

## SCENE THREE | END OF THE LINE

*A carriage.*

*The afternoon is turning into evening.*

*ASTRID blinks once - twice - as if she has woken up here a'fresh.*

*She looks around, breathes deep, once - twice -*

*Then reaches into her bag for a book.*

*Meanwhile, another girl watches ASTRID intently.*

*This girl's face, and part of her hair; is covered in the remnants of the PIECE OF CAKE.*

*HADLEY.*

*HADLEY'S knee taps furiously, her glasses threaten to fall off her nose, then - with a resolve that is not her own - she speaks a little too loudly, earnestly, across the carriage*

HADLEY Okay.  
That's enough.  
What do you want?

ASTRID ...  
Pardon?

HADLEY Cut the crap Captain.  
This Pollyanna reboot you've returned to school with doesn't fool me.  
What do you want?

ASTRID Nothing.

HADLEY No.  
Nuh-uh.  
You never want nothing.  
You want a photo of my cake-smacked face?  
Is that it?  
You got another piece you wanna smear in my hair?  
Hm?

Listen: we're almost at the End Of The Line and while I admire your conviction  
- nay persistence -  
I'd rather you just made me the butt of whatever joke you're planning  
so you can save yourself the full fare  
and get off at the next stop.

ASTRID I'm going home.  
To my house ... ?  
Where I live.

HADLEY This is going to The End Of The Line.  
You don't live down here.

ASTRID I do.

HADLEY No you don't.

ASTRID Yes.  
I do.  
Now.

***Beat.***

***ASTRID tries to focus on her book.***

***HADLEY changes seats, moves closer towards***

***ASTRID. She observes her the way a scientist might observe a lab experiment.***

HADLEY My name's Ernestine.

ASTRID Nice to meet you Ernestine.

HADLEY I've been in your grade since prep.

ASTRID I'm sorry.  
I thought you looked familiar.

HADLEY I'm sorry.  
I just lied to you about my name.  
It's not Ernestine.

ASTRID Well,  
I'm sorry.  
Because I was just thinking Ernestine is a really  
unfortunate name.

HADLEY I'm sorry,  
Ernestine is my middle name.

ASTRID I'm sorry,  
I don't believe you.

HADLEY I'm sorry.  
*[HADLEY produces her ID.]*  
This time I'm not lying.

ASTRID I'm sorry

HADLEY Thanks

ASTRID I am sorry about the cake to your face.

HADLEY I've had worse from  
you no less.

ASTRID ...

HADLEY *[HADLEY straightens up, she wants to offer a serious  
apology.]*  
I'm-  
I'm sorry about what happened to you -

ASTRID My Pollyanna reboot?  
Truth is: that's where I've been for the past term.  
Brainwashed as part of a classified government

experiment.  
I'm one part girl.  
Two parts robot.  
When I'm not braiding my hair, I'm assassinating world  
leaders.

HADLEY That explains everything.

ASTRID Now I've told you: I'll have to kill you.  
Who's sorry now?

*The pair laugh.*  
*HADLEY seems to relax.*  
*This is probably the first time they've spoken to each  
other outside of school, or maybe ever?*

HADLEY *[Nodding at ASTRID'S book:]*  
You skipped a good bit.

ASTRID How do you know?

HADLEY I've read it.  
Flick the left corner.

ASTRID *[ASTRID does:]*  
Stick figures.  
Is that ... ?

HADLEY Yes.  
Stick Figure Joan.  
Being burnt in a Pile of Sticks.  
Took me five Big Lunches to do that.

ASTRID That's morbid.

HADLEY That's what happened.  
Oh! Have I ruined the ending?

ASTRID I didn't know you took History?

|        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |        |                                                                                                              |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| HADLEY | I don't.<br>I was just mildly obsessed with her two summers ago. I wanted to start a band called <i>Joan On Fire</i> . Punk-ska- <i>Bikini-Kill</i> -kind of vibe. We were only going to sing in French. And make music videos in black and white. But I had trouble recruiting members. Nobody could play bass. And I only learnt the bassoon to Grade Three. Plus Woodwinds don't exactly scream hardcore femme rock. I'm Hadley. | ASTRID | No.<br>Not in my bag. Not exactly.                                                                           |
|        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | HADLEY | <i>[She holds up a piece of cake from her hair:]</i><br>Why'd you keep this?                                 |
|        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | ASTRID | Sentimental reasons.                                                                                         |
|        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | HADLEY | Explains the tang.                                                                                           |
|        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | ASTRID | That cake was one of the last things my Mum baked before her breakdown.                                      |
|        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | HADLEY | What happened?                                                                                               |
| ASTRID | Astrid.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | ASTRID | She was the chef who blew chunks over her co-host on live television.                                        |
| HADLEY | I know.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |        |                                                                                                              |
| ASTRID | I can't take you seriously with that cake on your face.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | HADLEY | I'm not familiar.                                                                                            |
| HADLEY | Nobody truly great was ever taken seriously at first. Look at her.<br><i>[HADLEY points at the book.]</i><br>Nobody took her seriously.<br><i>[She licks some frosting from her forehead ... ]</i><br>(This is still pretty good.)<br>They thought she was crazy.                                                                                                                                                                   | ASTRID | You're kidding?<br>You don't Snapchat?                                                                       |
|        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | HADLEY | Nope.                                                                                                        |
|        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | ASTRID | Insta?                                                                                                       |
| ASTRID | She wasn't crazy.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | HADLEY | Nup.                                                                                                         |
| HADLEY | Agreed.<br>But at first nobody was sure whether she was talking to angels or demons.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | ASTRID | Do you even Facebook?                                                                                        |
|        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | HADLEY | I prefer Real Books.<br>Less opinions.                                                                       |
| ASTRID | How do you tell the difference?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | ASTRID | The video went viral.<br>Then someone turned her into a meme.                                                |
| HADLEY | Why?<br>You have an angel in your bag?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |        | I think seeing herself as GIF up-chucking over-and-over might've been what finally pushed her over the edge. |

*HADLEY offers her a conciliatory smile.  
She gets up.*

HADLEY My stop.

*ASTRID might go to say something.  
Doesn't.*

Angels protect you.  
Demons: not so much.  
Angels carry warnings.  
Prophecies.  
Salvation, that kind of thing.  
They reveal themselves to people who need saving.  
*[HADLEY hands her a clump of something wrapped in  
a white cloth]*

This is yours.  
What's left .. .

HADLEY exits.  
ASTRID unfolds the clump. It's the PIECE OF CAKE.  
She puts it down beside her and unfurls the cloth.  
It's JOAN'S pennant.  
The lights flicker as though the train is travelling through  
a tunnel.  
We see a flash of JOAN holding out her hand.  
Then, darkness.