



📺 Cyberpunk 2077 — Never Fade Away by P. T. Adamczyk & Olga Jankowska (SAMURAI C...

Heavy Hearts Club
Dogtown, Night City, California

Veronica sits on the plush couch in Mr. Hands office that over looks the club below. Her arms are folded across her chest as Hands sits back against the edge of his desk in front of her. He sips his tea.

"Are you sure I can't offer you a cup of tea? It is my own blend."

"I appreciate it, but no thanks. I won't be overstaying my welcome."

He nods and smiles. Hands reaches into his maroon blazer, pulling out a data shard and hands it to The Scorpion. She slots it in behind her ear, and her eyes light up. She is the first to admit she wishes her cybernetic upgrades would come with her when she travels back to her home dimension, but for whatever reason, it doesn't.

"As you can see, Ronnie, NetWatch activity has spiked near the old Militech laboratory, same as the areas where you return to this dimension."

Veronica stops reading the NetWatch documents, and looks at Mr. Hands with a smirk.

"Not surprised, you know. You seem to know everything."

"Well, Ronnie, one can't be a puppet master if they don't know what goes on beyond the public eye."

The ruggedly handsome man behind the combed down grey beard smiles. He sits his tea down, and sits down behind his desk. Mr. Hands leans back, putting his feet up.

"Val has been causing quite a ruckus throughout Pacifica. She has the Voodoo boys running scared, but that hasn't been hard since an old mercenary of mine with the engram of one old rockerboy killed Mama Bridgette. They haven't been organized in years, but over the last month they have been pulling their shit together."

"Are you telling me that Valerie is leading the fuckin' Voodoo Boys now?"

"For Uncle Arasaka."

Veronica shakes her head as her eyes light back up as she goes through the information on the data shard. She talks as she reads the information to herself.

"My question is, did Valerie bring anyone to this side?"

"She did. A man, maybe around forty-eight years old. He wasn't here long, but he was here."

Veronica casually looks over to her right at the soul of her grandfather. He shakes his head knowing their worst fears are a reality. She pulls out the data shard and goes to hand it back, but Mr. Hands held up one of his, well, hands, and motions to keep it.

"Information is yours, but you know nothing is free. I have a gig for you."

"Figured you would, what is it?"

"Excellent. You'll have a partner, Alexis Kane. It's her gig. And Liz Vitale will be helping you out."

Scott Nash Strader laughs as he looks at his Veronica.

"Guess we don't need to find her, eh?"

Building 6 Rooftop
Night City, California (Alternate Dimension)
Later that evening

"KANE GET DOWN!"

POW-POW-POW-POW-POW-POW-WHIRRRRRR-POW-POW-POW!!!!!!

Veronica dives through the air, tackling her one time onto a stone covered roof, as the bullets fly by, barely missing them. The sound of the casings discarded with great haste always stuck with Veronica. No matter the weapon, it had this hollow sound, which was the opposite of how it felt afterwards. The adrenaline rush made her feel like she was floating on a cloud of morphine with all the dopamine being released. Veronica got them over and behind a three and a half foot barrier, backs up against it. The sisters share a glance with the sky being lit up with gunfire, and both laugh, going for their weapons. Alexis lets out a small sigh, shaking her head before giving Veronica a smirk.

"What's that look for?"

"Nothing is ever easy."

"Not when it comes to klepping from Militech"

Kane, still smirking, pivots from her behind to her knees, facing the barrier, as does Veronica. The duo check their weapons. Kane cocks her hand cannon as Veronica pulls her shotgun off her back. They nod to one another and start to peek up over the barrier....

POW-POW-POW-POW-POW-POW-WHIRRRRRR-POW-POW-POW!!!!!!

Pieces of concrete fly up in the air as the partners slink down, looking at one another wide eyed. Veronica brings up what they call a "Holo" and calls the digital copy of their mom, who is going by Elizabeth Smyth-Vitale, their mom's maiden name like Meghan was Peter Parker and this was her clone, Ben Reilly.

"I'm almost in!"

Veronica stares at the Hologram that sits in front of her eyes.

"Well, hurry up and get that program uploaded into their systems! We need to get out of here sooner rather than later. Oh, shit..."

"What?"

Veronica points up to show Victoria that an AV (air vehicle) with a Giant Mech sitting in the middle of the platform. Beside it stands a corpo agent for Millitech. She is a hard and striking looking woman.

"Alright ladies, enough is enough."

"It's time for a change?"

Nugget reference. Kane peaks over the barrier, sees the woman and her eyes go wide. Veronica looks over at her, seeing the concern as she loads 12 gauge shells into her shotgun she named "The Mox."

"Friend of yours?"

"Her name is Meredith Stout and considered one of the most deadly Corpo Agents out in the field today."

Veronica shrugs and stands up, leaving her gun leaning on the blind side of the barrier. She holds up her hands.

"Well, Miss Corpo Agent, you have our attention. What can we do for you?"

Two soldiers on either side of the agent fire their weapons, bullets chiseling out holes into the roof near the barrier hoping to intimidate Veronica, but she doesn't move.

"Oh, you got balls. Normally I don't find that attractive in a woman, but in you? Well...."

Just before Veronica can say anything, Elizabeth Vitale, the clone of Meghan Strader, is thrown to the floor in front of the giant Mech and its guns point down at the rookie mercenary. She looks down to Veronica, regret in her ice cold blue eyes.

"You have been a colossal pain in our collective asses. You have officially ruined our side project, but I am a fair woman. So, if either you or your twin hiding behind that barrier comes with me now, I will let this one go."

Veronica laughs. She starts firing at the Corpo and her Mech. The mech's guns fire down at the three women.

"I got this."

The two guards step down from the AV, stopping Kane from getting to Stout.

"I'd say don't bother following us, but we blew up your ride already."

"FUCK! My QUADRA!!!!!"

"The bug was planted, mission successful."

Veronica watches the AV fly away and nods her head as Elizabeth limps over to her with Kane. Veronica doesn't look down at her blown up car. She just stares into the sky wondering if the man Valerie had brought back here was who she thought it was.

Strader Estate **Houston, TX**

Veronica was happy to be home after her trip to London for Cara's physio. The stoner could do it in Houston, but she likes to go home every once in a while. Veronica walks through the side door of the ranch into the kitchen that everyone used as a front door, and she could hear her husband snoring away on the couch. When she approaches, she places her hands on the back of the soft grey couch to look over quietly. She can't help but smile. Veronica isn't what's known as happy-go-lucky. She's not an optimist or a pessimist, but more of a realist that would lean towards the pessimistic side.

You know, glass isn't half full or half empty, but most likely filled with piss. Not in the AW kind of way.

"You have your daddy's snore and matching open mouth." Her tone was quiet to not wake them. She takes the flannel blanket laying over the chair beside the couch and covers the two most important people in the world to our new era Cowgirl From Hell. "Goodnight, my loves."

As tired as she was, she kept her jacket on and retreated to the back deck out by the kitchen, but not before grabbing a rock glass and the bottle of Gibson's Finest Rye Whiskey. She sits down with a sigh, popping the cork top and pouring roughly three fingers of whiskey, which she uses to wash down the handful of hydromorphone she was prescribed after the match. The last few seconds of glorious sounds of silence would be cherished as that voice crept back into her grey matter.

"Tough luck, kiddo, but hey, you saved your ass."

Veronica feels the stare of her grandfather from the old body length mirror that was across from her, leaning against the wall.

"I'm not in the mood, old man."

"Miss Delicate Weapon over here, huh?"

Veronica goes to whip her glass of whiskey at the mirror but stops herself and instead refills her whiskey glass. The cigarette she lights fills her lungs and exhales as she places her pain meds beside her whiskey.

"Scott, I'm not in the mood for your shit tonight. My body hurts. I am pissed that Val figured out how to get Cara's dad to the other dimension. God knows what she has told him."

"Listen... I have a premonition that something bad is gonna happen."

Veronica takes a drink and a drag of her cigarette as she stares at the reflection of his icy blue eyes that he passed on down to her late mother, Meghan, and Uncle John. She stays quiet, sipping her whiskey.

"Not at all curious, kiddo?"

"I am. I'm just processing a few things. What is your premonition, old man?"

"Val has become Gaudet's ally. And I feel my shitheel nephew is going to be a part of the problem."

Veronica takes a deep drag and exhales, butting out her cigarette in the standing ashtray stand beside the old porch couch she sits on.

"I promise you this: anyone who tries to hurt my family will feel my wrath."

"Just stay frosty and keep your eyes open, Veronica."

She stands up and nods toward the mirror, finishing the whiskey in a gulp.

"I will keep my eyes open."

Downtown Houston

Following Day

"I am impressed you trusted Cara to take Chrissie for the day."

"Well, she is my tag partner and we have grown a lot."

Victoria leans her head against Veronica as the two walk down the sidewalk. Victoria was decked out in her favourite light blue Canadian Tuxedo (jeans, pink blouse and jean jacket) while Veronica was in her purple jeans, black blouse and purple leather jacket. It was almost like looking at an angel and a hell spawn. Victoria pulls out her phone and looks over to her twin.

"Did you decide what movie you want to go see?"

"No, I don't even know what's playing. Just been so busy with everything, hardly any time to think, let alone know what's playing right now. You pick."

Victoria knows Veronica better than anyone and knows something is going on with her. Only Outcast knows about Scott's soul attached to Veronica because he can see him but can't communicate, but she would've told him. Not to mention, Veronica having visions of her daughter being 10 years-old, telling her mom she needs to help Aunt Jackie (Jack Sullivan).

"Ronnie, what's going on? Ever since you took a leave from CU:LT, you haven't been exactly yourself." *Victoria takes Veronica's hand into hers, reassuring her twin with a gentle squeeze. Veronica smirks and gently shakes her head.*

"That obvious?" *Veronica knew it wasn't, and only Vee and Christian would ever pick up on it.*

"I know you too well. What's going on?"

"Where do I begin? We'll miss the movie."

"Whatever, you are more important."

A while later, sitting at the Spindle Sculpture at Eleanor Tinsley Park, Victoria leans back and lets out a deep breath.

"Damn, Ronnie. You think Val is helping Cara's dad now?"

"Yes, I do. I also think Kristopholis has become involved."

"That's a worrying trio. Does mom know?"

"She's the one that brought the possibility to me."

Vee sighs and puts her arm around Ronnie, giving her a hug.

"Every time we think we are done with the Rivers family Affliction...."

"Yeah... I know."

Victoria sighs.

"You aren't alone. You have me, Brooklyn, mamabear, auntie teebag...."

Veronica lets a small chuckle escape her lips before softly nodding.

"I know. What time is it? I promised Cara I'd be home this afternoon."

~ START TRANSMISSION ~

The scene is out in the Texas desert, where we see the Baba Jaga of professional wrestling, one half of the new era Cowgirls From Hell... The Scorpion Veronica Strader sitting on the lowered tailgate of her restored black Chevy Silverado. Her medium length dirty blonde hair is slicked back, and the moon shines off the shiny black leather jacket that her mom wore to the ring for a decade she wears now with pride. Her palms slap the purple denim jeans that cover the top of her thighs and smiles widely.

“Supreme Championship Wrestling... did you miss me? Because I certainly have missed all of you. Unfortunately, I still don't have my sister by my side, but she will be back sooner than later, and everyone's favourite support 'poodle' Jimothy with her. But until she comes back, I have some unfinished business with the Phantom Troupe, the wannabe devil of North Carolina specifically.”

“My little cousin, Mackenzie, my Uncle John's daughter, was asking me why I have this issue with Striker... and it's simple.”

“I just don't like his face.”

The Scorpion shrugs and lets out a laugh.

“Petty? Oh most definitely, but in order to get opportunities in this game you have to make an example out of someone, and why not start with two idiots that have more nicknames than there are members of my family? Now, management didn't want to give me Striker yet, instead they have given me his partner, Chris Dumont along with Gavin Taylor and a Queen of Chaos in Kimberly Williams.”

Veronica pulls out a soft pack of Marlboro Reds, a staple of her mom and grandfather, and lights up, the blue smoke twirling up into the cool Texas air.

“Gavin Taylor, from all accounts I have heard you are quite the athlete, have had quite the career but just like everyone else in this industry you think you are the only 'pure' athlete around. What I see is a jack of all trades, but a master of none. I never take anyone lightly, that never leads to anything good.”

“But that doesn't mean I don't believe in my own abilities in the ring. I'm looking to make an example out of anyone that stands in my way, and this week you are one of three.”

“Then there is Chris Dumont. I have already pointed out you have more stupid nicknames than I do family members. On both sides. You really aren’t the one I want. I want Striker a bloody pile of bones at my cowgirl boots, but this week you will suffice.”

“But the intriguing one in this match, at least to me, is Kimberly Williams. I have seen the Queens of Chaos circling about the industry since I made my professional debut three years ago. Now, while most of my opponents in my career so far have had years and years and many championships over me, the outcome well over eighty-seven-point-two-percent of the time has been in my favour. And I don’t see this going any differently. Now, I will say out of the three, Kim will be the biggest thorn in my side. You are the only thing that is consistent about you is the inconsistency you present. Will you follow the rules? Will you go off the handle?”

“No matter which way you go, I’m going to be in your way. I have taken down names in this industry that make most shake in their boots. I also think you know I am your biggest threat in this match, and I am aware that you are mine.”

Veronica takes a drag and sneers.

“But the bottom line here? Is that Veronica Strader is back. I’m not called the Baba Jaga and The Scorpion just because they are cool nicknames. No, I have those names because they are what I am. I am the wicked witch that eats my opponents alive after luring them into a false sense of safety. My strikes are the sting from a scorpion's tail.”

“What I do is simple: I win. Wherever I go, I win. There’s not one damn thing anyone can do about it. And if any of you do anything to piss me off you are going to learn a valuable but extremely difficult lesson.”

“God forgives.”

Veronica hops off the tailgate taking one last drag before sneering at us through the screen,

“**I don’t.**”

“See you at Breakdown, kids.”

Fade to black.

~ END TRANSMISSION ~