Z Relief

by

Jean-Pierre Chapoteau

Jean-Pierre Chapoteau 10094 Paseo Montril San Diego, CA 92129 301-266-6002 Jeanpierre_4_25@msn.com INT. CARRY OUT - RESTROOM - NIGHT

Small. Floors, sink, and the only toilet are spotless. A picture of CRISOLLA, 30s, lies on the countertop.

A small red box on the sink vibrates and tinkers. Attached to the box, a tube, which leads underneath Crisolla's shirt.

The tinker slows. Hunched over the sink, Crisolla removes the tube. A sharp end. She tucks her equipment in her purse.

She straightens up her attire and pulls out a compact.

In the mirror, Crisolla applies makeup. She glimpses at the photo for a reference point. She appears a bit older.

CRISOLLA

Unbelievable.

Crisolla sucks her teeth, snaps her compact closed, snatches the photo and tosses them in her hand bag.

She yanks the door open and storms out.

INT. SMALL CHINESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Dim and dingy. Crisolla chews on a bloody rare steak.

LEON, 40s, his watch cost more than most cars, sits with her. Uncomfortable. He pushes his half eaten steak aside.

LEON

It's awful. It has this... metallic like taste to it. Never again. And this place? Don't get me started.

CRISOLLA

Awful? Don't talk to me anymore. You must be broken. And how dare you bad mouth my restaurant.

A HAPPY COUPLE enters. Their demeanor changes when they spot Leon. He peers back, confused. They move on.

Leon slowly exhales as he leans forward.

LEON

So... about the move in date?

Crisolla glances up for a second, then gets back to her meal.

LEON (CONT'D)

I want you with me Crisolla. Four months in seems perfect to me.

(MORE)

LEON (CONT'D)

Lets face it, our wrinkles are only getting deeper.

Crisolla works to avoid eye contact as Leon leans in closer.

LEON (CONT'D)

I know you feel the same way.

Leon smiles as Crisolla meets his gaze.

CRISOLLA

Okay. But, only if tonight goes smooth.

LEON

Tonight? What should I be expecting?

Crisolla bounces her eyebrows with a smile and stuffs another piece of steak in her mouth.

CRISOLLA

(food in mouth)

Can't talk. Mouth is full.

Leon chuckles.

LEON

Now I see why you never eat around me.

Crisolla reaches over the table and punches him in the arm. Leon smiles, but glances up just in time to see the Happy Couple look away. His brow furrows in confusion.

Leon fixes his tie and stands up.

LEON (CONT'D)

How about we take that to go?

CRISOLLA

I don't eat leftovers.

Leon pulls a menu off the table and holds it out to her.

LEON

Well then, Miss high maintenance, there is always delivery.

Crisolla snags the menu and beams a sarcastic smile. Leon flashes on back. They poke at each other as they leave out.

EXT. BUSY STREET - NIGHT

Armed TROOPS patrol the area. Barricades block off side roads.

A SOLDIER holds his hand up as a Bentley Coupe approaches.

Leon rolls down the window. He pulls out his wallet and hands the soldier a card. The soldier peers at Crisolla.

He nods to her as he returns Leon's card and heads off, but Leon grabs his sleeve.

LEON

Hey, aren't you supposed to check everyone's papers?

The soldier eyes Crisolla. She returns a blank stare.

SOLDIER

We know each other from mutual acquaintances.

LEON

...oh. Well, I apologize about that. I'm a primary donor to the cause, so you can see where my concern lies.

The soldier forms a slight frown.

SOLDIER

Understandable. Stay out of trouble.

Leon nods and pulls off. He looks Crisolla's way, ready to inquire, but her undivided attention lies out the window.

A large sheet drapes over what seems to be an enormous box.

As the vehicle blows past, the veil flutters.

Emaciated PEOPLE groan inside the CAGE. Crisolla looks away.

INT. LEON'S CONDO - NIGHT

Classical music croons from a stereo. Important plaques and articles of Leon, cloth the walls.

A large picture of Crisolla and Leon hang above the fireplace.

Crisolla's picture lies on her lap. Compact in hand, she touches up on her makeup, but all of sudden puts them away.

Leon strolls in the room with two glasses of wine. He hands her one. Crisolla frowns at the choice of beverage.

LEON

Is there something on your mind? Did we not have a good time tonight?

Crisolla clenches her stomach.

CRISOLLA

I'm still hungry, that's all.

LEON

I'm sorry about that. My fillet must have been dropped or something.

Leon chuckles. Crisolla half smiles. Leon points to their picture.

LEON (CONT'D)

Did you notice?

CRISOLLA

Yes, in matter of fact I did. It's nice.

LEON

Well? The place is calling to you. Apparently it wants you here. It's no longer under our control, Crisolla.

Crisolla smiles. She looks down. Fiddles with her skirt.

CRISOLLA

It's really getting late.

Crisolla holds her stomach as she lumbers over to the door.

LEON

But... what about our smooth night? You didn't give me a chance to sway you.

Leon walks over just as Crisolla opens the door.

LEON (CONT'D)

Can I at least get a kiss good night?

Crisolla gazes at Leon, almost begging with his eyes. She grins and closes hers. They kiss.

...but her eyes fly open. Crisolla's breaths quicken. She pulls away. Her gaze shoots to the doorway.

CRISOLLA

Good night, Leon.

She rushes out. Leon watches her hurry down the hall. He puts his hand up.

LEON

Yeah... you too.

Crisolla rounds the corner. Stops. Listens... Leon's door closes. She clenches onto her shirt and chews on her bottom lip, lost in thought.

INT. CRISOLLA'S CONDO - KITCHEN - NIGHT

A refrigerator, cracked open, shows no sign of food. The faint tinker of the small red box plays.

The box vibrates on a granite countertop. Crisolla arches over it with the tube up her shirt.

Slimy brown substance slides through it, and into the box.

INT. CRISOLLA'S CONDO - BATHROOM - NIGHT

The lights are off. Beige stained cotton balls lie all over the tiled floor. The bathtub, full of ice.

Plastic jars fill a small pantry which reads: EMBALM CREAM.

The only source of light comes from a candle on the edge of the tub. Crisolla's picture dangles above the flame.

It catches fire. Her pretty face withers away.

Crisolla stands before a mirror. Her body, engulfed in shadow. Only her hazel brown eyes are seen.

She sticks her finger in her eye -- and removes a contact.

Two hazel contacts are dropped in a small trash bin.

She scoops a glob of cream from an open white jar that rests on the bathroom sink and applies it across her foot. Then her thighs. Her stomach. Chest. Back. At last, her face.

She stares at her gelatin reflection, semi covered in shadow.

Crisolla steps in the icy cold tub. Not a flinch. She submerges her entire body under the shavings of ice.

Seconds after seconds pass... Crisolla never emerges.

INT. CRISOLLA'S CONDO - NIGHT

It's dark. A knock at the door. It creaks open.

Leon enters. He squints through the gloomy room.

LEON

Crisolla?

He eyes a light switch.

CRISOLLA (O.S.)

It doesn't work.

Startled, Leon peers into the shadows. The moonlight gives her skin a grayish hue. Crisolla slouches in a chair.

Leon pauses by the door. Confusion strikes his face.

LEON

Why'd you call me over here, Crisolla?

Crisolla stands. She looks up... with dark red eyes.

CRISOLLA

Stop funding the Z Relief, or else you'll be killed.

Leon's taken back. He eyes his surroundings.

LEON

What the hell is going on?

CRISOLLA

You're contributing to an antidote that is no longer needed. It's too late for your people, Leon. But our leaders want to make an arrangement.

Leon steps forward. Hand stretched out.

LEON

You're... infected. It looks like first stage. This is still curable.

Crisolla cringes at the statement. She bats his hand away.

CRISOLLA

Infection? No, Leon. Evolution.
There are... more than enough of us
now. Details aren't important, but --

LEON

What are you talking about?

CRISOLLA

Most of us have controlled our urge to... violently feed. We have a system now. A system your people might agree on. That's why we need you to be sort of an ambassador.

Leon looks for deceit in her eyes. But he finds none.

CRISOLLA (CONT'D)

Please Leon. You're the only one left that the governor will listen to. It's in your people's best interest. Just meet with us and --

LEON

Crisolla! You're talking about meetings, and- and the governor? What... what about us?

Crisolla avoids his saddened eyes. She fixes her gaze on the floor.

CRISOLLA

Leon, I -- we don't share the same interests in each other.

Leon's at a lost of words. He looks away. Pain in his eyes. He shakes his head. Struggles to find his next words.

But he whips out a pistol from behind his back.

Crisolla, hurt over his action. But not surprised.

Leon stammers back.

LEON

What do you eat?

Crisolla shakes her head.

CRISOLLA

Please don't make me say it...

LEON

Answer me, damn it! What do you eat?

Crisolla's red eyes gaze into his. Leon awaits her answer.

CRISOLLA

... The living.

Leon holds his mouth as he backs away. He bumps into the front door. His hand trembles as it searches for the knob.

Eyes still on Crisolla, Leon opens the door. He pauses. Holds the gun. Firmer. More confident. His finger cradles the trigger. Angered eyes focus on his former love --

But he drops his hand.

Leon backs out into the hallway. Gives Crisolla one last look, then bolts away.

Silence. Crisolla stands in the living room. Solemn faced.

A SCREECH outside cuts through the silence. Crisolla sprints to a window overlooking the street.

Leon flags down a squad car. Two OFFICERS step out. Crisolla places her hand on the windowpane.

CRISOLLA (CONT'D)

(whispers)

Leon...

Crisolla watches him point toward her window. The cops nod and follow him to the building doors.

But an officer POUNCES.

Crisolla leans back a bit. The other officer works to get his partner off -- but gives in as well.

The faint site of the officers devouring Leon reflects off Crisolla's window.

Most pedestrians watch. Some even join. A few run...

...but they are caught.

The sound of flesh being eaten causes Crisolla to turn away. She sits in her chair. Leans forward. Covers her ears...

INT. CRISOLLA'S KITCHEN - LATER

Candlelight bounces off the walls. The restaurant menu rests on the counter. Crisolla leans against it, phone to her ear.

CRISOLLA

And if it isn't here in four minutes, just don't bother. Thank you.

Crisolla sets the phone down and removes a decrepit sheet of paper from her pocket.

A list of faces, with names and information have been crossed out. Leon's face and info are the only ones untouched.

Instead, A heart is sketched over it.

Crisolla takes the list and holds it over a candle. It goes up in flames.

The light bounces over her saddened face.

Leon's picture withers away.