

The Bar of Revelation

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The Calypso tavern was a solemn place. It was occupied by many, but rarely had any excitement. This was something the bartender prided himself on. He smiled to himself, everyone seemed content with their service. Everyone except the strange woman sitting at the bar. She tossed a stray piece of white hair over her shoulder and puffed on her cigar. She spun her glass repeatedly. The liquid inside sloshed opposite her fingers, as if it was trying to get away from her touch. No one else was sitting at the bar.

The woman looked up as the tiny bell positioned over the door rang. A man walked in. His dark skin was sallow, and the skin was drawn so tight over his bones that you could count his ribs through his clothes. This was accentuated by the toothpick he was chewing. His already stretched cheeks stretched further as he gnawed on the small piece of wood. The man still sauntered over and sat beside the woman with the utmost poise. He plucked the cigar from her and took a drag.

“You always were punctual,” said the man, brushing ash from the shoulder of his suit jacket. The woman gave the ghost of a smile.

“And you were always as thin as a paperclip,” said the woman. Her voice was ragged, catching on every syllable that passed through her lips. She tapped her cigar, raining ashes onto the bar.

Behind them, a man keeled over, claspings his sides. Anyone close to him could see his stomach caving in on itself. The man dug his nails into his table, gasping. His friend’s body convulsed with a

cough, red flecks spitting from his mouth. The mysterious pair ignored them, taking turns smoking and regaling shared memories they had had over the years. The bell rang again.

A young woman entered the tavern, swathed in red: a red jacket, red lipstick, red gloves. Her raven black hair swayed by her hips as she walked over to the thin man and his companion. She hopped onto the bar itself, settling in front of the other two. She removed her red tinted sunglasses to reveal eyes that burned like fire.

“It’s been *such* a long time,” the woman sighed. The words flowed out of her crimson lips. “We need get together more often.” Her accent was unplaceable. When concentrating too hard on it, it could start to sound like the most exotic accent you could think of, but also no accent at all.

A woman across the bar slammed another into a table, her head cracking against the wood. Both women had sunken stomachs and thinning cheeks. Around the tavern, fights broke out. Over a misplaced wallet, or a hair that had gone astray. Over who would pay the bill, or about the sudden storm that was brewing outside the windows. Meanwhile, the woman in red laughed, a laugh filled with such glee that one would assume she had just heard the funniest joke in her life. A man with a bulky frame and fever bright eyes approached them and raised his fist, attempting to start something that wasn’t worth starting. The woman’s lips pulled into an amused smile.

At once, the trio raised their hands, their eyes ablaze. The man’s face swelled with boils, steam rising from his skin. Next, the man keeled over in pain. His face was gaunt, and he had changed from bulky to skeletal. The third woman tilted her head and grinned at the man, watching as his face twisted with an emotion so potent that his features were unrecognizable to the ones he had moments ago. His anger was almost tangible. The woman in red giggled. The man promptly slumped onto the floor, his heart unable to take so much raw emotion.

The bell rang a third time as a hooded figure stepped into the tavern. Silence fell as fighting men and women all sunk simultaneously to the floor. The only people left were the trio sitting at the bar, and they didn't have to check to know that everyone else was dead. The woman in red bounced up and ran over to the hooded figure.

"You made it!" she exclaimed as the hooded figure's tattooed arms wrapped around her waist. The others turned away as the couple kissed. He produced a black rose from his armless trench coat, tucking it behind her.

"It isn't the same without you," the thin man said, the toothpick back between his lips. The white-haired woman stood and grinned.

"Famine, Pestilence, War," Death said as he poured them each a shot. They drank in unison. "There's an apocalypse that needs to be harbingered."

They all grinned and walked out of the Calypso tavern together.