

**THE COMPANY**

"Stitch"

by  
Sarah-Jane Sheppard

TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. BALLROOM - NIGHT

MUSIC CUE: "The Rainbow Connection" by Jason Mraz

The empty room is lit dimly, soft squares of light floating across the dance floor. Then, two figure step into frame.

VI and ERIN, on opposite sides of the dance floor, are dressed for a formal occasion. Erin in a tux. Vi in a stunning soft pink dress.

Their eyes locked, they move forward until they are only inches apart. They smile.

Erin puts a hand on her waist. Vi reaches up and drapes her hand over his shoulder. Then, carefully and lovingly, they grasp their free hands together. And they start to dance.

Swaying to the music, they find themselves moving closer together. Vi rests her head on Erin's chest. She looks content. Happy. A perfect moment for her little seventeen year old heart.

**BBRRRRRIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIINGGG!!!**

INT. GARRETON ACADEMY - CLASSROOM - DAY

Vi snaps back to reality. The MUSIC is gone. The ballroom is gone. She's in school. The class just having finished, STUDENTS talk loudly as they move out the door.

Vi shuffles the papers in front of her, covered in bored doodles, and tries to look like she hasn't spent the whole class daydreaming about her ex-boyfriend.

Speaking of which...

ERIN (O.S.)

Hey.

Vi looks up. Erin stands by her desk, looking down at her. Vi quickly straightens up and smiles - heartened.

VI

Hey.

Erin pulls something from his pocket. A ticket. He hands it to her.

ERIN

Here's your ticket for the formal next week. I sort of... I forgot I had them both.

Vi's smile drops.

VI

Oh.

(beat)

Thanks.

Erin nods. He turns for the door. Vi stands hurriedly, not wanting their conversation to end so quickly.

VI (CONT'D)

Do you want me to pay you for it?

Erin turns back.

VI (CONT'D)

I mean... You did buy them both originally. It's only fair.

ERIN

(beat)

Okay. Sure.

Vi blinks, surprised.

VI

Um. Okay. Uh...

She fumbles in her skirt pocket.

VI (CONT'D)

I only have twenty dollars right now but --

ERIN

Don't worry about it.

Vi pauses, her earlier assumption coming to pass. Then:

ERIN (CONT'D)

You can just pay me the rest later.

A beat. Vi hands over a twenty dollar bill. Erin stuffs it into his pocket.

ERIN (CONT'D)

Thanks.

He exits. Vi watches after him, saddened and confused. She slumps back behind her desk. Sighs. A few moments pass.

She frowns. Doesn't she have to be somewhere?

VI

Oh, crap! Class!

Vi grabs her books and dashes out of the room. A few loose sheets float to the floor.

ON PAPER

Vi's absentmindedly drawn a series of love hearts.

We PUSH IN on one, scribbled out - harsh jagged lines of black running through it.

CUT TO BLACK:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. GARRETON ACADEMY - DAY

With the shrill call of another BELL, Student flock out the main entrance and scatter off - heading home.

ON VI

walking with SHANE, down the front steps.

VI

It was weird. He was nice enough, I guess, but... but he had this look on his face like...

SHANE

Like you two were talking for the first time since you broke up?

They reach the footpath and move away from the school.

VI

(changing the subject)  
Where's Gwen? Thought you guys were going to hang out today?

SHANE

(shrugs)  
I don't know.

VI

You don't know where she is or you don't know if you're hanging out?

Shane doesn't answer. Vi frowns.

VI (CONT'D)

Is everything okay with you guys? This "just friends" thing... Not such a good idea after all?

SHANE

No, God. Vi, we're fine. Gwen and I... Being just friends is about all we can handle, I think. That wasn't a mistake.

VI

But I'm guessing there is one? A mistake?

SHANE

(beat; sighs)

She started asking me about the formal.

VI

Oh.

SHANE

Yeah. Obviously, we're not going together anymore. But, she got it outta me.

VI

(cringes)

And?

SHANE

She's not taking no for an answer.

(beat)

Gwen's going to find me a date.

Vi pats his shoulder sympathetically.

VI

I'm sorry, Shane.

SHANE

Now, if that isn't humiliating enough, my mum's taking me to rent a tux this afternoon.

VI

Have you considered, I don't know, just not going? It's only the year eleven formal. It's not like it's our last one.

SHANE

Yeah, I guess.

(beat)

What are you up to this arvo?

They pause at a street corner. Vi takes a piece of paper out of her pocket.

VI

Assignment. Lucky me. I've got to be at this address in...

She checks her watch.

VI (CONT'D)

... Fifteen minutes.

SHANE

Any idea what it's about?

Vi shakes her head.

VI

Nope. But for all the excitement I've had lately, I'm hoping it's something really laid back.

She smiles, thinly.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

A small, well-kept house. The garden's full of flowers.

Vi's already at the door. She rings the BELL. Waits patiently.

After a few moments, the door opens to reveal EDITH (50s). She clutches a pair of sharp looking scissors in one hand.

VI

Um... Hi.

She eyes the scissors warily.

EDITH

Hello, dear. Can I help you?

Deciding that Edith is not a threat, Vi turns her attention to, y'know, her job. However, her mind's gone blank.

VI

I... Uh... My name's Vi.

EDITH

Hello, Vi. I'm Edith. It's nice to meet you.

Long beat.

EDITH (CONT'D)

Was there anything else, dear?

Vi, getting a tad desperate, does a quick scan of her surroundings. She spots a bed of roses by the door, the tag still attached to the stake in the dirt.

VI

(off tag)  
Brindabella Roses?

EDITH

Oh, you like my flowers? They are beautiful.

Vi sighs.

VI

No, um... I kinda thought that it  
might have been a Sign, er, or...  
I don't...

(quiet)

Brindabella's a weird word.

Edith frowns in confusion. Then, from inside the house:

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Who's at the door, Edith?

EDITH

A girl. Vi.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Is she here for the meeting?

EDITH

I don't think --

VI

(quick)

Yes.

(smiles)

I'm here for the meeting.

Off this, CUT TO:

INT. EDITH'S HOUSE - DAY

Just to one side of the front door is a LIVING ROOM. It's almost looks like a some sort of work shop for the amount of activity going on.

As Vi and Edith enter, Vi tries her best to take this all in.

Three other WOMEN are seated around the room. There are two sewing machines, huge thick rolls of material and three clothes mannequins among other things.

EDITH

Welcome to the "Ladies of  
Garreton Sewing and Dress-Making  
Social Club".

CARIS (late 30s) is the woman who spoke earlier. She hops up and hurries over to Vi, holding out her hand. Vi shakes it.

CARIS

I'm Caris. And I really think we  
need a name change, don't you?

(MORE)

CARIS (CONT'D)

The "Ladies of Garretton Sewing and Dress-Making Social Club" is so... dull. It drives the young people away.

An ELEGANT WOMAN "huffs" from her own work station.

ELEGANT WOMAN

I thought that was the point.

Caris takes Vi around the shoulders and guides her to an empty spot at a large table.

CARIS

That's Hestia. Don't mind her.

HESTIA (60s) eyes Vi with disdain.

Edith takes her own seat at the table where, using the scissors, she starts to cut out a pattern from a roll of material.

EDITH

And that --

She looks to an elderly woman, asleep in an armchair.

EDITH (CONT'D)

-- Is Pearl.

PEARL (70s) lets out a SNORE. A half finished skirt slips from her lap and onto the floor. Caris shakes her head sadly.

CARIS

She's been working on that skirt for eight months.

Suddenly cheerful again, Caris looks to Vi.

CARIS (CONT'D)

So, what made you want to join our social club?

VI

I like, um, making things?

HESTIA

(slightly accusing)

What have you made before?

VI

I made a scarf once.

(beat)

At least, it was supposed to be a scarf.

HESTIA

We don't knit here. This a sewing and dress-making club. That means we sew and make dresses.

VI

What if a boy wants to join?

HESTIA

He has to make a dress.

EDITH

(intervening)

You don't have to make a dress. It's just a name.

CARIS

That needs to be changed.

EDITH

We had a boy in the group for awhile. Randall.

CARIS

He's competing in "Project Runaway Australia", now.

VI

Oh, interesting.

As the women continue to TALK about Randall and his skills (or lack thereof, according to Hestia) in dress-making, their voices begin to FADE into the background.

We focus on Vi as she puts her elbows up onto the table - and jolts back.

VI (CONT'D)

Ow!

She removes a pin from her elbow and leans back in her chair, already looking bored out of her head.

JENNA (PRE-LAP)

Just give it some time.

INT. THE COMPANY - HALLWAY - LATER

JENNA walks quickly down the hall and, as usual, she carries files - looking super busy. Vi, still in her school uniform, hurries along beside her, trying to keep up.

VI

But it's so boring. I think there's been some mistake.

JENNA

Not all assignments involve car crashes and explosions. I think your last few have made you a bit jaded, Vi.

VI

It's not even about that.

(beat)

Well, it is a little bit.

(then)

But I talked to these women for hours. I've got nothing. Their lives are fine. More than fine if Hestia's love life is as... exuberant as it sounds.

JENNA

Maybe you should be speaking to your mentor about this.

VI

I would but he's not answering his phone.

(thinks)

Although, I think he did one time but he pretended to be his own voice mail message.

Jenna smiles at that. Then quickly frowns, serious again.

JENNA

He can't be shirking his responsibilities as a mentor but maybe something's going on. Maybe he's busy.

VI

Doing what? This is Andrew we're talking about. He's probably trying to see how long he can microwave a banana before it blows up.

They slow as they reach the doors to the control centre.

JENNA

He could be doing any number of things. I'm not his wife, I don't know where he is every second of every day.

VI

(confused)

Wife?

JENNA  
 (flustered)  
 Look, I have work to do and so do  
 you.

She ducks inside the control centre, leaving Vi in the hallway. Vi calls after her.

VI  
 Can't I switch with someone?

JENNA (O.S.)  
 (calls back)  
 No!

Vi bites her lip and turns away from the door, just as HANNAH passes by. Vi's eyes light up.

VI  
 Ooh, Hannah! Wait up!

INT. THE COMPANY - RECEPTION - MOMENTS LATER

Hannah emerges from the hallway. Headphones on, she hasn't heard Vi calling her name. She presses the button for the elevator and the doors open.

Vi dashes after her, slipping through the elevator doors just as they're about to close behind Hannah.

INT. THE COMPANY - ELEVATOR - NEXT

Hannah pulls off her headphones.

HANNAH  
 Oh, hey, Vi. Were you calling me?

Vi struggles to catch her breath. Hannah grimaces.

HANNAH (CONT'D)  
 Sorry. I just got the new "Brand New" album. Heh. Isn't that funny? New "Brand New". It was kind of awkward asking for it at the shop. Do you like them?

VI  
 (nods)  
 Shane's fault.

HANNAH  
 Shane's a fan, too?

VI  
 You guys have a lot in common.  
 You should hang out more.

HANNAH

I'd like to. I just... I dunno.  
He's got his normal life and  
I'm... not exactly normal.

The elevator CHIMES and the doors slide open into:

INT. SHOPPING COMPLEX - DAY

Hannah and Vi step out of the elevator.

VI

Have you got an assignment?

HANNAH

Yeah. I'm helping this girl  
propose to her boyfriend today.

VI

How progressive of you.

Hannah grins.

HANNAH

You've gotta get with the times,  
Vi. Us girls are stepping it up.  
(beat)  
Did you need help with something?

VI

Oh, um... No. Just wanted to say  
hey. So, um, "hey".  
(beat)  
I've got an assignment, too.  
(dull)  
Mine's about sewing.

A beat. Hannah feigns a supportive smile.

HANNAH

That's... great.

Vi laughs, shaking her head. Hannah cracks a real smile,  
now. The girls walk off screen together.

EXT. GARRETON HERALD - DAY

Establishing shot.

INT. GARRETON HERALD - SAM'S OFFICE - DAY

SAM lies on the couch. There's a KNOCK at the door.

SAM

Enter, lowly peasant.

PETER slips inside, closing the door after him.

PETER  
 (looking around)  
 Sam? You busy?

Sam sits up, startling Peter.

SAM  
 Always. What's up?

PETER  
 Most of the office has cleared  
 out but I've still got some, er,  
 work to do and I was wondering...  
 (beat)  
 We don't have a microfilm archive  
 do we? With all of the back  
 issues of the paper?

Sam laughs. As he stands:

SAM  
 Ah, Pete, you make me feel young  
 again.

PETER  
 You're thirty-one.

Sam sits down at his computer. Beckons Peter over. Sam logs  
 onto the Garretton Herald's intranet system.

SAM  
 (as he types)  
 Everything's in the computer,  
 now. You just type in what you're  
 looking for. And... Voila!

A page of search results have come up.

SAM (CONT'D)  
 (re: results)  
 Mrs. Henderson and Barnacle the  
 Tabby won the Garretton Cat Show  
 in 1991. Interesting.

Sam looks to Peter.

SAM (CONT'D)  
 What were you looking for?

PETER  
 Um... If you type in someone's  
 name, will it --

SAM  
 Any reference in any article will  
 come up. Closest match.

PETER  
Try "Violet Morgan".

A beat. Sam complies. A couple of results appear.

Sam clicks on the first one. A scan of a newspaper article appears on the screen. A large picture of Vi underneath the headline: "LOCAL GIRL RISES FROM DEAD".

Peter reacts to this - bad memories flooding back. But he steels himself. He scans the page. Points to something.

PETER (CONT'D)  
What's that?

He's pointing to an option on the screen, "SEARCH FOR SIMILAR".

SAM  
It'll bring up articles that have similar elements like the reporter or topic or...

PETER  
Do that.

Sam does. A beat.

SAM  
Whoa...

Dozens upon dozens of search results have appeared on the screen - all of them with words like "dead", "miracle", "reanimated", "mysterious circumstances" in their descriptions.

SAM (CONT'D)  
This is... weird.

Peter, focused intently on the screen, absentmindedly pushes Sam's chair aside. He leans closer.

He takes the mouse and hovers it over the link to one article in particular. The name is familiar to us: "ANDREW FRIAR".

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

ON MOBILE PHONE

as it buzzes. "JENNA CALLING", says the screen.

A hand swoops down on top of it, lifts it up to...

ANDREW, still in bed.

ANDREW  
 (into phone)  
 You've reached Andrew. I'm not  
 here right now so leave a message  
 after --

JENNA (V.O.)  
 (filtered)  
 Nice try, Andrew.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. THE COMPANY - JENNA'S OFFICE - SAME

Jenna swings around in her chair to face the camera. She  
 smirks into her mobile phone.

JENNA  
 But Vi told me about your  
 answering machine scam.

Andrew props himself up against the headboard.

ANDREW  
 Bloody Vi. Always ruining my fun.

JENNA  
 So where are you?

ANDREW  
 (yawns)  
 Working.

JENNA  
 (in disbelief)  
 Are you... Are you still in bed?

ANDREW  
 (beat)  
 No.

JENNA  
 Andrew, it's after six. It's  
 getting dark!

ANDREW  
 I had a late night.

JENNA  
 Really? Because I left yours at  
 ten and you said you were off to  
 bed.

ANDREW  
 Took a detour through Liberty  
 City.

JENNA  
 You were playing "Grand Theft  
 Auto" all night?

Andrew smiles, pleased.

ANDREW  
 You do pay attention when I talk  
 about video games. I'm impressed.

Jenna bites her lip, a bit nervous.

JENNA  
 When Vi told me she couldn't  
 reach you I kind of thought...

ANDREW  
 What?

JENNA  
 I don't know. That you were  
 planning something.

ANDREW  
 Planning something?

A beat. Jenna realises he's not.

JENNA  
 Oh. I... Um...  
 (weak laugh)  
 Guess you spoilt me with that  
 whole "first date" scenario.

Andrew cringes.

ANDREW  
 Man, Jenna, I'm sorry. I... I do  
 have... something planned. I was  
 just kidding about being asleep.  
 I --

JENNA  
 (embarrassed;  
 apologetic)  
 No, it's fine. I shouldn't have  
 assumed... It's my mistake. Um...  
 Just... just forget I said  
 anything, okay?  
 (beat)  
 You go back to sleep.

She quickly hangs up. Closes her eyes and presses a hand to her forehead, mentally berating herself.

At the same time, in Andrew's bedroom, he slowly lowers the phone - and THUNKS his head back into the headboard.

EXT. EDITH'S HOUSE - DAY

Vi drags her feet up the front path. Halfway to the door, she stops. Turns and looks longingly back at the street.

She digs her mobile phone from her pocket. Stares at it.

VI

Ring, damn it. Be Jenna with some emergency. The elevator's broken and they need me to send abseiling gear. Doc suddenly got less crazy. Anything!

A beat. As expected, her phone remains silent. GRUMBLING, Vi puts it away again...

... And spots a GARDEN GNOME, by the front path. It holds a little ceramic sign post which reads: "Suck it up, kid".

She's momentarily shocked. Then, she glares. She marches towards the gnome, pulls back one leg - ready to kick it - when --

-- The front door opens and Edith emerges.

EDITH

Hello, Vi!

Vi's foot quickly finds pavement again. She spins around, smiling innocently.

EDITH (CONT'D)

Thought I heard someone. You know, I wasn't expecting to see you after yesterday.

VI

(beat; weak)

Well... I'm back.

Edith steps aside, motioning Vi into the house.

Vi heads for the door but not without one look back at the smiling gnome - his little sign post now reading, "Home Is Where The Heart Is".

Another glare from Vi and we --

CUT TO BLACK:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. EDITH'S HOUSE - DAY

Vi sits at the table, going through a box of patterns. They're folded up into their own packages with a picture of the clothing item on the front.

She looks bored, supremely so, and isn't trying to hide it.

The SEWING LADIES (Edith, Hestia, Caris and Pearl) are in their usual places and, as usual, Pearl is already asleep.

EDITH

(to Vi)

Have you found something you're going to make?

Vi shakes her head.

EDITH (CONT'D)

Well, what would you like to make?

VI

(shrugs)

I don't know. Some pants?

Hestia makes a disgusted noise.

CARIS

Pants are nice. Very practical.

EDITH

What about a nice dress? Have you got something coming up? A school dance, perhaps?

VI

Well, there's this formal in a couple of weeks --

EDITH

Perfect!

She hurries over to Vi's side. Ruffling through the box of patterns, she grabs one and holds it out to Vi. We don't see what's on the front.

EDITH (CONT'D)

How about this one?

VI

Wow. I, uh, are you sure I can make that?

EDITH  
Why not? We'll help you.

Vi still isn't sure.

VI  
Well, I don't even know if I'm  
going. There this sort of...  
assignment I've got to do and...  
(beat)  
I mean, it's just a dance, right?

Hestia GASPS.

HESTIA  
Just a dance?

She stands, putting aside her work.

HESTIA (CONT'D)  
Just a dance? Young lady, there  
is nothing in this world more  
magical than a dance.

She starts to sway, moving about the room.

HESTIA (CONT'D)  
When you take the hand of a  
handsome gentleman...

She puts out her hand.

HESTIA (CONT'D)  
And place your other on his  
shoulder...

She does so, holding onto an invisible dance partner.

HESTIA (CONT'D)  
And when that music starts to  
play, it's like you're the only  
two people in the world...

A happy smile on her face, she starts to HUM as she dances  
around the room.

ON VI

as she watches Hestia dance. She smiles, starting to enjoy  
herself...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. EDITH'S HOUSE - LATER

Caris is helping Vi take measurements of herself, Edith is taking around a tray of tea and biscuits and Hestia is in the middle of a rant.

HESTIA

It's getting ridiculous. She should be married by now but she doesn't even have a boyfriend.

EDITH

She'll find someone.

HESTIA

She puts in no effort. Never any flattering clothes, she wears sneakers to work. Not just on the way to work, no - at work. She's like a... a bum. On the street.

EDITH

Hestia!

HESTIA

I love her, but it's true.

CARIS

Gosh, I don't know how you can be like that, Hes. If my babies wanted to go off on dates --

EDITH

But your babies are babies. Hestia's girl is --

HESTIA

Don't remind me! It will just make me more depressed that she's still not married.

EDITH

Not everyone has to get married, Hestia. Nowadays girls want to have careers and travel the world. They want to live a little, not get bogged down with men.

She looks to Vi.

EDITH (CONT'D)

Isn't that right, Vi?

VI

(caught off guard)

Um... I don't... I mean...

Caris smirks.

CARIS

She's already got a boy of her own. Look at that pink in her cheeks.

Vi hand flies to her face, embarrassed. The other women chuckle.

EDITH

I'm sorry for putting you on the spot, dear. I was just trying to include you. We tend to talk a lot.

VI

That's fine. I, um, I just broke up with my boyfriend, actually. Well, not just. A little while ago.

CARIS

Was he your first boyfriend?

Vi nods. Caris makes a sympathetic sigh.

CARIS (CONT'D)

Oh, those are the worst. I remember when I broke up with my first boyfriend. He was the love of my life - well, at fourteen.

EDITH

What happened?

A tiny smile and then:

CARIS

We got married.

The women laugh. We PUSH IN on Vi, a thought forming...

INT. GARRETON ACADEMY - HALLWAY - DAY

It's the next day. Vi and Shane carry books as they head to class. Vi bounces around Shane excitedly.

VI

That's it! I can't believe I almost missed it.

SHANE

Your assignment is to help someone get married?

VI

No. The assignment is about me  
and Erin --

SHANE

-- getting married?

Vi rolls her eyes.

VI

Now who's getting ahead of  
themselves.

SHANE

I never said you were --

Vi pulls him over to a row of lockers, out of the flow of  
Students.

VI

Don't you see? I thought I was  
sent to those meetings to help  
them but, listening to those  
women talk, talking to them?

(beat)

They managed to get more  
information out of me than my  
entire first attempt at getting  
information out of them.

SHANE

Vi, you're not making any sense.

VI

Fixing connections. Mending  
relationships. Sewing them back  
together.

(grins)

Me and Erin. We were never meant  
to break up.

Deliriously happy, Vi twirls around and continues on down  
the hall. Shane frowns, unsure about this.

SHANE

Vi, wait up!

He starts to follow her. But as he passes a doorway - Gwen  
darts out, grabs his arm and yanks him into the --

INT. GARRETON ACADEMY - GIRL'S BATHROOM

SHANE

Gwen! What the hell?!

She closes the door. Drags a waste bin in front of it.

SHANE (CONT'D)

Don't get me wrong. Back before we started going out, you dragging me into the girl's bathroom was pretty high up on my list of things I'd like to --

Gwen grabs his shoulders. Turns him around.

Five GIRLS (16-17) stand around the room. A collection of high-school stereotypes. There's the GOTH, the JOCK, the SCIENCE NERD, the REBEL and the VIRGIN MARY.

SHANE (CONT'D)

Um... Gwen? What is this?

REBEL

(looking him up and down, not impressed)  
I'm thinkin' the same thing.

Gwen, a nervous smile on her face, comes to stand between Shane and the girls.

GWEN

Well, I thought it was getting a bit late for you to find a date yourself so I took a quick poll and these lovely ladies --

She motions to the collection of girls.

GWEN (CONT'D)

-- Are all available.

SHANE

(beat; horrified)  
Oh dear God, my ex-girlfriend is a pimp.

He leans against a stall, presses a hand to his sweaty forehead and takes a few deep breaths.

SHANE (CONT'D)

Gwen, I can't just choose someone. I mean --  
(to Girls)  
-- I'm sure you're all very nice but --

GWEN

(laughs)  
Shane! Don't be silly.

Shane looks confused.

GWEN (CONT'D)  
They're going to decide who you  
get to take to the formal.

A beat. Shane straightens up, his eyes wide. Afraid.

GOTH  
Got any piercings?

Shane shakes his head.

JOCK  
He's a bit scrawny.

She marches forward and grabs his arm. As she squeezes his  
bicep:

JOCK (CONT'D)  
How much do you bench?

Shane winces and pulls away.

SHANE  
I dunno.

One by one, the other Girls move in - circling him.

SCIENCE NERD  
You take biology, don't you?

SHANE  
Yeah.

SCIENCE NERD  
What was your last test result?

SHANE  
Um... Thirty percent?

Science Nerd SCOFFS.

REBEL  
Got an older brother?

SHANE  
No.

REBEL  
So who's gonna buy us cigarettes?

SHANE  
I don't smoke.

VIRGIN MARY  
What about sex before marriage?

SHANE

Uh --

JOCK

What sports do you play?

SHANE

I --

REBEL

Ever been arrested?

VIRGIN MARY

How often do you attend church?

GOTH

What about the church of Satan?

Thankfully, Gwen steps in - motioning the Girls back.

GWEN

Okay, okay. You've had your chance to inspect the merchandise. Now, who wants this stunningly...

She turns to study Shane. Chooses to rephrase.

GWEN (CONT'D)

... Unique gentleman to escort them to the formal?

Silence. The Girls look at each other. No one's biting.

GWEN (CONT'D)

He'll buy you a corsage.

(beat)

Sign up now and I'll throw in a slow dance or two!

Another beat. Gwen sighs and waves them towards the door.

GWEN (CONT'D)

Thanks anyway, girls.

They troop out, leaving Shane and Gwen alone. Shane, terribly embarrassed, is angled away from her.

GWEN (CONT'D)

Cheer up. I think one of them's a lesbian, anyway.

Shane turns on her, angry.

SHANE

What the hell, Gwen?! How could you just -- No, don't tell me.

(MORE)

SHANE (CONT'D)

You're just trying to help,  
right?

(beat; glares)

Well, I don't want your help.

He exits, kicking the waste bin (and painfully stubbing his toe) on the way out.

INT. MORGAN RESIDENCE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Vi listens to an ipod, HUMMING softly, as she cuts around part of a dress pattern.

She stretches across the dining table, drags a sewing kit towards her and rummages through it.

Peter comes to stand in the doorway. Noticing the movement, Vi looks up. She smiles and removes the earbuds.

VI

Hi.

PETER

Hi.

(re: pattern)

Having fun?

VI

(surprised)

Actually, yeah.

(beat)

I'm making a dress for the formal.

Peter looks like he wants to say more but, instead, starts to step away from the doorway. Then, he swings back.

PETER

Do you remember your birthday party?

VI

(smiles)

You'll have to narrow it down. There's been a few over the years.

PETER

This year. At Shane's cousin's music shop?

VI

Oh, yeah. Sure. What about it?

PETER

You introduced me and your mother to a friend of yours.

Vi sits up straighter, leaning back from the table.

VI

Yeah...

PETER

He works for the city or something, doesn't he?

VI

Um... Maybe. Andrew's kind of --

PETER

Ah, yes, Andrew. Andrew Friar?

VI

How'd you know his --

PETER

You must have mentioned it.

Peter gives her a quick smile and turns for the door. But Vi's not ready to let him leave just yet.

VI

What's this about?

(Peter turns back)

Why are you suddenly so interested in Andrew?

PETER

No reason.

Vi raises her eyebrows. That answer isn't gonna cut it.

PETER (CONT'D)

Don't you think he's a bit old for you?

VI

(laughs)

It's not like we're dating.

(beat)

We're friends.

PETER

Why?

Vi thinks seriously for a moment.

VI

We have a lot in common.

Peter nods, giving her another smile. Vi, satisfied, gets back to her work.

ON PETER as he turns from the room, his smile fading.

INT. THE COMPANY - RECEPTION - NIGHT

ANGLED towards the closed conference room doors, we hear:

SIDNEY (O.S.)  
 (angry)  
 And don't come back until you  
 learn how to use a bloody fax  
 machine!

The door FLIES open and a harried looking EXECUTIVE TYPE scurries out.

INT. THE COMPANY - CONFERENCE ROOM - NEXT

SIDNEY sits at the head of the table.

Aside from Jenna and BENSON at the table, there's also GABRIELLE and MYRON. Everyone's stunned at his outburst.

Sidney dusts off his hands.

SIDNEY  
 I have half a mind to cut  
 surveillance from the budget  
 entirely.

BENSON  
 We can't do that, Sidney.

Sidney waves a booklet of stapled papers in the air.

SIDNEY  
 He's head of the department, he  
 should know how to fax something  
 that doesn't cut off half my name  
 at the top of the page!

He tosses the booklet over his shoulder.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)  
 Next?

His eyes land on Myron who shrinks down in his seat.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)  
 You. Head of records, right?

MYRON  
 Y-y-yes sir but I, uh, I left my  
 report at home.

SIDNEY  
 (beat)  
 I thought you lived here?

MYRON

I, ah, I don't... remember.

JENNA

Myron usually just relays his report from memory. He --

SIDNEY

Yes, his memory implant device. But how can I trust what he "relays" to me? Hmm? He was somewhat of a protégé of Doc's wasn't he? How do we know he's not leaving out important status report type details?

JENNA

(indignant)

Because Myron wouldn't do that.

Sidney leans into Myron.

SIDNEY

Would you do that, Myron?

Myron's pretty much terrified by this point. Gabrielle rolls her eyes.

GABRIELLE

For God's sake, Alistair. Are you going to let him continue like this?

BENSON

Gabrielle, please. Sidney's running this meeting and --

SIDNEY

And I don't like people talking about me when I'm perfectly capable of talking about myself.

An odd beat. Even Sidney's not sure about that one.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)

Well, then, where's your status report Ms. Dautry?

GABRIELLE

I didn't write one.

Sidney's eyes light up.

SIDNEY  
Oh-ho-ho, didn't write one, eh?  
Too busy sneaking into other  
people's offices? Stealing their  
novelty mugs?

GABRIELLE  
I knew it.

SIDNEY  
Knew what?

Gabrielle stands.

GABRIELLE  
As soon as you get over your sulk  
and decide you want to run this  
branch like a real director, then  
I'll have my status report for  
you.  
(beat)  
Sir.

She turns and exits, passing GLENDA who enters.

SIDNEY  
(sighs)  
Yes, Glenda?

She holds up a post-it.

GLENDA  
Jenna, er, Ms. Cooke?

Jenna perks up.

JENNA  
Yes?

GLENDA  
You're needed in the control  
centre.

INT. THE COMPANY - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Jenna, a concerned look on her face, walks quickly. She  
moves off screen.

VOICE (O.S.)  
Psst! Hey!

A beat. Jenna steps back into frame, confused. She looks  
around. The door to the supply room is ajar.

Jenna moves closer to the door. Through the gap, we see  
Andrew. He smiles.

ANDREW

Surprise.

JENNA

Either you're the one who sent  
Glenda that memo or you just  
really like the smell of new  
erasers.

Andrew pushes open the door.

INT. THE COMPANY - SUPPLY ROOM - NEXT

Andrew takes a step back as Jenna enters. He holds out his  
arms.

ANDREW

(hopeful)

How's this for a romantic  
gesture?

Jenna looks around. Andrew's arms fall back to his sides.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

I suck. I know.

A beat. Jenna, keeping her eyes on him, reaches behind her  
and closes the door. Andrew raises his eyebrows, surprised.

JENNA

What?

ANDREW

Was just kind of expecting you to  
put your hands on your hips,  
narrow your eyes all sexily and  
tell me to stop playing around  
and get back to work.

Jenna narrows her eyes and puts her hands on her hips.

JENNA

I do not --

She realises. Blushes. Drops her hands. Andrew laughs.

JENNA (CONT'D)

Don't laugh.

Andrew zeroes in on her. Takes her hands in his.

ANDREW

Why? You're funny.

An awkward beat. Jenna looks nervous.

JENNA

Andrew, about yesterday --

ANDREW

Yeah, I should stop being such a slacker. I get it.

JENNA

No! Well... Maybe. But I just want you to know... I'm not expecting paper stars and goldfish every day.

ANDREW

(beat)

How about every second day?

Jenna smiles - a laugh just behind it. Andrew reaches up, cupping her face. Jenna squirms a little and pulls away.

JENNA

The meeting's not over. I should really...

Andrew's bottom lip quivers, giving her his best "puppy-eyes". Jenna grins. Pushes him up against the wall.

JENNA (CONT'D)

How can I argue with that?

Andrew grins back, and they start to kiss.

EXT. MORGAN RESIDENCE - NIGHT

MUSIC CUE: "Everything We Had" by The Academy Is...

PUSH IN on the upper level. Vi's bedroom window. She's inside, sitting on her window seat and looking down at something in her hands.

INT. MORGAN RESIDENCE - VI'S ROOM - NIGHT

PHOTOS of her and Erin, obviously taken during happier times. Vi flips through them, smiling sadly.

Frozen moments of their past relationship. Arms around each other after a soccer game, one handed high-angle "MySpace" shots at the lunch table, together at Vi's birthday party.

VI

(mutters; overwhelmed)

How am I supposed to get this back?

She reaches down, picks up a shoe box. "**Erin + Vi**" written on the lid, a love heart surrounding the words.

Vi puts the photos inside. She swings her legs back to the ground and a forgotten photo falls to the floor.

Vi picks it up. It's a lone shot of Erin, something she must have snapped when he didn't notice.

VI (CONT'D)  
(to "Erin")  
I'll fix us. I'll make it right  
again.

She goes back to the shoe box, pops the photo in and closes the lid.

The writing on the top has changed. Inside the heart, it now reads, "**Erin + Bianca**".

Slowly PUSH IN on Vi as she reels from this, disbelieving.

CUT TO BLACK:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. HAPPY VAMPIRE - DAY

ON PANCAKES

or what look like pancakes, shaped like bats. Maple syrup is dribbled over them and a NEW ANGLE reveals the meal belongs to Vi.

She sits across from Andrew, also about to enjoy some pancakes.

ANDREW

Hey, don't hog the syrup!

He snatches it from her. Vi nods to the condiment station across the room.

VI

There's more over there.

ANDREW

Operative words being "over" and "there".

Vi rolls her eyes.

VI

So, like I was saying, Bianca hates me. I mean, she actually said those words to my face, "I hate you". Right after she said she was still in love with my boyfriend.

(beat; thinks)

Or did she say that before?

She looks to Andrew who's staring at her, a meaningful expression on his face.

VI (CONT'D)

What?

ANDREW

You're doing that thing.

VI

What thing?

ANDREW

Where you refer to your ex as, well, not your ex. It's not healthy.

VI

(embarrassed)

He wasn't my ex back then.

(then)

Anyway, I'm trying to not confuse you.

Andrew shrugs.

ANDREW

So she hates you and... ?

VI

I don't think she's going to want my help in getting her and Erin back together.

She viciously stabs her pancake with a fork.

VI (CONT'D)

If that's even what the stupid assignment is about.

ANDREW

You know that it is.

VI

(grumbles)

I know.

ANDREW

(beat)

Okay, then you've just got to do this without her knowing about it. Let's brainstorm first steps. Ooh, can I draw a mind map?

VI

I already know the first step. I've got to go back to the beginning, find out why and how they got together in the first place. I figured I'd ask her housekeeper, from what I hear she's more of a parent to Bianca than her actual parents.

ANDREW

Okay, good, great. That's...

(beat)

So why do you need me?

Vi shrugs and pops a bit of pancake into her mouth.

VI

They stop serving breakfast at ten.

EXT. PARRY RESIDENCE - DAY

We've seen it before. It's basically a mansion.

INT. PARRY RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - DAY

Vi sits at the centre island with ESME (50), a petite woman with a friendly face. They share tea and biscuits.

ESME

(sighs)

Bianca probably won't want me talking to you. She's such a private girl.

VI

That's what I figured. But like I said, me and her? We're friends. Why else would she tell me about her feelings towards Erin?

Esme nods. Vi blows gently on her tea, cooling it.

ESME

I think it's lovely what you're trying to do for her - getting those two back together. She's been in such a bad state since that awful Violet stole Erin away from her.

Vi chokes on her tea.

ESME (CONT'D)

Are you alright, Pam?

VI

Yep. Just fine.

Esme reaches for another biscuit. Vi lets out a breath, probably glad she decided to use a fake name.

VI (CONT'D)

So, um, basically, I was wondering if you could tell me anything that would help me? About the two of them, why they started going out, you know, stuff like that?

Esme thinks.

ESME

Well, like I said, Bianca keeps to herself - at least around me.  
(MORE)

ESME (CONT'D)

I think that's partly to do with her parents, her father and step-mother, being away so often and for so long. She feels abandoned by them - cut off, I suppose.

(smiles)

But I'm always here. I live here, with Bianca. I act as her guardian while her parents are away. I... I sort of like to think of myself as her mother.

It's a sad story and Vi even looks to be at least a little affected by it.

ESME (CONT'D)

(getting back on track)

But, she's always talked to me about Erin. I think he was the one part of her life she was so happy about, it was impossible for her to keep quiet about it.

(beat)

I don't think they were in any classes together until year eight. They had music together.

VI

But they only had their six month anniversary last year. Why weren't they together for longer if they'd known each other since then?

ESME

They were young, but I think both of them knew that there was something special. It was... Bianca's quite a popular girl.

(beat; sad)

Or, she used to be.

(then)

And Erin was always popular himself. Bianca confessed to me once, before they started dating, that she didn't want people to think that was the only reason they were together. The politics.

Vi looks surprised.

ESME (CONT'D)

Eventually, they decided that it didn't matter what other people thought. From their first date, they were inseparable.

VI

Where'd they go on their first date?

ESME

That old fashioned soda shop down on King Street. She told me he bought her a lemonade spider - the drink with the icecream where it all fizzes up?

Esme laughs.

ESME (CONT'D)

She always said --

BIANCA (O.S.)

What the hell is going on?

Bianca stands in the doorway, clutching several shopping bags from expensive boutiques. She drops one handful on the floor and removes her sunglasses, narrowing her eyes at Vi.

ESME

Hello, Bianca. Your friend Pam and I were just having some tea.

BIANCA

(nods)

You were just having tea... with my friend, Pam.

(beat; to Esme)

Esme, could you give us a second?

Picking up some Bianca's agitation, Esme looks confused. She stands.

ESME

I have some laundry to do, anyway.

She exits. Bianca puts down her second bag of shopping and walks over to the table. She carefully folds up her sunglasses and puts them down next to Esme's tea cup.

VI

Bianca, I --

BIANCA

What are you doing here, Violet?

Vi blinks in surprise.

VI

Wow, how... civil. At the very least I was expecting some screaming, maybe a couple swears.

BIANCA

I'm not going to ask you again.  
What are you doing in my house  
and talking to my... to Esme?

Vi sighs. Cringes a little. She might as well come clean.

VI

I want to help get you and Erin  
back together.

A beat. Bianca's face is blank.

EXT. PARRY RESIDENCE - MOMENTS LATER

Vi, now on the front porch, jolts back as the door is  
SLAMMED in her face. A beat.

VI

Guess I'll see you at school on  
Monday, then?

EXT. MORGAN RESIDENCE - FRONT PORCH - DAY

Vi makes her way up onto the porch. She moves a hand for  
her pocket and GROANS. She's forgotten her key. She goes to  
press the doorbell --

PENNY (O.S.)

Mum's sleeping.

Startled, Vi jumps. PENNY sits on the porch swing, a large  
history text book in her lap.

PENNY (CONT'D)

Dad's doing overtime at work and  
Cam's probably off doing  
something with bunsen burners.

(sighs)

That kid is such a loser.

Vi comes to sit beside her.

VI

And you're...

(surprised)

Are you studying? On a Saturday?

(beat)

No, wait. Scratch that last part.  
You studying at all is weird  
enough.

PENNY

(shrugs)

Graduation's coming up, and then  
there's the HSC after that. 'Bout  
time I started, y'know, learning.

Beat.

VI

Mum locked you out, didn't she?

PENNY

Til I finish chapter fifteen.

She cranes her neck, looking up and down the street.

PENNY (CONT'D)

Joke's on her, though. Mr. Murray from down the street has been doing his roller-blading workout all morning.

VI

Isn't he gay?

PENNY

Doesn't mean he's not fine as hell.

A long beat. Vi sighs. Another beat. Now, Penny sighs.

PENNY (CONT'D)

You're gonna make me ask what's wrong, aren't you?

VI

I have a problem.

Penny GROANS and lurches to her feet. Tucking her text book under one arm, she starts for the front door.

VI (CONT'D)

Locked out, remember?

Penny looks back at her. Glares.

PENNY

Damn you.  
(sits back down; beat)  
What's wrong?

VI

Bianca Parry.

PENNY

Oh my God, you're crazy. That girl's great. I don't get why you two hate each other so much.

(beat)

Oh, wait. That's right. You stole her boyfriend.

VI

Yeah, like you just remembered that. Can you at least try to not be a bitch for two seconds?

Penny waits two seconds.

PENNY

You're fat. Are we done?

VI

(ignoring her)

I'm trying to get Bianca and Erin back together. I need you to convince Bianca that I'm not just planning some Carrie-esque prank on her.

(beat)

This is real.

PENNY

Wow.

(beat)

You are so much weirder than I thought you were.

VI

Penny!

PENNY

Okay, fine. I'll talk to her but only because I like Bianca more than I like you.

VI

Never thought any differently.

Penny holds back a smile, biting her lip. Vi, also fighting a smile, rolls her eyes at her. Then:

PENNY

So, if you want to get them back together, why are you struggling with Bianca. You know she can't stand you.

VI

(shrugs)

I don't know. What else am I supposed to do.

PENNY

(as if it's obvious)

You could talk to Erin.

Vi doesn't react - the thought of it freezing her right up.

Penny doesn't really notice. She spots something out in the street and perks up. She waves, a grin on her face.

PENNY (CONT'D)  
 Hi, Mr. Murray!  
 (to herself; lustful)  
God damn.

INT. WICKER RECORDS - DAY

MUSIC CUE: "Heart of Glass" by Blondie

We CIRCLE AROUND Shane as he leans against the front counter - his head in his hands. He stares blankly into space, his mind elsewhere.

ON COUNTER TOP

as a vinyl record is placed gently down onto it.

ON SCENE

a cute girl, MICHELLE (16), digs through her purse. Shane picks up the record and looks over it appreciatively.

SHANE  
 Blondie. Good choice.

MICHELLE  
 Yeah.

She points overheard, indicating the speakers.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)  
 I walked in and was sort of inspired.

SHANE  
 That's cool. Do you want the CD instead? Can't really get this onto an ipod.

MICHELLE  
 No, vinyl's fine.

Shane's surprised. He scans the record and punches something into the cash register.

SHANE  
 We don't get many, er, younger vinyl fans in here.

MICHELLE  
 That's too bad.

She leans forward, her elbows on the counter and gives Shane a flirtatious smile.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)  
I mean, you must get bored. Being  
all alone in your love of vinyl.

A beat. Shane's eyes go wide.

SHANE  
Um... Not really.

Michelle straightens up and hands Shane the money. As he gives her change:

MICHELLE  
So, do you have a girlfriend?

Shane drops the coins. They roll off the counter, onto Michelle's side.

SHANE  
Sorry!

Embarrassed, Shane rushes around the counter to collect them. Michelle drops to her knees to help him.

MICHELLE  
That's okay.

SHANE  
No, really. I'm sorry.

MICHELLE  
Well, you could make it up to  
me...

Shane stops searching for coins and locks eyes with her. He's nervous but intense - hanging on her every word.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)  
... By taking me to the formal?

The spell breaks. Shane stands, Michelle following. He levels her with narrowed eyes.

SHANE  
Where is she?

MICHELLE  
(innocent)  
Where's who?

Shane turns around, searching the rest of the store.

SHANE  
Gwen!

At a table in the CAFE AREA, Gwen lowers a newspaper from her face. Frowning, she strides over to them.

GWEN

Now, Shane, before you throw me out, I'd like you to at least consider --

SHANE

(re: Michelle)

Who is this girl? Did you pay her? You paid her to go out with me, didn't you?

GWEN

Of course not! This is Michelle, she's in year ten.

Michelle waves.

MICHELLE

Hi.

GWEN

And she really wants to go to the formal with you.

SHANE

(suspicious)

Why?

MICHELLE

Oh my God, do you know how awesome that would be? I'll be the only year ten going to a senior formal. My friends are going to be so jealous.

SHANE

(beat)

So, it really doesn't matter whether you go with me or someone else, as long as you go, right?

MICHELLE

Well, yeah.

Shane sighs and walks back around the counter. He bags the record and holds it out to her.

SHANE

You can go now.

MICHELLE

(re: record)

I don't want that.

SHANE

But you just said --

MICHELLE  
Blondie? Please.

She nods to Gwen.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)  
She just gave me money to buy  
whatever was on the stereo  
system.

She flicks her hair over her shoulder, flashes a quick  
smile at Gwen --

MICHELLE (CONT'D)  
Thanks anyway, Gwen.

-- And leaves.

There's an awkward beat. Shane holds the record out to  
Gwen.

SHANE  
Here.

GWEN  
Your cousin said I wasn't allowed  
to touch vinyl records anymore,  
remember?

SHANE  
I think it's okay if you paid for  
it.

GWEN  
I don't have a player thing.

SHANE  
(beat)  
Oh.

He sets about getting Gwen a refund.

GWEN  
(quiet)  
I'm just trying to help.

SHANE  
I know. I'm sorry for yelling at  
you before.

GWEN  
I'm sorry for not listening when  
you yelled at me before.

They share a smile - things slowly losing their tension.

SHANE

Why are you doing this, Gwen? And don't say that it's because we're friends now and friends help friends get dates.

GWEN

Well... It's just...

SHANE

Yeah?

GWEN

I already have a date. I'm going with Bernard.

SHANE

So?

GWEN

I don't want you to be upset that you were... so easy to get over.

SHANE

(beat)  
Oh. Okay.

He hands Gwen back her money.

GWEN

I hope I didn't... I'd hate it if I hurt your feelings.

Shane laughs, weakly.

SHANE

You didn't hurt my feelings, Gwen. The reason that we broke up in the first place... I'd be kind of surprised if it suddenly was really hard to let you go.

GWEN

Yeah, I guess.

He hands Gwen the record.

SHANE

Take it anyway.

GWEN

But I don't have a --

SHANE

I do. Come over to my house anytime you want to play it.

Gwen gives him a small, sincere smile.

GWEN

Thanks.

SHANE

You're welcome.

Beat.

GWEN

I'm sorry.

SHANE

I know.

Another smile from each of them, but sadder this time, and we CUT TO:

INT. GARRETON HERALDR - SAM'S OFFICE - DAY

ON PETER'S BOOK

The familiar cover - the silhouette of a young woman against a brilliant white light, spilling from open elevator doors.

SAM (O.S.)

Oh my God...

ON SCENE

Sam's behind his desk, the book in his hands. Peter's hovering on the other side of the desk, nervous.

SAM (CONT'D)

I've read this.

PETER

(beat; surprised)  
What?

SAM

Yeah! I got the advanced copy off the guy who does the reviews.

Peter's face drops, remembering.

PETER

Ugh. The reviews.

SAM

No idea why he gave it such a bad rap, though. This thing was great.

This time, Peter doesn't look surprised. He looks shocked.

SAM (CONT'D)

(laughs)

Yeah. Great. I'm telling you, critics, man, don't know a thing.

This seems to spur Peter on. He takes the book back from Sam and sits down in an empty chair across from him.

PETER

Okay, I... I'm glad you've read it because... maybe you could help me.

SAM

You're wondering if this piece of fiction you wrote isn't so fictional after all?

Peter's eyes go wide.

SAM (CONT'D)

Hey, I saw those search results on people coming back from the dead. It freaked me the hell out and I've never written a book on the subject.

PETER

(hesitant)

So, you don't think that I'm... crazy?

A beat. Sam smirks. He stands and moves to the back of the room. There's a filing cabinet - plain, grey.

Sam fishes out a chain from around his neck, under his shirt. There's a key on the end. He unlocks the filing cabinet and pulls open the top drawer.

Peter stands. Walks over to it. He looks down, scanning the contents in amazement.

ON FILES

We catch glimpses of the names, just the little tags sticking up from thick folders.

Among them are things like: "New World Order", "Moon Landing", "Illuminati", "Area 51", "Shakur, Tupac".

ON SCENE

Sam looks to Peter, who's still trying to take it all in.

SAM

If you're dealing with a  
conspiracy theory, you've come to  
the right guy.

He grins.

INT. THE COMPANY - RECEPTION - DAY

DIANA emerges from the elevator, carrying a bag of Chinese  
takeaway. She heads towards Sidney's office but, halfway  
there, pauses in front of a framed painting - checking her  
reflection in the glass.

ON HER REFLECTION

Pristine. Gorgeous. Yet she still smooths her hair and  
checks her lip-gloss, never satisfied.

Still watching the reflection, Jenna steps up behind her.

JENNA

You look fine.

ON SCENE

Diana turns, glaring sourly.

JENNA (CONT'D)

Besides, I don't think a stray  
hair or two is going to change  
the way he feels about you.

DIANA

Why, Jenna, I'm afraid I have no  
idea what you're talking about.

Jenna nods to the bag in Diana's hand.

JENNA

So all that food's just for you?  
Please tell me there's some new  
diet where you're allowed to eat  
all the takeaway you want.

DIANA

There is. It's called your diet.

She looks Jenna up and down and turns for Sidney's office.  
Jenna rolls her eyes. She quickly moves in front of Diana.

JENNA

That's a little bit high school,  
don't you think?

(beat)

Look, we're both adults.

(MORE)

JENNA (CONT'D)

And I don't want to get into a juvenile bitch contest with you because, let's face it, you'd take gold.

Diana puts a hand on her hip. Raises an eyebrow into a perfect arch.

DIANA

What do you want, Jenna?

Jenna glances past her to Sidney's closed office door.

JENNA

Sidney. We - meaning me, Benson and, well, everyone with good intentions towards this Company - need him.

DIANA

You need him?

JENNA

I'm pretty sure you've heard what we found in the Breaker offices? Blueprints of our own building, unauthorised work being done on the Power, and... There's evidence that proves Nathan Percy, one of the Breakers, killed Kou.

Diana reacts to this. It's not new information but still hurts. Still, she puts on her best nonchalant tone of voice.

DIANA

So, what do you want me to do about it?

JENNA

Talk to Sidney. Just... see if he can work through this whole sulking thing a little faster.

(beat)

We need him to fix this, Diana. Or everything's going to get much, much worse.

A beat. Diana nods, understanding.

INT. THE COMPANY - SIDNEY'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

The door opens and Diana sweeps in, swinging the takeaway bag in the air. Sidney looks up from his desk.

DIANA  
I bring sustenance and spring  
rolls!

Sidney smiles and pushes away his paperwork.

SIDNEY  
Ah. Food of the Gods.

Sidney takes the bag from Diana and starts laying food  
containers out on the desk.

Diana picks one up, along with a plastic fork, and perches  
herself on the edge of Sidney's desk.

Sidney clears his throat - struggling to keep his eyes off  
Diana's long, bare legs stretching out from under a mini  
skirt.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)  
I, er... Thank you for, ah,  
picking up lunch, Diana.

DIANA  
No problem.

She takes a bite of food.

DIANA (CONT'D)  
Ran into Jenna on the way in  
here, though.

Sidney gathers together some food of his own.

SIDNEY  
(not caring)  
Did you have a nice chat?

DIANA  
Not really.

Sidney frowns.

SIDNEY  
Oh. Well, I thought... You two  
aren't friends?

Diana lets out a laugh. She angles around to face him.

DIANA  
Us? Friends? Please! She's  
just...  
(beat)  
No... I don't want to upset you.

SIDNEY  
(interest rising)  
Diana, you could never upset me.

Diana smiles at the compliment.

DIANA  
(cheery)  
Okay, then!  
(beat)  
She was telling me about how smart she was. You know, boasting about how she and Benson and the others were able to walk right into the Breaker offices without you even noticing.

Sidney glowers. Diana sighs and shakes her head.

DIANA (CONT'D)  
I don't envy you, Sidney. It must be so hard trying to figure out who to trust around here.

Suddenly, Sidney's hand is on her knee.

SIDNEY  
Well, I know I can always trust you, Diana.

Diana blinks in surprise. Looks down at his hand.

Realising, Sidney looks apologetic and quickly pulls his hand away.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)  
I'm s-s-sorry, I didn't --

Diana leans down, one hand still in the air - a dumpling speared onto the end of her fork - and the other hand grabbing a hold of Sidney's tie.

She pulls him into a kiss. Sidney's eyes are wide for a moment before he closes them, submitting to Diana's lips on his.

INT. SODA SHOP - DAY

The place is straight out of the 1950s. Vi enters, looking around with teenage cynicism.

VI  
(to herself)  
Wow...

ERIN (O.S.)

Yeah, I always wonder when I'm going to run into Fonzie.

Vi looks around. Erin's sitting in a booth by the door, a milkshake in front of him. He gives her a wave.

Vi slides into the booth opposite him, facing the door.

VI

You come here a lot?

Erin shrugs, not answering. There's a beat.

ERIN

So...

Remembering, Vi digs around in her pocket.

VI

Oh, yeah! Here's the rest of the money for my formal ticket.

ERIN

No problem. It could've waited until Monday, though. I mean, you didn't have to arrange for us to meet here or anything.

VI

I, uh, I didn't want to leave it. You know what they say, money owed is money... Um... Actually, I'm not sure what they say.

Erin chuckles a bit. Vi takes this as a good sign and smiles.

ERIN

You want a drink? They make really good milkshakes here.

VI

Um...

Vi glances past him. Outside, through the glass shop front, Penny drags Bianca towards the door.

Bianca's nervous - adjusting her clothes. She tries to turn away but Penny pulls her back. They near the door...

VI (CONT'D)

Actually...

Penny and Bianca enter, coming to stand at Vi and Erin's table.

PENNY

Oh, hi you two! Isn't this a coincidence?

Suddenly, her hand flies to her pocket. She whips out her mobile phone.

PENNY (CONT'D)

Oop - Text from mum. Vi? We've gotta get home right away.

She steps around Bianca, grabs Vi's hand and pulls her up. Then, she grabs Bianca and shoves her down into Vi's empty seat.

PENNY (CONT'D)

But you two stay, talk, you know - whatever! Later!

Linking arms with Vi, she strides back to the door. Vi pulls away, pausing momentarily. She glares at Penny.

VI

(low; annoyed)

I thought I told you to act natural!

Over with Erin and Bianca, Erin shakes his head. He starts to stand.

ERIN

This is ridiculous.

BIANCA

What do you mean? Why are you leaving?

ERIN

Because you obviously set this up, Bianca. I'm not an idiot.

BIANCA

Well, you must be because I didn't set anything up.

He motions to Vi.

ERIN

Come on, getting Vi to meet me here? I didn't forget what this place means, Bianca.

(beat)

But I guess you did.

Starting for the door, Vi jumps in front of him.

VI  
Erin, wait!

ERIN  
And you... I have no idea what  
your game is, Vi, but I don't  
want any part of it.

He pushes past her and exits. Vi sighs. She looks sadly at Bianca, still sitting at the booth, looking numb.

Vi approaches.

VI  
Bianca, I...

Bianca looks to her, eyes flashing with anger. She stands.

BIANCA  
This is all your fault.

VI  
What? How --

BIANCA  
You just like sticking your nose  
in where it doesn't belong. Is  
this fun for you? Watching people  
get hurt.

VI  
I'm just trying to help.

Bianca holds back tears, too angry to cry.

BIANCA  
This is what I think of your  
"help".

Bianca grabs Erin's milkshake --

-- And tips it over Vi's head!

Penny GASPS in shock, as do many of the other CUSTOMERS.

Bianca SLAMS the glass down, throws Vi a triumphant smirk and storms out of the store.

Vi turns, watching after her, as the ice cold liquid runs through her hair, down her face and neck...

CUT TO BLACK:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. EDITH'S HOUSE - DAY

ON SEWING MACHINE

as someone feeds the material into it. It's going steady, then something goes wrong and the material starts bunching up, caught in the needle.

ON SCENE

VI

Damn it!

She takes her foot off the peddle. Her attempts to free the material are in vain.

The other women look up from their own projects.

CARIS

What's wrong?

VI

It's broken.

Edith CLUCKS her tongue and comes over to Vi. With a few quick movements, she removes the material. She starts to unpick the bad stitches, allowed Vi to see what she's doing.

EDITH

Nothing is every broken, my dear.

She hands Vi the material and gives her a comforting smile. Then, Edith goes back to her work and Vi continues to unpick the stitches.

HESTIA

(re: Vi)

She's quiet again. I thought we'd managed to get her to stop that.

CARIS

Maybe something's wrong?

HESTIA

If something were wrong, she'd tell us.

CARIS

Well, maybe she will. Maybe she's just waiting for a lull in the conversation.

A long beat. Hestia, Caris and Edith all look to Vi.

VI  
Everything's fine.

Hestia looks to Edith.

HESTIA  
So, why is she so quiet?

Caris rolls her eyes. She looks to Vi. Smiles.

CARIS  
That formal's this week, isn't it?

VI  
(nods)  
Friday.

She looks down at what should be an almost finished formal dress but is, instead, still mostly just a big bit of material. She heaves a sigh.

VI (CONT'D)  
Lucky me.

EDITH  
Well, I'm sure you'll still have fun - even if you're not going to wear a dress you made.

VI  
Doubt it.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)  
Ugh. Teenagers.

Vi looks around - as do the other women. Pearl is awake. She adjust her glasses, looking to Vi.

PEARL  
Don't sulk. Nobody likes a sulker. You've got a problem, girl. Let it out.

Vi blinks in surprise.

EDITH  
Er... Welcome back, Pearl.

Then, Edith looks to Vi. Nods her head.

VI  
Um... Okay. I've kind of been trying to fix this relationship between two people who used to have a relationship but then it got kind of... messed up.  
(MORE)

VI (CONT'D)

I guess I messed it up but that's not the point. Point is, I think I've just made things worse.

PEARL

Because you meddled.

VI

I didn't medd --

PEARL

You're a meddler. You tried to meddle with us, asking us about our "problems" and so on.

VI

That's different.

CARIS

(to Pearl)

And we all thought you were asleep!

PEARL

Meddling's fine. As long as you do it quietly and nobody knows about it.

EDITH

Pearl, I don't think that's such good advice.

CARIS

Maybe nobody should be meddling with anybody.

HESTIA

Just leave them alone, these two people. Let them work it out on their own.

PEARL

Or...

(dramatic pause; then)

You could meddle.

Vi takes this all in. She nods, an idea forming. Then, she smiles.

VI

Thanks, guys. Er, ladies.

She stands.

VI (CONT'D)

Um, I hate to do this but I've got some things I've got to take care of.

EDITH

Of course.

(beat)

And I take it you won't be back?

VI

(beat)

Probably not.

She looks sadly back at her unfinished dress.

VI (CONT'D)

I was never really cut out for  
this, anyway.

CARIS

That's what we figured.

She nods to Edith who stands and moves to a nearby closet.  
As she reaches in:

HESTIA

Teenagers never finish what they  
start. Trust me, when my daughter  
was a teenager, she had a new  
boyfriend every week - did she  
marry any of them? No.

EDITH

Vi, this is for you.

And she pulls out a stunning handmade formal dress. A slow,  
disbelieving smile creeps over Vi's face.

INT. PARRY RESIDENCE - FOYER - DUSK

Through the front window, we see a LIMO pull up at the end  
of the driveway.

Esme turns from the window, an excited sparkle in her eye.  
She clutches a digital camera.

ESME

Bianca! Nikolai's here!

ON BIANCA

as she emerges from a door at the top of the staircase. She  
looks beautiful in a black dress, accented with diamonds.  
Her hair is swept up into a loose bun, a few tendrils  
curling gracefully to her neck.

FLASH! FLASH! FLASH!

Bianca laughs, covering her eyes, as she starts down the  
stairs.

BIANCA  
Esme! Wait til I get downstairs  
or I might trip and die.

Esme lowers the camera.

ESME  
Don't joke about that.

Bianca reaches the foyer floor. She glances out the window.

BIANCA  
Is he coming to the door?

Outside, the limo remains stationary. No one emerges.

INT. LIMO - MOMENTS LATER

The door opens and Bianca climbs in. She's adjusting her dress in her seat, her eyes down.

BIANCA  
(annoyed)  
Okay, so give me one good reason  
why you couldn't be a gentleman  
and meet me at the door?

Bianca looks up. Erin - the only other occupant of the car - stares at her, wide eyed, from his seat opposite the door.

ERIN  
Um... Because I'm not your date?

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The limo drives past us, moving smoothly up the quiet street.

INT. LIMO - NIGHT

Bianca and Erin are silent, neither sure of what to say.

BIANCA  
(beat)  
I didn't plan this.

ERIN  
Okay.

BIANCA  
(insists)  
Really.

ERIN  
I believe you.

BIANCA  
(beat; suspicious)  
Why?

Erin shrugs.

ERIN  
Because it feels like Vi.

Bianca doesn't like the sound of that. Erin quickly clarifies.

ERIN (CONT'D)  
I just mean, it doesn't feel like something you would do. You're into the traditional high school events, you know? Spoiling the classic "limo ride to the prom" scenario by tricking your ex into some alone time doesn't really click.

Bianca smiles.

BIANCA  
Thanks. I think.

ERIN  
Pretty good plan, though. This limo just showed up at my house, I assumed it was the one I'd ordered for me and...  
(beat)  
Actually, I'm not going with anyone. I was just sharing the ride with some guys from the team and their dates.  
(chuckles)  
I'm kind of a loser tonight.

BIANCA  
Erin, you haven't been a loser for one second since I met you.  
(beat)  
Except for when you started liking someone else while we were still together.

Erin grimaces, looking away briefly.

BIANCA (CONT'D)  
You look nice, by the way.

ERIN  
So do you.

BIANCA  
You know I...

She shakes her head.

BIANCA (CONT'D)  
Never mind.

ERIN  
(smiles)  
No, what? Say it.

BIANCA  
I was just... When I saw you,  
after the initial shock, I kind  
of had this flashback to --

ERIN  
-- Our first date?

BIANCA  
Yeah! And that lemonade spider.

Erin, grinning at the memory, slides along his seat -  
moving closer to Bianca, who faces the front of the limo.

ERIN  
But just before it got to the  
table, something really funny  
happened. What was it?

BIANCA  
(shakes her head)  
No idea.

ERIN  
And we were still laughing so  
hard, the whole thing fizzed over  
the top of the glass and went all  
over the table.

BIANCA  
(nostalgic)  
And you bought me another one.

ERIN  
(beat)  
Yeah...

Momentarily heartened by the story they've just shared,  
Bianca takes a deep breath.

BIANCA  
I'm pretty sure this isn't a  
secret anymore but... I always  
hoped we'd get back together.  
(beat; nervous)  
(MORE)

BIANCA (CONT'D)  
 Maybe now, after tonight, we  
 could --

ERIN  
 (trying to stop her)  
 Bianca.

BIANCA  
 (growing desperate)  
 I'm not over you.

A long beat. Erin works up the courage to look her in the eye.

ERIN  
 (soft; apologetic)  
 I'm... over you.

A tiny, sharp intake of breath as Bianca goes to speak again. She studies Erin's face. There's nothing she can say.

She sinks back into her seat, her heart breaking.

EXT. FUNCTION CENTRE - NIGHT

Glamorously dressed STUDENTS flock towards the entrance. Limousines and other stylish cars are lined up along the curved drive, waiting to reach the main doors.

Across the drive, facing the entrance, is Vi. Wearing casual clothes and holding a dress bag in one arm, she sits on a low marble wall - watching and waiting.

Shane approaches her. He's dressed in a tux and, all cleaned up, he's pretty damn good looking. Vi notices.

She touches his sleeve, faux winces as if having cut herself and pulls her hand back.

VI  
 Looking sharp tonight, Evans.

He snaps out his tuxedo jacket, smirks, and sits down beside her.

SHANE  
 And don't I know it.

Vi laughs. Shane bumps her shoulder with his own.

SHANE (CONT'D)  
 Why aren't you all fancy yet?

VI  
 Want to make sure my assignment's  
 all done, I guess. Before I get  
 into par-tay mode.

SHANE

Do you know how the limo switch went?

VI

It should be arriving soon.

SHANE

Y'know, I'm pretty sure they did this on "One Tree Hill". Might've been "The OC". Either way, it didn't end well.

VI

Lucky for me, I'm grounded most of the time so TV isn't a big thing with me anymore.

Shane sighs, not getting through to her.

SHANE

I'm just trying to say that maybe locking two people in a room and forcing them to fall in love doesn't work in real life.

VI

I didn't lock them in a room.

SHANE

Vi, you know what I mean.

(beat)

I don't think you can make something like this happen.

(thinks)

Maybe it's not about them falling in love. Maybe they could just be friends. Maybe any connection will do. You know, like how we are, or how I am with Gwen or... Hannah.

Vi looks out to the line of cars and spots the limo. It's reaching the entrance. She stands, glum.

VI

Let's start a tally. "Times When Shane Was Right".

She looks back to the limo and starts walking towards it.

VI (CONT'D)

I can look at it whenever I want to feel like a moron.

Shane grins, saluting her.

SHANE  
Glad I could help!

ON VI

as she hurries towards the limo. The DRIVER climbs out and starts for the back door. Vi waves at him.

VI  
Keep going! Drive around the  
block!

INT. LIMO - MOMENTS LATER

Bianca's gathered her purse and is waiting patiently by the door. She and Erin avoid eye contact.

The back door opens, Bianca starts to slide towards it, when Vi leaps inside. She SLAMS the door behind her.

Then, the limo starts moving again!

ERIN  
Vi!

BIANCA  
Get out!

Vi catching her breath, adjusts herself next to Bianca - folding down her dress bag awkwardly.

VI  
Just give me a sec.

BIANCA  
To what?

VI  
To explain.

A beat. She looks to both of them.

VI (CONT'D)  
I did this all wrong. I was  
trying to help and I... I screwed  
it up. I'm sorry.

Erin nods, accepting her apology.

VI (CONT'D)  
(to Erin)  
I thought I could make everything  
go back to the way it was, before  
you and I...

She takes a deep and shaky breath.

VI (CONT'D)

But that's impossible. Sometimes you can't fix something. You have to just... start over.

BIANCA

What's your point, Morgan?

VI

I want you guys to be friends.

Bianca and Erin share an uncomfortable glance. Vi doesn't seem to notice this as she stares only at Erin.

VI (CONT'D)

Like how, one day, I hope you and I can be friends.

(beat; to both)

I mean, it's not like it'll happen right now or overnight or anything but you have to be, I don't know, open to it.

(beat)

Just be open to the connection.

The car slows to a stop. Outside the tinted window, we see the function centre again. They sit in silence as the Driver comes around again. Opens the door.

DRIVER

You want me to go around again?

Vi looks between Bianca and Erin. Then, to the Driver:

VI

No, I think we're good.

EXT. FUNCTION CENTRE - NEXT

Vi climbs out and steps off to the side as the Driver helps out Bianca, looking a little shaken. Erin follows. The Driver closes the door behind them.

Standing quietly for a moment, Erin holds out his arm to Bianca.

ERIN

Friends?

Bianca, on the verge of tears now, puts on a brave smile. She puts her arm through his and, without looking back at Vi, they walk inside together.

Vi watches after them. She sighs. Shane steps up beside her.

SHANE  
You coming in?

VI  
Yeah. Just gonna get changed.

Like Bianca, she attempts a smile.

VI (CONT'D)  
I'll see you in there.

Shane nods and joins the parade of Students, heading into the building.

INT. FUNCTION CENTRE - LOBBY - NIGHT

Vi walks swiftly for the women's restroom, starting to unzip the dress bag. At the door, she pauses.

Looking across the room, her eyes find an elevator. Without hesitation, she turns for it.

INT. MORGAN RESIDENCE - CAM'S ROOM - NIGHT

Cam's asleep. Something wakes him. A SHUFFLING noise. He sits up, blinking blearily into the darkness.

CAM  
Dad?

Peter crouches by Cam's closet, rummaging around inside. His hands are on a cardboard box. He stands.

PETER  
Go back to sleep, kiddo.

Cam does. Peter creeps for the open door. In the light from the hallway, he looks down at the box. Lifts the lid. We see the remnants of Cam's investigation - photos, newspaper articles and notes on Vi.

Peter's face is blank as he slips out of the room and closes the door behind him.

INT. FUNCTION CENTRE - BALLROOM - NIGHT

It's decorated much like Vi's daydream.

We find Shane sitting alone at a table, bored. He fiddles with a napkin as, behind him, the dance floor is packed with couples slow-dancing.

He looks around the room, perhaps searching for Vi, but his eyes stop on --

-- Hannah. Standing in the doorway, wearing the dress made for Vi.

A far cry from her usual punk-ish attire, she looks absolutely breathtaking. She spots Shane and, with a nervous smile, approaches.

Shane gets to his feet. He's stunned.

HANNAH  
(re: dress)  
You like it? Vi let me borrow it.

SHANE  
(confused)  
Vi?

HANNAH  
Yeah. She stopped by my apartment, told me that you didn't have a date.

Shane's shoulders slump.

SHANE  
Oh. This is...  
(mumbled)  
... just a friend thing.

Hannah shakes her head. Takes his hand.

HANNAH  
I'm sick of being friends.

Shane reacts - surprised, smiling. They move out onto the dance floor...

MUSIC CUE: "The Rainbow Connection" by Jason Mraz

... And we PUSH IN on them as Shane places his hand on her waist, Hannah's hand on his shoulder. They can't take their eyes off each other.

Then, we PULL BACK, until we see that they are suddenly alone in the room. Just the two of them.

They start to dance.

FADE OUT.

END OF EPISODE