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ELEVATOR GIRL

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CAST: 1F, 2M

VANESSA: 20s, Peter's girlfriend, an editorial assistant

RICHARD: 20s, an editorial assistant

PETER: 20s, Vanessa's boyfriend, Richard's roommate, an animation artist

SYNOPSIS: Elevator Girl was never meant to be more than an urban legend, a sexual revenge fantasy created by Vanessa and her graphic illustrator boyfriend. But when the comic superhero unleashes her boyfriend's darkest fantasies, as well as a flesh-and-blood copycat, Vanessa must stop EG in her tracks—with the truth.

SET NOTES: The elevator is central to the set, and always visible. It would be great if the elevator could be on wheels and move forward when it is the center of the action. Sometimes action is set inside the elevator; scrim doors would work, as might another creative solution that would allow them to be transparent when necessary.

Using the elevator as a central frame, there are many ways that the stage could mimic a comic strip, and that's encouraged, as are close-up projections that would enhance the story, e.g. of Vanessa's note, or, later, her tattoo. I urge as much merging of a graphic world with a realistic one as designers envision.

At times, stage directions call for a shadowy figure to be seen by the elevator; this should be done with light and shadow, or projection, and not an additional actor.

DIALOGUE NOTE:

// indicates overlapping speech.

Dialogue in brackets [] is an unspoken reaction

... indicates a beat

Scene 1: Elevator

Scene 2: Richard and Peter's apartment

Scene 3: Vanessa's office at *Online Guidepost*

Scene 4: Richard and Peter's apartment

Scene 5: Richard and Peter's apartment

Scene 6: Richard and Peter's apartment/Vanessa's office

Scene 7: Vanessa's office

Scene 8: Elevator

Scene 9: Elevator

Scene 10: Richard and Peter's apartment

Scene 11: Elevator/Richard and Peter's apartment

Scene 12: Elevator

SCENE 1

AN ELEVATOR. A SCENE. IMAGES AND SOUNDS, NOT CONCRETE.
GRAPHIC PANEL PROJECTIONS SHOW CAPTAIN UNAWARES, IN HIS
YELLOW CAPE. THOUGHT BALLOON: "HE GOT AWAY... AGAIN."

A series of sounds and images intended to set the mood/scene of the show: A generic man (Richard actor, but disguised so that nobody will later identify him as such and get confused) approaches the elevator, presses button. Door opens, he steps in. As doors close, there is a big WHOOSH!, a flash of color, something mythic. Whirring sounds as the elevator operates; the sound stops. After a beat, it is replaced with sex sounds, ambiguous, and distinctly male-focused. What exactly is going on in there?

Blackout.

SCENE 2

FULL LIGHTS UP ON PETER AND RICHARD'S APARTMENT.

Elevator doors open; VANESSA steps out.
Elevator doors close. PETER sits,
drawing with a sketchpad. VANESSA
enters, hangs her winter coat, which is
a wool cape.

PETER
One S or two in "possessed"?

VANESSA
Four. Two and two.

VANESSA kisses Peter, stands for a
moment, engaging with her phone.

PETER
I thought it was one and two.

VANESSA
Obsessed is one and two.

PETER
Ah.

VANESSA
(tries to look at Peter's work)
What's Captain Unawares up to today?

PETER pulls his work away.

PETER
It's not Captain Unawares.

VANESSA
What? What is it?

PETER
I don't know yet.

VANESSA
Why can't I see?

PETER
It's kind of-- I don't know if it's any good. It's not any
good.

VANESSA
Of course it's good. And if you let me see--

PETER
Come on, 'Ness. I'm just not ready yet.

VANESSA
[Fine.] What happened to Captain Unawares?

PETER
(shrugs)
People are getting tired of him being... unaware. It's maybe time to kill him off.

VANESSA
No! I kinda like him.

PETER
Kinda. See?
(wagging a finger, imitating his editor)
"You can't save the world if you're clueless, Peter. Foibles don't make good fantasy, Peter."

VANESSA
What do bosses know?

PETER
'Ness, please, start sending out resumes.

VANESSA
I'm going to!

PETER
Good! It's about--

VANESSA
Once Howard realizes how valuable I am.

PETER
You are.

VANESSA
I don't know why he even hired me if he's not going to give me any real work to do.

PETER
Look at you.

VANESSA
What is that supposed to mean?

PETER
Just-- Nothing. Richard says he--

VANESSA
What?

PETER

Nothing.

VANESSA

[Oh, I get it.] Are all men secretly pigs? When I'm not around, do you and Richard have secret pig meetings? Is that when he told you Howard hired me because he likes my knockers? Do guys still say knockers?

PETER

...

VANESSA

(beat)

Even if that had something to do with it, why can't it be both? Win-win.

PETER

Because some people are never gonna see things the way you want them to, no matter how hard you try. My first drawing teacher in college? Wouldn't give me an A. On anything. All through high school, "Peter, you have a gift!" "Peter, you're so talented!" But her? The Hyper Hex? My best-selling character to date? C-fucking-minus.

VANESSA

But I want him to see.

PETER

He's got no reason to. So my advice is still and always: quit before you give up.

VANESSA

Is that what you're doing?

PETER

Before they give up on me. I'm just a freelancer, can't even get a full-time gig. And I won't have any gig if I don't come up with someone to blow their minds.

VANESSA

Let me see what you've got.

VANESSA tries to look again; PETER holds the sketchbook tight.

VANESSA

Maybe I can help.

PETER

Probably not.

VANESSA

You're as bad as Howard. You got coffee?

PETER
Richard made some this morning.

VANESSA
It's seven-thirty.

PETER
[shrugs]

VANESSA
I'll make more.

VANESSA kisses him, grabs his
sketchpad.

PETER
Hey!

VANESSA
(looking at sketchpad, then...)
Peter, this is Captain Unawares.

PETER
No, it's--

VANESSA
It's Captain Unawares with brown hair and bigger calf
muscles.

PETER looks at the sketchpad, realizes
she's right.

PETER
I'm doomed.

VANESSA
Coffee. Then brainstorm. I do have good ideas, you know.

PETER resumes drawing. VANESSA starts
toward kitchen as RICHARD enters.

RICHARD
Why didn't you wait for me?

VANESSA
I thought you had a meeting with Howard.

RICHARD
I did, but you could have waited.

VANESSA
You know the way home, Richard.
And I don't wait on men.
Do you want coffee?

I want a beer.

RICHARD

Vanessa exits to kitchen.

Dude, I think there's a new chick in the building.

RICHARD

PETER doesn't look up.

Dude!

RICHARD

What?

PETER

I saw her Tuesday, and she was just in the elevator again now. She gets off on seven. I have to find out who she is.

RICHARD

VANESSA enters, hands Richard a beer.

Who?

VANESSA

Some hot new resident.

PETER

Are you ever going to settle down, Dicky?

VANESSA

When you dump this guy and run away with me.

RICHARD

Keep dreaming, dude.

PETER

What happened to Suzanne?

VANESSA

She keeps icing me.

RICHARD

Seriously? You've been patient.

PETER

Pause. You've been out with her how many times?

VANESSA

This was like their seventh date 'Ness.

PETER

RICHARD nods earnestly. VANESSA shakes her head.

RICHARD
Last night, we were goin' at--

RICHARD looks at Vanessa.

VANESSA
Oh don't stop now.

RICHARD
I thought we were proceeding nicely, and then like "Whoa!"
She slams the brakes. Yes to no on a dime/

PETER
/Not cool/

RICHARD
/And says she has to get ready for work.

VANESSA
Nerves?

PETER
Seven dates, Vanessa.

RICHARD
And gives me the old heave-ho. Like literally shoved me out
the door.

VANESSA
Maybe you were rushing her.

RICHARD
She had at least an hour.

VANESSA
...

PETER
Then why invite him up?

VANESSA
Oh, I don't know. Coffee? Conversation?

RICHARD
Whatever. So when do you think that fine thing moved in?

VANESSA
Maybe she's just visiting her new boyfriend.

RICHARD
Uh-uh. We made eye contact.

PETER
Nobody makes eye contact in an elevator.

PETER goes back to his work.

RICHARD
That's what I'm talkin' about. If we'd had a little longer--

VANESSA
What, Richard? She'd have found you so irresistible, she'd have jumped you right then and there?

RICHARD
That's not so far out.

VANESSA
And that would have been a good thing? To be attacked in an elevator?

RICHARD
I just mean-- Come on, Van-- So what'ya workin' on there, Pete?

VANESSA exits to kitchen, a little peeved.

PETER
What was that about?

RICHARD
I-don't-know-so-what-is-that-there?

PETER
I need a new character.

RICHARD
Do you really think she was visiting a boyfriend?

PETER
Something that's never been done before. Mind-blowing.

RICHARD
'Cause I think we had a meaningful exchange.

PETER
The problem is that everything's been done before.

RICHARD
I mean if I had a woman--

PETER
You think it should be a woman?

VANESSA enters, hands a cup of coffee to Peter, beer to Richard.

VANESSA
Who should be a woman?

PETER
Richard thinks my next comic character should be a woman.

RICHARD
I didn't say that.

VANESSA
Why not a woman?

PETER
There's already a ton of women in comics, 'Ness.

VANESSA
Peter, aren't you listening? There's none like Richard wants.
No woman who stalks elevators and grants sexual favors.

RICHARD
I didn't say that--

VANESSA
A female superhero who's not just blowing minds but--

PETER
That's not really any kind of superhero.

VANESSA
Put a mask on her.

RICHARD
That's kinda hot.

PETER
It takes more than a mask to-- She needs a super power.

VANESSA
Being Turbo Deep Throat isn't enough?

RICHARD
Van, come on. This doesn't need to go any further.

PETER picks up his sketchpad, starts
drawing.

VANESSA
Why not? I'm onto something.

RICHARD
But what are you trying to--

VANESSA silences him with her hand, a
look.

PETER

(drawing)

Can she fly? Is she a super swallower?/

VANESSA

/What does that mean?/

PETER

/Can she disappear into thin air? Where does she go when she's finished? Can she read minds? Turn water to wine? Bake great cakes?

VANESSA

(beat)

Yes.

PETER

Cheesecake? I love cheesecake.

VANESSA

She can read minds. She knows... She knows when a guy... is about to do something bad. To a woman.

PETER

And she heads him off at the pass?

VANESSA

Right. She makes a sacrifice that renders him incapable of executing the act of violence.

RICHARD

What if he's got quick turnaround? And an hour later--

VANESSA

That's part of the power. He can't. Maybe for months. Years.

PETER

Years?

VANESSA

Yeah... So he knows how she feels. Maybe... maybe she was...attacked herself.

RICHARD

Van--

PETER

It's dark... like Batman.

VANESSA

Batman was not defiled.

PETER

No, but his parents were killed in a random robbery, and then he turned on all criminals. So she's using her powers for good.

VANESSA

Yeah... I mean it's not curing cancer.

PETER

Superheroes never try to cure cancer. |
But curing sexually frustrated men in elevators--

VANESSA

Not sexually frustrated. Violent. Violent men who need to fear women. Make them afraid.

PETER

Afraid?

VANESSA

By giving them a taste of their own medicine. You know, so they don't want to do it again.

PETER

Like turning the tables? That's good, 'Ness.

VANESSA

Really, you like my idea?

PETER starts sketching rapidly.

PETER

So ludicrous it just might--

RICHARD

I don't know--

VANESSA

(to Richard)

Just because Howard never thinks I have a good idea doesn't mean I don't. He isn't the--

RICHARD

But I don't know if I get it.
Wouldn't they--
I mean, wouldn't the guys like it?

VANESSA

Not if Peter does it right.

RICHARD

But it seems--

VANESSA

It's fiction.

PETER

It's never been done before.

RICHARD

There's probably a reason for that.

PETER sketching rapidly.

PETER

Ah! I got it! She has a tattoo. An EG in a shield.

RICHARD

EG?

PETER

Watch out Urbanville. Elevator Girl

PETER turns around his sketchpad to show Richard and Vanessa. Projections show a rough sketch of Elevator Girl, who looks fairly average, but for cape and mask.

PETER

Is gonna get ya.

Lights out.

SCENE 3

OFFICES OF ONLINE GUIDEPOST.

Elevator doors open and RICHARD and VANESSA emerge.

RICHARD
It just doesn't make sense to me.

VANESSA walks to her desk; RICHARD follows.

VANESSA
How do you not understand revenge?

RICHARD
An avenger that is both fictional and surrogate isn't much up to that task.

VANESSA
Maybe it'll just make me feel better. And I get to help Peter at the same time. "Sex sells," didn't you know?

RICHARD
It's been like two years.

VANESSA
Two years and eight months. So?

RICHARD
I guess I just didn't think it was still so--

VANESSA
You think I'm going to forget? Have you forgotten?

RICHARD
Come on. No. But maybe if I weren't the only person who knew, right, you wouldn't feel the need to concoct this--

VANESSA notices and picks up a note from her desk.

VANESSA
"Vanessa--The slush pile inbox is full again. I trust your judgment in responding.--H" Why does Howard think all I can write is "Thanks but no thanks" letters?

RICHARD
Because you let them down on feathers, babe. No doesn't sound like no.

VANESSA
But it still is.

RICHARD

But that's not what they hear. So listen: you stomp on their egos a little more, right, and they won't keep coming back. And presto-chango!

VANESSA

Rejection magic.

RICHARD

Yep. You and Suzanne.

VANESSA

Poor, poor Dicky. Do you ever think about anything else?

RICHARD

Jealous?

VANESSA

...

RICHARD

It's all just a distraction while I wait for you. I mean this Peter thing has gone on--

VANESSA

Richar--

RICHARD

Kidding. Not really.

VANESSA

(holding out the note to
Richard)

Why don't you take some from me? Pretty please.

RICHARD

Oh, Van, you know I would, but I'm kinda working on a different gig.

VANESSA

What?

RICHARD

Nothing.

VANESSA

Nothing but with a byline? While I answer slush queries.

RICHARD

Howard's got this thing he wants me to look into.

VANESSA

He came to you with it?

RICHARD

Kinda, yeah.

VANESSA

I've pitched him twenty things at least.

RICHARD

He probably saw this as more... in my gender wheelhouse.

VANESSA

Great. I work in an office where there are girl stories and boy stories.

RICHARD

...

VANESSA

What is it?

RICHARD

I was thinking maybe Elevator Girl really does have potential--

VANESSA

Richard, it's not even noon! Were you on his doorstep when he woke up?

RICHARD

We were on the same elevator this morning--

VANESSA

Ironic or inspiring?

RICHARD

He thought it was kind of... sexy.

VANESSA

Not surprising. I've seen what he does with cucumbers at food shoots.

RICHARD

So he does actually think you had a good idea.

VANESSA

Does he know it was my idea?

RICHARD

He knows Peter's my roommate--

VANESSA

So I can't even write my own ideas.

RICHARD

He doesn't want just an interview. He wants Peter to let me create something interactive with the magazine.

VANESSA

A staff party where Elevator Girl jumps out of a cake?

RICHARD

Techy stuff. Like a website. A personality.

VANESSA

(looks at her watch)

From empowered superhero to objectification in less than ten hours. Amazing. That was not my idea.

RICHARD

I don't have to do it.

VANESSA

That was convincing.

RICHARD

Well...

VANESSA

No, listen. You do it. But you make Elevator Girl the bad ass bitch she's supposed to be so that guys will be so afraid of elevators they'll be crowding the stairs. Not just some 2-D bad guys, real guys.

RICHARD

An urban legend.

VANESSA

Yes! Someone to fear.

RICHARD

So real that-- Just one problem. Real guys are not out to do something bad.

VANESSA

Then where do rapists come from?

RICHARD

Not all real guys.

VANESSA

So maybe your urban legend casts a wider net, doesn't discriminate between action and thought, between a rapist and the average man who looks at a woman and thinks, "Man, I'd sure like to..." Complete the sentence.

RICHARD

I'd rather not on the grounds it might incriminate me.

VANESSA

I just want them to understand, a little, what it's like to walk alone afraid.

RICHARD

But how-- Oh! I can make a map! Like an interactive map, where people can report sightings.

VANESSA

Sightings?

RICHARD

We need a euphemism. It's a family friendly site.

VANESSA

But what sightings? There's no real Elevator Girl.

RICHARD

We'll make them up. Put a dot in this neighborhood or that one... Elevator Girl is on the move! Where will she strike next, right? Urbanville may never be safe again. Howard'll make me put a fictional disclaimer on it, but I'll make it small.

VANESSA

And guys will be worried? Scared they'll run into her?

RICHARD

We'll see, won't we.

VANESSA

But they'll be talking about it. It could really start a conversation, Dicky.

VANESSA hugs him; RICHARD melts.

RICHARD

I still think if you told him why you really thought of it, he'd let you.

VANESSA

No.

RICHARD

It might help. You could tell Peter and--

VANESSA

No.

RICHARD

But--

VANESSA

And you better not either.

RICHARD

I promised you I wouldn't. And I never will. But it's not that big--

VANESSA

Not that big?

RICHARD

You know what I mean.

VANESSA

You know how you look at me sometimes? Still? Peter can never look at me like that.

RICHARD

Is that why you'd never give me a chance? Because I looked at you some way. I'll look at you any way you want, Van.

VANESSA

Not just some way. Like I was-- Never mind.

RICHARD

Come on, Van, that's not fair. I felt-- if I ever looked at you like that, it was only because I cared about you. I love you.

VANESSA

Aw, Dicky. I love you, too, but--

RICHARD

Not like that. I know. But that night, if you'd--

VANESSA

/We're not talking about that./

RICHARD

Or if I'd been more--

VANESSA

No.

RICHARD

I'm sorry. You're still one of the most important people in my life, like one of the five I'd want on a desert island. Top two easy.

Beat.

RICHARD

I can still push for Howard to let you do it.

VANESSA

He'll ask questions. But it doesn't matter.

VANESSA grabs her cape and heads to the elevator.

VANESSA

She's still mine, Richard. And this is going to help me.
You're helping me.

A whoosh of color, followed by the shadow. Graphic projections show the website: "Have you seen Elevator Girl? Tell us all about it!", a map of Urbanville, with dots on it, if possible with a couple of dots being added as we watch.

Tweets: Is #elevatorgirl for real?

**Dudes, an elevator and a dream.
#elevatorgirl**

**I heard it's some publicity stunt.
#elevatorgirl #dreamkiller**

@realPeterNorse #elevatorgirl is HOT!!

**Whose got tips 4 finding #elevatorgirl?
I wanna go UP with her.**

#Survivors, who is #elevatorgirl?

Have fun with handles for tweeters, and numbers of likes and retweets.

Lights slowly brighten; elevator doors open. VANESSA steps out, and into Richard and Peter's apartment. Doors remain open.

SCENE 4

RICHARD AND PETER'S APARTMENT.

PETER is drawing, VANESSA engrossed in a game on her phone. Sound of destruction.

VANESSA
You've been at that for hours. Should I go home?

PETER
Nah, I like working next to you. It inspires me.

VANESSA
It's all Elevator Girl?

PETER
Yep. Got a deadline.

VANESSA
Not even a funeral for Captain Unawares?

PETER
He fell down an elevator shaft.

VANESSA
Not really.

PETER
So to speak. Come look.

VANESSA looks.

VANESSA
You're fleshing her out.

PETER
That first sketch was just rough. She's getting interesting now.

VANESSA
Interesting is not how I'd describe freak show boobs like that. Nobody has those.

PETER
Wonder Woman does.

VANESSA
Only in comics. Not Lynda Carter. Not Gal Gadot.

PETER
Have you see the muscles on Captain America?

VANESSA

Muscles are male fantasy.

PETER

They're real people. Elevator Girl can be whatever I dream up.

VANESSA

It's pretty obvious what you're dreaming. Are those stars coming out of her mouth?

PETER

She doesn't need to have limits.

VANESSA

(looking at her own smallish
chest)

How can a real woman compete with that... that biological impossibility? An obscene rack and a magical mouth?

PETER

It's nothing personal. You're perfect.

VANESSA

Nothing personal that my boyfriend is fantasizing--instead of fearing--a cartoon's oral hijinx?

PETER

You fantasize about [insert hot pop culture star].

VANESSA

At least I know what he looks like.

PETER

And this is what she looks like.

VANESSA

Did Richard tell you about the website?

PETER

Best publicity ever. A social experiment, an urban legend. What happens when guys think some hot random sex was just around the corner.

VANESSA

No! Danger around every corner. For guys with bad thoughts, not randoms.

PETER

I guess that's the experiment.

VANESSA

You don't think they'll be afraid?

PETER
I don't know. What does "Dicky" say?

VANESSA
That's ugly, Peter.

PETER
I'm sorry. I don't know where that came from.

VANESSA
Are you ever gonna let it go?

PETER
Maybe when he does.

VANESSA
He has.

PETER
If you say so.

VANESSA
We're friends. Have been friends forever.

PETER
He'd kick me to the curb if you said the word.

VANESSA
But I'm not going to. And besides, if not for him, we would have never met.

PETER
...I said I'm sorry.

VANESSA
...
You really think it's hot, not scary?

PETER
...Maybe a little.

VANESSA
You disappoint me.

PETER
What? I mean, she whooshes in--

VANESSA
Whooshes?

PETER
Capes whoosh.

VANESSA

Rape in a cape. That should be scary.

PETER

Whoa, I never said--

VANESSA

It is, isn't it?

PETER

No, it's just--

VANESSA

Right. Hot random blow jobs.

PETER

Why are you getting mad? This was your idea.

VANESSA

So what else?

PETER

What do you mean?

VANESSA

What else? What's her origin story?

PETER

I like your idea about her being a victim herself. Maybe she has a scar. Maybe she was left for dead.

VANESSA

Why so violent?

PETER

It has to be, so she has reason for wanting revenge.

VANESSA

It's not always like that.

PETER

Well, sure, but you want people to feel bad for her.

VANESSA

Yeah. Of course. So where are her headquarters? Who's her sidekick--Handjob Baby? Nipple Twister?

PETER

Threesomes! Why didn't I think of that? She needs a sidekick.

VANESSA

You need a sidekick--to the ribs.

PETER
(laughing)
You're jealous of a cartoon.

VANESSA
What if you ran into her?

PETER
That's impossible.

VANESSA
What if it wasn't? And you did?

PETER
I don't get out that much--

VANESSA
Peter Norse!

PETER
I don't know. I mean, is that a freebie? Would you let me?

VANESSA smacks him with a pillow.

PETER
For research purposes!

VANESSA smacks him again.

VANESSA
You wouldn't feel scared?

PETER
It's like a one-woman traveling bathhouse for straight guys.
There's no risk of emotional attachment. Poof! It's gone,
like it never happened. A perfect fantasy.

VANESSA
Fantasy that's better than reality.

PETER
You can't say that. That's like saying night is better than
day. They need each other.

VANESSA
Poof. Gone. No sticky residue.

PETER
A guy can dream. C'mon 'Ness. If readers have that kind of
reaction, Elevator Girl could be a breakout character for me.

VANESSA
That's not the kind of breakout character I had in mind.

PETER

Characters sometimes take on lives of their own, but I'll tell you what? If your inspiration takes off, I can write my own ticket. I'll make up a feminist superhero.

VANESSA

She was supposed to be a feminist superhero.

PETER

A real one. Serious. From...

VANESSA

Suffragette City?

PETER

Planet Cho. If any douchebag male foe looks at--worse, disparages--her completely average-sized boobs, her nipples shoot Steinemous poison darts that render him blind.

PETER demonstrates shooting the darts from a couple spots in the room.

VANESSA eventually cracks a smile.

VANESSA

Where were your Women's Studies sensibilities when you were drawing that?

PETER

She vanquishes her foe. That's what heroes do, and that's what's comforting about them.

VANESSA

Even if she's exhausted from carrying around the weight of her own boobs.

PETER

But Feminox will be average. I promise.

VANESSA

Feminox? That doesn't even sound human.

PETER

When the time comes, I grant you full name approval.

VANESSA

Do you really need to do this to sell her?

PETER

It won't hurt, 'Ness. But she's still gonna take down bad guys, okay?

VANESSA

Okay.

PETER
Really. Don't worry.

PETER kisses Vanessa; she kisses back. After a few seconds, PETER slides Vanessa's shirt over her shoulder, which VANESSA takes as invitation to further engage. After some kissing, PETER picks up his drawing pen, and starts to write on her shoulder.

VANESSA
What are you doing?! That's my scar.

PETER
Shh. Hold on.

PETER draws "EG" in a shield on Vanessa's upper arm. VANESSA twists to look at it.

VANESSA
What the fuck?! I thought you were drawing a heart with our initials or something, and you give me the Elevator Girl tattoo?

PETER
How does it feel?

VANESSA
Like you're an asshole.

PETER
Honey, relax. It's just me and you're Elevator Girl. What superpower do you have?

VANESSA
The power to eat your nuts for lunch.

PETER
Really? You feel powerful?

VANESSA
Yeah, all it takes is a Sharpie doodle and I can conquer the world one dick at a time.

PETER
Just pretend.

VANESSA
Why?

PETER
To get in her head. It was your idea. Humor me.

VANESSA

Does EG even have a boyfriend?

PETER

What do you think?

VANESSA

A male acquaintance, but they can never get too close. Because of her secret identity. If he knew, he might not understand.

PETER

But maybe he suspects. Like Lois Lane. But he's just afraid to know.

VANESSA

Why would he be afraid?

PETER

I don't know. He'd feel bad. He might look at her differently.

VANESSA pauses as Peter has just articulated her greatest fear.

VANESSA

He'd look at the fantasy differently. Because it would destroy the illusion that there's really a hot girl out there giving otherworldly no-strings blow jobs.

PETER

'Ness--

VANESSA

Maybe I admire her--a little. She's not timid. That's what you like about her, isn't it?

PETER

Honey, you're--

VANESSA

I'm Clark Kent and she's Superman. Powerful. Proactive. Brave. No shame. No glasses.

PETER

That's what makes her tick?

VANESSA

She owns it, calls the shots. She's never on the defensive. It's not that hard to get.

PETER

So who is she? Who is EG?

VANESSA

In some ways, she's every girl. Maybe you should stop trying to make her more.

PETER

But she is more. She has a superpower. And...

PETER picks up his sketchpad, flips a page, shows her.

VANESSA

Who's that scary dude?

PETER

What every superhero needs, right?

VANESSA

That's no sidekick.

PETER

It's a super villain.

VANESSA

(afraid to ask)

What's his name?

PETER

Elevator Violator.

Graphic projection is panels of Elevator Violator, perhaps in his lair, looking at the EG map, with a thought balloon, "I'll be waiting for you, Elevator Girl." Lights dim, Elevator Violator shadow slips into elevator; doors slam shut as lights go out.

SCENE 5

RICHARD AND PETER'S APARTMENT.

PETER is drawing; VANESSA enters from elevator. PETER jumps up, grabs a comic book.

PETER
Hot off the presses! Second issue! And the first is in second printing! Peter Norse has arrived!

PETER whirls Vanessa around, shows her his phone.

PETER
Hashtag elevatorgirl was actually trending today! Someone made a Facebook page! I heard there's an Elevator Girl in the Square!

VANESSA
Hey, you need to copyright her!

PETER
Ha! Where do you want to celebrate? Anywhere you want.
(kisses her fiercely)
Uptown.
(rubs his hands on her ass)
Downtown. Anywhere, anyway you want.

VANESSA
Success is an aphrodisiac.

PETER
Elevator Girl is an aphrodisiac! Everybody loves her, and I owe it all to you! Women think she's sexually empowered, but for a good cause. Guys are living out some kind of rape fantasy--

VANESSA
Rape fantasy?

PETER
Yeah. Ravishment. Being coerced. I've tapped into one of the top sexual fantasies of all time, but all in the name of preventing it. You're a genius!

VANESSA
Why would anyone fantasize about... about a violation?

PETER
Not a real one. Something...safe. No sticky residue.

VANESSA

I don't think I like that, Peter. The men she's going after. They're bad guys, rapists. She's preventing rape, not delivering fantasies. That's what you--

PETER

That's just it! In the strip

(Peter opens the magazine to show her)
they are afraid, they put up a fight--but she always wins. Score one for Elevator Girl and feminism. But in real life... it's...

VANESSA

What?

PETER

A winner, 'Ness. It really is.

VANESSA

I just want it to be--

PETER

It is. Come on. I want to celebrate with you!

VANESSA

Okay! Okay. Give me a minute.

VANESSA starts exits to bathroom, turns back.

VANESSA

I'm happy for you, Peter.

PETER beams, resumes drawing. RICHARD enters, dazed. PETER looks up.

RICHARD

Dude!

PETER

You okay?

RICHARD doesn't answer. PETER gets up, waves a hand in front of his face.

RICHARD

Duuude.

PETER

So you said.

RICHARD

She's real.

What? PETER

Elevator Girl-- RICHARD

What are you talking-- PETER

Elevator Girl! RICHARD

You saw the new issue! PETER

She's real-- RICHARD

Your website is on fire, too! I just checked, and there are whole discussions about what it would be like to encounter Elevator Girl. Your urban legend-- PETER

Just sucked my dick. RICHARD

What?! PETER

All the way to downtown Urbanville. RICHARD

In an elevator?! PETER

Her name ain't Stairwell Girl, dude. RICHARD

Come on. PETER

For real. RICHARD

So you were in our elevator-- PETER

Not our elevator. We're not that lucky. RICHARD

And some girl-- PETER

RICHARD
Not some girl. Elevator Girl--

PETER
Just because some girl decides to--/

RICHARD
/Listen!/

PETER
/that doesn't make her--/

RICHARD
/But it was!/

PETER
/Elevator Girl.

VANESSA
(entering)
Did you drop acid, Richard?

RICHARD
Vanessa. I didn't know you-- How much did you--

VANESSA
Because you're hallucinating. Or drunk?

RICHARD
(gets up to breathe in
Vanessa's face)
I'm not. And I have had a bona fide... um, encounter/

VANESSA
/Sighting/

RICHARD
With Elevator Girl.

VANESSA
That's impossible. Elevator Girl is--

RICHARD
Van, I know. I know, okay? It's improbable, admittedly. But
as suggested by recent events, not impossible.

PETER
(looking him over)
You're not kidding.

VANESSA
Of course he is. There's no way a real girl--

PETER

No. Look at him. He's got post-orgasmic malaise.

VANESSA examines RICHARD's face.

RICHARD

(pointedly, to Vanessa)

You wouldn't know what that looks like.

PETER shoots Vanessa a look.

VANESSA

What was she wearing?

PETER

Who cares?

RICHARD

I don't remember.

PETER

You better. I want to hear everything.

VANESSA

Not everything. Fabricate a brief synopsis.

RICHARD

It's no fabrication.

PETER

Then ante up the details.

RICHARD

...Um okay, so I had lunch with Suzanne--

PETER

I thought you were done with her.

RICHARD

I decided to give her another chance, and by another chance, she made it sound like she wanted--

(looks at Vanessa)

We can talk about it later.

PETER

Come on.

RICHARD

But--

VANESSA

Stop trying to protect me from your dark side, Richard.

RICHARD

...Okay. So we had lunch, and she asked me if I wanted to lay eyes on her place, and I'm thinking, this is it, right? And we're hot and heavy in the elevator going up, and when she get to her floor, she slams the brakes.

PETER

What the--

RICHARD

"I changed my mind."

VANESSA

What did you do to her?

RICHARD

Nothing! She got off and when I tried to follow, she pushed me back in. I started going down, and I was pissed.

VANESSA

You were pissed because she wouldn't sleep with you?

RICHARD

Just somewhat befuddled given the circumstances, Van. So when I got to ground, I was like "No way, man. I gotta know what's going on," and I stayed on the elevator, trying to get my head straight. I barely noticed when she got on.

PETER

Until you got off.

RICHARD

Dude.

VANESSA

Or what she was wearing.

RICHARD

But then I realized she was standing kind of close and I looked up, and woowwwwwza--this chick is smokin'.

VANESSA

Oh, smokin', was she?

PETER

Well yeah.

VANESSA

Why "well yeah"?

PETER

She's Elevator Girl.

VANESSA

A minute ago, she didn't even exist.

PETER
(flapping comic book)
She existed! And she's hot.

VANESSA
See! I told you not to--/

PETER
/Let him finish.

RICHARD
She kind of smiled at me, and I guess I smiled back, polite
right? Like you do at elevator people.

PETER
But this was Elevator Girl.

RICHARD
I didn't know that yet, and she wasn't sticking to her corner
and following proper elevator etiquette, right? So I thought
maybe she was a little mad whack so I kinda backed into my
corner.

VANESSA
You're a little mad whack. You're making this--

RICHARD
And then she slowly slides her shirt/

VANESSA
What color was it?

PETER
He doesn't know!/

RICHARD
/like down over her shoulder, right, and she's got this
tattoo.

VANESSA
Smokin' and the tattoo?

PETER
The EG in the shield?

RICHARD
Yes!

VANESSA
This has gone far enough.

PETER
Come on, 'Ness. He's almost finished.
(to Richard)
You're almost finished, right?

RICHARD
(looking at Vanessa, then back
to Peter)
Yeah. I-- And then she um, you know/

VANESSA
/Oh, I think we do./

RICHARD
/Concluded.

PETE
And how was it?

VANESSA
Peter!

RICHARD
She's right, Pete. That would be crass.
(mouths over Vanessa's head,
silently)
I'll tell you later.

Beat.

VANESSA
Somebody made her real.

RICHARD
Flesh and blood, man.

PETER
(beat)
Yeah... What color was her cape?

RICHARD
Blue?

PETER
Blonde or brunette?

RICHARD
Yeah!

VANESSA
What difference does it make?

PETER

Just filling in some details. You have to log it! A real encounter/

RICHARD

/Sighting/

PETER

/What if she strikes again? You have to make it so anybody can log a sighting! This is amazing!

RICHARD

Just in the right place at the right time.

PETER

Wow.

RICHARD

I think I want to marry her.

VANESSA arm punches him.

PETER

Hey, can you still... you know?

PETER motions toward Richard's crotch.

RICHARD

Oh!

RICHARD

(thinking hard for a sec)

VANESSA

It was a real girl!

RICHARD

(smiles)

Yeah, I'm good.

VANESSA

You're an idiot.
Did she say anything?

RICHARD

Not a word. But man, this chick had a body... and a mouth...

VANESSA

Most women do.

PETER

So aside from "smokin',"

VANESSA mouths "smokin'" sarcastically.

PETER
What else did she look like?

RICHARD
I don't know, man. She was wearin' a mask.

VANESSA
Peter, you have to stop.

PETER
The details are help--

VANESSA
I mean the comic. You can't keep--

PETER
What are you talking about? I'm gonna be set for life!
Because of you. This was all you.

VANESSA
But if you can believe Richard/

RICHARD
/Hey!/

VANESSA
/there's a real Elevator Girl out there/

PETER
/I know! It's great!

VANESSA
And you can't always make sure she wins.

Lights fade and focus on the elevator.
A dark shadow moves across it. Elevator
doors open, and the shadow slips
inside. Doors close.

SCENE 6

FULL LIGHTS UP ON RICHARD AND PETER'S APARTMENT/VANESSA'S OFFICE.

Elevator doors open. VANESSA and PETER step out. VANESSA goes to her desk; PETER enters his apartment, where RICHARD is playing a video game.

RICHARD

Double jump!

PETER

Ah! Good one!

RICHARD

Love me some Taki.

PETER

EG's hotter than her, right?

RICHARD

We have any beer left?

PETER

You didn't check?

RICHARD

Couldn't find a good place to pause.

PETER

What if you have to pee?

RICHARD

I don't.

PETER

[You win.]

PETER exits to get beer. RICHARD continues playing.

VANESSA

(typing)

"Dear Mr. Omni: We recognize how difficult it is to send your work out into the world and face potential rejection, and we are honored that you chose to share it with us. We think your writing shows great promise, but this piece isn't a good match for The Online Guidepost at this time. Please don't see this as a closed door. We encourage you to keep writing, and keep us in mind for your future projects." Send. Delete. Next.

PETER re-enters with beer, hands one to RICHARD, who doesn't miss a beat. They open beers. VANESSA continues to read, mouth the same words, and delete.

RICHARD

Van says to tell you--

PETER

She's working late again. I know. She texted.

RICHARD

She thinks if she can get to the point where there's no slush pile/

PETER

/Howard will give her something more important to do./

RICHARD

/Howard will give her an assignment.

PETER

Won't he? That game almost over?

RICHARD

In a minute. She should be writing the Elevator Girl stories.

PETER

Why?

RICHARD

It was her idea.

PETER

It's better coming from a dude.

RICHARD

(beat, finishes game)

Done! She struck again.

PETER

Vanessa?

PETER grabs another control, and they seamlessly begin to play. [!] indicates a reaction to game play.

RICHARD

Elevator Girl. I set it up on the site like you said. Real people can log encounters.

PETER

I thought it was sightings.

RICHARD

Right. There's been four. [!] Numero quattro was last night in the building right next to our office. I was that close.

PETER

Except you never work late, and you'd have no reason to be in that building. [!]

RICHARD

Details. I should have sensed her. [!!] We have a bond.

PETER

A bond she's also shared with three other guys now?

RICHARD

Watch what you're implying about my girlfriend. [!]

PETER

She's a fantasy, Richard.

RICHARD

Uh-uh. Look.

RICHARD pauses game, calls up site on his phone.

RICHARD

There it is. Four dots on the map. She's really out there.

PETER

Did it never occur to you that guys could be making this up, just like I'm making it up?

RICHARD

No, because I didn't make it up.

PETER

It's just us...

RICHARD

May I never have sex again if I'm lying about this. She is out there.

PETER

Dude, the bigger she gets, the bigger I get. Ubiquitous Comix called me this week.

RICHARD

Ubiquitous? You gonna jump?

PETER

They said Elevator Girl is Ubiquitous. And nobody else has offered me a contract yet, so. I'm just gonna meet with them, show 'em what I got.

PETER grabs his sketchpad, shows
Richard.

RICHARD
(looking)
Did her boobs get bigger?

PETER
Just a little.

RICHARD
Taki's got nothing on her, dude.

PETER raises his beer.

PETER
To Elevator Girl.

RICHARD raises his beer. Clink.

Over next section, VANESSA finishes up at her desk, get ups, looks in the office mirror. Over the next lines, she does things that clearly show she is imagining herself as Elevator Girl: pushing her breasts together, putting "Batman" fingers over her eyes like a mask, adopting a sultry pose, lastly donning her cape and whooshing it around, then throwing it over her shoulders. Maybe she enacts a pretend elevator scene where she is in control. There should be enough so that nobody in the audience misses what she is doing. This fantasy is powerful and empowering, much different from the one her male friends are about to spin...

PETER
Vanessa thinks she's not realistic.

RICHARD
So? Who has fantasies about Average Girl?

PETER
I kinda promised 'Ness an average girl hero. If Elevator Girl takes off. If this keeps up... A promise is a promise.

RICHARD
If this keeps up, fans'll demand sequels, right? You can avoid that bridge all day. Let me see the Violator panels.

PETER
I haven't started them yet.

RICHARD

Dude, you promised! Elevator Girl becomes Violator Vanquisher, the ultimate revenge. What are you waiting for?

PETER

I need to reveal EG's weakness, and I don't know what it is yet. Diamonds? Elevator buttons?

RICHARD

No way. Everybody loves elevator buttons.

PETER

Which would make it hard for her to resist them.

RICHARD

And also impossible to ride an elevator.

PETER

[Good point]

RICHARD

Fire alarms? Pocket protectors? Briefcases?

PETER

Something more... No less... Less obvious.

RICHARD

Like scars? Or... buildings with a thirteenth floor?

PETER

No, I got it.
Ready?
She likes it.

RICHARD

Likes it?

PETER

Yeah, like some gay guys, right? They don't expect anything in return. That has given me pause more than once.

RICHARD

They really don't?

PETER

I don't get it either, but okay, Ness wants EG to use her vacuum powers for good, like it's a sacrifice, but what if it's like the rape fantasy in reverse? What if she likes it? She's like Elevator Violator, except she's doing the right thing, but it's also the wrong thing, you know?

RICHARD

Is that possible?

PETER

Sure! If he likes it, why doesn't she? Sexual liberation. Isn't that what women want?

RICHARD

I don't think that's what Van-- I mean if EG--

PETER

No. No! She suppresses it. It's her secret struggle, because if the guys knew--

RICHARD

Disaster. Oh man! She's like the Flash, right? Her own power can also be her destruction. But if it's a secret, how can anybody use it against her?

PETER

She's new, so it's the discovery. For her, the Violator, the readers. Now she has inner conflict, and that's an epic showdown. An unsuspecting EG follows EV into the elevator... And the doors close.

Simultaneously, as he says this, VANESSA gets into the elevator and the doors close.

RICHARD

And then what?

PETER grabs his sketchpad, ready to draw. Throughout, he makes quick sketches furiously. This scene moves quickly as the ideas come almost faster than PETER and RICHARD can spit them out, so fast they have no idea what they're concocting. Even when they pause, it's ever so brief, because if they thought too long about it, they might check themselves, and what we want is pure fantasy spilling out in all its unfiltered honesty, not guys being deliberate douchebags.

PETER

He figures out her weakness.

RICHARD

Huh? Oh. Oh! I get it.

PETER

So she moves in...

RICHARD

...and does her tattoo reveal, and he smiles at her...

PETER

...and she knows something's weird because he doesn't even seem surprised...

RICHARD

...because he's been waiting for this--

PETER

But wait--

(flips a page back on his pad,
holds it up)

Look at him. That's not a guy she's gonna want to approach.

RICHARD

Yeah... But, but, but but, butbutbut--

PETER

Spit it out.

RICHARD

He can morph! Like that's always how he gets her, because he's Mr. Suavo Debonair, right? Nobody would ever suspect, because he seems like such an upright dude in like a designer suit. And never looks the same way twice/

PETER

/so she never knows if it could be him.

RICHARD

Yeah, yeah, so at some point in every encounter, he's like "We meet again Elevator Girl"/

PETER

/and she never figures it out because there's some kind of chemistry/

RICHARD

/like Batman and Cat Woman.

PETER

This is great, this is great, but we're getting ahead. So now he's good-looking. And she shows him the tattoo, and he smiles...

RICHARD

...and she reaches for his belt, but he grabs her hand, and she's confused/

PETER

/because nobody ever stops her/

RICHARD

Right? And he yanks her to her feet, and he says, he says...

PETER
"Allow me."

RICHARD
Dude, so polite.

PETER
It can't be too rough.

RICHARD
So we can believe she likes it, right?

PETER
Exactly. But she needs a little reason to resist. That's where the fantasy comes in.

RICHARD
But not too much? Does he have a weapon?

PETER
His charm.

RICHARD
Ah.

PETER
So maybe he pushes her against the wall and says, "Not this time, Elevator Girl." And she screams, but he puts a hand over her mouth, and says, "Now be a good girl." And she... she bites his hand and says "I won't go down easy."

RICHARD
That sounds rough.

PETER
Just enough. Yours didn't talk, though. Should I change that?

RICHARD
No way. You don't want anybody to think she's like handicapped and he's taking advantage.

PETER
Right.

RICHARD
Okay, so she says, "I won't go down easy!"

PETER
And he says, "But you were just about to, weren't you?"

They are on a roll. PETER is still drawing. RICHARD checks his phone, jabs at it.

RICHARD

"See, my little Elevator Girl, you are not the only one who's clever. And you're also not the only one who should have all the fun." And she screams again, and he pulls her to the floor, and puts his hands on those huge... oh man!

PETER

And by now, she's starting to get a little turned on, but she's fighting it, because she knows that this guy's bad news, right, and she wants to stop him.

RICHARD

But not really?

PETER

Not really, but nobody can ever know that.

RICHARD

Does she have any secret weapons?

PETER

Willpower?

RICHARD

But he has physical power.

PETER

He slides his hands over her body. "I know many men have experienced your... talents, Elevator Girl. It's a pity none have returned the favor."

RICHARD

He's so slimy.

PETER

But smooth. Like a good villain.

RICHARD

So you don't know who to root for.

PETER

Exactly! Sometimes you want the Joker to win. She knows what's about to happen, and she lets out a little moan. "I knew you'd come around to my way of thinking." And she realizes she's powerless, and he moves in, reaches for his buckle and/

RICHARD

/she gives him a knee in the/

PETER

(stops dead)

/No! No, no! That's so cliché.

RICHARD

But she has to fight back. She wouldn't just let him--

PETER

Unless he pushes a button that paralyzes her!

RICHARD

So she can't do anything?

PETER

Nada. And that's how she can rationalize. She was powerless.

RICHARD

Dude. But how does she get out of that? You can't let the hero lose. She needs a way out--

PETER

A rescue, but--

RICHARD

Captain Unawares!

PETER

What?

RICHARD

Elevator Girl gets rescued, and you, my ingenious comrade, resurrect Captain Unawares and make his previously weak ass a real hero.

PETER

He's not very unaware if he shows up in the nick of time.

RICHARD

You change his name, but she recognizes him. "Captain Unawares!" "Sorry, Elevator Girl, I'm Captain Hijack now."

PETER

No way. Then the Violator's going to be like, "Hi, Jack."

PETER throws a punch to knock out
Captain Hijack.

PETER

Captain... Know-It-All?

RICHARD

Captain Omniscient.

PETER

No, Captain Cognito. Italian.

RICHARD

Dude, that's Latin. So it's "Sorry Elevator Girl, I'm Captain Cognito now." Did he get radiated or something?

PETER

I'll figure it out later. No wait! He really did fall down elevator shaft. But he didn't die. He got... uh, electrocuted by the wires and it changes him. He goes from not knowing to knowing.

RICHARD

Yeah, yeah, so he shows up in--you should probably change his costume, too. To go with the new ID.

PETER

And the new powers.

RICHARD

No hero should ever wear yellow, dude. That was your biggest mistake. After naming him Captain Unawares.

PETER

I like yellow, and he was supposed to be kind of like an everyday guy.

RICHARD

That's why he didn't work. Everyday guys aren't heroes.

PETER

Purple, for courage and valor. Black tights.

RICHARD

Yeah. So he pries the elevator doors open, and drop kicks the bad guy and zaps EG/

PETER

/He zaps now?/

RICHARD

/Yeah, he's a boss. So she can move again. And while Captain Cognito helps her to her feet, Elevator Violator slips out--

PETER

"He's getting away!"

RICHARD

"Don't worry, Elevator Girl. We'll get him next time. Can I buy you a drink?"

PETER

Yes! Wait-what?

RICHARD

I don't know. Maybe they should have like a thing.

PETER

Let's just have Elevator Girl adjust her cape, and "Thank you Captain Cognito." He disappears just as quickly as he came.

RICHARD

He didn't get to come at all. That's why the drink--

PETER

...

RICHARD

Dude. Surefire hit. Epic battle. The hero wins.

PETER

Yeah. Thanks for talking me through it.

RICHARD checks his phone again, holds it up to PETER. Elevator doors open. VANESSA steps out.

RICHARD

She struck again. Right down the block dude and-- Wait.

PETER

What?

RICHARD

You ever try to get uptown from 8th, even when it's not rush hour?

PETER

Sure.

RICHARD

How long does it take?

PETER

Twenty minutes best case.

RICHARD turns his phone around for Peter to see.

RICHARD

So tell me how she did it in five. She can't fly. Not even your EG can fly.

PETER

What do you--

RICHARD

Dude, two dots! At least twenty minutes apart to travel, but sighting times only five minutes apart.

PETER

I don't--

RICHARD

Two. There are two. I should call Howard. And Vanessa.

PETER

Dude, call for pizza. I'm starving.

RICHARD reaches for his phone, VANESSA steps into the apartment with a pizza, puts it down, removes/hangs her cape.

VANESSA

Hey! What's up.

RICHARD and PETER stare at her.

VANESSA

Oh, let me guess. Is there room in your fantasies for food?

Elevator doors slam shut. VANESSA exits to kitchen.

PETER

She thinks we're obsessed.

RICHARD shrugs, opens the pizza, carries it to the office. Tweets appear on the projected screen:

Latest issue of #elevatorgirl HOTTEST. THING. EVER.

all hail #elevatorgirl, the VIOLATOR VANQUISHER!

Of course. #elevatorgirl gets rescued by a man."

@TheRealPeterNorse Violator issue best selling to date! Thanks all!";

What does this mean for the real #elevatorgirl? How long 'til some real dick villain finds her?";

What real #elevatorgirl?

@richardOGP Dude, check the map here: elevatorgirl/onlineguidepost.com"

#elevatorgirl I want to be on the map!

SCENE 7

VANESSA'S OFFICE.

RICHARD and VANESSA eat lunch at
Vanessa's desk.

RICHARD

(reading aloud)

"So while Peter Norse has tapped into the darkest corners of our sexual psyches, and made walking into an Urbanville elevator akin to buying a Lotto ticket--with odds just as long--one is still left wondering about our mysterious Elevator Girl. Why has she chosen to bestow her gifts this way? Is she merely spreading goodwill, or is she seeking something--or someone--she may never find? Her presence has excited our imaginations, warmed this cold and dreary winter, and wakened our city to possibility." So?

VANESSA

Gifts?

RICHARD

I see. Maybe "bestow her... bestow these... talents." No.
"Bestow these opportunities." That's better. Not so--

VANESSA

Juvenile?

RICHARD

Salacious. You were right. Thank you.

VANESSA

Where's your real copy?

RICHARD

This is it.

VANESSA

Richard, that's not about Peter's creation.

RICHARD

This is it.

VANESSA

Did you hear what you wrote? Where's the vigilante angle?
Instead you're salivating about a woman going around blowing
half of Urbanville--

RICHARD

Now who's exaggerating?

VANESSA

And not a word about why.

RICHARD

Because she's not preventing rape. She doesn't actually have superpowers.

VANESSA

You implied sexual prowess of a super nature.

RICHARD

I just changed it!

VANESSA

You're still glorifying it. Lotto, really? Does it occur to you that there might be men who are entering elevators with apprehension? That some men might not want this encounter, that it might be frightening? When we first talked about it, that's what you were going to try to do. Create that fear. For me.

RICHARD

That was before I ran into her.

VANESSA

And I thought you were one of the good guys. What was on your mind that night anyway, Dicky? As you headed back up to Suzanne's? Were you about to do something bad?

RICHARD

Hey, that's the cartoon's gig. This real life EG is about something else.

VANESSA

But she's copycatting. It makes sense that she wants to create fear in the same way. Some kind of revenge.

RICHARD

Or just have an excuse to act like a man. No strings attached. You wanted feminism.

VANESSA

Maybe the guys who find it disturbing just don't log in. They don't tell anyone because they're ashamed to admit they didn't want it. Maybe they have girlfriends--or boyfriends--and it's easier to just not report it or talk about it. That's possible, isn't it?

RICHARD

But not probable.

VANESSA

You're not even trying to do what we set out to do.

RICHARD

Okay, so in theory, revenge was great, right, and if a guy reads this and feels a little afraid, cooliosity.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

But the truth is that most men are going to get a little tingly at the possibilities, whether they actually want to run into her or not.

VANESSA

Maybe instead of talking about the thrill of running into her, you could talk about them with concern. Peter's EG is a fearless bad ass, but these are real girls.

RICHARD

The story has changed.

VANESSA

You're changing it! To something... I don't know.

RICHARD

Suzanne liked it.

VANESSA

You're still seeing her?

RICHARD

Yeah. Things have... improved. She just needed a little coaxing.

VANESSA

Meaning-- [Never mind.] Shit, Richard, how many other girls have you planted this seed with? Did you tell your sister? The Starbucks girl downstairs?

RICHARD

Hey, hey, now. It's not exactly first date information, so not every--

VANESSA

You slay me.

(beat)

Suzanne liked it?

RICHARD

She said it's lickety-Split.

VANESSA

...

RICHARD

I thought that was clever.

VANESSA

...

RICHARD

And nobody gets hurt. She even thought it might be a kick if we pretended--

VANESSA

She could get hurt! Any one of her. She's putting herself at risk every time she approaches one of these guys. They're strangers.

RICHARD

That's what's exciting!

VANESSA

Exciting? What if there's a Violator copycat, and you've just set a rapist loose? You have a real story here, Richard. Why? Why are they doing this? Are they victims? Tell the story. Speculate on what might make a girl do this. What might make more than one girl do this.

RICHARD

It was your idea.
So you tell me, Van.
The truth.

VANESSA

If you were a real reporter, instead of taking the freebie, you might have asked. You had her right there, but you didn't want to know anything about her, because there goes your story.

RICHARD

I'm doing her--them--a favor. I'm making them larger than life, instead of demonizing them as a peripatetic sex objects who like getting off with randos in elevators.

VANESSA

You think they're getting off on this?

RICHARD

Why else would they do it?! Ya gotta admit, elevator sex is as hot as airplane sex, but with way more room to maneuver. Why do you think the newsstands can't keep Violator on the shelves? People like it.

VANESSA

You should be having this conversation with Howard.

RICHARD

You can't deny that it's selling.

VANESSA

(seething)

...You believe me, don't you, Richard? I still have a scar from where he clawed my arm.

Richard
Sure.

Vanessa
Richard?

Richard
One has nothing to do with the other.

Vanessa
Richard.

Richard
You were mad at me.

Vanessa
It wasn't mad.

Richard
And maybe you just wanted to fuck Jack instead of me.

Vanessa
What?

Richard
It's not like he was a stranger.

Vanessa
He--

Richard
You never had any problem with him before. You even used to say if he and Karen ever broke up--

Vanessa
That doesn't mean I asked him to--

Richard
He didn't have a weapon, Van. He's just a regular guy.

Vanessa
Being twice my size is a weapon.

Richard
You were really drunk.

Vanessa
You are not even suggesting--

Richard
I'm just saying, maybe he didn't under--

Vanessa
I said no.

RICHARD

But maybe he didn't hear no. You're not the best at--

VANESSA

Have you been pretending to believe me all this time?

RICHARD

I thought if I was supportive, but it's been a long time/

VANESSA

/Three years, one month/

RICHARD

And then you started dating Peter. For all that time, I've been waiting for my chance, being a good friend, waiting for you to get over--

VANESSA

Over?

RICHARD

And then Pete was telling me about all this rape fantasy stuff/

VANESSA

/Rape fantasy--/

RICHARD

/how girls like thinking about gentle... coercion where they won't really get hurt--

VANESSA

Peter said that?

RICHARD

The tip o' the iceberg, Van. He's not the hero you thought he was, is he? So I started to put two and two together--

VANESSA

Two and-- oh my god, Dick--Of all the delusional-- This is-- This--

RICHARD

Would you admit if it was true? Would you tell me if you were turned on, even a little?

VANESSA

Shut up.

RICHARD

Or would you then have to admit that it was a way to keep me around without being bothered by my feelings?

VANESSA

Fuck off.

RICHARD

Why didn't you ever get counseling Vanessa? Why won't you tell Peter? If it was the real deal, why won't you deal with it?

VANESSA

What would you know about dealing with it? You were assaulted in an elevator and you're still savoring every detail!

RICHARD

I was not assaulted--

VANESSA

You've made it clear that you don't know the difference!

RICHARD

Then maybe neither of us do!

RICHARD exits to his office. VANESSA regroupes, and has a thought. She checks her computer. Graphics show that she is looking at the EG website, trying to put together a pattern.

Tweets: Vanessa0GP: #elevatorgirl How do I join you?

Vanessa0GP: EG4EVA followed you

EG4EVA: Vanessa0GP followed you back.

VANESSA puts on her cape, determined, goes to elevator. Doors open, VANESSA steps on. Doors close.

SCENE 8

ELEVATOR.

VANESSA paces in front of elevator.
Graphics show a passage of days,
VANESSA still in front of elevator.
Finally, she sees a flash of color at
the stairwell door.

VANESSA

Hey wait! Wait! It's me!

Stairwell door does not close; VANESSA
approaches.

VANESSA

Are you there?

Beat.

VANESSA

You don't have to talk. Just let me know if you're there.

Knock on door.

VANESSA

Do you want to come out?

Knock knock on door.

VANESSA

I want to know why. I want to know if this is for fun or
if... if you hae a story like Elevator Girl? An origin story?

Knock. VANESSA sucks her breath.

VANESSA

Does anybody know? Your family?

Knock, knock.

VANESSA

A boyfriend?

Knock. Beat. Knock.

VANESSA

Not anymore?

Knock.

VANESSA

I'm sorry. When I gave Peter--Peter Norse, he's my boyfriend--the idea, I thought it would feel good, like revenge. It does a little, at least in his comic pages. At least there, she creates terror. But in real life? We can never win, not as long as these guys think she's--

KNOCK.

VANESSA

Can I ask you something?

Knock.

VANESSA

For every three or four guys who think they hit the Lotto, is there at least one guy who's scared?

Knock.

VANESSA

Do you feel his fear? Do you understand his fear?

Knock.

VANESSA

Does it make you feel better?

Knock. Beat. Knock knock.

VANESSA

Because they're not really bad guys, right?

Knock.

VANESSA

Yeah, I probably should have thought about that, but I never thought it would go beyond-- You know?

Beat. Faint knock.

VANESSA

I imagined her--or someone like her--long before this. I would pretend to be her, when I needed to get through things, like riding an elevator again, or being with Peter. Sometimes I still have to be her to be with him. And maybe even have some wine. But she was an imagination. My alter ego. I never meant for her to be real. I never had the guts to make her real. Are you scared?

Knock knock.

VANESSA

I think you should be.

Knock, knock.

VANESSA

How do we make them understand afraid? Is there a way?

Knock.

VANESSA

Are you sure you don't want to come out and talk to me?

Knockknock.

VANESSA

Can I tell you something?

Beat. Knock.

VANESSA

You didn't do anything to make it happen. That's not how it works.

Beat.

VANESSA

Are you still there?

Knock.

VANESSA

I'm gonna tell you something else. You're a hero to me. We're sisters. And I think if we support each other, if we talk to each other... There can be strength in numbers.

KNOCK.

VANESSA

And in not being silent. We need to start talking. Out loud. Face our fears. That's the only way to make them understand. If we find strength in numbers.

Beat.

VANESSA

Are you there?

Door slowly opens. Lights fade. Graphic panels show tweets:

EG4EVA #EGstrengthinnumbers They think it's hot? Sisters, let's make them BURN! EGs--UNITE!

#EGstrengthinnumbers No more elevator violators! #elevatorgirls

You don't fear one? Try 20.
#EGstrengthinnumbers

@VanessaOGP are you going to join us?
#EGstrengthinnumbers

@EG4EVA What do you mean?

SCENE 9

ELEVATOR.

We see the back of ELEVATOR GIRL, lying in wait. PETER approaches, in a suit. The doors open, he gets on; right before they doors close, VANESSA, as ELEVATOR GIRL with enhanced breasts, cape, and mask up on her head, rushes on. Doors close. Doors open again with a scrim shielding action, or perhaps elevator on wheels can be turned around, so it's clear that this scene is inside the elevator.

PETER

Vanessa! What are you--

VANESSA

Sh!

PETER

But--

VANESSA

Not a word. Play along.

PETER and VANESSA stand on opposite sides of the elevator. PETER smiles nervously. VANESSA moves a little closer to PETER, who edges closer to the elevator wall.

VANESSA

What a night, huh?

PETER

Just a regular day in Urbanville.

VANESSA

This weather can't last. Big snowstorm coming.

PETER

Yeah?

VANESSA

We don't know how many inches we're gonna get...

PETER

[...eyeroll...]

VANESSA moves closer. PETER looks wary.

VANESSA

Where you headed?

PETER

Just... um... out. To meet friends.

VANESSA

Yeah? I think

(moving closer)

you're up to something... bad.

PETER

Me? No. I'm one of the good guys. Just a regular guy.

VANESSA

What are you thinking right now?

PETER

That you're...uh... standing awfully close.

VANESSA

You don't like women being close? Aren't you and your friends going out with the intention of getting

(moves closer)

close to women? Won't you buy them drinks in the hopes that it will be easier to get them close to you?

PETER

Um... I have a girlfriend.

VANESSA

Maybe I do too.

(laughs)

Does that stop you? From wanting to get close to women? From wanting to get close to me? Because compared to her, this is the stuff of legends.

PETER

I think I forgot to push my floor, if you could just--

VANESSA

Of course. I love elevator buttons.

VANESSA stops elevator.

PETER

What are you do--

VANESSA

Can I show you something Mr. One of the Good Guys?

PETER

Oh, God, you're not--

VANESSA reveals a Sharpie-drawn EG tattoo.

VANESSA
Hard to believe your luck?

PETER
You've got every guy in Urbanville looking over his shoulder when he gets in an elevator.

VANESSA
Looking out of fear? Or anticipation?

PETER
Fear, oh definitely fear.

VANESSA
Don't patronize me.

VANESSA moves even closer, slides her hand over PETER. She pulls the mask down onto her eyes.

PETER
You don't put on your mask until--

VANESSA
No, I just forgot.

PETER
But now I know your secret identity.

VANESSA
I doubt that Mr. Good Man.

PETER
Yes, I saw--

VANESSA
Nobody ever notices a face.

VANESSA drops to her knees and begins to work Peter's belt buckle. From here, PETER's struggle is between "this feels good" and "this feels bad." Vanessa is being forceful, but there's no way she can overpower Peter; this has to be more of a psychological "rape" for him, i.e. he's massively uncomfortable but turned on at the same time. And if the audience is being honest, maybe they're turned on, too.

PETER
Hey, you're not really gonna-- I mean, with no--

VANESSA
You didn't find our pleasantries about the weather foreplay enough?

PETER
You can't just--

VANESSA
Sure I can.

PETER
I think I want you to stop.

VANESSA
You think?

PETER
I do.

VANESSA
But I don't. I've gotten this far.

Oblivious to any of Peter's discomfort, VANESSA has undone his pants now, and slides them down. PETER lets out a moan of pleasure.

VANESSA
It doesn't sound like you want me to stop.

VANESSA starts to put her mouth on him. PETER moans again.

PETER
No...

VANESSA continues.

PETER
No.

VANESSA
No?

PETER
I just-- I'm sure you're very good. I mean, I've heard you're very good, but--

VANESSA
Nobody ever says no.

PETER

I am. I'm saying no.

VANESSA

It's just a little thing and then poof! It's over. And I'll be gone.

VANESSA moves in on him again.

PETER

Please. Please don't.

VANESSA

Just relax. This is really happening to you. Can you even believe it?

PETER

No. I mean it. I have a girlfriend.

VANESSA

Okay, Peter, that's the second time you've said that and it's ridiculous. You're not cheating on me.

PETER

I was desperate for an excuse! It just came out.

PETER quickly pulls up his pants.

VANESSA pushes the mask back up on her head.

VANESSA

An excuse for me to stop? You just had to ask.

PETER

I did!

VANESSA

I didn't think you meant it, that you were just... enhancing the fantasy.

PETER

What fantasy? You didn't tell me you were going to do this.

VANESSA

What fun would that be? I wanted it to feel real.

PETER

It felt--

VANESSA

Exciting?