

GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME

written by

Teddy McCormick

teddyhwmccormick@gmail.com  
(478) 238-3339

BLACK SCREEN

A woman's voice, bubbly.

ANNE (V.O.)  
Wait, tonight? You're going out  
again tonight?

**INT. OFFICE KITCHEN - DAY**

A small kitchen - fridge, counter, sink - decorated sparsely with office photos and pictures of flowers. A small table with two chairs sits in the corner.

VANESSA WHITTAKER (28, short hair, dressed cheap but well) pours herself some coffee.

VANESSA  
Yeah. Why?

She knows very well why.

ANNE (38, business casual, heavy on the casual) pulls some tupperware out of the fridge, gives an oddly happy glare to Vanessa.

ANNE  
Eight months. Eight months I have  
been trying to set this up with you  
two.

Vanessa doesn't look at her, sips some coffee.

Anne sits at the table, starts picking at her lunch.

ANNE  
It went well, then?

Vanessa relents, turns around and leans against the counter.

VANESSA  
Yeah. It went well.

ANNE  
...And?

VANESSA  
I don't know! He asked to see me  
again tonight, and I said yes.

ANNE  
What did you do? Where did you go?

VANESSA  
Dinner, and then, we just, walked  
around.

Vanessa turns to leave.

VANESSA

I have work to do. His mom says hi.

ANNE

You met Carol?

VANESSA

She happened to be there. I don't think it was planned.

Brief moment of horror. Vanessa looks at Anne.

VANESSA

Oh god, was it planned?

Anne shakes her head.

ANNE

No, if you knew them, you'd believe it.

Anne kicks out the other chair for Vanessa.

Vanessa pushes the chair back in.

ANNE

Where's he taking you tonight?

VANESSA

We didn't make any plans. Just, meeting after work.

ANNE

I hope you have a great time and I want to be one of your bridesmaids.

Vanessa gives her a look.

VANESSA

It's not like that, don't take it too far.

Anne puts her hands into a heart shape, holds them over her shoulder.

Vanessa rolls her eyes.

Vanessa's phone DINGS with a text message.

ANNE

If that's him, tell him I say hi.

VANESSA

It's not him!

But it is him. His name in the phone is "CHRIS (ANNE'S FRIEND)."

Vanessa leaves the kitchen.

**INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

A small office; no cubicles, just desks, and a skateboard rack on the wall because they're "fun!"

Vanessa reads the text message: "Do you want something classy or casual?"

Vanessa considers.

Responds: "Casual."

Chris: "Casual like dinner or casual like bowling?"

Vanessa: "I hate bowling."

Chris: "Batting cages? Roller skating? Gym?"

Vanessa: "You want to take me on a date to the gym??"

Chris responds with a gif of a guy in 80s spandex giving a thumbs up.

Vanessa laughs.

ANNE (O.S.)  
(knowing)  
Hmnnnnnn!

VANESSA  
Shut up!

**EXT. GYM - EVENING**

Vanessa stands out front of a gym, wearing a tank top and yoga pants. Big smile on her face even as she shakes her head.

VANESSA  
This is dumb. Why am I doing this?  
This is so dumb.

CHRIS (30, clean-cut) jogs around the corner in a loose tee and exercise shorts.

CHRIS  
Hey!

She sees him, waves. He jogs over.

VANESSA  
(playful)  
This is already the dumbest date  
I've ever been on.

CHRIS  
What, you don't want to work out  
with me?

VANESSA  
As a date.

CHRIS  
Yeah! It'll be fun!

Vanessa rolls her eyes and laughs.

CHRIS  
Alright, it's cool, no worries.  
There's a movie theater like three  
blocks that way, you want to see  
what's playing?

Vanessa laughs, grabs his hand and drags him inside the  
gym.

**INT. BOBA PLACE - NIGHT**

Vanessa and Chris drink boba tea across from each other  
after a long workout.

VANESSA  
I'll say this: I don't think I'd  
ever suggest it myself, but I would  
accept a gym date if it was  
suggested to me.

CHRIS  
Fair enough. What do you want to do  
next?

VANESSA  
Next?

Chris is disappointed, but gets it.

CHRIS  
Oh, sorry. No, duh, we can be done.  
You've probably got things to do.

VANESSA  
No, I... do you not have anything  
else to do?

CHRIS  
Yeah. But I'd rather keep doing  
this.

Vanessa smiles, doesn't know how to respond.

**EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT**

They walk down the street together; Vanessa wears a light sweater now.

They walk past a massive crater in the center of the street, construction crews cleaning it up. Nobody reacts; must be normal.

VANESSA  
Favorite... type of pet?

CHRIS  
Dogs.

VANESSA  
You're such a dog person. I don't know why I asked.

CHRIS  
You can just tell from looking at me?

VANESSA  
You act like a golden retriever. You're so excited about everything.

CHRIS  
(honest)  
Nah, not really. That's just how I've been acting around you.

VANESSA  
Ooh, that's a good line.

CHRIS  
What? ...Oh, that is a good line. I should remember that one.

Vanessa laughs.

Vanessa's phone RINGS.

VANESSA  
Oh god, sorry, I should've silenced it-

She fumbles with it, makes it stop.

VANESSA  
I told Anne I'd call her after the date.

CHRIS  
You could've answered, I don't mind.

VANESSA

It's not after the date yet.

Vanessa takes Chris's hand, and it's like they've been holding hands all their lives.

**INT. ARCADE - NIGHT**

They play Dance Dance Revolution. Chris is failing miserably on the easiest difficulty, while Vanessa blows through a screen full of arrows.

CHRIS

How long have you been playing this?!

VANESSA

It's not as hard as it looks.

CHRIS

I don't believe you!

The song ends. CONTINUE? flashes on the screen.

CHRIS

Oh please no. Anything but this.

VANESSA

This and Guitar Hero are the only arcade games I play.

Chris gets excited.

CHRIS

I can play some Guitar Hero.

**EXT. TRENDY ICE CREAM PLACE**

Chris and Vanessa exit past a line that wraps halfway down the block. They each have a massive ice cream cone.

CHRIS

It's probably my favorite book of all time.

VANESSA

It's so boring!

Chris shakes his head.

CHRIS

Mm-mm. Nope. We can't be friends.

They sit at a bench.

VANESSA

I thought he was done with me, but Charles Dickens is back to ruin my life yet again!

Chris takes a bite of his ice cream. Enjoys it immensely.

VANESSA

(off his enjoyment)  
I told you.

CHRIS

I would never have paid eight dollars for an ice cream cone, but this is...

He takes a bigger bite, talks with his mouth full.

CHRIS

This is amazing.

VANESSA

How do you bite your ice cream like that?

CHRIS

What, like this?

He takes another bite.

VANESSA

I can't do that. I can't open my mouth wide enough.

She tries to take a bite, gets ice cream on her face.

Chris laughs at her.

The ice cream place cuts off the line; closing time.

VANESSA

Are they closing? Is it really midnight?

Chris checks his phone.

CHRIS

A little after.

VANESSA

Oh god, I completely lost track of time.

CHRIS

Do you need to go?

Vanessa debates with herself.



VANESSA

I mean, it's Friday, I don't need  
to get up in the morning. But...

CHRIS

Let's do something else.

Vanessa laughs.

**INT. KARAOKE PARLOR - NIGHT**

A private room. Vanessa sings *Bye Bye Bye* by NSYNC.  
She's doing the dance and everything, it's awesome.

Chris laughs and laughs.

CUT TO:

Chris absolutely nails *I Wanna Dance with Somebody* by  
Whitney Houston. Vanessa is blown away.

The song ends and Vanessa cheers and claps.

VANESSA

That was amazing! I wish I could  
sing like that!

CHRIS

Yeah, but you did all the moves for  
your song! I couldn't dance if my  
life depended on it. I'm all-

He starts dancing like an middle-aged aunt at a wedding.

Vanessa HOWLS with laughter.

**EXT. VANESSA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

The sky is juuust barely starting to brighten. It's almost  
morning.

The building is the nicest one on a crummy block.

Chris and Vanessa walk up. They're exhausted, but somehow  
not tired at all.

VANESSA

This is me.

CHRIS

Are you sure? Should we walk around  
the block another time?

Vanessa hesitates.

VANESSA

It doesn't have to be over.

Chris doesn't get it.

VANESSA  
You could come in? If you want.

Chris gets it, is immediately awkward.

CHRIS  
Oh, no, I don't...

VANESSA  
No, sorry, I didn't-

CHRIS  
It's fine, I just-

VANESSA  
No no, I shouldn't have...

They compose themselves.

CHRIS  
I don't need... that.

VANESSA  
Do you... want it?

CHRIS  
Yes. Kind of. Not... yes.

VANESSA  
Not yes?

CHRIS  
I haven't... I haven't.

**Oh.**

VANESSA  
Oh. That's okay, I don't... Are you,  
um... on purpose?

CHRIS  
Kind of. I don't know. Would that be  
a problem?

VANESSA  
No! But, I... have. Is that a  
problem?

CHRIS  
No! I know I'm weird.

VANESSA  
It's not weird.

CHRIS  
It's kind of weird.

VANESSA  
It's kind of weird.

They laugh at themselves.

VANESSA  
Can we... kiss?

CHRIS  
I would really like that.

Suddenly they're kissing, long and hard.

Then it's over, and they're both smiling like idiots.

CHRIS  
I had a really great time.

VANESSA  
Me too.

CHRIS  
Are you busy tomorrow night?

Vanessa looks at the sun just starting to peek up.

VANESSA  
You mean, tonight?

Chris laughs.

VANESSA  
I... am, actually. And tomorrow. But  
I'm free Monday?

CHRIS  
Okay. Monday. It's a date.

VANESSA  
It's a date.

She squeezes his hands, walks inside.

**INT. VANESSA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS**

It's nice enough. A little barren, and it doesn't look like she ever dusts. Her only furniture is a sofa and a coffee table.

Vanessa walks in, closes the door behind her.

Beat.

She laughs uncontrollably. She's deliriously happy. And deliriously sleep-deprived.

**INT. VANESSA'S BEDROOM - EVENING**

Even more barren than the living room. Vanessa is asleep on a mattress on the floor; there's no other furniture or decorations.

Vanessa shifts awake. Cocks her head like she can hear something.

VANESSA

Oh, shit.

She fumbles for her phone. Looks at it.

VANESSA

Oh, shi-

**EXT. VANESSA'S APARTMENT - EVENING**

Vanessa rushes out the door wearing a trenchcoat and sweatpants and carrying two energy drinks.

She fumbles with the lock.

Runs off down the street.

**EXT. ALLEYWAY - EVENING**

Vanessa strolls casually down the alley, finishes her second energy drink and crumples the can.

She throws her can away in a dumpster, takes the opportunity to look behind her; nobody's around. Nobody can see her.

She drops her trenchcoat and sweatpants, revealing a SUPERHERO OUTFIT - a white jumpsuit with leather boots and symbol of a bell on her shoulder. She pulls on a mask and becomes SONORA.

She shoves the coat and pants behind the dumpster, then steps back and kneels.

Her whole body vibrates with energy, which builds to a BRIGHT HUM as she leaps into the air.

**EXT. SKYSCRAPER ROOFTOP - EVENING**

MOB RULE (30s, superhero - rugged punk look, blank mask) sits on the rooftop, watches the sun set over the city. He's super bored.

Sonora lands on the roof behind Mob Rule.

MOB RULE

She lives!

He stands up.

SONORA

Everyone else is already in position?

MOB RULE

Volur's got eyes on the truck, Jotun's standing by. The Devourer's got most of the big heroes tied up downtown.

SONORA

If we're lucky, they'll catch him and I'll have one less problem to worry about. No signs of Jupiter?

Mob Rule sighs.

MOB RULE

Not a blip.

SONORA

Good.

MOB RULE

Is it? I'd be happier if I knew he was in the area.

SONORA

Jupiter's smart, but he isn't psychic. We're gonna get him.

MOB RULE

You know what's gonna happen if we don't.

SONORA

There's nothing to worry about. If I don't get him, it's because I died trying, and then who cares what Volur thinks?

Mob Rule grunts.

MOB RULE

Truck's rounding the-

And Sonora's already leapt from the rooftop.

A HIGH-PITCHED WHINE grows and fades as she circles around to buzz the rooftop, and then she's gone.

Mob Rule sighs. POPS out of existence.

**INT./EXT. ARMORED TRUCK - NIGHT**

Two armed guards man the truck as it drives through surface streets. The PASSENGER (24) is nervous, but the DRIVER (39) couldn't be more relaxed.

PASSENGER

But they said the Devourer is out tonight, and-

DRIVER

And nothing. He's on the other side of the city. Hearing he's there and not here makes me feel safer.

The passenger nods, tries to calm down.

A keen eye will notice a woman dressed in heavy furs and leathers leaning against a wall.

The driver has a keen eye.

DRIVER

(under his breath)  
Oh, shit.

PASSENGER

What? What's wrong?

DRIVER

Get on the radio, tell-

A huge armored fist SMASHES through the passenger side door and grabs the passenger, yanks him outside.

**EXT. CITY STREETS - CONTINUOUS**

JOTUN (50s, bear-themed medieval armor) clings to the side of the truck, and throws the passenger onto the sidewalk. He ROARS with laughter.

The truck FLOORS IT and tries to speed off, when Volur (50s, the woman in furs and leathers) breaks a small runed stone, and the truck SMASHES into an invisible wall.

SONORA drops from the sky behind the truck; she SCREAMS at the back of it, and blows the doors open with a sonic shockwave.

Volur and Jotun walk up on either side of her, looking at the interior of the truck - full of gold bars.

Sonora looks with distaste at Jotun's right hand - carrying the terrified driver.

SONORA

Put him down.

Jotun snarls at her.

VOLUR  
He does not take orders from you.

SONORA  
That's not what we're here for.

JOTUN  
It's not what you're here for.

A set of bolas whip out at Jotun; he drops the driver to catch them in a meaty fist.

The trio turns to face:

JUPITER, champion of justice. He wears a thick armor-plated suit; lightning bolts arc down both arms, leading to oversized gauntlets with spinning electrical turbines.

JUPITER  
You should listen to her.

He clenches his fists, and electricity arcs around them.

Sonora adopts a relaxed pose, brushes some nonexistent dirt from her shoulder.

SONORA  
You guys handle the gold, I've got Thunderpants.

Jotun takes a step towards Sonora, but Volur lays a hand on his back and he stops.

VOLUR  
(to Sonora)  
I hope you do.

She hands a bag to Jotun, and they both start loading the gold into bags. (Volur does so by magically lifting the gold; no manual labor for her.)

SONORA  
I'll be weighing the sacks later, you know.

Sonora moves towards Jupiter. Jupiter squares off against her.

JUPITER  
I don't want to hurt you. If you'll just come with me, I'm sure-

Sonora GROANS.

SONORA

Every single time with you. What will it take to get you to just fight me without the spiel?

Jupiter shakes his head.

JUPITER

I know there's good in you, Sonora. If you'd only-

SONORA

Ohmigod I'm so BORED!!

She SCREAMS the word BORED in a massive sonic blast; Jupiter dives out of the way, tucks into a roll, and comes out of it throwing another set of bolas at her.

The bolas catch Sonora's wrist, give her a light shock before she can rip them off.

By the time she does, Jupiter is in her face. He throws punches with the speed and precision of a trained boxer, and even with her sonic shields it's all Sonora can do to keep from getting hit.

She barely manages to look back at Jotun and Volur, now with most of the gold bagged.

SONORA

Go!

Jupiter tries to leap past her, but she blasts him with sonic energy, hurling him up into the air and onto:

**EXT. A NEARBY ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS**

Jupiter lands in a roll and spins around to throw a heavy haymaker at Sonora as she lands behind him. Sonora blocks with a wave of sonic energy pressing against his fist; Jupiter throws a punch with his other hand, which Sonora catches in another sonic field.

Sonora strains; this is taking a lot out of her.

Jupiter presses forward; he manages to take a step, forces Sonora to take a step backwards.

SONORA

This is a lot of power, Jupiter. You'd take my head clean off if I let you.

JUPITER

What can I say? I have faith in you.



His gauntlets SURGE WITH ENERGY, and Sonora is forced to throw herself backwards; she hurtles back, slams into the ground across the street, barely manages to slow herself with another sonic shield.

**EXT. CITY STREETS - CONTINUOUS**

Jupiter doesn't take a break; he's already falling at her, full speed.

Sonora, now legitimately scared, takes off into the air.

Jupiter hits the ground in a crouch, then leaps into the air himself with a lightning-powered jump, easily reaching Sonora as she's 30 feet high.

Sonora SCREAMS a sonic wave at him; he manages to block with his electric gauntlets, but the force still sends him crashing down to the ground.

He lies on the ground, unmoving.

Sonora hovers in the air, stares at him, holds her breath.

Jupiter shifts, GROANS in pain.

Sonora relaxes, just a little bit. Lands next to him.

SONORA

Really? Just like that?

Jupiter flexes an electro-gauntlet; Sonora pins his wrist with her foot.

SONORA

We had a whole plan. Mob Rule's got a bunch of doubles a few blocks south of here. I was gonna lure you in, Volur was gonna-

JUPITER

Don't count me out just yet.

His gauntlets charge with energy...

Sonora blasts both gauntlets with sonic beams; the gauntlets glow with power, press against the energy...

Then they break.

JUPITER

Oh, that's bad.

Sonora leans with a knee on Jupiter's neck, waggles her fingers excitedly.

SONORA  
Let's take a peek.

JUPITER  
I'd really rather you didn't-

She takes off Jupiter's mask...

It's CHRIS!

She stumbles backwards, falls on her ass.

SONORA  
WHAT. No, no no no. Why are you...

Chris leaps to his feet, tackles Sonora, then nimbly flips around to hold her in a wrestling pin.

SONORA  
Chris, wait!

CHRIS  
How do you know my name?

Chris is confused.

CHRIS  
Do I know you?

Sonora doesn't know what to do.

SONORA  
Damn it.  
(defeated)  
Yes.

Chris releases her, but keeps his dukes up, wary of a trick.

SONORA  
This is a bad idea.

She hesitates... pulls her mask up, and now it's Chris's turn to stumble backwards.

CHRIS  
**Vanessa?!**

He's excited and confused and freaked out and excited.

Sonora pulls her mask back on, tosses Chris back his.

SONORA  
The others are already looking for us. We need to get out of here.

CHRIS  
Do you want to go get some coffee?

**INT. WAFFLE HOUSE - NIGHT**

Vanessa and Chris sit across from each other in their civvies. A SERVER takes their order.

VANESSA  
I'll just have a coffee. Black is fine.

SERVER  
(to Chris)  
And you?

CHRIS  
Can I get... hashbrowns, all the way?

VANESSA  
Wait, you're getting food?

CHRIS  
Yeah, I'm starving.

VANESSA  
I just, you said we were getting coffee.

CHRIS  
You can eat if you want?

Vanessa scoffs.

VANESSA  
You talk stuff out over coffee. Now this is... well, it's not just coffee.

The server looks between them; "Do I leave, or...?"

CHRIS  
Do you want to order food?

The server looks at Vanessa.

Vanessa chews on her tongue.

VANESSA  
I'll have a cheeseburger. Very well done, no toppings.

Chris gives her a look; he disapproves of her choices.

The server quickly shuffles off.

CHRIS

That's not why you go to Waffle House.

VANESSA

You didn't get waffles either.

CHRIS

Who gets waffles? Who gets anything other than hashbrowns?

He laughs. Vanessa doesn't.

CHRIS

So if it's not just coffee, what is it?

VANESSA

Not a date, if that's what you're asking.

CHRIS

Okay. Is this an outing?

VANESSA

Not enough people. I think of outings as group things. Maybe it's hanging out.

CHRIS

Too intentional to be hanging out. Hanging out is, like, chilling.

VANESSA

No, chilling is chilling. Hanging out is...

She stops.

CHRIS

Is what?

Vanessa sighs.

VANESSA

Chris, what are we doing?

CHRIS

That's what we're talking-

VANESSA

Not... no. This can't work.

Chris's smile fades.

CHRIS

Yeah. I know.

VANESSA

You're not gonna... My family  
doesn't know about... me.

CHRIS

You've met my mother. You know where  
she lives. My defenseless,  
stiff-breeze-could-knock-her-over  
mother.

Vanessa is offended at the implication.

VANESSA

You know I would never-

CHRIS

Exactly! I know you wouldn't. Just  
like I wouldn't. When I'm Chris,  
you're just Vanessa. When I'm  
Jupiter, you're just Sonora. No  
crossover.

Vanessa relaxes, leans back.

VANESSA

Agreed. Good.

CHRIS

Good.

VANESSA

But so if there's no crossover...

CHRIS

Yeah?

VANESSA

Nevermind.

Beat.

The server drops off Vanessa's coffee.

VANESSA

Thanks.

Vanessa takes a sip, glad for the excuse not to talk.

CHRIS

Can I ask you a question?

VANESSA

Shoot.

CHRIS

Why do you do it? You're not...  
like, you're not evil.

VANESSA

I could ask you the same thing.

CHRIS

No, come on. You can disagree with me, but I'm working with the law. I'm on the side of justice. You can't ask why.

Vanessa rolls her eyes.

VANESSA

You think just because you're working with the mayor, you're on the side of justice?

CHRIS

At least I'm not breaking the law.

VANESSA

What if the law needs to be broken?

CHRIS

Then you do it the right way! You vote, you protest! You don't-

He stops himself, calms down.

CHRIS

You've hurt people.

VANESSA

You're so naive.

CHRIS

You work with sociopaths!

VANESSA

If I was still solo, you'd have stopped me years ago. If I have to rob the occasional fat-cat banker to keep them happy, no sweat off my back.

CHRIS

And what is your end? Burning down banks? Beating up cops?

VANESSA

I guess you'd prefer I report them to themselves?

CHRIS

Society doesn't work if we can't trust it.

VANESSA

I don't understand how you can say something so right and use it as an argument for something so wrong.

CHRIS

You think I should what? Decide that I know better than people whose literal jobs are to research the entire issue and figure out where justice lies?

VANESSA

And when those people are the ones breaking the law?

Chris GROANS.

CHRIS

I don't know. Okay? I don't know. But that's the point. I don't want to take action in a situation where I can't know for sure I'm doing the right thing.

Vanessa sighs, relaxes.

VANESSA

That's not... you are wrong. You are. But you're not unreasonable.

CHRIS

What about you? You never have pangs of conscience? You're always convinced you're doing the right thing?

VANESSA

Obviously not. I wish I could see the world like you do. Trust the world like you do. I just... I can't.

Chris almost responds... sighs instead.

Beat.

VANESSA

This would be a lot easier if you were, like...

She struggles to think of the word.

VANESSA

I like you.

CHRIS  
I like you, too.

VANESSA  
No, not like...

She takes a risk.

VANESSA  
I really like you.

CHRIS  
I think I love you.

Oh damn.

The server arrives with their food.

SERVER  
Here you go. Hashbrowns all the way...

She puts them in front of Vanessa.

SERVER  
And a cheeseburger.

It's got a bunch of toppings. She puts it in front of Chris, then walks away.

VANESSA  
Um-

CHRIS  
Yeah, here.

He swaps the plates.

CHRIS  
Didn't you ask for no toppings?

He raises his hand to get the server's attention, but Vanessa pulls his hand down.

VANESSA  
You love me?

CHRIS  
...I don't know. Yeah.

VANESSA  
We've been on two dates.

CHRIS  
Three if you count this.



VANESSA

Even if we did! You can't say you love me after three dates!

CHRIS

I can say whatever I want.

VANESSA

Saying you love someone after three dates is insane.

CHRIS

I disagree. Falling in love with someone after three dates, that's insane. Saying it when it's true is just-

Vanessa looks away; she's getting upset.

VANESSA

Stop. Seriously. It's not funny.

Chris eats his hashbrowns; he's hard to read for the moment.

Vanessa picks the toppings off her burger, puts the bun back on. She's very easy to read: she's very upset.

Vanessa picks the burger up.

Puts it back down.

VANESSA

We are enemies. Sworn rivals.

CHRIS

We're not. Jupiter and Sonora are. We talked about how there's no-

VANESSA

There's crossover, Chris.

CHRIS

Well, then, fine. I love Sonora, too.

VANESSA

Stop it.

Chris looks sorry, backs down.

Eats more hashbrowns.

VANESSA

How are you eating?

CHRIS  
 (full mouth)  
 I'm hungry.

Vanessa takes a bite of her burger.

She swallows.

VANESSA  
 I think I love you too.

Chris smiles. Vanessa doesn't, but her attitude lightens.

VANESSA  
 This is dumb. We're dumb.

Chris takes another bite of hashbrowns.

CHRIS  
 Yeah.

Vanessa smiles.

**EXT. CITY PARK - NIGHT**

Vanessa is Sonora now; she leans against a tree as Chris gets dressed as Jupiter in some bushes.

SONORA  
 If this is going to work, we're gonna need some ground rules.

CHRIS (O.S.)  
 Agreed.

SONORA  
 No revealing each other's identities.

CHRIS (O.S.)  
 That's a given. And no acting on the knowledge ourselves. I won't turn you in to the police, you won't kidnap my girlfriend.

Sonora snorts a laugh.

SONORA  
 I'll try not to. No milking each other for information. If the city's putting together a task force to hunt me down, don't tell me.

Jupiter emerges from the bushes, reaches into a backpack to pull out his gauntlets.

JUPITER

I mean, I would tell you.

SONORA

You can't. We don't want them to suspect you were working with me.

Jupiter puts on his gauntlets. Flexes a bit and they spin into gear.

JUPITER

I kind of am, though? I'm definitely enabling you.

Sonora laughs.

SONORA

Yeah, but we don't want them to know that.

JUPITER

I'm not gonna... I won't volunteer the information, obviously, but even that feels weird. If they figure it out I'm not going to deny it.

SONORA

You would go to prison. And unlike me, you wouldn't be willing to escape.

JUPITER

I know.

Sonora rolls her eyes. She thinks he's an idiot, but at least he's a lovable one.

JUPITER

The big question: what if we bump into each other in... like this? We don't fight, do we?

SONORA

We kind of have to. Besides, it's not like either of us has changed our mind about what's right and wrong. We still have opposing goals.

This is wiggling Jupiter out a bit.

JUPITER

Are we sure about... is there some way we can... I don't know.

They stop. Look at each other.

JUPITER

I know it has to be a secret. I just don't like that.

SONORA

Yeah.

The sky gets a little brighter. Morning is coming.

**EXT. OFFICE BREAK ROOM - DAY**

Vanessa and Anne eat their lunches - Vanessa has a sandwich from Starbucks, Anne packed herself a salad.

VANESSA

We get along very well, but it's not, like, a sure thing. I don't know.

ANNE

Oh, please. Look at yourself.

Vanessa sighs.

VANESSA

I know. I'm worried we're moving too fast, though.

ANNE

How old are you now?

Vanessa laughs.

VANESSA

Wo-ho!

ANNE

I'm just saying! I don't know if you want kids, but-

VANESSA

Not even thinking about that right now.

Anne bites her tongue.

VANESSA

It's just, we just have some... political incompatibilities.

ANNE

Oh, grow up.

VANESSA

They're pretty extreme!

ANNE

Get over yourself and let yourself  
be happy.

Vanessa considers. Nods.

VANESSA

I'll try.

She turns back to her work.

VANESSA

But there are obstacles.

**INT. VILLAINS' LAIR - NIGHT**

A dark room with exposed beams and no decoration.

Sonora, Mob Rule, Volur, and Jotun argue around a large stainless steel table, along with THE PROFESSOR (40, sweater and khakis and an opaque face shield) and THE DEVOURER, a mostly-human-shaped living shadow.

VOLUR

And after all that bravado, you let  
him escape.

SONORA

I did not let him escape, he  
escaped. There's a difference.

THE PROFESSOR

Really? You're arguing semantics?

Volur gets up in Sonora's face, but Sonora doesn't back down.

Parts of the room have been coopted by the various villains - The Professor has a tiny lab with a computer and various gadgets, Volur and Jotun have some medieval torture implements and magical reagents, and Mob Rule has several wardrobes of outfits and disguises.

SONORA

The plan worked. We got him right  
where we wanted him. But there were  
unforseeable-

Volur scoffs, turns away from Sonora.

VOLUR

"Unforseeable." I told you that you  
were underestimating him.

Mob Rule's a little sheepish - he likes Sonora more than anyone else here, but...

MOB RULE

We all did, actually.

Sonora glares at Mob Rule; he doesn't like it, but he doesn't hide from it either, which shakes Sonora. She might be in trouble, here.

SONORA

So what? I was wrong once. The fact remains that without me, none of you would be here right now.

THE PROFESSOR

But what have you done for us lately?

Sonora snaps a look at him, and he does shrink a bit.

THE PROFESSOR

Not to be ungrateful.

The Devourer speaks up, with a voice like a dozen strained whispers.

THE DEVOURER

i am ungrateful. i performed my task perfectly. if you are incapable of performing yours, i do not benefit from our alliance.

VOLUR

I agree with the shadow thing.

She looks down her nose at the Devourer.

VOLUR

For once.

Jotun chuckles darkly.

SONORA

You know what? Fine. You think my plan sucks? We'll do something else. Forget Jupiter, forget the whole thing, we can do whatever you guys want to do wherever you guys want to do it.

MOB RULE

Maybe we've just been going at this the wrong way.

SONORA

No, seriously. Haven't you been talking about getting out of the city, away from the heroes?

MOB RULE

I'm being serious. Look at our powers. Some of us can hold our own in a fight, sure, but:

He points at each of them in turn.

MOB RULE

Volur's got all sorts of crazy divinations. Can't you talk to dead people?

VOLUR

My spirits are not "dead people."

MOB RULE

The Devourer can literally inhabit peoples' shadows. The Professor can hack just about anything given enough time.

THE PROFESSOR

(bashful)

You're being a little generous.

MOB RULE

I can be everywhere in the city at once, and Sonora can hear anywhere in the city if she concentrates.

Mob Rule looks at Jotun; thinks for a second.

MOB RULE

And Jotun can... punch people, really, really hard.

JOTUN

I'll show you how hard.

VOLUR

He's making a point, dear, let him finish.

MOB RULE

My point is, yes, we got together by blowing up buildings and brawling with the heroes, but there is literally no team better suited for espionage.

SONORA

You want to turn us all into super spies? Stop fighting heroes and start getting into blackmail?

MOB RULE

Stop fighting heroes, and start hunting them.

Oh, shit. Sonora's getting nervous.

MOB RULE

We find their secret identities from the civilian side instead of from unmasking them, and-

VOLUR

Of course! It's so simple. We simply find their secret identities.

SONORA

Mob, I get where you're coming from, but Volur's right: there are millions of people in this city. How would we even start?

Mob Rule is surprised, a little upset. He expected Sonora to be on his side.

MOB RULE

It's not a full plan yet, but I think it's at least a good start.

VOLUR

Ignore her. It is a good start.

Sonora looks at Volur.

SONORA

You were just arguing against it.

Volur shrugs, smirks. "Then you started arguing against it too."

THE PROFESSOR

Mob Rule is right! This is even better than before. If they don't know we know their identities, that opens up some fascinating possibilities.

Everyone looks at him.

THE PROFESSOR

Think about it. If we killed Jupiter or the Marshal - much less both - the other heroes would retaliate. That's how Hundred Arms got caught: they killed Luminous, which meant, what, Jupiter, Crimson, Grand Dame... even some out-of-town heroes showed up for revenge.



Sonora tries to come across as bored and indifferent. Mostly succeeds.

SONORA

And your point is?

THE PROFESSOR

But suppose it wasn't Luminous that died? Suppose it was Tyreek Taylor? And suppose it wasn't Hundred Arms that killed him, but just a random accident?

VOLUR

You suggest we kill the alter egos in secret. Assassination.

THE PROFESSOR

Any retaliation would be half-hearted at best, and wouldn't last nearly as long. They won't even have a target to go after.

Mob Rule points at the Professor.

MOB RULE

Yes. That.

He looks at Sonora.

MOB RULE

Come on, give this a chance. It can work.

Sonora feels cornered. She rolls with it.

SONORA

Fine. Don't let anyone say I'm not a team player.

She glances at Volur. Takes a risk.

SONORA

Mob and I will take the Marshal, Volur and the Devourer can hunt for Jupiter, and the Professor will play secretary and coordinate leads. Sound good?

THE PROFESSOR

Secretary?

VOLUR

Tch. I will hunt the Marshal. You will hunt Jupiter to atone for your previous failure.

SONORA

Fine.

THE DEVOURER

i do not take orders from you. i  
will hunt who i please, how i  
please.

THE PROFESSOR

But if you-

SONORA

If he wants to play all alone, let  
him. We'll manage.

The Devourer HISSSES at Sonora, but she ignores him.

THE PROFESSOR

(hopeful)

I can help Volur, then?

VOLUR

I need no help from the likes of  
you.

The Professor's face falls as he accepts his role.

SONORA

That's fine. You and Jotun on the  
Marshal, Mob and I on Jupiter, the  
Professor coordinates, and the  
Devourer jerks off in the wind.  
Sounds like a plan to me.

Volur glares at Sonora. Sonora glares back.

VOLUR

Very well.

She turns and stomps away, Jotun close behind.

Everyone else disperses too.

**EXT. DARK ALLEY - NIGHT**

Sonora and Mob Rule confer in the shadows.

MOB RULE

What the hell was that? I thought  
you were in my corner!

SONORA

I was in your corner! You saw how  
Volur was. Anything I suggested,  
she'd do the opposite. If I'd been  
behind your plan from the start, she  
never would've gone for it.

Which is kind of depressing. Could've saved herself a lot of trouble.

Mob Rule chews on that for a beat, then GROANS.

MOB RULE

Yeah. Yeah, I guess so. Some team we have.

SONORA

You just have to know how to work with them.

MOB RULE

And you do?

Sonora snorts a laugh.

SONORA

Sometimes.

Sonora sees an angle.

SONORA

Honestly, though, I am worried. Volur and Jotun have never really been big on the team. Them off doing their own thing...

MOB RULE

You don't think they'd turn on us?

SONORA

Turn on us? No. Cut us out of the loop?

She shrugs.

MOB RULE

To what end? They can't pull off anything big on their own.

SONORA

Do they know that? You think Volur thinks she needs us?

Mob Rule takes that in.

MOB RULE

Shit.

SONORA

Leave Jupiter to me. You keep an eye on them.

MOB RULE

Yeah. I think that's for the best.

He POPS out of existence.

Sonora lets out a heavy sigh.

**INT. MALL FOOD COURT - DAY**

It's crowded for the lunch rush. Vanessa and Chris eat lunch together near one corner.

VANESSA

I know we said no feeding each other information...

CHRIS

You gonna start milking me?

VANESSA

No. I actually have something you might want to know.

Chris shakes his head.

CHRIS

It's fine. I'm alright.

Vanessa is surprised.

VANESSA

You don't even know what it is.

CHRIS

I know you really wanted to keep a wall between our identities. It's fine. I've survived this far.

VANESSA

...Okay. Thanks.

Beat.

**EXT. DOWNTOWN MALL - DAY**

Vanessa and Chris leave the mall, prepare to separate.

CHRIS

This was nice. Can this be a regular thing?

VANESSA

If you're cool with Anne whining about you stealing me.

Chris gets excited.

CHRIS

She can come too! Oh, that'll be fun.

Vanessa laughs.

VANESSA

I don't want to eat out every day,  
either.

CHRIS

That's fair. Maybe like once or  
twice a week?

Vanessa nods.

VANESSA

That'll work.

Beat.

CHRIS

Okay, well-

VANESSA

My team is planning to  
figure out your identity  
and kill you.

Chris cocks his head, leans in closer, talks quiet.

CHRIS

What?

VANESSA

I'm actually... I'm in charge of  
finding your identity.

Chris smiles.

CHRIS

That works out well.

Then he realizes:

CHRIS

But what are you gonna do? Are you  
gonna be okay? What are you gonna  
tell them?

VANESSA

Nothing, obviously.

CHRIS

They aren't gonna get suspicious? If  
you need to give them something, I  
can-

VANESSA

I'll burn that bridge when I come to  
it. I'll be fine.

JULIUS (O.S.)

Hey, Vanessa!

JULIUS (33, battered hoodie and jeans... familiar voice?) walks out of the mall, heads over to Vanessa and Chris.

Vanessa is rattled, but recovers fast.

VANESSA

Hey, Julius. Chris, this is my friend Julius. Julius, this is my boyfriend Chris.

Julius shakes Chris's hand.

JULIUS

(to Vanessa)

I knew you were seeing somebody.

(to Chris)

Nice to meet you, man.

CHRIS

Likewise.

Julius nods to Vanessa.

JULIUS

Fancy seeing you here.

VANESSA

We just ate.

Chris can tell Vanessa's not happy about this.

CHRIS

Yeah, we went a little long, so...

JULIUS

Sure, I won't keep you. Nice to meet you, Chris. See you around.

CHRIS

You too.

VANESSA

See you.

Julius walks away. Vanessa watches him for a beat, like she's making sure he's leaving.

CHRIS

That was-

VANESSA

I gotta go. I'll text you later.

She hustles across the street, then turns the same direction as Julius.

**EXT. ALLEYWAY - DAY**

Vanessa walks into an alleyway. Julius leans against a wall, waiting for her.

Vanessa hisses at him, keeps the volume down.

VANESSA  
What the hell are you doing here?

JULIUS  
Relax. I'm not following you.

VANESSA  
(spooked)  
Then who are you following?

JULIUS  
You really didn't want me to know about this guy, did you?

VANESSA  
I asked you a question.

JULIUS  
Volur.

VANESSA  
Why the hell was Volur here?

Julius frowns, shakes his head.

JULIUS  
I don't know. Probably just a coincidence, but you should be careful.

Vanessa nods. She's worried, but carries it well.

VANESSA  
I do have to get back to work.

She turns to leave.

JULIUS  
Chris seems like a cool guy.

Vanessa looks at Julius.

VANESSA  
Don't.

She leaves. Julius chuckles.

He POPS out of existence.

**INT. OFFICE - DAY**

Vanessa works on a text to Chris: "Julius is kind of a"...

She deletes it all. Swears under her breath just as Anne arrives and sits at the desk behind Vanessa.

ANNE

Everything okay?

Vanessa jumps.

VANESSA

Y-yeah.

Anne doesn't buy it. Waits.

Vanessa spins to face Anne.

VANESSA

...We bumped into Julius at lunch.

ANNE

Oof. How was that?

VANESSA

(It was terrible.)

It was fine.

ANNE

Do you think it was a coincidence?

VANESSA

I don't know. I talked to him after and he said yes.

ANNE

He's not going to tell you if he's stalking you again. You should think about a restraining order.

VANESSA

It wouldn't... that's not necessary. He's an asshat, but he comes by it honestly.

Anne laughs.

ANNE

What does that mean?

VANESSA

It means I'll talk to him.

ANNE

You said you did.



Vanessa spins around, gets back to work.

VANESSA

I need to make sure he got the message.

**EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT**

Sonora pins Mob Rule to the wall, hand on his neck.

SONORA

Disappear again, and I'll just track down the real you. You can't hide from me.

MOB RULE

Shit, fine! What the hell is your problem?

SONORA

How many of you are tailing Chris right now? And you know I can tell if you lie.

MOB RULE

None! I swear!

Beat.

Sonora releases him.

SONORA

I thought we were past this.

MOB RULE

We are. I'm telling you, it was an honest coincidence. I was following Volur. You know I'm telling you the truth, so why are you freaking out?

Sonora sighs.

SONORA

Alright. Okay.

She leans against the wall.

Beat.

MOB RULE

You really like this guy that much?

SONORA

What's that supposed to mean?

MOB RULE

I mean, you're... look at yourself.

SONORA

Don't put this on me. This is about you and your shit. If you hadn't been a bitch after we broke up-

MOB RULE

Oh please, complain some more.

SONORA

Screw you.

MOB RULE

Never again.

Beat.

Sonora looks at Mob Rule.

Sighs.

SONORA

I do like him that much.

MOB RULE

That's good. I'm happy for you.

SONORA

Now you are lying.

MOB RULE

Only half lying. I can be happy and jealous at the same time. I contain multitudes.

Sonora snickers at the pun.

SONORA

Yeah, well, thanks.

MOB RULE

You're not just spending all your time with him and blowing off the hunt for Jupiter, are you?

Sonora stiffens. Mob Rule notices.

MOB RULE

Yeah, I thought so. Look, we're cool, you and me, but the others... We gotta give them something.

Sonora grimaces.

Mob Rule stands up straight.

MOB RULE

Oh, shit. Speak of the devil.

Sonora stands up, ready for action.

SONORA

What's up?

MOB RULE

The Devourer's fighting Jupiter.

SONORA

Shit.

(thinking fast)

He's trying to kill him. He'll ruin everything.

MOB RULE

Jupiter's a big boy, he can handle himself.

SONORA

Where are they?

MOB RULE

Commercial-Broadway. Don't do anything stupid.

SONORA

I'm just gonna watch.

And with a BRIGHT HUM, she takes off into the air.

**EXT. COMMERCIAL-BROADWAY TRAIN STATION - NIGHT**

Jupiter stands on elevated train tracks, gauntlets surging with electricity. He looks around himself, trying to predict the next attack.

The Devourer is a horrifying shadowy thing; it slithers like a serpent before it bursts out as a demonic beast and charges from behind Jupiter.

Jupiter spins around, punches the Devourer across the jaw; it SCREAMS like an angry animal, swipes at him, and he's forced to jump down to the ground below.

**EXT. NEARBY ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS**

Sonora lands on a rooftop nearby, but she's too far to get a good view of things - especially once the Devourer chases Jupiter underneath a bridge.

SONORA

Shit.

She looks around for a better vantage point, but she's at the highest spot for a mile. There's nowhere where she can see what's going on and hide at the same time.

SONORA

Shit.

There's another SHRIEK, and Jupiter soars into the air.

**EXT. BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS**

Jupiter tucks into a neat backflip and lands on the bridge in a crouch - then immediately dives out of the way of an oncoming car.

He holds a finger to his ear.

JUPITER

Where's that roadblock?! I've still got civilians here!

Before he can get a response, a car is THROWN AT HIM from the other side of the bridge.

Jupiter narrowly dodges our of the way of the car. As it passes by him, he sees the terrified DRIVER, trapped in her seat.

As the car hurtles over the side of the bridge, Jupiter grabs the corner of the car with both hands.

The car's weight drags him to the edge of the bridge, but he throws one foot on the barricade, and SPINS THE CAR BACK ONTO THE BRIDGE.

The car lands on the bridge with a heavy CRUNCH. It's totaled, but the driver is alive.

As soon as Jupiter can see the driver is safe, the Devourer TACKLES HIM OFF THE BRIDGE.

**EXT. BELOW THE BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS**

Jupiter hits the ground hard, the Devourer on top of him. Shadowy limbs sprout and pin Jupiter completely.

JUPITER

(in pain)

You don't have to do this, Nicholas.

THE DEVOURER

do not speak.

The Devourer solidifies into DOCTOR NICHOLAS THOMAS (75): a leathery-skinned, wiry old man; shadows still hold Jupiter to the ground.

His voice is more natural now, but still raspy.

DOCTOR THOMAS  
You're finally going to pay for what  
you did to me.

A shadow coalesces into a dagger in his hand.

SONORA (O.S.)  
NOOO!!

A sonic wave hits Doctor Thomas like a truck, knocks him  
back into his shadowy form as he flies back underneath the  
bridge.

Jupiter gets to his feet - he's hurt, but he's still gonna  
fight.

Sonora walks over to him, hands up and ready for when The  
Devourer comes back.

JUPITER  
What are you doing?

SONORA  
Saving your ass.

JUPITER  
But what about-

SONORA  
Now's not the time.

Jupiter punches his fists together, and they ignite with  
electric flames.

JUPITER  
You're right.

The Devourer has regrouped, turned into a massive tide of  
darkness.

Sonora does some stretches, loosens up.

SONORA  
I've been wanting to do this for a  
long time.

The Devourer charges.

Sonora throws up a sonic barrier, which The Devourer  
crashes into.

Jupiter charges in; Sonora drops the wall at the last  
second, and Jupiter lands a tremendous uppercut that  
knocks The Devourer into the air.

Sonora takes off and soars over of The Devourer, then screams a sonic blast from above him that knocks him straight back down.

The Devourer lashes out; a shadowy tendril wraps around Sonora's ankle, whips her down.

Jupiter jumps back and catches Sonora, then snaps the tendril with an electric karate chop.

SONORA

Give me a boost!

Jupiter chucks Sonora like a shotput, hurling her at The Devourer.

The Devourer grows and spreads, readying a massive tide of shadows.

Sonora hurtles into the darkness, disappears...

...Then reappears on the other side, dragging Doctor Thomas out of his shadows with her!

She slams him on the ground. His shadows surge towards her, trying to return to him, but Sonora's entire body vibrates with sonic energy; all the shadows are shredded as soon as they get close.

Soon they're all gone, leaving only her and Doctor Thomas. Jupiter jogs towards them, but he's pretty far away for the moment.

SONORA

I knew I could take you, but I didn't think it'd be that easy.

DOCTOR THOMAS

Wh... why?

SONORA

Because you're an asshole and I've never liked you.

She leans in close, whispers to him.

SONORA

I'm not going to let you ruin everything because you needed to land the killing blow yourself.

DOCTOR THOMAS

I deserve this! He-

Sonora stands.

SONORA

Oh, boo-hoo. We all have tragic origin stories, asshole. Jupiter probably does too. You don't see him whining about it.

Jupiter arrives, stands next to Sonora.

JUPITER

Good work.

SONORA

Don't get the wrong idea, Sparky. This was me settling a score, not helping you.

Jupiter's not used to lying; it takes him a second to realize why she's talking like that.

JUPITER

Oh... well. Whether it was your intention or not, you helped the cause of Justice today. I couldn't have defeated Doctor Thomas without you. I'm going to make sure he gets the help he needs to-

SONORA

Yeah, yeah.

She takes off and flies away, leaving Jupiter and Doctor Thomas behind.

**INT. VANESSA'S APARTMENT - EVENING**

Vanessa sits on the sofa, holding a beer. Chris paces the room, gesticulating wildly.

CHRIS

And when I knocked him into the air and you just shot up there and blasted him back down?! It was like I knew you'd be there to follow up, I just felt it! And you asked for a boost, and I didn't even have to think about it, I just chucked you as hard as I could, and... and... oh, man.

He crashes on the sofa next to her, pulls her in for a kiss.

CHRIS

It was awesome.

VANESSA

We fought pretty well together.

CHRIS

Is this, like... can we do this more? Are there other bad guys you have beef with?

VANESSA

I have beef with all of them. They're conspiring to kill you.

Chris leans back.

CHRIS

Wait, this didn't, like, blow your cover, did it? You just saved my life.

She shakes her head, puts her beer down.

VANESSA

No. It didn't help, but part of the plan is to kill, like, you. Chris. Not Jupiter. To avoid drawing heat from other heroes.

CHRIS

That's still gonna draw heat, though. Most of the other heroes in the area know who I am.

VANESSA

That doesn't matter, what matters is... wait, hang on, really?

CHRIS

Yeah. It's a secret from... well, from you. Not the good guys. I'm not worried about Quasar or Sword Saint coming after my friends and family.

VANESSA

I hadn't really thought about that. The only secret identity I know is...

She realizes maybe she shouldn't say.

CHRIS

Who?

VANESSA

Uh... I don't... you're not gonna, like... go after him?

Chris shakes his head, then reconsiders.



CHRIS

Actually... I might. If he's hurting people, I'm going to do what it takes to stop him.

They both shift - just a little bit away from each other.

Chris clears his throat.

CHRIS

So, but... can we, like, do that again sometime? Really? Sonora was always, like... you have a code, everybody knows that. You worked with The Centurion a few years ago, didn't you? What happened there?

Vanessa laughs, leans back on the sofa, props her legs up on Chris's lap.

VANESSA

Okay, so that wound up working out, but it almost went really bad. What happened was...

Chris settles in, excited to hear the story.

**EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT**

Sonora looks out at the skyline. Mob Rule stands behind her.

MOB RULE

I'm not saying I don't understand, I'm saying the optics weren't great. Saving any hero would look bad, but Jupiter-

SONORA

"The optics?"

Mob Rule sighs, paces.

MOB RULE

Volur, and Jotun especially... they're not super forgiving.

SONORA

Which is why I don't like working with them. You do one thing wrong-

MOB RULE

(getting angry)

Yeah, but we are working with them. Shit, man, this is why the heroes keep beating us: they fight

(MORE)

MOB RULE (CONT'D)  
us instead of each other. And now  
you-

He throws his hands in the air.

MOB RULE  
Now you're even fighting us.  
(before Sonora can object)  
I know! I already said I understand!  
Just-

He freezes.

Sonora notices.

SONORA  
What's wrong?

MOB RULE  
Volur's jumping a double. I can't-  
SHIT.

He's in pain, like something's drilling into his head.

SONORA  
Where are they?

MOB RULE  
They've got me trapped, I can't drop  
the double! Alleyway, half a mile  
north-

Jotun leaps onto the rooftop from below.

Mob Rule POPS out of existence.

Sonora leans back to jump off the rooftop, but Jotun grabs her ankle and throws her back onto the roof.

She tucks into a roll and back to her feet, but Jotun tackles her and pins her to the ground, choking her.

JOTUN  
Heard what you did to The Devourer.

Sonora struggles to breathe.

JOTUN  
Heard you helped Jupiter.

Sonora gathers a ball of sonic energy in her hand, then Jotun slams her head against the ground and rattles her - she loses the energy.

JOTUN

Odd. I thought the plan was for you  
to hunt him.

He pulls out a black clasp covered in glowing runes, and  
locks it around her neck.

Then he releases her, stands up.

She rolls back onto her feet in a combat stance, but Jotun  
looks relaxed.

Sonora tries to speak, just coughs. Tries again:

SONORA

I'm gaining his trust, asshole.

Jotun nods.

JOTUN

Then you will be fine.

Sonora feels at the clasp.

SONORA

What the hell is this?

VOLUR (O.S.)

Insurance.

Volur appears from behind Jotun.

VOLUR

It will get tighter with each day  
that passes. I'll remove it once  
you've found Jupiter's secret  
identity.

SONORA

Are you crazy? I just said I was  
working on it!

Volur examines her fingernails. They're very long, very  
sharp.

VOLUR

If you know who he is, I can remove  
it right now.

Sonora shifts.

SONORA

I don't know yet, obviously. Or I  
would've told you.

VOLUR  
 ("I know you're hiding  
 something.")  
 Surely you're close.

SONORA  
 I... yeah, I guess, but-

VOLUR  
 Then there is no problem. We have  
 discovered the Marshal's identity.  
 Once you have Jupiter's, we're ready  
 to initiate the Professor's plan.  
 Bring the name to us in a few nights  
 and all will be well.

SONORA  
 Like hell.

Volur SNAPS her fingers, and Sonora starts choking.

Sonora drops to all fours, struggles.

Another SNAP, and she can breathe again - she gasps in  
 air.

Jotun laughs at her.

Sonora gets to her feet.

SONORA  
 (defeated)  
 What did you do to Mob Rule?

VOLUR  
 I don't like being followed.

She flies away, and Jotun leaps from rooftop to rooftop,  
 following her.

Sonora picks at the clasp on her neck, watches them leave.

She takes off in the direction of Mob rule.

**EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT**

Mob Rule is chained to the wall with manacles matching  
 Sonora's choker.

He tries to vanish; his entire form wavers, goes  
 transparent, then the bindings flash and he comes right  
 back.

Sonora drops from above into the alley.

MOB RULE  
 What happened? Did you get away?

He sees her new neckwear.

MOB RULE

Shit.

SONORA

You can't, "poof?" Disappear?

He tries to disappear again, demonstrates it failing.

SONORA

Okay, hang on, I'll get you out of these.

She holds her hand out flat, starts a dull vibration around it - making a sonic blade.

She tries to cut Mob Rule free, but the cuffs are strong.

She looks at him.

SONORA

I don't think I can.

MOB RULE

Cut off my hands. This is just a double.

SONORA

Won't that...?

Mob Rule nods. Tenses.

Sonora slices his hands off just below the cuffs. Mob Rule GROANS in pain, but drops down, free.

Sonora helps him to his feet.

MOB RULE

Gonna be harder to get your necklace off.

SONORA

Get out of here, I'll catch up with you when it's safe.

Don't have to tell him twice; he POPS away.

Sonora WHISPERS, but her voice ECHOES and STRETCHES, reaching futher than it ever could naturally.

SONORA

Chris...

**EXT. CHRIS'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Chris lives in a tiny house in an okay-ish part of town. Big iron fence, bars on the windows, but everything is clean and the yards are taken care of.

SONORA (O.S.)

Chris... Chris, I need you. I need Jupiter.

Chris all but leaps out of the front door, already shrugging on his Jupiter uniform.

**EXT. SKYSCRAPER SPIRE - NIGHT**

Sonora waits on the highest skyscraper for miles around.

With a small flash of light, Jupiter jumps from a lower ledge to land next to her.

JUPITER

Couldn't have waited somewhere easier to get to?

SONORA

I'm probably being followed. At least from here, I'd be able to see them coming.

Jupiter's immediately alert, scans the area.

JUPITER

Who is it?

SONORA

Volur and Jotun collared me.

JUPITER

Collared?

He looks at her, and she gestures to her neck.

He moves in to examine it.

SONORA

I was only able to get matching cuffs off Mob Rule by cutting his double's hands off. That won't work for a choker.

JUPITER

Why is she coming after you? I thought you were all working together?

Sonora hesitates.

SONORA  
This is... well...

Jupiter gets it.

JUPITER  
Oh, no. They're on to you.

Sonora nods.

SONORA  
They're suspicious.

Jupiter thinks.

JUPITER  
I know someone who might be able to help. But...

SONORA  
It's a hero.

JUPITER  
Do we take you as Sonora? Or as...

He looks around, cautious.

SONORA  
Relax. I control sound. Nothing we say is even reaching my collar, just in case it's bugged. But if they are following me...

JUPITER  
Right. Masks on. Sword Saint mostly operates on the other side of town. Bit of a hike for me, but...

Sonora smiles.

CUT TO:

**EXT. THE SKY - NIGHT**

Sonora carries Jupiter as she flies through the sky.

Jupiter is loving it.

**EXT. CITY PARK - NIGHT**

SWORD SAINT, a hero wearing a cyberpunk take on traditional samurai armor, complete with a pair of glowing swords on his belt, sits chatting with a couple cops as they put two handcuffed men into a police cruiser.

JUPITER (O.S.)  
Sword Saint!

Jupiter steps out of some nearby shadows. Sword Saint stands up.

SWORD SAINT

(to cops)

Excuse me.

(to Jupiter)

Don't normally see you around here.  
Everything okay?

JUPITER

Don't freak out, she's with me.

Sword Saint cocks his head.

Sonora steps out from behind Jupiter, with her hands raised.

Sword Saint draws his swords faster than you can blink.

JUPITER

I said don't freak out!

SWORD SAINT

I haven't attacked yet.

SONORA

I-

SWORD SAINT

That changes if you speak a single word.

Sonora grimaces, but doesn't speak.

JUPITER

She needs our help.

SWORD SAINT

I will gladly help her find her way to prison.

JUPITER

She's gonna die if we don't help her. Volur and Jotun have a collar on her. They're forcing her to figure out my secret identity.

Sword Saint considers.

SWORD SAINT

Why her?

Jupiter looks at Sonora. She shrugs at him.

JUPITER

We're... kind of an item.



Sword Saint is shocked. He takes a step back, and his grip on his swords tightens.

SWORD SAINT

It's a trick. She's-

JUPITER

Saint... I love her.

Jupiter puts his arm around Sonora's shoulders. She puts an arm around his waist.

Sword Saint processes that.

He sheathes his swords.

JUPITER

You're... cool with this?

SWORD SAINT

Of course not. But you're foolish enough to have given her ample opportunity to ambush you before now, and I have no reason to believe she'd use you to reach me, of all people. Whatever her ulterior motive is, I doubt it involves attacking me here.

Sonora nods.

SONORA

Mob Rule always said you were too clever to be worth tussling with. He wasn't exaggerating.

SWORD SAINT

You would do well not to remind me of the reprehensible nature of the company you keep.

Sonora slides out from under Jupiter's arm.

SONORA

If I get close enough to let you examine my new neckwear, are you gonna flip out?

Sword Saint rests his hands on his swords, says nothing.

Sonora walks over, tilts her head up to show off the collar. Sword Saint examines it.

SWORD SAINT

They want Jupiter's identity?

SONORA

There's more than that. I can tell you the whole plan if you help me.

SWORD SAINT

(to Jupiter)

You really trust her?

JUPITER

I do.

SWORD SAINT

Even though she hasn't told you the whole plan?

Jupiter hesitates.

SONORA

It hasn't come up.

Sword Saint snorts.

SWORD SAINT

I can help you. But not here, and I'll need time to set things up. The collar is too tight to cut it off with my swords, and regardless of how much Jupiter vouches for you, I will not take you to my lab.

SONORA

(genuinely relieved)

Thank you. I know you don't have to do this.

SWORD SAINT

(disgusted)

Of course I do. I value all life, even the lives of my enemies.

JUPITER

All the same, thank you.

SWORD SAINT

I haven't done it yet. Leave me for now, I have much work to do.

He walks away. Sonora and Jupiter look at each other.

JUPITER

That went well.

SONORA

He's gonna betray us.

JUPITER

I know villains all like to stab  
each other in the back-

SONORA

Chris, I'm telling you. I don't  
think he'll kill me, but...

Jupiter puts his hands on her shoulders.

JUPITER

Do you trust me?

SONORA

Of course I trust you, but-

JUPITER

I trust him with my life. If you  
can't trust him, trust my faith in  
him.

Sonora growls.

Nods.

SONORA

Fine. But if I have time to kill  
anyway, I'm setting up some  
failsafes.

JUPITER

Failsafes? Like-

Sonora kisses Jupiter.

SONORA

Like to keep you safe if I'm not  
around to protect you.

She steps back.

SONORA

I'll see you soon.

And she takes off into the air.

Jupiter looks around.

JUPITER

I should've taken my bike.

**INT. SWANKY APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Decorated more to show it off than to live in it;  
furniture that looks good but is uncomfortable to sit in,  
paintings on the wall instead of pictures of friends and  
family.

Julius walks in, flips the lights on. Sonora is standing in the corner behind him.

SONORA

Mob.

Julius doesn't react; he either knew she was there, or he's used to this.

JULIUS

I'm not single right now either, if this is a-

SONORA

This isn't a social call.

Wait.

SONORA

Who are you dating?

Julius smirks.

JULIUS

No one you know. What is this, then?

SONORA

I'm about to do something stupid.

Julius raises an eyebrow.

JULIUS

That's not like you.

SONORA

I'm calling in all my favors. I've already destroyed any evidence I had left about your identity. You and me, we're square now.

That gets his attention, but he tries to play it cool.

JULIUS

I haven't agreed to anything yet.

SONORA

If something happens to me in the next 24 hours, you're Chris's bodyguard for a year. Nobody comes after him.

JULIUS

Only for a year? What happens to him after that?

SONORA

He can take care of himself. I just need to make sure he doesn't get blindsided.

Julius considers. This is too good a deal.

JULIUS

What don't I know?

SONORA

A lot.

JULIUS

He's somebody important, isn't he? The president's nephew or something? Foreign prince?

Sonora smirks.

SONORA

He doesn't have money, if that's what you're thinking.

JULIUS

If something happens to you twenty-four hours and five minutes from now, it's not my problem?

SONORA

And you're free and clear for life, either way.

Julius GROWLS. He knows there's something he's missing, but he wants this.

JULIUS

I hate this. You're fighting so dirty.

SONORA

Deal's off the table in ten seconds.

JULIUS

You said you already destroyed-

SONORA

I'll just go tell the police your identity. No skin off my back.

JULIUS

So that's how it is, huh?

He swears under his breath.

JULIUS

Fine. Fine, deal. But if this is some sort of trick, you and I aren't going to be friends anymore.

Sonora turns to leave, but hesitates.

SONORA

This isn't... the deal's already been made. But-

JULIUS

Of course I'll keep an eye out for Anne. Come on.

Sonora relaxes. Nods.

Leaves.

**INT. SWORD SAINT'S TEMPORARY WORKSHOP - MORNING**

A high-tech workshop has been pieced together inside an abandoned warehouse.

Sword Saint leans over a workbench, preparing something.

Sonora walks in. Looks around.

SONORA

Where's Jupiter?

SWORD SAINT

I gave him the wrong address.

Sonora stops, gets into a defensive posture, but doesn't strike yet.

SWORD SAINT

I wanted to have a chat with you first. Without him here.

SONORA

He told me I could trust you.

SWORD SAINT

I'll keep my word, villain. Sit.

Sonora's gut tells her to run, but she sits anyway.

The chair reclines and the headrest drops, exposing Sonora's neck and the choker.

SWORD SAINT

I imagine you know his secret identity.

Sword Saint grabs a laser scalpel, starts working on the collar.

SONORA  
He knows mine, too. We actually met  
in real life, first.

SWORD SAINT  
This is real life.

SONORA  
That isn't-

SWORD SAINT  
You think you can put on a mask and  
consequences don't apply to you.

Sonora grimaces.

Beat.

SONORA  
I really do love him.

Sword Saint looks up at a monitor.

SWORD SAINT  
Huh.

Sonora rolls her eyes.

SONORA  
You have me hooked up to a lie  
detector?

Sword Saint goes back to work on her collar.

SWORD SAINT  
Only seemed fair. You can hear  
micro-quivers in the voice to detect  
lies as well, no?

SONORA  
I can.

SWORD SAINT  
Then you trust me when I say this is  
a trap, and you have already fallen  
into it with no hope of escape.

Sonora tenses... then relaxes.

SONORA  
You wouldn't tell me about it if I  
had a chance.

SWORD SAINT

Indeed not. I still expect you to resist, but it will accomplish nothing.

And like that, three more superheroes emerge from the shadows around them.

SONORA

And that's the real reason Chris isn't here.

SWORD SAINT

It is also a reason he isn't here. I find the secret to lying successfully is to do so entirely within the truth.

Sonora sighs.

SONORA

You're still removing the collar?

SWORD SAINT

I have no wish to harm you, especially knowing your feelings for each other are sincere. But all the same, you must face justice for your many crimes.

Sonora opens her mouth to respond, but doesn't.

Sword Saint finishes. The collar falls off.

Sonora takes a deep breath, and immediately Sword Saint slams some strange technological gag around her mouth. The other heroes leap into action, grabbing her arms and legs and holding tight.

Sonora struggles, but there's nothing she can do.

CUT TO:

**INT. VANESSA'S CELL - DAY**

The room is covered in thick soundproof padding, including the floor and ceiling.

The room is bisected by a thick barrier made out of a translucent foam. A small glass porthole in the center allows the only clear sight of the other side.

Vanessa stands on one side of the room. She wears a white prison jumpsuit, with glowing electronic bands around her wrists and her neck. Chris, in his full Jupiter getup but with his mask off, is on the other, visible only through the porthole.



Chris's voice comes in staticy and distorted as if through a hidden speaker.

CHRIS

Of course I'm being careful, but now that I know to be on the lookout, I'm not too worried. Saint even hooked me up with some talisman he says will ward off Volur's spirit spies or whatever.

Vanessa relaxes, just a bit.

CHRIS

On that note: the Marshal has come around to our side of things now that she knows the whole story. She's supporting your case to the other heroes, but...

Vanessa shakes her head.

VANESSA

They can't do anything now.

CHRIS

Sure they can. If all the big heroes in the city speak up as character witnesses on your behalf-

VANESSA

Then I can get out after twenty years instead of thirty?

CHRIS

Be reasonable, Vanessa. You're not exactly innocent. You need to serve *some* time.

Vanessa is shocked.

VANESSA

Excuse me?

CHRIS

That's not... that came out wrong.

A BUZZER sounds. Chris puts his mask back on, becomes Jupiter again.

JUPITER

I'll be back in a few days. I'm helping the Defensive Alliance of New York deal with some stuff, I'll be out of town.

VANESSA

They wouldn't be happy with you  
telling me that.

Jupiter is hurt by her implication.

JUPITER

You know I trust you with my life.

VANESSA

You trusted Sword Saint, too.

The BUZZER again.

Jupiter lingers for a beat more, then leaves the room.

Vanessa watches him go.

**INT. PRISON REC YARD - DAY**

The rec yard is completely enclosed, with armed guards patrolling and guarding each of the doors.

Vanessa, dressed the same except with the addition of a technological gag, lifts weights. A few other supervillains are in the yard, all wearing various technological restraints to match their powers:

- HUNDRED ARMS, a villain who can grow additional limbs, wears a straightjacket with glowing bands reinforcing the restraints;

- UNICLOPS, a one-eyed villain with laser vision, has a thick metal eyepatch and is led around by a guard acting as his seeing-eye dog;

- RED DRAGON, a massive woman with scaly skin, a thick reptilian tail, and a large finned ridge on her head, has thin glowing bracelets that seem to somehow be impossibly heavy, dragging her arms down. She wears a gag similar to Vanessa's, but this one is made out of a thick fireproof canvas.

And finally, Doctor Thomas (AKA The Devourer) sits in the corner, glaring at Vanessa. He wears no extra restraints, but his jumpsuit glows faintly, and he doesn't cast a shadow at all.

Vanessa stops lifting weights, sits up. Looks at Doctor Thomas.

He snarls at her. She gets up, walks over to him.

Vanessa can speak through the gag, but it's distorted and staccato like Chris's voice was through the speaker.

VANESSA

You have a problem you need me to  
fix?

DOCTOR THOMAS  
Jupiter visits you a lot, doesn't  
he?

Vanessa turns to walk away.

VANESSA  
I don't know what you're talking  
about.

DOCTOR THOMAS  
I have a theory.

Vanessa stops, but doesn't turn around.

DOCTOR THOMAS  
I don't think you failed at all. I  
think you discovered his identity.

VANESSA  
That's absurd. I would've told Volur  
right away, not needed to turn  
myself in to the heroes.

DOCTOR THOMAS  
You'd think so, wouldn't you?

Vanessa scoffs and walks away, but she's rattled.

**INT. VANESSA'S CELL - NIGHT**

Vanessa lies on the padded floor, no need for a bed.  
She hears a small, quiet HISS, and sits up straight.

VANESSA  
Hey. Hey!

She looks around, panicked.

VANESSA  
HEY! GUARDS! HEY!

She yells loud enough, long enough, a prison GUARD comes  
in her cell. The lights automatically turn on as he  
enters; he walks up and looks in the porthole.

GUARD  
What do you want?

VANESSA  
The Devourer is out of his cell.  
He's got his shadow back.

The guard glares at her for a beat, then pulls out a  
radio, whispers into it.

Beat.

He holds the radio to his ear. Nods. Puts it away.

GUARD

We've got eyes on him right now.  
He's locked away and fast asleep.  
Now shut up.

VANESSA

I'm telling you, he's got his powers  
back, I don't know how. He was just  
in here. Can you at least leave the  
light on?

The guard considers... hits a button on his radio. He  
leaves the room, and the lights stay on.

Vanessa lies back down, but she can't relax.

**INT. DOCTOR THOMAS'S CELL - NIGHT**

Doctor Thomas's cell is filled with vibrant light from all  
angles, preventing anything from casting a shadow.

Thomas lies with his back to the door, facing the wall.

He's awake.

And smiling.

**INT. VANESSA'S CELL - DAY**

Julius visits Vanessa. He looks nervous as hell.

JULIUS

I told you, I'm watching out for  
him.

VANESSA

Have you noticed anything...  
strange?

JULIUS

Yeah, Vanessa, I figured that out  
pretty damn quick.

He swears under his breath.

JULIUS

I've agreed to a lot of stupid  
things, but-

VANESSA

But nothing. Even in here, I can  
hold you to your word.

Julius grimaces.

JULIUS

You think I don't know? Counting the days to the end of the year, I promise.

Vanessa nods.

VANESSA

There's something else.

JULIUS

The hell else can there be?

VANESSA

The Devourer. I don't know how, but he's... he's got some of his mojo back, even in here. And he...

She looks around her. It's not safe.

VANESSA

He's pissed at the people who put him in here.

JULIUS

I would be too, if I were him. I'll keep my eyes peeled, but...

VANESSA

But?

JULIUS

But, he's... I'm just a normal guy, Vanessa. I've got a lot "friends," but nobody with super strength.

Vanessa sighs.

JULIUS

Besides, you're the one locked up in here with him. Are you gonna be okay?

They're both worried.

**INT. PRISON REC YARD - DAY**

Vanessa lifts weights again.

The room darkens, fades away; Vanessa remains, standing in a sea of black.

VANESSA

About time, you son of a bitch.

She gets to her feet, but she's lost in a black void now.

**BLACK VOID - CONTINUOUS**

Vanessa looks around her, arms raised in a defensive posture.

VANESSA

I've been waiting for you to-

She turns around and is face to face with Volur.

VANESSA

You?!

VOLUR

Our mutual friend sends his regards,  
and says you may have held up your  
end of the bargain after all.

VANESSA

You and I have no bargain.

VOLUR

I beg to differ.

She grabs Vanessa's head forcefully, and the air around Volur's head ripples with psychic energy.

Vanessa drops to her knees in pain.

VANESSA

Get... out... of... my... HEAD!

She leaps to her feet, shoves Volur back.

But Volur just hovers in the air and laughs.

VOLUR

Oh, my. Devourer said he thought you  
knew him, but, this...

Vanessa is terrified.

VANESSA

No! NO!

And suddenly the darkness disappears, taking Volur with it.

**INT. PRISON REC YARD - CONTINUOUS**

Vanessa stands in the middle of the yard, yelling.

VANESSA

NO! Get back here! Stop!

The guards rush her, aim their rifles at her.

GUARD

Down on your knees! Now!

They tackle Vanessa and pin her arms behind her back. She doesn't resist.

Doctor Thomas watches from nearby, grinning.

**INT. VANESSA'S CELL - NIGHT**

Vanessa sits in her cell, eyes closed, concentrating.

She HUMS, and the band around her neck GLOWS, lets out an ELECTRONIC WHINE.

The process is difficult, maybe painful; Vanessa grimaces, stops.

She takes a deep breath.

Tries again.

She HUMS, the band on her neck WHINES, and Vanessa modulates her hum to match the whine.

Once it matches exactly, she hums louder, LOUDER, until the band sparks and fizzles and falls off!

An ALARM goes off somewhere outside the room.

Vanessa stands, steels herself.

She looks at the porthole. Backs up to put as much distance as possible between it and her.

A guard charges in the room, rifle ready.

GUARD

Hey, you-

Vanessa charges towards the porthole, YELLS as she does; the porthole BURSTS in shards of plastic, startling the guard; Vanessa leaps into a perfect dive, sliding right through the now-empty hole and into a roll on the other side.

The guard tries to raise his rifle, but she's too close; she disarms him and slams the butt of the rifle into his face, knocking him out.

**INT. PRISON HALLWAY - NIGHT**

An ALARM blares as Vanessa walks down the hallway, removing her bracers with a key. Once they're all removed, she drops them and the key to the floor.

A group of guards run around the corner. They don't wait to shout a warning, just open fire on her.

Vanessa throws her hands forward, and the air in front of her vibrates with a sonic shield that stops all the bullets before they can reach her.

She SCREAMS, and the sound reinforces the shield until it's a raging wave of sound that bowls the guards over.

VANESSA

I always wondered if it was as easy to break out as The Fiddler made it sound.

SWORD SAINT

It's not that easy.

Vanessa wheels around to see Sword Saint behind her, swords drawn.

VANESSA

Volur knows Jupiter's identity. And she's pissed. They're going for him right now.

SWORD SAINT

How could you possibly know that?

VANESSA

She came to visit. Ripped it out of my head.

Sword Saint shakes his head.

SWORD SAINT

Nice try, but my sensors would have-

VANESSA

Not with The Devourer blocking them. Don't ask me how, but he got his-

SWORD SAINT

Enough!

Vanessa stops.

Nods.

VANESSA

You're right.

She gathers sonic energy in her hands.

Sword Saint tightens his grip on his swords. Half-crouches, ready to pounce.



Beat.

Everything happens at once: Vanessa shoots a sonic blast at Sword Saint; Sword Saint dodges to one side and bounces off the wall at Vanessa, closing the distance between them in a single stride.

Sword Saint swings both swords simultaneously, one low, one high; Vanessa ducks beneath the high one, and shatters the other with a sonic slap.

She then has to duck flying shards of metal, as the pieces of the sword magnetically vibrate and zip back into place on the hilt.

VANESSA

Neat trick!

But Sword Saint doesn't do banter; he was already swinging the empty hilt, knowing the sword would be there before reaching Vanessa.

Vanessa falls flat on her back, catching herself on a sonic wave, and shoves herself back twenty feet.

Sword Saint runs, keeps pace with her; his boots glow brighter as he runs superhumanly fast.

Vanessa's back on her feet as Sword Saint unleashes a flurry of attacks; Vanessa blocks each one by shattering the blades, which just reform before each new attack.

Vanessa finally shoves a huge wall of sound at Sword Saint, pushing him all the way back 50 feet to the far wall.

Vanessa looks around herself; there's nothing, just cells, no exits. If she wants out, she's going to have to go past Sword Saint.

He knows it, too; he stands there, waits for her to make the approach.

SWORD SAINT

I know this prison complex like the back of my hand. You can't outmaneuver me.

VANESSA

You've miscalculated. I've already won. Let me leave now, before I do something you're going to regret.

SWORD SAINT

You're bluffing.

VANESSA  
Kinda wish I was.

She SCREAMS at the door next to her.

**EXT. SUPERVILLAIN PRISON COMPLEX - NIGHT**

A thick concrete wall, miles outside the city.

The wall EXPLODES, and Sonora soars out into the city.

Sword Saint charges out over the rubble, watches her fly off.

He speaks into a radio on his gauntlet.

SWORD SAINT  
Sonora is out and airborne. I've got to look after the hole she blew in the wall.

A woman's voice comes in over the radio.

CRIMSON (O.S.)  
I see her, Saint.

Sword Saint prepares his swords as Red Dragon and Hundred Arms advance on him, freed in the explosion.

**EXT. SKY - NIGHT**

Vanessa flies through the sky. She WHISPERS into the air, her whispers vibrating with a curious strength.

VANESSA  
Chris.... Chris, they're coming for you. Chris-

A red streak slams into Vanessa from below, sending her tumbling before she's able to catch herself.

She looks around. Doesn't see anything.

The streak slams into her from behind, and stays this time - it's CRIMSON, a flying heroine with superspeed. She wears a deep red jumpsuit with a prism as her logo.

Crimson has Vanessa in a half nelson hold.

VANESSA  
Crimson, now is not the time.

CRIMSON  
I've been waiting for you to stumble back on my turf again, Sonora. I've picked up a few tricks since the last time we-

Vanessa SCREECHES, the sound deafening. Crimson drops her and covers her ears.

Vanessa slams her feet into Crimson with an extra sonic OOMPH, and sends her hurtling towards the ground.

VANESSA

So have I!

Vanessa hurtles away.

VANESSA

(vibrating whisper)

Chris... Chris!

She LISTENS, filtering through all the sounds of the city. She hears children LAUGHING, car horns HONKING, music BLARING, people TALKING...

And she hears Chris's voice, quiet, but clear. She focuses in on it.

CHRIS (O.S.)

...nessa? Where are you?

VANESSA

Volur knows. She's coming for you.

CHRIS (O.S.)

I just got off the plane, are you still in-

Crimson slams into Vanessa again, tackling her down towards the ground.

#### **EXT. CITY STREET - CONTINUOUS**

They smack into the ground with a sonic shockwave, leaving a large crater and a cloud of dust.

Beat.

A SHRIEK, and Crimson is sent flying out of the dust cloud. The shockwave leaves a tunnel through the dust, revealing Vanessa, somewhat battered, but using the pain to fuel herself.

Crimson skips across the ground, manages to land on her feet. She squares up at Vanessa; they stare each other down.

Vanessa's voice is almost unrecognizable; it booms and vibrates with barely-contained energy.

VANESSA

This won't end well for Jupiter.

CRIMSON  
Tough talk, but... what? What does  
he have to do with-

VANESSA  
He's in danger. You and I are the  
only ones fast enough to get to him  
in time to help.

Crimson has doubts, but Vanessa's words are landing.

CRIMSON  
How do you know?

VANESSA  
You know how I always know you're  
coming? I can pick sounds out from  
across the city.

Crimson smirks.

CRIMSON  
You didn't hear me coming this time.

Vanessa GROWLS; it echoes across the walls, vibrates the  
windows.

VANESSA  
I was occupied trying to save  
Jupiter's life.

Vanessa cocks her head.

JOTUN (O.S.)  
(faint)  
He doesn't have his gauntlets. This  
will be easy.

Vanessa's eyes widen. She SHOUTS at the top of her lungs,  
the shout bowling Crimson over and echoing across the  
entire city.

VANESSA  
CHRIS!

**EXT. AIRPORT PICKUP ZONE - NIGHT**

Chris waits with a large backpack; he looks around, alert  
for signs of danger.

Vanessa's shout echoes all around.

VANESSA (O.S.)  
CHRIS!

Everyone around him looks up, trying to find the source of  
the shout.

CHRIS  
Vanessa?! Are you-

Sparkling dust drops all around; everyone but Chris freezes in time.

Jotun drops in from above Chris, grabs his backpack, and rips it off his back.

With one hand, Jotun shoves Chris to the ground; with the other, he throws the backpack far enough away that you can't see it land.

Jotun laughs, looks down at Chris.

JOTUN  
Hello, Jupiter.

CHRIS  
Oh, that's bad.

Jotun picks him up by the neck. Holds him at eye level.

Volur flies in from above them, hovers just over Jotun's shoulder.

VOLUR  
"Vanessa" was kind enough to point us in your direction.

Chris chokes out his words.

CHRIS  
I thought you were going to make it look like an accident.

VOLUR  
Look around you. They'll see what we want them to see.

Chris does look around; everyone is spellbound, staring wide-eyed at nothing. Colors dance in their eyes.

Jotun tightens his grip, cutting off Chris's air supply.

Vanessa comes out of nowhere and slams into Volur, tackling her into a wall; she holds a vibrating sphere of sonic energy to Volur's head.

VANESSA  
Not so fast.

Volur laughs merrily.

VOLUR  
You don't have time to kill me and save your lover.

VANESSA

Try me.

VOLUR

Okay. Jotun?

Time slows to a crawl.

Jotun lifts Chris up to better slam him into the ground.

Vanessa's eyes widen. She turns around, releases Volur; Volur teleports away.

Vanessa tries to run to Jotun, but she's too far away; Chris is already halfway to the ground.

Time returns to normal speed as a red streak blasts past Jotun; Crimson stands a dozen yards away, holding Chris.

Vanessa is flooded with relief.

Jotun ROARS. Vanessa SCREAMS at him, blows him a few blocks away.

Chris looks towards where Jotun threw his bag.

CHRIS

Nice timing. My stuff is over-

Crimson bolts away; she returns a moment later holding Chris's gauntlets.

Vanessa runs to Chris; they embrace tightly. Crimson is surprised.

CRIMSON

You guys really are a thing? Like, really?

CHRIS

It's a long story.

CRIMSON

I didn't see your suit or mask. Are you-

Chris and Vanessa's hug finally ends.

CHRIS

Got damaged in New York. Looks like my identity's out now anyway; we'll deal with that tomorrow.

VANESSA

The others involved were The Professor, the Devourer, and-

MOB RULE (O.S.)

And me.

Mob Rule walks over from around the corner. Everyone takes defensive postures towards him.

Mob Rule shakes his head.

MOB RULE

Really, Vanessa? Is this really how things are shaking out?

VANESSA

You said you knew who he was.

MOB RULE

That doesn't mean... you're on their team, now?

VANESSA

It's not a team thing.

MOB RULE

And yet there you are squaring up at me, Jupiter on one side and Crimson on the other.

A small EARTHQUAKE rattles the ground.

CHRIS

Jotun and Volur are regrouping.

CRIMSON

On it.

She disappears in a blur.

CHRIS

She's gonna need help.

VANESSA

Go. I can handle him.

MOB RULE

"Handle me?" You can "handle me?"

Chris charges his gauntlets, wraps himself in lightning, and runs off at 50 MPH.

A dozen more Mob Rules walk out from various corners.

VANESSA

We don't have to fight.

MOB RULE

It says something about me that I  
(MORE)

MOB RULE (CONT'D)  
 thought we were friends up until  
 this point. Says something about  
 you, too.

VANESSA  
 Help us. Help us beat Volur, tell us  
 who else is coming.

MOB RULE  
 You were the goddamn idealist of the  
 two of us, do you remember that? I  
 was the opportunist, you were the  
 one who insisted we were right and  
 they were wrong!

The Mob Rules each double.

Vanessa notices.

VANESSA  
 I'm not giving up the fight. But I'm  
 not letting anyone hurt Chris.

The talking Mob Rule hangs his head.

MOB RULE  
 You know what the difference is  
 between you and me?

Mob Rule looks at her again.

MOB RULE  
 I know I'm a bad guy.

CUT TO:

**EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT**

Jotun stands in the middle of the highway, swinging wildly  
 at Chris as Chris weaves in and out of range.

Crimson flies through the sky as Volur shoots bolts of  
 dark energy at her.

CHRIS  
 Crimson, can you-

CRIMSON  
 Kinda busy!

Jotun jumps at Chris, and Chris barely dives into a roll  
 to avoid the attack.

Chris yells at Jotun.



CHRIS  
Bring it on, big guy!

Jotun ROARS, swings another meaty fist, and Chris can't get out of the way fast enough; Jotun knocks him a dozen yards across the pavement.

Jotun LAUGHS.

JOTUN  
Are you even trying?

Chris tries to stand, but the shadows coalesce around him and pin him to the ground.

The Devourer's HISSES come from everywhere at once.

THE DEVOURER  
hello, jupiter.

Chris's gauntlets surge with lightning, but the darkness strangles them, shuts them off.

A WAVE OF BLUE ENERGY shoots out from the other side of a hill and blasts Crimson from the sky; The Professor emerges with a backpack-mounted energy cannon.

CHRIS  
I thought things were going too well.

Jotun stomps over to Chris. Grabs him by the head and lifts him. Volur telekinetically lifts Crimson, pins her in midair.

CHRIS  
Your plan has already failed! What do you think you can accomplish here?

VOLUR  
You're right. Might as well go all-in.

Volur twists her wrist, and Crimson's neck SNAPS.

CHRIS  
JANE!

Volur tosses Crimson's body aside. The Professor walks up to Volur.

THE PROFESSOR  
You shouldn't have killed her. We could have salvaged the plan.

Volur shrugs.

The Professor looks at Chris, grim.

THE PROFESSOR  
So do we just kill him now?

Mob Rule drives up on a motorcycle. Stops next to them.

MOB RULE  
I have Sonora. I'm carrying her over  
now.

VOLUR  
Jupiter's powerless without his  
gauntlets. We'll let her watch us  
kill him.

JOTUN  
(to Chris)  
Don't worry, she'll join you soon  
after.

MOB RULE  
I did everything you asked. You and  
me, we're square now.

VOLUR  
We're not "square" until she's dead,  
fool. Demonstrate again.

Mob Rule growls, doubles himself and then disappears the  
double.

MOB RULE  
I'm *still* the real one.

Three of his doubles appear from towards the airport,  
carrying Vanessa's body.

They toss her in front of The Professor and Volur.

THE PROFESSOR  
Is she dead?

MOB RULE  
She's unconscious. Sue me.

Volur sighs.

VOLUR  
I'm not waiting for her to wake up.  
Might as well kill Jupiter now,  
then. Jotun?

The Mob Rules all disappear.

Volur's eyes widen as she realizes she's been tricked.

Vanessa's eyes snap open, and she SHRIEKS. It's deafening.

A shockwave blows Volur and The Professor back; Jotun drops Chris to cover his ears.

The Devourer's shadows quiver across his frame, revealing Doctor Thomas beneath them.

Vanessa flies forward, slams a sonically-charged fist into Jotun, sending him flying into a nearby hill; he hits so hard he leaves a crater.

The Devourer charges Vanessa; she leaps forward, a sonic sheathe protecting her from his shadows; she pushes through them to grab him by the neck, then grabs his shadows with her other hand; she vibrates the shadows into nothingness, then she tosses the now-defenseless Doctor Thomas aside.

Volur flies towards Vanessa's exposed back, a mystic dagger in her hand-

Then Sword Saint drops from the sky on top of her! He deftly disarms and cuffs her in the same motion.

The other heroes who helped him arrest Vanessa arrive and cuff The Professor and Jotun.

VOLUR

Fool! You think these can hold me?

Shadows gather around Volur... then fade, having accomplished nothing. Volur is surprised, angry.

SWORD SAINT

I do.

A flying truck lands, and Sword Saint and the others load Volur, Jotun, and the Professor into the back.

Vanessa runs to Chris and checks on him.

VANESSA

Chris! Are you okay?

Chris is dizzy, but conscious.

CHRIS

Holy heck that was loud!

Vanessa smiles and cries and hugs him tight.

Chris hugs back, still dazed.

Sword Saint walks up behind Vanessa.

Chris pushes Vanessa off of himself, tries to get to his feet; Vanessa has to help him.

As soon as he's up, Chris steps between Saint and Vanessa.

Vanessa squares up for another fight, but it's clear she's wiped.

SWORD SAINT

You need to step aside, Chris.

CHRIS

I will not.

SWORD SAINT

She's a criminal. Everything else aside, she just broke out of prison, let a few other villains out with her.

CHRIS

She broke out to save me.

SWORD SAINT

From villains that she enabled to harm you.

VANESSA

I would never have-

Sword Saint draws his sword and would have cut Vanessa if Chris didn't get in the way; Sword Saint stops his sword at Chris's throat.

SWORD SAINT

If she speaks again-

CHRIS

(angry)

Saint, I swear to you, if you hurt her, you and I are going to have a big problem.

Chris and Sword Saint stare each other down.

VANESSA

I am not a threat to you.

Sword Saint GROWLS at her, but doesn't attack.

SWORD SAINT

Crimson is **dead**.

CHRIS

And you have the murderers! Let Vanessa go!

SWORD SAINT

No. No! I will not let you ally yourself with this villain!

VANESSA

He would be dead right now if not for this villain!

SWORD SAINT

His secret identity would still be intact if not for you!

(to Chris)

Think about your mother, Chris!

Chris's eyes widen.

CHRIS

Is she-

VANESSA

Mob Rule said he had a double watching her.

SWORD SAINT

Is that a threat, fiend?

The other heroes take up flanking positions around Chris and Vanessa.

CHRIS

You know I'm not gonna let you take her. You arrest her today, I spring her out tomorrow.

Vanessa pushes past Chris.

VANESSA

Forget it, Chris. I can take them.

SWORD SAINT

Can you?

Vanessa's hand vibrates with sonic energy. She and Sword Saint stare each other down.

Chris turns around to face the heroes behind them, covers her back.

A long beat.

SWORD SAINT

Both of your secret identities have been exposed.

He sheathes his swords.

SWORD SAINT

You should get out of town before  
something like this happens again.

He walks away.

The other heroes are confused, surprised, but also  
relieved.

Chris and Vanessa relax.

VANESSA

Sword Saint.

Sword Saint stops.

VANESSA

Thank you.

Sword Saint keeps walking.

Vanessa grabs Chris and flies away.

**FADE TO BLACK**

**ROLL CREDITS**

As they roll:

**EXT. BELIZE STREETS - DAY**

Vanessa and Chris hold hands as they walk through a  
touristy area.

A sharp eye will notice them both wearing wedding rings.

VANESSA

I get it. I really do. But does she  
have to, like, live with us?

CHRIS

Not forever, just, while she's  
getting used to living in a new  
country.

CAROL (O.S.)

Oh! Chris! Over here!

Vanessa rolls her eyes, but she's got a smile on her face.

CAROL (55, Hawaiian shirt and fanny pack) runs through the  
crowd, gives Chris and Vanessa both big hugs.

CHRIS

Mom, you have to stop calling me  
that. I'm John, now.

CAROL

I'm an old woman, you have to give me time to get used to that.

VANESSA

You're not that old.

CAROL

Oh, hush.

But she liked hearing it; she holds Vanessa's hand as they all walk away.

CAROL

I was talking to one of the shop owners, he said there's a nice restaurant over on the beach that...

**INT. CHRIS AND VANESSA'S NEW BEDROOM - NIGHT**

It's cramped, not fully decorated. But it'll be nice once they're finished getting settled.

Vanessa sits on the bed, watches Chris show off a pieced-together super outfit made out of various scraps and cloths.

CHRIS

I think it'll work.

VANESSA

I'm so bad at this. I'd need to see the finished product to judge.

CHRIS

At least tell me what you think of the color palette.

VANESSA

Did you really put this much effort into your old outfit? Because... it did not show.

CHRIS

That's why I want to get this one right!

CUT TO:

Now Chris sits on the bed, shirtless and in pajama pants, while Vanessa models an all-black outfit with a towel for a cape.

Carol stands in the doorway and TUTS.

CAROL

I think you should-

Vanessa jumps.

VANESSA

Shit! Oh, sorry, ma'am, I didn't see you there.

CAROL

You don't have to call me mom, but you also don't have to call me "ma'am."

Vanessa considers.

VANESSA

I don't... I could call you mom.

Carol smiles.

**EXT. DARK BELIZEAN ALLEYWAY - NIGHT**

A MUGGER armed with a large knife advances on a YOUNG WOMAN. They speak in subtitled Spanish.

[The English translation of Spanish dialogue is in <angled brackets>]

YOUNG WOMAN

<Please, don't hurt me!>

MUGGER

<Give me your purse and->

RELÁMPAGO

(thick accent)

<Stop!>

RELÁMPAGO, Chris's new hero identity, drops down from the rooftop; he wears a uniform much like the one he was modeling.

MUGGER

<Who the hell are you?>

RELÁMPAGO

<I'm feeling Relampago!>

Vanessa, in her new identity as TRUENA, drops down on the other side of the mugger, between him and the woman.

TRUENA

(perfect accent)

<No, you are Relámpago.>

RELÁMPAGO

Right. <I are Relámpago!>

Truena laughs. The mugger is very confused.



RELÁMPAGO  
Come on, I'm trying.

MUGGER  
<What's going on?>

TRUENA  
<You're going to prison, moron.>

She blasts him right into Relámpago's arms; Relámpago spins him into the wall, zip ties his hands behind his back.

**FADE TO BLACK.**

THE END