SPACED OUT

By

Marilyn Pesola & Kristopher M. Newcome
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 asteroid 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 LOLLIPPOP

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 LOLLIPPOP 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


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 LOLLIPPOP

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!

(steery)
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 LOLLIPPOP

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 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 eclair 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,
ether. 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)
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 an 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 cliche 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