

THE COST OF LIVING

Written by

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GREEN REV: 09/24/2024
YELLOW REV: 09/24/2024
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FADE IN:

1

INT. ANTONIO'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

1

RAIN POURS and THUNDER ROARS outside. SERGIO MARTINEZ (30), scruffy and tipsy, watches the storm from a window as he sips whiskey from his glass.

ANTONIO (O.S.)
Sergio, did you hear me?

He turns and looks at ANTONIO MARTINEZ (25), sickly looking and exhausted. Sergio looks at him with resentment.

SERGIO
Yeah...

ANTONIO
I need you out by morning.

SERGIO
I SAID I HEARD YOU.

Antonio hangs his head low. He COUGHS violently.

ANTONIO
Just, leave the keys on the counter.

Antonio turns to and walks down the hallway.

SERGIO
You're full of shit, you know that?

Antonio stops. Sergio turns to him.

SERGIO (CONT'D)
You might have everyone else fooled, but not me. Your two suits and fancy degree don't mean shit, it's all glitter and confetti. When I look at you, I don't see a great man, I still see that scared pathetic kid, following me around. If you want me out of your life, fine. But don't expect to see me again.

Beat. Sergio finishes off his whiskey. Antonio looks at him, heartbroken.

ANTONIO
Good night, Sergio. I love you.

Antonio walks down the hallway, to his room. Sergio slowly approaches the hallway and stops. He turns to the wall and sees a FRAMED PHOTO of him and Antonio - *happier days*.

2 INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER 2

Sergio opens the front door, ready to leave. He takes out the apartment keys from his pocket and tosses them on the counter.

A loud THUNDER and WHOOSH pass through the room. FLASHES OF LIGHTNING light up the room. Sergio hears a PULSING SOUND coming from the hallway. *

3 INT. ANTONIO'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS 3

The room is dark. Sergio opens the door. He sees Antonio in bed. A FLASH OF LIGHTNING reveals ALMA (late 30s), dressed in a dark hood and covered in shadows; *She is Death*. She stands over Antonio's body, holding a SCYTHE.

SERGIO
Get away from him!

Sergio charges in and tackles Alma. Before they hit the ground, a glowing light illuminates around them. They are whisked away to --

4 INT. AFTELIFE - NIGHT 4

Smoke surrounds Sergio as he slowly sits up. Fear in his eyes as he observes a dark, liminal space around him.

His view lands on Alma, rushing toward him.

SERGIO
OH SHHIIIIII--

Alma covers his mouth.

ALMA
YOU IDIOT! What the hell is the matter with you?

Sergio squirms and mumbles. Alma takes off her hood, revealing her face for the first time. Sergio looks even more confused.

SERGIO
(muffled)
WHHHHAAATHHEEFUCCKK????

ALMA

Shhh. Shut up. Keep it down.

Sergio nods. Alma looks around, making sure it's clear. She gestures for Sergio to follow her into...

5

INT. CORRIDOR OF TIME - CONTINUOUS

5

The space is lined with doors ranging from prehistoric to modern eras. Alma pulls Sergio in and continues walking down the pathway. He looks around in total shock.

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SERGIO

What...what is this place?

ALMA

It's the afterlife. You were brought instead of your brother.

SERGIO

Antonio? What do you want with him?

TWO DEATHS walk out one of the doors. Alma drags Sergio behind a different door, hiding him. She gestures to keep quiet. Sergio watches in fear as the Deaths leave.

ALMA

I can't let the others to see you.

SERGIO

Hey, Death Lady, or person, there's gotta be some mistake.

ALMA

Hey, first off, my name is Alma not 'Death Lady'. Second, yes. You're the mistake.

SERGIO

But you're wrong. Antonio can't be dying.

ALMA

What did you think I was doing, kissing him goodnight? His heart was failing, I was taking his soul--

SERGIO

But he was getting better. The doctor said his blood pressure was lowering. His numbers were fine--

ALMA

Hey, I don't know what to tell you
guy. I'm just the transporter.

Sergio paces, taking everything in.

SERGIO

Well, can't you fix this? Can we
try one of these doors?

Sergio reaches for a doorknob.

ALMA

Stay away from those! Keep it down,
I'm trying to think.

SERGIO

Look, just send me back and we'll
forget all this happened.

ALMA

Please shut up.

SERGIO

You can go with taking souls or
whatever you do, just leave me and
Antonio alone.

ALMA

I can't do that.

SERGIO

Just send me back and leave me and
my brother alone. Fair?

ALMA

I can't just let you go back.
Especially after seeing all this.

SERGIO

I won't say anything to anyone ever
again.

Sergio walks over to Alma and sticks out his pinky.

SERGIO (CONT'D)

I promise.

ALMA

Put your finger away.

Sergio walks away. He paces in frustration. He gets
overwhelmed and breaks. Alma sees his desperation. She peaks
around the doors, making sure the coast is clear.