

THE OASIS

By
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(GARRETT, an older man, is cleaning a rundown diner, long abandoned as a place of business. The door opens. MAGGIE enters. She is younger.)

MAGGIE

Hey, Garrett!

GARRETT

What is it, Maggie?

MAGGIE

You know what I want more than anything?

GARRETT

Don't get my hopes up now.

MAGGIE

A nice long shower.

GARRETT

Does seem like a fantasy don't it?

MAGGIE

On days like this... I used to love a cold one.

GARRETT

How's about your ration of water instead?

MAGGIE

I 'spose it's the best we got.

GARRETT

It's all we got.

MAGGIE

We got each other. Here in this little oasis.

GARRETT

You're cute when you're positive. Here.

(He pours a glass of water from a jug.)

GARRET (cont'd)

You're red as a lobster.

MAGGIE

I swear it's getting hotter every day.

GARRETT

And is that...?

MAGGIE

What?

GARRETT

On your cheek. You've got a new freckle!

MAGGIE

Oh no! I hate 'em. Seems I get a new one every day.

GARRETT

You know better than to not wear your hat. Don't take much sun these days to turn a freckle malignant.

MAGGIE

Then how's about a break from working outside.

GARRETT

And keep me company? That's fine. You're on broom duty then.

MAGGIE

Thanks, Garrett!

(She goes behind the counter.)

GARRETT

You should be indoors at all times with skin as fair as yours.

(MAGGIE finds a giant manual juicer fixed to the top of a bucket. She has never seen this before.)

MAGGIE

Wow, will you look at this. (*beat*) What in the world are you juicing with this thing? Fruit hasn't grown in years.

GARRETT

Broom's by the door, Mags.

(He puts the juicer away. MAGGIE finds the broom. Starts sweeping.)

GARRETT

Any sign of Eduardo today?

MAGGIE

Manning his post, same as every day.

GARRETT

Yeah, yeah... You two still... uh...

MAGGIE

Yeah, we're still an "uh". When you gonna quit holding out for me?

GARRETT

Soon as you lose that infectious positivity.

MAGGIE

Go screw yourself. Mind if I have another glass?

GARRETT

Ohhh, I suppose it's alright.

(MAGGIE pours a glass. The door opens. EDUARDO enters. He is close to her age.)

EDUARDO

Afternoon Garrett. Hey Mags, I gotta (*stops*) that's a tall glass of water.

GARRETT

Think nothin' of it. Who's at your post?

EDUARDO

Mags, I gotta talk to you a minute.

MAGGIE

Alright, Ed.

EDUARDO

Well... just you and me.

GARRETT

What's wrong with you stepping outside?

MAGGIE

No! I mean... please, Garrett?

GARRETT

You got two minutes! I'll be in the back but don't go forgetting who runs this oasis.

(He exits through a backdoor.)

MAGGIE

What's wrong?

EDUARDO

You seen Hector around today or Carmen?

MAGGIE

No, but Carmen and I were together last night.

EDUARDO

Where?

MAGGIE

Uh... here. Well, outside on the porch.

EDUARDO

Where'd she go after?

MAGGIE

Has something happened?

EDUARDO

Neither one of 'em reported in this morning for assignments.

MAGGIE

Not them!

EDUARDO

I know... too many folks disappearing lately and it don't make no sense. As if they just walked into the wasteland and died of thirst. How are the water levels?

MAGGIE

Garrett doesn't seem to be worried about it.

EDUARDO

Garrett... I don't like you spending so much time with him.

MAGGIE

He's harmless.

EDUARDO

It ain't got nothing to do with you helpin' him out... it's just I wonder about him being in charge of the water supply.

MAGGIE

He's a grumpy old man but he means well.

EDUARDO

You're not hearin' what I'm sayin', Maggie.

MAGGIE

Do you ever listen to me? *(beat)* I'm sorry, the heat gets to me...

EDUARDO

It's alright... I know what he means to ya... I just wish sometimes I'd been the one to find you alone out there; to save your life.

MAGGIE

He did save me from the wasteland, but you saved me from being alone...

EDUARDO

Mags, why don't you knock off and we go back to my tent. *(low)* I've got a whole case of sparkling water we can break out.

MAGGIE

(laughs)

Eduardo!

EDUARDO

Ssh! I traded for it honest. C'mon, Mags, let's hurry.

MAGGIE

No, that sun... It's too much for skin as fair as mine. Garrett says I should be inside at all times.

EDUARDO

So that's it?

(The backdoor opens. GARRETT enters.)

GARRETT

Back to your post, amigo!

(EDUARDO is startled by the aggressiveness. Looks at MAGGIE. Exits.)

MAGGIE

He's only tryin' to help... folks up and vanishing in the night... I'm scared.

GARRETT

More reason to stay here with me. Anyone comes knockin', he'll be sorry. Here, drink up and get back to your own assignment.

MAGGIE

Maybe I oughta check on him -

GARRETT

This floor ain't going to sweep itself!

(MAGGIE begins sweeping. Beat.)

MAGGIE

Hey, Garrett?

GARRETT

What is it?

MAGGIE

You give me a lot of water today. Thought we were low.

GARRETT

I dug a new well.

MAGGIE

Really? Why didn't you tell anyone?

GARRETT

To be honest, Maggie, because it's here. Through the back room there, down the cellar and if people got wind of it they'd all be storming the castle for a gulp.

MAGGIE

Right. No, I won't say anything to anyone.

GARRETT

You're a good girl. I trust you. *(beat)* How about you, though, you want a look-see?

MAGGIE

You've never let anyone down there. Are... are you sure?

GARRETT

Sure I'm sure. Come on back.

(MAGGIE waits for his lead.)

GARRETT *(cont'd)*

No, you go ahead of me.

(Beat. EDUARDO screams offstage)

EDUARDO *(o.s.)*

Maggie!!!! Maggie, help!!!

MAGGIE

Eduardo!

GARRETT

You can't!

MAGGIE

He needs me!

GARRETT

It's for your own good, now get back there!

MAGGIE

Let go of me! Garrett - Lemme go -

(GARRETT strikes her. She falls limp. He places her in the back room. The front door opens. EDUARDO crashes in. His head is bleeding. He slumps to the floor.)

EDUARDO

Maggie, please!

GARRETT

Who's manning your post?

EDUARDO

Maggie??

GARRETT

Went out lookin' for you.

EDUARDO

I need water!

GARRETT

You need medical attention is what you need.

EDUARDO

Heat got to me... lost my balance and fell... hit a rock...

GARRETT

Far as I'm concerned, the gash in your head can stay there.

EDUARDO

Garrett, please... water... you have so much.

GARRETT

And it'll stay that way. For me and Maggie.

(GARRETT goes behind the counter. He pulls out the juicer. Places it on the counter. EDUARDO is fading.)

EDUARDO

You're gonna watch me die... I knew you were crazy. Maggie!

(GARRETT grabs the helpless EDUARDO by the legs. Starts pulling him back behind the counter.)

GARRETT

She can't save you, amigo.

EDUARDO

Please... water...

GARRETT

Oh, there's gonna be water alright.

(He gets EDUARDO situated behind the counter, who groans in agony. GARRETT holds the juicer.)

GARRETT (cont'd)

You're dehydrated but you still got plenty of H2O in ya. Same as the others... plenty of water to fill my new well. Just gotta get it out of ya. Lemme show ya my new juice squeezer.

(He disappears behind the counter with the juicer.)