

Good Enough for Me

written by

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BLACK SCREEN

A series of overlapping voices - news reports.

NEWS ANCHOR

Chaos tonight as the Chroma Killer robs a bank in...

INTERVIEWEE

...knew as soon as they flew overhead that we were in trouble, but we didn't expect them to start spraying fire from...

INTREPID REPORTER

...at the scene here where Neon is fighting with Zero Degrees, and-shit, get down!

SMASH TO:

MONTAGE - NEWS CLIPS

The news clips continue, now with visuals. News articles and blog posts fill the gaps between them.

A) NEON VS. ZERO DEGREES

A superhero with a glowing outfit fights an ice-breathing yeti as an INTREPID REPORTER watches from an alley way, having just ducked one of the yeti's ice blasts.

INTREPID REPORTER

Are you okay? Are we still rolling?

Beat.

INTREPID REPORTER

Neon is fighting with Zero Degrees, and things are getting-

Another ice blasts hits right outside their alley. The reporter jumps. Not that intrepid.

INTREPID REPORTER

Hell no, that's enough, we're getting out of here.

They start to run away.

B) STREET INTERVIEW

A PLUCKY REPORTER interviews a pair of BYSTANDERS.

PLUCKY REPORTER

...claimed she was doing this in the
(MORE)

PLUCKY REPORTER (CONT'D)
name of police reform. Would you
say-

One of the bystanders interrupts.

CRITICAL BYSTANDER
No, dude, no way. Like, I get the
All Cops Are Bad thing, sure, but
that doesn't give you license to
just start blasting every cop
cruiser you see.

SYMPATHETIC BYSTANDER
Not just start blasting, no, but
surely some extreme measures are
needed? I mean-

PLUCKY REPORTER
So would you say you agree with
Sonora then?

SYMPATHETIC BYSTANDER
Obviously not, no, villainy is never
the answer. I'm not saying her
methods are acceptable, but if we
look at what she's trying to
accomplish-

CRITICAL BYSTANDER
She flattened the truck, man!

C) MORNING SHOW

A MALE and a FEMALE HOST talk on a comfortable set.

MALE HOST
Speaking of, have you been following
this Ionica drama?

FEMALE HOST
You mean the unmasking? That she's
a, what, a real estate agent?

MALE HOST
That's what we thought yesterday!
Just, what, an hour ago? There's
someone else claiming to be her now.

FEMALE HOST
What? I was surprised one person
would want to be associated with
her, but-

MALE HOST
Hang on, you were surprised someone
wanted to be known as a superhero?

The audience laughs.

FEMALE HOST

It's not just being a superhero, though! Ionica is infamous for starting as a villain too, and obviously with unmaskings you have the police now after her for her villain days, you have several villains who will be hunting her family members now, she's got the worst of both worlds as far as her secret identity coming out.

MALE HOST

Okay, that's fair, that's fair, but...

D) INTERVIEW WITH MR. MAYHEM

MR. MAYHEM, an ordinary-looking man in a prison jumpsuit, is being interviewed by a YOUNG INTERVIEWER. A thick transparent wall separates them.

MR. MAYHEM

I called myself Mister Mayhem because, you know, that was what I wanted. I didn't have any real goals, um... I just wanted... I felt like society had wronged me, and I wanted to wrong society back.

YOUNG INTERVIEWER

By killing people.

MR. MAYHEM

I tried not to... but yes, I did, I killed a lot of innocent people.

YOUNG INTERVIEWER

So would you say you regret your crimes?

Mr. Mayhem sighs.

MR. MAYHEM

I regret... I do realize now, of course, in the specifics, I was hurting people that didn't deserve it. So that, I, yes, I would do that differently. But in the general? The mayhem? The riots?

He shakes his head.

MR. MAYHEM

No, I don't think I regret it at all.

FADE TO:

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.

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

ANNE

Tonight? You're going out again tonight?

Vanessa shrugs, feigns indifference.

VANESSA

Yeah, why?

She knows very well why.

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. "Tell me
more!"

Vanessa pushes the chair back in. "No."

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 "DANIEL (ANNE'S FRIEND)."

Vanessa leaves the kitchen.

INT. OFFICE - DAY [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."

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

Vanessa: "I hate bowling."

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

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

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

Vanessa laughs.

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

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.

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

DANIEL
Hey!

She sees him, waves. He jogs over.

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

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

VANESSA
As a date.

DANIEL
Yeah! It'll be fun!

Vanessa rolls her eyes and laughs as they walk into the gym.

INT. BOBA PLACE - NIGHT

Vanessa and Daniel 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.

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

VANESSA
Next?

Daniel is disappointed, but gets it.

DANIEL
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?

DANIEL
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.

VANESSA
Favorite... type of pet?

DANIEL
Dogs.

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

DANIEL
You can just tell from looking at me?

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

They walk past a massive crater in the center of the street, construction crews cleaning it up. Vanessa nods at it.

VANESSA
Ooh, superheroes or supervillains?

DANIEL
Surely nobody roots for the villains?

Vanessa is disappointed, but hides it quickly.

VANESSA
There are a lot of weirdos in this city.

DANIEL
I guess. But okay, who's your favorite hero?

Vanessa tries to go along with it, but is clearly uninterested.

VANESSA
I don't know if I have a favorite. They're all so...

DANIEL
("I'm an idiot")
Ohhh no, you root for the villains!
I'm so sorry, I didn't-

VANESSA
No, it's fine, I don't really,
they're-

DANIEL
I totally get it, you're not a
weirdo, I'm just-

VANESSA
Let's talk about something else.

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

Daniel nods, smiles.

DANIEL
Okay.

INT. ARCADE - NIGHT

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

DANIEL
How long have you been playing
this?!

VANESSA
It's not as hard as it looks.

DANIEL
I don't believe you!

The song ends. CONTINUE? flashes on the screen.

DANIEL
Oh please no. Anything but this.

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

Daniel gets excited.

DANIEL
I can play some Guitar Hero.

EXT. TRENDY ICE CREAM PLACE - NIGHT

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

DANIEL
Sure, but they almost destroyed the
city.

VANESSA

Only because Crimson kept escalating. I remain convinced that if she hadn't shown up, King Chaos wouldn't have actually hurt anyone.

DANIEL

Only disrupted the city's entire power supply and bankrupted hundreds of small businesses.

VANESSA

Not necessarily saying I agree with his goals, just saying I don't think he wanted to hurt anyone.

They sit at a bench.

DANIEL

I think you're the first person I've met who's tried to defend him.

VANESSA

Different circles.

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

VANESSA

(off his enjoyment)

I told you.

DANIEL

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.

DANIEL

This is amazing.

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

VANESSA

Are they closing? Is it really midnight?

Daniel checks his phone.

DANIEL

A little after.

VANESSA

Oh god, I completely lost track of time.

DANIEL
Do you need to go?

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

DANIEL
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.

Daniel laughs and laughs.

CUT TO:

Daniel 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!

DANIEL
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.

Her phone BUZZES. She checks it.

VANESSA
(quiet)
Oh, shit.

DANIEL
Everything okay?

VANESSA
Um. Yeah, I just... I forgot about a
meeting I have?

DANIEL
At...

He checks his watch.

DANIEL
Two in the morning?

Vanessa laughs, gathers her things.

VANESSA
At seven. But I would like to get
some sleep beforehand.

DANIEL
Right, duh, obviously. Sorry. I'll-

Daniel starts to get his stuff together too, but Vanessa's
already ready.

VANESSA
It's all good, this was great, I had
a fantastic time, I'll call you.

And she's gone.

DANIEL
Bye?

His phone BUZZES.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - EVENING

Vanessa jogs down an alley, finishes an energy drink and
crumples the can.

She talks to herself, practices a conversation.

VANESSA
"I didn't forget, I was occupied."
(doing a dumb voice)
"This was your op, and you were too
busy boning to show up on time?"
(her voice)
Nope. "Sorry. Is everyone in
position?"
(dumb voice)
"Sorry? You're sorry?"

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

VANESSA
"This is my op, I decide when it
starts."

She pulls a bundle of white fabric out of her purse, ducks
behind the dumpster.

She emerges wearing 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 her previous outfit behind the dumpster, then steps back and kneels.

VANESSA

Damn it.

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

EXT. SKYSCRAPER ROOFTOP - EVENING

MOB RULE (30s, superhero - rugged punk look, blank mask) stands on the rooftop.

He GRUNTS with effort... and SPLITS INTO TWO IDENTICAL COPIES OF HIMSELF.

Sonora hovers over the roof behind them; Mob Rule is startled, and one of the copies POPS out of existence.

SONORA

Oh, shit, are you really here?

Sonora drops to her feet.

SONORA

I figured you'd just have a double waiting for me.

Two of the Mob Rules disappear.

MOB RULE

(pissed)

This is a double. You're late.

SONORA

(impressed)

I didn't know your doubles could make doubles.

MOB RULE

It's something I've been working on, don't tell anyone. You're late.

SONORA

This is my op, I decide who's late. Everyone else is in position? The heroes are all downtown?

MOB RULE

They've been in position for half an hour now. And most of the heroes are occupied, yes.

SONORA
Most of them?

Mob Rule sighs.

MOB RULE
No sign of Jupiter, but that's a
good thing.

SONORA
A good thing? The plan literally
revolves around him.

MOB RULE
I'm just saying, if all that happens
tonight is we get a truckload of
gold bars, I'm a happy camper.
Villainy doesn't have to be
complicated.

SONORA
We're not villains-

MOB RULE
..."Not villains," I know.

Mob Rule shrugs.

MOB RULE
I just want to be rich.

Sonora walks to the edge of the roof, scans the city.

SONORA
If Jupiter doesn't show up, Hexa's
gonna be trouble.

Mob Rule grunts.

MOB RULE
Hexa's always trouble. You know, for
claiming we're the good guys, you
sure don't mind teaming up with-

He pauses, like he's just realizing something.

MOB RULE
Truck's rounding the corner.

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 - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

BJORN (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 HEXA (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.

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

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

SONORA

Put him down.

Bjorn snarls at her.

HEXA

He does not take orders from you.

SONORA

That's not what we're here for,
Hexa.

BJORN

It's not what you're here for.

A set of bolas whip out at Bjorn; 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.

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

HEXA

(to Sonora)

I hope you do.

She hands a bag to Bjorn, and they both start loading the gold into bags. (Hexa 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 Bjorn and Hexa, 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 - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

Jupiter lands in a roll and spins around to throw a heavy haymaker at Sonora as she lands on the far side of 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 - NIGHT [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, Hexa 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 DANIEL!

She stumbles backwards.

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

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

SONORA
Daniel, wait!

DANIEL
How do you know my name?

Daniel is confused.

DANIEL
Do I know you?

Sonora doesn't know what to do.

SONORA
Damn it.
(defeated)
Yes.

Daniel 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 Daniel's turn to stumble backwards.

DANIEL
Vanessa?!

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

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

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

DANIEL
Do you want to go get some coffee?

INT. WAFFLE HOUSE - NIGHT

Vanessa and Daniel 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 Daniel)
And you?

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

VANESSA
Wait, you're getting food?

DANIEL
Yeah, I'm starving.

VANESSA
I just, you said we were getting coffee.

DANIEL
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...?"

DANIEL
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.

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

The server quickly shuffles off.

DANIEL

That's not why you go to Waffle House.

VANESSA

You didn't get waffles either.

DANIEL

Who gets waffles? Who gets anything other than hashbrowns?

He laughs. Vanessa doesn't.

DANIEL

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

VANESSA

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

DANIEL

Okay. Is this an outing?

VANESSA

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

DANIEL

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

VANESSA

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

She stops.

DANIEL

Is what?

Vanessa sighs.

VANESSA

Daniel, what are we doing?

DANIEL

That's what we're talking-

VANESSA

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

Daniel's smile fades.

DANIEL

Yeah. I know.

VANESSA

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

DANIEL

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-

DANIEL

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

Vanessa relaxes, leans back.

VANESSA

Agreed. Good.

DANIEL

Good.

VANESSA

But so if there's no crossover...

DANIEL

Yeah?

VANESSA

Nevermind.

Beat.

The server drops off Vanessa's coffee.

VANESSA

Thanks.

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

DANIEL

Can I ask you a question?

VANESSA

Shoot.

DANIEL

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

VANESSA

I could ask you the same thing.

DANIEL

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?

DANIEL

At least I'm not breaking the law.

VANESSA

What if the law needs to be broken?

DANIEL

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

He stops himself, calms down.

DANIEL

You've hurt people.

VANESSA

You're so naive.

DANIEL

You work with sociopaths!

VANESSA

If I was still solo, you'd have stopped me years ago. Besides, it's not like I'm burning down orphanages with them. I just rob the occasional fat-cat banker to keep them happy. No sweat off my back.

DANIEL

So no orphanages, but you're fine burning down banks and police stations.

VANESSA

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

DANIEL

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.

DANIEL

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?

Daniel GROANS.

DANIEL

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

And you think supporting a system that oppresses and destroys is-

DANIEL

I think stopping Lord Kailon from destroying the city is for sure the right thing.

Vanessa groans.

VANESSA

Obviously Lord Kailon was bad, but he's not the only villain you've stopped. Hundred-Arms wasn't trying to destroy the city.

DANIEL

You're right, I guess I'm crazy for thinking that stopping murderers is good for human life.

Vanessa sighs, relaxes.

VANESSA

That's not what I... you're wrong. You are. But I understand why you want things to be that simple.

DANIEL

What about you? You never have pangs
(MORE)

DANIEL (CONT'D)
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 that. I just... I can't.

Daniel almost responds... sighs instead.

Beat.

VANESSA
You don't, like, secretly beat up
old ladies, do you?

DANIEL
(offended)
What?

VANESSA
No, just, this would be a lot easier
if you were, like, a conscious part
of the problem.

DANIEL
(still offended)
Instead of an oblivious part of the
problem.

VANESSA
Exactly.

DANIEL
I'm sorry that I-

VANESSA
I like you.

Daniel considers.

DANIEL
I like you, too.

VANESSA
No, not like...

She takes a risk.

VANESSA
I really like you.

DANIEL
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 Daniel, then walks away.

VANESSA
Um-

DANIEL
Yeah, here.

He swaps the plates.

DANIEL
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?

DANIEL
...I don't know. Yeah.

VANESSA
We've been on two dates.

DANIEL
Three if you count this.

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

DANIEL
I can say whatever I want.

VANESSA
Saying you love someone after three dates is insane.

DANIEL
I disagree. Falling in love with someone after three dates, that's
(MORE)

DANIEL (CONT'D)
insane. Saying it when it's true is
just-

Vanessa looks away; she's getting upset.

VANESSA
Stop. Seriously. It's not funny.

Daniel 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 with
mutually exclusive goals.

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

VANESSA
There's crossover, Daniel.

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

VANESSA
Stop it.

Daniel looks sorry, backs down.

Eats more hashbrowns.

Vanessa takes a bite of her burger.

She swallows.

VANESSA
I think I love you too.

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

VANESSA
This is dumb. We're dumb.

Daniel takes another bite of hashbrowns.

DANIEL
Yeah.

Vanessa smiles.

EXT. CITY PARK - NIGHT

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

SONORA

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

DANIEL (O.S.)

Agreed.

SONORA

No revealing each other's identities.

DANIEL (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 before stopping with a WHINE. Still broken.

JUPITER

Dang it.

(to Sonora)

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 likeable one.

JUPITER

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

SONORA

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

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, Hexa, and Bjorn 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.

HEXA

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?

Hexa 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, Hexa and Bjorn 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 unforeseeable-

Hexa scoffs, turns away from Sonora.

HEXA

"Unforeseeable?" 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.

SONORA

Got you a truckload of gold?

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

THE DEVOURER

a side benefit, and you know this. i
(MORE)

THE DEVOURER (CONT'D)
performed my task perfectly. if you
are incapable of performing yours, i
do not benefit from our alliance.

HEXA
I agree with the shadow thing, for
once.

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

HEXA
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 Bjorn; thinks for a second.

MOB RULE

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

BJORN

I'll show you how hard.

HEXA

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-

HEXA

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

Sonora relaxes a little now that she can see Hexa's not on
board.

SONORA

Mob, I get where you're coming from,
but Hexa'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.

HEXA

Ignore her. It is a good start.

Sonora looks at Hexa.

SONORA

You were just arguing against it.

Hexa 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. But if something should happen, some complete accident kills their alter egos...

Mob Rule gets excited.

MOB RULE

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.

HEXA

This... this is a plan I can respect.

Mob Rule 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 Hexa. Takes a risk.

SONORA

Mob and I will take the Marshal,
(MORE)

SONORA (CONT'D)

Hexa and the Devourer can hunt for Jupiter, and the Professor will play secretary and coordinate leads. Sound good?

THE PROFESSOR

Secretary?

HEXA

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 HISSES at Sonora, but she ignores him.

THE PROFESSOR

(hopeful)

I can help Hexa, then?

HEXA

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 Bjorn 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.

Hexa glares at Sonora. Sonora glares back.

HEXA

Very well.

She turns and stomps away, Bjorn 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 Hexa 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. Hexa and Bjorn 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
Hexa thinks she needs us?

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 Daniel eat
lunch together near one corner.

VANESSA

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

DANIEL

You gonna start milking me?

VANESSA

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

DANIEL

It's fine. I'm alright.

Vanessa is surprised.

VANESSA

You don't even know what it is.

DANIEL

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 Daniel leave the mall, prepare to separate.

DANIEL
This was nice. Can this be a regular thing?

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

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

Vanessa laughs.

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

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

VANESSA
That'll work.

Beat.

DANIEL
Okay, well-

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

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

DANIEL
What?

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

Daniel smiles.

DANIEL
That works out well.

Then he realizes:

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

VANESSA
Nothing, obviously.

DANIEL

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.

PAUL (O.S.)

Hey, Vanessa!

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

Vanessa is rattled, but recovers fast.

VANESSA

Hey, Paul. Daniel, this is my friend Paul. Paul, this is my boyfriend, Daniel.

Paul shakes Daniel's hand.

PAUL

(to Vanessa)

I *knew* you were seeing somebody.

(to Daniel)

Nice to meet you, man.

DANIEL

Likewise.

Paul nods to Vanessa.

PAUL

Fancy seeing you here.

VANESSA

(fuck off)

We just ate.

Daniel can tell Vanessa's not happy about this.

DANIEL

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

PAUL

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

DANIEL

You too.

VANESSA

See you.

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

DANIEL

That was-

VANESSA

I gotta go. I'll text you later.

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

EXT. ALLEYWAY - DAY

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

Vanessa hisses at him, keeps the volume down.

VANESSA

What the hell are you doing here?

PAUL

Relax. I'm not following you.

VANESSA

(spooked)

Then who are you following?

PAUL

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

VANESSA

I asked you a question.

PAUL

Hexa.

VANESSA

Why the hell was Hexa here?

Paul frowns, shakes his head.

PAUL

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.

PAUL

Daniel seems like a cool guy.

Vanessa looks at Paul.

VANESSA

Don't.

She leaves. Paul chuckles.

He POPS out of existence.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Vanessa works on a text to Daniel: "Paul 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 Paul 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

That's not necessary. He's an asshole, 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 Daniel 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 Hexa. You know I'm telling you the truth, so why are you freaking out?

SONORA
Alright. Okay.

She leans against the wall.

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.

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're 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

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
I kept a double on the Devourer,
just in case. He's slippery, but-

SONORA
Get to the point.

MOB RULE
The Devourer's fighting Jupiter.

SONORA
Shit.
(thinking fast)
He'll ruin everything. 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 - NIGHT [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.

MOB RULE (O.S.)

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

Sonora jumps; she didn't notice Mob Rule was already there.

SONORA

(I hope you're right.)

I know.

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

EXT. BRIDGE - NIGHT [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 out 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. NEARBY ROOFTOP - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

Sonora steps towards the edge of the roof, but Mob Rule grabs her.

MOB RULE
What are you doing?

SONORA
He's gonna kill him!

MOB RULE
I know, but-

SONORA
(floundering)
The plan is good, Mob, but it all
goes to shit if-

MOB RULE
Let the Devourer do it. He'll bring
all the heat down on himself, the
heroes take him down, we kill two
birds with one stone.

Sonora can't come up with an excuse fast enough.

EXT. BELOW THE BRIDGE - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

The Devourer has pinned Jupiter with a dozen shadowy
tentacles.

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-

SONORA

Yeah, yeah.

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

EXT. NEARBY ROOFTOP - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

Mob Rule POPS out of existence.

INT. VANESSA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

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

DANIEL

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.

DANIEL

It was awesome.

VANESSA

We fought pretty well together.

DANIEL

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.

Daniel leans back.

DANIEL

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

She shakes her head, puts her beer down.

VANESSA

It didn't help, but part of the plan is to kill, like, you. Daniel. Not Jupiter. To avoid drawing heat from other heroes.

DANIEL

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?

DANIEL

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.

DANIEL

Who?

VANESSA

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

Daniel shakes his head, then reconsiders.

DANIEL

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.

Daniel clears his throat.

DANIEL

So, but... can we 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 Daniel's lap.

Daniel settles in, excited to hear the story.

But no story comes. Vanessa sighs.

DANIEL

What's up?

VANESSA

Did you know I started out as a hero?

DANIEL

What? Really?

VANESSA

I got my powers from a lab accident in college, joined a little campus group.

DANIEL

What group? Where was this?

VANESSA

That's not... the important thing is, the others were so okay with beating the tar out of villains - we were the ones who hospitalized Nightqueen, if you heard about that - but they wouldn't move on a crooked DA I found unless I had ironclad proof. And then even once I had that, they handed everything over to the police. Trial took years, he got like six months in prison, by now he's reinstated, running a private practice and making six figures.

DANIEL

That's messed up.

VANESSA

It is.

DANIEL

But then... I don't want to, like... but you work with some bad people.

VANESSA

If I don't, then I'm alone against the heroes and their supergroups and then nobody's there to stop the bad guys who wear ties and uniforms instead of capes and costumes.

Daniel opens his mouth to respond... doesn't know what to say.

VANESSA

I'm not asking you to do anything, Daniel. You're not all wrong. Someone needs to stop people like the Devourer and Hexa. But...

Vanessa shifts to lean against him, zones out a bit.

VANESSA

I liked it. I liked fighting the Devourer today. It was simple. No moral quandries.

She zones back in, looks at Daniel.

VANESSA

If you ask me to team up with you like that again, I'll want to say yes. I probably will say yes.

(Off Daniel's growing excitement)

Which is why I don't want you to ask me to.

DANIEL

Oh.

VANESSA

Does that make sense?

DANIEL

Of course. I mean, no, but it's fine, I won't ask you to...

He shakes his head.

DANIEL

I like things to be black and white, you're really stretching my brain with this stuff.

VANESSA

I know. Thank you.

She nestles in to him, and they cuddle on the sofa.

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...

"What the fuck, Vanessa?"

MOB RULE

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

Hexa, and Bjorn 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
us instead of each other. And now
you-

He throws his hands in the air.

MOB RULE

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

He freezes.

Sonora notices.

SONORA

What's wrong?

MOB RULE

Hexa'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-

Bjorn leaps onto the rooftop from below.

Mob Rule POPS out of existence.

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

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

BJORN

Heard what you did to The Devourer.

Sonora struggles to breathe.

BJORN

Heard you helped Jupiter.

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

BJORN

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 Bjorn looks relaxed.

Sonora tries to speak, just coughs. Tries again:

SONORA

I'm gaining his trust, asshole.

Bjorn nods.

BJORN

Then you will be fine.

Sonora feels at the clasp.

SONORA

What the hell is this?

HEXA (O.S.)

Insurance.

Hexa appears from behind Bjorn.

HEXA

It will get tighter with each day
(MORE)

HEXA (CONT'D)
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!

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

HEXA
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.

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

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

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

SONORA
Like hell.

Hexa SNAPS her fingers, and Sonora starts choking.

Sonora drops to all fours, struggles.

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

Bjorn laughs at her.

Sonora gets to her feet.

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

HEXA

I don't like being followed.

She flies away, and Bjorn 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 alley 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 hurt?

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

Daniel...

EXT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

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

SONORA (O.S.)

Daniel... Daniel, I need you. I need Jupiter.

Daniel 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

Hexa and Bjorn 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

This is... well...

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. Hexa and Bjorn have a collar on her. They're forcing her to figure out my secret identity.

Sword Saint considers carefully, but can't intuit the answer to his question:

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

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

Daniel, 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.

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

Whoever lives here is fabulously wealthy.

Mob Rule creeps in.

The lights turn on. He jumps, sees Sonora is standing in the corner behind him.

SONORA
Mob.

Mob Rule relaxes. Walks around the house bagging anything that looks expensive.

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

SONORA
This isn't a social call.

Wait.

SONORA
Who are you dating?

MOB RULE
No one you know. What is this, then?

SONORA
I'm about to do something stupid.

MOB RULE
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.

MOB RULE
I haven't agreed to anything yet.

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

MOB RULE

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.

Mob Rule considers. This is too good a deal.

MOB RULE

What don't I know?

SONORA

A lot.

MOB RULE

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.

MOB RULE

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.

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

MOB RULE

I hate this. You're fighting so dirty.

SONORA

Deal's off the table in ten seconds.

MOB RULE

So that's how it is, huh?

He swears under his breath.

MOB RULE

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-

MOB RULE
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.

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 Daniel 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. Daniel, in his full Jupiter getup but with his mask off, is on the other, visible only through the porthole.

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

DANIEL

Of course I'm being careful, but now that I know to be on the lookout,
(MORE)

DANIEL (CONT'D)

I'm not too worried. Ouroboros even hooked me up with some talisman he says will ward off Hexa's spirit spies or whatever.

Vanessa relaxes, just a bit.

DANIEL

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

They can't do anything now.

DANIEL

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?

DANIEL

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

VANESSA

Excuse me?

DANIEL

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

A BUZZER sounds. Daniel 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 her seeing-eye dog;

- RED DRAGON, a massive man with scaly skin, a thick reptilian tail, and a large finned ridge on his head, has thin glowing bracelets that seem to somehow be impossibly heavy, dragging his arms down. He 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 Daniel's voice was through the speaker.

VANESSA
You have a problem you need me to
fix?

Doctor Thomas smirks.

DOCTOR THOMAS
Nice mask.

VANESSA
Everyone keeps thinking they can
take away my voice. Never sticks.

DOCTOR THOMAS
I, too, find their defenses to be
less limiting than they'd hoped.

Vanessa grimaces. That's a scary thought.

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 Hexa
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

Paul visits Vanessa. He looks nervous as hell.

PAUL

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

VANESSA

Have you noticed anything... strange?

PAUL

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

He swears under his breath.

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

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

Paul grimaces.

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

Vanessa nods.

VANESSA
There's something else.

PAUL
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.

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

VANESSA
But?

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

Vanessa sighs.

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

Vanessa grimaces. "I hope so."

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 - DAY [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 Hexa.

VANESSA

You?!

HEXA

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.

HEXA

I beg to differ.

She grabs Vanessa's head forcefully, and the air around Hexa'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 Hexa back.

But Hexa just hovers in the air and laughs.

HEXA

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

Vanessa is terrified.

VANESSA

No! NO!

And suddenly the darkness disappears, taking Hexa with it.

INT. PRISON REC YARD - DAY [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 (O.S.)

It's not that easy.

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

VANESSA

Hexa 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

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.

A tense 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
 Daniel.... Daniel, they're coming for you. Daniel-

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)
Daniel... Daniel!

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

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

DANIEL (O.S.)
...nessa? Where are you?

VANESSA
Hexa knows. She's coming for you.

DANIEL (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 - NIGHT [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, vibrating with angry
energy.

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 power.

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.

BJORN (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

DANIEL!

EXT. AIRPORT PICKUP ZONE - NIGHT

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

Vanessa's shout echoes all around.

VANESSA (O.S.)

DANIEL!

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

DANIEL

Vanessa?! Are you-

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

Bjorn drops in from above Daniel, grabs his backpack, and rips it off his back.

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

Bjorn laughs, looks down at Daniel.

BJORN

Hello, Jupiter.

DANIEL

Oh, that's bad.

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

Hexa flies in from above them, hovers just over Bjorn's shoulder.

HEXA

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

Daniel chokes out his words.

DANIEL

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

HEXA

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

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

HEXA

I'm thinking car accident. Bjorn
always did hit like a truck.

Bjorn tightens his grip, cutting off Daniel's air supply.

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

VANESSA

Not so fast.

Hexa laughs merrily.

HEXA

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

VANESSA

Try me.

HEXA

Okay. Bjorn?

Time slows to a crawl.

Bjorn lifts Daniel up to better slam him into the ground.

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

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

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

Vanessa is flooded with relief.

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

Daniel looks towards where Bjorn threw his bag.

DANIEL

Nice timing. My stuff is over-

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

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

CRIMSON

You guys really are a thing? Like,
really?

DANIEL
It's a long story.

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

Daniel and Vanessa's hug finally ends.

DANIEL
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.

DANIEL
Bjorn and Hexa are regrouping.

CRIMSON
On it.

She disappears in a blur.

DANIEL
She's gonna need help.

VANESSA
Go. I can handle him.

MOB RULE
"Handle me?" You can "handle me?"

Daniel 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 thought we were friends up until this point. Says something about you, too.

VANESSA
Help us. Help us beat Hexa, 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 Daniel, either.

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

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

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

DANIEL
Crimson, can you-

CRIMSON
Kinda busy!

Bjorn jumps at Daniel, and Daniel barely dives into a roll to avoid the attack.

Daniel yells at Bjorn.

DANIEL
Bring it on, big guy!

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

Bjorn LAUGHS.

BJORN
Are you even trying?

Daniel 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.

Daniel'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.

DANIEL
I thought things were going too well.

Bjorn stomps over to Daniel. Grabs him by the head and lifts him. Hexa telekinetically lifts Crimson, pins her in midair.

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

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

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

DANIEL

JANE!

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

THE PROFESSOR

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

Hexa shrugs.

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

MOB RULE

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

The Professor looks at Daniel, grim.

THE PROFESSOR

(to Hexa)

I suppose you want her to watch us kill him.

Mob Rule looks at Hexa.

MOB RULE

Don't be stupid. Kill him now before something goes wrong.

HEXA

Jupiter's powerless without his gauntlets. Nothing can go wrong. Demonstrate again.

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

MOB RULE

I'm *still* the real one. And I did everything you asked. You and me, we're square now.

HEXA

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

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

They toss her in front of The Professor and Hexa.

THE PROFESSOR

Is she dead?

MOB RULE
She's unconscious. Sue me.

Hexa sighs.

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

The Mob Rules all disappear.

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

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

A shockwave blows Hexa and The Professor back; Bjorn drops Daniel 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 Bjorn, 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.

Hexa 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 Bjorn.

HEXA
Fool! You think these can hold me?

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

SWORD SAINT
I do.

A flying truck lands, and Sword Saint and the others load Hexa, Bjorn, and the Professor into the back.

Vanessa runs to Daniel and checks on him.

VANESSA

Daniel! Are you okay?

Daniel is dizzy, but conscious.

DANIEL

Holy heck that was loud!

Vanessa smiles and cries and hugs him tight.

Daniel hugs back, still dazed.

Sword Saint walks up behind Vanessa.

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

As soon as he's up, Daniel 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, Daniel.

DANIEL

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.

DANIEL

She broke out to save me.

SWORD SAINT

From villains that she enabled to harm you.

Vanessa pushes past Daniel.

VANESSA

I would never have-

Sword Saint draws his sword and stops it at Vanessa's throat.

SWORD SAINT

If she speaks again-

DANIEL

(angry)

Saint, I swear to you, if you hurt

(MORE)

DANIEL (CONT'D)
her, you and I are going to have a
big problem.

Daniel 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**.

VANESSA
And you have the murderers! Daniel's
identity is public now; let us go,
you'll never see us again.

SWORD SAINT
No. No!
(to Daniel)
I will not let you ally yourself
with this villain!

DANIEL
I would be dead right now if not for
this villain.

SWORD SAINT
She started all of this! Does she
get credit for stopping a crisis she
caused?

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

VANESSA
If we're gonna do this, let's do
this.

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

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

A long beat.

Sword Saint sheathes his swords.

SWORD SAINT
If I see you in my city again-

VANESSA
Then we'll reevaluate the situation
(MORE)

VANESSA (CONT'D)
and talk things over like rational
adults? Because I think that would
be the proper course of action.

Sword Saint snorts a laugh. "Maybe so."

He walks away.

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

Vanessa grabs Daniel and flies away.

FADE TO BLACK

ROLL CREDITS

As they roll:

EXT. BELIZE STREETS - DAY

Vanessa and Daniel 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?

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

CAROL (O.S.)
Oh! Daniel! 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 Daniel and Vanessa both big hugs.

DANIEL
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. DANIEL 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 Daniel show off a pieced-together super outfit made out of various scraps and cloths.

DANIEL

I think it'll work.

VANESSA

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

DANIEL

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.

DANIEL

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

CUT TO:

Now Daniel 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
(MORE)

CAROL (CONT'D)
 you also don't have to call me
 "ma'am."

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

Carol smiles.

EXT. DARK BELIZEAN ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

A CROOKED COP struts towards an OLD MAN, forcing him into a corner. They speak in subtitled Spanish.

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

OLD MAN
 <Help! Help!>

CROOKED COP
 <There's no reason to yell. Nobody
 can hear you.>

OLD MAN
 <I don't have the money, I'm sorry->

The cop draws a billy club.

CROOKED COP
 <I really hope that's not true.>

RELÁMPAGO
 (thick accent)
 <Stop!>

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

CROOKED COP
 <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 cop, between him and the man.

TRUENA
 (perfect accent)
 <No, you are Relámpago.>

RELÁMPAGO
 Right. <I are Relámpago!>

Truena laughs. The cop is very confused.

RELÁMPAGO
Come on, I'm trying.

CROOKED COP
<What's going on?>

TRUENA
(to Relámpago)
You know we can't just send this guy
to prison. He's a cop.

She blasts the cop right into Relámpago's arms.

RELÁMPAGO
We're not gonna hurt him, though. I
don't want us to be bad guys.

Truena walks over. Crosses her arms.

TRUENA
He was robbing the old man. We rob
him instead? Take his money, give it
to charity. That's a good guy move,
right?

Relámpago spins the cop into the wall, zip ties his hands
behind his back.

RELÁMPAGO
Good enough for me.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END