

RIVERDALE



Chapter One: "The River's Edge"

written by Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa

Based on characters appearing in Archie Comics Publications

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ACT ONE

ICONIC SHOTS of an American SMALL TOWN. Beginning with: A "Welcome to Riverdale" sign. Its faded motto: "The Town with Pep!"

A Male Teenager's VOICE-OVER narrates:

UNSEEN MALE TEEN (V.O.)
There is an idea of Riverdale...

WE SEE: Nondescript SUBURBAN STREETS, anonymous, mysterious.

UNSEEN MALE TEEN (V.O.)
...of what kind of town it is, what sort
of families live there...

WE SEE: Riverdale's MAIN DRAG. Store-fronts, local businesses. People, different ages, sizes, races, walking...

UNSEEN MALE TEEN (V.O.)
...a notion that it exists unchanged and
unchanging, as if frozen in a time-capsule...

WE CYCLE THROUGH IMAGES OF: City Hall, Pickins Park, the Bijou Movie Theatre, the Fire Station, the 24-hour Diner, POP'S...

UNSEEN MALE TEEN (V.O.)
...that it must be *exactly* how it presents
itself to the outside world. Safe. Decent.
Innocent. So that if you were looking at it
from the window of a train, rushing by, you
might wish you lived there...

WE SEE: A DERELICT BUILDING, with boarded-up windows, brick walls covered in graffiti; a couple of skinny, possibly methed-out KIDS stumbling into the building's dark DOORWAY...

UNSEEN MALE TEEN (V.O.)
...but that's only *one* aspect of it, and
only on the surface...

IMAGES OF: The High School, the Police Station, the Comic Book Shop, the Train Station, the Liquor Store...

UNSEEN MALE TEEN (V.O.)
...the truth is, if you *really* want to
understand Riverdale, and what kind of
place it is, I have to tell you about its
shadows, the town *beneath* the town...

EXT. SWEETWATER RIVER - EARLY MORNING

A beautiful, slow-moving RIVER, eternal, hypnotic.

UNSEEN MALE TEEN (V.O.)
 ...starting, I guess, with what the
 Blossom twins did this summer...

A RED CONVERTIBLE crests the hill overlooking the river, stops, tires crunching on gravel. Taken by Tree's cover of "Sweet Child o' Mine" plays on the car's stereo, as two impossibly gorgeous TEENAGERS, both red-haired, step out of the car...

They are JASON and CHERYL BLOSSOM, and really, they could be models from an Abercrombie & Fitch catalogue.

CAR STEREO
*"She's got a smile that it seems to me/
 Reminds me of childhood memories..."*

They look out at the river's shimmering, rippling surface, start walking towards a DOCK...

UNSEEN MALE TEEN (V.O.)
 On the fourth of July, just after dawn,
 Jason and Cheryl Blossom drove out to
 Sweetwater River for an early morning
 boat-ride, as was their custom...

As they near the dock, Cheryl hesitates.

JASON
 Are you scared, Cher-Cher?

Cheryl shakes her head; Jason smiles, takes her hand, leads her onto the wooden dock, to a ROWBOAT at its end. The song keeps playing, wafting down from the convertible's open doors...

EXT. SWEETWATER RIVER - MOMENTS LATER

Jason and Cheryl in the rowboat, sliding across the water, towards an outcropping of rocks. They pass into -- and out of -- frame...

EXT. SWEETWATER RIVER - THE SHORE - THE SAME MORNING (LATER)

Nerdy, glasses-wearing high school geek DILTON DOILEY guides a troop of BOY SCOUTS along the river's edge. They all carry BINOCULARS. Dilton's pointing to BIRDS in the trees...

UNSEEN MALE TEEN (V.O.)
 The next thing we know happened for sure
 is that Dilton Doiley, who was leading
 Riverdale's Boy Scout Troop on a bird-
 watching expedition, came upon --

-- Dilton and the Scouts stop short. There's Cheryl, huddled by the lapping water, knees tucked under her chin, arms around her legs, shivering because she's sopping wet.

DILTON
 ...Cheryl? Are you okay?

Numb, in shock, she turns to him. Her face is streaked with tears.

CHERYL
 ...Ja...Jason...

Then, one of the SCOUTS, pointing out at the river, yells --

BOY SCOUT
 -- look! Out on the water!

The ROWBOAT's upside-down, banging lazily against those rocks, in the middle of the river...

EXT. SWEETWATER RIVER - DAY (LATER)

A POLICE BOAT anchored by the rocks. DETECTIVE SAM HILL, drinking from a mug, is in charge. SCUBA DIVERS jump into the water.

UNSEEN MALE (V.O.)
 Riverdale Police, led by Detective Sam Hill, dragged the river for Jason's body, but hours later, still nothing...

The ENTIRE TOWN is watching from the riverbank. Parents holding their kids. Blonde ALICE COOPER stands with her husband HAL and their daughter POLLY (18), pretty but tweaked-out and damaged.

HAL
 (staring out)
 They'll never find him. Not with that undercurrent.

ALICE
 Awful to say, but I hope he suffered. In those last moments.

POLLY
 (simmering rage)
 Jason Blossom burns in hell.

UNSEEN MALE TEEN (V.O.)
 Needless to say, there were no fireworks in Riverdale that night...

EXT. RIVERDALE'S CEMETERY - DAY

The BLOSSOM FAMILY -- dad CLIFFORD, mom PENELOPE, and CHERYL (all with red-hair, all in black) -- standing at a freshly dug grave, as a MINISTER says a few words (we don't hear)...

UNSEEN MALE TEEN (V.O.)

A week later, the Blossom family buried an empty casket, and Jason's death was ruled an accident, as the story Cheryl told made the rounds. That an early morning idyll turned tragic when Cheryl saw a ribbon in the water, and Jason reached down to get it, and accidentally tipped the boat, and panicked, and drowned...

INT. POP'S CHOCK'LIT SHOPPE DINER - NIGHT

Open 24-hours. A skinny teenager with dark, shaggy hair sticking out from under a weird hat -- it's like a felt CROWN -- sits in one of the diner's booths, *tap-tap-tapping* away on his laptop.

This is JUGHEAD JONES. An emo-heartthrob.

JUGHEAD JONES (V.O.)

...which is *super-weird*, because Jason was captain of every sports team at Riverdale High, including water polo, and during summer vacations, he worked as a lifeguard at the country club...

A WAITRESS stops by with a coffee pot, gestures with it, *does Jughead want a refill?* He nods, holds up his cup.

JUGHEAD JONES (V.O.)

Not that anyone examined those facts *too* closely, or asked *too* many questions... Probably because the Blossoms were like...*poison roses* in the garden of Riverdale -- and *no one* wanted to get pricked on those venomous thorns...

EXT. THE PEMBROOKE APARTMENT BUILDING - DUSK

A TOWNCAR pulls into the Gothic APARTMENT BUILDING's driveway.

JUGHEAD JONES (V.O.)

So the "July 4th tragedy" became just another suburban legend -- a cautionary tale we would analyze and regurgitate endlessly -- until some *new scandal* or *mystery* rolled into town...

Two dark-haired beauties -- HERMIONE LODGE (pearls, always) and her teenage daughter VERONICA, on her iPhone -- climb out of the car, look up at the Pembroke's ornate facade...

VERONICA

(trying to rally)

The gargoyles remind me of the Dakota.

HERMIONE

The same architect did this one, the Pembroke. The apartment's small, a *piéd-à-terre*, but --

HERMIONE/VERONICA

-- "quality, always" --

HERMIONE

-- *and*, it was the only piece of property in *my* name, not your father's, so the courts couldn't take it from us.

Hermione grips Veronica's hand.

HERMIONE (CONT'D)

You'll make a go of it here, won't you? The people in Riverdale, they're kind and forgiving in a way they just *aren't* in New York.

VERONICA

...I'll try, Mom. I promise.

The building's FRONT DOOR opens. The Pembroke's doorman, SMITHERS, in a uniform, comes out, waves, approaches --

SMITHERS

Ms. Hermione! Welcome home, Ma'am. How was the ride?

HERMIONE

No traffic, thank God.

(then)

Smithers, you've never met my daughter Veronica, have you?

SMITHERS

Never. It's a pleasure, Miss.

VERONICA

Hi...

SMITHERS

I'll get your bags.

(as he does that)

And would you like some menus, Ma'am, so you can order in?

HERMIONE

Oh, no, I've had a craving for one of Pop Tate's cheeseburgers since the Tappan Zee Bridge -- his diner's still open, I pray?

VERONICA

(the horror, the horror)
-- *diner?*

EXT. ELM STREET - RIVERDALE - NIGHT (THAT SAME NIGHT)

We hear crickets, a dog barking, end-of-summer sounds. The Camera pans across a series of MODEST HOMES along a tree-lined street. Towards ONE HOUSE in particular...a BEDROOM on the second floor...

INT. THE COOPER HOUSE - BETTY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Blonde, pretty BETTY COOPER (16), in jeans and a bra, getting dressed, while brown-haired KEVIN KELLER (16, cute) lounges on her bed, scrolling through profiles on his iPhone.

BETTY

I thought you already had your "date" picked out for tonight --

KEVIN

-- I did, jockbud92, but then he suggested we meet in the bathroom of a truck stop off Route 80 --

BETTY

Uhm, *hi*, Craigslist killer --

KEVIN

-- so it's back to the grind on Grindr. Or -- can I just hang out here with the twinks of FraternityX.com until you get back? My parents are warpathing --

BETTY

Oh, no, why this time?

KEVIN

Same old, same old. General Keller goes on a bender, calls me a homo, Mom starts yelling, I'm out the front door --
(speaking of same old...)
-- are you excited? Nervous?

BETTY

Both -- I haven't seen him all summer --

KEVIN

-- which is why nerves are acceptable, but we agreed: It's *time*. Your parents want to micromanage every aspect of your life? *Fine*, but not who you date -- there are limits, Betty. Post-LA, you're in your P.O.P. -- your Place of Power. You like him, he likes you, it's what *needs* to happen. Cosmically.

BETTY

Then why hasn't he ever said or done anything?

-- suddenly, Archie's hugging Betty. Super-tight.

ARCHIE
-- I missed you this summer, Betty. So,
so much...

This hug's a *tad* intense. Like Archie doesn't want to let go...

BETTY
...me, too. I...missed you, too...

INT. POP'S CHOCK-LIT SHOPPE DINER - NIGHT

Archie and Betty sit in a booth, in mid-conversation --

ARCHIE
-- what was the highlight?

BETTY
Of my internship? The Judy Blume book
release party I organized, *by far* --

INT. BARNES & NOBLE - THE GROVE (IN LA) - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Slow-motion: JUDY BLUME at a table, signing books for a *massive*
CROWD. Betty stands behind Judy, with a clip board, *beaming*...

BETTY (V.O.)
-- at the end of the night, she said to me,
"Enjoy this time, Betty, and *remember*..."

INT. POP'S CHOCK'LIT SHOPPE DINER - NIGHT (THE PRESENT)

RESUME WITH: Betty and Archie...

BETTY
"...when you're fifteen, one summer *can*
change your life."

ARCHIE
That's. Freakin'. Epic.

BETTY
It was *everything*. And I may not have gone
to LA if you hadn't encouraged me, Archie,
so -- thanks. You always believe in me...
(that hangs there, then:)
How was working for your dad?

ARCHIE
It was...pouring concrete, literally every
day, all day long. So to pass the time --
(beat)
-- okay, do you remember in 5th-grade?
(MORE)

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

My Mom and Dad gave me that guitar for my birthday and I made us all play Rock Band?

(Betty nods, *does she ever*)

-- anyway, to pass the time at work, I started composing these...poems, in my head. Then, at night, I'd get home, and I'd write them down. And -- try to fix them. Revise them.

BETTY

The Robert Frost of Rockland County...

ARCHIE

It took me half the summer to realize they weren't poems, they were song lyrics. And the other half to realize...uhm...

BETTY

What, Archie?

ARCHIE

(almost ashamed to admit it)
...I don't want to pour concrete for the rest of my life, Betty. Or whatever my dad's, like, *grooming me* to do. Manage the guys who pour the concrete. I wanna be... (I can't even say it, it sounds so stupid...)

BETTY

You wanna be the guy...who writes songs... about the guys who pour the concrete?

Archie's looking away -- at Jughead, in his booth, at the other end of the diner. A quick wave -- Jughead waves back -- then, Archie turns back to Betty for some truth-telling --

ARCHIE

You're lucky you were away this summer, Betty, it was -- messed-up. It messed *me* up. The stuff with the Blossoms, it was -- hardcore.

BETTY

That's what my mom and dad said.

(then)

What was it like?

ARCHIE

...surreal. For three days, everyone in town met by the river, waiting for Jason to...surface. And every day he didn't, less and less people would show up.

(darkly)

I'm never going back to Sweetwater River. That place is cursed.

BETTY

My parents wanted to write a story about it, for "The Register" -- they *tried* to -- but the Blossoms killed it. Threatened to sue, to shut the paper down for good.

ARCHIE

Darkest. Summer. Ever. The *only* good thing was -- writing songs? Made me feel like I'd *finally* broken through to something...*real*. About my life and what I should be *trying* to do with it. Starting this year -- tomorrow.

BETTY

What about football?

ARCHIE

I'll try-out, at least.

BETTY

Have you told your dad?

ARCHIE

That I'm deviating from his grand plan? For music? No. Until I've got it more figured out, you're the only person I'm telling.

BETTY

(that sinks in)

...can I hear them? Your songs?

ARCHIE

Definitely. I'm finishing some demos tonight.

BETTY

Great. Oh -- and also?

(here *she* goes:)

...*I've* been thinking about *us*, Archie, and our friendship, and how it's time we --

-- suddenly, the BELL above Pop's front door jingles. And in comes Veronica, wearing a fetching cloak (like Kim Basinger in "L.A. Confidential"). She approaches the diner's owner, POP TATE, behind the counter.

VERONICA

Hi, I called in an order? For Lodge?

POP TATE

(heavy Greek accent)

Two burgers, yah, almost ready, but you must to wait.

Veronica looks around while she waits -- there's some weird dude typing away (Jughead), *nope* -- but then her eyes land on Archie, who's staring at her, which Betty clocks. It's like when Claire Daines and Leonardo DiCaprio see each other through the fish-tank in "Romeo and Juliet." Veronica walks over to them...

VERONICA
Hi. How are the onion rings here?

BETTY
Uhhmm... ARCHIE
Addictive, they're so good.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
(over her shoulder, to Pop)
Can we get some onion rings, too, please?
(back to Archie and Betty)
Thanks. My mom and I just moved here, so...

ARCHIE
From where?

VERONICA
New York. Do you guys go to Riverdale?

BETTY
We do. Both of us. Together.

ARCHIE
(can't take his eyes off her)
We're sophomores.

VERONICA
Me, too. I'm filled with dread.

ARCHIE
How come?

VERONICA
...are you familiar with Truman Capote's oeuvre? I'm "Breakfast at Tiffany's," but this town is strictly "In Cold Blood." No offense.
(they have no idea what she's saying; then, a hand --)
-- Veronica Lodge.

ARCHIE
(taking it)
Archie Andrews. This is Betty Cooper.

VERONICA
Wait, are you -- ?

BETTY
-- supposed to give you a tour tomorrow?
Yes, I'm your peer mentor.

VERONICA
(not fun)

Fun.

ARCHIE
Do you want to join us? And maybe we can
un-fill you with dread?

Betty shoots daggers at Archie. Veronica smiles, demurs.

VERONICA
My mom's waiting for me. But...maybe I'll
see you tomorrow?

PRE-LAP: The sound of SOMEONE CRYING...

INT. CHERYL BLOSSOM'S BEDROOM - MORNING (THE NEXT MORNING)

Cheryl, in her cheerleading outfit (Blue and Gold), sits at her vanity, sobbing uncontrollably, studying herself in the mirror. A KNOCK on her door; it's her mother PENELOPE --

PENELOPE'S VOICE (O.S.)
-- *Cherry? You alright?*

Like a switch has been flipped, Cheryl stops crying, wipes the tears from her face. She's become a totally different person.

CHERYL
Fine, Mommy, I'm just practicing in case
I have to cry today.
(to herself, in mirror)
"I loved my twin brother. In many ways,
he was my soul-mate."
(then, debating:)
Maybe no crying's better.

INT. THE COOPER HOUSE - BETTY'S ROOM - MORNING

Betty, getting ready to head-out. A KNOCK on her door; it opens. It's Betty's mom, ALICE, coming in --

ALICE
-- we're sending next week's issue to the
printers tonight, so Dad and I'll be home
late.

BETTY
You know, Mom, one day? Eventually? "The
Register" will be all digital, and you'll
be able to work from home.

ALICE
That would break your father's heart.
(sitting down, heart-to-heart)
(MORE)

ALICE (CONT'D)

Betty. This coming year -- sophomore year? It's critical for colleges. Grades are important, extra-curriculars are important -- athletics, important -- maintaining a decent character? *Hugely* important, colleges *do* look at that.

BETTY

You say that every year.

ALICE

You've accomplished so much, Betty, I don't want *anything* jeopardizing that. Think about your poor sister. Polly was *such* a shining star till she let herself be ruined by that Blossom boy -- and now, where is she? She's turned her room into a cave -- she *never* comes out --

BETTY

-- I'm not Polly, Mom.

ALICE

No, but it's so easy to slip, Betty. You missed curfew last night.

BETTY

By seven minutes. And I was with Archie. Who has red hair, yes, but he is *nothing* like Jason Blossom.

ALICE

Oh, sweetie. They're *all* like Jason.
 (she strokes her daughter's hair)
 I love you so much, Betty...
 (taking Betty's hands in hers)
 I just need you to be as smart as I know you are. And *stay. Focused.*

With that, Alice stands, goes. We linger on Betty. Alice has left something in her hands. Reveal: A PRESCRIPTION BOTTLE of ADDERALL with Betty's name on it. The message is clear: *Betty. Must. Stay. Focused.*

INT. THE COOPER HOUSE - HALLWAY - MORNING

Betty comes out of her room. As she heads towards the stairs, she glances at a DOOR at the end of the hall (Polly's room). Painted BLACK, messily, angrily, like a Rothko. It's creepy; Betty might as well be looking at the possessed girl's bedroom door in "The Exorcist." Betty shudders, continues on her way...

INT. THE ANDREWS HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Archie's parents, FRED and MARY ANDREWS, on their feet, checking their phones, having a quick breakfast before heading out --

MARY

-- I'm showing the house on Lakeshore.

FRED

To that same couple again? Tell them you know an *excellent* contractor --

Archie comes in, trying to make a fast getaway --

ARCHIE

Hey, Mom -- Hey, Dad --
(grabbing a pancake to go)
First day and I'm already late --

FRED

-- hey, hey, wait, hang on -- you coming by after school?

ARCHIE

Dad --

FRED

Not to work on the crew, you did your time already -- this is to get you started in the office -- so that *next* summer --

ARCHIE

(dodging)
-- I can't, I've got football try-outs.

FRED

Oh, are you doing that? You haven't been talking much about football, so I --

ARCHIE

(bristling)
-- I played last year -- I'm gonna try-out, at least -- or is that not okay?

FRED

(beat)
Of course it's okay. Go. Good luck.

Archie goes. Mary and Fred share a moment:

MARY

Remember what it was like when we had a son? And he talked to us?

FRED

You mean three months ago? Good times.

EXT. RIVERDALE HIGH - MORNING

Establishing. TEACHERS going in; KIDS loitering out front, trying to extend the summer even for a few more minutes...

BETTY (PRE-LAP)

When Principal Weatherbee asks me to give a tour, I usually start with a little history and context. Riverdale High first opened its doors in 1941 --

INT. RIVERDALE HIGH - HALLWAYS - MORNING

Betty's leading Veronica down a locker-lined hall --

VERONICA

-- and hasn't been redecorated since, apparently. Honestly, I feel like I'm wandering through the lost epilogue of "Our Town" -- what's the social scene like here? Any night clubs?

BOY'S VOICE

(behind them)

A strip club called the Hoe Zone and a *tragic* gay bar called Innuendo --

Betty and Veronica turn to -- KEVIN, coming up behind them...

KEVIN

Friday nights it's football games, then tailgate parties in the Walmart parking lot -- attendance *is* mandatory. Saturday night is movie night, regardless of what's playing at the Bijou -- and better get there early, because we don't have reserved seats in Riverdale. Sunday nights, thank God for HBO.

BETTY

Veronica Lodge, Kevin Keller. Veronica's new here, Kevin is --

VERONICA

-- gay, thank God. Let's be best friends.

KEVIN

Is it true what they say about your dad?

VERONICA

That he's the devil?

KEVIN

That he's in jail, about to be on trial?

VERONICA

...I stand by my father. Does everyone here know?

(they're silent; to Betty)
Do you know?

BETTY

(nods)
But, unlike some, I wasn't going to bring it up unless you did.

KEVIN

Oh, shit, sorry --

VERONICA

(to Betty)
I appreciate your discretion.

They continue on their way -- and with the tour...

INT. RIVERDALE HIGH - HALLWAY - MORNING

Archie, at his locker, holding a FOLDER, which contains a SHEAF OF HAND-WRITTEN PAGES -- he's making notes on them -- and which he shoves *into* his bookbag, when he sees his two bro-friends, REGGIE MANTLE and MOOSE MASON, approaching --

REGGIE

-- Bro, you are *READY* for football -- you got *hella swole*, you're a *beast*. Your arms are *diesel*. How'd *that* happen? You on T? Anadur? Anavar? AndroGel? Oxy-Deca-Durabolinol? Because I *told* you. My cousins down in Miami --

ARCHIE

-- it's from working construction, Reg.

REGGIE

Oh, yeah, that's right -- *hey, hey*, did you do any houses? Any private homes?

ARCHIE

A couple.

REGGIE

Sweet. And were you supervised by the *la-la-ladies* of the houses?

ARCHIE

...where are you going with this, Reggie?

REGGIE

Where *I'm* going is where I hope you went: Did you *tap* any *MILF* ass this summer?

EXT. RIVERDALE HIGHWAY - SUNDOWN (FLASHBACK)

Archie, walking home from a job, pulls up his shirt, to wipe his forehead, when a cute VW BUG slows down...stops right in front of him. The driver's side WINDOW rolls down, revealing -- A SEXY 22-YEAR-OLD WOMAN, in sunglasses, sipping a Cherry Slurpee...

REGGIE (V.O.)
'Cause you know that's what they want, right?

22-YEAR-OLD WOMAN
Archie? Thought that was you. What are you doing, walking in this heat?

REGGIE (V.O.)
These bored, lonely, sex-starved housewives?

ARCHIE
Uhm. Building character?

REGGIE (V.O.)
A young, hot football-stud to service them?

22-YEAR-OLD WOMAN
(smiling at him)
Wanna ride?

OFF ARCHIE, debating this offer, as we RESUME WITH --

INT. RIVERDALE HIGH - HALLWAY - MORNING

-- Archie, Reggie, and Moose. As Archie backs away from them...

ARCHIE
...I think that's more an Xtube fantasy from your spank-bank, Reggie --

-- and Archie's down the hall, around a corner, and WE HEAR:

JOSIE (PRE-LAP)
Excuse me, this is a *closed* rehearsal.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Archie, holding his pages from the locker, has just come into the room, where three girls -- JOSIE AND THE PUSSYCATS -- were in the middle of a practice jam. VALERIE (dark-haired) and MELODY (a platinum blonde) stand with their instruments, behind their leader: Gorgeous, imperious JOSIE, at a microphone. All three ladies wear the ICONIC PUSSYCAT EARS. (Yep, Gang, we're all in.)

ARCHIE
Uh, sorry, I, I didn't know --
(except, yeah, he did)
-- but, now that I *am* here, I was hoping to talk to you about -- some songs? I wrote?

JOSIE
(eyes narrowing)
Do I even *know* you?

VALERIE

His name's Archie Andrews. He was in our
Pre-Cal class last year.
(she smiles, making intro's)
-- I'm Valerie Brown, by the way. This is
Melody Jones.

Valerie's obviously crushing on Archie...

ARCHIE

-- Archie, hey -- hi.
(back to Josie)
So, my songs. I was hoping you would maybe
consider recording one or two for your --

JOSIE

Let me stop you right there -- Archie,
was it? You're staring at our pussycat
ears, which is *rude*, but let me break *it*
-- and *them* -- down for you. The
Pussycats are building a *brand*, we're
telling a *story*. Last year, we won
Rockland County's Battle-of-the-Bands --

ARCHIE

-- I know, I was there, you were --

JOSIE

-- *yes*, we were. This year, we'd like to
build on that success. *Continue* telling
our story. With songs we write.

ARCHIE

I hear that, I just --
(cards on table)
You're doing what I *want* to be doing. If
I can get a song -- even *one song of mine*
-- out there, for people to --

JOSIE

-- uh, you can. *YouTube*.

ARCHIE

If I record one of my songs and post it
on YouTube, it's like, "Who cares?" --
(Josie gestures, "Agreed")
-- *but*, if the Pussycats sing and post
one of *my* songs on *their* YouTube channel,
with their two-hundred-thousand-*plus*
subscribers, that would actually *mean*
something.

JOSIE

I won't argue the point, but look at us.
We're a *girl-group* -- *of color* --

ARCHIE

-- lots of divas -- of color -- perform songs written by -- Caucasian dudes -- Beyoncé, Christina, Nikki -- maybe if you *tried* one, even to hear how it sounds --

JOSIE

Read my glossed lips, Justin Gingerlake:
Not. Gonna. Happen.

INT. RIVERDALE HIGH - HALLWAY - MORNING

We see: Archie, slinking out of the classroom where the Pussycats are. WE PAN from him, down the hall, to -- Veronica, still with Betty and Kevin, looking at Archie go...

VERONICA

There's the hottie you were with last night. The red-headed Ansel Elgort.

KEVIN

The hotness is a new thing. Last year, Archie was like Liam Hemsworth. This year? He's more *Chris* Hemsworth. Not that Liam *isn't* edible, I *totally* would, but --

VERONICA

Is he your boyfriend?

KEVIN

No, he's straight.

BETTY

No, we're just friends.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

In that case, mind putting in a word? I'm in *dire* need of a boy-toy to distract me till the spring collections are released, and I've tried every flavor *but* orange --

KEVIN

-- *actually*, to clarify: Betty and Archie *aren't* dating, but we're hoping they soon will be. They're endgame, but as with all epic romances, there are issues. Self-esteem. Confidence. We're working on them.

They pass a POSTER on the wall, for the Back-to-School dance.

VERONICA

Will you ask him to the dance?

KEVIN

She *should*, but I heard it might be getting canceled. Because of Jason. They're gonna tell us at Assembly...

SINGING VOICES (PRE-LAP)
"All hail, our fair Riverdale..."

INT. RIVERDALE HIGH - GYMNASIUM - MORNING

THE ASSEMBLY. STUDENTS sit on bleachers; TEACHERS, in folding chairs. Weatherbee's at a podium. A young teacher, GERALDINE GRUNDY (in glasses), leads the school's CHOIR as they finish up:

CHOIR
*"...here friendships started/Near or
 parted/Al-ways stay with yo-OU!"*

They finish. No APPLAUSE, except for Mr. Weatherbee --

WEATHERBEE
 -- thank you for that, Ms. Grundy, *always*
 nice to hear from our choir.

(he begins)
 On behalf of the teachers and staff of Riverdale High, I want to welcome you all to what I'm certain will be a memorable school year. Those of you who are returning may notice some changes -- but before getting into that, we felt it would be remiss *not* to acknowledge the member of our community...of our family...we lost this summer. Jason Blossom.

(STUDENTS react, variously)
 His sister, Cheryl, has asked to say a few words. Cheryl?

Cheryl, who's been sitting in the front row, makes her way to the podium. Weatherbee sits with the other teachers.

CHERYL
 Thank you, Principal Weatherbee. I'd like to begin with a moment of silence.

People comply, bowing their heads. Veronica's like, *Really?*

MEANWHILE, *under* the bleachers: Jughead, lurking, his laptop under his arm, apart from everyone else, but watching *everything...*

CHERYL (CONT'D)
 Many of you were lucky enough to have known my brother personally. Maybe you were in a class with him, or you played on a team with him, or you were Facebook friends with him, or followed him on Twitter, or Instagram, or Snapchat...

Sitting with Reggie and Moose, Archie stiffens. Tries to make eye-contact with Ms. Grundy, who's looking at the floor.

CHERYL (CONT'D)

It doesn't matter. The point is: Each and every one of you, whether you knew it or not, meant the world to Jason...

Kevin "glances" a HOT NEW STUDENT, who "glances" him back.

CHERYL (CONT'D)

I loved my twin brother -- in many ways, he was and always will be my soul-mate -- which is why I can say with confidence that Jason wouldn't want you -- *us* -- to spend the year mourning. He would want you -- *us* -- to move on with our lives.

Veronica tries to "glance" Archie, but it's a no-go.

CHERYL (CONT'D)

To the end, I've asked Principal Weatherbee that we *not* cancel the Back-to-School dance. But rather, that we use it as a way for us to *heal*, collectively, and to celebrate my brother's too, too short life, thank you all.

Archie *finally* locks eyes with Ms. Grundy. Now that we're focused on her, even though she's wearing glasses, we see -- *it's the same woman who offered him a ride in the VW bug* -- a revelation that PUSHES US into --

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS - DUSK (FLASHBACK)

START ON: A CROWD of teenagers, gathered around an OUTDOOR STAGE, where Josie and the Pussycats are performing. Above them, a SIGN over the stage reads: BATTLE-OF-THE-BANDS. The Pussycats' song is slow, sultry...

THE CAMERA pans from the stage, over the Crowd...to a BARN...

On the *other* side of the barn, WE FIND: Ms. Grundy's bug, parked, out of sight. Archie's leaning against it as Ms. Grundy, grooving to the song, *sexily* dances over to Archie -- think Nicole Kidman in "To Die For" -- *and kisses him*... THE KISS takes us back to --

INT. RIVERDALE HIGH - GYMNASIUM - DAY (THE PRESENT)

The Present. Around Archie, the student body is still applauding Cheryl, but he is *laser-focused* on Ms. Grundy, and vice-versa...

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. RIVERDALE HIGH - HALLWAY - DAY

Post-Assembly. Archie's trying to catch-up to Ms. Grundy, who walks ahead of him, *through* the students going to class --

ARCHIE

Ms. Grundy --
 (she keeps moving)
 Hey, Ms. Grundy, wait up --

-- Ms. Grundy turns on her heel to face Archie.

MS. GRUNDY

What can I do for you, Mr. Andrews?

ARCHIE

I -- I -- can we *talk*, Ms. Grundy?

MS. GRUNDY

That depends. About what?

A FLASH -- *of Archie and Ms. Grundy making out, hot, forbidden* -- a memory Archie pushes out of his mind as quickly as he can --

ARCHIE

...*music*, you're the music teacher, can we talk about music?

MS. GRUNDY

...of course. Make an appointment. During my regularly scheduled office hours.

She turns, starts to walk away from him again.

FRED (PRE-LAP)

Hermione Lodge.

INT. ANDREWS CONSTRUCTION COMPANY - LOBBY - DAY

Veronica's mom, Hermione, sits in the waiting area. Archie's dad, Fred, has come out of his office.

HERMIONE

(smiles)
 How are you, Fred?

FRED

Shocked to hear from you. Come on back.

INT. ANDREWS CONSTRUCTION - FRED'S OFFICE - DAY

Not much fancier than the lobby, though Fred at least has pictures of his family on his desk. Hermione sits, as Fred asks --

FRED
Do you want a water?

HERMIONE
(right into it)
-- I want a job, Fred. I saw on your website, you're looking for a seasonal hire, someone to help with the books?

FRED
I am. My guy's on paternity leave, but --

HERMIONE
-- I think my daughter's going to school with your son, isn't that funny? We'll have to tell them we knew each other, that we even dated, for awhile, until --

FRED
-- you chose the rich kid. Richer than I was, at least.

HERMIONE
And now, a reversal of fortune.
(then)
...I have a little money saved, not much, enough to get us through Christmas. I'm praying that someone in Riverdale -- maybe an old friend -- is willing to give me the benefit of the doubt.

FRED
...are we old friends? We haven't seen each other since...graduation? Riverdale High, Class of --

HERMIONE
-- now you're just being mean.

FRED
Hermione. If it were up to me --

HERMIONE
Isn't it? It's your company --

FRED
-- yes, but I have clients, and I'm looking to expand, and this is -- well, it's not much, but it's my legacy. What I'm building for Archie. I can't very well have Hermione Lodge, wife to Hiram Lodge, on trial for fraud and embezzlement, balancing my books.

HERMIONE

(a beat; it stings)
 ...no, I don't suppose you can.
 (then, tightly)
 What on Earth was I thinking? Oh, yes,
 that Riverdale would somehow be more
 accepting and less cruel than the savages
 of the Upper East Side. My mistake.

INT. RIVERDALE HIGH - COURTYARD - DAY

LUNCH-TIME. Kids at picnic tables. Veronica's moving across the courtyard, searching for the *perfect* place to land...

There are the Pussycats, *nope...* The football players, including Reggie and Moose, *not a good idea...* There's Betty... Dilton, with the nerds, *uh-uh...* Cheryl, with her fellow cheerleaders, including ladies-in-waiting, NANCY WOODS and GINGER LOPEZ, clearly the Queen Bees... Veronica sighs, *like attracts like*, she heads towards Cheryl, but then -- a double-take -- she notices that Betty *isn't* sitting alone, she's with that hottie, Archie; immediately, Veronica detours...

...arrives at the table where Betty and Archie are, sitting with Archie's open laptop.

VERONICA

Can I join you?

They nod -- she sits -- Betty and Archie are listening to something on Archie's computer. SOMEONE SINGING.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

What are we listening to?

It's a TEENAGER'S VOICE. Untrained, but cool. Angsty.

ARCHIE

Uhm. I recorded these songs...

VERONICA

That's *you* singing? A song you wrote?

They listen. The song's great. A little dark, a little sexy. Then, Archie closes his laptop; the play-back stops --

ARCHIE

-- I did. It's rough.

BETTY

It's great --

VERONICA

It's *incredible*, actually, the little I heard --

VERONICA
 (genuinely impressed)
 -- is that your thing? Music? Are you
doing something with that?

ARCHIE
 Well, I already struck out with the
 Pussycats --

VERONICA
 The *who*?

BETTY
 Josie and the Pussycats. They're this semi-
 famous band that goes to school here --

Betty gestures to where the Pussycats are sitting. Wearing, as
 always, their cat ears.

VERONICA
Hmm. A bit early for Comic-Con, isn't it?

BETTY
 Archie's trying to set-up an independent
 study --
 (turning to Archie)
 -- with Ms. Grundy, right?

ARCHIE
 That's the plan, we'll see.
 (changing the subject)
 How's your first day been?

VERONICA
 We-*ell*, not to be a *complete* narcissist,
 but I thought people would be more...

BETTY
 Obsessed with you? Are you disappointed?

VERONICA
 Relieved, actually.

BETTY
 Any other year, you'd be trending at
 Number One, for sure. This year, though,
 it's all about Cheryl Blossom...

They look across the way, at Cheryl, who is walking towards them.
 Which, for some reason, prompts Archie to --

ARCHIE
 -- I, I should go. I, uh. Have that meeting
 with Grundy, then football try-outs.

VERONICA
 You play football, too? #Renaissanceteen.

Veronica looks at Betty, who's looking at Archie, as he goes...

VERONICA (CONT'D)

...wow, and suddenly I'm in YA Novel/Fan-fiction Hell. I'm assuming Bella hasn't asked Edward Cullen to the dance yet?

BETTY

Not yet --

(lowering her voice)

-- and please, let's not talk about Archie in front of --

CHERYL

(arriving, grandly)

-- Veronica Lodge, I'd heard rumors, may I sit? Betty, would you mind?

Betty slides over so Cheryl can sit right next to Veronica.

CHERYL (CONT'D)

My daddy did business with your daddy. He says your daddy's being railroaded, and that I should take you under my wing -- what are you two gossiping about? Archie's Efron-esque emergence from the chrysalis of puberty?

Betty looks at Veronica, pleadingly.

VERONICA

-- extracurriculars. Weatherbee wants me to sign up for a few.

CHERYL

-- cheerleading. You must. I'm senior captain of the River Vixens!

VERONICA

...cheerleading -- like in that old movie "Bring It On"?

CHERYL

Some people say it's retro, I say it's eternal and iconic --

VERONICA

-- I'm kidding. At Spence, I sat at the top of the Elites' pyramid, I'm so in.

(then, not a question:)

Betty, you're trying out, too.

CHERYL

(abso-fucking-lutely not)

..of course, anyone's welcome to try-out, but Betty's already got so much on her plate, and being a Vixen is *kind of* a full-time thing. But whatevs.

(MORE)

CHERYL (CONT'D)
 (she stands; to Veronica:)
 Follow me on Twitter and I'll do the same
 -- cherrybombshell's my handle.

And as quickly as she appeared, Cheryl vanishes, off to terrorize God-knows-who next. Veronica turns back to Betty:

VERONICA
 Go ahead and hate on cheerleading, but if
 Hipster Prince Harry is playing football --

BETTY
 -- I'd love to be a cheerleader, is the truth --
 (off Veronica's surprise)
 -- it would round-out my college applications --
 but I tried out last year, and Cheryl said I
 was too fat. She said I was -- "Season Five
 Betty Draper."

VERONICA
 Were you? You're a *total* smoke show now.
 (makes a decision)
 If you want to be a River Vixen, we'll
 try out, together --
 (Betty's uncertain)
 ...come on, what's the worst that could
 happen?

INT. RIVERDALE HIGH - MUSIC CLASSROOM - AFTERNOON

Grundy, earbuds in ears, listening to something on Archie's iPhone. Reading along from the sheaf of SCRIBBLED PAGES. It finishes; Ms. Grundy takes out the buds. Archie, on a chair, opposite her, waits for the verdict...

MS. GRUNDY
 They're very real, very -- personal.

ARCHIE
 Thanks, Ms. Grundy, I, I took your
 advice. But I was maybe hoping you could
 help me a little more...

MS. GRUNDY
 (a beat, then:)
 With what, Archie? You've got something
 to say, you're saying it. That puts you
 ahead of -- most everyone in Riverdale.

ARCHIE
 Uhm. Thanks. But the thing is...
 (beat)
 ...I can transcribe lyrics, I can play
 some chords on my guitar -- you know that
 -- and I can record myself singing, but --
 that's it.

(MORE)

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

I have *no clue* how to write the music -- the actual notes -- down. And you only heard a couple, but all my songs sound basically the same.

MS. GRUNDY

You need to learn Composition, Variation.

ARCHIE

Everything. Including, maybe, some different instruments. Billie Joe Armstrong? From Green Day? Plays the guitar, the drums, the piano, the mandolin, the saxophone, the harmonica --

MS. GRUNDY

Archie --

ARCHIE

-- you went to Juilliard, Ms. Grundy. Last year, you did a private tutorial with Tomoko Yoshida and now -- now, she's at Carnegie Mellon.

MS. GRUNDY

Tomoko was a senior, and she'd been studying violin all her life --

ARCHIE

-- which is why I need your help even more. Look, there's no one else I can take lessons from -- believe me, I've looked -- even if there were, I couldn't afford them -- it's you or nobody.

MS. GRUNDY

I don't...think that would be a good idea, Archie. I don't think...we should be alone -- I mean, do you?

(Archie churns, silent)

If this is about you wanting us to re-start something that *never* should've started in the first (place) --

ARCHIE

-- it's not, it *is* about music, but it's also... Please, Ms. Grundy -- I *need* to be able to talk about what happened with someone.

MS. GRUNDY

(carefully)

We have -- we did -- all summer long.

ARCHIE

Yeah, but what we heard --

MS. GRUNDY

(definitively)
-- we heard *fireworks*, Archie, it was the Fourth of July --

ARCHIE

-- *who's lighting fireworks at six in the morning?*

(then)

We heard...what we heard, and then Cheryl screaming, and we -- didn't *do* anything -- and afterwards, we didn't *say* anything --

MS. GRUNDY

How would we have explained that we were at Sweetwater River at six in the morning on July Fourth?

(Archie has no answer)

And you're right, we didn't say anything, so now we have to live with that choice -- both of us -- do you understand?

(Archie's not making eye-contact)

Archie, look at me --

(he does)

-- *do you understand?*

(Archie nods)

And you should pursue your music -- you have talent -- but not with me.

EXT. STREETS OF RIVERDALE - AFTERNOON

Betty and Veronica, walking to Betty's, along a street that has VACANT LOTS along one side, ROW HOUSES along the other...

VERONICA

...we'll set the routine today, then review it tomorrow morning before try-outs, if you want -- that sound okay?

BETTY

Yeah, except -- you know I'll never make the squad, right? Not in this lifetime.

Veronica looks at Betty; *something's not adding up here...*

VERONICA

(a beat, then:)

...Betty, don't take this the wrong way, but can I make an observation? Hot as you are, and smart as you are, you *should* be ruling the school. But instead, you're scared of trying out for *cheerleading*? And of asking a ginge out? What's that about? Come on, dish the dee, spill the tea.

(Betty's silent)

I've been in therapy since I was six. I've heard it all.

Betty looks out, across the field of grass, waving in the wind... A beat. She starts to say something, then, suddenly, turns --

BETTY

-- train.

They hear a TRAIN WHISTLE. One is coming up, behind them, along the TRAIN TRACKS running through the field. Betty, with purpose, strides towards the tracks --

VERONICA

What? Betty? What are you -- ?

BETTY

(still moving)
It's okay, It's just a freight train --

VERONICA

(scared)

What the hell does *that* mean?

Veronica starts after Betty. It looks like Betty's going to step onto the tracks, in front of the oncoming train --

VERONICA (CONT'D)

(panic rising)

Betty -- Oh, my God, BETTY --

-- Betty stops, *scant inches* from the tracks. Lifts up her arms, so that they (and she) are parallel to the tracks, as the TRAIN *whooshes* past her, so close Betty could reach out and touch it --

-- Betty **screams** at the top of her lungs; the sound blends in with the train's SHRIEK. It's terrifying...a rush...and then...it's over...the train's speeding away... And Veronica's left gaping at Betty, who turns back to her, breathless...

BETTY

(deep breaths)

Helps. With. The. Stress.

(then)

Get me on the cheerleading squad, and I'll tell you everything.

EXT. RIVERDALE HIGH - FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY (THE NEXT DAY)

The guys are all suited-up, running drills, *smashing* into each other. Over this, we hear CHEERING:

VERONICA/BETTY (V.O.)

"Riverdale is where it's at/We bring the game/'Cause we're all that/We play to win--"

Archie *flattens* Reggie -- takes off his helmet -- offers Reggie a hand up. From the sidelines, Riverdale's two coaches, KLEATS and CLAYTON, confer...

VERONICA/BETTY (V.O.)

"--we won't back down/'Cause we're the hottest game in town!"

EXT. RIVERDALE HIGH - GYMNASIUM - DAY

On the GYM STAGE, Veronica and Betty, doing *sharp* cheer-ography, as -- Cheryl, Nancy, and Ginger (behind a table), observe.

VERONICA/BETTY

*"We're Blue & Gold/We're Dynamite/The
'Dogs'll bark/And then they'll Bite/We'll
take you down/And fight the fight!"*

B & V end on a high-note, but Cheryl's stone-faced.

CHERYL

I was hoping for something a bit...racier.

Okay. So *this* is how Cheryl's gonna play it.

VERONICA

Well, you haven't seen our big finish yet.
(whispering to Betty)
Don't freak out -- Trust me --

Then Veronica plants a big, wet KISS on Betty's lips -- *and the heads of every Archie fan on the planet explode! It's the water-cooler moment of the 2016/17 television season! Or...is it?* The girls turn back to Cheryl, who stifles a yawn.

CHERYL

Check your sell-by date, ladies. *Faux* lesbian kissing hasn't been taboo since Britney and Madonna did it -- *in 2003*. So, before you reenact Janet Jackson's "shocking" nip-slip of *2004*, let's move on to the interview portion of our audition, *m'kay?* To make sure you're of sound mind as well as body. How often do you talk to your father?

VERONICA

-- me? Oh, uh, once a week -- on weekends.

CHERYL

And would you say you're on good terms?

VERONICA

-- all things considered, yes.

CHERYL

Moving on: Betty, how's your sister doing?

BETTY

Polly's -- fine, thanks for asking.

CHERYL

Veronica, has Betty told you about her sister yet? And my brother?

VERONICA

Uh, no --

CHERYL

Is it because you're ashamed, Betty?

BETTY

No, I wasn't sure if I could trust her.

Veronica looks at Betty. Harsh, but she gets it.

CHERYL

Ah, but we River Vixens *must* be able to trust each other with our deepest, darkest secrets. So go ahead, Betty, tell Veronica about your sister and my brother.

BETTY

Polly and Jason -- dated.

CHERYL

I wouldn't say "dated."

BETTY

They -- whatever'ed. Freshman year, when I was in seventh-grade. It didn't end well.

CHERYL

In fact, Jason's probably why your sister had a nervous breakdown, isn't it?

BETTY

That's -- what my parents think.

Cheryl looks at Nancy, at Ginger, then back to *our* girls.

CHERYL

Well, is there anything you want to say about that, Betty? Go ahead, the floor is yours. I'm giving you a free pass. To say *whatever's* on your mind. Whatever you've been *dying* to spew about Jason and how he treated Polly, unleash it. *Destroy* me. Without fear of reprisal. I just want to hear you say it... I know you've thought about it. Stayed awake all night long, imagining how you'd rip me a new asshole... Well, the moment is here. It's now. And I swear to you, on my brother's grave, it won't have *any* bearing on my decision to --

BETTY

(giving in)
-- I just.

CHERYL

(satisfaction)
-- finally. Yes?

BETTY

...I...I just want to say...I'm sorry about what happened to Jason. I...I can't even imagine what you and your family must be going through.

Needless to say, that's not what Cheryl was hoping for. *Sigh.*

CHERYL

...right. Veronica, welcome to the River Vixens. Come to a kiki I'm hosting after the dance. Betty, better luck next time.

VERONICA

-- *what?* Wait, *why?* Because you couldn't bully Betty into being a bitch?

CHERYL

I need girls with fire on my squad.

Betty starts to leave the stage, Veronica grabs her arm --

VERONICA

(chillingly matter-of-fact)

Oh, I know what you need, Cheryl, because I know who you are. You're Riverdale's Red Queen -- or, should I say, "Red Widow," since you lost your "soulmate"?

(then)

Either way, you'd rather people *fear* than *like* you. You traffic in terror and intimidation. You're rich, so you've never been held accountable, but I'm living proof: That certainty -- that *entitlement* -- you wear on your head like a crown? It won't last. You might have another year, another two years, another ten years, but eventually, there *will* be a reckoning...

(beat)

Or maybe...that reckoning is *now*. And maybe, that reckoning...is *me*. If you know who I am, then you also know: *I have nothing to lose*. And that I, too, understand a little *something* about fear and intimidation. To *that* end...

(beat)

Betty and I come as a matching set. You want one, you take us both. If that doesn't work for you, she and I will start a Booster Club, open to guys *and* girls, which people would join, and which would eclipse your River Vixens by...lacrosse season, I'm thinking... You wanted fire? Sorry, Cherrybombshell, my specialty's ice.

And with that, a gauntlet's been thrown. OFF CHERYL, mulling...

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. RIVERDALE HIGH - BOYS' LOCKER ROOM - AFTERNOON

After try-outs, Archie's on a metal table; ASSISTANT COACH CLAYTON is icing Archie's sore leg. HEAD COACH KLEATS enters --

COACH KLEATS

That'll bruise, but you'll be alright.

(then)

Last two days, you've been playing with some real -- *stuff* out there, Andrews. Like you're trying to get something out. Something you didn't have last year.

(then)

Usually, sophomores only play JV, but this year, we've got an open spot on Varsity. Based on what you've been showing us, I'd like you to have it.

ARCHIE

Me? Not Reggie? Or Moose?

COACH KLEATS

We carry Mantle because his father subsidizes our department. And Moose, God bless, isn't bright enough for Varsity.

ARCHIE

-- I, I need to think about it, Coach.

COACH KLEATS

What's more important than football?

ARCHIE

(vamping)

My...my dad's company. It's our family business and he's sort of counting on me to help out, after school, on weekends...

(a beat -- then, realizing:)

...wait, is the spot Jason's Blossom's?

COACH KLEATS

It is. You'd get his locker, his number. 'Course, you wouldn't be captain...

This lands on Archie. He'd be the dead boy's replacement. *Whoa.*

INT. RIVERDALE HIGH - GIRLS' LOCKER ROOM - AFTERNOON

Post-try-outs, post-shower, Betty and Veronica, in towels, backs to each other. As Veronica combs out her wet hair, Betty looks over her shoulder, tentatively -- asks, quietly:

BETTY

...why did you defend me?
 (off Veronica's look)
 I know the circles you ran with in New York, and -- they're not me. So why are you doing this, why are being -- nice?

A beat -- as Veronica turns to Betty, gets real...

VERONICA

...when my dad got arrested? It was the worst thing ever. All these...*trolls* started writing these horrible things about us. We'd get letters and e-mails, saying my dad was a thief, my mom was a clueless socialite, that I was this spoiled rich-bitch ice-princess, and...what hurt *most* about it was...
 (is she going there?)
 The things the trolls were writing...were *true*. I was like Cheryl -- worse than Cheryl -- not a person I particularly enjoyed spending time with, to be honest...
 (eyes wet, getting emotional)
 So, after everything that happened with my dad, when my mom said we were moving to Riverdale, I made a pact with myself: To use this as a chance to become -- maybe, hopefully -- a better version of myself...

This unexpected admission prompts Betty to lower her own guard...

BETTY

...when Polly got together with Jason, it meant *everything* to her and *nothing* to him, and, and things got super-intense and toxic -- I don't know the details, no one will tell me -- but what came *after*... How Mom treated Polly *after* what happened with Jason was *so much worse*... She turned on Polly. Said Polly wasn't her daughter, said all these horrible things to her...

(then)

Jason *hurt* Polly, but it's my mom who *broke* her...

(then)

-- now, I guess, I'm under some pressure from my parents *not* to turn out the way Polly did...

VERONICA

Some pressure? You're like Katniss Everdeen before a reaping.

BETTY
Oh, that's (okay) --

VERONICA
(jumping in)
-- *totally unacceptable*, we need an escort. So take a break from being Riverdale High's resident tortured musical genius and spend a blissful evening with not one, but two newly-minted River Vixens --
(giving him no choice)
Resistance is futile, Tiger, we'll text you T & P, Time and Place.

ARCHIE
(helpless)
...oh-kay, then. ...cool. ...thanks, Betty. Thanks, Veronica.

Archie continues on his way. Veronica turns to Betty, *WTF?*

BETTY
It's your first dance at Riverdale, you *should* have someone to go with.

VERONICA
...fine, but just as your handmaiden. As soon as we get there, I'll peel off so you can be alone with Archie to ask him how he feels about you -- and then you'll know, and you'll be *much* happier -- deal?

Betty nods -- a beat -- *could this girl actually be a friend?*

EXT. THE PEMBROOKE APARTMENT BUILDING - DUSK

Hermione arrives home, spent. Smithers is there, opening the door.

SMITHERS
Was today any better, Ms. Hermione?

HERMIONE
No, Smithers, worse. I was even *slapped* today; *that* was fun. Every single place I go to apply for a job, the moment they hear who I am, who my husband is... It was naive of me to think this would've played-out any other way. (No, *not* naive, *stupid* -- *blind*...)

SMITHERS
(a beat, then:)
I'm due a fifteen-minute break, Ma'am.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND THE PEMBROOKE - MOMENTS LATER

Hermione and Smithers, around the side of the building, next to some DUMPSTERS. Smoking tightly rolled JOINTS.

HERMIONE

As always, you are a godsend, Smithers.
 (takes a puff, exhales)
 So many people in Riverdale hate us...

SMITHERS

Your husband made a number of enemies in this town, Ma'am. And Riverdale, itself, is not as forgiving as it once was.

HERMIONE

No, but -- you don't hate us.

SMITHERS

No, Ma'am. Your husband always took care of me and my family. He helped me buy my own apartment in the Pembroke. In the back, not much of a view, but it's ours. So whatever you need...

HERMIONE

I appreciate that, Smithers, but I'm afraid I've made a terrible error in judgment, coming back to Riverdale.

EXT. THE ANDREWS HOUSE - THE BACK PORCH - LATE AFTERNOON

Archie, with his guitar, experimenting with a new song. He plays some, then makes notes in a notebook by his side. Fred comes out, drinking a beer. Not angry, but something's weighing on him.

FRED

I got a call from your Coach today. He's under the impression that you can't play Varsity Football because I'm making you work for me...

(Archie's busted!)

Which is odd, since you intimated that you couldn't work for me because you were playing football... So my first question would be: Who are you lying to? Me or your Coach?

ARCHIE

Neither -- Both -- *Shit* --

(deep end of the swimming pool:)

I, I want to study music, Dad -- write music.

FRED

(processing)

And that means you can't play football?
Or work with me?

ARCHIE

It means -- I have to figure it out. If
I'm gonna get serious about music. Which
I want -- which I'm *going* -- to do.

FRED

When did you decide this?

ARCHIE

It's sort of been an ongoing process --

FRED

-- because it *used* to be, we talked about
things like this. Big decisions, life
decisions.

(then, imploring:)

Your *best* shot at going to college is
getting a football scholarship to a state
school.

ARCHIE

Not the places I'd go for music.

FRED

Archie... Right now, you wanna study
music -- that's great, I'm all for it --
when I was in high school, I was in a
band -- but what happens in six months,
when you move on to something else?

ARCHIE

I'm not going to, Dad.

(famous last words:)

And I'm not talking about a band.

FRED

Football takes you to college, college
takes you to business school, business
school (takes) --

ARCHIE

-- takes me back to work for you, here in
Riverdale.

FRED

With me, not for me. And eventually for
yourself, the company would be yours.

ARCHIE

No disrespect, Dad, but I don't want it.

FRED
Three months ago, you did -- at least you said you did. What changed?

ARCHIE
Me. Everything. This summer --

But Archie stops himself from saying too much.

FRED
What? Talk to me.

ARCHIE
This summer, I...

Archie *can't*. What would he say to his dad?

FRED
What, Archie? Tell me. If something's wrong, I can help --

ARCHIE
You can't, Dad -- You actually can't, not this time...

A beat. Fred nods, resigned.

FRED
...that's it, then. We don't talk to each other anymore. We keep secrets -- okay.

ARCHIE
Dad --

FRED
I would *never* force you to play football -- I don't *care* if you play football. And you don't have to work *with* me or *for* me, ever again. But some advice, man-to-man? The choices you're making now -- they're the most important of your life, Son. So -- good luck to you. Let me know what you decide.

Fred turns from Archie, and goes back into the house; *nothing* resolved between father and son...

INT. THE COOPER HOUSE - ENTRANCE HALL - LATE AFTERNOON

Betty, in her cheerleading uniform, comes home. The sound of LOUD ARGUING from the living room. Betty rounds the corner -- Alice and Betty's older sister, POLLY, are going at it -- until they see what Betty's wearing -- a beat -- then, both at once:

ALICE
-- what. Is. That?

POLLY
-- are you on crack?! You're
joining the River Vixens?

ALICE
No, she is not -- That's how it started
with your sister-- I don't need another
Polly, Betty, one trainwreck's enough --

POLLY
-- I'm the trainwreck? Mom, open your
medicine cabinet -- the *only* person in
Riverdale more medicated than me is you --

ALICE
(to Betty)
Take that off --

POLLY
(to Betty)
If you're trying to prove something --

BETTY
-- I'm *not*, Polly -- Believe it or not, not
everything is about you -- *either* of you --
(terrified, but enough)
-- I do *everything* for everyone -- *everything*
to be perfect -- the Perfect Daughter, the
Perfect Student, the Perfect Sister -- can't
I do this one thing for me? And no, not one
thing -- I'm *also* going to the dance with
Archie -- and, and Veronica Lodge --

ALICE
Hermione Lodge's daughter?

POLLY
Good luck with that --

BETTY (CONT'D)
She's actually really nice and trying to
be a good person --

ALICE
Oh, you think so? You think she's your
friend? You think *Cheryl* will be? Well,
let me tell you, girls like Cheryl and
Veronica Lodge, they don't like (girls
like you) --

BETTY
-- I *don't* want to hear it, it's
happening, *I'm going* --

-- Betty's up the stairs, into her room, and -- SLAM!!

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. RIVERDALE HIGH - GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

Decorated for the Back-to-School Dance. Streamers, lights, and... GIANT PHOTO-PORTRAITS OF JASON BLOSSOM, hovering over everything. Archie, Betty, and Veronica arrive, arm-in-arm, and the moment is like Cinderella arriving at the ball, Carrie arriving at the prom (before the bucket of blood). Veronica takes it in, sighs...

VERONICA

Well, it's not the Met Ball.

BETTY

Oh, my God, you've been?

VERONICA

Twice. Anna Wintour's daughter follows me on Instagram.

ARCHIE

Who's Anna Wintour?

VERONICA

(excusing herself)

On *that* note, I'm getting some punch.

(sotto, to Betty)

Don't let me down, Girl.

Veronica goes. Archie and Betty move further into the crowd...

BETTY

Anna Wintour is editor-in-chief of *Vogue*. There's no reason you would (know that) --

Archie spots Ms. Grundy, off to the side, chaperoning --

ARCHIE

-- shit, Betty, will you give me one minute?

(off her "*you're kidding*" look)

And I promise, when I get back, I'll be a *much* better date --

(as he goes)

Two minutes, max --

Archie's off, making his way towards Ms. Grundy. Before Betty can get *too* upset, she's rescued by -- Kevin, arriving with the Hot Guy who glanced him during the Assembly.

KEVIN

Betty -- have you met Devin Davis? His family just moved here from England.

DEVIN

Hello.

But WE'RE WITH: Archie, approaching --

ARCHIE

-- don't panic, Ms. Grundy, I'm not single-white-stalking you.

MS. GRUNDY

I thought --
 (lowering her voice)
 -- didn't we have a deal?

ARCHIE

-- no, we have a *secret*, Geraldine. *Multiple* secrets, actually. And maybe we could've done something to help Jason that morning, or maybe we couldn't have --

MS. GRUNDY

-- we will *never* know.

ARCHIE

Yeah, and like you said, we have to live with that. Our secrets. And I won't tell anyone, anything -- *but*, you need to help me. I'm not the Pussycats, I'm not Tomoko Yoshida, I'm not my Dad, but I could be -- I *will* be -- *someone*.

(then)

Maybe it's a *colossal* mistake, but this summer, the *only* thing that kept me sane was writing those songs. So -- here's my *not-so-indecent* proposal. I want to do an Independent Study with you, as many mornings a week as you can spare, and I swear: That's *all* it will be. And I won't tell anyone about July Fourth, *ever* -- deal?

Fuck, is Archie blackmailing Ms. Grundy? Is that the kind of show we're doing?

MS. GRUNDY

...Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 7:30 AM, before First Period, I, I'll set it up. And see about getting you credit.

At which point, a HUSH falls across the gym. Archie and Ms. Grundy turn towards it; Veronica, at the PUNCH TABLE, turns to it; Betty, Devin, and Kevin turn to it; the whole world, it seems, turns to --

-- CHERYL BLOSSOM, flanked by her ladies-in-waiting, Nancy and Ginger, making a GRAND entrance. Unlike the other kids, Cheryl's wearing an OUTRAGEOUSLY over-the-top CRIMSON GOWN. Gasp-inducing.

INT. POP'S CHOCK-LIT SHOPPE DINER - NIGHT

Hermione with Betty's mom, Alice, in a booth. Each having a MILKSHAKE. Hermione's is strawberry; Alice's, vanilla.

HERMIONE

Apparently, I have found the one thing in Riverdale that hasn't changed.

(toasting)

To Pop Tate and his glorious milkshakes.

ALICE

To Pop Tate.

They slurp, then:

ALICE (CONT'D)

When I heard, through the grapevine, you were back in town, I thought, "I should reach out." Then, when Betty told me she and Veronica were going to the dance, I thought, "Heck, why not tonight?"

HERMIONE

Even though we didn't always get along in high school?

ALICE

Didn't we? Well, maybe we've evolved beyond our high school selves...

ANGLE ON: Jughead, coming out of the bathroom, washing his hands, taking note of Alice and Hermione as he heads back to his booth...

ALICE (CONT'D)

Hermione, we didn't invest with Hiram -- we were small potatoes -- but even if we had, I'm not one of those biblical types who believes the Wife should be punished for the Sins of the Husband, especially if the Wife didn't know the Husband was sinning -- did you?

HERMIONE

(a beat, then:)

I've done many things in my life I'm not proud of, Alice. But I'd never knowingly steal from my family and friends.

ALICE

"Knowingly." That's the word, isn't it? The one that makes all the difference. The gulf between guilt and innocence...

Alice studies Hermione, who's *giving. Up. Nothing.*

ALICE (CONT'D)

...I went away, too, Hermione. For college. Hal and I both did. And then we came back. To raise our daughters here -- build a life here. Not just because of "The Register," but because we believe in Riverdale. We believe -- I believe -- it's the kind of town that forgives. That gives second chances.

HERMIONE

I'm not quite feeling that yet...

ALICE

Let me prove it to you. Let me try to help you find a job. We get listings at "The Register" before anyone else. What you and your daughter are doing -- moving here on your own, starting over -- I have *nothing* but admiration for that.

HERMIONE

I...
(helpless to say anything but:)
Thank you, Alice.

CHERYL (PRE-LAP)

First, I'd like to thank everyone for the support they've shown me since school started...

INT. RIVERDALE HIGH - GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

RESUMING WITH -- THE DANCE. Cheryl has taken control of the stage and stands at a MICROPHONE. Behind her, Josie and the Pussycats are tuning up their instruments.

CHERYL

...I wouldn't have made it through without your unconditional love and healing energy.

ANGLE ON: Veronica, looking from Cheryl, to -- Reggie, huddled with Moose and some of the other FOOTBALL PLAYERS, passing around a FLASK...

CHERYL (CONT'D)

Secondly, I'd like to thank Principal Weatherbee for agreeing to donate the proceeds from tonight's dance to a scholarship fund we're setting up in my brother's name, which -- each year -- will sponsor a deserving Student of Diversity or Disability of my choosing.

(then)

Lastly.

(MORE)

CHERYL (CONT'D)

To know this evening's main entertainment is to be obsessed with them. Although they usually perform their own material, tonight they're covering one of my brother's favorite songs. I give you --
 (gestures to them)
 -- *Josie and the Pussycats.*

Cheryl cedes the stage to Josie, Melody, and Valerie. Without a word of introduction, they start to perform an acoustic version of Tears for Fears' "Mad World." It's haunting, beautiful...

JOSIE AND THE PUSSYCATS

"All around me are familiar faces/Worn out places, worn out faces..."

Kids -- couples -- drift onto the dance floor. Veronica, off to the side, looks on, at Archie and Betty slow-dancing...

BETTY

...does working with Ms. Grundy mean no Varsity football?

ARCHIE

(shaking his head)
 I'll study with Ms. Grundy *before* school, football practice *after*-school, working at my Dad's on weekends, it'll be nuts --

BETTY

-- so long as you don't give up your passion...

Veronica's gesturing to Betty from the side-lines, "*Do it.*"

BETTY (CONT'D)

Uhm. Now that I'm a River Vixen and you're gonna be on Varsity Football, I have this fantasy of us being a power-couple, Archie, the Kim and Kanye of Riverdale High...

ARCHIE

Betty...

BETTY

...is that so impossible to imagine?

Archie looks from Betty, to Ms. Grundy, chatting with Mr. Weatherbee. As "Mad World" continues, WE FLASHBACK TO...

EXT. SWEETWATER RIVER - EARLY MORNING (FLASHBACK)

...Archie with Ms. Grundy, lying on a blanket, on one side of the river. Intimate, forbidden...

MS. GRUNDY

We should get back to town. Before people start waking up.

ARCHIE

It's the Fourth, everyone's sleeping in.

Ms. Grundy gently traces a finger along Archie's cheek...

MS. GRUNDY

...in that case, happy fourth of July,
Archie.

ARCHIE

(he smiles)

Happy fourth of --

-- the unmistakable sound of a **LOUD GUNSHOT**, followed by a GIRL'S SCREAM (Cheryl's), echoing from across the river, interrupts them; they sit up, their reverie shattered --

INT. RIVERDALE HIGH - GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

-- while, back at the dance, Reggie *smashes* into Betty and Archie. Breaking the spell. He's drunk, belligerent --

REGGIE

-- YOU made Varsity? YOU did? You don't
even *like* football -- I was next in line --
It was Jason, *then* me --

Reggie takes a crazy SWING at Archie, who dodges it, grabs Reggie's arm, twists it around behind Reggie --

ARCHIE

-- *what is your problem, Reg? Take it up with
Coach, but DON'T get in my face about this* --

Veronica arrives, *seconds* from a full-blown fight erupting, just as Cheryl joins them as well --

CHERYL

Hold that thought, Veronica, because I've
ordered a fleet of Ubers to take us to my
after-party --

(looking at Betty)

Attendance is mandatory for River Vixens,
I'm afraid --

(to Archie and Reggie)

And boys, let's channel all this healthy
young male aggression into something more
productive, shall we? My parents are
away, but their liquor cabinet is open.
For. Business. There'll be sex, booze,
and party games *galore* --

OFF ALL THE KIDS, no way is this going to end well tonight...

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

EXT. BLOSSOM HOME - BACKYARD - NIGHT

Weirdly, Cheryl's AFTER-PARTY is more packed than the dance. There are, indeed, bars with BARTENDERS, kegs, tiki torches. We find our kids in a clump, holding red solo cups. Other PARTY-GOERS are jumping into Cheryl's POOL. The MUSIC's ridiculously loud...

BETTY

(to Cheryl, yelling to be heard)
UHM. IS THERE A BATHROOM?

CHERYL

YOU CAN USE MINE. INSIDE, SECOND FLOOR.

Veronica sees this exchange, grabs --

VERONICA

-- ARCHIE! WHY DON'T YOU GO WITH BETTY?
TO MAKE SURE SHE FINDS IT WITHOUT BEING
MAULED.

ARCHIE

OKAY.

Betty mouths "Thank you" to Veronica -- which Cheryl clocks. Archie and Betty head into the house. Cheryl smiles at Veronica in a "I-see-exactly-what-you're-doing" kind of way...

INT. BLOSSOM HOME - SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Archie and Betty, walking down the hall. Trying to find the bathroom. They're both tipsy, taking in the grandeur.

ARCHIE

...how rich are the Blossoms?

BETTY

They own half the town, Archie. They're super-rich.

-- Betty stops -- she's opened a door to a room -- gasps --

BETTY (CONT'D)

-- oh, my, God, Archie...

ARCHIE

What?
(looks in)
Holy shit...

INT. BLOSSOM HOUSE - JASON BLOSSOM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Archie and Betty walk into--Jason's PERFECTLY PRESERVED BEDROOM. The vibe they get is: Nothing's been changed since the accident.

They look around. At all the TROPHIES Jason accumulated. At all these PHOTOS of the Blossom Family. It's *super-creepy* and shrine-like...

On Jason's desk, Betty finds a ratty copy of "Catcher in the Rye." Pressed in its pages, barely sticking out, there's a STRIP of PHOTOS, like from a photo-booth. Betty pulls it out...

It's PHOTOS OF JASON WITH...POLLY, before her fall from grace. She's blonde, wholesome, wearing a *cheerleading outfit*, and here, now, we understand *why* it means so much to Betty to be a Vixen...

She pockets the photo. Meanwhile, Archie, looking at all the shelves...

ARCHIE

...we went to the same high school, the same junior high, the same elementary school, and...I don't even know who Jason's friends are. Or were.

VOICE (O.S.)

My son was a private person.

They turn towards -- a tall, regal, *heavily doped-up* WOMAN. In a silk robe with red-hair. Otherworldly, she's: PENELOPE BLOSSOM.

PENELOPE BLOSSOM

I doubt he'd appreciate you being in here.

ARCHIE

Mrs. Blossom, we -- we didn't know you were home.

BETTY

We were looking for --

Cheryl appears at her mother's side --

CHERYL

-- the bathroom, they must've gotten lost.

(to Penelope)

Go back to bed, Mommy. And try not to wake Daddy.

(to Betty and Archie)

That way, to the left. And then come down to the basement, we're gonna play a game.

INT. BLOSSOM HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Betty and Archie arrive -- to find Cheryl, Veronica, and Reggie, gathered in Mr. Blossom's MAN-CAVE. Eerily lit by dozens of CANDLES. Wood-paneled, ANIMAL HEADS on the walls, hunting rifles in a display case.

CHERYL

Good. Now that we're all where we belong,
let's start. I assume everyone knows what
a Rainbow Party is?

REGGIE

(drunk, to Archie)
-- *bro. Bro*, I love you, you're my
hermano, I forgive you...

VERONICA

A) Rainbow parties are urban legends. And
B) You're a psycho if you think that's
happening, Cheryl. Come on, Betty, we're
(leaving) --

CHERYL

-- oh, *relax*, Prude. If I wanted to host
a Rainbow Party, I would've invited a
different crowd.

(takes out her iPhone)
We're going old-school tonight. Seven
Minutes in Heaven.

VERONICA

I don't see any bottles.

As Cheryl sets a small table in the middle of the room --

CHERYL

-- not *that* old-school. I have an app
that pairs paramours up, then times their
trysts in the Closet of Love. The big
question is: Who wants to go first? My
vote is "A" for Archie. Anyone care to
second it?

ARCHIE

Uh, actually --

REGGIE

(raising his hand)
Yes -- Andrews -- YES --

CHERYL (CONT'D)

All right, gather round, Kids, let's see
who's riding the Ginger Stallion tonight.

Cheryl sets her iPhone down on the table, surrounded by the kids.
A VIRTUAL ROULETTE WHEEL on the phone's screen spins...slows
down...stops on Betty -- Cheryl gently bumps the table -- the
wheel makes *one* more revolution, finally lands on...*Veronica*.

CHERYL (CONT'D)

The new girl. This should be fun.

ARCHIE

Hang on --

REGGIE

Yes -- Stud -- Bulldogs --

VERONICA

I'm not doing this.

CHERYL

That's up to you. But if you don't, House Rules decree the Host gets to take your turn.

(then)

You know, you don't *have* to do anything X-rated in the closet, you can just -- ask each other deep, probing questions.

(turns to:)

-- you wouldn't object to *that*, Betty, would you? Especially not if I told you tonight's only the first part of your initiation as a River Vixen?

(off her look)

Oh, sweet, sweet Betty, did you really think there wouldn't be a price to pay?

(Betty's silent)

I mean, it's not like you're crushing on Archie -- or, wait, are you? And I had no idea?

(back to Archie/Veronica)

Seven minutes. *Two* Taylor Swift songs.

Betty looks stricken as Archie and Veronica head towards...

INT. BLOSSOM HOUSE - BASEMENT CLOSET - NIGHT (MOMENTS LATER)

DARKNESS. Then -- one iPhone lights up. Then -- a *second* iPhone lights up. Archie and Veronica, lit only by their cell phones, huddle in the dark...

VERONICA

I know her brother died and everything, but Cheryl Blossom *truly* is the Anti-Christ -- how much time do we have left?

ARCHIE

(checking)

Six minutes, forty seconds...

(then)

Do you miss New York?

VERONICA

It's been less than a week. But yes.

ARCHIE

Six minutes, twenty seconds. Now you go. Ask me a deep, probing question. To, uhm. Kill time.

VERONICA

It looked like you and Betty were having fun at the dance.

ARCHIE

Definitely. We've been friends forever.
My turn.

VERONICA

I didn't ask my question yet. Is that *all*
it is? Just friends?

ARCHIE

Not just friends, *best* friends. My turn:
Did you have a boyfriend back in New York?

VERONICA

No. My turn: Could it ever possibly
become something more?

ARCHIE

Are you asking for Betty or for yourself?
Five minutes, forty-five seconds...

VERONICA

For Betty -- and you didn't answer my
question.

ARCHIE

I, uh. Know what you're trying to do -- get
us together -- but it's not gonna happen...
I've never felt -- whatever that thing I'm
supposed to feel is -- with Betty.

VERONICA

Have you felt it, though? With anyone?

ARCHIE

-- yes -- this summer -- have you?

VERONICA

No -- maybe once.
(then, realizing)
You're a little more dangerous than you
look, aren't you? All Boy-Next-Door-ish?

ARCHIE

You have *no* idea... Or, maybe...you do.

VERONICA

Your turn. Ask me a question, Archie...
(putting it out there)
Ask me anything you want...

The air -- the space -- between them is THICK with sexual tension.
So Archie and Veronica start to *kiss*... Tentatively at first, then
more and more passionately...

END OF ACT FIVE

ACT SIX

INT. BLOSSOM HOME - BASEMENT - NIGHT (6.5 MINUTES LATER)

Sheepishly, Archie and Veronica emerge from the closet...

CHERYL

You lasted the full seven minutes, color me impressed.

VERONICA

Where's Betty, you shady bitch?

CHERYL

(smiling wickedly)

She left. Strangely, she seemed upset.

Archie and Veronica trade a look. They both take out their cell phones, start to call her --

CHERYL (CONT'D)

I've tried. I think her phone's off, it keeps going straight to voice-mail.

Reggie, lying on the couch, drunk, *moans*...

CHERYL (CONT'D)

Meanwhile, who's driving *that* hot mess home?

ARCHIE

(to Veronica)

We should probably try to find --

VERONICA

-- Archie can. I'll take an Uber.

(to Archie)

Believe me, the *last* thing Betty wants is us tracking her down, together.

From the look on Veronica's face, we can tell: *She's already regretting those seven minutes...*

PRE-LAP: The sound of quiet KNOCKING...

INT. COOPER HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Betty, outside Polly's room, at the BLACK DOOR, knocking...

BETTY

...Polly? Are you in there...? I, I'm sorry about that stupid fight...

(on the verge of tears)

...it's just -- so *hard* sometimes, you know? With mom and, and everything...

We remember, in this moment, that Betty's actually *only* sixteen-years-old...

BETTY (CONT'D)
 ...please, Polly, if you're in there, talk
 to me, let me in...

INT. COOPER HOUSE - POLLY'S ROOM - SAME-TIME

Polly, standing just inside her room, against the door, listening, but *not* answering Betty...

VERONICA (PRE-LAP)
 Hey, Daddy, it's me...

INT./EXT. UBER CAR - STREETS OF RIVERDALE - NIGHT

Veronica, in the backseat of a Prius, leaving a similar message:

VERONICA
 ...you won't get this till the weekend, but
 I didn't want you worrying -- Mom's fine,
 I'm fine, we -- we hope you're holding up,
 and...

As with Betty, we see how young and vulnerable Veronica is here. How alike they are, in a way. She's fighting tears...

VERONICA (CONT'D)
 ...and I wanted to tell you...I'm *trying*,
 Daddy, I'm trying *so* hard...

EXT. POP'S CHOCK'LIT SHOPPE DINER - NIGHT

Walking home from dropping-off Reggie, reeling from the night, Archie passes the one place in town that's open. POP'S diner. He sees someone in a booth -- Jughead -- waves to him, goes in...

INT. POP'S DINER - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

...joins his former-friend, JUGHEAD, who sits in front of his open laptop and a cold, half-drunk cup of coffee. Archie lifts his hand. Signs *H-E-Y*. Jughead signs back. *H-E-Y*. Then, Jughead turns on a HEARING-AID he wears in his right ear, beneath his weird hat.

NOTE: When Jughead talks in this scene, it's with the same voice as in our V-0, but the cadence is different, slower. It's the voice of someone who's forgotten what he sounds like.

ARCHIE
 Can I sit?
 (Jughead shrugs; Archie does)
 What are you working on?

JUGHEAD

Novel.

ARCHIE

Cool. Still?

JUGHEAD

Takes awhile. Had a break-through this summer. Finally landed on something to write about...

(then)

Coach Kleats was in here. Varsity? That makes you, what, Mr. Popular Football God now?

ARCHIE

Uh, no, not so sure about that... In fact, I'm kind of terrified I lost my best friend tonight...

JUGHEAD

Yeah, you do that a lot.

(then)

If you mean Betty, whatever happened, just talk to her, man. That would go a long way.

(then)

Would've gone a long way with me.

ARCHIE

I was actually thinking...

(putting it out there)

...I would maybe write her a song...to explain, *exactly*, how much she means to me...

Jughead's silent. Doesn't give a shit about Archie's music story. Archie looks out the window. The town, in darkness. Then:

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

...did you know Jason Blossom, Jug?

(he shakes his head "no")

Seventeen years old...and how will *he* be remembered? As Captain of the Water Polo Team? The Aquaholics?

JUGHEAD

Considering how he died, probably not.

ARCHIE

What I mean is, did he make this place -- this shitty town -- better?

JUGHEAD

The Jason Blossoms of the world rarely do.

ARCHIE

-- Juggie, I'm sorry, man. I never said that to you, but -- I'm so fucking sorry.

JUGHEAD

For which part of it?

ARCHIE

All of it -- everything. I was a real dick.

JUGHEAD

Yeah, you were.

(then)

...what do you want me to say? What do you even want, Archie?

ARCHIE

...I...don't want to die without us being friends again.

Jughead considers this.

JUGHEAD

...I don't even know you, Archie. You might as well be Jason Blossom to me.

Jughead takes a sip of coffee, that's all he's saying tonight...
(*Yep, we'll be picking this story up in Episode Two...*)

INT. THE LODGE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Veronica comes home from Cheryl's, to find Hermione, having a glass of wine.

HERMIONE

I was about to take my Ambien. How was the dance?

VERONICA

(covering)

It was okay. I mean, it wasn't -- the Met Ball or anything...

Hermione pats the cushion next to her; Veronica sits.

HERMIONE

Our first week and we survived. And you're making friends.

VERONICA

...I, I'm super-tired, Mom.

HERMIONE

Okay, okay...

Hermione stands -- starts to go -- stops.

HERMIONE (CONT'D)

I had a nice night tonight. I reconnected with Betty's mom, Alice, and I -- I think they're going to be real allies to us, Veronica. Both of them. That's good news, isn't it?

Veronica stares ahead, doesn't know what to say...

ALICE (PRE-LAP)

She *knew*. Hermione knew what her husband was doing.

INT. THE COOPER HOUSE - ALICE AND HAL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alice and her husband Hal, getting ready for bed. Undressing.

HAL

She said that?

ALICE

Of course not, she lied. The way she did in high school. Like when she tried to steal you away from me.

HAL

Oh, come on, Alice. Hermione was a flirt, she -- she flirted with everyone.

ALICE

(*uh-huh*)

She and her daughter are a *story*, Hal, the story that's going to change *everything* for us, for "The Register." Everything the Blossom story *wasn't*.

HAL

Be careful, Alice, you're spinning into butter. The Lodges are still a powerful family.

Alice fixes her husband with a warning stare. Daggers there.

ALICE

You be careful, Hal. I don't want history repeating itself. Hermione broke your heart once, she'll do it again.

EXT. THE ANDREWS HOUSE - NIGHT

This late, Archie's exhausted, but wired. As he starts up the walk to his house, Betty steps out from the shadows. She'd been waiting for him, on his porch.

BETTY

...I'm not going to ask what you did with Veronica at Cheryl's -- that was just a stupid party game -- but I'm asking you now, right now, if you love me, Archie?

ARCHIE

Betty --

BETTY

-- or, even like me? Just -- please tell me. Respect me, respect our friendship, enough to be honest with me.

ARCHIE

I...

BETTY

Or do I need to say it for you?

ARCHIE

...I...I'm so sorry, Betty, *of course* I love you, but...I can't give you the answer you want...

Betty's eyes are wet with tears, but she's pushing through.

BETTY

...why -- why can't you?

ARCHIE

...so many reasons...but the main one is...
(shaking his head)
...you're *so* perfect, Betty, I'd never be good enough for you... I've never been good enough for you...

The two life-long friends look at each other -- hearts breaking -- a truth between them finally spoken aloud...

EXT. SWEETWATER RIVER - NIGHT

Post-dance, Kevin and British hottie Devin have come here for an illicit tryst. They're on the river's edge, wrestling to take each other's shirts and pants off --

DEVIN

What do you like to do?

KEVIN

I'm versatile, but can we -- could we maybe just start with skinny-dipping?

Devin stops. Looks at Kevin. It's actually kind of sweet...

DEVIN

Yeah, sure, that's brilliant.

