

Int. condo, night.

Jack--successful, attractive, early thirties--takes a seat at his attractive, successful dining room table. He has neglected to remove his jacket.

Veronica,--gorgeous, sophisticated, late-twenties/early thirties--emerges from the kitchen. She wears an apron over a cocktail dress and almost deliberately ironic oven-mitts, and carries a pan with an attractive, successful pasta casserole in it.. She raises an eyebrow.

Veronica
On your way somewhere?

Jack pulls a PDA out of his pocket, scours a few texts thoughtfully.

Jack
Hmm?

Veronica
Not going to be staying long?

He looks at her as though she might be speaking another language, then gets her point.

JaCK
Ah.

He stands, removing his jacket, and places it on the back of the chair. He sits.

VERONICA
Don't you think you'd be better off
with that in the closet, sweetheart?

He looks at his Blackberry quizzically.

JACK
That doesn't make much sense.

She's talking to a child, through gritted teeth.

VERONICA

Jacket. Your jacket, dear. Wouldn't
it be--

With a frustrated sigh, he gets up, retrieves the jacket and
exits the room.

She stands in place, her smile fixed. As he returns:

Veronica (CONT'D)
Isn't that much better?

Jack
I don't see that it makes much
difference one way or another--

VERONICA
(Cheerily) Well, it hardly makes
sense to drive for three hours to
find the perfect vintage teak table
and then have it refinished if
you're just going to toss your dirty
clothes all over the matching
chairs.

Jack
(bemused) A jacket is *all over*? I
mean a series of jackets would
surely sully the--

Veronica scowls, a petulant child.. Jack freezes for a moment
and then resumes.

JACK (CONT'D)
--Or like, a canvas circus tent.
That would obscure the--hey, have
you seen my parachute? Oh, right,
it's besmirching our entire living
room set right now.

VERONICA
Your sense of humour kills me.

JACK
Yeah?

VERONICA

No. It's a good thing you don't have to speak much at work.

JACK

Well, I save all my best stuff for home..

VERONICA

Mmm.

He smiles at her. She smiles back, but more in a kindergarten-teacher-to-student way.

JaCK

So I'll come up with some new material.

She smiles more warmly.

VERONICA

No you won't.

JaCK

Probably not.

She sets the pan down on the table, repositioning the ladle toward him.

VERONICA

Definitely not. Who are you kidding?

She moves his glass closer to him, seemingly for the sake of table symmetry, and glances into it.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

You're low.

He smiles.

Jack

Been called worse, my dear.

VERONICA

Your wine. I'll get you some more.

Jack

I don't know. Might put me to sleep..

Veronica mumbles.

VERONICA

Like a dog.

JaCK

Hm?

VerONICA

Good night's sleep never hurt anybody.

Jack eyeballs her lasciviously.

JaCK

Neither did staying up all night.

She ignores the advance entirely.

Jack (CONT'D)

Speaking of which, have you come to a decision?

VERONICA

--about?

JACK

You know, the *big* decision you've been pondering.

Veronica nods, but in her eyes, a frozen child, hand in the cookie jar.

JACK (CONT'D)

I think we've discussed it out. It's up to you now. I'm good either way.

Veronica's eyes join the rest of her face, relaxed.

VERONICA

I think I want to go with the XK
coupe.

Jack ponders this, agreeably.

Jack

I think you've made the saner, more
convenient choice.

VERONICA

Me too. We're still young, after
all. There's always time.

JACK

Sure. We can adopt later.

VERONICA

I mean it's not like plague-ravaged
cesspools are ever going to run out
of orphans.

JACK

Too true.

VERONICA

And I'm not sure we're done making
the most of our private time.

Jack raises an interested eyebrow.

Jack

Mood change?

Veronica smiles coyly, walks to the front door, makes sure
it's locked, and pulls the phone cord out of the wall socket
with a devilish look.

VerONICA

Never assume you know what I'm thinking. Tonight you're mine, and that's that.

JACK

I like the sound of that.

The glint of a lusty thought darts across his eyes.

VERONICA

You sure?

He nods, following her with his eyes. She approaches, and reaching into his pocket, produces his phone. She places it atop a high shelf with an almost burlesque flourish.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

I mean, it has been a while--

JACK

Easy now. Let's not put too much pressure on here. You know how it is, a guy thinks bout it too much and--

VERONICA

--thinking too much? Never been your problem, darling.

She almost winces, looking at the flowers on the table.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

But you try.

Jack begins to look exasperated.

Jack

What, the flowers? I thought you loved Lilies.

Veronica stares blankly at Jack.

(defensively) I've seen you buy
Lilies.

She grits her teeth and nods.

VERONICA
You have. Once a year.

JACK
--Sure?

VERONICA
Family plot. Headstones? Green,
fenced-in area full of dead people?
Ringing any bells?

He lowers his glass to the table, flushed with humiliation.

Jack
This, uh, this (he's uncertain what
the dish is) is really good. What
did you call it?

Veronica taps her fork on the edge of her plate, then scrapes
it ever so slightly. Jack flinches almost indiscernibly.

VERONICA
Marcello's calls it *fiorelinni*
fantasia. I call it calling
Marcello's. Since when do I cook?

Jack looks defeated.

JACK
Right. Must've slipped my mind.

Pan down to reveal Jack's fist clenching in frustration.

Pan up to reveal Jack's attempt at a smile.

He takes a few bites of his dinner, looking down at it.

He looks back up at Veronica almost in time to see the hatred
on her face change into a smile. Almost.

Veronica
But you like it?

JACK
Very much.

VERONICA
Eat up then. I have got a surprise
for you...

JACK
(setting down his fork) It's great,
I'm just not very hungry. What kind
of surprise?

VerONICA
Do you need a thesaurus? Surprise;
unexpected, unanticipated--

JACK
I know what the word means--

VERONICA
--how about patience, then?

Jack folds his hands in his lap.

JACK
I can be patient.

Veronica glances toward his dinner.

VERONICA
So can I.

She resumes her seat and her dinner. As she scratches her
fork along the plate, Jack grimaces at the sound.

JACK
Ronnie, please. You know I hate
that.

She shrugs, her expression enigmatic. Almost under her
breath:

VERONICA

Right. Must've slipped my mind.

JACK

Sorry?

VERONICA (again, sotto voce)

You will be.

Jack

Something on your mind, hon?

She stares at his full plate and lets out a frustrated sigh.

VERONICA

Do you even care?

JACK

It's no fun to walk into an ambush,
you know.

The colour drains from her face. She freezes.

JACK (CONT'D)

I call this afternoon and
everything's fine. I thought we were
going to have a nice date night--god,
that sounds lame--an evening like we
used to. I wanted to make it up to
you for being so--

VERONICA

What exactly is the adjective you're
looking for? Take your time.

JACK

--busy.

Veronica stands again. She paces with an animal energy.

VERONICA

This is making it up to me? Allowing
me the privilege of putting dinner
on your table--dinner, I may add,

that you aren't even eating--I
swear--

She gestures toward his dinner with a fork and then scrapes
it across a plate.

Jack does his best to avoid freaking out.

Jack
You weren't exactly slaving over a
hot stove, and it wasn't anything
person--

VERONICA
--Wrong, Jack. Everything is
something personal.

She drags the fork for a looong plate-scrape, loudly. Jack
flinches spastically.

JACK
Stop it!

VERONICA
Or what, Jack?

Again. Louder.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
Making you angry, Jack?!

JACK
No, you're just confusing me; please
stop!!

She surveys him with as much affection as a tabby stares at
an uncleaned litter-box.

VERONICA
I...confuse...you?

He nods.

Taking a breath, she looks to his dinner and then to his
quarter-glass of wine.

Veronica (CONT'D)

Looks like you're getting low. And I could use another drink or two myself. Maybe we should open another bottle.

JACK

Fuck yes.

She relaxes, satisfied.

VERONICA

All right then. Would you mind? I can't reach the LaFete.

He glances down at his glass and back up at her. She smiles.

JACK

Let's save that--can't we just open a bottle of Castillero?

VERONICA

Saving it for what? For when?

He shrugs.

She ponders this for a moment, then nods with a flirty glance.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Fine, but I'm opening two. And I want a sunroof on the XK.

Jack

Sounds fair.

She exits the room lightly, all negativity forgotten.

No sooner has she cleared the door than Jack begins whistling softly. He flips the cover off of the cheap chocolates. A fidgety move, non-deliberate. He removes one of the chocolates from the box. With the other hand, from his coat pocket, without looking, he draws a syringe, the plunger pulled back, full of bluish liquid. He reaches out and one-handedly

injects some of the liquid into each of the chocolates, except for the one he has removed. Halfway through, he starts to observe the process with curiosity, then apprehension. He recoils in revulsion at his own actions, but continues.

As he finishes, he places the syringe back in his pocket, and raises the un-tampered chocolate to his lips.

A voice from the doorway:

VERONICA (o.S.)
What the hell are you doing?

He freezes. Veronica enters into frame, holding two opened bottles of wine and a corkscrew.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
You can't eat your dinner, but you
can eat the chocolates you so
considerately brought me?

JACK (dazed)
Couldn't help myself...

She pours a copious amount of wine into each glass, and after setting down the bottles, raises her own.

(CONT'D)

Veronica looks at Jack's glass for a moment, then makes eye contact.

VERONICA
1) I'll need one of those new GPSs
like Joan and David have.
And 2): Sante.

She raises her glass, maintaining eye contact.

Jack shakes his head. Leaves the glass where it is.

JACK
I don't think I will.

She looks frustrated.

JACK (CONT'D)
Feeling kind of...weird.

She looks at the wine, to him, to the wine.

VERONICA
All right...

She crosses, brushing the hair away form his face.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
You know what?

She continues around behind him, caressing his shoulder and neck with the same hand used for the hair-brushing.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
Fuck patience!

With her other hand, which as been out of frame, she raises the corkscrew and plunges it into his back.

He reacts like someone who has just been mortally stabbed with a corkscrew in one of his vertebrae. Choking, gurgling, wheezing. He begins to spit a little blood.

Leaving the weapon lodged in him, she crosses around to face him again.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
No sir, thinking never was your problem.

She gestures to the flowers and candy.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
Consideration was never going to be your undoing, you inconsiderate fuck.

Veronica scrapes a fork across one of the plates with enough force to almost break one or the other.

More gurgles, blood drooling.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

But thank you so much, Jack, for
going to all this effort on my
account--

She hurls a lily at his bloodied face.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

That's for you. You'll forgive me if
you don't get me every year, you
selfish--

Distracted by the sight of the chocolates, she pops one in
her mouth, chews and swallows.

Jack's wheezing comes quicker, now. She leans in.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

That hurt, Jack? Well so does being
unappreciated. So does bullshit
expectation, and--

She leans in closer. His hand jingles something beneath the
table. It becomes clearer that the wheezing is laughter.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

How dare y--what is so god-damned
funny, you f--

Jack, still laughing, mouths "I don't know".

She can't get the word out for the burst of blood at her own
lips. She half-stumbles, dizzy, catches herself, and then
falls hard. As she drops, she clutches at the table.

The lilies aren't much to hold onto.

Some of them fall, marking her place.

Pan (with VO) to reveal a series of hanged and placed
photographs of Jack and Veronica.. In all, even the clearly
recent ones, they are happy. The calendar has upcoming events

like "Tennis w/Joan ad David", and smiley faces.

Pan back to the bodies. Jack's hand, now visible, holds a set of what look like new Jag keys. Veronica's lifeless form is slightly exposed, enough that we can see the hint of a garter beneath the cocktail dress.

Radio voice

--outbursts are unknown in cause and so far contained within certain geographic regions. Please consult with regional emergency services for further information. In the meantime, citizens without pressing business in the metro area are asked to refrain from unnecessary travel. As further news becomes available, we'll keep you--

A great crashing reduces the broadcast to static.

Fin de prologue.

