

THE BULLFIGHTER

FADE IN:

EXT. COASTAL PLAINS, SPAIN - ANOTHER DAY

Dark clouds gather low. Lush hills slope to the shores of the Mediterranean. The faint PATTERN of a manual typewriter can be heard, and:

A VOICE

(male, British)

To Sheila, for her strength, her
fear, her courage, and her grace.
And most of all, for the precious
light that shines in her eyes, even
through her tears.

A lone house is situated along the shore. It's little more than a shack, but it's pleasant and it's clean.

ON THE BEACH a stern young man sits on a wooden crate. He puffs a cigar as he restrains a bulldog by the collar. The dog, papier-mâché horns attached to its head, is going berserk over something we can't see. That is, until the man barks something in Spanish.

A RED CAPE is raised, grudgingly, by a little boy. The man barks another command, and the boy assumes the stance of a bullfighter.

ON THE PORCH OF THE HOUSE a beautiful Portuguese woman looks on, dismayed, as the man releases --

THE BULLDOG charges the red cape. The little boy boldly stands his ground. There is no fear in his eyes, even as a tear streaks his face.

THE BULLDOG'S POV -- RUSHING INTO: The red cape...grows. Red covers the entire frame. Instantly turns black.

IN THE BLACK: BARKING-! GROWLING-! SLOBBERY SNARLS-! (FANGS FLASH!) And now CHEERING! YAPPING! TEARING of flesh! Sounds like two dogs in a frenzy.

It is...

INT. A BARN - FRESNO, CALIFORNIA - PRESENT DAY

Two pit bulls tear the shit out of each other in a dirt pit surrounded by cheering men. Cigarette smoke blankets the spectacle. Hands wave money. Whiskey and beer abound. It seems we are viewing this through --

A HIDDEN CAMERA moves through the crowd for another angle.
PULL BACK to reveal we are actually watching this on --

A MONITOR, a monitor on a wall of monitors, and we are --

INT. FILM EDITING ROOM - DAY

ON THE MONITORS: the two pit bulls go at it; a bull terrier runs a treadmill; a boy slops raw meat to pit bulls in cages; a dead dog, belly-up, throat ripped out; a female REPORTER in front of a barn speaking into a microphone.

From the moment we entered this room we've heard the:

REPORTER

(on the monitor)

...is how they live, and how they die. Thousands of these animals are born and bred each year for the sole purpose of being entered into this blood sport...

And over this:

VOICE #1

I say we go with the dead dog.

VOICE #2

No, the close has to be Sheila.

VOICE #3

Sheila's gotta be the close.

VOICE #1

Wait -- bring up that shot of the kids and the puppy.

AT A CONTROL PANEL -- A PRODUCER. A DIRECTOR. A FILM EDITOR.

DIRECTOR

What do you think, Sheila?

The three men look to the end of the counter. The female reporter is there, absently smoking a cigarette. Her name is SHEILA CASTLE, beauty unadorned.

PRODUCER

Sheila?

She mashes out the cigarette in angst.

SHEILA

I quit...Huh? Oh, what?

Dumb looks mark their faces as she heads for the door.

SHEILA

I like the dog.

DIRECTOR

Which one?

She's out the door.

PRODUCER

She said she likes the dead dog.

DIRECTOR

No she didn't.

PRODUCER

What, I'm hearing things?

Film Editor shrugs.

INT. EXECUTIVE OFFICE - DAY

SAM MAZAR is at his desk. The window behind him reveals we are on a very high floor: a Los Angeles skyline paints the horizon. In walks Sheila.

SHEILA

I have to go after the bullfighter, Sam.

MAZAR

What bullfighter?

She sighs.

MAZAR

OK, so I know what bullfighter. And you know it's a no-go. We've been over this, Sheila. You do exposés. He's on the Spanish channels every fucking month. What the hell are you gonna expose?

SHEILA

There's always something.

Now Mazar sighs.