

winner takes all

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winner takes all

by [blossominribcage](#)

Summary

Maybe Oscar's just joking. Maybe he'll never act on it, even if he wants to. But Cesar doesn't really know him anymore, and he's not willing to risk Monse by taking the chance.

Notes

..... so we all. agree as a fandom that oscar was kidding, right.....

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

“Can't we listen to anything other than this shit?” Cesar groans as the millionth Tribe Called Quest song comes on. They've been waiting for their cash delivery for half an hour already, he's about to lose his mind. “Please, *mano*, at least from the last decade?”

“Fool, you ever try to play Lil fuckin' Peep in my car again, you can just get your ass out and walk.” Oscar cranks the volume up on Scenario pointedly. “If I knew music was this bad now, I never would've wanted to be paroled.”

“Jesús let me play Lil Peep. And Desiigner. And XXXTENTACION.”

“Jesús let you smoke a crack pipe, clearly he ain't raising you right.” Just to be an ass, Oscar turns the knob again, almost loud enough to drown out his voice altogether. “The OG's, they're the real deal, like us— all those mumble rappers ain't *shit*. Buncha white boys from Brentwood listen to that, *dios*.”

Sitting in their old car, bickering about music again, it could feel like Oscar never went inside, except the *like us* part. Oscar, oblivious to the sudden tension, elbows him in the ribs. “But I guess that's what you're into now, judgin' by that mixtape of yours.”

“Jesús and Ángel loved it,” he says with the deepest of scowls spreading across his face. “They played it at all their parties for a month straight. *And* in the car.”

“*Primos* tell you whatever's gonna make you feel good,” Oscar just says, “that's why your *hermano*'s back, to tell you what's best for you.” He shoots him a nasty smirk. “You start doing this Soundcloud rapper thing to impress the *hynas*? ‘Cause I don't think it's working out.”

“How would you know, were you here?” Cesar falls right into his trap. “Maybe I have tons of them.”

“So, you gotten your dick wet then, homes?” Oscar grins as he lights the joint behind his ear — Firme Hina blares from the stereo now, *that's the kind of hyna I'm talking about / the kind you see around three when school gets out*. He always used to play this corny old shit driving Cesar to elementary, made him beg him to drop him off a block away. “C'mon, don't give me that look. I was puttin' it in at your age.”

He swears Oscar straight-up forgets how old he's supposed to be— asked the night he got back from Corcoran, in full seriousness, what time Cesar went to bed now, cracked a Bud Light open for him the next minute. “I'm *fourteen*,” he reminds him, sliding down even further in his seat. “I'm not gonna talk bull with you, anyway—“

“Oh, so there *is* bull to talk.” If anything, Oscar's grin gets even wider, enough to carve dimples into his cheeks. “C'mon, spill it already. Can't believe you didn't tell me before.”

“There's nothing going on,” he still lies, though he's pretty bad at it— even after all these years, especially at lying to his big brother, who always managed to catch him sneaking

cookies before dinner and staying up past his bedtime. *You can't get shit over on me, C, don't even try it.* "Just... been thinking 'bout making moves on Monse lately."

Oscar holds out his palm, makes a come-hither gesture. "Shit, show me a picture or something, don't know what I'm workin' with here. Last time I saw her, she was practically shitting her pull-ups."

Reluctantly, Cesar pulls out his phone, opens the Photos app and produces a picture of her; he's lucky he hadn't set her to his wallpaper yet, figured he'd wait until they made things *official* for that. Oscar takes a long, satisfied drag on the joint, uses his thumb and index finger to zoom in. "Shit, *this* is little Monse? Same one you always was hanging around with in grade school?" He tilts his head a bit. "Least she figured out how to do her own hair by now. Monty always fucked it up, she had scrunchies dangling everywhere."

"Think she might be my *ruca*." Cesar leans against the headrest when Oscar passes it to him, feels ridiculous using a word like that when he just turned fourteen in May; Oscar's called his girl Rosita that, since they got back together, but that's different, they're grown. "We haven't really talked since she went to writing camp, though, before you got out. They don't let them have phones there."

"She's growin' up real fine," Oscar says with narrowed eyes, and something cold and tight twists in the pit of Cesar's stomach as he scrutinizes the photograph again. Monse stares back at both of them, looking painfully young all of a sudden; her face free of makeup, braces shining on her teeth, bright and happy and fearless. "You better make that move on her once she gets back, *mano*, you hear? Else I might just be tempted to home in on that ass."

And maybe Oscar's cracking a bad joke; he's spent four years in Corcoran, sometimes Cesar feels even more mature than him, like Oscar's been living in suspended animation and got released into a world that moved on without him. Maybe, even if he means it, it's just an idle fantasy, something he won't act on when he has a swarm of legal hynas throwing themselves at him. He could brush it off, pretend he didn't say shit.

But that was what he did with Nacho, wasn't it, pretended he was overreacting for years, it didn't mean anything. Him calling him smart, too smart to talk, *tàs lindo*, C, don't talk, don't tell anyone— and look where that got him. Sprawled on the floor, his cheek swollen from the force of his blow, a crotch thrust at him— *maricón, lo quieres? Lo quieres?*

Something inside Cesar crystallizes then, makes his spine straighten up; he looks Oscar in the eye, doesn't even blink. "Aight, I'm playin' you," he says with a casual shrug. "I fucked Monse, after school got out. Just the one time, though."

Oscar keeps his cool enough to pretend to not be too interested, either in what went down or the deception. He flips open the mirror above the driver's seat, checks out the angle of his shades in it. "You wrap it up, homie? Already raised your lil' ass, not really interested in raising the second generation."

"*Yeah*, I did," Cesar says, rolling his eyes— even Jesús and Ángel, when they were sober enough to notice he was alive, gave him that much sex ed between stories about their own conquests. "I told you, she's my *ruca*. She's mine."

(He hopes Monse will forgive him for this someday. Though, knowing her, it probably won't be anytime soon.)

End Notes

y'all know i love cesar with my whole heart. but i can confirm, as word of god: his mixtape was fucking awful.

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