

The Price of Life

FADE IN:

INT. MORGAN HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

It is a small, tidy house, decorated well with low funds. There are quite a few tribal pieces, as well as several books on the supernatural. There is incense burning, a several Feng Shui items strategically placed around the house. There are elementary-school age toys strewn around the living room. One room, in particular, is extremely messy, and appears to be a writing studio with a computer and many handwritten ideas thumbtacked to the walls.

Upstairs, in the master bedroom, KATHERINE MORGAN, 46, is sitting in an armchair by the bed, arms and legs crossed, and looking angry and agitated. Her husband, FRANK MORGAN, 43, slumbers in the bed next to her.

After about a minute, Frank wakes with a start, sitting up suddenly in the bed. Katherine doesn't blink, just continues staring straight ahead, angry. Frank rubs his eyes and looks around him, dazed. His eyes fall on Katherine and his face falls.

FRANK

(hesitantly)

Katherine, I...

KATHERINE

(interrupting)

Don't.

FRANK

(scrambling out of the bed and kneeling by her feet)

I swear to God, I'm so sorry.

KATHERINE

(coldly)

This is the last straw, Frank. I can't do this anymore.

(stands up and starts pacing)

God knows, I love you, but enough is enough!

FRANK

(getting annoyed)

You married me for better or for worse,
Katherine.

KATHERINE

I gave up everything for you! You said you
would take care of me, so I left school. You
didn't want to live on the west coast, so I
left my family. You wanted a child, so I
gave up my career. And now you think it's
okay that you have this condition and are
unwilling to do anything about it?

FRANK

(angry)

I sleep a lot, Katherine. It's not a
condition.

KATHERINE

You sleep through everything! It's not
normal!

FRANK

What do you want me to do, Katherine? I went
to your stupid doctors and your pointless
sleep clinics. They all told you the same
thing- I'm fine!

KATHERINE

You think it's normal that you slept through
your daughter's recital yesterday? The one
that she was so nervous about and begged you
to make sure you would be there? You slept
for fifteen hours, Frank. That's *not* normal.

FRANK

What the fuck do you want from me? You act
like it's something I can control!

KATHERINE

(interrupting)

I want you to go see Father Bishop!

FRANK

I am not going to go see your stupid-

KATHERINE

Don't you dare. I don't care if you don't believe in it, but I do. Something is not right here, and we've already exhausted all of the other options.

FRANK

(firmly)

I'm not going, Katherine. There is no such thing as the supernatural and your priest friend isn't going to make me believe that.

KATHERINE

(quietly)

You're going to go, Frank, or I'm taking Marie and leaving you. We both deserve someone who is going to be there for us when we need him, and with your condition, you aren't that man.

Katherine turns and leaves the bedroom, and Frank kicks at the bed in frustration.

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY TIME

Katherine and Frank are sitting in two armchairs across from FATHER BISHOP, 65, who is at his desk. Frank looks sullen and his slumping in his chair, Katherine is eager and hopeful. Father Bishop is intently listening.

KATHERINE

We know there is nothing medically wrong with him, Father, but I know something is wrong. It's just not normal for him to sleep through everything!

FATHER BISHOP

What exactly are you hoping from me, exactly?

KATHERINE

(tentatively)

Well, I just have this feeling that something more, well, ethereal might be going on.

(Frank snorts in disbelief but she ignores him)

I mean, he can literally sleep for 24 hours straight and it is always either after a huge problem in the family or during an important family event.

Father Bishop is clearly skeptical of the 'ethereal' suggestion, and is considering how to respond.

FATHER BISHOP

I see.

(pauses)

Well. I can offer some counseling services for Frank if he is willing, as this sounds like it could be a psychological problem.

KATHERINE

Isn't there like a test or something you could do to check for, like, supernatural things?

FRANK

(under his breath)

Will you give it a rest?

Katherine shoots him a dirty look and he looks away.

FATHER BISHOP

I think we should try to work with Frank's mental state before we jump to conclusions like that.

(to Frank)

So, how does that sound to you? I can give you once a week, if you'd like?

FRANK

(shrugging)

Sure, that's real nice of you, Father.

Katherine appears a bit dissatisfied, but still fairly hopeful. Frank is still sullen and Father Bishop appears vaguely amused.

INT. THE MORGAN HOUSE - EARLY EVENING

Katherine is in the kitchen making dinner. Frank is sitting at the table next to their daughter, MARIE, 8, who is coloring and ignoring them. They are having a heated discussion without raising their voices so they don't disturb her.

KATHERINE

I don't see what the big deal is.

FRANK

The big deal? Oh, maybe just that I have a psychotic wife who thinks I'm possessed and it makes me *sleep* a lot.

KATHERINE

I didn't say possessed! I used to think you had narcolepsy or something, but this is getting ridiculous.

FRANK

And what are you gonna do when Father Bishop also tells you that nothing is wrong? Leave me?

MARIE

(looking up from her coloring)
And go where?

KATHERINE

(shooting Frank a dirty look)
Nowhere, sweetie. Daddy is just talking.
(to Frank)
Haven't you realized that you always fall asleep when something important is going on? Maybe it is just a psychological issue, maybe you are legitimately incapable of being a partner in a relationship.

FRANK

(annoyed)
What are you talking about?

KATHERINE

You don't really want to be a part of this family, so your brain shuts down for you so you don't have to be involved. Your sleeping is just your way of avoiding us.

FRANK

That's crazy, Katherine. How could you think that?

KATHERINE

You realize we haven't made love in almost eight months?

(getting choked up)

Do you even love me anymore?

FRANK

(horrified and getting up from the table)

Of course I love you, Katherine. I've loved you from the moment I met you, and that will never change for as long as I live.

(pulls her into a hug)

KATHERINE

(sobbing into his chest)

Then why is it like this? It shouldn't be like this! I need you to be there for me, Frank!

FRANK

(sadly)

I know. Look, I'm gonna start seeing Father Bishop, okay? I'll figure this out.

INT. CHICAGO NATIONAL BANK - LATE AFTERNOON

CLYDE PETERS, 45, is sitting in his windowless office working on his computer. There is a knock at the door and Katherine pokes her head in. She looks uncomfortable.

KATHERINE

You wanted to see me, sir?

CLYDE

Yes, Katherine, please come in.

Katherine enters slowly and stands by the door, leaving it open.

CLYDE (CONT'D)

Shut the door, would you?

Katherine hesitates briefly, and does so, remaining by the door. Clyde smiles slyly at her.

CLYDE (CONT'D)

Why do I get the feeling that I'm making you nervous?

KATHERINE

(quietly)

This is wrong, Clyde. We can't do this anymore.

Clyde is quiet for a moment, regarding her, and then he gets up and walks slowly towards her, like a predator. The attraction between them is palpable, though it is clear Katherine is struggling to ignore those feelings.

CLYDE

(standing very close to Katherine)

Can't do what anymore, exactly?

KATHERINE

(shying away)

He's getting help now. He's really trying.

CLYDE

(chuckling)

You deserve more than 'trying'. You said so yourself.

(tries to kiss her)

KATHERINE

(ducking away)

No, it's different now. I can't do this with you.

CLYDE

(grabbing her around the waist)
I can give you more than he ever could.

Clyde aggressively seduces Katherine and she succumbs.

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - SAME TIME

Father Bishop and Frank are discussing Frank's condition.

FRANK

But, like I said, I've been to clinics and hospitals all over. There's nothing medically wrong with me. I figured it must be something psychological.

FATHER BISHOP

(Thoughtfully)

Times of intense stress could possibly lead to the brain taking an active role in protecting its psyche by shutting down, but not a certainty. It is definitely something we can delve into further.

FRANK

Yeah, that's what Katherine said. But, honestly, she's pretty sure it's some cuckoo supernatural shit.

(Pauses in horror)

Oh, sorry, Father!

FATHER BISHOP

Don't worry, Frank.

FRANK

(sheepishly)

But, yeah, I don't believe in all that.

FATHER BISHOP

We're going to try old-fashioned methodologies before we even consider the supernatural, okay? We're going to work through the varying elements of your home life that could cause you stress, and go through a detailed account of every single

one of your episodes and the events
surrounding their occurrences.

FRANK

That's fair.

FATHER BISHOP

(Looking down at his notes)
Tell me more about Katherine.

FRANK

(Sadly)
Katherine is the love of my life. I've loved
her since I was twelve years old.

(Shrugs)
I don't know when it started, but we had a
rough time after we first got married. She
gave up everything for us, but it didn't
matter because we were in love.

FATHER BISHOP

And how is your relationship now? Especially
considering your episodes.

FRANK

(Sighing)
I think she thinks it's her fault. That I
don't love her anymore or something.
Probably because these episodes started right
at the beginning of our marriage. We had all
those problems, what with her not finding a
job, finding out she had a hostile uterus and
couldn't get pregnant...

FATHER ROBERTS

But all those problems were solved, weren't
they? You were able to conceive, and she
found the perfect job for herself.

FRANK

Yeah, but, I had my episodes during all of
those great moments. I missed it all.

(shakes his head)
She doesn't deserve that.

INT. CHICAGO NATIONAL BANK - SAME TIME

Katherine is hurriedly redressing herself while Clyde watches her. It is clear they have just had sex in his office; she is ashamed and he is satisfied.

CLYDE

Oh, I have more funds I need you to store for me, if that's alright.

KATHERINE

(frustrated)

Don't do this to me, Clyde. This isn't fair.

CLYDE

(languidly)

Don't start, Katherine. You came after me, remember?

KATHERINE

That was wrong of me! I know that now!

CLYDE

(hands raised)

Ball's in your court, Kat. We can do whatever you want.

(smiles slyly)

If you can resist.

KATHERINE

Oh, shut up.

(composes herself)

Okay, seriously. How much do you need stored?

CLYDE

I have \$1.2 million.

KATHERINE

(shocked)

Where is this money coming from?

CLYDE

(soothingly)

Upper management need to know only, babe.

(winks)

Just know that the 10% you get for holding it is going to be pretty nice. You're lucky I chose you to keep it for us.

KATHERINE

(stunned)

Wow, thank you, Clyde. That's really nice of you!

CLYDE

(smiling)

Just cause you're my girl. Remember not to tell the others, though. Can't have them thinking I'm playing favorites.

INT. THE MORGAN HOUSE - EVENING

Frank and Katherine are in the living room watching television.

KATHERINE

So, how did it go with Father Bishop today?

FRANK

(focusing on the television)

Pointless, why do you ask?

KATHERINE

What did you talk about?

FRANK

Why does it matter?

KATHERINE

(sighing)

I just want to know, Frank.

FRANK

(annoyed)

Do you want me to tell you that he thinks I'm uninterested in the family like you said? Is that what you want?

KATHERINE

No, of course not. I just wanted to know of any progress...

FRANK

It's been one day. There's no progress.
(under his breath)
There probably won't ever be.

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH

Frank and Father Bishop are sitting in their customary places. There is a montage of the following weeks, shown through Frank's change in clothes, that displays the different tactics Father Bishop is using, including hypnotherapy, meditation, acupuncture, etc.

As the appointments go on, Father Bishop is getting more and more curious, and Frank is getting frustrated. Despite all of this, Frank and Father Bishop are getting to know each other pretty well.

FATHER BISHOP

You do really care a lot about others, Frank, I realize this about you, even though you portray like you don't.

FRANK

(grinning)
I mean, I keep to myself, but if someone is in trouble, I always try to do what I can.

FATHER BISHOP

(nodding thoughtfully)
Katherine's right, you know, noticing that every episode occurs during or after a huge moment or issue in your life.

FRANK

(earnestly)
It's not because I don't care, Father!

FATHER BISHOP

No, I don't think that's the case. I think it's something much more latent. Especially

since every problem has been solved by the time you woke up.

FRANK

(confused)

What?

FATHER BISHOP

You and your wife have financial problems, you get exhausted, sleep, and then when you wake up, it's been solved. Your daughter is scared she's going to preform badly at her recital, you get exhausted, sleep through it, and then when you wake up, find out that she was exemplary. Are you following?

FRANK

No...

FATHER BISHOP

(sighing)

I don't know. I have to figure out a way to show what I'm thinking. I'll see what I can do for next week.

FRANK

(skeptically)

If you say so, Father.

INT. THE MORGAN HOUSE - EVENING, SAME DAY

Frank arrives home from his meeting with Father Bishop and is tired and annoyed. When he arrives home, he finds Katherine in the living room, surrounded by shopping bags.

FRANK

Katherine, what the hell is this?

KATHERINE

(excited)

I went to IKEA and got new stuff for the living room and kitchen!

(reaches into the bag)

I even bought you this back cushion to help with the stiffness you get from sitting at the computer all day!

Katherine eagerly extends the pillow towards Frank, who is glaring at her.

FRANK

Where did you get the money for all of this?

KATHERINE

(uncertainly)

I got a bonus at work.

FRANK

And you decided to blow it on crap from IKEA we don't need instead of, oh, I don't know, saving it?

KATHERINE

You always complain about how I decorate our house! I thought you would be pleased!

FRANK

How would I be pleased about this? You know we're not financially stable and we still have to put Marie through college! You can't do stuff like this without asking me first!

KATHERINE

(getting angry)

You're pretty self-righteous for a man who spends most of his time not giving a crap about our family in the first place!

FRANK

(angry)

Don't start that shit with me. Did it ever occur to you that I'm not interested because you're boring?

Both of them stop in shock at his words. Frank looks horrified at himself, and Katherine looks like she's about to cry.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Omigod. Katherine, I didn't mean-

KATHERINE

(interrupting, enraged)

You lazy, son of a bitch. You never deserved me! I gave you everything and this is how you repay me?

Frank attempts to interject, trying to apologize, but she overrides him.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)

(shouting)

How dare you speak to me that way? You have no idea how lucky you are to have me in your life!

Frank grabs Katherine's shoulders to calm her down, but she SLAPS him in the face. He backs away from her, eyes wide. She looks shocked at herself, and then runs out of the house, leaving him standing there.

EXT. CLYDE PETERS' HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Outside of Clyde's house is a police squad car with flashing blue lights. Katherine is shocked as she drives up and drives a little ways past the house. She pulls over and gets out of the car, walking over to where a crowd of people have gathered, whispering amongst themselves.

As Katherine watches, TWO POLICE OFFICERS lead Clyde out of his house in handcuffs. She is horrified and makes her way towards TWO CHATTY WOMEN nearby.

WOMAN #1

(shaking her head)

I always thought there was something iffy about that man.

KATHERINE

What happened?

WOMAN #2

Embezzlement.

KATHERINE

(horrified)

Wait, what?

WOMAN #2

He'll probably go away for a long time.

WOMAN #1

Over ten million dollars over the last five years! They're looking for his accomplice.

KATHERINE

How do you know he had an accomplice?

WOMAN #2

(in a hushed tone)

Someone who works at his bank was hiding the money for him.

Katherine backs away from the two women, hands over her mouth, as the police car carrying Clyde drives away. She walks slowly back to her car and sits in it, stunned and not moving.

A change comes over her eyes and she sits up straight, starting the car and driving away in a flurry.

INT. THE MORGAN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Frank is sitting on the couch with his head in his hands when Katherine bursts into the house.

KATHERINE

(shouting)

Frank! Frank, I'm so sorry!

FRANK

(standing up and going to her)

No, I'm sorry!

KATHERINE

(hugging him)

I never should have said those things to you.

FRANK

(at the same time)

I was so tense and stressed I just took it all out on you, and you don't deserve that.

KATHERINE

I just need to know that you love me and you want to make it work and that you're going to make an effort to get better!

FRANK

Of course, I love you! I always will.

Katherine and Frank stand in silence, still hugging for a moment.

FRANK (CONT'D)

(tenderly)

Why don't you come with me to see Father Bishop next week? He says he thinks he has a test to determine what might be wrong?

KATHERINE

(hopefully)

Really?

FRANK

No promises, though.

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - AFTERNOON

Katherine and Frank are sitting in Father Bishop's office. There is an air of tentative comfort between them, as if they are working out their problems and getting back to being comfortable with each other.

Father Bishop comes in looking distraught and sits in the chair across from them.

FRANK

(concerned)

Father, what's wrong?

FATHER BISHOP

(sighing heavily)

Nothing I would want to burden you with.

KATHERINE

(eagerly)

Okay, then. What's this test for Frank?

FRANK

(interrupting)

Wait, no, seriously. What is the matter?

KATHERINE

Frank, Father Bishop doesn't want to burden you with his problems when you have your own. Let him help you.

Frank shushes Katherine, who sits back sullenly, and then turns back to Father Bishop.

FRANK

What happened, Father?

FATHER BISHOP

(sighing again)

I just found out that I have metastasized prostate cancer, and I only have a few months left.

Frank looks horrified. Katherine is concerned too, but it appears she is more concerned about how this affects her and not the priest.

KATHERINE

So, will you be here until then, or, like, in the hospital?

FRANK

(ignoring Katherine)

How are you doing with that?

FATHER BISHOP

(quietly)

I don't know if it's really sunken in yet. I just found out a couple days ago.

Frank reaches out and places his hand sympathetically on Father Bishop's wrist. Katherine is trying to look sympathetic as well, but is looking more annoyed.

FRANK

Do you need anything?

Father Bishop shakes his head dejectedly. Frank looks fairly distraught and is looking down. Father Bishop watches him closely, and then his eyes widen.

Father Bishop looks down quickly at where Frank is touching him and is amazed to see a FAINT PATTERN OF LIGHT trickling under his skin from Frank's hand.

FATHER BISHOP

(in awe)

Look!

Katherine and Frank both look down at Frank's hand on Father Bishop's wrist and gasp. Frank jerks his hand away and the light immediately vanishes. He staggers back in his chair, overcome with exhaustion and Katherine gapes.

FATHER BISHOP (CONT'D)

I knew it!

KATHERINE

(looking back and forth between the two men)

Knew what, what is it? Is it magic?

FATHER BISHOP

(excitedly)

Frank is exhausted right now, but, unless I'm mistaken, he should be getting his energy back pretty soon.

As if on cue, Frank's exhaustion lifts and he rights himself, looking confused.

FRANK

What the hell happened?

FATHER BISHOP

I lied about the cancer, Frank. I'm not sick; this was the test I was talking about.

KATHERINE

I'm so confused right now. What was that?

FATHER BISHOP

You have this latent need to help people who are struggling and it manifests itself in this miraculous way. Your body sends energy to those you subconsciously want to help and uses it to magically help them, if you will. Since I wasn't really ill, your energy was returned to you once it realized it wasn't actually needed.

Katherine and Frank both sit in awed silence watching him. Katherine recovers first.

KATHERINE

(shouting)

I knew it!

(hugs Frank)

I knew it! You can fix everything!

FRANK

(pushing her off)

Is there a way to stop it?

KATHERINE

Why would you want to stop it? It's an amazing gift!

FRANK

I'm tired of this happening when I don't intend it to. I'm tired of missing my own life because I'm unintentionally helping others. If what you're saying is true, then I can control it.

FATHER BISHOP

(nodding understandingly)

That's a valid point. You should not be required to give more than you can for

others. I can work with you, if you want, to figure out how to get it under control?

FRANK

(nodding vigorously)

Yes, please, Father.

FATHER BISHOP

It would be curious to see if someone could induce the reaction from you without you wanting to provide it. In the wrong hands, it could be quite dangerous for you. You should probably avoid physical contact with some people just until we can figure out how to control it.

KATHERINE

(astounded)

I can't believe you two! Are you serious?

FATHER BISHOP

It is Frank's gift to choose to use how he wishes, Katherine. You need to respect that.

(to Frank)

Besides, I should probably warn you that an excess of use of this gift could conceivably kill you.

FRANK

Kill me?

FATHER BISHOP

Yes, the energy must be your actual life energy, which is why you sleep for so long afterwards. There's only so much of that to go around.

FRANK

Well, that's good to know. Jesus. I definitely won't be using it ever again in that case. Sorry for the language, Father.

Katherine stares back and forth between the two men for a minute, realizes that they are both firm in their opinions. Her eyes narrow and she sits back in her chair.

INT. THE MORGAN HOUSE - EARLY EVENING

Frank is sitting at the kitchen table, mulling over his gift. Katherine is at the sink, looking out of the WINDOW while she does the DISHES. Frank is annoying her and she is clearly frustrated.

FRANK

So, basically, all of this time when you've been blaming me and getting mad at me for not being there, it was actually because I was fixing all of the problems in our life. Isn't that ironic.

KATHERINE

(annoyed)

Yes, Frank. You're amazing.

FRANK

(smugly)

Problems that you caused, you know.

Katherine's eyes narrow and she looks like she is about to whirl around and yell at Frank, but then the phone RINGS.

Katherine composes herself and reaches over the PHONE attached to the wall and answers it.

KATHERINE

Hello?

CLYDE (O.C.)

(quietly)

I'm sorry.

Katherine's eyes widen and she freezes, aware that her husband is right behind her, although Frank isn't paying any attention to her.

KATHERINE

(softly)

What happened?

CLYDE (O.C.)

I had to tell them. I'm sorry.

KATHERINE
(panicking)
What did you do?

CLYDE (O.C.)
(sorrowfully)
They're on their way.

KATHERINE
(whispering fiercely)
But, I didn't do anything! I didn't even
know!

CLYDE (O.C.)
I'm so sorry.

The line goes dead and Katherine is left staring at the phone, comprehension dawning in her eyes. She slowly hangs up the phone and stares into the sink, thinking hard. Frank is oblivious behind her.

Suddenly, Katherine raises her head, a sly smile coming onto her face and she turns slowly to face Frank.

KATHERINE
(silky)
Oh, Frank? Do you think you could help me
with something?

FADE OUT.