

THE LAST DEBT

Written by
Jeffrey A. Apostol

FADE IN:

EXT. CEMETERY - SUNSET

The sun slowly goes down.

Shadows grow longer.

A breeze rustles leaves on the ground.

DICKY, early twenties, male, stands in front of two graves. One larger than the other.

The large grave marker reads: **MARY MORTISE, 1990-2010, A daughter and a mother...**

The small grave marker reads: **RICHARD MORTISE, Jr., 2010, Son.**

Dicky cries silently.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

RICHARD, early thirties, male, walks down the hallway. He whistles a cheerful tune as he carries a bag of groceries.

GABRIEL, a middle-aged man, bald with a fringe of white hair, the proprietor and land lord of the apartment complex, notices Richard as he mops the hallway floor.

GABRIEL
Hey, Richard.

RICHARD
Hello, Gabriel.

GABRIEL
You seem cheerful today.

Richard smiles.

RICHARD
I paid off my credit cards, sent in my utility bill payment and dropped off the rent at your office. Today, I'm officially debt free.

GABRIEL
That's great! Debt free, huh? That's hard to believe. Especially in today's economy. Everyone I know owes somebody something.

RICHARD

Except me.

Richard pulls out a bottle of vodka from his bag of groceries and shows it to Gabriel.

RICHARD

Want to have a drink with me to celebrate?

GABRIEL

No thanks. Too much work. Next time.

RICHARD

Suit yourself, Mr. Land lord. See you later.

GABRIEL

Take it easy, Mr. Tenant.

Gabriel continues to mop while Richard enters his apartment.

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Richard enters his apartment. He puts down the bag of groceries on a small table and opens the balcony doors. He inhales a deep breath as he admires the city view beyond. After a moment, he puts away the grocery.

INT. APARTMENT - LATER

Richard sits on the couch and watches TV. In front of him, on the coffee table, a bottle of vodka and a small plate of roasted peanuts sit. He takes a swig from the almost full bottle and changes the channel with a remote control.

As he watches, his eyes begin to close. Richard eventually drifts off to sleep on the couch.

INT. A DARK ROOM

MARY MORTISE, a young and very pregnant woman, sits alone in a dark room. She rubs her belly. A troubled expression covers her face.

Across from her, Richard sleeps on the couch. His eyes flutter open after a few seconds. He adjusts his eyes to the darkness and realizes his new surroundings. It takes him a moment to notice Mary.

RICHARD
What the...

MARY
You never came back, Richard.

RICHARD
Mary? It can't be!

MARY
You promised me you'd return, but
you never came back. You never came
back for me or the baby.

Mary continues to rub her belly.

RICHARD
I...

Blood runs down Mary's leg and pools at her feet.

Richard's eyes grow wide and his mouth opens as if he is
about to scream.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Richard SCREAMS as he wakes. Sweat beads on his forehead. He
looks around his apartment wildly. A few seconds pass before
he finally calms.

A KNOCK comes from the door.

Richard startles.

Several more KNOCKS come from the door.

Richard stands, walks to the door and looks through the peep
hole. He relaxes and opens the door.

Gabriel stands on the other side.

GABRIEL
What's wrong, Richard? I heard you
scream.

RICHARD
Nothing. I had a nightmare. Must
have been the booze. I'm sorry.

Gabriel shakes his head.

GABRIEL
Ease up on that stuff, man.

RICHARD
I know. Sorry.

Richard laughs shamefully.

GABRIEL
Are you sure you're okay?

RICHARD
Yeah. I am. I'm sure. No worries.

GABRIEL
(hesitantly)
Alright. I'll be going then.

RICHARD
Sorry, Gabe. It won't happen again.

Richard closes the door. He walks into the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Richard washes his face. He dries off with a towel. He notices Dicky in the reflection of the bathroom mirror.

DICKY
What's wrong, Richard?

Richard turns around suddenly.

Dicky vanishes.

Richard takes several deep breaths. He waits for his body to stop trembling.

RICHARD
(to himself)
What the fuck is happening to me?

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Richard sits on the couch. In front of him, on the coffee table sits a half empty bottle of vodka and an almost finished plate of peanuts.

Every little sound incites a reaction in the man. Although the TV is on, Richard's attention strays. A sudden idea pops into Richard's head.

Richard opens a drawer on a lamp stand next to the couch. In the drawer, a box of bullets lays next to a small revolver.

Richard reaches for the revolver and clutches it to his chest.

RICHARD
Come on then. I'm ready. Come on
and see what Richard's got for you.

Richard places the gun on his lap and reaches for the bottle of alcohol. He drains the content of the bottle in one swig.

INT. DARK ROOM

Mary, pale faced, holds a bundle in her hands. She gently rocks it back and forth.

Richard dozes on a couch in front of Mary. He wakes suddenly and sees Mary. He jumps to his feet.

Mary looks at him.

MARY
Do you want to see?

RICHARD
Huh?

MARY
Do you want to see?

RICHARD
What?

MARY
Your son.

Mary holds the bundle towards Richard. She moves part of the blanket to reveal what's inside.

Shock registers on Richard's face.

In the bundle, a pile of bloody gore sits.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Richard wakes. Tears stream down his face.

Dicky sits on the balcony railing. He quietly observes Richard.

Richard wipes the tears away with the back of his hands.

DICKY
Why so sad? Did Mary visit you
again?

Richard jumps to his feet.

RICHARD
What do you want?

Dicky sighs.

DICKY
Really? You really don't know? Come
on, Richard.

RICHARD
I...

Richard grabs the gun from the couch and aims it at Dicky.

RICHARD
Get out you son of a bitch!

Dicky remains calm.

RICHARD
I'm warning you!

Dicky shrugs.

DICKY
Do it. I'm sure you're used to
having blood on your hands.

Richard flinches.

A fresh stream of tears run down his cheeks.

DICKY
You told Gabe a lie. You aren't
debt free. There's still someone
you owe.

Richard becomes angry.

RICHARD
Fuck you! I don't owe anybody!

Richard pulls the trigger.

CLICK.

Nothing.

Richard pulls the trigger several more times in rapid succession.

CLICK. CLICK. CLICK.

Still nothing.

Dicky laughs.

Richard notices that the cylinder of the revolver contains no bullets. He forgot to load the gun.

Richard throws the gun at Dicky.

Dicky remains still and calm.

The gun misses his head and flies out the balcony.

Richard grabs the empty bottle of vodka and throws it at Dicky.

Dicky stays motionless as the bottle flies harmlessly passed his head.

Richard rubs his head in disappointment.

Dicky smoothly jumps off the railing and stands on his feet.

DICKY

Is that the best you can do.

Richard YELLS and charges towards Dicky. As he nears Dicky, he jumps.

Dicky spreads his arms as if to embrace Richard.

Richard's body, instead of impacting Dicky, flies through Dicky's body as if it was insubstantial. Richards body smoothly flies through Dicky and out the balcony.

Dicky closes his arms as if to embrace himself. His body slowly vanishes into thin air.

EXT. SIDEWALK - CONTINUOUS

Richard's body hits the sidewalk with a THUD. His legs and arms sprawl at awkward angles.

Around the body, tiny bits of broken glass reflect light from a lamp post like tiny, glittering stars. Near Richard's head, the revolver lays ruined.

Blood begins to pool around Richard's lifeless body.

EXT. SIDEWALK - LATER

A POLICE OFFICER questions Gabriel.

POLICE OFFICER
What was his name?

GABRIEL
Richard Mortise. He was one of my tenants for many years. I think it was about ten years ago when he first walked into my office...

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Gabriel, with a full head of white hair, sits behind a desk. He reads a document.

GABRIEL
Is it just you who'll be moving in?

Dicky sits in front of the desk.

DICKY
I'll be moving my wife in soon. She's eight months pregnant, so you better put me down for two more people moving in.

Dicky laughs.

GABRIEL
Excellent. A family man.

DICKY
The least I owe myself as a father and a man is to provide a decent life for my wife and child.

Gabriel smiles.

GABRIEL
Well said, Richard.

DICKY
Call me Dicky. All of my friends call me Dicky.

GABRIEL
If you don't mind, I'd rather call you Richard. Dicky sounds like a boy's name, and you're obviously a full grown man.

Both men laugh.

DICKY
Suit yourself, Mr. Landlord.

EXT. CEMETERY - SUNSET

Dicky cries. With both hands, he covers his face as he weeps. When Dicky finally drops his hands, they uncover Richard's face.

FADE OUT.