

"THE SCRAP COLLECTOR" BY AMANDA CALDARI

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Couple is at a romantic candle-lit dinner for two.

LARRY

My whole life has been about scrap metal. And then I met you. The steel beam to my baler. The copper to my circuit board. The crowbar to the rusty engine that lives inside my heart.

DOTTIE

Oh, Larry. My whole life changed the day I walked into your junkyard.

LARRY

(correcting her)  
Scrap yard.

DOTTIE

Right. You and the scrap yard are so special to me. And tonight, I'm gonna show you just how special.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Dottie leads Larry into an art gallery, her hands covering his eyes. She removes her hands.

DOTTIE

Surprise!

Larry opens his eyes, surrounded by mixed metal sculptures. He glances around, not sure what to make of it.

LARRY

What's all this?

DOTTIE

It's my art! My passion.

LARRY

(shaking head)  
No. No, this can't be right. The Dottie I know isn't a sculptor. She's a scrapper. Just like me.

As Larry surveys more of the exhibit, each sculpture feels

like a fresh punch to the gut. He reads the laminated description next to one of the pieces.

LARRY  
 (reading out loud)  
 "Sculptor Dottie May creates majestic works of art from...unwanted scrap metal."

He turns towards Dottie, visibly pained, spitting out the next word like poison.

LARRY  
 Unwanted?

DOTTIE  
 (nodding enthusiastically)  
 It's called up-cycling! Lots of people do it.

Larry walks somberly from one sculpture to the next.

LARRY  
 That's the copper wire I pulled from a motor. And there's the battery from Hank's Chevy Silverado. The brass fittings. The extra rebar.

He turns back towards Dottie.

LARRY  
 (accusatory)  
 I thought you scrapped all this.

DOTTIE  
 I thought you'd be excited.

LARRY  
 (getting hysterical)  
 Excited? Excited?! Do you know how long it took me to pull the metal chips from this cable modem? 14 hours! Oh my god, you mixed steel with aluminum?

Larry begins ripping parts from the sculptures, in a fit of passion, before storming out of the gallery.

LARRY  
 I'll never forgive you for this, Dottie! Never!!!

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Larry is slumped over his fifth glass of whiskey, pouring his heart out to the bartender.

LARRY  
(grimly)  
Out of all the scrap yards. In all the towns. In all the world. She walks into mine.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

A depressed Larry is on the couch, halfway through a gallon of ice cream. He holds up the metal spoon, staring back at his own reflection. Dottie's voice reverberates in his head, haunting him.

DOTTIE VO:  
(echoing)  
It's called up-cycling. I thought you'd be excited.

EXT. SCRAP YARD - DAY

Larry is operating a shredder machine, something that once brought him joy. But his heart just isn't in it. Two of his friends appear, pushing a dolly with a bunch of junk.

FRIEND 1  
(trying to cheer him up)  
Hey, buddy. Brought you something.

FRIEND 2  
Hard drives... couple microwaves. And look, circuit breakers! Pretty cool, right?

LARRY  
(monotone, barely looking up)  
Sure. Whatever.

INT. LAW OFFICE - DAY

Larry and Dottie meet with divorce lawyers to divide assets.

LAWYER  
Well, that should do it. I'll just need your signatures right here.

DOTTIE  
Larry should keep the ovens.

She turns to Larry.

DOTTIE  
I know how much you love ripping them  
apart.

LARRY  
No, Dottie. I want you to have them.  
Turn 'em into a painting or something.

DOTTIE  
(extending a hand)  
Friends?

LARRY  
(shaking Dottie's hand)  
Friends.

INT. LARRY'S PICKUP TRUCK - DAY

It's trash day. Larry's out for a drive, singing along to "Letting Go" by Suzy Bogguss, when he spots an old toilet out on the curb. But before he can get to it, he notices a woman getting out of a truck.

WOMAN  
You're too late. I called dibs.

LARRY  
Oh yeah? And what's a lady like you  
gonna do with a loo like that?

WOMAN  
Well, after I load her onto my truck  
mount here, and get her home, I'll pry  
off the brass fixtures, separate them  
from the copper piping. Then I'll use  
a hacksaw to scrap the pipes. It takes  
longer than other tools, but it's  
honest work. And I like it.

Larry perks up.

LARRY  
(nodding towards toilet)  
What do you think she'll yield?

WOMAN  
(considering the question)  
#2 copper? I'd say 12 pounds.

Larry and the woman begin stepping closer and closer towards each other until they're inches apart. Finally, they kiss.

WOMAN  
(lost in Larry's eyes)  
It's not every day you get the  
scrapper and the crapper.

Larry places a hand on the woman's cheek.

LARRY  
My precious, precious metal.

BLACKOUT