

(A dimly lit bar. Victoria sits alone, nursing a scotch. Eventually, she is approached by Darcy, although she doesn't notice this right away.)

Darcy

You look lost.

(Victoria looks up.)

Victoria

What?

Darcy

I've never seen you here before. Did you just move to the city, or...?

Victoria

Is that a euphemism? Oh, no, obviously it's not. Uh, no, no, I've lived here my whole life. This is just my first time here.

You know, when you said "moved to the city," I thought that was slang or something, for uh...

Darcy

Oh. Oh, I get it, like moving to Lesbian City?

Victoria

Yes! Yes, exactly. Lesbian City. Sounds like a great place. Would have loved to be born there, would have figured things out a lot sooner. Ooh, but what if you were straight though? And you were born in Lesbian City? That would kind of be a bummer, right? Or maybe Lesbian City is like one of those places where nobody actually settles down and has kids, it's just so great that people want to move there, constantly.

You know, like Manhattan.

Darcy

You are like, really nervous.

Victoria

Yes, you are correct.

Darcy

You don't have to be. This is a great bar. I've been going here for years.

Victoria

It does seem like a nice bar.

Uh, I'm... Victoria.

Darcy

Darcy.

Victoria

Nice to meet you. So, uh, you come here with Peppermint Patty?

Darcy

What?

Victoria

You know, from Charlie Brown? Patty and Marcy?

Darcy

I said my name is Darcy.

Victoria

Could have sworn you said Marcy.

Darcy

Nope.

Victoria

Huh.

(They sit.)

Darcy

So, what do you do?

Victoria

I work in a lab.

Darcy

Oh, you're a scientist?

Victoria

Ehhhh, not exactly. I don't do research or anything, I mostly just build things. I'm more like a glorified mechanic.

Darcy

See, now that's hot.

Victoria

Is it?

Darcy

Totally. I am so into do-it-yourself-ers. Something about professions that need you to use your hands.

Victoria

Well...I don't use my hands much. I have an assistant. And when I'm building things, I mostly just use machines to build other machines. You know, that's a perk of the job, I guess. Half of the work takes care of itself.

Darcy

So it sounds like you're not actually a scientist at all.

(Victoria's breath catches)

You're like a MAD scientist.

(Victoria laughs a little too loudly)

Victoria

That is a label you could use, yes.

Darcy

I gotta tell you something, though, you don't fit what I picture when I think of a mad scientist.

Victoria

Heh, well, there aren't many women in the field, right?

Darcy

Oh that too, totally, but I mean like...you're very straight-laced.

Victoria

Okay.

Darcy

I mean, I obviously don't know you very well, but you're very...very proper, very...

(she makes a gesture with her hands)

You know, you're in a bar, you have a scotch, you are surrounded by beautiful women and you aren't talking to any of them.

Victoria

Maybe I just wanted a drink.

Darcy

What's the fun of going to a bar just to drink?

Victoria

I was GOING to talk to someone, okay? Anyway, you talked to me, so it's fine, right?

Darcy

Did you plan on talking to me?

Victoria

Uh...

Darcy

Did you notice me watching you at all?

Victoria

Why would you tell a person you were watching them?

Darcy

You are very frustrating.

Victoria

Look, I...I've never done this before, okay? Even when I was trying to...not that I ever TRIED to get guys, I was very busy with work and my dreams and...but even THEN, I sucked at it. Is that what you want to hear? I'm terrible at this. I suck. I just thought, you know since I am, since I like women, I should make an effort, I should go to the stupid bar and have a dumb drink. Even though I don't have time, even though I don't know how to do something that everyone in the world knows how to do. And this is what happens. I get made fun of by strangers.

Darcy

I'm not trying to make fun of you!

Victoria

You should take a minute to think about how other people feel before saying shit, you know that? Stuff like this, it's exactly why humanity gives me no hope. At all.

(Tension.)

Darcy

So, uh...you know, I think I see my friend over there. I'm going to go say hi.

Would you like to come with me?

Victoria

Do you actually want me to come with you?

Darcy

It might be fun. My friend is really nice. She's a good dancer. She's the reason I go here so much, actually.

Victoria

You should go hang out with her then.

(Darcy stares at Victoria, shakes her head a little and walks away. Victoria stares into her scotch, downs the rest of it in one gulp and leaves the bar.)

Victoria enters her laboratory. There are gadgets and screens everywhere, something out of Philip K Dick's worst nightmare. As she enters she takes off her going-out clothes and puts on a lab coat, goggles and an ostentatious cape. She walks over to a pile of garbage and gives it a kick.)

Victoria

BLADES. UP.

(The garbage pile shifts and a kid with a punk haircut emerges, rubbing sleep from their eyes. They blink at Victoria.)

What was my rule, Blades?

Blades

No sleeping in the expensive lab equipment?

Victoria

You win first prize. Now get up.

Blades

To be fair, I thought you were going to be out super late.

Victoria

That was a lot for you to assume.

Blades

Why? I figured, one look at your smoking hot ass, all the ladies would flock to you. Like pigeons. That didn't happen?

Victoria

No.

Blades

See, that's so weird to me. Still, you couldn't have been gone for more than an hour or so.

Victoria

Blades, shut up.

Blades

Aw, come on, boss, put some force behind it.

(Victoria rolls her eyes and gives her cape a flick)

Victoria

SILENCE, PLEBE.

Blades

Yeah! That's what I'm talking about!

Victoria

Look, now that I'm back, we're going to get some work done. Okay? Follow me.

Blades

I'll follow you anywhere, boss.

(Victoria opens up a basement door and goes down below, Blades close behind. The messiness around them becomes more high-tech. Victoria eventually stops in front of a work table with a bunch of scary-looking devices on it. She holds out her hand to Blades without looking at them)

Victoria

Wrench.

(Blades roots around nearby)

Blades

I wanted to ask you...

(They hand Victoria the wrench)

You thinking about changing your name now?

Victoria

Why would I do that?

Blades

I mean, it's not like your brand was widely known before, right? But now that you have the whole lesbian thing going for you, you know, you could cash in on that. I was thinking something like "Lady Sappho."

Victoria

Oh please.

Blades

Or "The Gynecologist."

Victoria

What? No. Why would you even suggest that?

Blades

I'm spitballing! Sometimes that means tossing out some loser ideas. Oooh! "Labia Majora". Huh? Kinda straddles that line between classy and vulgar, people will remember it.

Victoria

Philips head.

Blades

Or maybe "The Straddler"?

Victoria

PHILIPS. HEAD.

(Blades hands Victoria a screwdriver.)

You're making a mistake here, Blades. This whole thing, it doesn't change my "brand", whatever the hell that means. The plan stays the same. I spread panic and chaos throughout the city, its citizens learn to fear my name, I become a powerful legend that sinks into their psyches for millennia to come. Nobody's going to run in fear from "Lady Sappho".

Blades

Wait, you were going for scary? "The Tinker" is not a scary name.

Tinker

Oh like "The Joker" is fucking terrifying. I thought hard about my name. It's simple. It's effective. People remember it...those who've heard it. Once more people get wind of my deeds, it'll all come together. I just need momentum.

Blades

You're the boss, Boss. So, what deeds are gonna get done tonight?

Victoria

I haven't exactly had time to prepare tonight.

Blades

You thought you were going to be out late, too, didn't you? Oh man, you thought you were going to get super laid, and you didn't! Not even close!

Victoria

Can you just ready the robots?

Blades

I thought you said you didn't have a—

Victoria

I just thought of one! That's how brilliant I am!

(Victoria presses a button and a bunch of robots activate. A couple of them are sort of stupid, but for the most part they function as one competent unit. Blades shuffles through the throng and makes some adjustments.)

Blades

All set!

Victoria

Perfect. Perfect!

(She addresses the robots)

In the National Science Museum on 54<sup>th</sup> and Washington, you will find one of the world's oldest diamonds. You will replace it with this grapefruit.

(She produces a grapefruit)

You will not be detained. You will not be distracted. You will act efficiently and with determination, and if anyone asks you who built you, what will you answer?

Robots

THE TINKER.

Victoria

You know, I didn't catch that. WHO built you?

Robots

THE TINKER, THE GREATEST SUPERVILLAIN IN THE UNIVERSE.

Victoria

Excellent! Now go! Do my bidding!

Robots

AT ONCE, MISTRESS.

(The robots disperse.)

Victoria

Blades, ready the helicopter.

Blades

Yes, yes, yes! I LOVE the helicopter!

(Victoria and Blades board a modest-sized helicopter and follow the robots, who quickly make their way to the museum. However, before they can make it inside, they are stopped by a bolt from the blue.

The Fist, a woman with super-strength in a skintight outfit, descends from above and lands in the midst of the robots. They turn their attention toward her and advance. She quickly takes them out in a spectacular fight sequence. A news crew immediately arrives on the scene.)

Casey

I'm here at the National Museum of Science, where an attempted late-night heist has just been thwarted by our city's very own superhero, The Fist. While out on patrol, the heroine spied from a distance a cadre of robotic thieves descending upon the museum, their intentions unknown but assuredly dastardly. Let's join The Fist now and get a few words from our intrepid savior.

The Fist

Hello, Casey, always a pleasure.

Casey

Ms Fist, what can you tell us about these robots? Where could they have come from?

The Fist

Sadly, Casey, by the time I realized that these robots possessed voice modules, I had so thoroughly destroyed them that their words came out garbled and nonsensical. However, there are many active

supervillains in the city at the moment, so by using my resources I should be able to root out the source of this crime very quickly. Between us though, and the viewers at home of course, I don't think we need to worry about another heist.

Casey

Why do you say that?

The Fist

These robots were very crudely put together. The materials used are high quality, to be sure, but mistakes made during their construction keep them from being true works of craftsmanship. It's almost as if this heist was the result of five minutes of planning. Maybe less.

Casey

Well, I bet if that supervillain is watching the news, he's feeling pretty embarrassed right about now.

The Fist

Hahaha, you're probably right about that.

Casey

Does anyone have any questions for the most fabulous woman in Tacoma?

(A bunch more reporters swarm The Fist with questions. She points to each one in turn)

Taylor

Ms Fist, how do you explain the sudden influx of supervillains in our city?

The Fist

Excellent question, Taylor. I believe that the competition in larger metropolises has gotten far too stiff. Used to be if you wanted to start shit, you'd go to Hell's Kitchen, you know what I'm saying?

(Casey coughs)

Oh, right, sorry, pardon my language. Start "stuff". "Heck's Kitchen". Anyway, you've seen little pockets of villainy just opening up all around the country as a result, and unfortunately for some reason, Tacoma has attracted its fair share of evil-doers. You'd think they'd want to move to Seattle, right? Nope. This is the one thing we get instead. But as long as I'm around, none of you have to worry about a thing.

Ralph

Ms Fist, how do you respond to criticism that your superhero moniker is in fact sexual innuendo?

The Fist

What? Is he allowed to ask that? Let me ask you something, man, would you ask a male superhero that question? I don't think so. I have super-strength. Come on.

Casey

Ms Fist, do you have anything to say to the perpetrator of this crime?

(The Fist looks directly into the camera)

The Fist

Yes, I do. All I have to say to you, scum, is that you'd better try harder if you want to put one over on this city. I sleep with one eye open. And I'll be keeping both eyes out for any more of your robots. Whoever you are. Wherever you are. Whenever we meet, it will be a moment of reckoning.

(She flies away. The newspeople scatter. Victoria grumps in the helicopter)

Victoria

Oh my god I HATE her.

Blades

That was over the top.

Victoria

Right? "A moment of reckoning?" Who the hell does she think she is?

Blades

Yeah. What an asshole.

Victoria

Oh, don't think I'm not paying attention to the sloppy job you did on those robots.

Blades

Crap, I was hoping you weren't paying attention to that part.

Victoria

Do I have to teach you again how to assemble a robot?

Blades

No no no, I know how. Maybe if you give me more than five minutes next time...

Victoria

Great. So it's my fault. I'm the bad guy.

Blades

Aren't you...trying to be the bad guy?

Victoria

Hmph.

Blades

I'm not actually steamed, boss. You took me in when I needed a place to go, and I'm always gonna be grateful for that. No matter what...I'm your Dick Grayson.

Victoria

Oh God, that's disgusting. Get the hell away from me.

Blades

Let's get you home.

Victoria

Yeah, let's. And then we'll figure out a way to take this bitch down. "The Fist."

It really does sound like innuendo.

(They fly away. Victoria tinkers into the night, but nothing good comes out of it. She takes a break at an all-night diner with The Antlion, a fellow supervillain. His costume isn't very cool looking. He's looking through an old rotary index.)

Victoria

No, no, take your time. It's not like I have things to do.

Antlion

Would you relax? Please? This is the method of organization that makes the most sense to me.

Victoria

We are living in the age of the smart phone. Go to the nearest Sprint and pick one up.

Antlion

Smart phones. Huh. Smart phones can be hacked. You want to make sure you're untraceable, you use pen and paper. And a good, solid code.

Victoria

That doesn't look like code to me.

Antlion

I'm working on the code. Do you want my help or not?

Victoria

God help me, I do.

Antlion

Ah-HAH!

(He pulls a card out of the index)

Right, right! A recent one! "The Fist." Looks like she's fresh from Spokane and she's already got a lot of rich suits in her pocket. And she comes with a squeaky clean resume.

Victoria

So what's her focus? Crime? The environment?

Antlion

She dabbles. Haven't come across anything she really stinks at, though. Notably, she's credited with fixing the homelessness issue in Spokane. Apparently they're all gone. Like they've been wiped out.

Victoria

You are throwing a lot of shade on someone who's done an inarguably good thing. Nobody likes homeless people. I mean, nobody likes that they're THERE...you are following me and not thinking I'm a terrible person, right Ant?

Antlion

Where'd the people go, Tink? A population that big doesn't just vanish. For all we know she could have killed them. Tossed them into Puget Sound.

Victoria

Yeah....but she probably didn't do that, right? She's a superhero. That goes against their code or whatever.

Antlion

Superheroes do awful shit all the time, Tink. That's why we're around. To keep them in check. All that power, it's too much for individuals to handle. They ought to be regulated.

Victoria

So...wait, now we're regulating things? I'm very confused.

Antlion

I'm not saying we're regulating, I'm saying they OUGHT to be regulated. Good point though, perhaps that solution's too indelicate. Too many other outside forces holding them back and we wouldn't be necessary.

Victoria

Well that's a gross idea. We're totally necessary. We could totally exist without some batch of goody-two-shoes calling us "evil". Our work is important.

Antlion

You'd call your work important?

Victoria

Yes?

Antlion

I'd like to draw your attention to your "exploits" the other night.

Victoria

We're doing this right now, you're seriously doing this here in a fucking diner in the middle of the night...

Antlion

As your mentor—

Victoria

You are not my mentor—

Antlion

As your MENTOR, it is important for me to course-correct you when I feel as though you've been

going astray.

Victoria

I've been doing this LONGER than you, you only moved here a year ago.

Antlion

A museum heist? Really? That is the most fucking clichéd thing I've ever seen. I need you to get more specific! Really think about what grinds your gears.

Victoria

It's a perfectly serviceable crime.

Antlion

You dig boobs now, yeah?

Victoria

Oh dear Jesus.

Antlion

Do you know the last time I've read press about a lesbian supervillain? Never. Because there isn't one. Use that! Blow up a church—

Victoria

Whoah—

Antlion

Okay, maybe don't blow up a church, but like, sabotage some government buildings, break open some women's prisons, do something like that. Strike back at society on behalf of your gay brothers and sisters or whatever.

Victoria

Ant, that's not supervillainry. That's a fucking PSA come to life. People LIKE gay people.

Antlion

Uh, no. No they don't. Have you not been paying attention?

Victoria

People don't like gay people?

Antlion

'Fraid not.

Victoria

Shit.

Antlion

No, you're missing the point, this is GOOD. This is GOOD for you. You have a built-in cause to fight for, you little ignoramus.

Victoria

I didn't get into this because I wanted a "cause", Ant.

Antlion

And that's your problem. Right there. That's why you're doing uninspired shit like museum heists. Because you don't have drive. You don't have a purpose for doing what you're doing.

Victoria

Uh, yes I do.

Antlion

And that is?

Victoria

Because I rock at it.

Antlion

Then how come nobody knows your name?

Victoria

I think I'm starting to understand why you call yourself "The Antlion". Because it's fucking impossible to escape a conversation with you. I'm cutting this off.

Antlion

Hey hey, hold up a second. Rushing out of here like a tornado, who do you think you are?

(He reaches under his seat and pulls out a lumpy unlabeled package. He hands it to Victoria)

Pierogi.

Victoria

You don't have to do that. You were doing ME the favor, I should be paying YOU.

Antlion

You know how it is, share and share alike. You wanna pay me back, build me a phone. One that works the way I want it to.

Victoria

Sure, with all that free time I have.

Antlion

Whose fault is that?

Victoria

Is this heavier than usual?

Antlion

Extra for the kid.

Victoria

Doesn't Martha get suspicious when you ask for a lunch that could feed three people?

Antlion

Mom doesn't care who eats the lunch as long as I'm home for dinner. Consider yourself a child by proxy.

Victoria

Heh. Bet she'd be thrilled.

Antlion

Hey, don't be like that. Love doesn't care how many museums you rob as long as you appreciate it being there.

Victoria

So she knows what you are? What you do? And she doesn't care?

Antlion

Get those outta here before they get cold.

(Victoria leaves. A server comes up and plops down some food in front of the Antlion)

Server

Here's your burger.

Antlion

Pay attention to this face, helpless prole. This is the face of your savior. It may take me time, but the system that holds you in thrall will burn to the ground, and it will all be because of one man. Me.

(He takes a big bite of his burger and chews sloppily without breaking eye contact)

Server

I hate serving you. Please leave me a tip this time. I have a kid at home.

Antlion

You ever watch "Reservoir Dogs"?

Server

Enjoy your burger. Asshole.

(The Antlion demolishes the rest of his food. We see Victoria on another date. She's pooped.)

Stevie

I just think it's really important that we know where our food is coming from. Sure, genetically modified vegetables might be convenient in general, but where do we draw the line once we're letting scientists grow the things we're putting in our body in some lab? Of course, the dream is to grow your own produce, but...

...Are you listening?

Victoria

What?

Stevie

Guess that answers my question.

Victoria

Ugh. I was trying to listen. I swear. I was up all night.

Stevie

Oh?

Victoria

Oh, no, not like that. I WISH. No, I have a...big work project.

Stevie

What is it that you do?

Victoria

...Engineer. I'm a robotics engineer.

Stevie

Ooooh, that's a relief.

Victoria

I'm sorry, I'm sleepy, you'll have to explain.

Stevie

You said "engineer" and for some reason my mind went to "genetic engineer", and I was all "Oh God, Stevie, you've been ranting about GMO's for five minutes. NOT smart." But robotics, huh? Totally hot.

Victoria

Wait, that's what you were talking about? GMO's? You're against those?

Stevie

You have been paying no attention to me at all.

Victoria

And wait, you said that if I disagreed with you because I was in the field, that wouldn't have been smart? What are you afraid I'd do? Cram a delayed-growth tomato down your throat?

Stevie

No, I just meant, you know...first date and all...conversation's supposed to be light.

Victoria

So...that's your idea of light conversation?

Stevie

Well, if you agreed with me, it would be.

Victoria

Okay, Stevie, you are lucky I'm desperate, or this whole conversation would be a deal-breaker for me.

Stevie

Excuse me?

Victoria

You just basically admitted to me that you would be willing to hide your politics from me if you thought it might make things awkward. Or is it that you thought I might challenge you, if I happened to know more about the subject than you? Either way, I can't stop fantasizing about shoving my face into your chest, so I guess the whole point is moot.

Ohhh, that's not the sort of thing you actually say out loud to a person, is it?

Stevie

You're disgusting.

Victoria

Wait wait wait, sit back down. Hey! Yeah! A romantic connection, definitely not happening here. But—

Stevie

Nope. Nope nope nope, I think I just figured out what my deal-breaker is. It's all of this. All of it.

(Stevie stomps out of the restaurant.)

Victoria

Okay. At least I know now. There is no way a date will ever get worse than that.

Please God, let that be the case.

(Victoria receives a text on her phone. She groans.)

Son of a bitch.

(Victoria meets Blades in a dark alley near the restaurant. Blades is rubbing their hands together.)

Victoria

Okay, what is it? What's wrong?

Blades

Nothing. Things are perfect.

Victoria

You texted me in all caps, "COME OUTSIDE NAOW, THINGS AIN'T GOOD."

Blades

I thought I wouldn't get you to come if I told you I had good news. You wouldn't take me seriously.

Victoria

That's not true. I take your feelings seriously.

Blades

Sure, okay. But listen! I found it!

Her kryptonite!

Victoria

A weak spot? For The Fist? Are you joking?

Blades

Nope! It's really stupid, too.

Victoria

It's not the color yellow, is it?

Blades

It's cats.

Victoria

Like, an allergy? That information is next to useless.

Blades

No no, like she LOVES cats. All animals. Like she'll put herself in danger in order to protect even one.

Victoria

Okay, I might see where you're going with this...

Blades

So if we, say, held an animal shelter hostage...

Victoria

Why does everyone want me to blow things up and hold things hostage? No! No, I'm not doing it.

Blades

But Boss, it's the surest way to lure her out. Then you can deal with her however you want.

Victoria

This is not how I do things. I have standards. Killing kittens is beneath me.

Blades

What if you fake it?

Victoria

What?

Blades

What if you PRETEND to hold up an animal shelter, but you're actually messing around with some other part of the city? Then, not only are you letting her know that you know her weakness and you're willing to use it against her, but you're smart enough to predict her movements and make her look like an idiot. Taps into that whole "wily professor" persona you've got going on.

Victoria

Blades, that may be the smartest plan you've ever come up with.

Blades

Aw, shucks.

Victoria

Yeah...yeah! I can fake it! Blades, I can fake it!

Blades

Not too loud, you don't want the ladies to hear.

Victoria

Oh my God BLADES, you are not going to believe the date I just went on.

Blades

Tell me on the way!