

## **V-Card**

A ten-minute play by Jake Lewis

### **CHARACTERS**

Betty – a recently-separated Mom, mid-40s

Lexie – a lovelorn teenager, 16

Greg – Betty's husband, Lexie's dad, mid-40s.

Setting: Living room of Betty and Lexie's house

## V-Card

*Lights rise on a living room. BETTY is seated on the couch, going through the mail.*

BETTY: *(Calling offstage)* Lex! Your dad will be here soon to pick you up!

*She continues to sort through the mail, and comes across a small envelope, which she opens curiously and pulls out. It is a card with some sort of heart design on the front/something romantic. She reads it, her face in shock.*

*From the other room, LEXIE enters.*

LEXIE: Hey, mom! Guess what happened to me today at school?

BETTY: *(Quickly hiding card)*. You learned something?

LEXIE: Of course not! Marky staged a flash mob for me in the lunchroom so he could ask me to prom! It was to the music of "Bad Guy" by Billie Eilish, but instead he changed it to "Rad Guy!"

BETTY: *(Sarcastically)*. That's so...creative.

LEXIE: Well, it might not be the most original lyric change, but it was totally romantic. Especially at the end when he, somehow, had a whole bunch of those candy hearts with messages on them fall out of his mouth all over me. It was like, symbolic...or something...like he couldn't even contain his love for me! Get it? I even kept some! Look! *(She pulls some out of her pocket and shows it to BETTY.)*

BETTY: *(Slightly repulsed knowing where they've been.)* There's nothing written on them.

LEXIE: Oh. Right. That's because they were in his mouth so long, the writing got worn away by his spit. He has a very wet palette, it's not his fault. *Buuuuuuut* he told me they used to say "U + me = prom," with the U like the letter, not the word! It's like algebra! He's soooo smart!

BETTY: He's quite the guy, that Marky.

LEXIE: Yeah, he's the best. *(Finally noticing the torn envelope, looks at it, and then looks at BETTY.)* You get a Valentine's Day card?

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BETTY: Nope. Just a bill.

LEXIE: In a pink envelope with Dad's handwriting on it?

BETTY: Ummm...yes?

LEXIE: Cough it up.

*BETTY gives her the card reluctantly. LEXIE reads it, a big smile.*

LEXIE: "Awww!" Dad is so corny!

BETTY: Well, it's no candy heart flashmob.

LEXIE: He still loves you!

BETTY: *(Not thrilled about it.)* Don't remind me.

LEXIE: You don't seem to be too fond of that idea.

BETTY: We *are* separated, Lex. Don't you think it's weird he sent something romantic to his soon-to-be ex-wife?

LEXIE: No, because *he* doesn't want it to be over, duh. *(Beat.)* And I don't think you do, either.

BETTY: You think you know your dear ol' mom that well, huh? Go ahead. What am I *really* thinking?

LEXIE: For real?

BETTY: "Totes," as you kids say.

LEXIE: No kids say that anymore. But anyways, you like that he's thinking of you. You want him to want you, and you're trying to be all cool and make it look like you still think it was a good idea to separate, but deep down what you're really upset about is...

BETTY: Let's hear it.

LEXIE: That all he sent you was a card.

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BETTY: What? That's...that's...

LEXIE: Is "correct" the word you're looking for?

BETTY: Wow. You're good. And I sound like a horrible person.

LEXIE: A bit. But what's wrong with a card? It's old-fashioned.

BETTY: Exactly! Him sending me a card for Valentine's Day makes me feel like I'm an old fart!

LEXIE: Mom, you're 45. You *are* an old fart.

BETTY: Who was the old fart who went with you to the Lil Nas X concert last week? Huh?

LEXIE: You did, Mom. But you also left after the third song and slept in the car the rest of the time.

BETTY: The damn thing started at 9pm! Who starts a concert that late on a school night?

LEXIE: Look, Mom, I know this is your first Valentine's Day without Dad here, but if you ask me, I think you need to be more like Marky.

BETTY: By vomiting candy?

LEXIE: By quitting this tough guy act and taking him back.

BETTY: Yeah, that's not gonna' happen.

LEXIE: I've seen how you're acting lately. You miss him! He's trying to be romantic, for God's sake!

BETTY: Well, couldn't he be more like your regurgitating boyfriend and put a little more oomph into his gesture? I mean, a card?!

LEXIE: Now I know you're joking. You would hate a spectacle.

BETTY: I love spectacle!

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LEXIE: You always tell us when we go out on your birthday to dinner that if the waiters come out singing, you'll get up and drive home, leaving us at the restaurant!

*BETTY acknowledges this is true.*

BETTY: He could have had flowers delivered to my work.

LEXIE: Which would have made everyone gossip, which you also hate.

BETTY: Or send a box of chocolates!

LEXIE: You're allergic to chocolate!

BETTY: It's the thought that counts!

LEXIE: Wouldn't that thought be, he's trying to send you into anaphylactic shock?

BETTY: I wouldn't eat them! Just look at them.

LEXIE: Sure, that makes total sense. (*Beat.*) I'm sorry, Mom, but you got your V-card when you kicked him out.

BETTY: Got My V-card? I think the expression is "Gave up your V-Card," and that happened *ages* ago.

LEXIE: Ugh! No, not *that* V-card. I don't want to know about that one! No, I mean V-Card as in, your right to expect anything from him on Valentine's Day. Although, in this case, it's an actual card.

BETTY: Ok, but this is different. Birthdays are about getting older. Not something to make a big deal out of. But Valentine's Day is when you want to be treated like you're the best lover in the world!

LEXIE: Mom, I love our talks, but please don't put "you" and "lover" in the same sentence, ok? I know it happened, and that's how I'm here, but I don't need to be reminded that you and Dad--

BETTY: I mean "lover" like you're there for each other every day besides Valentine's. Little looks that let you know the other person is thinking of you. Someone who watches *The Bachelor* with you even though they hate it, but do it anyway because you like it.

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The person who doesn't curl their nose when you take off your socks after a long day of work and place your feet on their lap for a rub. That kind of lover. Not lover like...*luuuuuver*.

LEXIE: And was Dad a good lover? Oh my God, I can't believe I just asked that.

BETTY: He had his moments.

LEXIE: Then why'd you kick Dad out?

BETTY: I guess I just wanted...more. More romance. This will be hard for you to understand, but after a while, a marriage can get a little...well, boring.

LEXIE: Mom, I totally get it. I mean, the first time Marky and I were a couple, he only called me, like, once a day. If that.

BETTY: Not *quite* the same thing.

LEXIE: Maybe you and Dad should try to be ethically non-monogamous, then.

BETTY: I don't understand how one can be "ethical" and "non-monogamous." That's an oxymoron, like "jumbo shrimp" or "honest politician."

LEXIE: Yeah, I didn't think that would be your thing. But look, Dad has made an effort here. Give him a call and see what happens. You haven't finalized the divorce yet. You can still figure things out!

BETTY: Lex, I love you and want you to be happy, but I don't see your father and I getting back together as being in the cards.

LEXIE: Nice pun, Mom. And I know that's a possibility. I'm not stupid. Half of my friends parents' are divorced. More than half, probably. It's kind of weird you two stayed together so long to begin with. Made me kind of stand out, if I'm being honest.

BETTY: I'm so sorry my marriage interferes with your social life.

*LEXIE's phone rings.*

LEXIE: *(Looks at phone.)* It's Marky.

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BETTY: Can't we just call him Mark?

LEXIE: *(Answers.)* Hi, sugarbutt!

*BETTY mouths, "Sugar butt?"*

LEXIE: *(To BETTY.)* Yes, his butt is so cute, don't you think?

BETTY: Haven't noticed, sorry. *(Beat.)* What's he call you?

LEXIE: *(Ignoring the question and returning to the call.)* Sorry, what? I was being my mom's shrink. I know. Again. *(To BETTY.)* You good here by yourself, Mom?

BETTY: I'm fine. Thanks.

LEXIE: *(On phone, as she exits.)* Of course I'm wearing your boxers! I feel so close to you in them!

*BETTY shakes her head, in amazement at her daughter's idea of love, for better or worse.*

*Doorbell rings. BETTY rises and goes to open it. GREG stands there.*

BETTY: She'll be right down. She's talking to Mark.

GREG: Mark? Who's that?

BETTY: Her boyfriend for the past three years.

GREG: Oh! Marky! I was like, "Mark," who's that? That kind is definitely not a Mark. You could say "She missed the mark" on that one!

BETTY: He's not that bad a kid.

GREG: I know. I like him. Although have you heard what his nickname for her is?

BETTY: No, and I don't want to. *(Beat.)* Thank you for the V-card.

GREG: The what?

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BETTY: Sorry. The Valentine's card. It was nice.

GREG: Oh. Yeah. No problem. Wasn't sure if it would be allowed, but I thought, "What the hell?"

BETTY: What a wonderful sentiment for a girl to hear, a card was sent to her because "What the hell."

GREG: Oh stop. You know what I mean.

BETTY: Yeah. I know. But, ummm....

*LEXIE starts to enter but sees them talking and hangs back.*

BETTY: (Con.) I have something for you.

*BETTY goes to a drawer, opens it up, and pulls out a card in an envelope. She hands it to GREG.*

GREG: A Valentine's Day card? (He opens it up and reads.) "Roses are red, violets are blue..." (opens card) "Happy Valentine's Day from me to you."

BETTY: Not the most original, I know. It was all the store had left. That, or some really gushy ones.

GREG: Can't have any of that gushy stuff!

BETTY: I've never been the really romantic type. That was always your territory.

GREG: A lot of good it did me.

BETTY: At first it felt great, when we started dating, and then you stopped doing it as much, and I started thinking it was because you didn't love me like you used to.

GREG: Not true.

BETTY: I know. But by the time I realized you weren't being lovey-dovey because you knew it made me feel bad since I couldn't match it, it was too late.

GREG: It's never too late, Bets.



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BETTY: It's too late.

*GREG nods, understandingly.*

GREG: *(Indicating the card.)* It's perfect. Thank you.

BETTY: Yeah.

*LEXIE enters as though not having heard anything.*

LEXIE: Hey Dad!

GREG: Hey kiddo! You ready to go?

LEXIE: Can Marky join us for dinner?

GREG: As long as you don't feed each other again like last time.

LEXIE: Deal *(Sees card.)* Meet you in the car.

*LEXIE exits.*

GREG: *(As he leaves.)* Happy Valentine's Day, Bets.

BETTY: You too.

*GREG exits.*

*BETTY sits on the couch again, picks up the card from GREG, reads it once more, and smiles as she holds it to her chest.*

The End