

# Home

Veronica had dropped everything, in order to return to Neptune, the moment she received the call. She had actually started a frenzy of packing, clothes flying and landing in a huddled mass in her suitcase, while she was still on the phone getting the unsettling news.

As soon as she hung up from the initial call, she phoned her internship supervisor at the FBI to let him know the situation and that she would need to be leaving for an unknown period of time. He was less than sympathetic to her plight and essentially told her that if she left, even for a day, regardless of the reason, that she need not return. He was a stick up his ass total jerk from day one, and she had wondered multiple times over the previous couple of weeks, since she had arrived, why he was the one chosen to essentially mentor young potential recruits. She had finally decided that it was to weed out those who weren't tough enough to make it, so his cold and insensitive response came as no surprise at all to Veronica.

Before she got the call, she would have cared that she had just lost the internship that had meant so much to her and that she had worked so hard to get. In all likelihood, she would have been extremely angry about losing it.

Now, however, she didn't care in the slightest.

There were much more important matters at hand for her.

She was so anxious to get home that she didn't even bother to try to make flight reservations online or over the phone. She simply packed up all of her things, in record time, and hopped a cab to the airport.

Fleeing the taxi and leaving the driver with a very excessive tip, as she didn't want to waste the time waiting for her change, she rushed through the main airport doors and headed straight for the nearest airline counter, turning a few concerned heads as she did so. She was lucky to have gotten by without receiving a not so welcoming greeting from security, in her hurried state, but that was the furthest thing from her mind.

Putting on her sweetest, most imploring expression, and without giving away any unnecessary personal details, she was able to convince the customer service agent to get her on the next nonstop flight to San Diego. She was beyond thankful that she was able to do so with only a minimal amount of drama, but she had been willing to go full tilt if necessary.

Whatever it took wouldn't have been too much.

Once she had settled herself into her cramped seat on the airplane, she was finally able to relax, though only slightly. She normally hated the tight quarters of flying coach; but, on this trip, there was something comforting about the small cocoon of space that she was afforded as her living space for the next five hours.

The confinement actually helped to calm her a bit, though she had no idea why, since usually the complete opposite was true. As she slunk back into her seat she closed her eyes with a huge sigh, the first full breath she had taken since the call, and focused on her destination.

She focused on him.

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When she was finally on the ground in California, and had collected her baggage, she made a beeline straight for the hospital. She would have loved nothing more than a shower and a nap, but nothing would take priority over her need to get to him as soon as possible.

The long flight had been torturous, not knowing what was happening at home, and now that she was back on the right side of the country, and on her way, nothing would deter her from her mission.

As soon as she arrived on the 12<sup>th</sup> floor of San Diego's Crystal Coast Hospital, she was immediately greeted by Mac, who had been serving as her eyes and ears until she was able to physically get there. "Hey, you got here pretty fast," she said in greeting, as she hugged her friend.

Veronica had never been fond of the distinct hospital smell that she was now surrounded by and her nose crinkled slightly in response to it as she spoke. "Quick as I could, but it felt like an eternity," she said with a sigh of exhaustion and exasperation, as she glanced around the waiting area.

Mac nodded with full understanding of how hard the trip must have been for her. "Yeah, I bet," was the best response she could come up with, knowing that it wasn't nearly enough to cover the situation.

"So, any new news?" Veronica asked hopefully, refocusing her attention on Mac.

"They haven't told us anything new; and, since we aren't family, they haven't allowed us in to see him."

"Well, that changes now," Veronica said with determination, as she firmly squared her shoulders and headed towards the busy nurses' station that she had been eyeing since she arrived.

“Heyyy . . . Verrronnica. Ronnnnie!” She heard the drunken voice yell to her from the far end of the hall and she shook her head with annoyance as she turned to confirm who was calling out to her. *I’m so not dealing with him right now.*

Ignoring him, as Mac intervened to quiet Dick and take his attention away from her, Veronica immediately turned back towards the nurses’ station; but this time she was stopped in her path by a middle aged man in a white lab coat who moved to stand directly in front of her. He quickly glanced from her to the young man who had called out to her and then back to her again in one swift and fluid motion. Since she hadn’t responded, he wasn’t certain who she was, so he simply asked. “Is your name Veronica?” he inquired of her casually.

“Umm? Why do you ask?” At that moment she didn’t want to give away who she was. It could totally blow her plan.

“I’m Dr. Sheldon,” the handsome, dark haired man said, extending his hand to her. He then continued, as she cautiously shook his hand in greeting. “Are you here for Logan Echolls?” he asked as he once again looked over at the young man who had called to her, knowing that he was a friend of his patient and apparently had been the one who had pulled him from the water after the accident. Though, in his current state of extreme intoxication, he found it very hard to believe that he was the hero type.

Again, she wasn’t certain that she should respond, but she did so anyway in spite of her misgivings. “Yes,” she finally answered with a slight nod.

His dark blue eyes were questioning as he once again tried to gain a confirmation from her. “And, your name *is* Veronica?”

“Yes,” she again admitted, though somewhat reluctantly.

“Could I see you in my office, please.” It was more a statement than a request.

“In your office? Who are you exactly?” she asked with cautious interest.

“I’m Mr. Echolls’ attending physician and I’d like to speak with you about his condition if you don’t mind.”

Veronica glanced at him in complete confusion. “With me?” she asked curiously, clueless as to why he would want to speak with her about Logan. She was no one to him. *Just his ex, multiple times over.* Not the first person, or necessarily even the last, that she would expect his doctor to want to talk to about him.

“Yes,” he confirmed simply. “If you wouldn’t mind,” he added, as he gestured for her to follow him down the hall.

When they reached Dr. Sheldon's office, he ushered her inside and asked her to take a seat, as he closed the door behind them. "How is it that you know Mr. Echolls?" he inquired as soon as he sat down across from her.

"We're friends," Veronica answered semi-honestly, though that now totally blew any hope she would have of pretending to be his sister, which was what she had intended to do when she had first arrived.

She had been relieved when she found out that Logan was in the hospital in San Diego, rather than Neptune, as there would be a greater possibility, slim though it may have been, of him not being recognized by the staff there as he certainly would have been at their local hospital where he was all too well known. Under that same hopeful assumption, she figured that Trina would likely be an unknown entity to them, as well, and she would then have easily been able to slip into that role in order to see him. Not that any of that mattered now, as she had fully blown the ability to use that little ploy.

He nodded. "I see. Good friends I take it?"

Veronica stared at him quizzically, crinkling her brow slightly, as she responded. "Why would you say that?"

"Well, you're here to see him, right?"

"Yes."

"Well, people don't usually visit others in the hospital unless they're close to them or obligated to do so in some way," he said reasonably.

"I guess," Veronica conceded, not wanting to give away too much in regards to their actual relationship.

"The reason I wanted to speak with you privately, Veronica, is that Mr. Echolls has been asking for you."

Now she was really confused. "For me?" she asked, somewhat skeptically, fairly certain that he must be mistaken.

"Well, unless there's another Veronica in his life," the doctor responded, acknowledging the possibility.

She shook her head with a slow and casual certainty. "No, I'm pretty sure I'm the only one."

"Well then, as I said, he's been asking for you."

Veronica continued to shake her head, but now it was in simple confusion. "I thought he was unconscious."

“Yes, he is; but, he has been speaking periodically. I’d like for you to talk to him,” the doctor suggested.

“But, you said he’s unconscious; so, how is it that he’s been talking? I’m sorry, I don’t understand.”

Dr. Sheldon nodded as he proceeded to explain. “Well, not so unlike those who talk in their sleep, sometimes comatose patients will talk, as well. And, there has been some good research to suggest that they are able to hear and understand what’s going on around them. So, if he’s asking for you specifically, he just may respond positively to your presence.”

“I see,” Veronica said, knowing that it was the appropriate response to what she had just been told, though she wasn’t at all sure that she really did understand. “So, you’re going to let me see him?” she continued, feeling the need to confirm that she was actually going to get what she came for and without any deceptive tricks needed.

“Yes, that’s the idea,” he confirmed for her. He then stood from his seat behind the desk and moved to the door to open it for her. “Shall we go see him now?”

Veronica silently exited the room, concern and uncertainty clouding her thoughts, as she proceeded to follow the doctor’s lead.

After a few more quiet and introspective moments, while they slowly walked down the hall, Veronica asked, “What exactly is he saying about me?” She needed to know just what this doctor had been hearing about her, though she wasn’t entirely certain that she really wanted to know.

“It’s best if you see, or rather hear, for yourself,” the doctor said casually when they reached Logan’s room.

That statement concerned her more than anything else she had heard since receiving the call from her dad about Logan’s surfing accident. The possibilities of what he could be saying about her were pretty much limitless, in her mind, and many of them were likely not good considering everything they had been through and how they had left things. It made her all the more glad that she had convinced Keith to just drop her off at the hospital and take her things back to their apartment, in Neptune, allowing for her to try to see Logan on her own. The last thing she needed was her dad hearing something untoward about her from an unconscious Logan.

Veronica slowly let out a breath, she hadn’t even been aware that she was holding, as Dr. Sheldon opened the door to Logan’s room and she got her first glimpse of him laying motionless in the bed with wires and tubes seemingly attached to him everywhere. He was such a vibrant person. So alive. It was almost impossible for her to believe that this still and pale figure before her was even him.

She paused in the doorway, the doctor directly behind her, as she steeled herself for what she was about to experience. It was then, above the incessant beeping of the monitors alongside his bed, when she heard him speak.

“Veronica!” It was a forceful and stern projection.

His voice completely belied his physical appearance. It sounded strong and animated, yet at the same time it held an undertone of . . . what was it? Pain. Worry. Fear. She couldn’t quite put her finger on it, but the hint of whatever it was, was clearly there.

Veronica just stood there, staring, her body essentially frozen in place at the unnatural site and sound of him.

Then, in a more quiet and uncertain tone, “Veronica?”

The swift shift in his vocalization concerned her; yet, both of the ways that he spoke her name said volumes about them and summed up their relationship so very perfectly. The message wasn’t at all lost on her and she wondered if the variation in his tone was purposeful or just a coincidence. She chose to believe that it was the former as that at least gave her the hope that Logan was somewhat consciously aware.

His voice still low, he continued speaking. “Veronica,” he said again, his voice just barely above a whisper. “Where are you, Veronica?” The question was pleading, but also held what seemed to be a casual hopefulness that the answer was near. “I need you,” he said more earnestly, his voice rising steadily with each word, and then his voice fell again to just above a murmur. “Don’t want to be alone.”

At hearing those words, in his calm yet imploring tone, the shocked paralysis that had held her in place, at the doorway, fully faded and she rushed to Logan’s bedside. She reached him almost before she realized that she had started moving and with trembling fingers, she immediately took hold of his hand. As she casually caressed his palm, trying to calm herself as much as him, and careful to avoid the PICC line on top of his hand, she said her first words to him since she had arrived. “I’m here, Logan. I’m right here.”

“Veronica?”

She thought she saw his eyelids flutter, though just barely, as he spoke her name once again; but it was all together possible that she had imagined it, or that it was nothing but a general body twitch and had nothing at all to do with her being there.

She gave his hand a little squeeze of reassurance, as she continued to speak. “It’s me, Logan. I’m right here with you.”

“Veronica? Where are you?” He repeated the same words as before, but this time with a more confident air, as though he knew the answer.

Squeezing his hand once more, with a slightly tighter grip, she again tried to make her presence known. “I’m right here, Logan.”

His facial expression seemed to relax a bit, as she spoke that time, and she thought she heard a slight sigh come from him. She stood there, continuing to hold his hand in silence for a few moments, so she could fully concentrate on his movements, if any.

*Move.*

She silently implored him to show her some sign that he knew that she was there. Something to show that he understood what she was saying to him.

The doctor had left the room, quietly closing the door behind him, as soon as she had rushed to Logan’s bedside, but Veronica hadn’t noticed his departure at all. From the moment she had first laid eyes on Logan, he was all that she was focused on.

When she didn’t see any additional response from him, though she wasn’t certain that she had actually seen any before that, she again spoke to him. “Logan, can you hear me? Move your hand if you can hear me. This hand,” she added for clarification, lightly lifting the hand that she was holding.

Nothing.

*Crap.*

*Maybe I did imagine it.*

“What am I supposed to do now?” she asked herself aloud, frustration and uncertainty building up within her like a burgeoning volcanic eruption.

After a few moments of complete silence, with the exception of the unrelenting monitor beeping that was about to push her over the edge, Veronica slumped down onto the chair that was right next to Logan’s bed, continuing to hold onto his hand as she did so. She was completely exhausted from her unexpected cross-country trek. Adrenaline had kept her going until then. But, now that she was there with him. Now that she could see that he was still alive. At the very least, that he was still breathing on his own. That had to be a good thing, she told herself, as she silently watched his chest rise and fall with a slow and rhythmic movement. She could now permit the inevitable, albeit reluctantly.

She allowed her exhaustion to overtake her and in that moment a wave of emotion fully flooded her. She felt the warmth rising in her eyes, as her tears began to form, and a split second later she found herself fully crying. It was as though someone had flipped a switch allowing for all that she was feeling to be released all at once within her. She didn’t like it at all, but she had absolutely no control over it.

Sobbing uncontrollably, in her emotionally overwhelmed state, she gave Logan's hand another light squeeze. "Logan," she choked out. "You . . . need to . . . wake up. I . . . love you. Need you." It seemed like an eternity for her to get those few words out between her gasping sobs.

Veronica sat for only a couple of minutes, but it felt like forever to just be sitting there doing nothing. She always needed to be doing something, even when she was too exhausted to do so, as was now the case. Needed to be actively involved somehow in solving the problem.

And, though she had no idea how to solve this particular problem, she stood back up, on shaky legs, and leaned over his bed with a renewed determination. She kissed him lightly on the lips, not knowing what else to do. After all, it worked for Sleeping Beauty. She sighed as she lifted her head back up, her tears falling onto his cheek.

She then just silently stared down at him, hoping.

At first she thought that she was imagining it, since her vision had become a bit blurry, so she firmly closed her tear filled eyes for a brief second and then slowly re-opened them, wiping away the excess wetness as she did so. The picture before her was just the same. Logan's eyes were open and he was staring up at her with a bleary and uncertain expression that said he wasn't sure if she was real or not.

As the edges of his mouth turned slightly upwards into a partial smile, Veronica sighed with complete relief. His increasingly alert brown eyes were the most beautiful things that she had ever seen. Her tears continued to fall down her cheeks as she leaned over and tenderly kissed him again.

Slowly, she lifted herself back up and silently stared at him again for another moment, unable to speak, and then she released his hand and turned to walk away. As soon as she did so, she felt his hand grasp hers, as though he finally realized with certainty that she was really there and not just his imagination after all.

His eyes were lit up now with loving recognition. "No, don't go." They were the first words he had spoken since he had come to.

She turned back towards him and smiled, happier than she had ever been to hear his voice now that he was awake and at least partially alert. "I'm not leaving, Logan," she said in her most soothing tone of voice. "Just going to get your doctor. He'll want to know that you're awake."

Logan furrowed his brow at that, fully realizing for the first time that he was in a hospital bed. "Veronica, don't leave me," he said somewhat drowsily, though he gripped her hand more tightly.

She shook her head as she responded, knowing his doctor should see him right away. "Logan, I'll just be in the hall for a minute and then I'll come right back."

“Don’t leave,” he said again, imploringly, the sparkle of a tear forming in his eye. He desperately didn’t want her out of his sight.

Seeing his worried expression and hearing the concern in his voice, she gently caressed his hand and then pressed the call button to summon the nurse. “Okay, I’ll stay right here,” she assured him, as she softly squeezed his hand.

The nurse popped her head into the room and then quickly left to retrieve Logan’s doctor when she saw that he was awake.

It seemed that almost instantly after the nurse had left that Dr. Sheldon was entering the room. He glanced at Logan briefly and then turned to Veronica with a knowing nod. “My, you do quick work don’t you?”

“I didn’t do anything,” she argued as she sniffed and turned her head slightly away from him, subtly wiping away the remaining unshed tears from her eyes.

She always hated showing any kind of weakness or vulnerability in front of others, so she put what she considered to be her professional face back on for the doctor’s benefit. Though, really for her own.

“Well, I left you alone for only a few minutes and my patient wakes right up, I’d say you did do something,” he countered, as he moved to Logan’s bedside opposite where Veronica was standing and checked his vitals on the monitors.

Veronica just silently shook her head, still denying her part in Logan’s awakening, as the doctor went about checking out Logan’s current condition.

“I’m Dr. Sheldon,” he said, introducing himself. “How are you feeling?”

“Okay,” Logan responded simply.

“Any pain?”

“Yeah.”

“Where?” the doctor asked when he didn’t elaborate.

Logan simply pointed to the back of his head, with his free hand, not taking his eyes off of Veronica or releasing her hand. He hadn’t stopped looking at her the entire time, since the moment he had reawakened. A part of him was worried that if he lost sight of her, even for a second, that she would be gone when he looked back and he didn’t want to chance it.

“Do you know your name?” the doctor continued.

“Yeah,” he said, and Veronica lightly laughed when she heard the patented Logan sarcasm in the tone of his response. Nothing had ever sounded better to her.

“You really need to give me a little more in your responses if you can. Now, can you look at me over here?” the doctor asked, somewhat concerned by Logan’s minimal responses and lack of eye contact with him as he spoke.

He continued to stare at Veronica without responding to Dr. Sheldon at all.

“Logan, the doctor is talking to you,” Veronica said, intervening.

“Uh-huh.”

Dr. Sheldon had taken out a penlight and was waiting for Logan to turn his direction. When he still didn’t do so, Veronica glanced over at him with a slight shrug. “Maybe I should leave while you check him out,” she suggested, feeling like her being there was too much of a distraction for Logan.

“No, don’t go.” As Logan spoke he used all of his strength and squeezed her hand much too tightly in an effort to keep her from leaving.

“Oww,” she yelped, as she looked back down at him. “Geez, Logan, that hurt.” Her response came out much more harshly than she had intended.

“Sorry, I just don’t want you to leave,” he said contritely, loosening his grip on her.

The little exchange between them, and Logan’s apparent strength, left Dr. Sheldon feeling much better about his patient’s condition and he couldn’t help but smile when Logan finally turned to him and asked, “she doesn’t have to go, does she?”

“No, she doesn’t,” the doctor assured him. “I need to take a look at your eyes, though, so I need you to look over here at me for a minute,” he said, holding the penlight up again.

As the doctor lifted the light, Logan immediately looked back over at Veronica, realizing that he had taken his eyes off of her for too long. To his relief, she was still standing right there next to his bed.

“Logan, this way,” Dr. Sheldon tried again, and then he thought that he realized what was happening with him. “Okay, how about we try it this way,” he suggested, moving to the other side of the bed to stand next to Veronica. She moved over a bit to give the doctor some space and as she did so, Logan squeezed her hand more tightly again, ensuring that she didn’t let go of him.

“Logan, if you keep crushing my hand like that I am going to leave,” she said sternly. She didn’t mean it, but she knew the threat would get him to stop.

He let up on the pressure immediately.

“Hey, I don’t blame you. I’d much rather look at a pretty young woman than at me, too,” the doctor said with a good-natured laugh, as he proceeded to check Logan’s eyes.

Dr. Sheldon spent a few more minutes looking him over and then made some notes in his chart. “So, everything looks really good, considering . . .”

“Considering what?” Veronica asked interrupting him. She just couldn’t help herself. It was her way.

“Considering that we have a pretty serious concussion and near drowning here,” the doctor said in answer to her and then he turned his attention back to Logan. “You’re one lucky young man. You’re in good physical shape and thankfully you weren’t unconscious for long, so I don’t see any reason that you shouldn’t make a full and complete recovery now that you’re awake, that was the big thing; but, I want to run a couple of tests and keep an eye on you for a few days to be sure you’re healing up as you should, okay?”

Logan nodded, but continued to look at Veronica. “Yeah, okay,” he agreed simply in an effort to get the doctor to leave the room. He knew that compliance was the best way to expeditiously achieve that goal.

Dr. Sheldon nodded in return, as he set Logan’s chart back on the end of his bed. “I’ll get those tests set up and be back to check on you a little later, okay?”

“Yeah, thanks,” Logan responded with a casual nod of appreciation towards the doctor, as he was leaving the room.

“Always need to be in a penthouse, don’t you,” Veronica joked, as soon as the doctor left them alone, referring to his top floor room in the hospital.

He laughed with a casual shrug and the so very Logan gesture brightened Veronica’s smile tremendously. “Well, I don’t think I had a say in it this time around, but what can I say, I gotta be me.”

“Don’t you just. And I wouldn’t have it any other way,” she said with a sweet smile, as she leaned down and tenderly kissed his lips.

Without hesitation he happily returned the kiss, though in his slightly weakened condition the exertion left him somewhat breathless.

Veronica pulled back and gazed at him with concern when their lips parted and she noticed his breathlessness.

Logan wasn't bothered by it at all. Veronica was there with him and that was all that mattered to him in that moment. His stamina would return. Veronica's return to him had been doubtful, but here she was with him. When he had needed her the most she came.

Nothing was more important to him than that.

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The next day, Logan was released from the hospital.

He had been insistent that he didn't need to be there, that the hospital was for sick people; and, he could be impossible to deal with when he was determined about something.

Dr. Sheldon had agreed to release him, somewhat reluctantly, but only on the condition that he had someone with him round the clock for the next several days to ensure that he didn't have any sort of relapse into unconsciousness from his head injury. Even though all of his tests came back clear, head injuries can be tricky and the doctor felt that it wasn't a good idea to take chances with them. However, he was also a firm believer that the happier a patient is the more likely they are to heal faster and he thought that in this case the benefits would greatly outweigh the potential risk.

Veronica agreed to be his babysitter and with that, and Logan's agreement to sign a release of liability for his leaving the hospital against his doctor's recommendation, Dr. Sheldon provided him with prescriptions to fill and after care instructions; and then he allowed them to go on their way. As they were about to leave, the doctor casually told them that Veronica was definitely better medicine for him than anything that he could provide him in the hospital anyway, and that made them feel better about Logan's early release.

Keith picked them up at the hospital and took them back to the apartment so Veronica could pack up some clothes and other necessities for spending the remainder of the week at the Grand with Logan. Her dad wasn't at all pleased about the situation, but he knew there was no point in arguing the issue with her, so he simply let it go acknowledging the fact that regardless of his feeling that she would always be his little girl, she was an adult and had to be free to make her own choices despite his opinion of them.

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"How are you feeling?" Veronica asked Logan, right after she had settled her things into his suite.

"Never better," he said as he plopped down on the couch with a slight thud, careful to avoid hitting the bandaged knot on the back of his head against the couch cushion.

She casually dropped down next to him. "Liar."

“Hey, is that any way to talk to the man you love?” he asked with a smirk.

She lowered her head somewhat sheepishly. “Oh, you heard that huh?”

“Well, actually, I thought that I might have just imagined it, wishful thinking or something, but now that you’ve confirmed it for me . . .”

Veronica shook her head at him with a glare, but it quickly morphed into a smile that clearly said that she was happy that he had heard her. “Man, you’re getting sneaky.”

Logan grinned as he placed his arm around her shoulders and pulled her in closer to him. “Hey, I learned from the best.”

“Yeah, I am the best,” she agreed with a light laugh.

Frowning at her. “Who said I was talking about you, missy? Sheesh, so full of yourself,” he said facetiously.

“I say you were. And, I do love you,” she added before giving him a light little peck on the cheek.

“And it’s about time you said so.”

“Way past time, I’d say, but I can be difficult like that,” she admitted.

He nodded firmly in complete agreement. “Yeah, you can. And, yet, I love you anyway,” he said before leaning over and tenderly kissing her.

When he pulled back from the lingering kiss, Logan saw the tears in Veronica’s eyes. “What’s wrong?” he asked with concern.

She silently shook her head for a moment before responding with a sniff. “I could have lost you. I just always take it for granted that you’ll always be there . . .”

“Because I *will* always be there,” he said interrupting her.

“But, if you had died . . .”

Veronica needed to stop speaking for a moment as her tears began to fall in unison with her greatly increasing emotion. Catching her breath and recovering her voice, she said, “I’m just not used to having to worry about you like that. I used to worry, but you’ve survived so many potential death causing moments that in the back of my mind I just figure you’re somehow invincible.”

“Because I am. Just like Superman,” he said with a little smirk, flexing his biceps. “And this last little incident only proves it,” he added trying to convince her that it wasn’t a big deal.

She shook her head at him in disbelief. “Little incident? Seriously! Logan, you are not invincible. You are not impenetrable. Even Superman has his Kryptonite.” Her tears were falling faster now, but she was somehow still able to force herself to clearly speak. “Do you have any idea how hard the flight back here was for me? Five solid hours of nothing but thinking time. And, you know what I thought about that entire time?”

Logan had been shocked into silence by her emotional outpouring, so he silently sat and listened to what Veronica had to say.

“I thought about you. And I thought about us,” she said continuing. “But, I didn’t think about all of the good times we’ve had together or even about all of the terrible, difficult times. All I could think about was losing you. Losing you for good this time. And if you had died, all I would have is regrets. Regrets for all of the time we wasted. All of the stupid mistakes I made in our relationship. All of the stupid things that I made a huge deal out of that shouldn’t have mattered at all. Because of me, we wasted so much time that we should have spent together. I’m so sorry.” She finally paused, needing to take a breath, as her tears continued to flow down her cheeks unchecked.

Logan, his deep brown eyes now tear filled as well, took that moment of silence to pull Veronica more firmly into his arms, lifting her up and sitting her back down across his lap.

“Hey, you’re supposed to be relaxing and not exerting yourself,” she lightly admonished him, as she sniffed and began to wipe away her tears.

He had pulled her to him in that way in a purposeful attempt to get her to shift her focus. And, based on her response to him, it seemed to have worked. “I am relaxing,” he said, as he wiped away his own escaped tears at hearing her emotional outpouring. “And, lifting you is hardly an exertion. You don’t weigh anything,” he added with a light laugh.

“Yeah, whatever,” she said, lifting her head up slightly and wiping away the remainder of her unshed tears before lowering her head back down once again.

Now that she had relaxed a bit, Logan knew that he needed to in some way acknowledge all that she had said, but he wasn’t sure how to do that without her getting upset again.

However, she was clearly blaming herself for everything that had gone wrong between them. For all of the problems they had in their past. And he couldn’t allow that to stand without some response on his part. “Veronica?” He paused, waiting for her to raise her head back up to face him. As soon as she did, he continued. “Yeah, you messed some things up for us,” he agreed. “But, so did I. We both made a lot of mistakes. Stupid mistakes. And yes, it’s true, we’ve wasted a lot of time that we should have been together; but, we’re both to blame for that and none of it matters anymore.”

“Of course it matters,” she argued. “I screwed up so much and . . .”

He stifled the remainder of her words by tenderly placing his lips on hers, not really kissing her, but simply stopping her from speaking any further. After a solid minute, where he felt her relax in his arms, he lifted his head back up and continued with his argument. "It doesn't matter anymore, Veronica. None of it. We need to be strong enough and smart enough to just let go of all the crap from our past and move on from here free of it all. If we just let it all go, forgive each other and trust each other, we can make it work. I don't want to waste the love we have for each other. That would truly be something to regret," he added with a slight sigh.

Veronica nodded, but said nothing.

After a few moments of complete silence between them, Logan once again continued; but, he changed the subject as he did so, knowing that they needed to just sit on the big stuff for now and slowly deal with letting go of the past, so they could productively move on with their future together. A future that he desperately wanted and could now clearly see that she did as well. He knew without a doubt now that they were going to be okay in the end. "So, when do you have to go back to Virginia?" he asked casually, moving on to what he thought would be a safer topic.

She shrugged slightly and shook her head as she responded. "I'm not," she answered simply.

Logan crinkled his brow at her in confusion. "What do you mean you're not? You have your internship to get back to."

She continued to shake her head. "No, I don't. That ship has sailed, as they say," she said in a light and non-regretful tone of voice.

"What are you saying, Veronica? How can you not be going back?" He didn't intend for the question to come out harshly, but it did.

"I have nothing to go back to," she said, as she shrugged again. "Apparently needing to rush home to check on an ex-boyfriend in the hospital is not a valid excuse for leaving. Though, Agent Simpson made it pretty clear that nothing would have been a valid reason. He was kind of a jackwagon, anyway," she added with another slight shrug, as though it were no big deal to her.

"Then why did you leave, if you knew you couldn't go back? If you knew the consequences?" he asked her incredulously.

She stared at him as though the answer should have been obvious. "Because I had to be here for you. With you. I had to know that you were okay. You know me, not trusting and all; I had to see for myself that you were still alive. Stubborn," she added, pointing both of her thumbs towards herself with emphasis. "And besides, I wouldn't have been able to concentrate on anything but you anyway, so I may as well be here. The internship would have been completely wasted on me in that state of mind," she said as her final rationalization for her decision.

Logan just silently shook his head in disbelief for a moment. “I can’t believe you gave up your internship for me. It was so important to you,” he finally managed to say, his expression and voice soft with loving appreciation for her and what she had done for him.

She nodded, acknowledging the truth of his statement. “Yeah, it was, but clearly you’re more important to me because I never even thought twice about the decision to rush home, even knowing the consequences for my internship; and possibly my future. But, when it comes right down to it, there’s no future I want that doesn’t include you.” She was surprised at herself by how open and honest she was being with him, but she knew that it was long past time that she was.

“Thank you,” he said softly with newly formed tears in his eyes.

“For what?”

“For putting me first. No one’s ever . . .” His emotion overtook him and he couldn’t finish speaking his thought as his tears began to fall, but he didn’t need to say anything else. She knew exactly what he was thinking and knew how very true it was. Another wave of emotions struck her at the thought and she tilted her head towards him lovingly with burgeoning tears in her eyes.

Logan just silently hugged her a little tighter, unsure what else to say in response to her unexpected revelations and priorities.

After a few wordless moments, Veronica spoke again, as she gently wiped away the tears from Logan’s cheek. “It’s really nice to be home,” she said gazing up at him with an ever-brightening smile. “And, I don’t mean in Neptune,” she added, placing her arms around him and snuggling more deeply into his embrace.

He nodded slowly in response as he held her. It took only a brief second for the realization of her meaning to fully dawn on him, at her clarified thought, so he held onto her even more tightly and tenderly kissed her cheek with a feather light touch of his lips. No further words seemed to be necessary at that point, so they just continued to silently hold each other.

Logan couldn’t have been happier at the idea of his arms being home for her and clearly, Veronica couldn’t have been happier at the insight into, and admission of, her true feelings either.

They were now both truly home to stay.

**The End!**