

VALERIE

Written by

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LIGHTS OUT

INT. - WOODHULL - HALLWAY

HOUSEMASTER walks room to room, opening doors and demanding lights go out and the kids in the dorm go to bed.

HOUSEMASTER

Lights out, boys! You know the drill.

(walks to another room)

Time for bed.

(walks to another room. opens door and flicks light switch)

Lights out.

(walks to another room. opens door to dark room)

Good night, Ted.

TED lifts arm, signaling goodnight. The Housemaster closes the door but turns his head slowly. He detects music being played on the floor above. He dashes upstairs and opens the bathroom door, poking his head in.

Heyyyyy! Get out of the shower!

It's lights out!!

INT. - WOODHULL - BATHROOM

BENJAMIN is in the shower, staring blankly up at the showerhead. He closes his eyes, sighs, and then turns off the faucet. He exits the shower and stops at the door to the bathroom, looking at the Housemaster and not saying anything. The Housemaster is perplexed. Benjamin exits. Housemaster sighs.

(calling after)

Goodnight. Benjamin.

HAMLET - BENJAMIN'S ROOM

INT. - WOODHULL - SINGLE BEDROOM

Benjamin comes back to his room, gets dressed, flicks on his lamp and reaches into his desk for his copy of Hamlet.

Written on the inside cover, it says, "This book belongs to Benjamin B. Bartholomew" He brings it to his desk, opens his laptop, and begins to read

BENJAMIN (V.O)

"To be, or not to be? That is the question-- Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, Or to

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BENJAMIN (V.O) (cont'd)
take arms against a sea of
troubles, And, by opposing, end
them?"

(Benjamin writes in the
margins, "depression?")

Benjamin shakes his head, rubs his face, and closes his laptop. Carrying his copy of Hamlet, he pokes his head out of the door, listening to see if the housemaster is still outside.

INT. - WOODHULL - HALLWAY

The coast is clear.

INT. - WOODHULL - SINGLE BEDROOM

Benjamin takes out his phone and makes a call. The other end picks up immediately.

JONATHAN

Yea?

BENJAMIN

Good. You're awake. Listen, I-

JONATHAN

Now's not a good time...

BENJAMIN

I need help

JONATHAN

Listen, Ben, I got an early morning
start tomorrow. I'll call you late-

Suddenly, Benjamin goes back into the hallway and pushes himself into the JONATHAN's room.

JONATHAN'S ROOM

INT. - WOODHULL - OTHER SINGLE

Jonathan's watching anime, but he pauses it and ends the call.

JONATHAN

(looks side to side
impatiently)

What is it?

(CONTINUED)

BENJAMIN

I need your help.

JONATHAN

I was in the middle of something,
asshole. Can this wait til
tomorrow?

BENJAMIN

This is important Jonathan...

JONATHAN

I can read over your paper in the
morning, but as a general note,
your procrastination shouldn't be
my problem

BENJAMIN

I'm not talking about my essay.
Besides, I got an extension.

JONATHAN

How the hell'd you do that?

CUTAWAY - INT. - WOODHULL - BENJAMIN'S ROOM

Benjamin typing an email to his english teacher: "Dear Mrs.
Gertrude, can I hand in my essay on Wednesday? I think I'm
depressed. Signed, Benjamin Bartholomew"

INT. - WOODHULL - OTHER SINGLE

JONATHAN

Huh. Alright, Ben. What's this all
about?

BENJAMIN

(dramatic)

She.

JONATHAN

No...

BENJAMIN

What do you mean "no"

JONATHAN

It's not about "she". It's about
"her". Grammar... Accusative case-

BENJAMIN

Okay!.. It's about a girl.

(CONTINUED)

JONATHAN
What's her name

BENJAMIN
Valerie

CUTAWAY - EXT. - FOREST

Valerie standing in the lush green with hair blowing majestically in the breeze

INT. - WOODHULL - OTHER SINGLE

JONATHAN
What happened?

BENJAMIN
She became very... distant all of a sudden and I really haven't heard from her since

JONATHAN
Since when?

BENJAMIN
Since we hooked up

JONATHAN
You got with this girl?

Benjamin nods

JONATHAN
No kidding... What's her name again?

CUTAWAY - EXT. - FOREST

Valerie with her hair blowing in the wind

INT. - WOODHULL - OTHER SINGLE

BENJAMIN
Valerie.

JONATHAN
What about her last name?

BENJAMIN
Leblanc

EXT. - FOREST

Valerie with her hair blowing in the wind. Zoom in on hair then out to mid shot

INT. - WOODHULL - OTHER SINGLE

JONATHAN

Ah, Ben...

BENJAMIN

What? What is it?

JONATHAN

I heard she's talking to someone else

BENJAMIN

Really?

JONATHAN

A senior.

BENJAMIN

Already?

JONATHAN

Well, it's too early to say if she's in the wrong... I need context. When was it that you guys fucked?

BENJAMIN

Jesus, Jonathan...

JONATHAN

What?

BENJAMIN

You can't just say that.

JONATHAN

Why not?

BENJAMIN

E-e-even if I did, I wouldn't just say it like that.

JONATHAN

So you did fuck?

BENJAMIN

What's the matter with you?

(CONTINUED)

JONATHAN

What's the matter with me? What's the matter with you!

BENJAMIN

It's up to her! It's not my decision to make!

JONATHAN

Jesus Christ. You got with this girl all but once-

BENJAMIN

I'm sorry I care about her!

JONATHAN

Oh, do you now?

BENJAMIN

Yes! I do

JONATHAN

Benjamin...

BENJAMIN

What is it?

JONATHAN

Quite frankly...

BENJAMIN

Uh huh?

JONATHAN

You sound like a little bitch

BENJAMIN

(aside)

Thanks

JONATHAN

Look, when it comes to these things, you gotta assess the situation. For instance, you care about her-

BENJAMIN

I do and-

JONATHAN

Okay. That's fine. But before you go laying all your cards out on the table, you gotta ask yourself: Does *she* feel the same way about me?

(CONTINUED)

Benjamin is silent.

JONATHAN

Now, it's 12:30 am. There's not much you can do right now. And there is certainly not much that *I* can do for you right now. So here's my advice: sleep on it. See what you come up with in the morning. You're probably just a bit worked up.

BENJAMIN

Maybe.

JONATHAN

Alright... Goodnight

Jonathan resumes his anime.

BENJAMIN

Who is he, by the way?

Jonathan pauses anime again.

Valerie's senior friend. What's his name?

JONATHAN

His name's TIMOTHY

EXT. - FOREST

Valerie standing in the lush green with hair blowing majestically in the breeze.

TIMOTHY comes into frame and puts his arm around her shoulder.

FLASHBACK - PARTY

INT. - DORM BASEMENT

Party scene. Benjamin is somewhat of a wallflower. Valerie holds cup and stares at him. Smiles. Benjamin looks away, glancing at the rest of the party. Benjamin looks straight ahead again, glancing to where Valerie was before, except she's not there. As he's about to take a sip from his cup, Valerie comes beside him, touches his arm gently and whispers something into his ear. Benjamin is wide eyed. Valerie walks to a closet door, puts her finger to her lip (shhh) and walks inside.

Benjamin waits for a bit, looking around panicked. He sips from his cup, wincing slightly. He rocks back and forth on his heels and toes before heading off screen to the door.

FLASHBACK - PARTY - CLOSET

INT. - DORM BASEMENT

Valerie is sitting criss cross apple sauce on the floor, eye's closed. Benjamin walks in, apprehensive. Valerie opens her eyes.

VALERIE

Benjamin

BENJAMIN

Hey.. Valerie

VALERIE

Benjamin, you're cute

BENJAMIN

Thanks. I think you're pretty cute too-

VALERIE

So cute, Benjami- Benjy. That's what I'll call you. Does anyone call you Benjy?

BENJAMIN

I guess my granddad used to call me Benjy... sometimes

VALERIE

I have something I wanna tell you

BENJAMIN

What is it?

VALERIE

(whispering)

For the New Year... I'm going vegan.

Valerie leans in for the kiss

TAKE ARMS - A MONTAGE

Music - BUDDY LEE ROBINSON , Le Sirop d'Amour (The Clovers
- Love Potion Number 9)

INT. - WOODHULL - SINGLE BEDROOM

Benjamin enters his dark room, sits at his desk and flicks on a desk lamp. He pulls out a piece of paper and a pen and writes, "Call her?". Benjamin ponders this looking, with wonder, to his left

INT. - GIRLS DORM - SINGLE BEDROOM

We show Valerie's phone ringing with an unsaved number on the screen. Valerie, who was in the shower, returns to see 6 missed calls from this random caller. Benjamin checks his watch, shakes his head and crosses "Call her?" off of his list

INT. - WOODHULL - SINGLE BEDROOM

Benjamin looks from his right to his left. Ben crumples that paper. He looks around, disappointed, until he gets an idea on what to do next. He begins writing on a new sheet. It says, "Dear Valerie..." He holds the pen high above his head and ducks out of frame. He sprouts back up with a stuffed envelope. Ben licks the envelope and is about to seal it until he looks to his left

EXT. - GIRLS DORM - PORCH

Valerie walks outside with her friend beside her and she sees an envelope taped to a nearby brick wall. She opens the envelope, reads the note, and looks around before picking up her phone and dialing a 3 digit number. Benjamin, who'd been watching the scene from afar, holds his phone in anticipation. He waits for a second and then checks the scene again. Valerie is standing as police officers approach her. She hands them the letter and the cops read it together. When they finish, they shake their head, tilt their hat to Valerie and are about to leave until they spot Ben behind the bushes and chase him. Benjamin books it from his hideout.

INT. - WOODHULL - SINGLE BEDROOM

Benjamin looks from his left to his right. He sighs, looking discouraged. He then gasps and dials a number

BENJAMIN

Raheem... sorry to bother you so
late. Listen, can you do me favor?

Click from the lamp.

PORCH

EXT. - BOYS DORM - PORCH

Raheem stands at door threshold with boombox in one hand.

BENJAMIN

Thanks, a ton.
(Takes boombox)

RAHEEM

No problem... Just don't kill the
battery.
(shakes Ben's hand)

BENJAMIN

Where're you headed? Aren't you
going to the dance?

RAHEEM

Not my type of party. Peace.

Raheem walks away. Jonathan enters.

JONATHAN

Why'd Raheem give you his boombox?

BENJAMIN

Don't worry about it

JONATHAN

(surprised)
Hm. Alright...

DANCE

INT. - IRWIN - LOUNGE

Benjamin and Jonathan are dancing. Lights are shining on their faces. Benjamin spots Valerie and her new guy, Timothy, leaving the dance. He ditches Jonathan, who watches disappointed as his best friend grabs his boombox and chases the couple outside.

BLEACHERS

Music - "Through the Fire" by Chaka Khan

EXT. - LAVINO TRACK - BLEACHERS

Valerie and Timothy are cuddled up laughing on the bleachers. As they're about to kiss, Valerie stops him.

VALERIE
Do you hear that?

TIMOTHY
(leaning in for a kiss)
Not a thing...

VALERIE
Wait, Timothy. It sounds like music.

TIMOTHY
It's probably just coming from the dance. All that matters is that we're here, (leaning in again) together, all alone...

VALERIE
Ohhh my Goddd.

Valerie spots Benjamin standing down at the base of the bleachers with a boombox over his head.

Timothy reads Valerie's line of vision and spots Benjamin himself.

TIMOTHY
Who is that?

VALERIE
Give me a second. I gotta handle something.

Valerie approaches.

EXT. - LAVINO TRACK - FIELD
Benjamin, what the fuck is wrong with you?

BENJAMIN
(pauses music, but leaves boombox on)
You never called...

(CONTINUED)

VALERIE
Nobody calls anymore.

BENJAMIN
You never sent me a text, either.
No DM, no snapchat...

VALERIE
We were at a party

BENJAMIN
Valerie, I really liked you

VALERIE
(aside)
Oh my God; you sound like a girl...

BENJAMIN
And if you knew that you didn't
actually want to be with me then
why ...

VALERIE
I was drunk!

BENJAMIN
You were?-

VALERIE
Drunk.

BENJAMIN
(taken aback)
Really?

VALERIE
Yeah. I must have had a bit too
much to drink that night.

BENJAMIN
(anxious)
Oh my God... did I...

VALERIE
What?

BENJAMIN
I didn't...

VALERIE
Ben, what?

BENJAMIN
I had no clue...

VALERIE
That what?

BENJAMIN
You were

VALERIE
That I was drunk?

BENJAMIN
Yeah.

VALERIE
Well I was.

BENJAMIN
I didn't mean to...

VALERIE
Mean to...

BENJAMIN
... violate you... or

VALERIE
Violate me?

BENJAMIN
Because I had no idea...

VALERIE
Jesus Christ... No, Benjamin, you didn't... Look, we had fun... But would I do it again-

BENJAMIN
Let's find out

VALERIE
That's not what I-

BENJAMIN
Let me take you out for pizza...

VALERIE
Ben...

BENJAMIN
We'll just talk. Ya know? Get to know each other.

(CONTINUED)

TIMOTHY
(shouting)
Hey! What's going on down there?

VALERIE
(shouting back)
Almost done! Benjamin...

BENJAMIN
You don't eat pepperoni, do you?

VALERIE
Ben, you *have* to-

BENJAMIN
Ah shit...

VALERIE
What now?

TIMOTHY
(shouting)
Who is that?

BENJAMIN
Vegetarians can't eat pepperoni

VALERIE
You need to stop...

TIMOTHY
(shouting)
Is that Benjamin?

BENJAMIN
I don't really mind. We can just
get plain.

VALERIE
BENJAMIN!

BENJAMIN
Valerie...

VALERIE
Leave me alone. Please

Valerie begins to walk away.

BENJAMIN
So no pizza?

VALERIE

I'm vegan.

Benjamin watches. Then, he walks a bit, stops, and hits play again on the boombox.

INT. - WOODHULL - BATHROOM

The boombox is still playing the same song from before. Benjamin walks back to his house sad. He goes to take a shower with the boombox still playing in the corner

PORCH PART 2

EXT. - BOYS DORM - PORCH

Benjamin hands Raheem his boombox. It's dead. The music stops.

RAHEEM

It's dead.

BENJAMIN

Yeah, sorry, I was using it all of last night. I'll pay for your new pack of batteries.

Raheem doesn't respond.

BENJAMIN

I didn't mean to kill the battery it just kinda died on me. This should be enough to replace them-

Obviously upset, Raheem walks away, ignoring Benjamin's outstretched wad of cash

THERAPIST SESSION

INT. - INFIRMARY - EXAM ROOM

Therapist reads Mrs. Gertrude's response

MRS. GERTRUDE (V.O)

"Benjamin, your email was particularly concerning. I've notified your parents and scheduled a meeting between you and the guidance counselor. Your essay can wait until you are mentally stable Signed, Mrs. Gertrude"

(CONTINUED)

TWO SHOT OF BENJAMIN AND DOCTOR

DOCTOR

She's worried, Benjamin. *We* are worried. So, what's on your mind?
(pregnant pause)

BENJAMIN

I think I'm depressed.

INT. - INFIRMARY - HALLWAY

Cut to Benjamin in hallway with lollipop. Attached is a note that says "u r not alone :)" He sighs.

STORE

INT. - JIGGER - CHECKOUT COUNTER

Sucking on a lollipop, Benjamin slides a pack of batteries and a can of Red Bull across the counter

CASHIER

Your total comes to-

Benjamin produces a wad of bills and coins from his pocket. The cashier slides it across the counter. Ben walks out the door.

WRITE THE PAPER - ANOTHER MONTAGE

Music - "This is My Life" by Shirley Bassey

EXT. - CRESCENT WALKWAY

Carrying his plastic bag, Benjamin walks down a side walk (right to left) with his backpack on his shoulders. He sees Valerie and Tim arguing through a window. He stops briefly to watch, but continues on his way.

INT. - LIBRARY - STUDY POD

Benjamin sits in a library pod writing his essay and drinking Red Bull. When he looks up, he sees Valerie laughing and talking to another guy (Ted from before)

INT. - LIBRARY - OPPOSITE STUDY POD

Valerie looks at Benjamin grinding out his paper, but Benjamin doesn't notice. He clicks "Submit", packs his things, and leaves the library

(CONTINUED)

EXT. - BOYS DORM - PORCH

Raheem picks up the batteries, smiles to himself, looks around to see who dropped them at his porch.

Raheem spots Benjamin walking away.

EXT. - BOYS DORM - FRONT FIELD

Benjamin smiles to himself as well.

INT. - WOODHULL - OTHER SINGLE

Music cuts. Benjamin opens the door to Jonathan's room. There's a period of silence

JONATHAN

You good?

BENJAMIN

(pause)

Yeah... I'm good

Jonathan hits resume on his anime. Benjamin joins him on the couch

Music resumes with credits. 6 seconds of credits interrupted by a phone notification

Benjamin looks at his phone to see a text from Valerie:
"Pizza?"

Benjamin stares at it blankly before launching his phone across the room

JONATHAN

Who was that?

BENJAMIN

Nobody.

FIN