

DADDY COMPLEX

SYNOPSIS

A young aspiring journalist decides whether or not to betray his older lover to catch a big break.

Players

TEDDY

*Nineteen year old college senior taking up Journalism;
mestizo, tall and lean, a twink.*

DADDY

*Muscular man, 34, a congressman's chief aide;
Teddy's much older lover.*

MAMA

*Imperious woman who appears to have had several facelifts, 44;
a memory of Teddy's estranged mother.*

PAPA

*Muscular man in military uniform, 34, same build as Daddy;
a fantasy of Teddy's absent father.*

Scene

Suite at the Westin Philippine Plaza. 1999.

Music plays, an instrumental that sounds like Doris Day's "Que Sera Sera." Curtains part and the lights come on to reveal a king-sized bed in the middle of the stage, the sheets a ruffled mess. On the bed are TEDDY and DADDY, both smoking. Nightstands are on either side of the bed, with lamps, ashtrays, and packs of cigarettes atop each. A touch-tone telephone and hotel stationery are also on the nightstand on TEDDY's side, and an open backpack is on the floor in front of it. Atop the nightstand on DADDY's side are the remote control to a television, a pager, and a tube of lube. Clothes are scattered all over the floor. Beside the bed is a massive floor-length mirror. The overall vibe of the room must be high-class, yet coldly impersonal.

The music plays as TEDDY sits up and puts on his boxers. He walks toward the window and parts curtains, then turns to DADDY who has been staring the entire time. The music stops.

TEDDY

What a view. (slight pause) You make me feel like a kept woman.

DADDY

(harsh) Don't talk that way. (pause, then softer) Get your tight ass back in bed.

TEDDY

Another round already? Such stamina.

TEDDY looks back out again. He looks down and to the distance, taking a drag from the cigarette he brought with him as disembodied voices that only he can hear speak.

MAMA

(voice only) Didoy, mijo, can you even stand to look at yourself anymore?

DADDY

Just look at you. God, you make me rock-hard. (pause) Don't keep me waiting.

PAPA

(voice only) Buck up, Didoy, my boy. Play your cards right. Dahan-dahan.

MAMA

(voice only) Escandaloso... Ayy, pobrecito, there are far smarter and more respectable ways to get what you want.

PAPA

(voice only) The man's not that bad. Besides, one must do what one must to get what one wants, doesn't one?

TEDDY

The sunset's breathtaking. (frowns) I haven't seen it from this high angle in years.

MAMA

(voice only) Dios mío, you're sounding less and less like yourself—

DADDY

—Come on, Teddy-boy. I know you want to.

TEDDY

(mutters) As if you would know.

DADDY

Come again?

PAPA

(voice only) Now, anak. Be the man I know you are. Time to shine.

TEDDY

(smiles) There's a party downstairs, by the pool.

DADDY

Ows? Not thinking of crashing it, are you?

TEDDY

Looks like a wedding reception. (pause) Unfortunately, I don't think I'm quite dressed for the occasion.

DADDY

I say you're rather overdressed for this occasion. (laughs) Get over here.

DADDY forcefully pats the empty space on the bed beside him, but TEDDY ignores him.

TEDDY

There's a woman in a slinky white column dress dancing. And she's changing partners rather indiscriminately. She seems to be enjoying herself. Good for her.

DADDY

Drunk off her ass probably. How shameful. And for a woman. Where's her husband? He should get a hold of his wife.

TEDDY

There's a much older man in a barong sitting by himself at the sweetheart table. Might be the groom. (pause) He's drinking. Drinking a lot. Nursing a half-empty bottle of whiskey and sullenly watching her. He doesn't look like he's having a lot of fun. Actually, he looks downright pissed.

DADDY

If I were him, I would drag her off the dance floor and straight to the honeymoon suite. Teach her how to behave like a proper wife.

TEDDY

How very macho of you. (turns to DADDY) Macho man.

DADDY

(laugh-sings) I gotta be a macho man.

TEDDY

Every man wants to be... (whispers) The Village People. What irony.

DADDY

What was that?

TEDDY

(deflects) You know, I just remembered. I stumbled across this article on Yahoo a few days ago. About a couple who got married in Hawaii.

DADDY

Yeah? And how's that news?

TEDDY

It was two men that got married. But they called it something else. A commitment ceremony, I think. Very floral, no surprise. Lots of leis—

DADDY

Now just what are you going on about—?

TEDDY

—In the picture they looked pretty happy. It was very bright, and the two of them were holding hands and kissing—

DADDY

—Okay, okay. Now I get it. Let me stop you right there.

TEDDY

Why? I'm just thinking out loud.

DADDY stubs out his cigarette and lights another as TEDDY sits beside him on the bed.

DADDY

Listen, Teddy. You know that's not possible here.

TEDDY gets himself a cigarette, lights up, and shrugs.

TEDDY

I know that. And I wasn't really going there. It was just an interesting news item I came across. I mean, it was just a thought.

DADDY

Just a thought. Well, have you really thought about it? Nobody in power will work to make something so... controversial... legal here. The church is against it. Lawmakers don't even think about it. And the masses are more concerned with putting food on the table day after day. It's not a priority.

TEDDY

That's a real shame. I'm sure there's one solon out there who's for it.

DADDY

I assure you there's none. Filipinos don't really elect lawmakers based on policy positions. (pause) You remember who I work for, don't you?

TEDDY

Sure. The congressman from Lanao?

DADDY

(laughs) You're half-right, at least.

TEDDY

I remember you called him lazy—

DADDY

—I never said that. I would never say that. (pause) Tatay's just bored. He finds duties in the House exasperating. Not his style. Not at all what he signed up for.

TEDDY

You said he spends most of his days awol, watching movies.

DADDY

He prefers his old role, so I guess he can't help it. Can't teach an old dog new tricks. And Tatay's always been a renegade. He does what he wants, when he wants. That's just one of the things so great about him. (pause) Tatay's the best.

TEDDY

So, why did he run for congress if he didn't like what he was getting himself into?

DADDY

Political reasons. You wouldn't understand, Teddy-boy. (slight pause) Then again, I suppose you might have an idea of how it is. (pause) Regardless. Tatay is a real man, more than the president even. A true leader. He runs his city with an iron fist. Even all the way from here, in the imperial capital, he holds a tight grip.

TEDDY

Sure. With his death squads, right?

DADDY

Just where the hell—(pause, changes track) Where'd you hear such nonsense?

TEDDY

I don't know. Must have read it somewhere.

DADDY

Lies from his enemies. The CHR is out for blood, but they know nothing.

TEDDY

But all the unsolved murders—

DADDY

—They. Do not. Exist. (pause, then laughs) Why cry over dead criminals?

DADDY is getting riled up. TEDDY puts his cigarette on the ashtray and straddles DADDY.

TEDDY

Alright, alright. They don't exist. (pause) But I do, don't I? I'm real.

TEDDY begins moving his hips.

DADDY

Yes... Right there, Teddy-boy... You're so hot...

TEDDY

You like this?

DADDY

Yes...

TEDDY

You like me?

DADDY

Yes!

As DADDY thrusts up at him, TEDDY abruptly stops. He gets up and moves away from the bed, taking his cigarette with him as the voices return. TEDDY goes to the window, looks out, then looks back at DADDY after a few seconds.

MAMA

(voice only) Mijo, you're going off-script! Get back on track. Get him back on track. Por dios por santo, you nearly had something back there.

DADDY

What's with the blue-balling, Teddy-boy? Why are you suddenly a cock tease?

MAMA

(voice only) Ayy, you're in way over your head, mijo.

TEDDY

What are we? What is this arrangement of ours?

MAMA

(voice only) Dios mío. Your emotions are clouding your judgment.

DADDY takes a puff from his cigarette and exhales.

DADDY

Well, we're having fun. (slight pause) A real fun ride.

TEDDY

That's all? You take me here, and we're just having fun?

DADDY

Aren't you enjoying? We're in one of the best rooms in this five-star hotel, paid for by me. Always the best, for you. What more do you want from me?

TEDDY looks out the window and takes a drag from his cigarette. He does not answer.

DADDY

Do you want a car? A condo in a high-rise? I'm sorry, Teddy, but we've known each other for what now, around three months? We're just not there yet.

TEDDY still doesn't answer.

DADDY

And I'm no sugar daddy. I never took you for some kind of gold digger.

TEDDY

I'm not! That's not what I meant!

DADDY

Then what? (pause) Are you actually entertaining the idea of marriage? With me?

Are you out of your mind?

TEDDY

Haven't you ever thought of it? Not even marriage. Screw that. Just, something more real. A future. With me.

DADDY

Pisting yawa. Did I shoot up your ass, straight into your brain, and give you an aneurysm? I'm married. I have a son and a daughter. What, do you want me to leave my family for us to be together? Because let me tell you now, that is never going to happen. (pause) Tatay is my wife's uncle. Don't you know what he's capable of? If I even think of leaving her, he'll have me killed by— (pause, changes track) He punishes betrayal. But he rewards loyalty. What was I before Tatay took me under his wing? I wouldn't have achieved as much as I have without him. Look where I am now: chief aide of a congressman, married into a landed dynasty, with more cash in various bank accounts than I can imagine, all thanks to him. I'm taken care of. Really well. Teddy-boy, you have no idea—

MAMA

(voice only) —Ahh, muy bien, mijo. He's singing now.

DADDY

It's only been how long and already you're soaking in the fringe benefits. Can't you see how lavished you are? Imagine, a strapped university scholar, and from a disgraced family no less, living the high life. This is as real as it gets, Teddy-boy. Take it or leave it. As for the future, well, whatever will, will be. And if you ever even dare think about... (pause) Listen. I like you, but if you can't get all this through your thick skull, we should end things right now. Is that what you want?

TEDDY

Of course not!

DADDY

So. Are we clear? You get where I'm coming from?

TEDDY and DADDY stare intently at each other. TEDDY has been fidgeting with his cigarette, but then takes a drag and sighs.

TEDDY

Yes, of course.

DADDY

Good boy. Now come here and finish what you started.

DADDY fondles himself under the sheets and pats the empty space beside him. TEDDY stubs out his cigarette and returns to the bed. DADDY stubs out his own cigarette as TEDDY snuggles against him and rubs circles on his chest. With his free hand, DADDY takes another stick from the pack on the nightstand and puts it between his lips.

MAMA

(voice only) Santísimo, Didoy. Did you hear what he said?

PAPA

(voice only) He said he likes you, anak.

MAMA

(voice only) Puñeta, that's not what—

TEDDY

—So you like me? You really, really like me?

DADDY

That's what I said.

TEDDY

Good. I really like you too. (pause) But you smoke a lot.

DADDY looks at TEDDY, but grabs the lighter and lights up anyway.

DADDY

You're one to talk. (slight pause) Tatay is actually thinking of implementing an ordinance to ban smoking when he becomes mayor again.

TEDDY

You're okay with that?

DADDY

Not like I'll be affected.

TEDDY

Why doesn't he just pass a law while he's in the House?

DADDY

Not his style. The House is a bureaucratic nightmare. And there's the tobacco lobby too. (pause) You have to understand. Tatay may be part of the majority, but he's still only one congressman. A city ordinance would be much easier. And faster. Filipinos want fast results, and Tatay, as mayor, promises fast results.

TEDDY

And you're sure he'll be mayor again?

DADDY

The city is his and his family's. Maybe soon even the whole province. (pause) But that's probably just wishful thinking on my part.

TEDDY

What do you mean his and his family's?

The telephone on TEDDY's side rings. DADDY reaches for it from across the bed.

DADDY

Hello? (pause) What is it? (pause) Okay. And you're waiting at the bar? Alright.

I'll be right down.

DADDY puts the phone down and gets dressed as TEDDY watches, swathed under the covers.

TEDDY

Who was that?

DADDY

(distracted) Speak of the devils... An assistant from the office. Seems like

Tatay's eldest maimed a security guard.

TEDDY

Oh. That's terrible. Is he always so... volatile?

DADDY

Happens all the time. Then it's up to me to clean up after. Like father, like son.

TEDDY

What do you mean? You clean up after his father too? (pause) Hey...

DADDY ignores the question as he finishes getting dressed. He is about to leave, when he notices TEDDY frowning, waiting for an answer.

DADDY

What's wrong this time, Teddy-boy?

TEDDY

Huh? What do you mean?

DADDY

You're frowning. (slight pause) Upset that I'm leaving?

TEDDY

Ahh. It's just, you got us this nice, big room and now you're leaving me alone in it. I was hoping we could make the most of it.

DADDY

Oh, don't worry. I won't be long. Ten minutes, tops. Promise.

TEDDY

If you say so.

DADDY

Hey, don't be that way.

TEDDY

I'm fine! Go. Whoever you're meeting is waiting for you.

DADDY

Watch TV first. I'll be right back.

DADDY goes to the desk to press on the remote. Audio of the primetime news plays. DADDY gives TEDDY the remote and gives him a peck on the forehead. TEDDY pulls him down to give him a more passionate kiss, after which DADDY begins walking offstage.

TEDDY

No rush!

Once DADDY is offstage, TEDDY clicks the TV off, wraps the blanket around himself, and stands up. He grabs the pad from the nightstand and furiously scribbles notes. He stuffs the notes inside his backpack and pulls out a tape recorder from inside. He puts it to his ear and listens as he walks about until he catches his reflection on the mirror. He puts the tape recorder down and ties the blanket into a gown. He begins posing. Mid-pose, the mirror lights up, becoming two-way, revealing MAMA on the other side in a similar pose, and PAPA behind her.

MAMA

You think you're clever, don't you? (pause) Though even I must admit saying Lanao was an inspired touch. Bravo.

TEDDY

You again.

MAMA

Is that any way to greet your mamá? I would think you'd be happier to see me. It's been, what, five years since you last saw all this in person?

TEDDY

I hear you loud enough in my head, thank you very much.

TEDDY grabs the pager from the nightstand and looks through the messages. Then, he grabs the tape recorder and continues listening. PAPA stands beside MAMA behind the glass.

PAPA

Oh, leave the boy be, Letitia. Your face frightens him.

MAMA

¡Ay, de mí! It's all the work he assumes I've had done. Just spiteful. He should know I have far greater concerns than time drawing lines on my face. (pause) I do

hate that you'll always look younger than me, Rigoberto. Didoy can't even imagine how you might look now. All because you left when he was six.

PAPA

Oh? You left him when he was fourteen and never returned. What's your point?

TEDDY

Shush! I can barely hear anything.

PAPA

Did you catch anything good?

TEDDY

I think so. (slight pause) I hope so.

MAMA

I'm surprised you haven't caught anything from what you've been doing with that man. (pause) A whore for a story. The laziest route to go.

TEDDY glares at MAMA.

PAPA

You were always so hard on him. Horrible mother. No wonder he despises you.

MAMA

Was I so horrible? (shrugs) Unlike you, I was with him longer.

TEDDY

You were there longer, but you did nothing with that time. On and on you went about our lost wealth. It was as if I didn't exist. (slight pause) Just shut up.

MAMA

You know that's not up to me. You should be happier, hijo. At least now, I'm always with you. (pause) Mi niño, the aspiring investigative journalist. Reviewing the incriminating information your lover revealed mid-coitus? How adorable. Who could have guessed that our son would end up treading this path?

PAPA

Nasty woman. The boy is trying. You're making me proud, anak.

TEDDY

Thank you, Papa.

MAMA

(laughing) Hilarious! Do you honestly think—

PAPA

Didoy doesn't care about what you think he thinks.

TEDDY

I don't care about what you think I think, Mama!

MAMA

Oh, must you be so histrionic? (pause) Is it so impossible for you to believe that I care? Imagine how much better off you could be with your mamá's help.

TEDDY

And just how would that have worked exactly? You ran off to the south of France with your French lover. You left me all alone, all on my own, all by myself!

MAMA

Ayy! Such eloquence. So articulate. Truly, you will be a fine journalist. (laughs) Didoy, mijo, lo pasado, pasado está. Still so much vitriol for me, but what of your coward of a father? El traidor. Pendejo. Leaving the two of us here when the first family fled the palace for Hawaii after that misguided revolution. I always pray that wherever he is, he's choking. (pause) He abandoned us in near destitution, surviving on the scraps from your decrepit lola's dwindling trust fund, and with me constantly at risk of indictment by the usurpers. Can you honestly blame me for seeking greener, richer pastures with my well-endowed francés? Do you still?

(pause) Do you want to hear me say it broke my heart to leave you? (exaggerated)
It broke my heart to leave you, mijo. It was a terrible mistake. Every night I cry
myself to sleep for not taking you with me. (fake cries then laughs cruelly)

PAPA

It broke my heart to leave you, anak. I should have taken you with me. It was a
terrible mistake. Wherever I am, my boy, I think about you. Always.

MAMA

How silly. (slight pause) Unlike him, you can always call me, Didoy. I'm far, but
not out of reach. You know that. I left you a number. Somewhere. If you've lost
it, I'm sure you can find it. You're an aspiring investigative journalist, after all.
You simply choose not to seek me out. Why is that? Out of spite? Misdirected
anger? Time to grow up, mijo. (sighs) All this does break my heart. But still, you
refuse to entertain the possibility that your mamá misses you so. Very, very much.

TEDDY

What heart? (slight pause) And you, miss me? Very, very much? Talk about silly.
Even in my head you can't make amends right.

MAMA

(laughs) You're probably right. Then again, you'll never really know if I can
make things right unless you call. You've never even tried.

PAPA

Enough with the ancient history lesson, you harpy. My boy, you have work to do. Time is of the essence. Do this, and you'll get your big break.

MAMA

Ahh, of course. Tell me, mijo, what exactly is your plan?

PAPA

You have a good plan, anak.

MAMA

You'll forward the info you get to your friend in the PCIJ, and then? One flimsy report, from information unethically procured, and about a provincial politician nobody really cares about at the moment, and voila, your big break?

TEDDY

Worked for Jessica Soho. All she needed was one report. She was just eating halo-halo in Guagua, when boom! Coverage. Literally.

MAMA

Ayy. Todavía tan joven, and so naïve. (pause) Let's say the PCIJ finds your info newsworthy and they print it. And you get your big break. What of your lover?

PAPA

He did say he likes you. The first time you saw him during that symposium at school, he reminded you of how I was with you when you were little. And when you two locked eyes... (slight pause) Remember when we spent that one semana santa in this hotel many years ago? We were in the pool and you wanted to swim in the deep end. Even when you were small, you were always so brave. It wasn't safe, but you were adamant. So I carried you as you fluttered your arms and kicked your legs toward the deep. You felt so accomplished, all because of me.

MAMA

Is that how it happened? (laughs) As I recall, Didoy was throwing quite the tantrum in the kiddie pool, crying and flailing about, splashing water everywhere. When you finally had enough, you let him. To 'scare some sense into the brat.' You heard that, Didoy. If not for the lifeguard on duty, you would have drowned.

PAPA

Nonsense. Your mother had more time with you and she could never foster the same bond that we had, anak. I provided for you. Every comfort and luxury you could imagine and wanted, I readily gave. I cared for you. For all my faults, I was still a generous father. I don't blame you for missing it. Or for looking for it in someone else. (slight pause) You like him, Didoy. And you like what you can have with him. You don't have to admit it, but I understand.

MAMA

(looks at PAPA, then at TEDDY, then laughs) How can you be so full of lies? So delusional? (pause) Ahh, but to the more pressing topic at hand. What do you think your lover will do when he finds out you seek to betray him? Think he'll take it sitting down? You know he's not that kind of man.

TEDDY

But he said he likes me. He's in the palm of my hand. (pause) He won't find out.

MAMA

Ahh, so no big break then?

TEDDY

My name doesn't have to go on the byline. All I have to prove is that I'm willing to go the extra mile for a story.

PAPA

You are a hard worker, anak.

MAMA

Extra mile? More like three and a half inches at most. (laughs) And you're absolutely certain he'll never find out?

PAPA

Didoy is smart. He's covered all his bases. He can take care of himself.

TEDDY

I've covered all my bases. He knows little about me. He doesn't know I'm taking up journalism. Or that I have a friend with the PCIJ. He doesn't even know my last name. (pause) I can take care of myself. I can have my cake and eat it too.

MAMA

Greedy, greedy. Well, you are our son. (laughs) Do reconsider, though. If I—

TEDDY

Enough! I can do this. And I want nothing to do with you, Mama.

PAPA

He wants nothing to do with you, Letitia. Anak, you will get your big break.

MAMA

Mijo, it's not about want. You need to hear what I'm telling you. You want this idea of a father figure, but you need your mamá. You're just too stubborn to admit it. Who else can point you in the right direction? You're walking on thin ice, mijo.

TEDDY

I know what I'm doing. And I have no reason to talk to you except to get information from you, to expose you for the crimes that you abetted.

MAMA

(laughs) Abetted! Exactly! That's the extent of my wrongdoing. Your father is the criminal. We just benefitted from it, for however long that lasted. (pause) Santísimo, my nerves. Be a dear and get your mamá a cigarette.

TEDDY grabs the pack from the table. He hands one to MAMA. PAPA motions for one and is given a stick as well. TEDDY lights up and he lights MAMA's cigarette. PAPA asks for MAMA to light his, and she begrudgingly does. They return to the mirror, staring at each other.

PAPA

I was never caught. I was never tried. I'm no criminal. Stop tarnishing my name to the boy. I was a good father until I was forced to leave.

MAMA

(laughs) Ahh, Rigoberto. You were never like this. Had you discovered our son's proclivities, I am certain you would have disowned him. (pause) I wonder when Didoy will admit to himself that this has no semblance at all to his father...

PAPA smokes quietly. TEDDY glares at MAMA, then resumes listening to the recording.

MAMA

Have you gotten to the part where he slips?

TEDDY

Yes. He's talking about how his boss is his wife's uncle.

MAMA

Ahh, you're getting warmer. (slight pause) He knows about you, Didoy. And though you worry, you ignore it. (sizes TEDDY up) That look does not suit you.

TEDDY

Oh? What do you care?

MAMA

Maricón. Is this what you do by yourself? Wrap yourself up in blanket gowns? Teodor, grow up. Do you fancy yourself some kind of femme fatale?

TEDDY

If that's what it looks like. What Teddy wants, Teddy gets.

PAPA

(laughs) That's our son. (pause) You never could accept him, Letitia.

MAMA

Impostor. (begins to laugh, but it sounds hollow and eventually fades) The real Rigoberto could never have been so understanding. (pause) You'll have to come to terms with that, mijo. I hope you do. Sooner than later, hopefully.

TEDDY

Come to terms with what?

PAPA

The boy can take care of himself. After all, he takes after his father.

MAMA

(shrugs) Ahh, que sera sera. But you might want to consider slipping into something more masculine. And hiding your tape recorder. Your lover returns.

MAMA and PAPA disappear as the two-way mirror once more becomes one-way. TEDDY rushes to his backpack to hide his tape recorder. He is in the middle of untying the blanket gown when DADDY walks back onstage and enters the hotel room space.

DADDY

Did you miss me, Teddy-bo—what's that you have on?

TEDDY

Want to take it off me?

DADDY

(disgusted) Were you playing dress-up?

TEDDY

No way! It's just cold and I didn't want to put my clothes on.

DADDY

Good. I don't want you like that.

TEDDY removes the blanket gown. He picks up a shirt from off the floor and wears it.

TEDDY

How did your meeting go?

DADDY gets his pager and looks through his messages. TEDDY approaches. They embrace.

DADDY

We can use this latest debacle as an excuse for Tatay to resign so that he can finally return home. He's been away for too long and the incumbent mayor has been building himself up as a potential rival for the next election. The ingrate.

TEDDY

(nods) Sounds exciting.

DADDY

(smiles) Does it now? (slight pause) Actually, on my way up here from my meeting, I got to thinking about our future together.

TEDDY

(taken aback) Oh. You did?

DADDY

Well, you're graduating soon and you'll be looking for a job. I think I, and Tatay too, can benefit from having someone like you on our side.

TEDDY

What is this? A decent proposal? (chuckles)

DADDY

Who said anything about decent? (laughs) You want to be a journalist, don't you?

TEDDY recoils and gawps at DADDY. The voices return.

MAMA

(voice only) There it is. I told you, mijo. You're in way over your head.

TEDDY

How did you—?

DADDY

You were always so evasive about yourself. So, I put matters into my own hands and dug up some info on you. I hope you don't mind, but I couldn't help getting suspicious. I was concerned that you were actively trying to hide something from me. (pause) But it all made sense after I found out about your parents.

TEDDY

(shaking) You found out about...?

DADDY

Your parents. How, after that little revolution, your father escaped to America to avoid indictment. Can't really blame him. With his padrinos chased out of the palace, he would have ended up a scapegoat. (slight pause) And then, a few years later, your mother left you with your grandmother to remarry in France. What a selfish woman. (pause) I'm not judging you for their choices. It's all part of politics, after all. It's just unfortunate you had to get caught in the crossfire.

PAPA

(voice only) Well, this is news. But anak, it's gonna be all right. Just roll with it.

TEDDY

(harsh) Shut up.

DADDY

Now, now. No need to be petulant. I did what I had to do.

TEDDY

(shaking) Sorry, it's just... So, what happens now?

DADDY

Why are you shaking?

TEDDY

I can't believe you... You caught me off guard is all.

DADDY

You have nothing to worry about, Teddy-boy. You're good. We're good. (pause)

In fact, as I was saying, we could use someone like you on our side. I got to read some of the pieces you've written. Persuasive stuff, and usually in a roundabout way. Well-researched too, but that doesn't really matter unless it's against Tatay's

enemies. (slight pause) Actually, even if it is against Tatay's enemies it doesn't matter. It just has to be convincing, and you can pull that off.

TEDDY

What do I do? What do you want me to do?

DADDY

Build up Tatay's reputation until the next mayoral election. Use your words. Your voice. Tatay is the best leader. Tough, but with heart. Just how a father should be. Tatay is the best and only man for the job. He'll take care of his constituents. (pause) And he'll take care of you like he takes care of his children. Like he's taken care of me. (slight pause) Every step of the way, I will be with you. Don't you see? This is the future we can have.

PAPA

(voice only) Take it! Think of this as your big break. This is it!

MAMA

(voice only) You're cornered, mijo. An attractive corner, but still.

TEDDY

So, I'll be working for you? That's how it's going to be between us?

DADDY

No. You'll be working with me. I am Tatay's right-hand man. And you'll be mine. I'll take care of you.

TEDDY

You'll take care of me? And I can make something of myself?

DADDY

I promise you more than that taste of the good life your father gave you. All this and more. And we'll be together. But that's all I'll say about it. Until you say yes.

TEDDY

And if I say no?

The glass of the mirror lights up again, becoming two-way, with MAMA and PAPA behind it.

MAMA

(laughs) Do you think you can, mijo?

PAPA

(harsh) Boy, don't you dare say no. This is how things have always been.

CURTAIN