

Chloe stops.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
Everybody makes mistakes at first.
If you don't know something, ask.
And slow down. Don't let anybody
rush you. You're gonna be great.
Don't worry about it, okay?

CHLOE
Okay.

INT. MERCY HOSPITAL - DAY

Mrs. Dumke lies in bed. Veronica taps on the door.

VERONICA
Time for you medicine.

Veronica comes in and gives Mrs. Dumke her pills.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
You okay? You haven't called me a
bitch in a while.

MRS. DUMKE
What's with you and the sexy
surgeon? The one who squeezed your
arm last night.

VERONICA
You looked like you were asleep.

MRS. DUMKE
I can't believe this. My
daughter's online dating and you
with two men after you.

VERONICA
Believe me, this is a first.

MRS. DUMKE
Well, whatever you do, you'll wish
you had done the other thing. I
was married for thirty-nine years.
I know.

VERONICA
You know, you old married people
don't sell it too well, I notice.

Mrs. Dumke shrugs, rearranges herself against the pillows in
a manner almost regal.

START

MERCY

MRS. DUMKE

The solution is not a man, I'll tell you that right now. They're nice and all but they'll disappoint you. You better have something else. Something you're passionate about. But I guess you do.

VERONICA

Yeah. I guess that's right.

MRS. DUMKE

You think I should have this surgery?

Veronica sighs, then opens the door by her table, pulls out a nail file and starts giving Mrs. Dumke a little manicure.

VERONICA

If you were my mother...

MRS. DUMKE

You'd have a better haircut.

VERONICA

If you were my mother I'd say no. It's too risky and it won't work.

MRS. DUMKE

I'm dying.

VERONICA

(tenderly, voice breaking)

Yeah. You are.

(a beat)

A lot of things scare me about the surgery. You could die on the operating table. At least that would be painless. Or you could die in recovery, in pain, on a ventilator. That scares me. And it probably won't work. I think you have to decide about the quality of the time you have left.

Mrs. Dumke is quiet -- hard to tell how she is reacting to this. Veronica keeps working on her hands in silence.

MRS. DUMKE

Thank you.

Veronica looks up and meets the woman's eyes and squeezes her hand. After a beat.

VERONICA

How about a little polish?

Mrs. Dumke nods. Veronica grabs a bottle of red polish... **END**

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Same bar they went to in Act One. Veronica, Gianna and Chloe sit in a booth. Chloe toasts.

CHLOE

To the first day that I didn't want to kill myself.

GIANNA

Oh, yeah?

CHLOE

Christina Lucas got her lungs.

VERONICA

I gotta make this quick. Mike's picking me up in a half an hour.

GIANNA

Full speed ahead with the plan huh?

VERONICA

Yep.

Across the room, at the bar, they hear a commotion. Some drunk guys are fighting. There's a CRASH as a bottle goes flying into the back bar mirror, SHATTERING it. Someone YELPS in pain. Gianna and Veronica are both annoyed.

BAR PATRON

He cut his arm pretty bad.

CHLOE

Maybe we should go see.

VERONICA

We're a half a block away from the emergency room.

GIANNA

And I'm not giving up this booth.

Chloe is standing on her chair to get a better look.

CHLOE

It's the bartender. His arm's bleeding. I'm gonna go see.