

EXT. PIER IN FRONT OF THE DOWN & OUT CAFÉ – TWILIGHT

Coroner Sweborg and Laia stand on the edge of the pier. Sweborg's boat idles, a driver waiting for him to get in.

LAIA

Mr. Sweborg, I'm not entirely sure...

SWEBORG

Please, Laia. Call me C.S.

LAIA

OK...C.S.

She smiles.

LAIA (cont'd)

I don't know how I would've gotten through this without you, C.S. I'm afraid I would have ended up like Abuela, or Evan...

Laia's smile disappears.

SWEBORG

It's nothing. It was the least I could do. Somebody would have stopped her sooner or later.

Sweborg lights a cigarette.

LAIA

We thought it was ARM. We thought it could be A,R,I. But in the end, it was always Nancy. Nancy...

SWEBORG

She was extremely underestimated. Her husband. Your grandmother. Nobody ever suspected what she was capable of.

LAIA

And I used to go camping with her. She was just a gardener.

Sweborg contemplatively draws on his smoke.

SWEBORG

You never really know what a person is like on the inside. Even me, who can get inside people like nobody else. Even I can't tell.

Laia nods. Then she cocks her head as if listening to a nonexistent voice.

LAIA
(to the voice)

You're right.

(to Sweborg)

Mephista agrees with you. She says that she is as far inside me as it is possible to get, and as much as it might feel otherwise, we are two separate entities.

Sweborg smiles.

SWEBORG

I always liked Mephista.

LAIA

She always liked you.

She looks at him. He looks away. Uncomfortable pause.

LAIA

So, what's next for the famous Coroner Sweborg?

SWEBORG

Well, I'd like to tie up a couple of loose ends with this case. It's tempting to just say, "Nancy did it," and leave it at that. But she had to have help. Some things just don't sit right with me. I haven't heard from Audrey Green in a while, and that concerns me. Plus, Ojimbwa may not be the swiftest gazelle in the pack, but there is NO WAY he would confuse death by strangulation with anaphylactic shock caused by shellfish. And due to all the notoriety around recent events, I have a bunch of new clients who are clamoring for my services.

LAIA

Mmm-hmm

Beat.

SWEBORG

And. What will you do now?

LAIA

I'm not sure. I was thinking for starters, I'd go back to my apartment and try to find the bottom of a bottle of red wine.

SWEBORG

Why don't you go look in on Dwayne? He'll need your help in his recovery. And you can help him.

Laia looks away from him to hide her blush. She kicks a piece of refuse into the water.

LAIA

The Red King...is, well, a little young for me. I prefer someone more...experienced.

Sweborg flicks his half-smoked cigarette to the ground, saying nothing. Laia turns back and faces him.

LAIA

Y'know, the Salla women are notoriously hardheaded and implacable when they've decided that they want something. And you've got me stammering like a schoolgirl looking at a Belladerma catalog for the first time.

Sweborg reaches out and cups Laia's face with his hand.

SWEBORG

Pretty little Laia. You know that's not a good idea.

Laia closes her eyes. Sweborg caresses her cheek for a second, then drops his hand to his side. Laia sighs.

SWEBORG

Go. Go be the Red Queen.

He turns to go. Laia opens her eyes. She looks as if she wants to call after him, but somehow, she is restraining herself.

Sweborg walks to the end of the pier and jumps into the waiting boat.

EXT. – BOAT – TWILIGHT

The driver turns around and reveals himself to be Mike Royal. He starts to unmoor the boat from the dock.

MIKE ROYAL

So, where to Mr. S?

SWEBORG

Anywhere that serves a stiff drink. How about you, Mike

MIKE ROYAL

Wherever is fine with me, Sir. I'm just grateful to you for giving me this job. After what happened, I wasn't sure I knew what to do next.

SWEBORG

No problem Mike. You deserve it. You deserve more.

MIKE ROYAL

So, what's next for you, Mr. S?

SWEBORG

Well, Mike. I got a call from Cybertronics, believe it or not. Seems Allen Hobby has vanished. He went looking for some members of his team, and nobody's seen him since. They want me on the case. You up for a little action, Mike?

MIKE ROYAL

Always, Sir.

Mike puts the boat in gear and it starts to pull away. Sweborg looks back to the dock where he sees Laia still watching him. He turns back towards Mike and relaxes into his seat.

SWEBORG

Why don't we make a quick stop at Rouge City first.

MIKE ROYAL

You need to find something there? I know a couple of people...

SWEBORG

No Mike. No, I need to lose something there.

EXT. PIER – TWILIGHT

Laia watches Sweborg's boat recede into the distance. She listens to Mephista's silent comment.

LAIA

I know, Mephista. I wonder, too.

Laia bends down and picks up the remaining half of Sweborg's cigarette. She lights it and takes a short puff.

LAIA

I think you're right. I think he's going to make some very important people very unhappy.

She looks out again at the boat, which is now barely visible in the distance.

LAIA

We're going to be hearing from that Coroner. And I don't mean a postcard.

Laia makes a decision. She stubs out the remains of the cigarette.

LAIA

Let's go see how Dwayne is doing.

Laia turns and walks away. Sweborg's boat is recedes out of sight.

The cicadas chirp in the twilight.

In the river, the trout leap.

FADE OUT

THE END