

NEWER TESTAMENTS

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Punctuation:

- The line is cut off by the next line or action
- / The next line starts here, overlapping

Characters:

Luz - Female. Appears to be early-mid 30s. Visibly Latina or Afro Latina.

Oren - Male. Early 30s. Any race.

Setting: A small but chic studio apartment. Evening.
It's clear that the area has been deep-cleaned in preparation for a guest.

At Rise: LUZ sits on the couch, silently checking out the place while OREN is in the kitchen pouring glasses of wine.

Is red okay?

Red is my favorite.

Great.

(He brings the drinks and sits next to her. Luz is relaxed while Oren is clearly self-conscious. It's an uncomfortable amount of time before he finally says:)

Your name is cool. How do you pronounce it? "Luzz?"

Luz.

Is that short for something?

Yes. And no. It's Spanish for "light."

That's beautiful.

I think so too.

(They fall into silence again.)

Your photos make it look like you travel a lot. Are you from around here?

Is this what we're doing?

I don't know. I'm sorry.

You don't hook up a lot, do you?

Is it obvious?

OREN

Very.

LUZ

(Oren laughs.)

I don't know. I guess I wanted to get to know you before I...
get to know you.

OREN

*(He sits in his embarrassment, not sure what
to say next.)*

It's cute.

LUZ

Huh?

OREN

You. Not knowing how to be a horn dog. It's cute.

LUZ

Thanks.

OREN

No. To answer your question: no, I'm not from around here.

LUZ

Where are you from?

OREN

Someplace warm.

LUZ

C'mon, it's not that bad here.

OREN

It's fucking frigid.

LUZ

Well, I've lived here all my life and I don't mind the
weather.

OREN

Your whole life?

LUZ

I like it here. The people are nice. My job is nice.

OREN

And what do you do?

LUZ

Pharmaceuticals. I mean, it's not what I want to do for the

OREN

rest of my life but it's enough to pay the bills and then some.

LUZ

Man, that is bleak.

(Oren laughs.)

OREN

Yeah? I'd love to hear what you do.

LUZ

Honestly, it's mostly travel and overseeing a large number of people—

OREN

So, you're basically just a glorified supervisor?

(Luz laughs.)

LUZ

I suppose you could say that.

OREN

And who do you supervise for?

LUZ

Eh, let's not get into it. I prefer not to mix work and pleasure. But, it's a big global business. And it's exhausting. Always finding new people to join my team.

OREN

Well, I don't even know what you do and I already want to join.

LUZ

That's surprising.

OREN

Oh yeah?

LUZ

You just don't seem the type to suddenly take a job you know nothing about.

OREN

How so?

LUZ

I'm not trying to burn you but: between never leaving the town you were born in and working a stable job that you clearly hate, you don't seem too inclined to risk.

OREN

Fair. But I'm also not usually the type to summon women through apps for sex, and yet here we are.

(Luz smiles.)

LUZ

Here we are.

OREN

Getting to know each other.

(Luz climbs onto Oren's lap, straddling him.)

LUZ

Getting to know each other.

(Movement: It was only supposed to be a one-night exchange. But night turned to day and days turned to weeks and without warning; something monogamous was made.)

Scene 2: Evening at Oren's place. Six months have passed.

At Rise: Luz stands in the kitchen making tea. Oren enters from the bathroom wearing an extremely oversized sweater.

LUZ

Uhm, excuse me, I believe that's mine?

OREN

Is there such a thing as "ownership" in a relationship?

LUZ

I believe the law would say "yes."

OREN

Remember when you said you didn't do long term?

LUZ

This may have been one of the contributing reasons why.

OREN

I'll give it back tomorrow, just let me sleep in it, it smells like you. I'll lend you something else to sleep in.

LUZ

No way, Bub. I have to get home and pack.

OREN

You're not staying the night?

LUZ

They pushed my flight back. 4am and you live so far from the airport. It would just be easier to go home.

(Silence as Luz makes her tea. Something boils inside Oren until he finally explodes.)

OREN

I think you're cheating on me.

LUZ

Excuse me?

OREN

I think-

LUZ

No, I heard you.

OREN

You've been distant.

LUZ

I'm a distant person.

OREN

We barely see each other-

LUZ

And it's always been this way!

OREN

Never this bad,

LUZ

We're not doing this.

OREN

You are gone all the time! If it's not travelling for work it's visiting your hometown - which I get, you miss the heat, but you never invite me? I don't see why anyone would do that if they weren't having an affair.

(Luz taps her talons against the counter. This isn't how she wanted to spend the evening.)

OREN

We've been together for six months and for as much as you go home, don't you think it would be right if I met - I don't think that's moving too fast? I mean, that's not asking too much is it? - You go home all the time and I just think it's time - I think it's fair, it would be right if I met your parents?

(Silence.)

LUZ

Lucifer.

OREN

What?

LUZ

"Luz." It does mean "light," but it's also short for Lucifer.

OREN

Real fucking funny, Luz. I try to be vulnerable and you-

LUZ

No. My name is Lucifer. *The* Lucifer.

OREN

You're the devil?

(A beat. She hasn't moved.)

OREN

No. No, the devil is a man. And red with cloven hooves and-

LUZ

I could assume that form if you wanted me to. Gender is mostly inconsequential. Think about all the gods you've heard of; Greek, Roman, Hindu, they all have a "gender" yet also assume the opposite and sometimes a different species altogether.

OREN

So, you're an "it."

LUZ

That's hurtful. I'm a woman. You of all people know that firsthand. However, if you prefer, I could be a man. Or a bird. You have a preference? I'll take a request.

OREN

Is this some kind of sick joke? Do you really think this is fucking funny?

(Luz looks Oren dead in the eyes. Her familiar irises are replaced with a glowing orange pair. In her eyes Oren can see molten lava and hear the soundtrack to all his fears. She holds him there briefly before releasing him and returning to normal.)

(Oren stumbles back.)

OREN

What the fuck did I just see in your eyes?!

LUZ

Oren -

OREN

Is this why you won't go to church with my parents?! Or invite me to your hometown?

LUZ

I would if I could -

OREN

No, you stay the fuck away from me!

(He brandishes a knife from the block.)

LUZ

You don't even believe in God, what is this?!

OREN

I know but - I don't know. Do you know what they say about you? You're the Devil. You're a temptress and a destroyer of worlds - you seduce people and talk / to them when they're

LUZ

At least I talk to you! Tell me, what does that man in the sky do for you? Yes, he gives you things like love and happiness but he also rips them away. He gives you AIDS and sudden infant death. Don't forget this man sent a wave of plagues to Egypt. He killed first born sons.

OREN

And what about you?! What about all the evil you cause in this world-

LUZ

I cause nothing!

(An otherworldly bass enters her voice.)

LUZ

I have no omnipotent control on Earth. All I can do is tempt you. I can give you options. If you want, you can surrender yourself over to me, but I can seize no one. He wouldn't give me that much power.

OREN

What about disasters? Tsunamis?

LUZ

Him.

OREN

Cancer?

LUZ

Him.

Pneumonia.

OREN

Him.

LUZ

Maggie's pneumonia.

OREN

It's all him.

LUZ

(The bass has left her voice.)

LUZ

He took your little girl away from you. This is his planet. He controls how its skies swirl, what diseases it designs. He wipes out all that competes for his attention. His own son started to gain traction and you see what he allowed to happen to him. He said it himself, he is a jealous god.

OREN

I was... taught... that God always has my back.

LUZ

The one who guards your back has easiest access to stab it.

OREN

Why are you telling me this?

LUZ

Because you thought I was cheating on you.

OREN

But why are you telling me this? You could have lied! Why tell me this?!

LUZ

I just felt like I needed to—

OREN

WHY?

LUZ

Because I loved him!

(The walls begin to shake.)

LUZ

Because I was the most devoted, the most passionate, the most sure of his power. I knew him better than anyone else and that's how I knew he was better than that. He didn't need to be jealous. He didn't need to be a tyrant. He was an artist, capable of so much beauty - I loved him and I couldn't let him become the monster he was trying to be so I confronted him. And he exiled me.

OREN

He hates you. You love him and He hates you.

(The edge in his voice slices Luz. Abruptly, the walls stop shaking.)

LUZ

He loves me. He exiled me with a bitter heart and built me a kingdom-

OREN

That you fill with the souls of sinners-

LUZ

That he fills with the people that remind him of me. Souls damned for reminding him of what used to be.

(Oren re-brandishes the knife, holding it with more conviction than before.)

OREN

This goes against everything I've been taught.

LUZ

You don't even believe what you've been taught!

OREN

I was on the fence, but...fuck, I didn't renounce God! I still went to church-

LUZ

For Easter and / Christmas

OREN

But you're real. Now, you're actually real and I'm confused and - You shouldn't have told me! You shouldn't have fucking told me and you should have left me the fuck alone. Why did you even date me?

LUZ

I don't... know. You were... good. There was something in you that made me feel... warm.

OREN

There are billions of people on this planet.

LUZ

And I've met many. But then I met you.

(He does not back down. She stares at the knife in his hands, his knuckles taugth under his skin.)

LUZ

Fine. Have it your way. I hope you think of me when you finally meet him.

(She strides over to the bathroom, intending to use the mirror in there as a portal. Right before she enters, a surge of fear shoots through Oren.)

OREN

Wait!

(She pauses.)

OREN

What if He denies me entrance because of all the time I've spent with you?

LUZ

Then you better pray for purgatory. Because if you come to my home, you won't be a welcome guest.

(She enters the bathroom. He tries to chase after her, calls her name, but is halted by the purple light that bursts through the doorway. She's gone. He stands there, staring into the bathroom, helpless and at a loss for which deity he should call to for help.)