My, How You Have Grown

by BloodRedLust

Summary

Veronica returns to Neptune 5 years after the end of season 3 for her Fathers wedding, and discovers that many things have changed in her absence. Not movie compliant, but contains some spoilers/ideas from the movie, and the mention of a character borrowed from season 4.

Notes

A big thankyou to my beautiful niece Jaime for relentlessly encouraging me to start writing again after a 7 year break, your stubborn determination finally paid off baby! xx

Big thanks to LoVeObsessed2 for her awesome betaing skills, and her reassurance, patience and enthusiasm.

Disclaimer: I do not own Veronica Mars or any of these characters, except for Lexi, and Atlas.

Title taken from the lyrics of ‘Brown Eyed Girl’ by Van Morrison

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Chapter 1
Veronica glanced one final time around her apartment, keys in hand, doing a mental checklist as she went. She had a habit of forgetting something important every time she went back to Neptune, and she was determined, just this once, to actually remember to take everything that she was going to need.

Tickets, check. Phone charger, check. Shoes, clothes, toiletries… check, check, check. Garment bag containing her dress for the wedding, check!

What am I forgetting?

Apartment is secure. Atlas is down the hall with Adam and Steve for the weekend, where he will no doubt be spoilt rotten and come home six pounds heavier and with no manners or recollection of any of his training, but at least he won’t miss me…

Windows are locked, balcony is secure… I think I’m good.

She slowly closed the door behind her, and walked down the hall to the elevator with her little weekender luggage case trailing behind her. Mind racing, imagining what the weekend would bring. The idea of returning to Neptune always gave her butterflies (or more accurately, Mothras) in her chest, and she had been known to make up excuses on a few occasions just to avoid the place, but she knew she couldn’t do that this time. I mean, it’s not every day that your Dad gets remarried.

It had been 5 years since she left Neptune, and in that time Keith had created a whole new life for himself. He had won the Sheriff’s race, against all odds, the day that Veronica had decided to leave Hearst; leave town for good. From there he had done nothing but good things for the community, and the good people of Neptune. He had weeded out the crooked and amoral deputies who had followed Lamb into the murky waters of bribery and corruption… He had moved out of their beachside apartment complex, into an abode much more fitting of the towns once again beloved Sheriff. A bungalow house with a wide, wrap-around porch where he could entertain and barbeque on weekends for his new family… well, not so new anymore. He and Alicia had been dancing around this changed dynamic between them for the better part of 4 years before they finally surrendered to it, and her and Daryll finally moved in with him.

Veronica was happy for them, mostly. Of course, sometimes, when she let herself overthink it, she would get jealous that he had moved on with his life without her, but wasn’t that part of the reason why she left in the first place? She knew she was holding him back. She was a psychology major, and had managed to do plenty of self-reflection and analyzation in the last 5 years, and even she could recognize how co-dependent her relationship with her father had become in those last couple of years that she lived at home with him. She wanted more for him than that. He could see it too, of course, and had reminded her on several occasions that they were all her new family too. Her best friend was about to become her brother, it didn’t get much better than that, did it?

So why do I still feel like shit every time I think about it?

The elevator dinged as it arrived in the lobby, and Veronica sighed, shaking herself out of her reverie, then steeling herself, stepped out into the thrum of New York City rush hour traffic to hail a cab to the airport.
Logan reached out to give the middle aged woman one last one-armed hug, as the tiny, precocious three year old in his other arm sang the alphabet song and danced her brown scruffy puppy toy up his arm and around his neck. To his credit, he was so used to her incessant chatter that he wasn’t even distracted by it any more, and continued his conversation over the top of the little girls babbling.

“Thanks again for coming out for her birthday, Aunt Naomi. It’s so important to me that she knows who her family is.”

Naomi reached out and embraced the little girl gently, kissing her forehead. She responded by throwing her arms around her auntie’s neck and squeezing hard, giggling.

“Love you pumpkin” the older woman mumbled against her skin.

“Love you, Aunty Nomi” the tiny child answered back.

The three embraced for another few moments, then Logan peeled the little girl’s arms away from his Aunt, and they stood silently as they watched her walk away towards the boarding gate. After she had disappeared from view, Logan placed her down on her feet and reached for her hand.

“Come on kiddo, you hungry?”

She nodded, but didn’t grab his hand like he had wanted… she was too independent for that. She was already bent over, walking her doggy on his own plush stuffed legs through the dirty airport. It looked like ‘Woof’ was going to need yet another bath soon, then there would be the inevitable hours of tears while they both waited for him to dry. Logan sighed with resignation, falling into a very slow step behind her, growling at her playfully as he stomped along, trying to hurry her up. He knew what she was like if she didn’t get her dinner on time, if he missed that small window of opportunity when she was actually willing to eat then it would mean an unnecessarily stressful evening for both of them. He had learned the hard way how important it was to stick to her routine.

Veronica hovered by the baggage claim, cursing herself for even bothering to check her luggage. Not that she was in a hurry, per say, she just hated waiting...

*I should have just carried it on, saved myself this hassle.*

She had been standing there for a good five minutes when it finally appeared at the other end of the carousel, and Veronica waited impatiently as it approached, then scooped down to pick it up and spun to walk away, but before she could take two steps, a tiny blonde girl collided hard with her legs, nearly knocking her over.

Veronica dropped her case and caught the child against her legs, trying to balance them both so she didn’t fall flat on her ass and take the kid with her, but she couldn’t help the expletives that escaped
her at the effort and the shock.

“Holy crap, whoa!”

When she was sure she was going to keep her feet, Veronica glanced down at the little girl, checking automatically to see if she was hurt, but she was grinning cheekily, so Veronica knew she was okay.

“I crashed you” She giggled, looking up at Veronica. Her eyes were such a gentle, soulful shade of brown. They looked vaguely familiar. Veronica couldn’t help but smile back down at her, the little girl’s grin was infectious.

“You sure did! Hey” She said kindly. “Where’s your Momma?”

The pounding of running footsteps approaching them made them both look up, and in that second Veronica’s heart stopped.

And as the man’s eyes met hers, she’s pretty sure his did too.

She spoke his name at the exact moment that he spoke hers.

“Logan?”

“Veronica?”

For several seconds, all either of them could do was stare. Open mouthed, gaping in wide-eyed disbelief.

Logan recovered first, and reached out to extract his giggling daughter from Veronica’s legs, lifting her easily up into his arms.

“I’m so sorry about that, she took off on me. Are you hurt?”

There was an awkward silence as Veronica just stared at him, completely unable to form words. Her eyes kept flicking between his face and the little girl’s, and the resemblances had to be more than coincidence. Before she could speak the little girl reached out and gripped Logan’s face, turning it to hers, and started babbling.

“Daddy I crashed her!”

Logan automatically corrected her ‘You crashed into her, Lexi. Did you say sorry?’

“Sorry” she chimed immediately, her big brown eyes snapping back to meet Veronica’s but Veronica was still too shocked to answer. She just stared at the two people in front of her, almost cheek to cheek, two pairs of identical brown eyes staring back at her.

Logan reached out for her, touching her arm. “Hey. You okay?”

Veronica’s eyes snapped back into focus as she soaked in the sight of the face that had haunted her dreams for five long years. He had aged well. His face had matured, his cheeks a little thinner than they had been in his teens, and the scruffy three-day stubble on his chin only made him look more rugged, and gorgeous.

_Dammit. He was still smoking hot._

Finally, she nodded slowly.
“Yeah, umm, I’m fine. Sorry. Hi. Just a little shocked to see you.”

*Especially with a kid!*

Logan smiled kindly, certain that he was just as surprised to see her, but appreciating that it happened all the same. He reached out and gently placed his hand on her upper arm, and the touch sent a jolt of electricity through them both.

“It’s really good to see you, Veronica.”

She nodded, silently, her tongue darting out to moisten her lips.

“Yeah, you too.”

“So, what brings you to Neptune?”

“My Dad and Wallace’s mom are getting married this weekend.”

He smirked, the grin making his eyes twinkle as he said “About damned time, too.”

She just laughed.

Suddenly aware of the crowds of people milling about them, Veronica reached down and picked up the handle of her case, and the trio moved silently out of the busy walkway to a quieter spot over by the windows. Logan bent to put his little girl back down on her feet, but kept her hand firmly grasped inside his, and from his crouch down at her level, looked back up to Veronica to make introductions.

“Lexi, I want you to meet a very dear friend of mine. This is Veronica. Veronica, in case you hadn’t guessed, this is my daughter, Lexi. Alexis Lynn Echolls.”

*He named her after his Mom.*

Veronica, shaking slightly, and feeling like she had crossed into a parallel universe, crouched down so she was on their level too.

“Well, it’s very nice to meet you, Lexi. I’m glad you crashed into me.” She paused for a few beats, as her eyes drifted back to Logan’s.

“She’s so beautiful, Logan. I can’t believe this. You’re a Dad?” A thought suddenly occurred to her, and even though her heart quickened at the notion, she quickly glanced around the airport. “Is her Mom here? I would love to meet her.”

*Liar!*

Logan shook his head. “Nope, no Mom. It’s always just been me and Lexi.” He grinned. “From the day she arrived on the planet, and blinking, stepped into the sun...” Veronica laughed aloud, recognizing the phrase from The Lion King.

A jolt shot through Logan at the sound of her laughter. *God I missed that sound.*

“Haha, someone watches too much Disney!”

He grinned back, rolling his eyes.

“You say that like it’s possible!”
She could hear the potency in his voice, the genuine interest in her answer. It wasn’t just small talk for the sake of making small talk, because he had accidentally run into his ex… he seemed actually happy to see her.

She had walked away from him; away from everything, five years ago without a word, and never looked back. He had called her so many times over the first few months; left voicemails begging her to call him back, to come back to him, to please just talk to him, but she had never replied. She needed a clean break, and so she took it, and never once waivered in her conviction that she was doing the right thing for herself, and ultimately, for him too. They were toxic together. They both needed to move on. And then one day, he seemed to have finally accepted her decision. He called her one last time and left a voicemail saying goodbye. That he would always love her, she could always count on him if she needed him, but he couldn’t sit around wallowing, and waiting for her to come home. He was moving on. He never called her again. She may or may not have kept that message, and replayed it a few times over the years, when she was alone and needed a reminder that she was loved, and wanted.

He regarded her face carefully, he could tell she was still in shock; to be honest, he totally was too, but the sense of joy that filled him just at the sight of her was enough to ground him, and he knew he didn’t want to waste a minute of this encounter with her by allowing his nostalgic brain to take over.

“Hey, I need to feed this little dynamo before she turns into Chuckie and her head starts spinning around. Do you maybe want to join us? We were heading over to Mama Leone’s for some pasta, it’s her favorite.”

Veronica raised an eyebrow.

“She’s got good taste.” She allowed, wholeheartedly approving of the little girls choice of restaurants. Logan knew she would, that’s why he said it, but still he could see her hesitating, so he threw in something he knew she couldn’t refuse.

“My shout for ice cream at Amy’s afterwards? I would love to have the chance to catch up with you, It’s been way too long. Do you have plans for tonight?”

Veronica considered the question. Well, her plans for the night were meant to consist of going back to Wallace's house to crash on his couch, as her Dad’s house was already full of Alicia's extended family who were in town for the wedding. Her Dad had a room at the Neptune Grand for the night and Alicia was staying at her sister’s. She knew they all had to get an early start in the morning, but the night was still young, and the idea of catching up with her long lost love actually was actually seeming less terrifying by the second. And besides, he was right. It really had been way too long.

“Okay, sure. I’m in.” She reached down with her free hand and offered it to the little blonde girl, whose eyes shone bright with excitement just like her fathers, as she slipped her tiny hand into her grasp, and skipping along, led Veronica and her Daddy out of the airport.

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Dinner was … loud, and chaotic, and fun, and over very quickly. Lexi picked at her pasta with her fingers, despite Logan’s best efforts to get her to use silverware.
Veronica barely got to say three words to Logan, but found herself staring at him in awe as he interacted with his child.

It turns out, feeding a toddler relies heavily on bribery and distraction.

Veronica figured out very quickly that Lexi had Logan wrapped very tightly around her little finger, but not in a spoiled brat kind of way … more in a ‘you are my entire world, and I would do anything for you’ kind of way, and frankly, it was adorable to watch. It was obvious that these two were very used to being the only people in each other’s lives. Veronica could relate; there was a time, not so long ago, when she and her Dad were like that too.

Logan was a natural dad. It looked like it came as easy as breathing to him. Lexi was strong willed, but she clearly adored her Daddy, and when Logan offered to read her a story if she ate 2 more bites, she gobbled them up quickly, grinning at him. Then a cheeky glint came over her eyes, and she asked “2 stories?”

Logan laughed at her, tapping her on the nose.

“Okay, but you have to eat 4 more bites to get 2 stories!”

She giggled, and pressed her forehead to his. “Okay daddy.”

Veronica couldn’t help but smile as she watched the little girl shovel 4 more spoonfuls of pasta into her mouth, with Logan counting along with her as she went.

Within minutes, she was curled up in the booth with her head on Logan’s leg, sucking her thumb as Logan gently stroked her hair. Her eyes drifted closed, her breathing evened out, and just like that, she was asleep.

Veronica shook her head, meeting Logan’s eyes with a soft smile on her face and more than a tinge of awe in her voice.

“I still can’t believe you’re a dad, Logan. She is amazing.”

Logan beamed and nodded, gazing down at the tiny little human beside him.

“She truly is the most incredible creature I’ve ever met in my life” he said proudly, then deliberately lifted his gaze to meet Veronica's eyes. “Present company excluded, of course.”

Before she could reply, he picked up a bottle of red wine that he had ordered at the start of the meal, and finally poured himself a glass, then topped up Veronica's.

“How’s your lasagna?”

She groaned with delight, raising her eyebrows.

“About as good as I remember. Still as incredible as it was five years ago.

He tipped his wine glass suggestively towards her, and she raised hers to clink with it, finally meeting his eyes. A smile played at his lips, and she dropped her gaze, knowing immediately exactly what he was thinking. She scrambled to change the subject away from them, and their past. Something current. Something safe to talk about.

“So, what’s the story then? Where’s her mom?”

Logan grinned, raising his glass again.
“Oh good, we’re starting with the easy stuff! Okay, fine, but we are definitely going to need more wine.”

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“I met Rachel at a New Year’s Eve Party, at Dick’s, during my final year at Hearst. We traded some witty banter... ” he hesitated for a second, deliberately avoiding her gaze as he spoke the next part. “She was a smart girl. Sassy, petite blonde. Totally my type. She reminded me so much of you, well, at first anyway.”

He waved his hand through the air, trying to gloss over what he had just said, but Veronica understood. She had dated a Logan look-a-like at Stanford too.

“We spent the night flirting, and drinking together, and of course, we ended up in bed. I don’t remember much of it; just that I woke up the next morning alone, with the hangover from hell, and I honestly never thought about her again until she showed up at Dick’s in August, eight months later, looking for me.”

“At first, Dick didn’t want to tell her anything about me. All she could remember was my first name, and obviously, Dick could see her belly, which scared the crap out of him, and he thought he was having my back by trying to send her away, but she had come back for a reason, and she wasn’t going anywhere, so he called me.”

“I had signed up for the Navy in June of that year, so I was away at the base doing my aviation training. I was still within my cooling off period, so they discharged me without an issue. It’s a shame really, I think I would have really enjoyed that kind of career.”

“So yeah, I came home that weekend to see her and I never went back. She was nothing like the girl I met at that party. When she found out she was pregnant, she had started drinking and using drugs in the hopes that it would abort the baby. Her family was strictly religious, she knew she couldn’t get an abortion, so basically, she tried to do it herself. She was gaunt, her cheeks hollow, her eyes shadowy. Practically a walking skeleton with a baby bump. I got a paternity test done, and it came back that I was the father, so I had to try to help her.”

“By the time she sought me out, Rachel was badly addicted to the shit. When Lexi was born she had to spend a month in hospital, detoxing from it. God, she was so tiny, Veronica. I didn’t think she was going to make it.”

“She had heart problems, she needed surgery to fix two holes in her heart, and her doctors are now saying that they think the drugs have affected her brain too. They want to test her for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, and Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome. They’ve done scans, and they are concerned about the growth and development of her brain. It’s referred to as an ‘Organic Brain Injury’.”

He sighed, shaking his head, and when he lifted his gaze to meet her eyes again, Veronica could see they were wet with tears.

“But I’m getting ahead of myself. When Lexi was born, the hospital called Child Services and reported that she had been born with a drug dependency. Child services investigated us, and ruled that Rachel was incapable of caring for her. They wanted to remove her and put her in foster care. I
couldn’t lose her, Veronica. I told them the story, and insisted on being drug tested to prove my case. Of course I came back clean, and Dick corroborated my story, so the courts awarded me sole custody of her and court ordered Rachel to go to rehab. I knew she tried to clean herself up, but I didn’t keep in contact with her. I did try to keep her updated on how Lexi was doing, but she really wasn’t interested, so I paid to get her into the best rehab center in California, and then I never heard from her again. I got news ten months later that she had died of an overdose.”

“Oh God, Logan. I’m sorry.”

Veronica didn’t know what else to say. She reached a hand across the table and he took it, gratefully squeezing it, then lifted it to his lips to kiss her knuckles.

“I didn’t plan my life out like this, Veronica, but I wouldn’t give back fatherhood for anything. She has become my whole world. She has changed me so much, I’m a better person now.”

He hesitated, absent-mindedly stroking the palm of her hand with his thumb as he spoke, softer than before.

“It’s getting late, I should get her home to bed.”

He eyed her thoughtfully. He didn’t believe in coincidences, he believed that everything happened for a reason… and if Veronica Mars had been brought back into his life, there had to be a reason for it, and he wasn’t going to throw it away.

“He hesitated, absent-mindedly stroking the palm of her hand with his thumb as he spoke, softer than before.

“Do you want to come home with us? We could just talk…?”

Or not?

She met his gaze, and she could see the hunger there. The connection. The want, that even after five years of absolutely no contact, still existed. There was still a yearning there; she felt it, and she was certain he could feel it too.

She nodded, and the words were out of her mouth before she even realized she had spoken. “I’d love to”

She heard him exhale. He reached across the table and cupped her cheek in his palm. Her eyes fluttered closed, and she leaned into his hand, his fingertips tracing gentle lines through her hair.

Logan wasn’t quite sure what she was agreeing to, but whatever it was, he would take it. He gently withdrew his hand from her face and reached for his wallet, throwing some bills down on the table, then finished his glass of wine without taking his eyes off her. She followed his cue, finishing her wine too, then he scooped up his little girl in his arms, propping her against his shoulder as his other arm fell easily around Veronica’s waist, and the trio silently left the restaurant.

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His apartment wasn’t far, they drove there in silence and she watched with mild amusement as he tenderly scooped the sleeping child up out of her car seat with practiced ease, without even disturbing her sleep. Veronica leaned back against the door of his Range Rover, watching him balance the tiny child against his body, then he reached out to Veronica with his free hand and
linked his fingers through hers, gazing down into her eyes.

“Is this really happening?” He said gently, eyes twinkling. “Are you really here? I feel like I’m dreaming.”

“Well…” She drawled. “If this were a dream, would you still be a ‘soccer-mom’ driving a Range Rover?”

He laughed aloud, and it dawned on her how long it had been since she had heard that sound, and she acted on impulse, before she could overthink it. Leaning forward quickly, and balancing up on her tippy toes, she kissed him gently, chastely, just a soft peck on the lips.

In that instance everything shifted. It was enough to light the fire between them, and to reassure him that they were on the same page, and he growled low and deep in his throat as he returned her tentative kiss. Deepening it. Giving it substance.

And whether either of them actually realized it at the time or not, it was also making a promise.

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Logan handed her the keys, and she unlocked the door, letting him pass by first. He gestured around the spacious room with his free hand, “Make yourself at home”, and then disappeared down the hallway to put Lexi to bed.

Veronica found the kitchen, and quickly located another bottle of red wine for them to share. When Logan returned, she had poured them both a glass and nestled herself in to the throw rugs on his couch, in front of his now roaring fireplace, and she was channel surfing while snacking on Pringles. He plopped down beside her with a grin, stealing a chip out of her hand.

“So, tell me, Veronica Mars. How’s life?”

She smiled coyly, gazing down at her wine. “Actually, it’s pretty good. I moved to New York a few months ago, and I’m now working as a paralegal secretary to pay the bills while I put myself through law school. I graduated from Stanford in June.”

“Magna cum Laude, I know. I’ve been keeping tabs on you.”

They chatted easily, effortlessly, for a while, gradually loosening up towards each other as the wine helped them both relax. Logan’s hand rested casually on her thigh, and she kept reaching out to playfully swat him on the arm at some quick joke or mildly self-deprecating remark. He told her tales of Dick’s shenanigans, and that he had taken over a few of his Dad’s real estate ventures in the older Casablancas’s absence, but surprisingly, Dick was actually managing to successfully run the business above board, completely legit, and had even given Logan the opportunity to buy into a few sound investment properties, allowing him to live off the income and the interest while still being at home, raising his daughter.

“It sounds like even Dick has grown up. Wow, bizarro world!” Veronica sounded melancholy, morose.
Logan laughed softly. “I won’t tell him you said that. A college girl told him he was balding the other day and he’s still crying about it.”

A short burst of laughter escaped her at that, but her face fell and her eyes went dark, and she continued sadly. “And meanwhile, I didn’t even know you had a daughter.”

Logan gave her a sheepish grin. “I was sure that your dad would have told you.”

“Wait, my dad knows? When did you see my dad?”

“A few times, over the years. He’s the only decent parental figure I ever knew, I call him on the odd occasion, whenever I need parenting advice. He and Alicia even babysat her for me once, about a year ago, when I had to deal with a Dick related emergency. He seriously never mentioned it?”

She shook her head, knowing damn well why her Dad had never said anything to her about Logan Echolls, but not wanting to admit that to him. Instead, she wordlessly drained her wine glass, then waved it back through the air in front of him. “Got any more?”

He regarded her carefully, and slid his hand slowly up her neck to cup her cheek, and brushed a tendril of hair back behind her ear. “Do we need any more?”

He shifted his body so that he was laying down more, his body reclined behind hers on the couch, and she turned herself so she could retain eye contact with him as he continued.

“I’ve had enough. I don’t want to risk forgetting a single moment of this time spent with you.”

His voice had gotten husky and low, and the wine had given her a nice, relaxed buzz, but still Veronica hesitated. This was all moving so fast, and it felt great, and he was still her Logan, and clearly there were still feelings there; on both sides, but did she really want to jump back into this with him?

Yes

She leveled a serious stare at him. “Well, if we’re going to keep talking, I think I need more to drink…”

He slid his hand gently down her arm then across her stomach, pulling her back against him. She could feel his warm breath on the back of her neck as his fingers explored the bare skin just under the hem of her shirt, circling her belly button. Her breath hitched and she felt herself shiver at his touch.

“What if we were done talking?”

She felt his lips press against her jawbone, his breath hot, and he pressed a few soft chaste kisses against her neck. She moaned lightly, turning her head a little away from him to give him better access. His fingers travelled slowly upward across her ribcage, until the warmth of his hand was gently cupping her left breast, his fingers teasing the nipple just as she felt the tip of his tongue on her earlobe.

She turned in his arms, quickly capturing his mouth in an electrifying kiss. He moaned against her lips and pulled her tighter into his arms as he tasted her mouth and surrendered to being lost in the feel of her, all over again.

Her hand came up between them, resting on his chest, and pushed back on him just enough to be
able to come up for air.

“Is this a good idea?” She whispered against his open mouth.

He nodded emphatically, making her smile.

“I think it’s the best idea we’ve ever had.”

She grinned at that, agreeing with the sentiment, and let her fingers drift down below the waistband of his pants to take his hot, hard length into her hand, wrapping her fingers around it firmly.

“Oh Shit…” he moaned against her mouth, throwing his head back.

She shook her head, not caring about anything but kissing him. “I’m on birth control, it’s fine.”

He hesitated. “Are you, have you… “

“I’m clean Logan, I promise.”

“Me too.” He whispered against her lips, before claiming them softly again with his own.

“Let’s go to bed.”

She nodded, and slid off the couch away from him, but she could feel him following close behind her. His fingers lightly gripped her shoulder as he steered her toward the short hall, but they didn’t make it far before he reached for her again with both arms, pulling her tight against him. One arm braced behind her back, the other tangled in her hair as he lifted her against the wall, their mouths teasing and tasting each other. He pressed into her with his hips, and she let him support her bodyweight as she lifted her legs to wrap around his waist, feeling him hard against her, just a few thin layers of material between them. He lifted her sweater up and slid it off her body, leaving her before him in just a lacy, red bra.

“Fuck Veronica, you are so beautiful.”

His hand, tangled in her hair, slid down her neck and cupped the swell of her breast, gently pinching the nipple through the sheer red lace, and she gasped into his open mouth. He pressed his hips forward again, letting her feel the effect she was having on him, and she groaned again.

“Logan, fuck me.”

He growled low in his throat.

“I’m going to do a lot more than that.”

Reaching between their bodies, she grabbed the hem of his shirt and pulled it up, over his head. His lean, muscular, surfer’s body had matured since she last saw him shirtless… he was still beautifully tanned but the muscles were thicker, more developed, and she leaned in to lick a line up over one of his gorgeous pecs to his collarbone, then closed her lips around the bony ridge and bit down on it, hard.

Logan sucked in a hissing breath, meeting her sparkling eyes with shocked mirth.
“Fuck, Bobcat.  You haven’t changed.  Jeezus, don’t ever change.”

He pulled at the waistband of her pants, trying to rid her as quickly as possible of the pesky material, and she dropped her legs back down briefly to help him pull them down, and then did the same to his. When she lifted her legs again, she felt him hard against her wet skin, finally no more barriers between them.

He thrust against her, sliding against her wet folds, spreading her dampness between them, and Veronica hissed his name between clenched teeth as the head of his cock rubbed against her clitoris.

His hand slid back up her body and into her hair again, then formed a fist and pulled back hard on a thick tangle of her long, golden hair as he thrust up into her, sliding deep inside her body. They both gasped in unison at the feeling, and Veronica kept her head thrown back, letting her body adjust to the size of him, waiting for him to start moving inside her… except he didn’t. He just held still.

Her eyes fluttered open and she peered down at him, realizing what he was waiting for. Remembering. She locked her eyes on his, slightly surprised at the intensity of his gaze, and then, keeping their eyes locked, she lowered her mouth to his for a sweet, deep kiss.

The hair pulling was her thing. The eye contact was his.

He shuddered as he pulled most of the way out of her, then watched her eyes darken and glaze over as he slowly slid back inside her, loving the way her muscles tightened around him. She groaned, long and deep, and deep in her throat. He set a steady rhythm, pulling out slow, pushing back in deep and hard and she quickly began to quiver against him, her thighs trembling, her breath coming in ragged pants and groans and soft cries of his name and God’s. Logan reached between them, pinching her clitoris between his fingers as he rocked into her, and he could feel her build, and spasm, and shake, until she shattered and came apart in his arms. He could feel her flooding warm and he felt his spine stiffen as he came deep inside her, her muscles contracting and pulsating and milking every last drop from his cock.

As his breath caught in his throat, he felt her lips close over his, sucking them, teasing them open, and then she was kissing him, deep and intense and passionate. He opened his eyes and there she was, already staring at his face, her beautiful blue eyes liquid, literal windows to her soul, and he couldn’t bear the emotion in them. She was everything.

They stood that way for a while longer… time stood still for them as they kept kissing and tasting each other, stroking sweaty skin, her hair tangling and catching between them. When Logan trusted that his legs could support them both again, he lifted her off the wall and walked, still semi hard inside her, into his bedroom, only reluctantly pulling out of her so he could lay her gently down on the bed.

Veronica reached up for him, not ready to break their contact, and pulled him down beside her. He settled in, laying half on his back as he slid his arm under and around her, holding her close against his chest. She sighed and nestled in with her head on his chest, tracing lazy circles across his sweaty skin.

She glanced up at his face to see that he was smiling.

“What?”

He met her eyes, that familiar twinkle present in his. “What what?” He asked playfully.
She grinned back. “You’re smiling.”

He leaned in and kissed her forehead. “Why wouldn’t I be smiling? I’ve got everything I ever wanted, right here.”

Veronica felt her chest tighten, just a little, but was saved from having to form a reply by the sound of tiny footsteps running up the hallway.

“Daddyyyyy” came a small, distressed voice.

Logan moved quickly to cover them both with the quilt, then turned toward the door, shielding Veronica from view with his own body. He reached under the covers for the sheet, wrapping it firmly around his waist just as Lexi came running into view, clutching Woof, and climbed straight up onto Logan’s side of the bed. Logan settled her in, tucking the quilt around her body and snuggling in behind her.

“Go back to sleep, baby. Daddy’s got you.”

Veronica could see through the gap under his arm that she was happy to comply, her eyes had already closed again and her thumb was firmly between her lips. Logan still had his back to her, and Veronica suddenly felt very, very out of place and awkward.

*What the hell are you doing here, Veronica?*

She leaned up and whispered very softly, in his ear.

“Hey. Do you mind if I jump in the shower? I’m all sticky.”

He turned slightly, and slid his hand across her thigh.

“Of course. As soon as she’s asleep, I’ll join you.”

She nodded, kissed the back of his shoulder, and quietly slipped out of the bed and into the bathroom.

The stinging heat of the scalding hot water raining needles down upon her skin suddenly sobered her up completely, and she could feel tears pricking her eyes.


*Logan is a father now. This isn’t just about you and him anymore.*

If she gets back together with Logan, the three of them will be a family.

*Do you want to be a mom, Veronica?*

She actually physically shuddered at the thought.

*No. I don’t... not at this point in my life, anyway. I’m certain of that.*

And what if it doesn’t work out, again. Walking away was hard enough last time, could she do it again if it also meant hurting a little girl?

The answer was simple.

No.
Veronica shut off the water and stepped out, wrapping a thick, plush towel around her body. She tiptoed back out into the room, past Logan, quietly picking up her clothing as she went down the hall, and dried and dressed herself once she had gotten to the kitchen. She was shaking, but it certainly wasn’t from the cold.

She started to make herself a cup of tea, then paused, hand frozen in mid air as she considered her options. She could sit here and wait for Logan to come find her, and she could tell him of her fears and her doubts about them getting back together, and they would probably fight. At the very least, he would be hurt…

Or she could just go. This whole night had happened so fast, and it was just so easy to fall back into … whatever this was … with Logan, but she needed time to process it.

She needed to sleep on it, before she could talk to him about it... about what this was going to mean for them. There was no point hurting him with her doubts now, and ruining their beautiful night together.

You're being a coward, Veronica.

She shrugged at her own thought. Yeah, maybe she was, but she still thought this was the best way to handle this. Her decision made, she quickly jotted a note to him on a piece of paper and left it on the kitchen island, then gathered her belongings and slipped silently out the front door.

Logan emerged ten minutes later to find her gone, her hastily scrawled note weighted down by an empty wine glass.

'Big day tomorrow, I needed sleep. Call me in the morning. xx V.'

He smiled as he read over it, then returned to his bed, switching off lights along the way. He wrapped an arm loosely over Lexi’s sleeping form as he tucked himself in behind her, and drifted off to sleep.

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