

GIRL ON FIRE Beat Sheet

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ACT

I:

Opening Image (page 1): It is a dark and cool night in New York City, where we see Silas Auto Body. A plethora of military weapons in a secret room, next door, three young women blindfolded and chained up in a dark room. Silas, who runs an auto body shop, as a front for his underground weapons ring, examines the girls. He then gives Kelvin a nod and the door closes. He is looking for a special girl some say is a myth, known as The Queen of hearts. We then move away to Vanessa. Vanessa is looking for her biological father, she has spent years having people walk out of her life, and she feels he can shed a light on why she is so different. Imagine you can hear the heartbeat of the surrounding people so vividly that you can control it. That is Vanessa who has cardia-telekinesis, the mutant-like ability to hear people's heart beat (and control them). She quells this through music, listening or singing. She is sitting on the sidewalk, armed with thick glasses (spy glasses), a guitar, a knapsack on her back, and a walkman with headphones, singing James Brown's "It's A Man's World", with her eyes closed, unaware that people are putting money into a cardboard box right next to her. When she is done singing, she sees the money, takes it out of the box, and splits it all between two homeless men sitting across from her.

Theme Stated : Is blood thicker than water. Which is repeated by Kelvin, Maxwell's brother often used as an excuse for Maxwell to turn a blind eye because he is his brother. The one thing that Maxwell fears is his brother

Set-up (pages 2-15): After we meet Vanessa, we then meet Maxwell, a smoker/alcoholic addicted to xanax, and is going to therapy for PTSD. He has been tormented by his bully of a brother Kelvin, who has taken the criminal path. Maxwell has been seeing a therapist who thinks there is a major incident that has caused his depression/PTSD although she can't quite put a finger on it. But the picture of the therapist with the congressman on the wall intrigues Maxwell.. Maybe it's nothing. But we know that his brother gets into trouble a lot putting Maxwell in the thick of it. We also see Maxwell after therapy go to a bar and on the television there is a report of THREE MISSING GIRLS. Vanessa who represents the purity and innocence of life is about to enter a dangerous world that she may not be ready for. We also meet Roger who lives in the apartment complex with Maxwell, whom Vanessa instantly takes a liking to.

Catalyst (page 11-12): Vanessa finds Maxwell outside of the bar, where he is drawn in by her singing voice, but ultimately dismisses her. When she sees him, she realizes that his heart is beating way faster than normal. Clutching his chest as he falls to the floor, Vanessa uses her powers to save Maxwell from a heart attack. She follows him home after while explaining that he might be her father. Come night time she leaves but without a place to sleep, she sleeps outside of Maxwell's apartment complex, and starts singing. Hearing her singing outside of his apartment realizing that she has no place to stay, Maxwell lets her sleep in his extra bedroom. She graciously thanks him.

Debate (pages 27-31): Vanessa finally meets Maxwell's devious older brother Kelvin one night in the apartment while Maxwell is asleep. They have a conversation on the guest room bed. During their conversation Kelvin realizes that Vanessa although a bit awkward, but she is the exact age, she just may be the queen of hearts as he also feels some strange grasp from her on his heartbeat. Vanessa unknowingly gives him a lot of personal information, especially the clue that music keeps her calm. He even offers her a job working in Silas's shop to only lure her in, as he is convinced that she is the queen of hearts.

Break Into Two (page 32 - 40): Maxwell not liking the prospect of Vanessa working for Silas angers Kelvin who backs him into a wall threatening him with a knife at his throat. This startles Vanessa into stopping Kelvin's heart momentarily, forcing him to drop the knife. This incident is confirmation for Maxwell that Vanessa saved him from the heart attack at the bar, and caused Kelvin to drop the knife. Maxwell, eager for a break, takes Vanessa shopping for some clothes, then to an amusement park. He also gets her a cellphone that can connect to her spy-glasses. When she sees the wireless headphones, she asks where is the wire? Which prompts Maxwell to ask if she came here in a DeLorean. In order to keep her away from Silas, Maxwell gets her a job working at a coffee house. Silas sees her awkwardness and immediately dismisses her as the queen of hearts, but Kelvin decides to hatch up a plan, using Roger, to prove it to Silas that she is the Queen of hearts.

ACT II Part 1:

B Story : Ambar a big tough brute who is a police officer by day and one of Silas's goons by night. He is driven by money, money to feed his family, and he also has a young daughter. He eventually empathizes with Vanessa, and decides to make the moral choice of helping Vanessa escape Silas and his goons. Oscar, another big goon that does whatever Silas says. Roger, a neighbor of Maxwell whom Vanessa develops a crush on. He entertains her slightly, but he sees her as being odd, and initially rejects her offers for a bubble tea date. Kelvin, who learns that Vanessa has a crush on Roger, asks Roger (a loyal auto body customer) to return a favor, going on a date with Vanessa only to lead her right into his hands. Roger reluctantly agrees. So excited and unable to control her emotions, she mistakenly stops Rogers' heart. She apologizes profusely, leaving him confused. Roger eventually leads her right into Kelvin's Hands.

Fun and Games : Vanessa has showcased her talents as a singer and her amazing mutant-like ability which she has never used for bad only for good, but has little control. She and Maxwell have a father-daughter relationship. She is the daughter that he never had, and he becomes the father figure in her life. They end up learning from each other, and helping each other. In his rather hectic and tense world, she brings a new positivity about life. He met her just in time for her to save him from a heart attack. At nights her beautiful singing can be heard in the guest room, putting him to sleep. She tries to help him fix his diet, at one point by wiping off the salt from his eggs with a paper towel. Although she soon loses her powers , it isn't until seeing him get shot that is the driving force that brings her powers back. She learns to use this ability to exact justice. Maxwell who is a troubled loner learns a lot from Vanessa as she is the peace that makes him value life whole. He sees her as the daughter he never had.

Midpoint (page 48 to 58): While in captivity, Vanessa's awkwardness convinces Silas that she could not be the one. Knowing that music keeps her calm, Silas plays loud melodic music, which weakens the sound of the noise (heartbeats) and her ability to control them. Silas explains the real reason why he has been looking for Vanessa, is that she is his half sister. Silas's father's infidelity and refusal to accept Vanessa as his child, left her in the care of an abusive step father and emotionally distraught mother. Silas found out about her existence and her powers but believed that she would align with him in his crime syndicate. Vanessa's mother did not die by suicide, as she found out, but Silas had her killed because she refused to tell him her whereabouts. There was only one picture taken of her, that is the one with Maxwell and her as a baby. Learning that Silas killed her mother Vanessa , sends Vanessa into an emotional spiral, unable to control her powers as the heart beats become stronger, louder, and everywhere. Her refusal to align with Silas and his crime syndicate causes him to strike her

onto the floor. Verbally and physically berating her, Kelvin steps in and continues the physical assault. She tries to use her powers to fight back, but is unable to get a handle of it, as the noises become just that, noise. Kelvin then picks her up, as if he is finished, fixes her clothes, wipes off her glasses, which had fallen to the floor, strikes her again, so hard that the noises stop, her powers are gone. While on the floor, the frame of her glasses cracked in the middle, playing unconscious, Vanessa awaits the perfect opportunity to escape.

ACT II Part 2:

Bad Guys Close In (pages 58-68): Feeling afraid and alone, and nearly beaten to a bloody pulp, Vanessa no longer has the desire to sing, and has lost her mutant-like powers. While Kelvin and Silas are occupied, she finds an escape, only to be blocked by Ambar. Looking at the tears in her eyes, Ambar begrudgingly looks the other way. Maxwell who has been looking for her, senses something is wrong when she returns, she hides her wounds from Maxwell. Afraid to tell Maxwell what happened, but also afraid that they will come back, she tries to tell him, but is afraid, as she keeps looking out the window. In the other room, Maxwell no longer has her beautiful sounding voice to put her to sleep. Going into her room he sees her bruised and battered face and decides to go to the police.

All Is Lost (page 68-85): At the precinct, she spots Ambar, and realizes that the police will not help her. They decide to go back to the apartment where the police are waiting for Maxwell as he is arrested for the kidnapping of the three missing girls. They found evidence at his apartment. With no place to hide Vanessa goes to the coffee house where she works for refuge, but find that videos of her sexual assault has been posted online, as the cashier shows her the video. Embarrassed, broken and all alone she has nowhere to go, she turns to the only other person she knows, Roger. Seeing him with his new girlfriend crushes her as they ridicule her. Even calling her a retard for thinking that he really liked her. She goes outside and runs right into Ambar and Oscar, who eventually recapture her.

Dark Night of the Soul (pages 78-84,): While recaptured, in the back of the goons' car, Vanessa has to find a way out. She knows that they intend to kill her. Maxwell, while in police custody, comes to the realization of what Terrence, the politician, did to him as a child. His sexual abuse

was the traumatic experience that caused his depression.

Break Into Three (page 84-89 and 94-100): Vanessa realizes that she can get to Ambar, as she appeals to his family side, forcing him to make the moral choice. But Oscar will not budge, his loyalty is strictly with Silas. At the same time, Maxwell is bailed out by his therapist, and gets an anonymous text (from Ambar) of Vanessa's whereabouts. Maxwell breaks into the relocated warehouse where Vanessa has been taken, he tries to fight off the thugs, realizing that he has an Ally of Maxwell and Vanessa. Maxwell and Ambar appear to be fighting the good fight, until the sneaky Silas slips away. While everything looks great for Maxwell and Ambar, Vanessa comes out when she hears Maxwell's voice. She comes out, he sees her relieved that she is ok. She runs to hug him, then hears a loud gunshot, Maxwell drops to the floor, as Ambar is shot in the shoulder, eventually overtaken by his opponent. As Maxwell's heart slows down, about to lose the father she never had, this causes an emotional disruption. Silas pushes her out the way, with Maxwell still alive, taking aim at Maxwell's head. For the first time we see anger in Vanessa's face. But not just angry, she becomes enraged. This rage becomes that spark that not only brings back her mutant-like ability, but with pinpoint precision and surgeon-like control. She stops Silas's heart-beat, as he drops the gun, and that of Ambar's opponent. With Silas dropping to the floor, she takes Maxwell's knife and shoves it into Silas's chest, only to use her powers to keep him alive to feel the pain. She then gets in tune with Maxwell's heart, and keeps his heart beating strong. Other goons who have just arrived, feel her wrath. When the bad guys are defeated, she hears three more heartbeats in the warehouse. The three missing girls are also discovered on the site. Ambar covers up, while the police show up on the scene, missing girls rescued. One down, two more to go.

Act III:

Finale (pages 100-110): Back at the apartment complex, Maxwell asks Vanessa to wait for him outside while he goes upstairs. In the apartment, Maxwell finds Kelvin waiting for him. In a standoff at his apartment, with Maxwell holding onto a knife hidden behind him, and Kelvin with his hand on the trigger of a pistol hidden inside the back of his pants. Face to face in an intense discussion as we wait to see who will strike first. Maxwell makes the quick decision to slice Kelvin's throat in this intense standoff.

Maxwell and Vanessa to continue their journey to visit Terrence, the politician who raped Maxwell as a child. Maxwell tells him what happened and gets him to confess while Vanessa secretly videotapes the confession. After they have the videotaped confession, they are on their way to a new life.

Final Image (page 116):Maxwell and Vanessa drive off on the road smiling and at peace ready to start a new life with Maxwell as a mentor to her.