

VERONICA MARS

"Drinking the Kool-Aid"

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Production Draft
Blue Draft

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VERONICA MARS
EPISODE 8
"Drinking the Kool-Aid"
BLUE Draft
10/15/04

CAST LIST

VERONICA MARS

KEITH MARS

WALLACE FENNELL

DUNCAN KANE

WEEVIL

CASEY GANT

BILL GANT

JUANITA GANT

HOLLY MILLS

JOSH

RAIN

DJANGO

ICE COLD MAN (DEPROGRAMMER)

NURSE

DARCY

CLARENCE WIEDMAN, JR.

MRS. MURPHY

GOVERNMENT TEACHER

MANAGER

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SET LIST

INTERIORS:

MARS INVESTIGATIONS
MARS INVESTIGATIONS -- RECEPTION
MARS INVESTIGATIONS -- KEITH'S OFFICE *
VERONICA'S CAR
MARS APARTMENT
MARS APARTMENT -- LIVING ROOM
MARS APARTMENT -- VERONICA'S SHOWER
MARS APARTMENT -- VERONICA'S BEDROOM
MARS APARTMENT -- KEITH'S BEDROOM
MARS APARTMENT -- KITCHEN
HIGH SCHOOL -- ADMINISTRATION OFFICE
HIGH SCHOOL -- CREATIVE WRITING CLASSROOM
HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY -- CROWDED
HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY
HIGH SCHOOL -- GIRLS BATHROOM
HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM (GOVERNMENT)
RESTAURANT
HOSPITAL ROOM
GREENHOUSE (THE MOONCALF COLLECTIVE FARM) *

EXTERIORS:

NARROW SHOULDER OF THE FREEWAY
CITY STREET
RESIDENTIAL STREET
RESTAURANT DECK
HIGH SCHOOL COURTYARD
HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT
THE MOONCALF COLLECTIVE FARM
CORRAL (THE MOONCALF COLLECTIVE FARM)
CAMPFIRE (THE MOONCALF COLLECTIVE FARM)
FARMHOUSE (THE MOONCALF COLLECTIVE FARM)
FARMHOUSE KITCHEN (THE MOONCALF COLLECTIVE FARM)
HOSPITAL
CEMETERY

COLD OPEN

1 INT. VERONICA'S CAR - DAY 1

Veronica punches her dashboard with both fists and weeps with raw, uncontrolled sobs. She struggles to compose herself.

VERONICA (V.O.)

So Jake Kane is your father. Deal with it, Veronica. "Life ain't fair." Says so on a coffee mug at the office. It's gotta be true.

2 INT. VERONICA'S CAR - MOVING - DAY 2

Veronica drives home from the prison. She attempts to make sense of everything that's just landed in her lap.

VERONICA (V.O., CONT'D)

Does dad know? Did he go after Jake Kane so obsessively because of the affair?

(then...)

Oh God. Does this mean...? Is Duncan my...?

SMASH CUT TO:

3 EXT. NARROW SHOULDER OF THE FREEWAY - DAY 3

Veronica wrenches out her passenger door as headlights flash by and the wind from passing trucks rocks her tiny car. *

4 INT. VERONICA'S CAR - MOVING - DAY 4

Veronica returns to driving. She's marshaled her wits. Her thinking is more analytical now.

VERONICA (V.O.)

So is Duncan onto this too? Is that why he let his mom break us up? That'd explain why he dropped me so suddenly. So heartlessly. *

(a new thought...)

Those photos that were sent to Mom, the ones with me framed in a gunsight -- was that how Jake finally stuck it to Dad, his old rival? I can just see him kicking back in his silk pajamas, nursing his macchiato and watching my family fall apart. He's got to be the one. Jake Kane destroyed my...
...my... *

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

VERONICA (V.O.) (cont'd)

(beat)

He destroyed the man who raised me.
So is that really it? If so, I'm
taking this bastard down. Hard. I
don't care whose father he is.

5 INT. MARS APARTMENT - NIGHT

5

Veronica enters. It's growing late and she's in a rotten mood, but she finds Keith giddy. *

KEITH

Close your eyes. Give me your hand.

Veronica responds with dull agitation. She's finding it difficult to look Keith in the eye. She knows too much.

VERONICA

Do what?

KEITH

C'mon, honey! You gotta see this!

VERONICA

What's the deal? You're jacked up
like some hillbilly kid who's
stumbled into daddy's meth lab.

His patience at an end, Keith claps Veronica's hand over her eyes and practically drags her down the hall. She's really in no mood for this, but Keith's goofy zeal is irresistible.

6 INT. VERONICA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

6

He leads her back to her bedroom, to her bed.

KEITH

Sit.

Veronica does as she's told. She realizes she's now perched on a waterbed. Keith arches his eyebrows expectantly.

KEITH (cont'd)

It's a waterbed!

Veronica wriggles her butt slightly, waits for the undulations to subside.

VERONICA

All right..? *

KEITH

You've wanted one of these things
since you were five years old.

(CONTINUED)

VERONICA

I also wanted to marry Vanilla Ice
and build the world's largest
collection of Z-bots.

KEITH

You asked -- no, *begged* me for a
waterbed like four years in a row.
It was your obsession.

VERONICA

(laughing, starting to
emerge from her funk)
Uh huh, it's all coming back to me
now. The way you explained it,
Santa was cool with the basic
concept, but had grave doubts about
second-floor deployment.

KEITH

That well-known bedrock pragmatism
of elvish culture. But I want you
to know, if it had been my call...

VERONICA

You're so full of it! But this is
incredibly sweet of you. Yard sale,
right? Maybe ten bucks?

Keith's eyes roll involuntarily back. For a detective he's
strikingly guileless.

VERONICA (cont'd)

It's okay, Dad. You forgot to peel
off the masking tape price tag.
Besides, our money situation being
what it is I'm glad you didn't blow
your wad on a whim gift for me.

KEITH

Well, you'll be even gladder to
know I got it as a throw-in with
some old Gordon Lightfoot LPs.

Veronica suddenly leans over to hug Keith's knees with a
vehemence that seems to take them both aback.

VERONICA

I love you. *

KEITH

(gratified but wondering
what's up)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

KEITH (cont'd)

Yeah, you too. Well anyway, sorry
it took so long to get Santa's dead
old ass in gear. 'Night, sweetie.

*

Keith leaves the room with a smile that says, for now, all's right with his world. Veronica lies in bed, fidgeting and slapping gently at the jiggling vinyl sack. After a few moments of this she clambers out of bed. She takes the GUNSIGHT PHOTOS out from under a dresser.

TIME LAPSE

Veronica scrutinizes the prints from all possible angles. Before long she spots something in one of the photos. She's walking along a sidewalk in front of storefronts.

VERONICA (V.O.)

This one was taken last year,
downtown. My sole reason for being
in that part of town was that Mom
insisted I see a counselor after
Lilly died. Every Thursday for six
weeks, Dr. Dave and I stared across
an ottoman at each other. Might
well have spent the time doing
crosswords and watching Dr. Phil.
But it made Mom feel like she was
doing something.

TIGHT ON A PHOTO IN VERONICA'S HAND: Veronica is leaving Neptune High and part of a daily-announcements marquee is in the foreground. Most of the sign is out of the frame, but the visible section reads, "Book Week."

VERONICA (V.O., CONT'D)

"Book Week"?

*

7 INT. HIGH SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION OFFICE - DAY 7

Veronica catches up to English teacher Mrs. Murphy. Veronica is slightly out of breath and clearly on edge.

VERONICA

Mrs. Murphy. When was Book Week?

MRS. MURPHY

Wow. Now there's the attitude I
like to see in our post-literate
age. Don't worry, Veronica, it's
still months away.

VERONICA

Last year's Book Week.

(CONTINUED)

MRS. MURPHY
(why would ANYONE care)
It's always the first week in
February.

8 EXT. CITY STREET - DAY 8

Veronica stands on the sidewalk in the exact spot where we saw her in the photo. Holding the print she looks all around. She eyes a restaurant patio across the street.

9 EXT. RESTAURANT DECK - DAY 9

Veronica sits at a table, aims her camera across the street.

VERONICA (V.O.)
Whoever took those photos had to be sitting at this exact table. It's the only one where the angle matches.

The waitress brings Veronica her check. Veronica notices that it's been dated and time stamped. Even the table number is listed. Jazzed at this revelation, she chugs the last of her ice tea and grabs her camera bag.

TRACKING SHOT follows her as she flags down the manager. *

VERONICA (cont'd)
Excuse me, m'am. Can you tell me if you keep all your receipts?

MANAGER
Well, yes we do, but only for a couple of weeks. After that we trash them...
(as Veronica slumps)
...but we keep computer records for three years. Tax backup.

VERONICA
Great! Is it possible for you to pull just the ones from February 4, between 4:45 and 5:30?

MANAGER
Miss, you...no, absolutely not. I'm very sorry but unless you're with the police or IRS -- and at your age I can only hope that's not the case -- I see no reason why you'd be needing that information.

(CONTINUED)

Veronica briefly considers her possible courses of action. She opts for a rough version of the truth.

VERONICA

Someone's been stalking me. Taking photos of me without my permission. They even mailed some to my mom.

She shows the manager the gunsight pic she's been using to establish the photographer's position.

MANAGER

My God.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

She's been pretty shaken up -- you can imagine. I'm positive that whoever took those shots was sitting at that table over there. Please ma'am, it's really important to me. I have to find who's doing this to me.

The manager is floored. Her resistance overcome, she clasps Veronica's arm supportively.

MANAGER

Come inside and sit down, please. I'll have you a printout in a couple of minutes.

10 INT. RESTAURANT - DAY 10

Veronica sits at an empty table sipping a cup of coffee. The manager reappears holding a piece of paper. She hands it to Veronica.

MANAGER

It's yours to keep. And good luck finding this nutjob.

TIGHT ON THE PRINTOUT: All the details are there -- time stamp, table number, etc. Best of all: a scanned image of a credit card receipt bearing the customer's full name. Off Veronica's triumphant smile.

11 EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - MORNING 11

Veronica sits in her car in front of a house.

LONG SHOT of a man exiting. He wears a suit. We see him at a distance.

(CONTINUED)

VERONICA (V.O.)
Clarence Wiedman, Jr. 1434 Lazy
Hollow Dr., Apartment No. 1600-A.
He sat at that table last February
4 and took those pictures of me.

12 INT. VERONICA'S CAR - MOVING - MORNING 12

Veronica follows the man through town.

Clarence Wiedman's car turns into a parking garage. Veronica keeps driving by. CAMERA PULLS BACK TO REVEAL that Wiedman has turned into Kane Software Corporate Headquarters.

TIGHT ON VERONICA'S FACE -- she's smoldering. She reaches into her bag, pulls out her cell phone. She dials 411.

VERONICA
Kane Software. Main number, please.

VOICE
The number you requested...

Veronica punches 1. The phone rings.

RECEPTIONIST (O.C.)
Kane Software. How may I direct
your call?

VERONICA
Give me Clarence Wiedman, please.

A new line starts buzzing. A new voice answers.

WOMAN'S VOICE
Security. Clarence Wiedman's
office.

*
*
*

Veronica clicks off her phone. She stares coldly across the street at the building.

VERONICA (V.O.)
And there it is. I know who's
responsible for scaring Mom away
from Neptune. Her former lover.
Dad's nemesis. So if Jake Kane is
my biological father -- and if I
can prove it -- that information's
going to be worth millions. And
after what that family has done to
mine I intend to collect.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

13 INT. MARS INVESTIGATIONS - DAY

13

Attractive, tastefully dressed BILL AND JUANITA GANT (early 40s) perch uncomfortably on the office's shabby furniture as if they're afraid of picking up some naugahyde-borne skin disease. The well-off couple pour their hearts out to Keith.

BILL

He was as well-adjusted a boy as you'd ever want to meet. Secure, extroverted, lots of friends and school activities...

JUANITA

Super popular, super focused.

BILL

Girlfriends, top grades, not into the drug scene as far as we could tell.

JUANITA

Definitely not a druggie! Casey just isn't the sort of kid who just up and joins a cult.

KEITH

Well, it's actually the ones who seem to have it all that so often...

BILL

I know what you're thinking. Spoiled rich boy raised in the soulless lap of luxury. No material whim denied, no spiritual need met. Who'd blame a kid for running away from a hellish existence like that, right?

KEITH

That's not what I'm thinking at all, Mr. Gant. I just want to help you get your son back. Can you tell me about the day Casey left?

JUANITA

There's hardly anything to tell. Six weeks ago, Casey kisses me goodbye and drives to school, same as always. But he never comes home.

(CONTINUED)

BILL

He says he's gone to live at some place called the Mooncalf Collective and, basically, "thanks for all you've done guys, but I can take it from here."

JUANITA

(to Bill, a reminder)
The Porsche.

BILL

That's right. The Porsche. He sold his Boxter and handed all the money over to the cult. Look, Mr. Mars, here's what we really need from you -- and what we're prepared to pay you very generously to do...

He has Keith's undivided attention.

14 INT. MARS INVESTIGATION - RECEPTION - DAY

14

The Gants exit past Veronica. Keith follows them to the reception area ad-libbing assurances that he'll stay in touch, tenaciously pursue all leads, etc.

He turns to find Veronica trying to muster the courage to pierce the tip of her finger with a disposable lancet.

KEITH

Now what?

VERONICA

(growls in frustration)
I'm trying to draw a blood sample. Our health teacher's giving out extra credits for people who take a self-administered HIV test. I bought this thing online, but I'm seriously punking on the finger-stick.

KEITH

This is so endearing! My badass action-figure daughter is afraid to draw a teensy little drop of blood.

VERONICA

You know, if you really were a good father you'd let me draw some of your blood for this test. Nobody'll know the difference.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

VERONICA (cont'd)
Besides, you've been sexually
active and I haven't.

KEITH
For crying out loud, you're serious
about this, aren't you?
(off her sheepish shrug)
Oh, give me that thing. Wuss.

As Keith performs the stick-and-squeeze routine he briefs
Veronica on his strategy for the Casey Gant case.

KEITH (CONT'D) (cont'd) *

Those are the parents of Casey
Gant. Know him?

VERONICA
Unfortunately. Yeah. He's just
another slice off the loaf of
shallow, vapid, pain-in-the-ass
09er-dom.

KEITH *

Huh. Well, despite your assessment, *

his parents still seem irked about *

his decision to run off and join a
cult.

VERONICA *

(amused)

He joined a cult? What do they
worship? Wedgies, keggers, their
parents' platinum cards?

KEITH

Doesn't matter. The kid's 18, so
there's little the law can do. If
we get the kid back, the Gants are
offering a five grand bonus. It's
time to focus like the proverbial
laser.

VERONICA

(agog at the thought)

Target acquired and locked on!

KEITH

What they'd be paying us for is
proof of unlawful activity out
there. Drugs, firearms, kidnapping -
- anything'll work. All we need is
a sound legal basis for the
sheriff's department to shut 'em
down.

(CONTINUED)

VERONICA
Still with you.

KEITH
This boy is a classmate of yours. Maybe you can find something that could shed a little light? His parents say he's still showing up at school.

VERONICA
Five thousand dollar bonus? I'll get you his genetic code.

KEITH
Veronica -- do not, under pain of slow, agonizing death, even think about going to the compound yourself. I'll run the title search, do the background check, take the recon shots -- all of that. *Nous comprenons-nous?*

VERONICA
(slightly miffed but touched by his concern)
Mais oui. Gotcha, Frenchy.

Keith returns to his office leaving Veronica his blood sample. Veronica whips out a second kit. She lances her own finger without a moment's hesitation or fear. It's nothing.

VERONICA (V.O.) (cont'd)
Okay. So there's no health class extra credit. There is, however, an online company that does paternity testing. It's 300 bucks straight out of my college fund. But I don't really have any choice, you know? I have to find out.

15 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - CROWDED - DAY

15

Class has just let out and DUNCAN raises his head from a water fountain. When he sees Veronica walking past he perks up and opens his mouth to speak. She's past him before he can get a word out. He's been coldly, pointedly snubbed.

As Veronica disappears down the hall, Duncan is left confused and more than a bit stung.

16 EXT. HIGH SCHOOL COURTYARD - DAY

16

Wallace attempts to chat up Veronica, but she's distracted by the incongruous sight of millionaire-spawn CASEY playing hackysack with a bunch of less affluent-looking kids.

WALLACE

(re. the hackysack action)
Hackysack -- the final arena of unquestioned white domination. If I had me a forty right now I'd pour it out in tribute.

(off Veronica's silence)
'Course, if you want to get technical, there's still corporate crime and serial killing.

Veronica is riveted at Casey's transformation. Unlike the rest of the '09er kids, he's dressed way down. Cheap jeans. Death Cab for Cutie t-shirt. *Hackysack*, for Christ's sake.

WALLACE (cont'd)

New crush?

VERONICA

Hardly. That's Casey Gant. He sold his Porsche. Joined a cult. Took up hackysack.

WALLACE

He looks normal enough.

VERONICA

Not if you knew him before.

We push in on Veronica studying Casey. It takes us into...

17 INT. CREATIVE WRITING CLASSROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

17

Funky English classroom. Framed Kurt Vonnegut quote. Bean bags in a circle. THAT sort of room. It's presided over by a BOHEMIAN-LOOKING TEACHER -- HOLLY MILLS.

We're on Casey's face. He's scrunched into a bean bag, laughing and grab-assing with brunette stunner DARCY, who's clearly his girlfriend. A glance tells us that both kids are inner-circle '09ers: fashionable, entitled, stinking rich.

Our curiosity about the object of Casey's amusement is satisfied as we pan to WEEVIL who's standing in front of the class, his head bowed over a grimy notepad. There's no trace of his signature cock-of-the-walk attitude as he mumbles his way through an original poem.

(CONTINUED)

WEEVIL

I had skin like leather and the
diamond-hard look of a cobra. I was
born blue and weathered, but I
burst just like a supernova. I
could walk like Brando right into
the sun, then dance like a
Casanova.

More TITTERS from Casey. Weevil looks up from his poem. There are a dozen others in the class including Veronica and Duncan who are, also, clearly a couple.

HOLLY

Go on, Eli.

WEEVIL

With my blackjack and jacket and
hair slicked sweet, silver studs on
my duds like a Harley in heat...

Casey bursts out laughing. ANGLE ON VERONICA - "what a dick."

HOLLY

Casey Gant -- you can learn good
manners or you can go see Mr.
Clemmons. Eli, it's amazing work.
You're doing great.

CASEY

Miss. That's not original poetry.
That's a Bruce Springsteen song.

HOLLY

Is that true, Eli?

Weevil is equal parts embarrassed and livid. Off Veronica staring holes through Casey and Darcy.

18 EXT. HIGH SCHOOL COURTYARD - DAY

18

Veronica comes out of her flashback, gathers her things.

VERONICA

I know somebody who'll give me all
the dirt I want.

WALLACE

Who?

VERONICA

His ex.

19 INT. HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS BATHROOM - DAY 19

Darcy primps in the mirror. Veronica stands behind her.

DARCY

I'm as clueless as anyone about this trip he's on. One day he's totally cool, the next he's like, alien lobotomy boy.

VERONICA

Any explanation?

DARCY

Nothing that made a bit of sense. Just a lot of babbling about "renouncing the toxic deathstyle of late-stage capitalist society" and "unremembering the consumerist siren-song." Composting came up too, I think. It was just too bizarre. I had to cut him loose.

VERONICA

Did he ever talk about any new friends he'd made -- before he started weirding out I mean?

DARCY

No, but you know what? I think he's got something going with Miss Mills.

VERONICA

(incredulous)

You mean like...sexually?

DARCY

Yeah. It got to where they were doing everything together. He's even started working on the literary magazine. This is the same guy who's downloaded every writing assignment since seventh grade. He used to think Cliff's Notes were for intellectual posers. There's no way they're not getting it on.

Off Veronica, considering.

20 INT. VERONICA'S ROOM - NIGHT 20

Veronica lies on her waterbed, gazing at the ceiling and formulating her next move.

(CONTINUED)

VERONICA (V.O.)
Ah. How to get in tight with the
Lit-Mag crowd..?
(the answer...)
Become one of them.

Veronica stands. She gets a pad and a purple pen from her desk, plops back down, ponders over the blank page.

VERONICA (V.O., CONT'D) (cont'd) *
...the attributes and style of crap
teen poetry: *Must* be written in a
funky color of ink. *Must* include
dominant themes of alienation,
sexual ambivalence, self-loathing,
death, etc. Operative question:
confronted with a typical stressful
life situation, What Would Trent
Reznor write? *

Off Veronica putting pen to page.

21 INT. VERONICA'S SHOWER - DAY 21

Veronica showers. We hear the groaning of pipes. Suddenly Veronica shrieks. The water has gone cold.

22 INT. MARS LIVING ROOM - DAY 22

Veronica enters in a robe.

VERONICA
Dad, you're an ex-cop. You know
gangland enforcer types. Can't you
find somebody to intimidate the
maintenance supe into fixing the
hot water problem. *

KEITH
He swears they're putting in all
new copper pipes, new 5000 gallon
tank. The works....

VERONICA
That nimrod's been feeding us the
same line for five months now. I'm
so sick of this place.

Veronica sighs, but with a palpable stoicism. She's been here before. At this point she's just blowing off steam.

(CONTINUED)

KEITH

Sorry. Just try to tough it out.
Hey if we get that five grand
bonus, maybe we can go out looking
for a new place.

Veronica arches an eyebrow. Further incentive!

23 EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY 23

And all the more so as she arrives at school at exactly the same time as the rich kids -- including Duncan -- are tooling up in their BMW convertibles and their Lexus SUVs. She sits for a moment in the LeBaron and marvels at the procession of automotive bling, \$200 haircuts and designer couture.

VERONICA (V.O.)

Not that I expect anyone to buy this, but I honestly don't resent the fact that these 09ers have all this stuff, and we don't. Seriously, they're welcome to all their swell goodies. I'd settle for just one good, hot shower.

(beat)

No, the thing that really chaps my ass is that they're all utterly, completely blind to how lucky they are.

*

24 INT. HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY 24

Veronica sits in her government class. The TEACHER raps his pointer against the whiteboard.

GOVERNMENT TEACHER

Ten-o-five, ladies and gents. Time to get cracking. Hope you all have those editorial-content analyses I assigned last week. Everybody good? Okay then, let's break into groups of four and start comparing notes.

Veronica fumbles for her assignment. Once it's in hand she stands to scout for an open workgroup. None are in evidence. She scans faces for invitations but can't seem to make eye contact. She advances on an open seat; a boy across the table pulls it in with his foot. The snub couldn't be more flagrant.

25 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY 25

Holly Mills catches up to Veronica.

(CONTINUED)

VERONICA
Miss Mills...what's up?

HOLLY
I, um, read the poem you submitted
for the literary journal, "I Cut
Because I Can."

VERONICA
(innocently)
Oh yeah, sure! There were a bunch I
thought about submitting but that
one just seemed a lot more, I don't
know, relevant to where I'm at now.
So, are you going to publish it?

HOLLY
You've got a really unique outlook,
Veronica. If you ever feel like
sharing, there's a place where
you're always welcome to do so.
We're kind of like a family.

VERONICA
Yeah, I know some kids that work on
your lit magazine workshop. They
say it's really cool.

Holly smiles. That's not what she means.

HOLLY
I'm talking about the folks out at
the Mooncalf Collective. That's
where I live. Something tells me
you'd really enjoy visiting. If
you'd like, I could even take you
out there today. How's that sound?

A beat as Veronica considers her father's instructions, but
it's only a beat. She wants that \$5,000 bonus bad.

VERONICA
It sounds...great. I'm good to go
whenever you are.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

26

EXT. THE MOONCALF COLLECTIVE FARM - DAY

26

Veronica pulls up to a farm house following Miss Mills. A few rusty old cars and vans are parked nearby: they're motorized Bondo sculptures held together with bumper stickers bearing vintage Aquarian rah-rah.

The countryside is as ludicrously idyllic as a matte painting from *Brigadoon*. Whitewashed fences. Haystacks. Red tractors. Fat, glossy livestock grazing in the fields and the sound of chickens clucking. Mills waves Veronica up to the front porch.

HOLLY

Come on over.

VERONICA

This is all so amazing. I feel like I'm on a movie set or something. Thanks so much for inviting me, Miss Mills.

HOLLY

Around here I'm just Holly. And as far as you can see is all ours. Why don't you just take a while to wander around. Get a feel for the place.

(then, offhandedly)

Just stay out of the barn. You don't want to go in there, trust me.

VERONICA (V.O.)

Hey, way to throw me off your trail, Holly! "Wander freely?" "Don't go in the barn whatever you do?" Maybe I should play this needy, despondent waif card more often.

*

27

EXT. MOONCALF COLLECTIVE FARM - DAY

27

Veronica moves past a van and finds a hive of activity. There's cool music on a sizeable boombox -- Q and NOT U's "Wonderful People" at this moment. Milling everywhere are eclectic but uniformly upbeat-looking folks, late teens to late-20s. Veronica wanders into an established food-prep area where an efficient crew is making dinner. It's all aggressively nutritious. Brown eggs. Unbleached pasta. Dark, grainy breads.

HOLLY

Come meet my man. Well, really he kinda belongs to all of us.

(CONTINUED)

Veronica's eyes narrow. Holly's words seem innocuous but in a "compound" occupied by a "cult" the specter of polygamy is unavoidable. Veronica regards JOSH. He's sexy, charismatic, in his mid-30s. Holly really kisses Josh -- get-a-room intensity, lingering eye contact, palpable heat.

HOLLY (CONT'D) (cont'd) *
Veronica, this is Josh.

JOSH
Hey there.

Josh opens his arms expectantly.

VERONICA (V.O.)
Help! Knew I should've included a few discreet lesbian overtones in that poem.
(mortified squeak)
Hi...

Josh steps up to the board-stiff Veronica but to her relief his hug is no worse than you'd expect from a mildly snookered uncle at a family reunion.

Casey wanders over. He's thrown for a moment by Veronica's presence but this quickly passes and he greets her warmly.

CASEY
Hey, Veronica, I heard you were coming, but I had to see to believe.

VERONICA
Can't say I blame you. This is off my beaten track a bit.

CASEY
Yeah -- but now that I think about it, it makes perfect sense you'd wind up here sooner or later.

VERONICA (V.O.)
Perfect sense? Cut to herbal tea spit-take.
(then...)
Thanks, Casey. I feel at home already.

CASEY
Cool. Well, I'm sure I'll be seeing a lot more of you. Catch up with you later, okay?

(CONTINUED)

Casey grabs a pretzel out of a bowl and bounds out of the room as Veronica is left to puzzle over Casey's certainty that he'll be seeing a lot more of her.

HOLLY

Veronica, we're only a couple of hours from dinnertime. Why don't you stay and join us? As you can see our gardens have really blessed us this year.

VERONICA

That'd be great. I'm starved; all I've had today is a...
(suddenly feeling sheepish
in this context)
...a Beef Mexi-Melt and some
Cinnamon Crispas.

Holly laughs forgivingly, as does one of the nearby AFRICAN AMERICAN FOOD-PREPPERS who's ladling plain yogurt from a massive jar into a row of baking dishes.

PREP GIRL

Those Crispas are *awesome*, aren't they! I'm a total Taco Hut slut myself. I'd give my body to anyone for a Choco Taco Ice Cream Dessert.

*

HOLLY

Believe it or not I think we can raise the culinary bar even higher. As you can see we get a lot done through teamwork. In fact, you're welcome to jump right in if you're interested...

VERONICA

Uh, sure. Fair warning though, my idea of gourmet cooking is shaking some three-year-old Bac-Os into my microwave soup.

PREP GIRL

Yeah, same here. But most of us are just grunt workers anyway. We find our satisfaction in realizing the visions of Chef Django here.

She yanks the dreadlocks of a wiry LATINO guy who's poring over notes on a clipboard. He responds slyly without looking up.

(CONTINUED)

DJANGO

The secret ingredient is love.

PREP GIRL

I'm Rain. Glad to meet you.

VERONICA

Veronica -- likewise.

Veronica pulls a ladle off a hook.

VERONICA (CONT'D) (cont'd) *

Now this thing you're doing -- it looks like something even I could handle. Where do I start?

RAIN

Well, I'm actually just about done here. But I'll hook you up with a job that's even more fun.

28 EXT. CORRAL - MAGIC HOUR

28

We note that this area is NOT the barn, but it is the area where the cows get milked. Rain shows Veronica how to do this, placing the city slicker's hands on the udder and demonstrating the aim-squeeze-tug procedure.

RAIN

That's a good girl, Isis. See, Veronica? It's pretty easy once you get the rhythm down.

VERONICA

(getting a bit flustered)
Easy when you do it. I'm not getting a freakin' drop.

RAIN

She may be a little nervous. Are you nervous, sweetie? Try stroking her teat a little before you start milking. It relaxes them.

Veronica, clearly creeped out, follows Rain's suggestion.

VERONICA

Eww. It's so hot and...meaty.

RAIN

You're doing fine. Just hold the squeeze until the last drop's out. There, that's perfect.

(CONTINUED)

As Veronica gets her milking groove on she starts plying Rain with leading questions.

VERONICA

So I guess you can tell I learned all I know about rural life from *Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman* reruns.

RAIN

What do you mean?

VERONICA

Well, one example: I was under the impression that milking is done in, you know, a *barn*.

Rain fails to take the bait.

RAIN

Yeah, sometimes I guess. I don't think there's any hard and fast rule though.

Veronica checks the bucket, then squeezes away for a few more silent seconds.

VERONICA

So, Josh seems pretty cool. Kinda sexy, isn't he?

RAIN

(oddly, sincere)
Really? Never noticed. But you're right, he is a great guy. You'll really enjoy getting to know him.

VERONICA

Yeah, I bet. Holly says it's looking like a kick-ass harvest this year. Don't think I ever asked what you're growing, though.

RAIN

Well, I guess you could call it the ultimate cash crop.

VERONICA

And what's that?

RAIN

I can't even begin to describe it, but it'll blow your mind.

*
*

(CONTINUED)

Off Veronica taking mental note of that.

29

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

29

Everyone eats al fresco while seated at picnic tables as someone with some real talent plays the Velvet Underground's "Oh Sweet Nothing." As people finish eating, they move down to blankets by a campfire.

VERONICA (V.O.)

Enough already with this mellow
incense-and-peppermints vibe! Let's
break out the mushrooms and dance
naked. Strap on the goat-skull
headgear. Sacrifice a few infants.
C'mon people, you're *cultists*.
Start acting like it!

Rain motions for Veronica to sit by her. Veronica stands, but then Casey calls and asks her to sit by him instead.

CASEY

Hey, Mars, why don't you come on
over? I feel like I kind of gave
you the hit-and-run treatment
earlier.

This is an odd moment. Veronica, the pariah, experiencing an embarrassment of social riches. She wavers in her decision.

CASEY (CONT'D) (cont'd)

I'm serious. We've been going to
classes together for three years,
but I don't think we've ever really
talked. Lately I feel like I've
been missing out on a lot.

*

Veronica accepts Casey's offer and settles in beside him. Josh stands and, with no apparent prompting, commands everyone's attention. He smiles warmly.

JOSH

So -- how was everybody's day?
What's up?

In quick cuts, people share their experiences and thoughts.

RAIN

I woke up scared. I felt like I'd
been in a dream of peace and
happiness but if I stepped outside
the bedroom door it would all be
gone forever.

(CONTINUED)

Veronica involuntarily rolls her eyes at this dose of hippie- *
dippiness. *

(CONTINUED)

JOSH

Strange, isn't it, how we believe more in the reality of pain than of peace and belonging? And in unbelieving we see the good as fleeting and intangible, like a dream from which we expect to awake at any moment.

CUT TO:

DJANGO

I was talking to someone at dinner and I suddenly I realized I was conscious only of my own voice and delivery. I was, like, directing myself in a play with no audience but myself.

JOSH

I'm feeling you there, brother! I have to watch for that all the time myself. I'm having to watch for it now! Do this: observe a day of silence. Only listen. Only receive. You see your proud, self-absorbed self coming -- run like hell.

CUT TO:

HOLLY

(blissfully)

This is scary. I'm 32 years old and I feel like I'll never have a better moment than this.

Appreciative murmurs from around the campfire. Veronica squirms. To the confirmed cynic's sensibilities, these warm/fuzzy effusions feel like Rocky Marciano body blows.

CUT TO:

CASEY

(looking at Veronica)

I'm working on a new friendship. Off to a bit of a late start, but I feel like I'm making some headway.

More appreciative murmuring. From Veronica's face and body language we see that she's nearing emotional overload. She can't quite process what's happening here.

(CONTINUED)

JOSH

Okay -- Veronica Mars. How about a big Mooncalf welcome for our honored guest?

Warm, appreciative applause and "here! here!"s.

JOSH (cont'd) *

I guess, the elephant in the...pasture is a question: to what do we owe the pleasure?

VERONICA

(unnerved, cranky at being put on the spot)

I don't know. Guess I'm just a questing soul looking for pat answers to life's great mysteries.

Josh is neither oblivious to nor fazed by Veronica's confrontational attitude.

JOSH

Ah! Our in-house specialty! Are there any particular mysteries you'd like to knock off in the five minutes we have left?

VERONICA

Well -- the fate of Atlantis, how male and female bugs tell each other apart.

Josh deflects her sarcasm with a laugh that registers as appreciative, not shit-eating. Holly tries to salvage the moment.

HOLLY

Veronica is a writer, a poet. She's got a unique voice I think you'd all appreciate.

(to Veronica)

Would you honor us by reading the one you showed me earlier?

VERONICA (V.O.)

In my script, here's where Viggo Mortensen drops out of the sky on an impossibly long rope and whisks me away. How bad do I want this five grand anyway?

(CONTINUED)

Grimly willing herself onward she pulls the poem out of her handbag and begins to read.

VERONICA (cont'd) *

"I sense, imagine what courses
beneath the smooth white surface/In
silent perpetual motion within
obscure chambers and
passageways/Relentless yet absent
of purpose/I seek the source and
purpose of its mindless energy/My
steel is poised above the
surface/The moment of release
withheld, just for the moment/Like
the final release from all pain and
wondering..."

Veronica suddenly is aware that her intended gothverse parody is blowing her audience away. Their empathy and raw emotion are overwhelming, intolerable.

VERONICA (cont'd) *

I'm sorry. I have to go.

Shunning eye contact she grabs her handbag, jams the poem into it and heads for her car.

30 EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

30

Veronica is walking toward her car, still trying to compose herself when she realizes she's right next to the barn. She eyes it suspiciously. Why can't she go in there?

She looks around and, seeing that she apparently has not been followed, decides to enter. She throws open the barn door and a bandaged HORSE charges out and rears up, knocking Veronica down into the dirt and mud. The Mooncalves, responding to the noise, make their way over to check on Veronica. *

VERONICA

God, I'm so sorry everybody. I was
freaked out and just wanted
someplace to sit and pull myself
together before driving.

Understanding sentiments are offered all around, but Casey appears to see right through her. Josh grabs the horse's reins. *

HOLLY

It's my fault, Veronica. I
shouldn't have teased you earlier
with that stuff about the forbidden
barn. I'd have been curious too.

(CONTINUED)

JOSH

This is just a little project we're undertaking. One of our neighbors was gonna put down Hildegard, here. We're nursing her back -- slowly, but surely.

*
*
*
*
*

Josh pats the horse's neck. Veronica cringes and nods. She realizes that Josh is being completely truthful. The other group members ad lib expressions of support. They're too damned decent and understanding by half. We see that, in Veronica's mind, it's just not right.

*

31 INT. MARS APARTMENT - NIGHT 31

Veronica comes home.

KEITH

You're covered in mud.

VERONICA

See. That's why you make the big bucks.

KEITH

What did you find out about m'boy Casey?

VERONICA

His ex-girlfriend confirms what his parents said. He fell right off the face of the planet.

32 INT. VERONICA'S SHOWER - NIGHT 32

Veronica steps into the cold shower. Screams. Brrrrrrrr.

33 INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY 33

Veronica spots Casey heading for the restroom and hustles to intercept him.

VERONICA

Casey. Hey, wait up.

(Veronica catches up)

I'm so ashamed of myself. For my meltdown last night. For being bitchy to Josh. For snooping around the barn. For everything.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

VERONICA (cont'd)

You need to know I was totally impressed by what you're doing out there, and by everyone I met -- especially Josh. Can you please tell them what I said?

CASEY

Why don't you tell them yourself?

VERONICA

Are you nuts? I totally abused everybody's trust and hospitality. I was a rampaging jackass.

CASEY

Have you forgotten who you're talking to? I'm Casey Gant! I wrote the jackass Bible, the jackass Koran, the jackass Talmud...

Veronica smiles at this endearing -- and, for the old Casey, unimaginable -- bit of self-deprecating wit. She messes with her hair, blushes and generally hints at real (though perhaps unconscious) attraction to the reformed '09er jerk.

CASEY (cont'd)

Why don't you come back out? It'd mean a lot to me.

*

34 EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

34

Veronica arrives at the farm. Ad-libbed welcomes and displays of affection reinforce, once again, a sense of the collective's warm family atmosphere. Josh enters.

JOSH

Hey, Veronica. I can't tell you how happy I am to see you again. Guess you can see that everybody else feels the same way.

VERONICA

I'm floored. There are no words to say how bad I feel about the other night.

JOSH

Apologies are for those who doubt the ability of others to...
(he catches himself)
Sorry -- the platitudes are kind of second nature for me. Listen, would you like to join me for a walk?

*

(CONTINUED)

VERONICA (V.O.)

I knew it. This is when the cult leader claims me as his new bride.

(then...)

Um., sure.

TIGHT on VERONICAS's BAG. She reaches in, turns on her tape recorder, and activates her Tazer. She's ready for anything.

JOSH (PRELAP)

I'm not judging you. I'm just saying what you must already know.

35

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

35

Josh and Veronica stroll through lovely green woods.

JOSH

You've built this fortress around yourself. It does offer a limited kind of protection but you're also keeping other people and all they have to offer at bay. Starving your soul. Maybe you should consider opening yourself up, letting other people inside.

Veronica is on full alert.

VERONICA (V.O.)

"Let other people inside"? Got anyone particular in mind? Maybe if I discreetly flash Mr. Tazer...

But as they continue on, Josh puts no moves on her. Instead he leads her to a second barn-like door.

*

JOSH

So anyone tell you what we grow here?

*

*

*

VERONICA

I heard it was the ultimate cash crop.

*

*

*

JOSH

That it is.

*

*

Josh slides open the barn door revealing the interior of a GIANT GREENHOUSE. Red-leafed poinsettias grow in seemingly endless rows.

*

*

*

(CONTINUED)

JOSH (cont'd) *

Impressive isn't it? *

A36 INT. GREENHOUSE - CONTINUOUS A36 *

Veronica and Josh step inside. *

VERONICA *

(dumbfounded, this is not *

what she expected to *

find) *

Are those poinsettias? *

JOSH *

And Christmas is right around the *

corner. *

(CONTINUED)

JOSH (cont'd)
We never would've been able to
finish off the greenhouse if Casey
hadn't given us the money.

*
*
*
*

VERONICA
(Fishing... Is this where
they hit me up for cash?)
I wish I weren't so broke right
now. Otherwise I'd try to chip in
too.

*
*
*

JOSH
Well, our goal isn't to be a
charity case. We've got nothing
against money. It's kind of like
water -- lots of symbolic power but
really just a lifeless substance
when you get down to it. But the
paradox is, life as we know it is
impossible without it. You see what
I'm saying?

Veronica squints and gamely tries to follow.

VERONICA (V.O.)
No, not really. But one thing I'm
pretty sure of is that I'm not
being asked for any donations.

36 INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - DAY - SERIES OF SHOTS 36

The dinner crew is hard at work. Stereophonics "Have A Nice
Day" is pumping from the stereo. In a series of shots that
stays just on the believable side of a "Big Chill" moment.

*
*

VERONICA WORKS IN THE KITCHEN WITH THE OTHERS INCLUDING
CASEY: HELPING ROLL LONG TUBES OF DOUGH.

VERONICA MARVELS AT ACROBATIC BEHIND-THE BACK PASSES AND
CATCHES OF KITCHEN IMPLEMENTS

VERONICA GETS A CHUNK OF DRY ICE DROPPED INTO HER TEA GLASS,
CAUSING WITCHES'-BREW SMOKE TO BILLOW OUT.

VERONICA IS SLOW TO GET WITH THE HAPPYHEAD VIBE. BUT BY
DEGREES, SHE SURRENDERS TO IT. SHE AND RAIN START GROOVING IN
EARNEST TO THE MUSIC.

Josh enters.

(CONTINUED)

JOSH
Listen up everybody. This is
important.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JOSH (cont'd)

Somebody from the county water department is out here to check for lead in the pipes. So try not to run the water for 15-20 minutes, okay?

This doesn't stop the dinner-makin' party.

A beat later, Keith enters in a city workman jumpsuit. He notices Veronica dancing, her hands elbow deep in a bowl of bread dough. He doesn't flinch. He just keeps moving through the house.

Veronica, however, knows that her ass is grass. We hold on her suddenly very sober face. This is WAY bad.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

37 INT. MARS INVESTIGATION - NIGHT

37

Veronica enters the office sheepishly. Keith is entering from the kitchenette at the same time. He wastes no time laying into her, hammer-and-tongs.

KEITH

There you are. What the hell were you thinking, Veronica? That's got to be the worst decision I've ever seen by someone who's not literally brain-damaged.

Veronica offers no defense.

KEITH (CONT'D) (cont'd)

And since when do you reserve the right to totally blow off my instructions? Does my judgement, my concern for your safety carry that little weight with you?

*

VERONICA

I'm sorry, Dad. I screwed up bigtime. I know. Trust me, I'm sticking to your game plan the rest of the way.

(beat)

It's just that they seemed so...harmless.

KEITH

(snapping angrily)

What was your basis for that call? The absence of swastikas engraved on their foreheads? Please reassure me you aren't that dense.

VERONICA

I'm sorry. ...Really.

As Veronica wanders over to her desk.

VERONICA (cont'd)

So -- did you get any bugs planted out there?

*

KEITH

Yes.

VERONICA

And you've been listening in?

(CONTINUED)

KEITH

Mmm-hmm.

VERONICA

Heard anything incriminating yet?

KEITH

Nope. It's like listening to the Brady Bunch with a reggae soundtrack.

VERONICA

How about your background check on Josh? Anything shady, out of line?

KEITH

Until four years ago he was manager of the downloadable ring development team at E-Tones. One day with no warning, he quit his job, cashed out his stock and used it to buy land for the collective. Holly's totally clean as well.

*
*
*

VERONICA

So what's our next step?

KEITH

There's no "our" about it. You're officially off the case. I'll take it home from here.

VERONICA

What? That makes no sense whatsoever! Aren't you even interested in what I've learned?

KEITH

What's the point, Veronica? I'm prepared to admit that these Mooncalves probably don't merit the full ATF fire-bombing treatment. My guess is they're just a bunch of tie-dyed Oliver Twists who scam naive rich kids to pay the bills.

The door buzzer sounds. Bill and Juanita Gant have arrived. They're accompanied by an odd, stoic, quietly intimidating type. As far as the Gants know, Veronica is simply the receptionist. They ignore her presence and launch right into their discussion with Keith.

*

(CONTINUED)

BILL

Mr. Mars. I'm sure you have a lot to report, but first there's something you need to know.

KEITH

Step into my office.

*
*

Keith leads the trio back into his office. The Ice Cold Man swings the door closed behind him, but Veronica sticks a foot in the door frame and prevents the door from closing fully. She stands in the doorway, listening to the conversation inside.

*
*
*
*

A38 INT. MARS INVESTIGATIONS, KEITH'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS A38

The Gants don't sit. They stand in front of Keith's desk.

*
*

JUANITA

Mr. Mars, my mother -- Casey's grandmother -- is dying. She had a severe stroke Tuesday night. She's effectively brain dead and not expected to make it more than a couple more days.

*

KEITH

My condolences.

JUANITA

Thanks. It's been a tough, disorienting time for us. Even more so because of something else we've just learned from her attorney.

KEITH

What's that?

JUANITA

If she dies, the bulk of her fortune -- about \$80 million -- will go to Casey. We're afraid he'll simply hand it all over to that cult.

Keith, predictably, is thrown for a loop by this news. He pauses to collect his wits before speaking.

KEITH

I appreciate the information. And I wish I could say I've found something we could nail them on, but that's not the case.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

KEITH (cont'd)

Not yet anyway. At least you should know I've seen no evidence that Casey's in danger.

The silent man speaks up. We'll never learn his name. Let's just call him ICE COLD MAN.

ICE COLD MAN

I'm sorry to contradict you, Mr. Mars, but I have substantial experience with these groups.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ICE COLD MAN (cont'd)
Enough to know that Casey's in
grave danger indeed. The sooner we
get him off that farm the better.
If your current strategies aren't
working, perhaps you should try
something new.

Veronica's body language tells us she'd love for her father
to tell this guy to fuck off.

VERONICA (V.O.)
Add this to the list of things
money buys you: permission to tell
people to kiss your ass.

KEITH
Any relevant experience you can
share, I'll be happy to consider
it. What's your background anyway,
if you don't mind my asking?

ICE COLD MAN
Technically, my field is SMSPI --
Systematic Manipulation of Social
and Psychological Influence. One
vulgar term is deprogramming.

KEITH
No kidding! I've heard of that.
How's it work anyway?

The Ice Cold Man notices the door to Keith's office isn't
completely closed. He steps over and forces it closed, ending
Veronica's eavesdropping. He returns to his dispassionate
description of his work. *

ICE COLD MAN *

In simple terms I control the
elements of a subject's social and
psychological environment to
eradicate undesirable modes of
behavior. I'm then able to instill -
- or re-instill -- desirable ones.
I'm quite good at my work.

KEITH
Yeah, I bet.

JUANITA
We just want Casey back home again
-- soon. This is a sensitive
situation and we ask you to proceed
accordingly.

(CONTINUED)

KEITH

Of course.

Off Keith's ill-concealed anxiety as he considers his options.

38 INT. MARS APARTMENT - NIGHT 38

Keith sits on the sofa. He sifts through a stack of documents. From the next room we hear the sound of pipes groaning in the wall and shower water splashing against tile.

VERONICA (O.S.)
AAAAAAGHH!

Keith grimaces. He wishes he could provide better. Still, it is kind of funny.

39 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY 39

Veronica walks down the hallway. Wallace catches up with her.

WALLACE
Not to sweat you, V, but when'll we be seeing those "FBI Swarms Cult Compound" headlines?

VERONICA
(grimly)
This case is dead in the water. We've found diddly squat on the Mooncalves and I seriously doubt there's anything to find. Plus, my dad caught me out at the farm. So now it's seriously off limits.

WALLACE
Dang!

VERONICA
As if that weren't enough, I'm starting to doubt the whole rationale for what we're doing. Casey -- noxious, overbearing '09er butthead Casey -- has become a really sweet guy. And I think this so-called cult deserves most of the credit. *

WALLACE
Sounds to me, Veronica, like you've been drinking the Kool-Aid.

VERONICA
I have not.

WALLACE
You better reco'nize.

(CONTINUED)

Veronica rolls her eyes.

VERONICA
Thank you for being my own personal
Springer audience. Should I check
myself before I wreck myself?

WALLACE
I'm just saying -- you may be
getting soft.

VERONICA
(no I'm not)
Right. And I'm...

She's cut off by Casey's approach.

CASEY
Hey, Veronica. Listen, I'm going to
visit my grandma in the hospital
after school. You wanna come with
me? *

VERONICA
Yeah, sure, Casey. I'd love to.

Wallace mouths the word "soft" behind Casey's head.

40 EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY 40

Veronica and Casey walk and talk up to the front entrance of
a hospital.

CASEY
I hope you make it back out to the
farm again. You really seemed to be
digging it the other day.

VERONICA
Yeah, once I got past the
obligatory sensitive-artist
breakdown, things did seem to
improve.

CASEY
Didn't surprise me. If you really
were a sensitive hothouse flower
you'd never have survived so long
among a crowd like mine.

VERONICA
Is it really your crowd anymore?

(CONTINUED)

CASEY
No, I guess not.

41 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY 41

Veronica and Casey enter the room. We see an elderly woman in a bed she'll never leave. Casey greets a nurse attending to his grandmother.

CASEY
Hey, Laurie, how's it goin'?

*

NURSE
Pretty good, Casey. We're starting her on a glucose drip but you can push the stand against the wall if you want to sit next to her. You know the drill.

CASEY
Sure do. Thanks. We won't be long.

The nurse exits. Casey pushes the stand against the wall, leans over his grandmother, takes her hand.

CASEY (cont'd)
It's still hard to accept - seeing her this way.
(beat)
You wanna hear something sad?

*

VERONICA
Sure.

CASEY
My parent's 'fortune' -- every last nickel of it -- comes from grandma's publishing company. Mom and Dad had *nothing* to do with it. Grandma provided everything.

Casey smooths his grandmother's hair.

CASEY (CONT'D) (cont'd)
Then, a couple years ago, when she started having strokes...started forgetting stuff...my parents, who called her "grammonster" behind her back, just quit paying any attention to her.

*

Casey pauses to compose himself -- the resentment, the grief.

*

(CONTINUED)

CASEY (CONT'D) (cont'd) *
It's amazing how much better they
started treating me when they found
out she'd decided to leave all her
money to me.

VERONICA *
(stunned by the *
revelation) *
So...how long have they known that
she was willing her money to you?

CASEY
They've known for a year.

42 EXT. MOONCALF COLLECTIVE FARM - MAGIC HOUR 42 *

Veronica pulls up at the farmhouse and drops Casey off. It's a gorgeous, crystalline early autumn night. In the distance we see the group gathered by the campfire. We see from her wistful expression that she's powerfully drawn to join them.

VERONICA
I'd really like to come with you.

CASEY
I know. Thanks for spending this
time with me. You know, you really
could...

Now Veronica, too, is a bit choked up. She shakes her head and restarts her engine. Casey smiles: "Well, I tried." We feel a powerful spark between Casey and Veronica in this moment. *

43 INT. MARS APARTMENT 43

Veronica rummages in the fridge for something to drink. She pulls a quart of milk out of the fridge and pours it into a glass. As she's putting the carton back away, Veronica gasps.

CAMERA swivels around to reveal what's taken Veronica's breath away.

It's a picture of RAIN as a 15-year-old. Born Debby Meyer. She's been missing for two years. She's still a minor. And there it is: the smoking gun.

VERONICA
Rain?

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

44 INT. MARS APARTMENT KITCHEN - NIGHT

44

Keith enters to find Veronica seated, elbows on the table, staring at the side of a milk carton. He stops, studies her. Veronica is clearly wound up, deep in thought.

KEITH
(tentatively)
That must be good milk.

Veronica picks up the milk carton, offers it to Keith.

VERONICA
Recognize her?

Keith studies the girl's image on the carton. He seems to realize that he's seen her before but the context eludes him.

VERONICA (cont'd)
That's Rain; one of the girls from
the collective. Real name: Debby
Meyer. She's a runaway. A minor.

Keith doesn't respond immediately. He studies Veronica's face, sees her dismay.

KEITH
Good work, Veronica. And I respect
what you've done. I'm sure this
wasn't an easy decision, telling
me.
(as Veronica looks away)
So...We ought to call Gant family
right away.

VERONICA
Hold it -- hold it please, Dad.
Let's think about this for a
minute.

KEITH
(gently, but not wanting
to protract the agony)
This is what we've been working
for. We were praying for a break
and now you've given it to us.
Don't tell me the prospect of new
digs and steady hot water doesn't
sound good to you.

Veronica glowers.

(CONTINUED)

KEITH (CONT'D) (cont'd) *
We can't just blow this off,
Veronica. They're contributing to
the delinquency on a minor. It's a
serious crime.

VERONICA
Oh, please, Dad! You've been around
these people. Do you honestly
believe they're corrupting anyone?
I think they're exactly what they
seem to be: a bunch of sweet,
naive, Sixties throwbacks.

KEITH
Possibly true, but definitely
beside the point. Even if they are
the utopian sweethearts you think
they are, we don't answer --
morally or otherwise -- to the
Mooncalf Collective. We answer to
our clients, who are paying us to
do a job. And that job is to find
the information they want.

Off Veronica, having a tough time buying that.

45 INT. CREATIVE WRITING CLASSROOM - DAY 45

Veronica enters Holly Mills classroom during lunch. Holly's
straightening the room -- dragging beanbags back into place,
re-shelving books. She lights up at her new friend's arrival.

HOLLY
Hey, Veronica. Casey told me you
were out at the farm last night. I
wish you could've stayed for a
while. It was *so* beautiful out. The
moon was so bright you could almost
read by it.

Veronica's face is flushed, her voice barely audible.

VERONICA
Holly, there's something you need
to know about. Right now. See, I've
just found...

Holly is unnerved by Veronica's distress but doesn't
interrupt as she searches for words.

(CONTINUED)

VERONICA (CONT'D) (cont'd)
The thing is...I work for my Dad,
who's a private detective, okay?
And...and I was coming home last
night and I found this milk carton.

Veronica's confession is interrupted by Casey entering the room. He's in tears. In his hands is a HALL PASS.

CASEY
Mr. Clemmons just called me to his
office. He said my dad called him
and...and Gramma died this morning.

He tries to continue, but manages only an anguished moan. His arms fall helplessly to his side. Off Veronica and Holly rushing to his side to comfort him.

46

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

46

Gramma's funeral. Bill and Juanita Gant are there. So are a handful of collective members including Rain, Holly and Josh. Veronica stands separated from either group.

The coffin is lowered into the ground. People start to wander away. A few of the Mooncalves wave and smile at Veronica. Veronica manages to return their greetings but turns quickly into the departing crowd to pre-empt any conversation.

When Veronica sees Josh with Holly and Casey, however, she realizes she has to finish her confession this time.

She breaks away from the crowd and flags the trio down.

VERONICA
Josh! Holly! I've done something I
regret. I betrayed all of you. I
found out that Rain is a runaway
and I...I told my dad about it. You
have to get her the hell out of
there. Right away. The sheriff'll
probably be on your front porch
before dark. I can't take back what
I've done, but you deserve to...

Josh cuts her off. Weirdly, he doesn't appear to be shocked or even worried.

JOSH
It's okay, Veronica, we get the
picture. Don't freak out. Things
will be just fine. We appreciate
your being upfront with us.

(CONTINUED)

VERONICA

Ever since my friend Lilly died, anger's the only thing that gives me any sense of control over my life. You were right: I'm shutting everybody out. And I see what it's doing to me, but I just can't stop. I feel like there's something's wrong with me.

*

JOSH

(levelly)

You know what you need to do, Veronica? Just pull your head out of your ass and *be present* in your own life. Stop and recognize that's there's nothing of any value that you lack.

VERONICA (V.O.)

(stunned, a revelation)

So you're saying I'm utterly, completely blind to the good things I've got?

Veronica is taken aback by the brutally untouchy-feely nature of Josh's advice. But it's just what she needed to hear. Josh places his hand on Holly's arm and gently pulls her away.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Excuse us, Veronica.
(to Casey and Veronica)
Join us later if you like.

*
*
*

VERONICA

Thanks, Josh. I won't keep him long.

Josh and Holly walk to the parking lot together. Veronica and Casey head the opposite direction.

CASEY

I appreciated your being here. For no reason that I can see you've been a real friend to me lately.

Veronica shakes her head incredulously.

VERONICA

You can still say that after what I just told you?

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

I guess I don't think you were
faking the kindness. Am I wrong?

In response, Veronica clasps Casey's elbow as they walk. Whether or not Casey could be a romantic interest takes a backseat to the fact that she really likes and respects this guy.

As they approach their cars they find Casey's parents waiting for him by a limo. Casey smiles wryly and shakes his head.

CASEY (cont'd) *

Guess I need to go have this
conversation. They want to hear
that I'm not going to let them
starve.

Casey smiles at Veronica. She returns the smile. As he makes his way up to the car, TWO HUGE MEN burst out of the parked car behind Casey and shove him into the backseat of a limo.

VERONICA

Hey! What are you doing to him?
Stop!

Veronica running towards the car, but she's too far away to do any good.

ICE COLD MAN gets out of the same car that the HUGE MEN got out of. He walks calmly to the door of the limo and steps inside. The door closes just as Veronica arrives. The limo takes off, and Casey is gone.

47 INT. MARS INVESTIGATION - DAY 47

Veronica arrives. She's frazzled.

VERONICA

Dad, we have to call the police.
Casey's just been kidnapped.

KEITH

What are you talking about?
Kidnapped by who?

VERONICA

His parents -- and that creepy guy
who was with them at our last
meeting. They grabbed him in the
parking lot at the funeral. Just
stuffed him in their limo and drove
away.

(CONTINUED)

KEITH

They grabbed him? So it was against his will, then? He was trying to get away?

VERONICA

(frustrated at Keith's obtuseness)

No, it's not like he was running from them. I was kind of far away, but I could see he was surprised by what was happening.

Keith pauses to process this statement.

KEITH

Okay, I wasn't there. You saw what you saw. I don't doubt your interpretation. But if I were still sheriff and somebody told me an 18-year-old kid got in a car with his parents after his grandmother's funeral -- well, there's nothing I could do about it. Not for a couple days anyway. Let's hold off and see what happens, alright?

Veronica accepts, however reluctantly, that Keith is right. She sighs her assent.

VERONICA

You know, I wish we hadn't turned in that information about the collective.

KEITH

We didn't.

VERONICA

(hoping he means what she thinks he means)

What? You didn't turn over that info?

KEITH

I thought about what you said. What I'd heard on the wiretap. And you're right; once you get past all the Sixties theme-park trappings their community's way more wholesome and functional than -- just for example -- Neptune is.

(CONTINUED)

Keith reaches for a manila envelop full of papers.

KEITH (CONT'D) (cont'd) *

I did a little checking on Debby Meyer too.

(beat as he flips through the papers, shakes his head)

What a life! Poor kid's been in four foster homes since she was eight years old. Reports of serious abuse in at least two. I had to admit it: she's a lot better off where she is.

Veronica couldn't love Keith much more in this moment.

48 INT. MARS APARTMENT - SUNSET 48

Veronica enters the apartment carrying the mail. She pulls out one important letter.

TIGHT ON LETTER from FAMILY TREE INDUSTRIES - "Confidential. Results enclosed."

49 INT. VERONICA'S ROOM - NIGHT 49

Veronica lies on the water bed, considering. She seems to be trying to stare through the envelope.

VERONICA (V.O.)

It's my call now. I can open this letter and find out if my dad is really my dad. If he's not, then I am almost certainly the daughter of Jake Kane. And, consequently, an heiress.

We hold on Veronica who creates little waves with her feet that rock her gently, each one reminding her of Keith's love.

50 INT. KEITH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 50

WE CUT INTO THE BLACKNESS OF KEITH'S BEDROOM.

A DOOR OPENS FLOODING ALLOWING LIGHT INTO A DARKENED ROOM.

A FIGURE MOVES INTO THE ROOM.

A BEDSIDE LAMP FLIPS ON REVEALING WE'RE IN KEITH'S BEDROOM.

Keith, having turned on the light, catches Veronica feeding an envelope into his SHREDDER.

(CONTINUED)

VERONICA

Hey, Dad.

Keith stares at his daughter with an expression that reads: what kind of strange child did I raise?

KEITH

Honey. I don't mean to ask a silly question, but is it really necessary that you do that right now.

Veronica turns to her father as the last bit of envelope is mulched. She looks him in the eye.

VERONICA

As a matter of fact, it is.

51 EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY

51

Veronica gets out of the LeBaron. She notices Duncan pulling in next to her car. She returns to her car and removes a piece of yellow paper from underneath her windshield wiper blade. When Duncan achieves a full stop she approaches his Lexus and stuffs the paper under his wiper. Duncan gets out and examines it.

DUNCAN

(reading)

Free crab Rangoon with purchase of Happy Family Dinner at Wok 'n' Roll. Phat! And don't think I didn't notice the sacrifice.

Veronica grins and shrugs.

VERONICA

My pleasure.

The gratified-looking Duncan returns her smile, turns and walks toward the school, a little extra zip in his get-along. His day is off to a good start. Veronica watches him go.

VERONICA (V.O.) (cont'd)

I sent off for those test results because I wanted the truth. But can a lab tech really see the shape of my soul in a drunken conga line of genes? Jake Kane could be my father, but whether he is or isn't, I'm not going to deny the man who raised me.

*

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

VERONICA (V.O.) (cont'd)
I'd love to be rich, but I'd rather
be poor than claim the blood of the
man who drove my mom away.

WALLACE (O.C.)
Veronica. Wait up.

Veronica turns, sees Wallace smiling, catching up. She's got
a friend.

VERONICA *
One more thing: I want a better
life, sure, but I've got plenty
going for me right now.
(aping Wallace)
I better reco'nize.

Suddenly a new car, even more ostentatiously expensive than
Duncan's, pulls up. Casey gets out. Veronica lights up at the
sight of him, but her smile quickly disappears. Casey nods
acknowledgement to Veronica, but something is wrong.

CASEY
(generically flat,
condescending '09er tone)
'sup, Veronica.

CLOSEUP ON CASEY as his vacant gaze lingers momentarily on
Veronica. He might as well be regarding a shrink-wrapped slab
of meat. If eyes are the window to the soul the view we see
is that of a featureless tundra.

Veronica's expression of sorrow and dismay. She knows beyond
doubt that this is no longer the same Casey whose friendship
she grew to cherish. The deprogrammer did his job. *

Wallace catches up to Veronica. *

WALLACE *
Beautiful day, huh? *

(This line works whether it's a beautiful day, or not. *
Frankly, I'd prefer for it to be drizzling, in which case *
Wallace would deliver the line ironically.) Veronica shakes *
off her melancholy. *

VERONICA *
(delivered like the "yeah *
you do" line in the pilot) *
Yeah, it is. *

Off the pair heading toward class. *

END OF SHOW