

## Journal Entry#1:

10/8/04

Dear Christian,

Happy birthday, *mijo*! So, you're finally 18! A man I can call my son. You might've noticed this letter is from your father. If you're reading this, and I hope you do, I wanted to tell you I'm so so proud- and I'm sorry for not being there. I got caught up in a mess your mother made- I may not like what she did- but I still love her. Once you're done reading this letter, please love your mother for both of us. I pleaded guilty to the judge, but I'll write down the truth with this half broken pencil and paper. I don't care if the world knows the truth, I just hope you will. It was your mother who put me in here, don't let her tell you otherwise. I just got back from buying the groceries we so desperately needed. When I came home, I saw you, oh how I want to see you again. You probably don't remember much since you were only three when they stripped me away from you. I'm sorry for leaving you, but I can't help but feel that maybe it was for the best. Only God knows why he put in such a place. If I had any worries in the world, it won't be what they'll do to me in here. It's you I worry about. I didn't want your mother to be taken, I would never be able to live with myself if she was. But I still hate what she did. If I hadn't fallen in love so blindly, then I could have my arms wrapped around you so tightly. I never took you for granted- and I'm sorry these are the last few words you will ever hear from me. So, I'll tell you something that I regret not saying more- I love you. I'm sorry for getting off track *mijo*, but if this letter ever reaches you- I hope you can understand why I did what I did. I completely regret this decision, a decision where when you read this, has brought me to a better place. I miss you more than I do my freedom. If only I hadn't been so blind.

To you, who I will love for the rest of my short life, I hope that you're happy. I can't describe how it feels to never see your child grow up. It's difficult, not being able to hold your hand or to bring a smile to your face when we play pretend. I will miss you the most. I can't blame your mother for putting

me in here, and I know that now reading this letter over and over. The truth is, your mother was an unlicensed Shaman. Someone very sensitive in the world of spirits. She helped others by reaching the heavens and spoke out the problems of her clients. We both managed a shop underneath my name. Although it was her who really brought in the business. The voices she listened to would tell her solutions towards the client's problems. Helping others was our income and I worked as a construction worker. One night, as you and I were spending our last moments together, your mother was "working" in the shop. There, she was doing a ritual- I don't know all the details, although I know she practiced an exorcism of dark energies. The client and your mother set candles in the middle of the room, where she sat near the lit flames around her. The client, a young lady, was splashed with alcohol in the middle of the ritual, where the candles set her hair ablaze. The fire spread to the rest of her body. It wasn't long for the woman to burn to death. Your mother ran away, not only from the horrid scene but us as well. She went into hiding and I was left in the dark for months. That was until my friend came knocking furiously at my door in the middle of the day. She looked at me in pure terror. My name was on the wanted list in the police department, a list for criminals. It had just been updated the day before. She told me what had happened and... I knew. I knew your mother was practicing these illegal rituals. She was unlicensed, and the shop was underneath my name. They had found the accident your mother had left in the open- and now they came after me- believing I was the true culprit. I tried to run away mijo, but it was too late. I was caught at the door of my car only a week after knowing the truth. I left you in the car and forced to turn my back on this family. Now, I've ended up here. I pleaded guilty only because I truly loved her, now I see that was a mistake. I was convicted of "involuntary manslaughter." All I could do was stay silent and now I regret every decision I've made. Except for you. I'm sorry for not loving you the way I should have. I'm no perfect father, not even a good one. However, in these few weeks of mine, I hope that you can forgive your mother and I. We don't deserve your love, but we will always love you. In the last few minutes I have, I need to let you know that I love you and your mother. It still pains me to know I could not tell you

this in person- for even if I die alone, I will hold you in my memories. *Te amo mijo*, and don't ever forget that when you make a family of your own. Please fix the mistakes your mother and I made. Lead a happy life and do what is right. This is a short goodbye-until I get to see you again in Heaven.

Love,

Your papá.

### **Journal Entry #2:**

10/11/04

I believe it's been three days since I last wrote the letter to my son. This place reeks of feces and body odor that it has probably destroyed my nose at this point. My correctional officer, "John," as everyone calls him gave me another piece of paper and a pencil. Although, this time I have a short opening to write. The inmates here have all looked at me, judging my appearance and build. I can't help but feel like the outcaste. I've only been asked once for my crime by a man named Jason. He's been growing on me and I'm hoping to at least make one friend before I die. I say that as if it's nothing, but to be honest I'm actually scared. It still has yet to sink in, only praying on my knees every day has helped me cope with it. I don't want to die. Please, someone, save me.

### **Journal Entry #3**

10/?/04

This the third time, I believe, I get to explain my thoughts. I don't know what day it is, it's been more than a couple of days since I last wrote anything down. I never saw myself as an author, but writing has really helped me in here. I only get one hour outside my cell, and for some reason, I hate it the most. I feel safer in my cell than I do out there. It's not the best conditions; with cockroaches, eyes on you 24/7, having no privacy, and the worst of it is I can't see anyone from the outside. I've run out of tears and

energy to cry. Every day I regret what I did. Why couldn't it be *her*? Why did it have to be me? I can't cry now, or ever. The guys in here will see me as a weakling. If I can't enjoy my last days outside I don't want to live in more hell than I already am. I've seen the weak guys get pummeled or even worse- taken. I'm scared, but I have to be strong. For my son... and for myself. I sometimes seek comfort knowing I won't have to stay here long, however, earning my spot in heaven is really all I can focus on at the moment. Maybe in heaven will I be able to see my son grow up. If this is God's plan for me, then I shall gladly embrace my fate. However, no one wants to die- how can I just sit here as the woman I love takes and enjoys everything I had? I can't help but wonder if there really is a God. If there is, how can he let something so cruel happen to me? I want to escape but there's nowhere to run. I wonder what it will be like to see the world one more time...

*Later that evening... A note is hidden underneath the prisoner's pillow.*

*Hey, Jason. I need to know if there is a way out. I can't say this out loud, but I **need** a way out. Please. Anything works for me, no matter the risk. Just let me know as soon as possible. If you find something, meet me by my cell in an hour. Don't let anyone see you.*

#### **Journal Entry #4**

10/15/04

I don't know how long it's been, but for some reason, the guards told me my death date has been delayed. I wonder what I could do in these few extra days I have left. I've been talking with Jason a lot more recently, he's been helping me a lot. I feel like we share a tight bond now, over everything that's been happening. A man was found dead yesterday because he slit his throat open. I couldn't see anything, but Jason told me everything. Apparently, he owed too much debt to the guys in here. Jason didn't say names, but I can guess a few guys that it could possibly be. Everyone who wasn't a dealer before entering this

dump avoids them, including me. I'm still a little shaken up... death isn't welcoming. It feels as if his death meant nothing in this place. What will people remember of me when I'm gone? No, I won't let myself die in a place like this. Tomorrow will be my last. I promise myself I will see my *son* again.

#### **Journal Entry #4**

10/16/04

Today is the day... of my escape. I haven't written about it because I was afraid the guards would take and read my letters. Since this is my last day here, I don't care if they find this letter- because I'm escaping tonight. I won't let them keep me locked up without letting me see my son at least one last time. There isn't much time to list the details, but Jason found a guy who let his visitor give him a pair of clothes every two weeks. The guards let him wear it on days he gets visitors. With this, I'm going to pass the guards impersonating a civilian. It may be a huge risk- but I've already decided my life is worth living with the love of my life. Of course, I still wonder if this is beneficial for Christian. But, I suffer every night knowing I won't be able to see him again. So tonight is the last night I will ever suffer. I will either succeed and live a life as a convict. Or I fail and suffer the same fate I will eventually meet if I stay.

#### **Journal Entry #5**

10/20/13

It was the night I planned to escape. As the night progressed, I was headed towards Jason's helper- the one who was going to help me escape and give me his clothes. I tried them on the day before and they seemed to fit. Everything was going as planned. The guards were going to switch guarding posts, and that would be my time to attack. Luckily, John never really cared for what we did in prison. He was only there to get paid. Without him, I wouldn't have been able to keep writing in my cell without my letters being checked or taken. It was about time I had to meet both of them at Jason's cell. I stand up from the bed and

head towards the door before a guard approached me. I was panicked, I began thinking my plan was foiled. I couldn't help but try to calm myself. I looked at the guard- a man who gave me me a glare. He asked me where I was headed. I didn't know how to respond. I breathed in and let out a half-baked excuse. I told him I was headed to ask if you guys had anymore... pillows. He chuckled a bit and opened my door. He grabbed me by the shoulder and handcuffed my hands together. He told me there was someone here to see me. He lead me outside my cell and I was beginning to sweat. He guided me to the visitor's room. I was confused and kept asking myself what and why these things were happening. He opened the door and I waited for his signal to walk in. I looked around the corner to see Alise. My wife was sitting there in tears. I was confused and approached her slowly. However, I was also angry. She looked up to see me, where she rose quickly until she was stopped by a nearby guard. We both sat back down and greeted each other. Our conversation went a little like this:

“Hello, Xavier. I've missed seeing you,” she said.

I kept quiet until she explained herself.

“I need to tell you something. I'm sorry *mi amor*, I'm so so sorry.”

She broke down in tears once more. She told me she had confessed to the police and that all my charges were being dropped. For some reason, I was speechless. In the moment, I broke down in tears. I wasn't happy. I've wanted to leave this place and now the woman I wanted in here more than myself is going to have to die here. She's not going to enjoy her life with her son. I know what it feels like to not have anyone. Not being able to see your loved ones or say goodbye. I grabbed her hand tightly before the guard pushed my shoulder back. We both cried until our time was up. I whispered goodbye as she said she was sorry. I forgave her for her mistakes and everything she has done. In the last moments, I told her about Jason's friend. She shook her head at the idea. I then told her to at least write me a letter every day and I would try my best to reach it. I was left with only one letter from her. Because the next day- she was injected with a lethal drug and passed away. Now, I write this last letter of mine at home, with my son.

It's only been four days since I was freed from incarceration, however, I'm adjusting nicely. I love the life I live and try to enjoy as much of it as I can. From my experience in prison, I've learned to do things I won't regret. The love of my life may have left, but I'm glad I could at least be here for my son. In the beginning days of isolation, I wrote a letter to my son hoping it would reach him on his birthday. I got rid of those and pushed them away (for now anyways). I believe I want to be a writer now- an author. I'm still learning and I wasn't very good at English, to begin with, so I have a lot to learn. I'm writing this for a future novel I want to write about this whole experience. Hopefully, I'll get there soon, and create a novel. A novel that people can learn from my experience. Forgive and remember because everything is a learning experience. I may have been in a dark spot, but I'm glad I found a passion. For now, I shall go to sleep and enjoy spending time with my son. I hope you're watching from above Alise. I love you and may you rest in peace.

### **Journal Entry #1**

10/18/04

Dear Xavier,

I just got checked right before taking your spot in this horrid place. I just want to say I'm sorry. If this letter reaches you, I want you and Christian to make a better life for yourselves. Tell Christian mama loves him. And I love you. I'm sorry for ruining our lives, our marriage, I'm sorry for everything I've done. I couldn't bear it any longer and so I decided to take your place. I made my case and the judge saw enough evidence to judge me "guilty." I showed her everything I could, the books I studied, I gathered people I've worked with to help myself be convicted. It worked, but I also had to prove you're innocent. I told them you were and they had trouble believing me. So I sold the car and bribed the judge. He accepted my request and now we're both where we should be. I'm sorry. I know you don't want to read about what I did for you- after everything I put you through. I should be going to Hell, but if God does show mercy

upon my soul- I hope to see you both in heaven. I hope I can prove to you that our marriage was not for money or for nothing. I love you, and I won't ever stop. There is no amount I could ever repay to make up for what I did. If you haven't already, please sell the shop. Find a better job and move to the United States. Do what you want to do because I regret ever letting you marry the disgusting woman I am. You deserve better and I pray every night until I'm killed that you and Christian deserve the life you choose. That you two may live happy and without anything to hold you down. Now, I want to make a part of this letter to my little boy who I know will grow big and strong, just like his papa. Christian, when you read this, I want *you* to know that mama loves you. That I didn't mean to do what I did. I'm sorry mama couldn't be there for you, but I'll always be with you. I said goodbye to you before I left the house, but you probably didn't know what that meant. So, goodbye my little everything. And goodbye my dearest love. I really will miss seeing the both of you. Hopefully, we will meet again. I hope both of you find wives that can care for you. As I failed as a mother and wife, I don't want you to experience this pain again. I'm sorry and I won't ever stop being sorry. If by any chance you get to see my mother, may you please tell her I love her as well. I don't want to say goodbye just yet, but duty calls. Live strong and well you two- for I will be waiting to see you again.

Love,

Alise