

SPACED OUT

By

Marilyn Pesola & Kristopher M. Newcome

FADE IN:

INT. VERONICA'S HOME OFFICE - NYC - MORNING

Veronica sits in her home office. She loves books and has several books disorganized.

She sees her first published book, Romance From Space lying on the floor.

VERONICA POWERS

I forgot all about this hidden gem.

Veronica puts it on her desk. She turns her computer on. The word program opens up.

VERONICA POWERS (CONT'D)

Hopefully this time... I can focus on writing.

She sees her fantasy world.

INT. SPACE SHIP ABOVE PLANET X12

Veronica sits in the co-captain's chair next to her favorite character he is named RION AXEL, mid-40s, a scar on his left cheek.

A two-seater space ship shaped like a lollipop with its round cockpit and array of switches, knobs, and dials on their chrome dashboard. A long, narrow corridor extends behind the cockpit. No windows except for a large HD computer screen.

On the computer screen above them, a sudden nasty-looking VORG space ship, the wide barrels of two ray guns on either side of the slim fuselage ready to belch death.

RION

Quick! Activate the plasma guns.
It's our only hope.

A RED LIGHT FLASHES and an OOGHA HORN BLEATS. Veronica jumps from her seat.

VERONICA

We need to get the heck out of here. The Lollipop can't take anymore damage after that earlier dance with those asteroids.

Rion wipes the sweat from his brow with his hand.

RION

We are not cowards. We can't retreat. Do I look like a chicken to you?

Veronica is busy flipping switches and turning dials.

Rion opens his twitter page.

RION (CONT'D)

We just got an incoming tweet. It is from @Sexyvorg22.

VERONICA

What does it say?

RION

(reads)

Stand down or die. Hashtag we're evil and awesome!

VERONICA

Tweet them back.

RION

Frankly, my dear, I don't give a tweet.

Veronica laughs playfully.

VERONICA

I like how you think outside the box.

RION

Haven't you seen Gone with Space?

VERONICA

No, is it good?

RION

It's a classic! It came out in 6565.

VERONICA

That was a millennium ago.

The VORG Commander's voice splits the silence.

VORG COMMANDER

Don't be alarmed. We only want your plutonium. The kind from Pluto, or else you will face sudden death.

RION

I am not scared of you. Do you see me trembling in fear?

The Vorg smiles insidiously.

VORG COMMANDER

Fear is what makes me powerful. I would think you would have learned that by now. I killed your old man Jerron Axel.

RION

I am not afraid of some red and blue spit ball. You will pay for your crimes.

VORG COMMANDER

You petty piece of ectoplasm! I hope you're ready to join your father's grave.

ON COMPUTER SCREEN

a ray ball spits out of the VORG'S left barrel, a twirling red and blue fireball.

She flips switches, presses a button, pushes in a foot pedal. The Lollipop takes a sudden stomach-lurching dive downward, then just as suddenly rights itself.

CABIN LIGHTS DIM.

The OOGHA AIR HORN MEOWS. Veronica feels around for the switch to turn it off, finds it. Silence.

The computer screen once again displays the galaxy landscape. Up ahead, a wormhole. They enter the pulsating tunnel, a cloud of pink rotating gas and space dust.

VERONICA

We're going to live.

RION

Good job, Veronica, but those spitballs are just warnings. We should have taken them on.

He glares at Veronica.

RION (CONT'D)

You've ruined my reputation!

Rion sits back in his captain's chair, folds his arms, and pouts.

VERONICA

In the next chapter I'm going to have to rebuild the generating system so we don't lose power on a dive.

EXT. OUTER SPACE

The Lollipop falls out of the wormhole and passes through a cloud of interstellar gas and dust. They float serenely in another galaxy surrounded by a swirl of colors: green, purple, orange, magenta.

INT. LOLLIPOP CABIN

VERONICA

Hey, Captain Ahab, you ever been in this galaxy before?

Rion studies the computer screen.

RION

No. We're lost. It sure is pretty, though.

Rion looks over at Veronica. She's fallen asleep.

INT. VERONICA'S OFFICE - DAY

Veronica's PHONE RINGS. She snaps out of her daydream, picks up her phone, looks at the Caller ID, then looks at her blank computer screen.

INTERCUT AS NECESSARY.

VERONICA

Hi, Mom. I can't believe I didn't write anything!

ASHLEY POWERS

What are you talking about?

VERONICA

Nothing, Mom. What's up?

ASHLEY POWERS

I wanted to see how things are going.

VERONICA

Terrible.

ASHLEY POWERS

Why, honey?

VERONICA

I can't escape my fantasies.

ASHLEY POWERS

You need to find a guy.

VERONICA

I've yet to meet a man I've clicked with. Too bad my novel hero isn't real. I could probably go for him. Then again, I don't want a man. I don't have time for them. My fantasy world takes up all of my time. It's how I make my living.

ASHLEY POWERS

Your Dad only liked one girl before me.

VERONICA

I know the story, Mom. But he left you years ago.

Ashley Powers is quiet. Veronica hit a sore spot.

ASHLEY POWERS

I'm just trying to help, you know.

VERONICA

I know, Mom, but I don't need any help. If I do, I'll holler.

ASHLEY POWERS

I know your plate is full. Just don't let life pass you by. I want grandchildren, you know.

VERONICA

I know. I need to get back to my writing.

INTERCUT OVER.

Veronica hangs and up and returns to her fantasy world aboard

THE LOLLIPOP

Rion looks worried. He wears headphones with an adjustable mic. A tense look on his face as he listens to whoever is on the other end.

RION

You're computing something?

Veronica's trying to write this chapter in a notebook on her lap.

VERONICA

Why can't I write anything? Why I can't finish this chapter?

Rion talks to into his mic.

RION

Wait a minute! I tell you, we have no time! We don't even know where we are.

That snaps Veronica out of her fantasy within a fantasy.

VERONICA

What do you mean, we have no time?

She finally looks over at him.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Why are you wearing headphones? Who are you listening to? I want you to listen to me. I think I have writer's block.

Rion removes his headphones, tries to put them on Veronica.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

You're being a jerk, Rion!

RION

Trust me, this is for your own good.

Rion puts the headphones on Veronica. She listens to a woman with a British accent.

BRITISH WOMAN

(on headphone)

You think you have escaped. What you don't know is that the VORG has a nefarious plot to follow you to your death. You have not escaped, you've just slipped out of reach for the time being. They will find you. I may be able to help you--

Veronica yanks the headphones off.

VERONICA

You think she is more important than me? We don't even know who she is.

RION

She used the word "death." What does it mean?

VERONICA

It means you won't exist anymore.

RION

Is death painful?

VERONICA

Think about it, stupid. Must I explain everything to you? Stop asking stupid questions. I've got a lot of work to do.

RION

Hey, I was just asking. You hurt my feelings. How can you be so mean? This is your story, after all. You must have all the answers.

VERONICA

I don't have all the answers, which is why I can't finish this chapter!

RION

That is bloody imbecilic! I am a war hero and captain of The Lollipop, yet you have all the power. And who names a ship Lollipop for cryin' out loud?

VERONICA

Don't get your knickers in a twist.

He looks at the computer screen.

RION
What is this place?

VERONICA
You're the captain of this ship.

He takes a deep breath, exhales loudly.

RION
Well, you're the writer!

Veronica looks hurt.

VERONICA
I apologize. I was in a writer's
snit. Some story elements don't
seem to be working.

RION
I was a bit of a jerk also.

VERONICA
Then I forgive you.

RION
Now it's your turn to apologize.

VERONICA
What do I need to apologize for?

RION
For bullying me.

VERONICA
I wasn't bullying you!

RION
I see. Miss Perfect gets to do
things her way.

VERONICA
That's right. This is my fantasy,
not yours.

Rion unstraps himself from the captain's chair and stands up.

RION
Okay, I'm outta here!

VERONICA
Goodbye, then!

INT. VERONICA'S OFFICE - DAY

Instantly Veronica snaps out of her fantasy world. Her PHONE RINGS. She picks it up, looks at the Caller ID. It's NATHANIEL COLLINS, 55, her crusty literary agent.

INTERCUT as necessary.

VERONICA
Hi, Nathaniel.

NATHANIEL
How's the new book coming?

VERONICA
I have zero pages written. The story still lives only in my mind.

NATHANIEL
We have the first 50-page deadline next week, Veronica.

VERONICA
I'll try to pick up the pace.

NATHANIEL
My reputation is on the line so please get with the program and start writing your story instead of just thinking about it.

VERONICA
My fantasy world is becoming more real than the real world. It's difficult to separate the two at times.

Nathaniel gives her a not-so-subtle reminder.

NATHANIEL
I have never missed a publisher's deadline.

VERONICA
I want to finish my novel but I don't know if I can with the problems I've been having.

NATHANIEL
I'm a literary agent, I make deals. I need something, even if it's a rainbow trying to make the circus, I don't care. I just need your contracted novel to sell.

(MORE)

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)

Your first book was amazing! Now you're worried about fantasies when that's the key element for writing novels?

VERONICA

I've become addicted to my fantasy world. I need help! Can't you understand that?

NATHANIEL

I'm not a psychologist, nor do I care about your petty problems. I only care about your novel. I hope you figure it out. Otherwise you'd better have a backup plan.

INTERCUT OVER

Veronica throws her cell phone on the floor, where it bounces twice before sliding under a table.

VERONICA

He must be a VORG!

INT. VERONICA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Veronica sets her alarm clock, then crawls into bed. As soon as she's asleep, Rion walks into her dream.

VERONICA'S DREAM

Veronica and Rion are being chase by the VORG armada, a fleet of a dozen ships.

RION

We must stand tall.

VERONICA

Are you crazy?

RION

We can't keep running.

VERONICA

Of course we can. This is my dream!

RION

I don't like you dominating me. The next time you do that, I'm going to kiss you.

VERONICA
You wouldn't dare!

RION
How do you know?

VERONICA
Because I have power over you.

RION
What can you possibly do?

VERONICA
Don't make me ...

RION
I double dare you!

VERONICA
(wicked smile)
Just remember, you asked for it.

Rion pretends to shake as though afraid.

RION
I'm petrified.

In the blink of an eye, Veronica changes Rion into an awkward Will Ferrellish type character. He now has curly red hair and is wearing his hat to the side that reads, "Compton."

Rion sees his reflection in the chrome-plated dashboard.

RION (CONT'D)
I look adorable now like a panda,
what is wrong with you? The Vorg
won't take me seriously looking
like this.

Veronica's laugh is more like a cackle.

VERONICA
I'm trying to be more realistic. I
told you I could change you but you
didn't believe me.

Rion yells out,

RION
Then stop making it dark!

VERONICA
What are you talking about?

RION

You know, like just before you wake up.

VERONICA

I wish you were here with me every day, then we'd go on a real adventure in the real world.

RION

We're on an adventure right now.

VERONICA

I can't stay in this fantasy world forever. I have to harness this energy into real writing.

RION

What if I came into your real world?

She ponders that.

VERONICA

I don't think you can come to life outside of my fantasy.

RION

I can think of something ...

VERONICA

Do you even know what humans are like?

RION

I love you. You're human. How bad can it be?

VERONICA

You're way too kind.

Veronica sees an astroid field pop up on the computer screen.

Just in time to save them from disaster, Veronica's ALARM CLOCK BLARES.

END DREAM

INT. VERONICA'S OFFICE - DAY

Veronica types fast and furious at her computer. She's on a roll!

SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1) Veronica, head on her keyboard, sound asleep
- 2) Typing furiously, a coffee butler nearby
- 3) Veronica pacing back and forth, thinking
- 4) Veronica asleep in her recliner
- 5) Typing furiously, the remains of a meal on her desk
- 6) Veronica pushes away from her computer with a smile END SHOTS

INT. NATHANIEL'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY

Veronica waits in a chair across from Nathaniel's SECRETARY, a briefcase on her lap.

SECRETARY

You look tired, Veronica.

VERONICA

I didn't sleep at all last night.

SECRETARY

Know what works for me when I can't sleep?

VERONICA

No, what?

SECRETARY

A man. Being involved with a man cures a lot of ills.

VERONICA

(smiles back)

How nice for you. I don't do relationships.

Nathaniel opens his office door and motions Veronica in.

INT. NATHANIEL'S OFFICE - DAY

A messy office. Piles of manuscripts everywhere -- on tables, stacked on the floor, stacked on his desk. Two chairs in front of his desk, one empty. Veronica sits in it.

Nathaniel sits wearily in his own chair.

VERONICA
I have some pages for you.

NATHANIEL
Let me see them.

Veronica opens her briefcase.

VERONICA
I didn't miss our deadline.

NATHANIEL
No, you didn't. Give me a moment to
look these over.

Veronica sits not so patiently and watches Nathaniel's eyes
rapidly skim pages. No sound except the TURNING OF PAGES.

Nathaniel looks up.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)
It's very different.

VERONICA
I know. It sucks.

NATHANIEL
It doesn't suck but it is
disjointed.

VERONICA
What do you mean?

NATHANIEL
It doesn't make a lot of sense. Who
are the VORG? Why does Rion want to
enter the human world?

VERONICA
I wanted to do something unique. I
wrote from my fantasy world.

NATHANIEL
In my fantasy world I see Swedish
girls so I can see why you want to
stay in yours with Rion.

VERONICA POWERS
It is not a romantic relationship.

NATHANIEL
Just get me those pages. I believe
in you.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

Veronica sits on a park bench, pen and tablet ready. She TALKS it out as she writes ...

LOLLIPOP COMPUTER SCREEN

Rion sees the asteroid field, begins to fire the forward port plasma gun. Asteroids explode into nothing! Then it's clear sailing for a while.

Adrenalin pumping, Rion turns, sees Veronica in the co-pilot's chair. He leans over to kiss her ... CLOSE ON VERONICA

Her eyes close. Her lips pucker to receive his imaginary kiss, then her eyes snap open.

VERONICA
Yuck! I hate kissing!

BACK ON THE LOLLIPOP

Veronica and Rion stand in the long narrow corridor. He smiles lasciviously, puts a hand on her breast.

RION
Now comes the part I like.

He leans forward to kiss her. She panics and back escapes to CENTRAL PARK BENCH

... where she talks and writes feverishly.

VERONICA
I'll fix you, Rion! I'll create another character. That British woman.

She puts pen to mouth, contemplates this new wrinkle.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
She's in her early thirties. Her name is Holly Pierce.

She begins writing ...

BACK TO LOLLIPOP CORRIDOR

Rion sees a quirky British women in her early thirties walk in.

HOLLY PIERCE
Looks like I got here just in time.

RION
Who are you? Where did you come
from? This ship's not big enough
for the three of us.

Veronica watches the interaction. She's amused.

HOLLY PIERCE
(to Rion)
Are you absolutely certain you want
to be rid of me?

RION
Yes! You're stealing Veronica from
me.

HOLLY PIERCE
(puzzled)
How so?

RION
I was just about to kiss her when
you walked up.

VERONICA
That's why I created her, Rion. She
will be our chaperon.

RION
What?!

VERONICA
I'm tired of you trying to put the
make on me.

RION
But it is fun! It takes the stress
out of the danger we're in.

VERONICA
For you, maybe. Not for me.

HOLLY PIERCE
I can be of immense help to you.
You'll see.

Rion turns toward the cockpit, sees another asteroid on the
computer screen.

RION
 (to Holly Pierce)
 Then destroy this freakin' asteroid
 coming at us!

VERONICA
 Be nice, Rion.

RION
 I'm trying!

VERONICA
 Try harder. This is my outer space
 fantasy. I have no desire for
 romance.

Rion lets out an exasperated sigh.

RION
 I don't even care anymore.

HOLLY PIERCE
 I think you do.

BACK TO CENTRAL PARK BENCH

People walk by. A few runners and power walkers.

A LITTLE BOY and his MOTHER walk by Veronica as she talks out
 her story. To them it looks like Veronica is talking to
 herself.

LITTLE BOY
 Why is that lady talking to herself
 like that, Momma?

Mother and Son walk up to Veronica. The Mother studies
 Veronica.

MOTHER
 (to Veronica)
 Hello? Anyone home?
 (to her Son)
 The lights are on but no one's
 home.

Veronica suddenly snaps back to present reality.

VERONICA
 Sorry, I was daydreaming.

The Little Boy is confused.

LITTLE BOY
What's daydreaming, Momma?

MOTHER
It's when you can sleep.

VERONICA
No, I have writer's block.

That goes over the Mother's head. Mother and Boy walk away.
Veronica tries to refocus on her writing but it won't come.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
I wish there was someone who could
understand my imaginary world.

She falls back into her story world.

ON THE LOLLIPOP

RION
People keep interrupting our
relationship.

VERONICA
For the millionth time, we are not
in a relationship.

Rion looks at the computer screen. In the distance, a large
asteroid is barreling down on them.

RION
See that asteroid on the screen?
Watch and learn from a master at
work. After I destroy this asteroid
and save a damsel in distress--

VERONICA
I'm not a damsel in distress! Quit
being so cocky.

RION
Ha! I've saved you at least a dozen
times.

Veronica looks around the cockpit, then turns and looks down
the long corridor behind them.

VERONICA
Holly Pierce, where are you?

Holly appears with a tray of hot tea things and a plate of
crumpets.

HOLLY PIERCE

I was taking a break.

VERONICA

Where did you find hot tea, and
what are those little cakes?

HOLLY PIERCE

Those are English crumpets. Very
good with tea, Luv.

VERONICA

I'll take one.

Veronica takes a crumpet and a napkin.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

On second thought, I'll have a cup
of tea also.

Holly puts her tray down on a low stool and fixes a cup of
tea for Veronica.

Veronica and Holly eat their pastry and drink their tea.

HOLLY PIERCE

Would you like something to eat or
drink, Rion?

Rion shakes his head no.

Holly puts the tray on the deck and sits on the stool.

Rion's intent on aiming the plasma gun. He FIRES and they
watch the asteroid explode into nothing.

He turns to Veronica.

RION

I've destroyed that asteroid, can
we please resume our relationship?

VERONICA

We don't have a relationship.

RION

I love you.

VERONICA

I am busy.

Rion's deflated.

RION
Have it your way.

VERONICA
Thank you.

RION
Don't worry. I'll find a loophole
and escape as soon as possible.

VERONICA
I don't want you to leave. Where
would you go? Besides, I'd miss
you.

RION
Anywhere away from here. I don't
belong here, that's for sure. Keep
Holly. She can take over for me.

VERONICA
I love that you're here but
sometimes you do things I'm not
comfortable with.

RION
What do you mean? I always respect
your boundaries.

VERONICA
Is that why you tried to kiss me?
Not once, but twice?

RION
I never did!

VERONICA
I know the truth. It's printed in
black and white.

RION
"You can't handle the truth".

VERONICA
That's why it's good that Holly
Pierce is here. To keep you in
check.

Holly jumps up from her stool.

HOLLY PIERCE
So I'm basically Rion's nanny? Is
that it? I will not make you guys
tea and crumpets anymore!

RION
Crumpets, yuck! I'd rather have a
new mainframe.

VERONICA
You can't eat a mainframe.

RION
No, but it would make me very
happy.
(to Holly Pierce)
Can I have one of you crumpets? I'm
hungry.

HOLLY PIERCE
After your insensitive remark?

VERONICA
Holly, give Rion a crumpet.

Holly pouts.

HOLLY PIERCE
No!

VERONICA
All right, both of you calm down.
All we have is each other.

HOLLY PIERCE
Fine. I will be more considerate.

RION
I guess I can be nicer.

VERONICA
Good. Now let's move on.

EXT. PARK BENCH - DAY

Veronica snaps back into reality and begins to write.

INSERT PAPER AS SHE WRITES: Rion whispers in her ear: I love
you.

Veronica sits up straighter. Rion's paper words make her
tingle. She has never felt like that before.

She flips her pencil to the eraser, debates erasing what
she's just written. She cocks her head as Rion is about to
say ...

BACK TO THE LOLLIPOP

RION

That's sweet. You understand me.
I'm glad that you're my friend.

VERONICA

You finally figured it out.

RION

Would I lie to you?

VERONICA

I don't know.

RION

Of course I wouldn't.

VERONICA

(excited)

How does this sound? The galaxy is
saved but the VORGS are still on
our trail. We know our time is
running out.

RION

I like the action.

VERONICA

What about you and Holly Pierce?

ON HOLLY'S SOLEMN FACE

HOLLY PIERCE

I want my own guy to love. I like
kissing.

VERONICA

Maybe that's an idea for my next
novel.

HOLLY PIERCE

If I'm still around. I'm getting
bored with you blocking Rion.

RION

I agree, Veronica. You need to step
up your game.

HOLLY PIERCE

I'm starting to like you, Rion.

VERONICA

You're fibbing, right, Holly?

HOLLY PIERCE
I meant every word.

VERONICA
I wish now I hadn't created you.

HOLLY PIERCE
You hurt my feelings!
(to Rion)
I wish I could be with you.

VERONICA
You're trying to steal my guy.

HOLLY PIERCE
I just want to borrow him until you
decide you want some romance.

RION
Now this is entertainment.

VERONICA
Rion was my friend first!

HOLLY PIERCE
So maybe I don't want to be a
chaperon anymore.

VERONICA
You can have endless crumpets at
any cafe.

HOLLY PIERCE
For free?

VERONICA
Yes.

Rion makes a kissy face at Veronica.

RION
Don't listen to her, Holly.

HOLLY PIERCE
It's too tempting not to consider.

RION
She just bought you off with all
the crumpets you can eat.

EXT. PARK BENCH - NIGHT

Veronica gathers her things and leaves the park.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Veronica walks into a nightclub. A disco ball reflects squares of light. A band plays dance music. Couples dance a slow dance.

ELAINE CRAWFORD, Veronica's best friend, walks up and hugs Veronica.

ELAINE

You got my text!

VERONICA

You wanted me to come. I didn't want to disappoint you.

ELAINE

You're a good friend. I hope you will be my maid of honor.

Veronica and Elaine walk over to an empty table on the edge of the dance floor and sit down. They order drinks from a passing WAITRESS.

VERONICA

I will be honored to be your maid of honor. How's Keith?

ELAINE

He's great. I wish he was more like you, though.

VERONICA

Like me? How so?

ELAINE

He just doesn't get me the way you do.

VERONICA

That's because we're women. Guys usually don't get women. When is the wedding?

ELAINE

Three weeks from today.

Veronica's eyes widen.

VERONICA

Oh, no! That's my deadline day.

ELAINE

You don't have to be my maid of honor if it's going to interfere with finishing your book.

VERONICA

No, I want to be there for you. I'll figure something out. I want to do what I can to make your wedding special.

ELAINE

That's really sweet.

The band plays a rock and roll tune.

VERONICA

(shrugs)

I try.

ELAINE

Do you want to dance?

VERONICA

Sure, but I'm not very coordinated.

ELAINE

I know but it'll be fun. Come on.

Elaine and Veronica stand up. Elaine takes Veronica's hand and they step onto the dance floor. They shake their bodies in tune to the music, move a couple of steps back and forth.

Veronica twirls around, comes forward, stomps on Elaine's foot. Hard.

ELAINE (CONT'D)

OW! My foot! I hope it's not broken.

Veronica helps Elaine off the dance floor. Veronica takes off Elaine's shoe, looks at her foot.

VERONICA

Gee, it's getting black and blue already. I'm so sorry!

Elaine tries to smile in spite of her pain. Gulps most of her drink to deaden the pain.

ELAINE

One day you'll get married so maybe you should practice dancing.

VERONICA
Words of wisdom, sure enough.

Elaine signals for the waitress.

Veronica slips into her fantasy with Rion.

LOLLIPOP COCKPIT

RION
You never dance with me.

VERONICA
Go away. Can't you see I'm trying
to focus on my story?

HOLLY PIERCE
I will dance with Rion.

VERONICA
You won't if you know what's good
for you.

HOLLY PIERCE
How rude!

VERONICA
It's my world. I can do what I
want.

BACK TO BAR SCENE

Veronica and Elaine sit at their table.

Elaine, a questionable look on her face, watches Veronica talk. She finishes her drink, orders another by raising her empty glass above her head.

ELAINE
Who are you talking to?

Veronica points to a GUY.

VERONICA
See that guy in the blue shirt? He
asked me to dance with him.

ELAINE
Have you ever wished you found the
right guy?

VERONICA

It might be nice to find someone who understands me, although I'm not looking.

ELAINE

Why don't you want some romance in your life?

Elaine gulps her drink down, looks for a waitress, finds one and holds up her empty glass. She's a little tipsy now.

VERONICA

Why do you drink so much?

ELAINE

It's fun. I like to party.

VERONICA

And I'd rather read a good science fiction novel.

Elaine laughs.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

You're drunk. Perhaps I should take you home.

A fresh drink comes for Elaine, who drinks half of it.

ELAINE

I don't wanna go home yet.

VERONICA

That's what you think.

Veronica takes Elaine's hand and pulls her from her chair, but not before Elaine grabs her drink and drinks it down.

INT. VERONICA'S OFFICE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Veronica checks her phone messages. Five messages from her mother.

She turns on her computer, takes out the notes she has previously written.

VERONICA

Are we ready to write?

LOLLIPOP COCKPIT

Rion answers her question.

RION
Yes, I would love to.

VERONICA'S OFFICE.

VERONICA
I was talking to myself.

INSIDE COCKPIT

RION
You actually do that?

VERONICA'S OFFICE

VERONICA
Yes. Can I get on with my writing
now?

INSIDE COCKPIT

RION
Holly Pierce is your best creation.

VERONICA'S OFFICE

VERONICA
Go away!

Veronica types nonstop. She's on another roll!
She finally stops, checks the number of pages.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
Five pages. A good start.

Then she falls back into her fantasy world.

LOLLIPOP COCKPIT

Rion mocks her with

RION
Five tiny pages! I can do better
than that!

VERONICA
 (through clenched teeth)
 I'm warning you ...

RION
 (urgently)
 STOP! We have a problem! A big
 problem!

Holly Pierce laughs.

HOLLY PIERCE
 (to Rion)
 Veronica will get mad,

RION
 Shut up! Holly.

VERONICA
 Be nice to me. Both of you.

HOLLY PIERCE
 Not to be prudish but I think Rion
 is getting a little egotistical.

RION
 (hurt look)
 My ego is smaller than most
 balloons.

IN VERONICA'S OFFICE

Veronica falls out of her chair and onto the floor of

ON THE LOLLIPOP

Veronica lies curled up on the deck.

HOLLY PIERCE
 You killed her, Rion! Have you no
 shame?

RION
 All I said was balloons. Who can
 die from the word balloons?

VERONICA
 Where's the balloon? I didn't know
 balloons existed in space.

RION
 It was an analogy.

VERONICA

I'm afraid of balloons. When they pop they make a loud noise.

RION

Your fear is stupid.

VERONICA

This is supposed to be my happy place.

HOLLY PIERCE

Apologize... Rion.

Rion thinks about it.

RION

I apologize for my immature actions,

HOLLY PIERCE

That's the best you can do.

VERONICA

What's becoming of my life? I need to escape from my own mind!

INT. VERONICA'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Veronica tries to refocus on her novel. She's interrupted by the voice Holly Pierce.

HOLLY PIERCE (V.O.)

Lighten up! I know you can meet your deadline.

VERONICA

That's encouraging.

Veronica falls back into

THE LOLLIPOP

HOLLY PIERCE

I don't see you writing.

VERONICA

That's because I keep getting interrupted.

HOLLY PIERCE

Blame the imaginary people.

VERONICA

I'm not blaming anyone. I just have to focus on writing.

HOLLY PIERCE

We get lonely.

VERONICA

Talk to Rion.

HOLLY PIERCE

What a rude thing to say. You get angry whenever I do.

VERONICA

I don't want you to take him from me.

Rion pumps his fist.

RION

Yes! Veronica loves me!

HOLLY PIERCE

Oh, really? Then why don't you come to life and join her?

RION

I just might do that.

HOLLY PIERCE

Stop distracting her, Rion.

RION

Her diversionary tactics bother me.

HOLLY PIERCE

I'm growing under your skin.

INT. VERONICA'S OFFICE - MORNING

Veronica snaps awake at her computer, looks at her wristwatch.

VERONICA

Five o'clock!

She yawns.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Another strange dream!

She looks at her computer screen. It has text on it. She scrolls down to the bottom of the page.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

I wrote 50 pages! I had no idea I wrote so much last night.

Veronica reads what she has written.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

(reads)

"After surviving the asteroid, the crew became more optimistic. We had improved our defenses. We also knew that any day now the VORG would attack."

Veronica closes the file and e-mails it to Nathaniel, then calls her mother.

Ashley Powers, late 30s, pleasingly plump, a bit of a meddler at times.

INTERCUT AS NECESSARY

VERONICA

Hi, Mom.

ASHLEY POWERS

You had me worried because you didn't return any of my calls.

VERONICA

Sorry, Mom. I've been busy writing.

ASHLEY POWERS

(sighs)

I guess I'll never have grand kids.

VERONICA

Give it time, Mom. I need this novel to do well.

ASHLEY POWERS

When I was 18 I was already married.

VERONICA

That worked for you but it won't work for me. I don't know if love even exists.

ASHLEY POWERS

You need to destroy your fantasy world. Get out in the real world more. Meet some nice men.

VERONICA

I'm too busy to meet men.

ASHLEY POWERS

Then stop being busy. Buy a new dress, go out with a friend. Believe me, you'll meet a nice young man. I know what's best for you.

VERONICA

I don't even know what's best for me so how can you know?

ASHLEY POWERS

Because I'm your mother!

VERONICA

I don't need that crap, Mom.

INTERCUT OVER

Veronica hangs up and is immediately called to

THE LOLLIPOP

RION

Your mother is going to destroy me, Veronica! Don't listen to her.

HOLLY PIERCE

I knew this was too good to be true. I suppose I'm next.

VERONICA

I'm the only one who can delete you.

Rion looks morose.

RION

Don't I matter to you?

VERONICA

Rion grow up.

RION

Delete me if you must.

VERONICA
Do you mean that?

RION
No! I don't want to be deleted!

VERONICA
Just stop distracting me from my novel.

RION
Done. Am I now supposed to feel all soft and warm, like melted butter?

VERONICA
Don't be sarcastic. I said you could stay.

HOLLY PIERCE
What about me?

VERONICA
You're both acting like my mother. I'm not going to delete either one of you!

RION
You mean it?

VERONICA
Yes.

HOLLY PIERCE
I was panicking from the tension.

VERONICA
Now I need to get back to my writing.

INT. VERONICA'S OFFICE - DAY

Veronica's phone rings. She picks up the phone, looks at Caller ID.

INTERCUT AS NECESSARY

VERONICA
Hello, Nathaniel.

NATHANIEL
I got your latest e-mail.

VERONICA

You read those pages already?

NATHANIEL

I sure did and I like what I've read. Have you taken a different approach?

VERONICA

How do you mean?

NATHANIEL

I like the abstract approach. I especially love it when Rion and Holly fight the VORG leader.

VERONICA

Thanks.

NATHANIEL

It's your best idea yet. You still have work to do but this is definitely a good start.

VERONICA

I told you to trust me, didn't I?

NATHANIEL

I shouldn't have doubted you. Come in tomorrow and we'll talk some more.

VERONICA

What time?

NATHANIEL

Four o'clock.

VERONICA

Can't. Bridal shower.

NATHANIEL

For?

VERONICA

For Elaine, my best friend. I'm to be her maid of honor at her wedding.

NATHANIEL

Can't you bump it?

VERONICA

No. Elaine and I have been best friends since the fifth grade.

NATHANIEL

How about if you don't go?

VERONICA

How about I find a new agent?

Nathaniel backpedals.

NATHANIEL

You win. Come in at one o'clock tomorrow.

INT. LOLLIPOP CORRIDOR

Veronica and Holly Pierce walk down the long, dim corridor.

An ominous red light suddenly FLASHES OFF AND ON. The ship lurches sharply to one side. Veronica and Holly crash into each other.

HOLLY PIERCE

What the bloody hell was that?

VERONICA

We hit something! Rion! Where are you?

The OOGAH ALARM MOOS.

HOLLY PIERCE

What in blazes is going on?

Veronica looks worried. She looks down the corridor to the cockpit. The captain's chair is empty. No Rion.

VERONICA

I hope he doesn't think I deleted him!

HOLLY PIERCE

Maybe he went into the Light.

VERONICA

Imaginary characters don't die, they're immortal!

Holly Pierce looks around. Although the ship has righted itself, the red light still FLASHES.

HOLLY PIERCE
Apparently not. Rion's nowhere to
be seen.

Holly has succeeded in convincing Veronica that Rion is dead.

VERONICA
Rion is too young to die!

The ship lurches once again but not as bad as last time.

HOLLY PIERCE
Maybe I'm next! I don't want to
die!

Veronica's in shock.

VERONICA
We all die sometime.

HOLLY PIERCE
I want to be imaginary forever!

VERONICA
You will be, but in a better place.

HOLLY PIERCE
I see how it is. You're already
trying to get rid of me. I bother
you. I was going to steal Rion from
you. You thought he loved me more
than he loved you.

VERONICA
Why are we fighting?

INT. VERONICA'S OFFICE - MORNING

Veronica wakes up terrified.

INTERCUT AS NEEDED

VERONICA
Mom, My book just died!

ASHLEY POWERS
What? What are you talking about?

VERONICA
Rion has vanished into thin air. I
only have Holly now.

ASHLEY POWERS

That's good. The less fantasy world you have, the better off you'll be.

VERONICA

But Rion's my inspiration.

ASHLEY POWERS

Look on the bright side. Now you can find yourself a real man.

VERONICA

(incensed)

I can't believe you said that! My book may just died and you're happy? Why are you so selfish? If I wanted a guy, I'd have one. Now get off that soap box and leave me the hell alone!

Veronica hangs up.

INTERCUT OVER

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - AFTERNOON

Veronica power walks in the park to burn off her anger. She sits on a bench. Elbows on her knees, head down, briefcase between her feet. She's lost in thought.

Rion suddenly appears in front of her but she doesn't know it yet. He looks around at his new life and smiles.

He looks at Veronica just as she looks up. His presence frightens her. She clutches her chest with both hands and gives out a sudden SCREAM, which frightens him. He jumps back, then grins.

RION

Hello, my lady. I have Yankee tickets. It's a new sport called baseball. I think they just invented it. Do you want to go with me?

VERONICA

You scared me! Don't ever just appear in front of someone like that. It might give them a heart attack.

RION

Sorry. What about the Yankee tickets and the new sport called baseball just invented?

VERONICA

Baseball's been around for a hundred years.

RION

Hold the phone! That's amazing. Which team's the best?

VERONICA

The New York Yankees. I don't like sports much.

RION

The New York Yankees! I love New York!

VERONICA

(leery)

Is this an attempt to pick me up?

RION

Have you fallen down? I like you a lot.

VERONICA

You almost gave me a heart attack, then you try to pick me up.

RION

Is it my undeniable charm that nearly caused your heart attack?

VERONICA

No, it's because you scared me.

RION

I am new to New York. New York people are so different than me. I should have listened to the voice that guided me here. It sounded sweet, like honey. It sounded like your voice.

A little apprehensive for her safety, Veronica picks up her briefcase, then stands, ready to flee if necessary.

VERONICA

I have an appointment so I need to get going now.

(MORE)

VERONICA (CONT'D)

I hope you find someone to see the baseball game with. Have a good day.

RION

But ... but I love you!

Veronica stops, turns around.

VERONICA

Love is overrated. Goodbye.

RION

Please, just give me one more minute.

Veronica looks at her watch.

VERONICA

I'm on a tight schedule. I have a one o'clock appointment with my agent.

RION

Please ... I beg of you.

VERONICA

Fine. What's your name?

Rion panics.

RION

You can call me Douglas. Yes, perfect. Douglas is my name.

Veronica looks skeptically at him.

VERONICA

Love your name. It reminds me of Douglas Adams. In high school I did a fake school assignment and I made the academy because of him. He's why I got into writing.

RION

I know.

VERONICA

How could you know that?

Rion thinks fast.

RION
I mean, I know that's an
interesting tidbit.

Rion reaches for her hand to kiss but Veronica mistakes his intention and punches him in the face. He falls backward to the sidewalk.

Stunned and with a painful jaw, he says,

RION (CONT'D)
I am from Paris. Sorry, it's a
cultural tradition to kiss a lady's
hand.

VERONICA
You are trying to pick up on me.

RION
No, I wasn't!

VERONICA
Trust me. I know guys.

Rion stands up. Looks down at himself.

RION
I do get this strange itch, though.

VERONICA
Too much information!

RION
You know, being human is
extraordinary. Can we fly?
(looks up)
You make me want to fly like that
bird up there.

Rion points to a BIRD flying overhead and Veronica looks up.

VERONICA
You're strangely funny. I kind of
like you. Maybe we can be friends.

RION
You make my heart do these weird
things. It's going very fast. Is
that normal?

VERONICA
It's called infatuation. I felt
that once.

RION

Do I make your heart go fast?

VERONICA

No. You don't give me any feeling at all. You do remind me of someone, though.

Rion looks behind him.

RION

I look like myself. Do I have a clone? That would be cool.

VERONICA

You make a terrible first impression but I enjoyed your second move on me. I would love to chat sometime. Here's my card.

Veronica reaches into her pocket and withdrew a business card. She hands it to Rion.

RION

What is this? Ancient coding?

VERONICA

Don't be silly. You dial those numbers and my telephone will ring. I will be on the other end to talk to you.

RION

I don't get out much.

VERONICA

I'm sure you'll eventually adjust to our culture.

Veronica takes a quarter out of her pocket and gives it to him.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Here's twenty-five cents. Put it in any pay phone. I believe in you.

RION

Sounds exciting. I have never talked to a female in person before.

RION (CONT'D)

Nice meeting you. Bon jour.

Veronica calls after him.

VERONICA
See you later!

INT. NATHANIEL'S OUTER OFFICE - LATER

Veronica walks into Nathaniel's outer office, the secretary smiles.

SECRETARY
You seem in a better mood than the
last time you were here.

VERONICA
I met a nice guy today.

The Secretary's phone buzzes.

SECRETARY
Nathaniel will see you now.

INT. NATHANIEL'S OFFICE - DAY

Veronica hurries in and sits down.

NATHANIEL
Why are you in such a hurry?

VERONICA
I brought 20 pages with me. I'm
anxious for your opinion.

She extracts a folder from her briefcase, hands it to Nathaniel, who looks pleased.

NATHANIEL
You making progress.

VERONICA
Rion has vanished into thin air.

NATHANIEL
I'm sorry to hear that. What are
you going to do?

VERONICA
I don't know. I met a nice guy
today.

NATHANIEL
What's the new guy's name?

VERONICA

Douglas.

NATHANIEL

Weird. That's a guy's name I envisioned you with.

VERONICA

Douglas is funny and quirky, like me.

NATHANIEL

What makes Douglas quirky?

VERONICA

He doesn't know how to work a phone.

NATHANIEL

Hilarious. Let's talk business.

He quickly skims her pages.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)

We are now where we should be. I have a great climax idea for later. Do you think you can have the novel finished in another week?

VERONICA

I hope so. I kind of feel that writer's block breaking up.

NATHANIEL

That's good to hear.

VERONICA

Did you know it can be caused by deadlines that are too strict?

NATHANIEL

No kidding!

VERONICA

Damn! You're good.

NATHANIEL

Thank you. Have a nice time at your dinner tonight.

VERONICA

It's a bridal shower.

Nathaniel waves his hand in dismissal.

NATHANIEL

Whatever.

VERONICA

I'm off to meet Elaine.

INT. STARBUCK'S - DAY - LATER

Elaine brightens up when Veronica walks in and sits at her table.

ELAINE

I'm glad you got my message. I ordered a frappe for us. I told the counter guy I'd signal when you came in so he can bring them.

Elaine waves her hand to get one of the TWO COUNTER GUY'S attention. One MAN looks up. It's Rion!

Veronica's back is to the counter so she doesn't see him.

VERONICA

What's up?

ELAINE

Keith and I have been fighting a lot lately.

VERONICA

I'm sorry to hear that.

Rion appears with their frappes.

ELAINE

Thank you.

Veronica is shocked to see Rion.

VERONICA

What are you doing here? I thought you'd call me on the phone.

RION

I had a feeling that you'd come here.

VERONICA

Are you stalking me?

RION

No, I just calculate things.

VERONICA

Really? That's how serial killers
are born.

Elaine watches the two of them.

ELAINE

(to Veronica)

I think you have finally met the
perfect guy.

VERONICA

Don't you think it's creepy that he
knows so much about me?

Elaine gives Rion the once over twice.

ELAINE

No way! He's worth it.

RION

I am not a serial killer!

VERONICA

Well, that's a relief.

RION

I am no serial killer because I
have no DNA.

VERONICA

You're an alien?

RION

You could say that.

Elaine cracks a mischievous smile.

ELAINE

He even has a sense of humor.

RION

I hope it doesn't blow my cover.

VERONICA

Your secret is safe with us.

ELAINE

I need to get ready for my bridal
shower.

Elaine gets up and so does Veronica.

VERONICA

And I need to go home and write for a couple of hours, unless you need me for anything before the shower.

ELAINE

Good luck with the writing.

Elaine leaves.

VERONICA

You have to go back to work now, Douglas.

RION

Can't I go with you instead?

VERONICA

(surprised)
To my place?

RION

Yeah.

VERONICA

Maybe once I know you better. Besides, you have to go back to work.

Rion doesn't understand.

RION

If girls are from Venus ... I don't get it. Why can't I go with you?

VERONICA

Because I don't know you.

Rion has had it with the rebuffs. Time to come clean.

RION

But we've shared so many wonderful times together in space!

Veronica is dumbfounded.

VERONICA

We have? You mean in dreams?

Rion's at the end of his rope.

RION

Never mind!

He threw up his hands and walks away.

Veronica blinks out in a puff of smoke and appears ON THE LOLLIPOP

Holly Pierce is sitting in the captain's chair, reading a book, a cup of steaming tea on the stool beside her.

Veronica sits in her co-command chair. The computer screen is blank.

VERONICA

I screwed up again.

Holly Pierce gives her a cheerful smile, closes the book on her finger.

HOLLY PIERCE

Go home and make some scones. That might cheer you up. They always give me a cheery disposition when I need one.

VERONICA

That might be a good idea, except I'd probably gain 10 pounds.

HOLLY PIERCE

Add a little lemon zest. Eat them with a glass of warm milk. What can be better than that?

VERONICA

Ewww, warm milk! I can't drink warm milk.

HOLLY PIERCE

So drink a cuppa Earl Grey tea then.

VERONICA

How does that help my predicament with Rion missing?

HOLLY PIERCE

Tea is soothing to the soul.

VERONICA

I see. Once my soul is soothed, who's going to command The Lollipop?

HOLLY PIERCE

How about you? You always sit in
the co-captain's chair.

VERONICA

I created The Lollipop but I can't
fly it and write at the same time.

HOLLY PIERCE

I see your dilemma. What can I do
to help?

VERONICA

Find Rion! Tell him I ... tell him
I need him!

INT. VERONICA'S OFFICE - LATER

Veronica types her story. Her fingers fly. She stops for a
breather. Rolls her shoulders, her neck. Cracks her knuckles,
yawns.

VERONICA

Page 175. Getting there.

She resumes typing. She starts to read her novel out loud.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

(reading)

"The day Rion headed off, my life
turned upside down. I had no clue
where to turn or what to do."

(to herself)

What crap! How can I say he
disappeared without saying he
disappeared?

She deletes what she wrote, then stares off into space and
she's immediately transported to

THE LOLLIPOP

HOLLY PIERCE

You can say Rion disappeared by
passing through space, time, and
beyond, Luv.

VERONICA

That's it! Thanks, Holly.

Holly Pierce a bit smugly:

HOLLY PIERCE

See what happens when there's no competition with Rion gone?

VERONICA

Do you think he will return?

HOLLY PIERCE

No, Luv. He went through the space/time continuum, which caused it to unravel. He was wanting to escape for a while now. He finally found a loophole. I debated about going with him.

VERONICA

How did he find a loophole? What was it?

HOLLY PIERCE

Maybe your writer's block caused it. Or maybe because everyone has their own imagination, he created his own world and based it on yours.

Veronica's eyes widen

VERONICA

What's going to happen to me, then?

HOLLY PIERCE

You might get sucked into your imaginary world forever if you don't fall in love with Rion.

VERONICA

Forever?

HOLLY PIERCE

Yes. He's linked to your imagination, meaning that if you don't find him, you might be stuck in a permanent comatose literary state.

VERONICA

That doesn't sound good. What does that mean?

HOLLY PIERCE

You may never write again.

VERONICA
I'd die if I could never write
again! I'd just die!

Veronica is struck by fear,

VERONICA (CONT'D)
What happens if you leave, Holly?

HOLLY PIERCE
The same thing.

Holly Pierce lifts up the book she'd been reading just as
Veronica's office PHONE RINGS, jarring her back to reality.

INT. VERONICA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

VERONICA
No! No! I'm on a roll. No
interruptions!

The PHONE KEEPS RINGING. She grabs the phone and continues
typing.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
Hello!

ELAINE
(a mite tipsy)
The bridal shower is happening
right now, Veronica. Are you coming
or not?

That stops Veronica cold. She checks her watch.

VERONICA
I was writing and time got away
from me. I'll be there as soon as
possible.

Veronica hangs up, looks to see what she's wearing, shrugs.

No time to change. She grabs her shoulder bag, drops her
phone in. She saves what she's written on her computer, then
runs out of the room, combing her hair with her fingers.

INT. ELAINE'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

A dozen WOMEN sit on the floor around Elaine, who's on one
end of the sofa. The coffee table with only a few wrapped
gifts left to open, had been moved to accommodate them.

On a side table next to Elaine's elbow, a bottle of champagne and a half-empty glass.

Elaine is opening gifts when Veronica comes in with a small gift bag. She drops the bag onto the coffee table, then sits on the floor with the rest of the women.

VERONICA

Sorry, I'm so late, Elaine. I had to stop and get a gift. You know me when I'm writing -- the house could blow up and I'd never know it.

All the women laugh except Elaine, who takes a swallow of champagne, then proceeds to finish opening a gift.

OOHS and AHHHS. A LASCIVIOUS COMMENT when Elaine displays a sheer nightgown.

REDHEADED WOMAN

He'll never let you out of bed now!

LAUGHTER from the Women.

Elaine pours more champagne, opens another gift, a small frying pan.

A BLOND WOMAN

Keith had better have a good excuse if he comes home late from the office!

Elaine drains her glass of champagne, then opens the next to the last wrapped gift handed to her: His 'n Her towels.

Veronica reaches for her gift bag, hands it to Elaine.

VERONICA

I'm so sorry I'm late and also for the cheap gift. I will get you something nice after I finish my book.

Elaine looks pie-eyed at Veronica.

ELAINE

Okay.

Elaine opens the bag, pulls out a pair of pot holders, the kind that fit the whole hand.

THE BLOND WOMAN

Ahhhh! For when Keith gets too hot to handle!

Elaine looks at her. If looks could kill ...

LATER

The guests have gone. Only Elaine and Veronica remain.

Veronica picks up used wrapping paper and ribbon, smashes them up, and drops them into a plastic garbage bag she's carrying.

Elaine is nearly passed out on the sofa, empty champagne glass in hand.

Veronica moves the coffee table back into place, then sits on it facing Elaine.

VERONICA

Okay, tell me what's wrong.

Elaine looks at Veronica, tries to focus half-open eyes.

ELAINE

Tomorrow. I'll tell you tomorrow.

Elaine passes out. Veronica helps get her on the couch. She covers her with a blanket.

INT. VERONICA'S BEDROOM - NEXT MORNING

Veronica is sound asleep when her PHONE RINGS. Groggy, half asleep, she answers.

VERONICA (ON PHONE)

Hello? ... send her up.

INT. VERONICA'S KITCHEN - MORNING

Veronica and Elaine sit at the table drinking coffee. A plate of pastries and stack of napkins within easy reach.

VERONICA

How's your head?

ELAINE

Feels like it's between a rock and a a hard place and both are squeezing. The coffee's helping.

Veronica pushes the pastry plate next to Elaine.

VERONICA

Put something in your stomach
besides last night's champagne and
this morning's coffee.

Elaine reaches for an éclair and napkin. Takes a bite, pushes
it away.

ELAINE

Never could handle food first thing
in the morning. Coffee fine, food
no.

VERONICA

All right, enough of the chitchat.
Tell me what's going on with you.

ELAINE

I don't want to marry Keith. I
don't think he wants to marry me,
either. Our parents have told us
since we were little kids that we
would get married when we grew up.
I guess we sort of fell into
believing that crap.

VERONICA

So what you're saying is that you
don't love him.

ELAINE

I love him, I don't think I'm in
love with him.

VERONICA

Have you talked to Keith about
this?

ELAINE

No.

VERONICA

Well obviously you need to talk to
him. You can't go through with the
wedding if you don't want to marry
him.

ELAINE

I will talk to him.

VERONICA

When?

ELAINE

As soon as I feel better. I'll have to return all the gifts from last night.

VERONICA

You can keep the pot holders.

INT. VERONICA'S OFFICE - LATER

Veronica's hard at work writing. The PHONE RINGS again.

INTERCUT AS NECCESARY

VERONICA

Hello! I'm busy! Is this the Nigerian spammer again?

RION

I used your twenty-five cents and dialed those ancient numbers and here you are. Amazing.

VERONICA

Douglas! Where are you?

RION

In a hotel lobby. I don't know which one. A man was kind enough to show me to a public phone in the lobby. What are you doing? Are you missing me?

VERONICA

I'm writing. I've written 10 more pages today.

RION

I hope your story is a success.

VERONICA

Thank you. That's really sweet of you.

RION

I have dabbled into writing myself.

VERONICA

Really? What do you write?

RION

Romantic comedies.

Veronica laughs.

VERONICA
E-mail me one of them.

RION
You really want one? It is only
four pages.

VERONICA
Yes then I can get to know you in a
different light.

RION
What is your email?

VERONICA
BeatWritersBlock at Nebula12 dot
com.

RION
I've never heard of writer's block.

VERONICA
Writer's block is when you can't
focus and the story won't come.

RION
That sucks. Like when an asteroid
hit Planet Zypher. BAM! Everyone's
dying.

Veronica is stunned.

VERONICA
You've read my first book, Romance
From Space!

RION
I have the book. It is truly
phenomenal with a truly deceptive
title that draws you in.

VERONICA
Thank you! I'm glad I know you.

A click! The phone goes dead. Veronica looks at her phone,
shrugs, turns her attention back to her computer.

INTERCUT OVER

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Douglas is a very strange man.

In an instant Veronica is transported back to

THE LOLLIPOP

HOLLY PIERCE

He is like bloody Rion, no?

VERONICA

You mean Douglas? Come to think of it, he sort of looks like him.

HOLLY PIERCE

Maybe you need to find out. Maybe he is Rion.

VERONICA

If he is, I don't want love.

HOLLY PIERCE

Why?

VERONICA

None of your business.

HOLLY PIERCE

I can't bloody help you if you don't let me, Luv.

VERONICA

Why would you want to help me?

HOLLY PIERCE

Because the other option is death.

VERONICA

Death?

HOLLY PIERCE

I'm sorry. But it's your only choice. Come clean or die.

BACK IN VERONICA'S OFFICE

Veronica resumes typing. She reads as she types.

VERONICA

"When Rion came to life, my world turned into a horror film.

(MORE)

VERONICA (CONT'D)

I never wanted to fall in love, nor do I want to be trapped in my own mind. I guess there is no other alternative ..."

In an instant Veronica is back on board

THE LOLLIPOP

HOLLY PIERCE

Veronica, love isn't that bad!

VERONICA

Why do you say that?

HOLLY PIERCE

Because real love flows like a warm cup of tea with lots of honey.

VERONICA

I don't get the analogy.

HOLLY PIERCE

Tea is the theory of everything.

VERONICA

I thought I was in love once. I was young, fifteen or so. He was a football jock. We were voted King and Queen that year.

HOLLY PIERCE

What happened?

VERONICA

I was supposed to meet him after school one day. He didn't show up so I went to the football field because I knew he had practice that day. I found him under the bleachers making love to Mary Jane Riley. I was never so hurt in all my life.

HOLLY PIERCE

But you were just a child.

VERONICA

A broken heart is just as painful to a child as it is to an adult.

Veronica's DOORBELL severs the moment.

INT. VERONICA'S OFFICE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Veronica shakes her head at coming back to the present so abruptly that for a moment she doesn't know where she is.

The DOORBELL RINGS again, shocking her into action.

She leaves her office, walks through her living room to her door. She peeks through the peephole.

INSERT PEEPHOLE IMAGE: Rion's distorted face.

She quickly unlocks her door, opens it to find a smiling Rion standing there.

VERONICA

How did you get past the doorman?

RION

Easy. I told him I was your long lost brother and that I was going to surprise you. I gave him \$20 to look the other way. Are you finished writing? I want to take you out.

VERONICA

Out where?

RION

Anywhere you want to go.

VERONICA

Come in and shut the door.

Just then her PHONE RINGS.

Veronica sprints through the living room and into her office. Picks up the phone.

INTERCUT AS NECESSARY

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Hi, Elaine. I can't talk now. I'll call you back later.

ELAINE

But ... but I--

Veronica hangs up, goes back to the living room.

VERONICA

Would you like a cup of coffee?

RION
That would be fine.

IN THE KITCHEN

Veronica pours 2 mugs of coffee from a coffee butler. She puts them on a tray, adds a sugar bowl, a small carton of milk, some napkins, 2 spoons. She carries the tray into THE LIVING ROOM

Veronica sets the tray on the coffee table. She gives a mug to Rion, who's sitting on the sofa. He adds 2 spoons of sugar, no milk. She adds nothing. They sip their coffee.

Rion puts his mug down, anxious to know the answer to a question.

RION
Why wouldn't you let me come over before but you let me in now? What changed, my lady?

VERONICA
I know you now. I didn't know who you were before.

Veronica puts her mug down on the coffee table. She turns to him.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
You're RION, aren't you?

RION
So you finally figured it out?

VERONICA
Why did you lie to me? Why didn't you come right out and tell me you are Rion?

RION
I didn't want to scare you. You were already worried about me missing on The Lollipop. What would you have done had I just appeared on your doorstep?

VERONICA
I probably would have had a heart attack.

RION

This way, you got to know me as a real person first and not a just character in your book.

He leans over and kisses her.

RION (CONT'D)

Did that make your heart beat faster?

Rion kisses her again.

RION (CONT'D)

How about now? Is your heart pounding like mine?

VERONICA

Yes, it certainly is.

Her DOORBELL RINGS.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Now what?

She untangles herself from Rion and goes to the door. She looks into the peephole.

INSERT DISTORTED IMAGE

... of Ashley Powers

Veronica is deflated, contemplates not opening the door, finally opens it.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Mom, what are you doing here?

ASHLEY POWERS

Where's the doorman? He usually rings you when you have a visitor.

Veronica looks at Rion. Ashley sees Rion on the sofa.

Finally, a man for Veronica!

ASHLEY POWERS (CONT'D)

You have a man here!

Rion stands and walks over to her, takes her hand and kisses it.

RION

I am Rion.

Ashley is momentarily speechless.

Veronica enjoys the moment, tries not to laugh.

ASHLEY POWERS

I thought you were missing. Maybe
dead.

RION

Just missing.

Rion looks at Ashley.

RION (CONT'D)

Then I found your daughter in
Central Park. She's quite a girl.

ASHLEY POWERS

That is so sweet!

Ashley Powers can almost see grand kids. She turns to
Veronica.

ASHLEY POWERS (CONT'D)

I was worried that something had
happened to you because you never
returned any of my calls.

VERONICA

I've never been better. Let's all
go sit in the living room, shall
we?

All three sit on the sofa, Veronica in the center.

RION

(to Veronica)

She really cares for you. I realize
that now.

VERONICA

I know but she's always meddling in
my life.

RION

Why didn't you ever give me parents
when you created me for your book?
I'm all alone in a huge galaxy, and
it's a lot bigger than you can ever
imagine.

VERONICA

I thought you'd be happy with a alien back story instead of being saddled with a cliched human-type French family. The hard part is creating a character who is a real woman or a real man.

RION

I am finally a real man.

ASHLEY POWERS

You certainly are!

Rion turns to Ashley Powers, a troubled look on his face.

RION

I love Veronica but I don't think she loves me. She thinks love is a bad thing and wants no part of it. I will die if she doesn't love me.

ASHLEY POWERS

That's because she was deeply hurt by love in high school. She doesn't want to get hurt again.

Veronica leaps from the sofa.

VERONICA

Mother! How dare you! You don't know the story here. Rion has nothing to do with my past but everything to do with my future -- if we even have a future -- so butt out!

Exasperated, Veronica marches off to her bedroom and SLAMS THE DOOR.

ASHLEY POWERS

See what I mean, Rion? She won't even me talk about it.

RION

Tell me what happened.

Ashley Powers rises from the sofa and walks to the door. Before going out she turns to Rion, who has followed her.

ASHLEY POWERS

No, Rion. It's better that she tell you herself. Give her time. She'll tell you when she's ready.

Ashley and Rion go out the door

RION

But she said it has nothing to do
with--

The door closes on them.

INT. VERONICA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

It looks as though Veronica is having another bad dream with
the tossing and turning and mumbling.

VERONICA'S DREAM

HOLLY PIERCE

Rion is the guy for you.

VERONICA

I don't know. I'm damned if I fall
in love with him and damned if I
don't.

HOLLY PIERCE

Stop worrying. You will make the
right choice at the right time.

VERONICA

Life or death -- tough choice. I
wonder what I'll choose. Worse yet,
what will choose me?

HOLLY PIERCE

Stop it! You've even got my
knickers in a twist.

VERONICA

Are you being sarcastic?

HOLLY PIERCE

Who, me???

END DREAM

INT. VERONICA'S KITCHEN - MORNING

Veronica sits at the table in Star Wars pajamas, drinking
coffee and pondering something. The remains of her breakfast
on a plate is pushed off to the side.

The kitchen PHONE RINGS.

INTERCUT AS NECESSARY.

VERONICA

Hello?

NATHANIEL

We have a meeting today, remember?

VERONICA

Damn! I forgot!

She hangs up the phone, picks up her briefcase, and runs out the door -- in her pajamas and fuzzy pink slippers!

INT. NATHANIEL'S OUTER OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Veronica runs past the astonished Secretary to NATHANIEL'S OFFICE

Surprise registers on Nathaniel's face.

NATHANIEL

Are you in your pajamas?

Veronica looks at what she's wearing. Embarrassment paints her face a bright red.

VERONICA

I forgot to get dressed!

She looks sheepishly at Nathaniel.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Shall I go home and change or can you overlook my oversight?

NATHANIEL

Quite eccentric, like you. Star Wars pajamas. Not very professional during the day, though.

VERONICA

No one was ever supposed to see them.

NATHANIEL

Okay, what's bothering you? Is it the book? Maybe you need a vacation.

VERONICA

I can't take a vacation.

NATHANIEL

Why not?

VERONICA

I'm still finding my way out of my writer's block. Plus I need to fall in love with Rion.

NATHANIEL

What will happen if you don't fall in love with him?

VERONICA

Then I'll die.

Nathaniel looks at her, then laughs.

NATHANIEL

The pressure is getting to you. It happens to every author wearing deadline shoes.

VERONICA

You don't understand. I have to make a choice, neither of which is appealing. I must fall in love with Rion or I must kill him off. Love is a cliché and so is death. Which would you choose? Love or death?

Nathaniel leans forward in his chair, all seriousness now.

NATHANIEL

You keep making my point, which is that you need to take a vacation. Write with sand on your feet. Let the wind blow through your hair. Doesn't that sound heavenly?

Rion comes in and walks toward Nathaniel.

Nathaniel stands up, points a finger at Rion.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)

You're not supposed to be in here! I'm going to call Security to get this clown out of here.

Nathaniel reaches for his phone, dials 0.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)

Hello, Security? I need to have someone removed from my office. Suite 202. Pronto!

Rion steps forward and kisses Nathaniel's hand.

RION

I am Rion. Are clowns fun?

Veronica sighs.

VERONICA

Why did you come here, Rion?

RION

To help you sell your story. Nice pajamas! I came to help you sell your book.

VERONICA

I don't need anyone's help. I can sell it myself.

A SECURITY GUARD enters and peacefully takes Rion away.

Nathaniel's face is pale. He falls back into his chair as though shot.

Veronica comes around the desk.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Are you okay, Nathaniel?

NATHANIEL

He IS alive! Unbelievable!

He looks at Veronica with wide eyes.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)

I thought you were joking.

VERONICA

I know. Isn't that amazing?

NATHANIEL

Kill him off!

VERONICA

So I should choose death?

Veronica ponders that.

NATHANIEL

Take the risk. This is totally freaky.

VERONICA

I can't do it. You will need to hire a new writer to write the ending.

NATHANIEL

I will arrange it. We will miss you here.

Nathaniel appears to be in some kind of trance or something.

He is not himself.

Veronica's CELL PHONE RINGS. She digs it out of her shoulder bag.

VERONICA

What's up, Elaine?

ELAINE

I told Keith I can't marry him.

VERONICA

How did he take it?

ELAINE

He pretty much feels the same way. Friends forever but never man and wife. His parents will be brokenhearted when he tells them.

VERONICA

I'm happy for you. Gotta go. Talk at you later.

Veronica puts her phone in her shoulder bag.

Nathaniel comes out of whatever psychic coma he was in.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Are you okay, Nathaniel? You're awfully pale.

NATHANIEL

Did you just say that I need to hire someone else?

VERONICA

I did.

NATHANIEL

How come?

VERONICA

Since you said I should choose death.

NATHANIEL

Writing has become a sick joke to you, hasn't it?

VERONICA

I love writing!

NATHANIEL

Look at yourself! You're in your pajamas and you somehow found a guy to pose as Rion just to shake me up. I'm worried about you!

VERONICA

Don't be a poltroon.

NATHANIEL

I'll square things with the publisher. Whatever that words means, don't say it again.

Veronica leaves his office in a huff.

EXT. OUTSIDE NATHANIEL'S OFFICE - DAY

Rion waits by the curb. Veronica walks over.

RION

Cars are much scarier-looking here. That Prius looks like a ravenous machine. Do cars eat the people inside of them?

VERONICA

(preoccupied)
Don't be silly.

Veronica is oblivious to pedestrians looking strangely at her pajamas and fuzzy pink slippers as they walk by.

Rion watches passing pedestrians stare at Veronica.

RION

I wish I were as brave as you.

That wakes Veronica up.

VERONICA

How much do you remember about me?

Rion stares lovingly into her eyes.

RION
You are the most beautiful girl in
the whole world.

She hails a passing taxi. It stops and she gets in.

Rion is hesitant to get in. Veronica grabs his arm and pulls him inside.

INT. TAXI - DAY

Rion looks warily around the inside of the taxi, not wanting to get eaten.

VERONICA
What else do you remember about me?

RION
You mean the world to me.

EXT. CAB AS IT DRIVES AWAY - DAY

Rion kisses Veronica.

INT. VERONICA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Veronica, still in her Star Wars pajamas, sits at the table watching Rion cook 2 steaks on an indoor counter grill. A bottle of red Zinfandel breathes on the counter.

VERONICA
I thought you didn't know how to
cook.

Rion turns the steaks over.

RION
I watch the Food Network.

He pours two glasses of wine and brings them to the table.

He goes back to the counter, puts the steaks on two plates, opens a drawer, grabs steak knives and forks. He brings Veronica's plate and silverware, then goes back for food.

Veronica cuts off a slice of steak, puts it in her mouth, chews. Her eyes light up in surprise.

VERONICA
This is really good!

Rion beams with pride.

RION
You really like it?

VERONICA
It tastes like the steak I had in a
French restaurant once. Absolutely
delicious!

Rion digs into his steak with gusto.

INT. VERONICA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Veronica sleeps with a smile on her face.

VERONICA'S DREAM

HOLLY PIERCE
I'm glad you're happy.

VERONICA
I discovered that I do like love.

HOLLY PIERCE
Rion needs to speak more
eloquently.

VERONICA
He's perfect as is.

HOLLY PIERCE
That's neat that you like simple.

VERONICA
You liked him!

HOLLY PIERCE
I was only trying to make you
jealous so you would love him.

VERONICA
You trapped me?

HOLLY PIERCE
He isn't my type of guy.

VERONICA
What else have you not said?

HOLLY PIERCE

He told me if I fought for you he would help me kill the VORG. What happened to them anyway?

VERONICA

The story isn't finished yet.

HOLLY PIERCE

I see. Are you going to leave me hanging?

VERONICA

Maybe. I have to work on another ending.

HOLLY PIERCE

Don't do that! You will get a double block! Then nothing will get done.

VERONICA

Good point.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Veronica comes out of her bedroom in her Star Wars pajamas.

Rion is watching TV. He jumps up from the sofa and goes to the kitchen. He comes back with a cup of coffee for her.

RION

Wait here. I'll be back in a few.

VERONICA

I'm not going anywhere.

She drinks her coffee, comes slowly awake.

Rion comes back with a breakfast tray, sets it on the coffee table.

RION

Eat! I'll be back with more coffee.

Veronica is amazed at the lovely breakfast tray. Scrambled eggs, bacon, blueberry muffin, one red rose. She picks up the rose and smells it. Smiles.

Rion returns with the coffee butler. He refills Veronica's coffee cup, then sits beside her.

VERONICA

You're not only the perfect man,
your also a perfect gentleman.

RION

I try.

Veronica eats breakfast but it's obvious there's something on her mind. Rion notices. He turns off the TV.

RION (CONT'D)

There's something on your mind.
What is it?

VERONICA

I still don't know how my book ends. I have never had such an ultimatum.

RION

You're still thinking of dying.

Veronica stares him down, then takes a sip of coffee.

RION (CONT'D)

Well, that's some kind of a look.

VERONICA

It's the look of anger when you're ticked off at someone.

RION

Anger sounds like fun.

VERONICA

Careful. Don't spoil your perfect image.

RION

Huh?

VERONICA

I like you. I think you're the perfect man but I don't know about love. Throw writer's block on top of that and it's volatile.

(sighs)

Let's just say that this hasn't been my best week.

RION

It's all my fault! I'm so selfish!
Why did I ever leave my dimension?
I'm ruining your life.

Rion puts his head in his hands.

VERONICA
You didn't know.

Rion gives her a half-hearted smile.

RION
I've never loved a woman before.

Rion gets up and leaves her apartment.

Veronica carries the breakfast tray into

THE KITCHEN

She starts washing the dishes even though she has a dishwasher. It gives her time to think.

Her DOORBELL RINGS

Thinking it's Rion, she rushes to the door, opens it with a smile that quickly fades when she sees her mother.

Veronica pulls her mother inside, closes the door. She puts an arm around her mother, walks her to the sofa. She gives her mother a hug before they sit down.

Ashley Powers looks at Veronica. She can tell something's bothering her.

ASHLEY POWERS
What's the matter?

VERONICA
I don't know what to do. I think I like Rion now. What I don't know is if that will make me happy or not.

ASHLEY POWERS
You won't know till you try.

VERONICA
What do you mean, try?

ASHLEY POWERS
Stay with Rion. He loves you. Give him a chance.

VERONICA
Like you gave Dad a chance? He left you for another woman.

ASHLEY POWERS
Some things aren't meant to be.

VERONICA
You still love him, don't you?

ASHLEY POWERS
I will always love him. He was my
first love. You never forget your
first love.

VERONICA
I know.

INT. NATHANIEL'S OUTER OFFICE - EVENING - CONTINUOUS

Veronica runs into the Secretary's office. She jumps up and stands in front of Nathaniel's door, blocking Veronica's entrance.

SECRETARY
Do you have an appointment?

VERONICA
It's an emergency!

SECRETARY
What kind of emergency?

VERONICA
For Nathaniel's ears only.

SECRETARY
I guess I can make an exception --
this time. Your boyfriend isn't
with you, is he?

VERONICA
No.

The Secretary steps away from the door and Veronica goes into

NATHANIEL'S OFFICE

Nathaniel pours over someone's contract. He looks up when Veronica comes in.

NATHANIEL
I thought you were on vacation.

Veronica paces back and forth in front of his desk.

VERONICA

I can't end it! I've written more than two hundred pages and I can't end the damn book!

NATHANIEL

Then let me read it.

VERONICA

I'm stumped on one thing, the climax. What would you do if you couldn't love someone the way they love you?

Nathaniel looks impatient.

NATHANIEL

If you mean Rion, then tell him how you feel. Have you slept with him?

Veronica is still pacing, lost in her own mind, stewing over the non-climax of her book. She stops in front of Nathaniel.

VERONICA

Look, the better the climax, the more money you will make.

NATHANIEL

Now your talking my language.

VERONICA

What do you recommend?

NATHANIEL

You're not going to like it. I've brought it up before.

VERONICA

Tell me. I want to know.

NATHANIEL

Kill Rion off. I think a Romeo and Juliet ending would be perfection.

VERONICA

Have you gone mad? If I kill Rion off, I'll be stuck in my imagination forever?

NATHANIEL

You asked for my advice. That's the great plot twist of your entire story.

(MORE)

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)

You thought you were writing in a comedy but in reality it's a tragedy.

VERONICA

You're sick!

Nathaniel looks angry.

NATHANIEL

I'm your agent! You're nothing without me!

VERONICA

Sit down!

NATHANIEL

Don't tell me what to do!

He remains standing so Veronica also stands. She crosses her arms, stares him down.

VERONICA

Fine! I can stand and be just as immature as you!

Nathaniel sits down, then Veronica sits down.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Okay, let's be adults here. I'm sorry for saying you're immature.

NATHANIEL

That's what my wife said before she left me.

VERONICA

Maybe that's why you want a dark ending to my book.

NATHANIEL

Don't psychoanalyze me.

Veronica pushes a little more.

VERONICA

Maybe you have guilt.

NATHANIEL

Your psychoanalyzing is getting on my nerves.

(sighs loudly)

Okay, let me read what you have.

VERONICA
I'll e-mail it to you tonight.

NATHANIEL
Good. Now please leave.

Veronica stands.

VERONICA
I will have a great ending, I
promise.

INT. VERONICA'S OFFICE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Veronica sits at her computer but stares off into space.

She's stumped. Writer's block 2.0.

She puts her head down on her arms and falls into a restless
sleep.

VERONICA'S DREAM

Veronica sits beside Holly's in The Lollipop cockpit. Holly
Pierce is also quite agitated.

HOLLY PIERCE
Don't kill my friend! Just write a
happy ending.

VERONICA
I still wish I knew if that's the
right thing to do.

HOLLY PIERCE
You're over-analyzing the
situation. Rion completes you.

VERONICA
How do you know that?

HOLLY PIERCE
Because you created him, and he'd
do anything for you.

Veronica thinks about that.

VERONICA
Perhaps you're right. Maybe I do
need to love him.

The cockpit is enveloped in darkness.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
This is too dark.

HOLLY PIERCE
I tried to tell you it was rubbish.

VERONICA
I wonder what Douglas Adams would
do.

HOLLY PIERCE
That's the most cerebral thing
you've ever said.

VERONICA
You really think so?

The dark lightens considerably.

HOLLY PIERCE
This might be your only chance to
do the right thing.

END DREAM

Veronica wakes up refreshed at her computer.

She starts writing on her novel with renewed enthusiasm.

She's nearing the end. Her typing speed increases.

ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN

... as she types THE END.

She leaps up out of her chair, jumps up and down.

She settles down and e-mails the finished novel to Nathaniel.

INT. VERONICA'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Veronica snaps awake to an AIR HORN BLAST.

VERONICA
What the hell? Stop making that
racket! I'm trying to sleep!

Veronica sits up, sees Rion with the air horn. She jumps out
of bed in her Star Wars PJs and kisses him.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
I thought someone was pranking me
with such a rude awakening.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Rion sits on the sofa, watching The Food Network on TV.

Veronica comes out and sits beside him. She grabs the remote
and turns off the TV.

VERONICA
I have to ask you something.

RION
Fire away.

VERONICA
Will you love me forever?

He starts to rise but Veronica pulls him back down.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
Do you think I can love you
forever?

RION
I enjoy your presence so much. I
could not live without you.

VERONICA
If I chose to leave you for your
own good, what would happen to you?

RION
Then I guess I'd die.

Rion reaches behind him and pulls out a wrapped gift. He
hands it to Veronica.

RION (CONT'D)
I've been meaning to give this to
you.

VERONICA
What is it?

RION
Open it and see.

Veronica tears the wrapping off.

VERONICA

It's a book on getting past
writer's block! That's so sweet!
You do want what's best for me.

RION

I will give you the novel that I
wrote for you when you least expect
it.

Veronica is stunned.

VERONICA

You wrote a book? I thought you
wrote only four pages.

RION

I wrote more. It's around four
hundred pages. I had a great
inspiration.

VERONICA

Really? Who was your "Douglas
Adams"?

Rion beams with joy and love for Veronica.

RION

You are my inspiration. I am madly
in love with you. The novel is
about a female struggling with
writer's block. She meets the
character in her head and they fall
in love.

VERONICA

You wrote a novel for me? What's it
called?

RION

Eternal Flame.

VERONICA

You are the greatest guy I have
ever known. I never thought I'd
ever say this but we have a special
kind of love.

RION

I love you so much I just want you
to be happy.

VERONICA

Thank you. Now we must go to dinner.

EXT. ELEVEN MADISON PARK - EVENING

Veronica and Rion arrive at Eleven Madison Park. Veronica carries a colorful shopping bag.

INT. ELEVEN MADISON PARK - EVENING

Veronica and Rion are shown to the table where Elaine waits.

The table is elegantly set with gleaming dinnerware and shining silverware. 3 menus wait at the empty place setting.

Elaine hugs Veronica and they all sit down.

VERONICA

(to Elaine)

You're looking good.

ELAINE

Nothing weighing on my mind. I'm free and it's my birthday.

She looks from Veronica to Rion.

ELAINE (CONT'D)

It looks like you two are getting along fine. Wedding bells in the future?

VERONICA

We still have some kinks to work out.

ELAINE

You two will do fine.

VERONICA

I hope you're right.

Veronica gives the shopping bag to Elaine.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Happy birthday from Rion and I.

ELAINE

Thank you. I wonder what's in here.

VERONICA

Only one way to find out.

Elaine opens the bag and reaches in. She pulls out a bound copy of Veronica's manuscript.

ELAINE

You finished your book! I'm so happy for you.

VERONICA

You're my best friend so I autographed the first page for you. You know, just in case it tops the charts. Some day this copy may be worth a lot of money. It's the original.

Elaine opens it to the Dedication Page. She reads the dedication:

ELAINE

(reads)

"To Elaine, my best friend since forever. Thanks for holding my hand when I needed it while writing this book. I couldn't have done it without you and Rion."

Rion beams and Elaine gets teary.

VERONICA

I hope you like it. The publishers were pushing me to finish so I had to rush a lot of scenes near the end.

ELAINE

I'm sure it'll be your best book yet.

RION

I know it will.

ELAINE

That's nice that you support her.

Elaine looks up over their heads and smiles.

ELAINE (CONT'D)

And I have a surprise for you. Keith and I are going to get married after all. Here he comes now.

KEITH RICHARDS pulls out a chair between Elaine and Rion and sits down.

KEITH

I see Elaine's told you the good news.

VERONICA

But I thought ...

KEITH

That the marriage was off? It was. Now it's on again.

Keith smiles and takes Elaine's hand.

KEITH (CONT'D)

We split for a while but we were both miserable. I guess we needed to find out that we can't live without each other. She's been my sweetheart ever since I can remember.

ELAINE

And the split was just what we needed. I guess I needed it more than Keith. I felt like we were being pushed and I didn't want to be pushed. We won't be married until next year.

VERONICA

I'm stunned beyond words but I'm very happy for you both.

RION

(to Keith)

Yes, I am happy for you.

Rion picks up Keith's hand and kisses it. Then he turns to Elaine and kisses her hand.

RION (CONT'D)

And I am happy for you, too.

Veronica rolls her eyes at the shocked look on Keith's face.

VERONICA

French custom.

RION
(to Keith)
Can you believe the Red Sox won?
That game was so rigged!

KEITH
Baseball is such a boring sport. I
only watch football. Much more
exciting.

RION
You mean futbol?

Keith laughs.

KEITH
No, that's soccer. American
football is different.

ELAINE
Here comes the waiter.

KEITH
Rion won't kiss his hand, will he?

ELAINE
Of course not.

WAITER
Are we ready to order?

Rion takes the WAITER'S hand and kisses it.

Veronica looks at the shocked Waiter and smiles.

VERONICA
French custom. He kisses everyone's
hand.

The Waiter leaves.

ELAINE
When does your novel come out?

VERONICA
Sometime next spring.

The Waiter brings coffee and fills everyone's cup.

RION
In Paris we drink coffee after the
meal, not before.

VERONICA

This is America. We do it backwards here.

When the Waiter gets to Keith he holds up his hand.

KEITH

Nothing for me. I've gotta go.

He stands and pushes his chair in. He kisses the top of Elaine's head.

KEITH (CONT'D)

I'll call you tomorrow. Happy birthday.

Keith leaves.

Veronica is a little upset.

VERONICA

He could at least spend your birthday with you.

ELAINE

He'd made these plans with out-of-state relatives before we got back together. Don't worry, he'll make up for it up later.

VERONICA

I hope he never breaks your heart.

ELAINE

If he does, I'd still have you.

RION

And me!

ELAINE

You guys are wonderful. Here comes our food. I'm starving!

EXT. EMPIRE STATE BUILDING - NIGHT

Veronica and Rion arrive at the Empire State Building. They look up at it.

VERONICA

I have something special planned for you.

RION
Can we go to the top?

VERONICA
I don't see why not.

INT. EMPIRE ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Veronica and Rion see a COUPLE kissing in a corner.

RION
They are doing more than us but I
am glad I get to be your friend.

Veronica pushes the button designated 102.

GIRL in elevator to her BOYFRIEND:

GIRL
Why can't we be more like them?

She points to Veronica and Rion. The Boyfriend is totally unaware of what she means.

BOYFRIEND
What about them?

GIRL
They are best friends.

BOYFRIEND
They could also be brother and
sister.

VERONICA
(to the Boyfriend)
Actually, we're in a relationship.

GIRL
How sweet.

Veronica and Rion exit the elevator and stand in THE HALLWAY

Veronica grabs Rion's hand. She leans over and kisses him.

VERONICA
I love you!

RION
Wow! I like that emotion.

Veronica and Rion walk to the observation window and look out at the lights of NYC below. Above the city's lights, millions of stars wink at them.

RION (CONT'D)

This is such a beautiful sight at night.

Veronica squeezes his hand.

VERONICA

It is beautiful, isn't it?

She looks at him and smiles a smile of love.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

And you're beautiful, too.

Rion lifts her hand, kisses it, looks into her eyes.

RION

You mean so much to me. Do you love me?

VERONICA

I just said I did.

RION

You mean I did not force you to love me?

VERONICA

No! I finally woke up and smelled the roses, so to speak. I discovered that I've loved you all along because you're the man I have been destined to be with since before time began.

Veronica puts her arms around him and kisses him; he kisses her back. When they separate ...

RION

Will you marry me?

VERONICA

Yes, I will marry you.

RION

So what happens now?

VERONICA

You get to be with me forever and neither of us will die.

INT. NATHANIEL'S OFFICE - NEXT DAY

Veronica and Rion enter Nathaniel's office. Veronica hands Nathaniel her completed novel.

Nathaniel removes the pages from the manila envelope.

NATHANIEL

Spaced Out. Interesting title. It refers to The Lollipop sections and to the fact that you've been spaced out writing it.

VERONICA

Actually, my best inspiration was Rion.

OFF THE DISTASTEFUL LOOK ON NATHANIEL'S FACE

VERONICA

Did you think I could get rid of him?

NATHANIEL

Go home. I'll call you and tell you what I think after I read it.

INT. VERONICA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Veronica is stretched out on the sofa, watching a Star Wars movie on TV. Her PHONE RINGS.

INTERCUT AS NECESSARY

VERONICA

Hello?

NATHANIEL

I read your novel. It's excellent. It's your best novel.

VERONICA

And we're one week head of schedule.

NATHANIEL

They're prepared to give us a million up front for it, it's that good!

Veronica is shocked into silence. Then her DOOR BELL rings.

VERONICA
Someone's at the door. We'll talk
later. And thank you!

INTERCUT OVER

Veronica hangs up and looks through her peephole.

INSERT: Ashley Power's distorted image

Veronica opens the door and her mother sails in, a smile on
her face. They sit on the sofa.

ASHLEY POWERS
I heard that you're engaged!

VERONICA
I know. Can you believe it?

ASHLEY POWERS
My little girl is all grown up.

VERONICA
(dreamily)
I will be Veronica Axel.

ASHLEY POWERS
That's an interesting last name.

Veronica ignores that.

VERONICA
So, will you walk me down the isle?

Ashley kisses Veronica's cheek.

ASHLEY
Yes, my dear, it will be my honor.
By the way, what's happened to
Elaine and Keith?

VERONICA
They decided not to wait and have a
big wedding. They went to the
courthouse. No bridesmaid, no best
man. Just their parents who stood
up for them.

Veronica yawns. She can hardly keep her eyes open.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
I need some sleep, Mom.

Ashley Powers stands up, kisses the top of Veronica's head.

ASHLEY POWERS
Good night, honey. I love you.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - AFTERNOON

Ashley Powers walks Veronica down a bike path to a waiting MINISTER. Veronica wears a white knee-length summer dress and carries a small bouquet of flowers. A tiara of baby's breath in her hair.

Rion stands with Keith Richards to the left of the minister and Elaine, with a bouquet of flowers, stands on his right.

Veronica gives Ashley her bouquet.

Ashley gives Veronica to Rion, then steps over to stand next to Elaine.

MINISTER
Do you, Rion, promise to love and cherish Veronica?

RION
I promise to love her until the end of time.

MINISTER
Veronica, do you take Rion to be your-lawfully wedded husband?

VERONICA
Yes. Rion is everything I've ever wanted, and everything I have ever dreamed about.

MINISTER
You may exchange rings.

Veronica and Rion exchange rings.

MINISTER (CONT'D)
Then with the power invested in me by the State of New York, I now pronounce you husband and wife.

The Minister looks at Rion.

MINISTER (CONT'D)
You may kiss the bride.

Rion smiles. He kisses the Minister's hand, then turns and kisses Veronica in a long, passionate kiss.

Ashley Powers and Elaine and Keith gather around the newlyweds and shower them with well wishes.

ELAINE

I'm so happy for you! I know you
will be happy.

Keith pats Rion on the back.

KEITH

Good luck, old boy.
(steps back)
No need to kiss my hand.

And last but not least, Ashley Powers, who waits until everyone else has given their well wishes. She hugs Veronica.

ASHLEY POWERS

I'm so happy for you. Now hurry up
and give me some grandchildren!

Ashley turns to Rion, hugs him.

ASHLEY

Take good care of her always.

RION

You know I will.

Veronica and Rion walk off holding hands.

VERONICA

I wonder what Holly Pierce thinks
of our getting married.

RION

I'll bet she enjoys our honeymoon.

Veronica stops walking, looks at Rion with large eyes.

VERONICA

Why is that?

Rion smiles lasciviously.

RION

Because she can see us.

Veronica experiences a moment of panic.

VERONICA
She wouldn't, would she?

Rion laughs and puts an arm around her as they walk away.

RION
That didn't come out right.

VERONICA
No, it didn't.

HOLLY PIERCE (V.O.)
You never know... You just never
know.

FADE OUT.

CREDITS

THE END