard.

John Phillips: "That is such a twisted way to frame support."

Mark Bravo: "It is also how people like Creed work. He makes love sound like a trap and pressure sound like salvation."

Kairo moves in again.

Yoshii is standing now, more serious than before. The smile has faded. The champion is breathing heavier, but his stance is wider, lower, ready to absorb.

Kairo throws another low kick.

Yoshii checks it with his shin.

Kairo winces.

Yoshii steps in with another sumo chop.

Kairo ducks.

Yoshii turns faster than expected and catches Kairo with a savate kick to the chest.

Kairo flies backward into the ropes and rebounds forward, stumbling straight into Yoshii's arms.

John Phillips: "Yoshii caught him again!"

Yoshii lifts.

Samoan Drop.

The ring shakes as Kairo is crushed beneath the champion's weight.

Kairo rolls away, clutching his ribs, gasping for air.

Mark Bravo: "That is a different kind of landing. Kairo is used to controlling his body in the air. You do not control anything when Yoshii lands on you."

Yoshii sits up and looks toward Kairo with concern for just a breath.

Then he remembers this is a championship match.

He covers, pressing one heavy forearm across Kairo's chest.

Referee: "One!"

Referee: "Two!"

Kairo kicks out, shoulder shooting up as the crowd cheers.

Yoshii nods once, then rises.

Jed Dye claps on the outside, grinning again.

Jed Dye: "That's right! Big love, big splash, big title reign! Keep it moving, Yoshii!"

Yoshii pulls Kairo up carefully but firmly, then whips him toward the corner.

Kairo hits the turnbuckles hard and slumps against them.

Yoshii backs into the opposite corner.

The crowd knows what may be coming.

John Phillips: "Yoshii has Kairo cornered."

Mark Bravo: "If this is the Yoshii Splash setup, Kairo has to move. There is no toughing this out."

Yoshii charges.

His massive frame barrels across the ring.

At the last second, Yoshii turns his back, looking to crush Kairo into the corner.

Kairo drops low and rolls out under the impact path.

Yoshii crashes back-first into the turnbuckles, the ring shaking again.

Kairo pops up behind him.

He jumps to the second rope.

Springboard.

Slingshot Cutter!

Kairo catches Yoshii as the champion turns out of the corner, driving him down just enough to send Yoshii face-first into the canvas.

The building erupts.

John Phillips: "Slingshot Cutter! Kairo countered the Yoshii Splash setup!"

Mark Bravo: "He did not get all of Yoshii, but he got enough! He got enough to put the champion down!"

Yoshii is down on his front, one arm under him, clearly stunned.

Kairo crawls toward the cover, one hand wrapped around his ribs from the Samoan Drop.

The crowd is fully behind the effort now.

Even the fans chanting for Yoshii are clapping for Kairo to move.

Crowd: "KAI-RO! KAI-RO!"

Kairo drapes himself across Yoshii's back and tries to hook an arm.

Referee: "One!"

Referee: "Two!"

Yoshii powers out, slower this time, but still with authority.

Kairo rolls off and lands on his back, staring up at the lights.

John Phillips: "Two-count! Kairo got two on the United States Champion!"

Mark Bravo: "That is progress. That is proof. But it is still not enough."

Eli Creed lowers himself to one knee outside the ring, close to Kairo's side of the ropes.

Kairo turns his head toward him from the mat.

Eli Creed: "You see it now."

Kairo breathes hard, ribs rising and falling.

Eli Creed: "The crowd does not move him."

Eli points gently toward Yoshii.

Eli Creed: "Purpose does."

Kairo rolls to his side and pushes himself up.

Lindsey steps closer behind Eli, eyes fixed on Yoshii, voice low but sharp.

Lindsey Lothario: "Leg first. Then the head."

Kairo hears it.

He nods once.

But as he rises, the crowd starts again.

Crowd: "NE-ON ACE! NE-ON ACE!"

Kairo freezes for half a second.

That chant hits differently.

Not Kairo's name.

Not Creed's lesson.

His name before the Method turned everything into instruction.

John Phillips: "Listen to them. They are not just cheering Kairo. They are reminding him who he is."

Mark Bravo: "And look at Eli. He does not like that at all."

Eli's smile stays on his face, but his eyes sharpen.

Eli Creed: "Names are anchors."

Kairo slowly stands.

Eli Creed: "Let them go."

Kairo looks at the crowd.

Then at Yoshii, who is pushing himself up again, still fighting, still champion.

Then at the United States Championship resting at ringside near the timekeeper.

Kairo exhales.

He does not answer Eli.

He moves.

Kairo sprints forward and drills Yoshii's leg with another basement dropkick before the champion can fully stand.

Yoshii drops back to one knee.

Kairo hits the ropes.

Another dropkick to the same leg.

Yoshii's hand hits the mat.

Kairo pops up and fires a spinning back kick to the body.

Then a sharp kick to the chest.

Then another.

The crowd rises with every strike, torn between cheering Kairo's surge and wincing at Yoshii being broken down.

John Phillips: "Kairo is going after the leg again, and this is effective, but you can feel the crowd struggling with it. They love Yoshii too."

Mark Bravo: "That is the beauty and the pain of this match. There is no villain between the ropes. The bad guy is on the floor, and he is trying to turn Kairo's brilliance into something colder."

Kairo backs up, measuring Yoshii on one knee.

The champion looks up at him.

Yoshii nods again.

Even hurt, he nods.

Fight me.

Kairo's face tightens.

For a moment, respect gets in the way of calculation.

Lindsey sees the hesitation.

Lindsey Lothario: "Do not stop now."

Eli remains kneeling, voice soft.

Eli Creed: "Compassion is delay."

Kairo clenches his jaw.

He charges.

Mirage Kick again!

Yoshii surges upward at the last moment and absorbs enough of it on the shoulder instead of the head.

Then he wraps both arms around Kairo.

The crowd gasps.

John Phillips: "Yoshii caught him! Yoshii caught him!"

Kairo tries to scramble free, but Yoshii pulls him in tight.

Yoshii Hug.

The champion squeezes, locking Kairo in a crushing bearhug at the center of the ring.

Kairo's eyes shoot open as the pressure clamps down around his ribs.

Mark Bravo: "Oh no. This is bad. This is very bad."

John Phillips: "Yoshii has Kairo trapped in the Yoshii Hug, and remember those ribs already took the full weight of that Samoan Drop!"

Kairo's feet kick slightly off the mat as Yoshii tightens the hold.

The referee checks immediately.

Referee: "Kairo, do you give up?"

Kairo shakes his head quickly.

The crowd begins clapping, trying to will him free.

Crowd: "KAI-RO! KAI-RO!"

Yoshii does not smile now.

This is competition.

This is championship defense.

He squeezes again.

Kairo grimaces, hands pushing against Yoshii's shoulders, trying to create space.

Eli rises slowly at ringside.

Eli Creed: "Do not reach for them."

Kairo's eyes are squeezed shut from the pressure.

Eli Creed: "Reach inward."

The crowd boos the sermon, but Kairo is too trapped to separate one voice from another.

He hears everything.

The fans.

Eli.

Lindsey.

His own breath being crushed out of him.

The referee checks again.

Referee: "Kairo! Stay with me!"

Kairo's hand rises.

It shakes.

The crowd gets louder.

Yoshii squeezes again.

Kairo's hand starts to drop.

John Phillips: "Kairo may be fading here! Yoshii may squeeze the challenger out!"

Mark Bravo: "This is where all the speed in the world means nothing if you cannot breathe."

The referee lifts Kairo's arm.

It drops once.

The crowd reacts with concern.

The referee lifts it again.

It drops a second time.

Eli Creed stands still, watching with that same soft smile.

Eli Creed: "Now bend."

The referee lifts Kairo's arm a third time.

For half a second, it hangs.

Then Kairo's fingers twitch.

The crowd explodes.

Kairo's hand closes into a fist.

Not toward the crowd.

Not toward Eli.

Just closed.

His own.

John Phillips: "Kairo is still in this!"

Kairo suddenly slams both palms against Yoshii's ears.

Yoshii loosens just enough.

Kairo drops his weight, landing on his feet, then immediately springs upward with a sharp knee under Yoshii's jaw.

The champion staggers backward.

Kairo drops to the mat, one hand on his ribs, gasping for air.

Luna Park is roaring now.

Mark Bravo: "He escaped! I do not know how much he has left, but he escaped!"

Yoshii shakes his head, trying to clear it.

Kairo crawls toward the ropes, coughing, dragging air back into his lungs.

Eli Creed crouches near him again.

Eli Creed: "Good."

Kairo looks at him through sweat and pain.

Eli Creed: "Pain clarified you."

Kairo does not answer.

He just pulls himself up by the ropes.

The fans chant again.

Crowd: "NE-ON ACE! NE-ON ACE!"

Kairo turns toward them, breathing hard, ribs aching, eyes conflicted.

For the first time, he does not shut them out.

He lets the sound in.

Eli notices.

Lindsey notices.

Yoshii notices too.

And the champion smiles again.

Because whatever Creed wants Kairo Bey to become, Yoshii can see the truth still fighting its way through.

Kairo Bey stays near the ropes, one arm hooked over the top strand, breathing hard through the pain in his ribs.

The crowd keeps chanting.

Crowd: "NE-ON ACE! NE-ON ACE!"

It rolls through Luna Park in waves.

Not just support.

Reminder.

Kairo looks out at them, sweat running down his face, chest rising and falling, and for a second he looks like he might answer them.

Then Eli Creed steps closer.

Eli Creed: "That name is what they need you to be."

Kairo's eyes move toward him.

Eli Creed: "The championship requires what you are becoming."

The boos for Eli swell again.

Lindsey Lothario does not speak this time. They stand behind Eli, still and severe, but their eyes stay on Kairo longer than before.

John Phillips: "Every time Kairo starts to feel the crowd, Eli Creed is right there to redirect him."

Mark Bravo: "And that is because Eli knows the crowd is the one thing he cannot control. He can control the lesson. He can control the language. He can control the pressure. But he cannot control what these fans remember about Kairo Bey."

Across the ring, Yoshii has recovered enough to stand tall again, though the targeted leg is clearly bothering him. He rolls his neck, then takes a heavy step forward.

Kairo releases the rope.

He turns back toward the champion.

Yoshii nods.

Kairo nods back.

Then Yoshii raises one hand and motions him forward.

Come on.

No tricks.

No sermon.

Just fight.

The crowd cheers.

John Phillips: "Yoshii is inviting Kairo back into this match. Not with mockery. With respect."

Mark Bravo: "And that may be the most dangerous thing for Eli Creed's influence. Yoshii is not trying to manipulate Kairo. He is just giving him a fight."

Kairo steps forward.

He moves slower now, ribs hurting, but the footwork is still there. He circles to Yoshii's damaged side, forcing the champion to pivot on the leg Kairo has been attacking.

Yoshii turns with him, but there is a slight drag now.

Kairo sees it.

He feints low.

Yoshii braces.

Kairo instead leaps up and catches Yoshii with a sharp kick to the chest.

Yoshii absorbs it.

Kairo lands, spins, and fires another kick to the ribs.

Yoshii grunts.

Kairo hits the ropes.

Yoshii swings a sumo chop.

Kairo ducks under and rebounds off the opposite ropes.

Yoshii turns.

Kairo comes back with a tilt-a-whirl headscissors attempt.

He spins around Yoshii's head and shoulders, trying to use momentum to take the champion over.

Yoshii staggers.

One step.

Two.

But he does not fall.

Kairo adjusts mid-motion, sliding down the champion's back and landing behind him.

The crowd cheers the recovery.

Kairo shoves Yoshii forward into the ropes and immediately drops low.

Yoshii rebounds.

Kairo pops up with a sudden jumping knee.

It catches Yoshii under the chin.

The champion stumbles backward.

John Phillips: "Kairo is stringing it together again! He could not take Yoshii over, so he changed the sequence in real time!"

Mark Bravo: "That is the Neon Ace. That is not Creed. That is instinct, timing, creativity."

Kairo hears Mark's words from the desk, or maybe just hears the crowd reacting the same way.

He moves again.

He runs to the ropes, springboards, and launches back with a crossbody.

Yoshii catches him.

The arena gasps.

Kairo is trapped across the champion's arms.

Yoshii shifts his grip, preparing to turn the catch into a front powerslam.

But Kairo twists his body before Yoshii can set his feet.

He slips behind.

Yoshii turns.

Kairo leaps.

Slingshot cutter!

No.

Yoshii shoves him off before Kairo can fully hook the head.

Kairo lands on the middle rope, balances there for one impossible heartbeat, then springboards backward again.

This time, he catches Yoshii with a springboard kick to the side of the head.

Yoshii drops to one knee.

Luna Park explodes.

John Phillips: "Kairo did not get the cutter, but he stayed with the sequence! He stayed in motion!"

Mark Bravo: "That is the kind of adjustment that can win a championship!"

Kairo lands hard on his side and immediately grabs his ribs.

The impact hurts him too.

He rolls onto one knee, teeth clenched, trying to force himself up before Yoshii can recover.

At ringside, Eli Creed's voice cuts through again.

Eli Creed: "Good. Again."

Kairo looks toward him.

Eli Creed: "Again."

Lindsey steps closer to the apron.

Lindsey Lothario: "He is low. Take the head."

Yoshii is still on one knee, shaking out the cobwebs.

Kairo looks from Yoshii to the ropes.

The crowd begins to rise because they can feel something coming.

Kairo slowly backs up.

He measures Yoshii.

Eight beats.

One.

Two.

Three.

Kairo charges.

Mirage Kick!

Yoshii ducks lower at the last second.

Kairo's leg sails over him, and the miss spins Kairo halfway around.

Yoshii surges upward behind him.

He grabs Kairo around the waist.

The crowd gasps.

John Phillips: "Yoshii has him from behind!"

Kairo reaches down, trying to pry at the grip.

Yoshii lifts.

Side belly-to-belly suplex.

No.

Kairo flips through just enough to land on his feet behind Yoshii.

He stumbles on the landing, clutching his ribs, but stays upright.

Yoshii turns.

Kairo jumps.

Snap German Suplex attempt.

The crowd reacts, but Yoshii is too heavy.

Kairo strains, arms locked around Yoshii's waist, trying to lift the champion.

Nothing.

Yoshii looks down at the arms around his waist, then over his shoulder at Kairo.

The champion smiles.

Mark Bravo: "Kairo, buddy, I love the ambition, but that is not happening."

Kairo realizes it at the same time.

He releases and tries to move.

Too late.

Yoshii backs up hard, crushing Kairo into the turnbuckles.

Kairo's ribs take the impact, and his mouth opens in a silent gasp.

Yoshii steps forward, then backs into him again.

Another crush into the corner.

Kairo slumps against the buckles.

John Phillips: "Yoshii using that size, that weight, crushing Kairo in the corner!"

Yoshii turns around and looks at the challenger.

Kairo is still standing only because the corner is holding him up.

Yoshii exhales, then grabs Kairo by the wrist and sends him hard across the ring.

Kairo hits the opposite corner chest-first and stumbles backward.

Yoshii moves.

Not fast.

But inevitable.

He catches Kairo from behind and lifts him.

Front powerslam.

The ring shakes as Kairo is driven into the canvas.

Yoshii hooks the leg.

Referee: "One!"

Referee: "Two!"

Kairo kicks out.

The crowd cheers, relieved.

John Phillips: "Kairo survives the front powerslam!"

Mark Bravo: "But every kickout costs him. Look at those ribs. Every breath is a fight right now."

Yoshii sits back on his knees and nods, impressed by the kickout.

He pats Kairo once on the shoulder.

The crowd cheers the gesture.

Kairo rolls onto his side, breathing hard.

Eli Creed immediately steps toward the ropes.

Eli Creed: "Pity is not honor."

Yoshii hears him.

The champion looks toward Eli, not angry, but confused by the ugliness of the framing.

Jed Dye throws both hands out at ringside.

Jed Dye: "Hey! Hey, spiritual dentist! Yoshii is a good man! Try it sometime!"

The crowd laughs and cheers.

Eli does not react.

Mark Bravo: "Spiritual dentist?"

John Phillips: "I am not sure I follow."

Mark Bravo: "Nobody does, including Jed."

Yoshii pulls Kairo up again, but Kairo suddenly fires a forearm into the midsection.

It lands.

Yoshii absorbs it.

Kairo throws another.

And another.

Each shot has less behind it than the last because his ribs are screaming, but he keeps throwing.

The crowd claps with him.

Crowd: "KAI-RO! KAI-RO!"

Yoshii lets the third shot land, then answers with a sumo headbutt.

Kairo drops straight to the mat.

John Phillips: "Sumo headbutt! Kairo just got stopped cold!"

Yoshii covers again.

Referee: "One!"

Referee: "Two!"

Kairo gets the shoulder up again.

This time, Yoshii looks slightly surprised.

Jed Dye points into the ring.

Jed Dye: "Stay on him! The little lightbulb is flickering!"

That draws boos, not for Yoshii, but for Jed's wording.

Yoshii glances at Jed, shakes his head once, and rises.

John Phillips: "Even Yoshii did not love that one from Jed."

Mark Bravo: "This match is weird, John. The champion is loved. The challenger is loved. Both men at ringside are making everyone uncomfortable in completely different ways."

Yoshii pulls Kairo to a seated position and clamps both hands onto the trapezius muscle.

Sumo Clutch.

Kairo's face tightens immediately as Yoshii digs into the nerve hold.

John Phillips: "Sumo Clutch applied! Yoshii trying to sap whatever Kairo has left!"

Kairo reaches toward the ropes, but they are far away.

Yoshii sits heavy behind him, pressing the hold deeper.

The referee checks.

Referee: "Kairo, do you submit?"

Kairo shakes his head.

Eli Creed kneels at ringside again, directly in Kairo's line of sight.

Eli Creed: "This is the bend."

Kairo grimaces.

Eli Creed: "Do not run from it."

The crowd claps louder.

Crowd: "NE-ON ACE! NE-ON ACE!"

Kairo's hand trembles against the canvas.

He hears Eli.

He hears the crowd.

He hears Yoshii's breathing behind him.

And then, slowly, Kairo starts tapping his fingers against the mat.

Not surrender.

Counting.

One.

Two.

Three.

Four.

His breathing steadies.

Five.

Six.

Seven.

Eight.

On eight, Kairo suddenly shifts his hips, rolls backward, and traps Yoshii's head between his legs for a desperate pinning counter.

Referee: "One!"

Referee: "Two!"

Yoshii kicks out, breaking the hold, but Kairo is free.

The crowd explodes.

John Phillips: "Kairo counted his way out! He turned the Sumo Clutch into a pinning counter!"

Mark Bravo: "That was Method and Neon Ace at the same time. I hate how good that was."

Both men scramble up at very different speeds.

Yoshii is slower because of the leg.

Kairo is slower because of the ribs.

They meet in the middle anyway.

Yoshii throws a sumo chop.

Kairo ducks.

Kairo fires a spinning back kick to the damaged leg.

Yoshii drops to one knee.

Kairo hits the ropes.

Yoshii reaches out for him.

Kairo jumps over the arm, lands behind him, and springs off the middle rope.

Springboard twisting cutter attempt.

Neon Skyline!

No!

Yoshii shoves him forward before Kairo can rotate fully.

Kairo lands chest-first on the mat, aggravating the ribs again.

Yoshii rises with a burst of urgency.

He runs the ropes.

Running leg drop!

Kairo rolls away at the last second.

Yoshii crashes hard to the mat, missing badly.

The champion immediately grabs the targeted leg.

Kairo uses the ropes to pull himself up.

The crowd is roaring now.

John Phillips: "Yoshii missed the running leg drop! Kairo may have another opening!"

Eli Creed stands, eyes locked on Kairo.

Eli Creed: "Now."

Lindsey grips the apron.

Lindsey Lothario: "Finish the sequence."

Kairo steps toward Yoshii.

Then stops.

The crowd sees him hesitate.

Yoshii is hurt.

The leg is there.

The champion is vulnerable.

And Kairo knows exactly what Eli wants.

Attack the leg.

Take the head.

Evidence.

The crowd chants again, softer at first, then louder.

Crowd: "KAI-RO! KAI-RO!"

Kairo looks at Yoshii.

Yoshii is pushing up, still trying to fight, still honorable, still champion.

Kairo looks down at the United States Championship outside the ring.

Then toward Eli.

Eli smiles.

Eli Creed: "Growth hurts."

Kairo looks back to Yoshii.

The decision is in front of him.

The Method.

The crowd.

The title.

And Yoshii, still rising.

Kairo Bey stands near Yoshii, the United States Champion still pushing up from the missed leg drop.

The decision is there.

The leg.

The head.

The championship.

Eli Creed's voice cuts through again from ringside.

Eli Creed: "Growth hurts."

Kairo looks down at Yoshii.

Yoshii is still rising.

Still fighting through the damaged leg.

Still refusing to let the title slip away from him.

Kairo's ribs ache. His breathing is ragged. His body wants the fastest route to the finish, and every lesson Creed has poured into him points to one thing.

Exploit the opening.

Do not hesitate.

Finish the sequence.

Kairo steps in.

Then the crowd changes.

Not a cheer.

Not a boo.

A wave of recognition moves from the back of Luna Park toward the ring.

The camera cuts to the entrance stage.

No music.

No gong.

No smoke.

No ceremony.

Hakuryu steps through the curtain.

The White Dragon stands at the top of the stage in silence, arms crossed over his chest, face still, eyes locked on the ring.

He does not move toward the ramp.

He does not call for attention.

He simply watches.

John Phillips: "Wait a second. Hakuryu is here."

Mark Bravo: "No music. No Sinja. No entrance. He is just standing there."

John Phillips: "And look at his eyes. Hakuryu is not here for Kairo Bey."

Mark Bravo: "No. He is watching Yoshii."

The camera cuts back to the ring.

Yoshii sees him.

For a fraction of a second, the champion's face changes.

The pain in his leg is still there.

The exhaustion is still there.

Kairo is still standing over an opening that could decide the match.

But now Yoshii sees Hakuryu watching from the stage.

Taking note.

Judging.

Measuring the United States Champion.

And something deeper than pain answers inside Yoshii.

Yoshii's hand presses into the mat.

His damaged leg trembles beneath him.

He rises anyway.

John Phillips: "Yoshii just saw Hakuryu. And Mark, that did something."

Mark Bravo: "Hakuryu has been watching Yoshii. We saw it earlier. The White Dragon is choosing targets carefully, and Yoshii knows exactly what that look means."

Kairo notices the shift too.

He looks from Yoshii to the stage.

Hakuryu does not look at him.

Not once.

That might be worse.

Kairo is the challenger.

Kairo is in the main event.

Kairo is one sequence away from the United States Championship.

And Hakuryu's attention is still fixed entirely on the champion.

Eli Creed steps closer to the apron, immediately sensing the distraction.

Eli Creed: "Do not look at him."

Kairo's eyes remain on the stage for half a second longer.

Eli Creed: "Look at the lesson."

Lindsey Lothario's hands tighten on the apron.

Lindsey Lothario: "Kairo."

Kairo snaps back toward Yoshii.

But that half-second matters.

Yoshii surges.

Not fast like Kairo.

Not pretty.

Just sudden, heavy, desperate power.

Yoshii drives forward with a sumo headbutt to the chest.

Kairo gets blasted backward into the ropes, the shot landing hard across the already-damaged ribs.

John Phillips: "Yoshii explodes out of nowhere!"

Mark Bravo: "Hakuryu gave Yoshii a reason to push through, and Kairo gave him half a second!"

Kairo rebounds from the ropes, clutching his ribs, but still tries to move.

He ducks under Yoshii's first reach and fires a spinning back kick to the leg.

It lands.

Yoshii stumbles.

Kairo hits the ropes.

The crowd rises, feeling the last burst coming.

Kairo springboards.

Neon Skyline!

He twists through the air, reaching for Yoshii's head.

For one heartbeat, the impossible looks possible.

Then Yoshii catches him.

Not clean.

Not perfectly.

But enough.

Yoshii's arms clamp around Kairo's body before the cutter can fully connect.

The arena gasps.

John Phillips: "Yoshii caught the Neon Skyline!"

Mark Bravo: "Kairo almost had it! He almost had the rotation!"

Kairo struggles immediately, trying to twist free, but Yoshii tightens his grip and roars.

Yoshii: "YOSHII!"

The crowd erupts.

Hakuryu remains motionless on the stage.

Arms crossed.

Watching.

Yoshii powers Kairo upward and turns his whole body.

Front powerslam.

Kairo is driven into the canvas with tremendous force.

The ring shakes.

Eli Creed takes one step forward, expression tightening.

Lindsey's eyes widen slightly.

John Phillips: "Front powerslam! Kairo is down!"

Mark Bravo: "And Yoshii is not done. Look at the champion!"

Yoshii does not cover.

He cannot afford to.

Not with Hakuryu watching.

Not with the United States Championship at stake.

Not with Kairo having come that close.

Yoshii grabs Kairo by the wrist and drags him toward the corner.

Kairo is barely moving now, one arm wrapped around his ribs, legs kicking weakly as Yoshii pulls him into position.

John Phillips: "Yoshii is dragging Kairo to the corner. He is setting it up."

Mark Bravo: "This is bad. This is where Yoshii ends people."

Yoshii places Kairo face-up near the turnbuckles, then backs away, limping heavily on the damaged leg.

The champion pauses and looks toward the stage.

Hakuryu's expression does not change.

But he is watching every breath.

Yoshii turns back to Kairo.

Jed Dye is losing his mind at ringside.

Jed Dye: "That's it! That's it! Show the dragon! Show everybody! Big man, big gold, big finish!"

Eli Creed moves toward the corner side, his voice calm but urgent now.

Eli Creed: "Kairo."

Kairo barely moves.

Eli Creed: "This is not the end of the lesson."

Kairo's hand twitches.

Eli Creed: "Bend."

Yoshii steps through the ropes and begins climbing to the second rope.

Every movement is slow because of the damaged leg.

Every movement is dangerous because of his size.

The crowd rises with him.

Some cheer.

Some shout for Kairo to move.

Some simply watch with hands over their mouths.

John Phillips: "Yoshii is climbing. Five hundred eighty-three pounds going to the second rope."

Mark Bravo: "Kairo has to move. He has to move now."

Kairo rolls slightly, trying to turn onto his side.

Lindsey slaps the apron once.

Lindsey Lothario: "Move!"

Kairo tries.

He gets half an inch.

His ribs seize.

Yoshii reaches the second rope.

He steadies himself, pulling hard on the top rope for balance.

The United States Champion looks out at the crowd.

Then toward Hakuryu.

Then down at Kairo.

For one final moment, the champion's smile is gone.

This is not fun.

This is defense.

This is proof.

Yoshii: "?????!!!"

Yoshii leaps.

Yoshii Bomb.

All five hundred eighty-three pounds crash down across Kairo's chest.

The impact shakes the ring.

The crowd erupts in shock and awe.

Kairo's body jolts beneath the weight, then goes flat.

John Phillips: "Yoshii Bomb! Yoshii Bomb! The champion got all of it!"

Mark Bravo: "Kairo is crushed! He is absolutely crushed!"

Yoshii stays seated for the cover, still breathing heavily, still favoring the leg, but using every ounce of his weight to keep the challenger down.

Referee: "One!"

Eli Creed stares into the ring, calm cracking at the edges.

Referee: "Two!"

Lindsey leans forward, one hand out, as if willing Kairo's shoulder to move.

Kairo's fingers twitch.

But his shoulder does not rise.

Referee: "Three!"

DING DING DING!

The crowd erupts.

Some cheer for Yoshii.

Some groan for Kairo.

Some boo Eli Creed before anyone else can even move.

Ring Announcer: "Here is your winner... and STILL UTA United States Champion... YOSHII!"

Yoshii's music hits as the referee helps the champion rise.

Yoshii limps badly but stands tall, one hand on the damaged leg, the other raised by the referee.

Jed Dye grabs the United States Championship from the timekeeper and hurries up the steps, almost tripping over himself in excitement.

Jed Dye: "Still! Still! Still! Big man still stands!"

Jed enters the ring and hands the title to Yoshii.

Yoshii clutches it to his chest for a moment, breathing hard.

Then he raises the championship high.

The crowd cheers him.

But Yoshii's eyes drift back to the stage.

Hakuryu is still there.

Still silent.

Still arms crossed.

The White Dragon looks at Yoshii.

Then at the United States Championship.

Then back at Yoshii.

He gives no nod.

No smile.

No sign of approval.

Only assessment.

John Phillips: "Yoshii retains the United States Championship, but Hakuryu watched every second of that final stretch."

Mark Bravo: "And you saw what happened. Hakuryu's presence woke something up in Yoshii. That champion dug deeper because he knew the White Dragon was taking notes."

Kairo lies on the mat, still trying to breathe after the Yoshii Bomb.

Eli Creed slowly steps up onto the apron, looking down at him.

Lindsey remains on the floor, their expression unreadable.

John Phillips: "Kairo Bey came close tonight. Maybe closer than anyone expected. But Yoshii remains champion."

Mark Bravo: "The fans wanted Kairo to find himself. Creed wanted him to prove the Method. Yoshii just proved why he is still the United States Champion."

Hakuryu turns away from the stage.

No music plays.

No announcement follows.

He simply disappears back through the curtain.

Yoshii stands in the ring with the UTA United States Championship clutched against his chest.

The champion is breathing hard.

The smile that usually comes so easily is not there now.

Not because he lost.

Not because the crowd has turned.

They have not.

Luna Park is still cheering him, still celebrating the massive champion who survived Kairo Bey, absorbed everything the challenger had, and retained the title in the center of the ring.

But Yoshii's eyes are fixed on the empty stage.

Hakuryu is gone.

The White Dragon arrived without music.

He watched.

He measured.

Then he disappeared without a word.

And somehow, his absence feels just as heavy as his presence.

John Phillips: "Yoshii has retained the United States Championship, but I do not think anyone inside Luna Park can ignore what we just saw. Hakuryu came out here, said nothing, crossed his arms, and watched the champion finish this match."

Mark Bravo: "Hakuryu does not waste his time, John. He does not stand on stages for fun. He was scouting. He was judging. He was deciding whether Yoshii and that United States Championship belong in the path of the dragon."

Jed Dye is inside the ring now, pointing toward Yoshii and shouting toward the hard camera with the manic joy of a man who believes this victory belongs partly to him.

Jed Dye: "Still champion! Still standing! Still too big, too strong, too Yoshii!"

Yoshii finally looks down at the championship.

He exhales.

Then he raises it again.

Yoshii: "?????!!!"

The crowd roars for him.

But the camera cuts from the celebration to the other side of the ring.

Kairo Bey is still down near the ropes.

He has rolled onto his side, one arm wrapped around his ribs, trying to pull air back into his body after the Yoshii Bomb.

The referee checks on him, but Kairo waves him off with a weak hand.

He wants to get up on his own.

He cannot yet.

Eli Creed stands over him from the apron.

Hands folded.

Expression calm.

Too calm.

Lindsey Lothario stands at ringside, eyes moving between Kairo and the celebrating champion.

John Phillips: "And then there is Kairo Bey. What a performance from the challenger. He came within inches of the United States Championship tonight."

Mark Bravo: "He came close, John. He came close using the Method, using his own instincts, using the crowd, using everything. And that is what makes this loss complicated."

Eli steps down from the apron and walks around to where Kairo has rolled closer to the floor.

He crouches beside him.

The crowd boos immediately.

Kairo looks up at him through sweat and pain.

Eli does not look disappointed.

That might be worse.

Eli Creed: "Now you understand."

Kairo's face tightens.

He is too hurt to answer.

Eli Creed: "You were not denied tonight, Kairo."

Eli leans a little closer.

Eli Creed: "You were shown where the work remains."

The boos grow louder.

Crowd: "NE-ON ACE! NE-ON ACE!"

The chant starts again.

It is not thunderous at first.

It is stubborn.

Then it spreads.

Crowd: "NE-ON ACE! NE-ON ACE!"

Kairo hears it.

His eyes leave Eli for just a moment.

They move toward the fans.

Eli notices.

Lindsey notices.

The chant gets louder.

John Phillips: "Listen to this crowd. Kairo did not win the United States Championship, but these fans are not letting him disappear into Eli Creed's lesson."

Mark Bravo: "They saw what we saw. They saw Kairo Bey in there. Not just the Method. Not just Creed's project. They saw the Neon Ace fighting through it."

Eli's smile remains, but the warmth drains from it.

Eli Creed: "Affection is not achievement."

Kairo slowly pushes to one knee.

The effort makes him wince, but he does it.

Lindsey steps closer, not touching him, not helping him up, just watching.

For a moment, Kairo is caught between two sounds.

Eli's voice.

The crowd's chant.

The Method.

The memory of who he was before it.

In the ring, Yoshii notices.

The champion lowers the title slightly and looks toward Kairo.

There is no mockery in his face.

No pity.

Only respect.

Yoshii gives Kairo one slow nod.

The crowd cheers that too.

Kairo sees it.

He nods back.

Small.

Hurting.

But his own.

John Phillips: "That says a lot. Yoshii knows how close Kairo came. He knows what kind of fight he was just in."

Mark Bravo: "And Kairo knows it too. But what worries me is what Eli Creed is going to do with this. Because Creed can turn a loss into a lesson, and he can turn a lesson into a chain."

Yoshii exits the ring with Jed Dye, the United States Championship over his shoulder. Jed keeps talking, keeps gesturing, keeps making sure every camera catches the gold, but Yoshii's focus keeps drifting back toward the stage.

Back toward where Hakuryu stood.

The champion and his manager reach the bottom of the ramp.

Yoshii stops.

He looks up one more time.

The stage is empty.

Still, Yoshii raises the United States Championship toward it.

A message without words.

John Phillips: "Yoshii knows. The champion knows he may have another challenge coming, and it may be unlike anything he has faced since returning to UTA."

Mark Bravo: "Yoshii retained tonight, but Hakuryu made sure the celebration came with a shadow."

The camera cuts back to Kairo near ringside.

He has made it to his feet now, though barely. Lindsey stands at one side. Eli stands at the other.

Eli places a hand gently on Kairo's shoulder.

Kairo looks down at the hand.

Then toward the crowd.

Crowd: "NE-ON ACE! NE-ON ACE!"

Kairo does not pull away.

But he does not lean in either.

Eli says something to him too low for the camera to catch.

Lindsey watches Kairo's face carefully.

The three begin backing up the ramp.

Kairo walks under his own power, but each step hurts.

He keeps one arm pressed to his ribs.

Halfway up the ramp, he stops and turns back toward the ring.

Yoshii is still standing near the aisle with the championship.

The two men lock eyes one more time.

No words.

Just respect.

Then Kairo turns and continues up the ramp with Eli and Lindsey.

John Phillips: "What a night in Buenos Aires. Bianca Page opened the night with momentum. The PAS made a statement in the tag division. Samuel Scythe became the new UTA Fighting Champion. Sol Azteca earned her first UTA win and fired a direct shot at Emily Hightower. And in our main event, Yoshii survived Kairo Bey to retain the United States Championship."

Mark Bravo: "And do not forget the two shadows hanging over the end of this show, John. The Creed Method did not get championship gold tonight, but Eli Creed is not going to let Kairo forget how close he came. And Hakuryu? Hakuryu just put Yoshii on notice without saying a single word."

John Phillips: "The World Tour continues, and after tonight, the championship picture has never felt more dangerous."

Mark Bravo: "Yoshii is still champion. Kairo is still searching. Creed is still whispering. Hakuryu is watching. That is a lot of trouble waiting for the next city."

The final shot finds Yoshii at the foot of the ramp.

The United States Championship rests over his shoulder.

Jed Dye talks beside him, animated as ever, but Yoshii is not listening.

His eyes remain fixed on the empty entrance stage.

Then the camera cuts to Kairo Bey at the top of the ramp.

Eli Creed stands just behind him.

Lindsey Lothario stands beside him.

The crowd is still chanting.

Crowd: "NE-ON ACE! NE-ON ACE!"

Kairo looks out at them.

For one second, something in his face almost answers.

Then Eli leans in again.

Kairo looks forward.

The screen fades with the sound of the chant still fighting through the broadcast.

Crowd: "NE-ON ACE! NE-ON ACE!"

Fade to black.

Conclusion

CARD SUBJECT TO CHANGE

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